



Catalyst of New Bedford's Creative Economy

Results of an Economic Impact Analysis
and Visitor Survey, FY 2015



Public Policy Center

UMass Dartmouth

ABOUT AHA!

AHA! (Art, History & Architecture) is New Bedford's free Downtown Cultural Night and collaborative cultural organization. A project of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, a 501(c)(3), the AHA! mission is to be a cooperative venture dedicated to invigorating the downtown New Bedford cultural scene. The project accomplishes this through:

- presenting second Thursday free cultural nights,
- inviting local and regional artists, cultural groups, and educators to present their work,
- spearheading cooperative marketing,
- being a forum for the AHA! Partners to convene around shared topics,
- contributing to New Bedford's creative economy initiatives, and
- collectively branding and presenting the best the city has to offer, providing an easy way for residents and visitors to be a part of the city's burgeoning cultural scene.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC POLICY CENTER AT UMASS DARTMOUTH

The Public Policy Center (PPC) at UMass Dartmouth is the University's applied social science research, technical assistance, and public service unit based in the College of Arts and Sciences. An interdisciplinary applied public policy research and technical assistance provider, the Center seeks to inform evidence-based policymaking at the state, regional, and local level through collaborative engagements with public, private, and non-profit partners.

The Center is supported by a highly experienced team of professionals who leverage the skills and expertise of UMass faculty, staff, and students to meet the needs of our clients and partners. Services provided by the PPC include survey research, program evaluation (summative and formative), economic and workforce analysis, demographic and socioeconomic analysis, technical assistance, and needs assessment. These services are offered in the areas of economic development, community development, education, public health, transportation, housing, and environment. More about the Public Policy Center can be found at: <http://publicpolicycenter.org/>.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AHA! (Art, History & Architecture) is New Bedford's free Downtown Cultural Night and collaborative cultural organization. The AHA! mission is to be a cooperative venture dedicated to invigorating the downtown New Bedford cultural scene. The project accomplishes this through:

- presenting monthly 2nd Thursday FREE cultural nights,
- inviting local and regional artists, cultural groups and educators to present what they do,
- spearheading cooperative marketing,
- being a forum for the AHA! Partners to convene around shared topics, and
- contributing to the City's Creative Economy initiatives.

AHA!'s monthly 2nd Thursday events have taken place continuously since July, 1999. These cultural nights are held on the second Thursday of each month from 5:00 to 9:00 PM and involve downtown New Bedford's museums, galleries, arts organizations, merchants, hotels, and restaurants. Each month's event is themed so that distinctive cultural programs are presented that allow a wide range of opportunities for performers, artists, and humanitarians of all disciplines and levels to engage the public. It is estimated that there were over 24,000 total visitations to AHA! Thursday Nights in FY 2015.

AHA! receives a portion of its funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) Adams Arts Program, which requires funded organizations to document their performance in terms of outputs (economic impacts, leveraged funds, visibility, etc.) and process (program implementation). To that end, AHA! has retained the Public Policy Center (formerly the Center for Policy Analysis) over the past several years to measure the success of AHA! in terms of the economic impacts and program outputs of AHA! sponsored programs. This report includes an analysis of AHA! activities for the 2015 fiscal year and presents historical data where appropriate.¹

Economic Impact

The economic impact of AHA! Thursday Nights is based on expenditures that were collected from the AHA! organization, in-kind expenditures, and visitor spending during the event. AHA! made a total of \$210,128 in expenditures in FY 2015, which included \$123,701 in direct AHA! expenditures and \$86,427 in in-kind expenditures. In addition, eighty-eight percent of AHA! visitors report they spent money in downtown New Bedford during AHA! Thursday Nights and spent an average of \$16.20 on items such as art, food/drinks, miscellaneous retail, transportation, and parking. The total estimated amount spent by visitors in FY 2015 on AHA! Thursday Nights is \$342,238.

PPC constructed a model in IMPLAN, a commonly used input-output modeling program that describes the flows of money between sectors within a region's economy. The data used in the model are for FY 2015 and model outputs are reported in 2015 dollars. The direct, indirect, and induced impacts of AHA! are significant:

