PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Cultural District Program was created as a part of the Cultural Economy Initiative. It is managed by the Office of Cultural Development in the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism under the Office of the Lt. Governor of Louisiana.
The Cultural Economy Initiative and Cultural District program are all about sustaining the people who create and preserve the artistic and cultural assets of Louisiana - our artists, musicians, writers, designers, performers and wonderfully talented chefs. The Office of Cultural Development is working to accomplish this by inviting communities to develop Cultural Districts to improve the capacity for creative production and provide new markets for cultural products.
Program Purpose

For local governments to revitalize communities by creating locally driven hubs of cultural activity

Criteria: Districts must be:

- Geographically Contiguous
- Distinguished by cultural resources that play a vital role in the life and cultural development of the community
- Focus on a cultural anchor - such as an art institution, art & entertainment business, an area with art and cultural activities or production
- Engage in the promotion, preservation, and educational aspects of the arts and culture of the locale
- Contribute to the public through interpretive and educational uses
Benefits

Increased cultural activity, occupancy, commerce, jobs, and a sense of community identity.
9 new districts were added to the program on October 1st, 2020, making a total of 115 Cultural Districts:

- A.P. Tureaud Cultural District (Orleans Parish)
- Bogalusa Cultural District (Washington Parish)
- Houma Heights Cultural District (Terrebonne Parish)
- Lake Providence Cultural District (East Carroll Parish)
- Marksville Cultural District (Avoyelles Parish)
- Renoir Cultural District (East Baton Rouge Parish)
- Scotlandville Cultural District (East Baton Rouge Parish)
- St. Joseph Cultural District (Tensas Parish)
- Touro-Bouligny Cultural District (Orleans Parish)

Since it was launched in 2008, the program is widely popular among local governments and organizations who are working to revitalize communities and neighborhoods through art & cultural development.
Program Incentives

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION**
Expands eligibility of state historic tax credits for rehabilitation of commercial structures to cultural districts

**VISUAL ARTS**
Local sales tax does not apply to original, one-of-a-kind works of art

There are two tax incentives that come with cultural district certification. One is the state historic tax credit, which extends eligibility to property owners of commercial buildings to apply for state historic tax credits for renovation projects to historic buildings. The other is that original, one-of-a-kind works of visual art sold within the boundaries of a Cultural District are exempt from local tax. These incentives are useful tools to encourage preservation and reuse of buildings. They inspire art and cultural activities that contribute to a sense of community, revitalization and economic development.
2019 Annual Report

- $3.4B Revenue Reported
- 2,232 Cultural Events Held
- $166M Value of Tax-Exempt Sales
- Net Growth of 232 Businesses
- 337 Commercial Renovation Projects
- 2M Event Attendance
CULTURAL DISTRICT TOOLBOX

Certain factors if already in place can contribute to the launch of a CD and its ongoing success. If not in place, they can guide the action of planners for a new district:

- Strategic partnership building
- Vision for the district & broader community
- Clear signage, distinctive logos, maps, etc.
- User-friendly website
- Marketing and promotion to attract visitors, potential residents and new businesses
- Accessible events and venues
Success Factors

- Artists valued as members of the community
- Artist recruitment to welcome new artists and facilitate their establishment
- Supportive amenities such as restaurants, lodging and recreation
- Unique, authentic identity
- Community support
- Artists, live/work space
- Planners and developers understand power of arts and culture in community & economic development
- Anchor institutions and special events
PUBLIC ART
COMMUNITY MEETINGS
A SEAT AT THE GOVERNMENT TABLE
EVENTS/FESTIVALS
REGIONAL APPROACHES, ASSET COMBINATIONS

So what can this look like in action?
So what can this look like in action?

These bulletpoints are larger conceptual themes that Cultural Districts all over the state have implemented to get to those Success Factors on the slide above... there is no right or wrong way to set about this work – JUST DO IT.
Louisiana's Cultural Districts Program is a valuable tool for Economic Growth, Community Vitality, and Creative Placemaking.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND FORMS AVAILABLE ONLINE
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