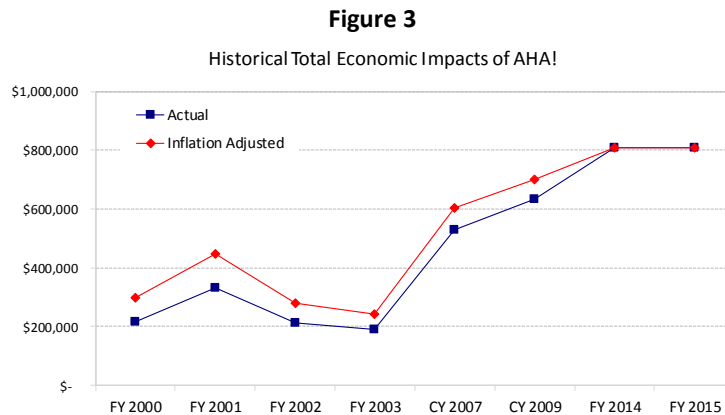
- The \$552K in direct spending by AHA! and its visitors generated an additional \$111K in sales to vendors who supply AHA! and its partners (indirect impacts) and \$145K in sales in other areas of the region's economy from the wages spent by employees (induced impacts) (see Figure 1). Or put another way, AHA! leveraged *an additional* \$256K in economic output for businesses throughout the region.

¹ AHA! received MCC funding for FY 2014 and FY 2015 (the state's fiscal year runs from July through June). A final report will be issued after the second fiscal year is completed in July, 2015.

- The total output multiplier is 1.46 (total impact/direct impact), which implies that for every \$1,000 in direct expenditures, an additional \$460 in sales is generated for other businesses in the region.
- The total employment impact is 13.4, which includes approximately 11 people directly employed by AHA! and its downtown partners, 1 employee who supplies inputs to AHA! (indirect impacts), and 2 employees who benefit from wages spent by creative individuals and businesses (induced impacts) (see Figure 2).
- In terms of the state’s return on investment, a total of \$33,750 of the Massachusetts Cultural Council grant was spent by AHA! in FY2015. With a total economic impact of \$809K (including in-kind), 24 dollars have been leveraged for every state dollar spent in grant money.



The estimated total economic impact of AHA! increased by 171 percent from FY 2000 to FY 2015 in terms of inflation-adjusted dollars (see Figure 3). The increase in economic activity since 2000 is primarily driven by four factors: higher attendance at AHA! events, an increase in the number of AHA! partners, an increase in in-kind contributions from AHA! partners, and quality improvements in the reporting of in-kind expenditure data from AHA! partners.



Visitor Survey

A total of 796 intercept surveys were conducted with AHA! visitors at various locations throughout FY 2015, including galleries, restaurants, on the street, and at live performances. The purpose of the visitor survey is to determine a respondent's place of residence, to establish visitation patterns, to measure satisfaction levels with AHA!, and to obtain expenditure data.

- Forty-eight percent of respondents (48%) reside in New Bedford, while smaller percentages reside in Dartmouth (15%), Fairhaven (13%), and Acushnet (9%). Ninety-two percent of respondents (92%) reside in the Southcoast and 1 percent reside outside of Massachusetts.
- Respondents are most likely to have heard/known about AHA! by word of mouth (63%), because they attended previously (59%), and from a friend or family member (55%).
- Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents report they have previously been to an AHA! event, which means that more than a third of visitors were new to AHA!.
- Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents report they attend AHA! more than once per year, with 58 percent attending 2 to 3 times per year, and 29 percent attending 4 or more times per year .
- Respondents rate AHA! highly; 86 percent rate that night's AHA! event as an "8" or higher and 20 percent rate the event as a "10," while only 1 percent of respondents rate the event as a 5 or below. Overall, respondents in FY 2015 rate the events they attended an average of 8.6 on the ten point scale, which is consistent with previous years.
- Seventy-seven percent (77%) of visitors report they patronized or planned to patronize one of New Bedford's downtown restaurants or cafes before, during, or after the event. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of visitors report they shopped or planned to shop at one of downtown's retail establishments. Both these percentages have increased steadily since the baseline.
- A primary goal of AHA! is to invigorate the downtown New Bedford cultural scene, which in turn promotes economic development in the area. AHA! is succeeding in meeting this goal in that the program attracts people who normally might not visit downtown New Bedford, including out-of-towners. For example, 58 percent of respondents' report they would have not come to downtown New Bedford that night if the AHA! event was not held.
- AHA! is an important catalyst in promoting downtown's galleries because it sponsors a diverse array of programming that appeals to a wide audience. For example, only 21 percent of respondents report they would attend a gallery night with no additional AHA! programming.
- Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents indicate they have a more positive perception of downtown New Bedford as a result of attending AHA!, while no respondents have a more negative perception and 43 percent have a perception that has not changed.
- Most respondents are likely to recommend AHA! to a friend; 76 percent rate the likeliness as an "8" or higher on a 1-10 scale, with 28 percent rating their likeliness a "10."

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AHA! - ARTS, HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE

AHA! (Art, History & Architecture) is New Bedford's free Downtown Cultural Night and collaborative cultural organization. A project of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, a 501(c)(3), the AHA! mission is to be a cooperative venture dedicated to invigorating the downtown New Bedford cultural scene. The project accomplishes this through:

- presenting second Thursday free cultural nights,
- inviting local and regional artists, cultural groups, and educators to present their work,
- spearheading cooperative marketing,
- being a forum for the AHA! Partners to convene around shared topics,
- contributing to New Bedford's creative economy initiatives, and
- collectively branding and presenting the best the city has to offer, providing an easy way for residents and visitors to be a part of the city's burgeoning cultural scene.

AHA! began in July 1999 and its monthly 2nd Thursday events have taken place continuously since that time. These flagship cultural nights are held on the second Thursday of each month from 5:00 to 9:00 PM and involve over sixty downtown museums, galleries, arts organizations, merchants, restaurants, and hotels. Each month's event is themed so that distinctive cultural programs are presented. On a typical AHA! Night, several art exhibits open, live music is presented, theater skits or a lecture take place, and interactive family and adult cultural experiences abound. Along with individual donors and partner venue dues, AHA! is funded in part by the following entities and organizations:

- Bay Coast Bank
- Bristol County Savings Bank
- Bristol Community College
- City of New Bedford
- Domino's
- First Citizens Savings Bank
- HallKeen
- Island Foundation
- Joseph Abboud
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism
- National Endowment for the Arts
- New Bedford Local Cultural Council
- New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
- Bristol County Savings Bank
- UMass Dartmouth
- Veolia
- Walgreens
- Whaling City Sound

Since its inception, AHA! has been a catalyst for downtown development, both cultural and non-cultural. AHA! began with 14 partners in 1999 and now has 57 partners across various industry sectors, including museums and attractions, galleries and studios, restaurants, retail shops, and cultural organizations. The number of visitors to AHA! and the quality of programming continues to grow each year, as does the excitement and energy generated by the event. For example, respondents report on the AHA! Visitor Survey that that the event "shows that New Bedford is a fun place," is a "good time and family oriented," that "showcases what New Bedford has to offer," while "promoting positive events in the downtown area."

1.2 MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL ADAMS ARTS PROGRAM

The Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), under its Adams Arts Program, awarded New Bedford's AHA! Project \$33,750 in FY 2015 to support new initiatives and ongoing expansion of the city's Second Thursday free arts and culture nights.² The goal of the Adams Arts Program is to maximize the economic impact of the cultural sector in Massachusetts by funding initiatives that connect artists and cultural organizations to local and state economic development efforts, nurture new arts and cultural enterprise development, raise awareness of the Commonwealth's cultural products and increase arts and cultural visitors to the state.

This is AHA!'s 16th year of consecutive funding from the MCC. Funding from the Adams Arts Program has allowed AHA! to pursue program rich events, cultural planning initiatives and to pilot new programs. These programs and initiatives include:

- AHA! Nights starting in July 1999
- The Cultural Convening, Spring of 2006
- Summer Saturdays in the City, Summer of 2006
- Summer 7C's Movie Series, Summer of 2006
- Open Studios, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008
- Wings Court programming and stakeholder dialogue, started summer of 2006
- Strategic Planning Sessions, Spring 2007
- Remembering Forward! Symposium, October 2007
- Fire and Ice/First Night , December 2007
- Creative Economy Task Force with New Bedford Economic Development Council, 2007- 2008
- Governance Planning for AHA! and AHA! partners, 2008
- Fast Forward, April 2008
- City Celebrates!, All summer Thursdays in Summer of 2008 and 2009
- City Celebrates! New Year's Eve, every year since 2007
- The Creatives Party, Meditech, Fall 2009
- Cooperative projects such as the Charles W. Morgan Homecoming (2014), working with the Seaport Cultural District group, and further integrating AHA! with various downtown initiatives.
- First Person, Second Story, on-going
- Making Waves, on-going

Meri Jenkins, the MCC's Adams Program Manager, offers these thoughts on AHA!'s accomplishments. "The AHA! Project has consistently proved that cultural activities can and do play an important part in a community's economic future. The project has helped to attract businesses, development and people into a downtown that was largely dormant seven years ago in the evening hours and is a model for other communities thinking about adopting cultural economic development as a development strategy."

² The 2015 fiscal year runs from July, 2014 through June, 2015.

1.3 AHA! PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING GROUPS

1.31 PARTNERS

There were 56 AHA! partners for the 2015 season (see below).

Museums and Attractions

- Buzzards Bay Coalition
- New Bedford Whaling Museum
- New Bedford Art Museum
- The New Bedford Whaling National Park Visitor Center
- Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum
- Seamen's Bethel
- Zeiterion Performing Arts Center
- Lloyd Center for the Environment

Galleries and Studios

- Alison Wells Fin Art Studio and Gallery
- Arthur Moniz Gallery
- B.Leger Studio and Gallery
- Duff Gallery
- Gallery 65 on William
- Gallery X
- Judith Klein Art Gallery
- Mediumstudio
- Paradise McFee Gallery
- TL6 the Gallery
- The University Gallery. UMass Dartmouth College of Visual and Performing Arts STAR STORE Campus

Restaurants

- Cafe Arpeggio
- Cork Wine and Tapas Bar
- Freestone's City Grille
- No Problemo
- Pour Farm Tavern
- Quahog Republic Whaler's Tavern
- Rose Alley Ale House
- Spicy Lime
- Slainte Irish Pub
- The Green Bean
- Tia Maria's European Cafe
- Waterfront Grille

Retail Shops

- Calico
- Crush Fine Wine
- Gatlin's Framing, Photography, and Art Supplies
- Isabelle Grace Jewelry
- Moby Dick Retail
- NBAM's Gift Shop
- Solstice Skateboarding
- Sub. Text Book Shop
- The Bedford Merchant
- TL6 The Gallery
- Travessia Urban Winery
- Whalers of New Bedford Antiques and Fine Arts
- Whaling Museum Store

Cultural Organizations

- Bristol Community College – New Bedford Campus
- First Unitarian Church in New Bedford
- New Bedford Free Public Library
- New Bedford Historical Society
- New Bedford Preservation Society, Inc.
- New Bedford Public School Paul Roderigues Administration Building
- Pilgrim United Church of Christ, UCC
- Waterfront Historic Area League

Live/ Stay

- Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott New Bedford

Be Well

- New Bedford YMCA
- Yoga on Union
- Carabiner's Indoor Climbing

1.32 AHA! COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING GROUPS

In addition to active partners, there are also 34 community programming groups who work in collaboration with the AHA! mission to present public programming, but do not pay dues or contribute on a monthly basis. These include:

- Abraham H. Howland Jr. Lodge
- Alphagraphics – New Bedford
- Bank 5
- BayCoast Bank
- Behavioral Connections
- Bristol Community College
- Bristol County Savings Bank
- City of New Bedford
- Clean Right Cleaning Solutions
- Cuttyhunk Ferry Company
- Domino’s Pizza
- Edible South Coast
- Fiber Optic Center Inc.
- First Citizens
- HallKeen
- Island Foundation
- Joseph Abboud
- Mass Cultural Council
- National Endowment for the Arts
- New Bedford Farmers Market
- New Bedford Local Cultural Council
- New Bedford Open Studios
- New Bedford Seaport Cultural District
- New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
- Seaport Cultural Council
- SEEAL
- SEMAP
- SouthCoast Serves
- Summer Fund of the United Way
- UMass Center for Civic Engagement
- UMass Dartmouth CVPA
- Veolia
- Wanderer
- Walgreens
- Whaling City Sound

1.4 ANALYSIS OF AHA! SPONSORED AND SUPPORTED PROGRAMS

The MCC Adams Arts Program requires that funded organizations document their performance in terms of new revenues, job creation, revitalized communities, and increased participation and engagement in cultural activities by residents and visitors. To measure these outcomes, AHA! retained the Public Policy Center (PPC) at UMass Dartmouth to conduct an economic impact analysis, program evaluation, and visitor survey of AHA! sponsored and supported activities for FY 2015.³

1.41 ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Economic impacts measure the importance of an economic activity primarily in terms of the employment and personal (labor) income generated by that activity. Economic impacts consist of direct impacts, indirect impacts, and induced impacts. The direct, indirect and induced economic impacts in this report are calculated using IMPLAN (IMpact Analysis for PLANing), which is an econometric modeling system developed by applied economists at the University of Minnesota and the U.S. Forest Service.

³ The Public Policy Center was formerly the Center for Policy Analysis (CFPA). CFPA conducted eight economic impact analyses, program evaluations, and/or visitor surveys for AHA! since 2000.

Specifically, the Public Policy Center estimated the direct, indirect, induced and total annual economic impacts of AHA!, based on expenditures that were collected from the following sources:

- **AHA! Expenditures.** Includes expenditures necessary to organize and hold the AHA! event such as spending on staff salaries, payments to artists, office supplies, travel, advertising, and printing. This data is provided by AHA!
- **In-kind Expenditures.** Includes donated items such as printing, signage, advertising, City work crews, volunteers, space rental, and web site design.
- **Visitor Expenditures.** Includes the amount spent by visitors on items such as food and drinks, art, retail, parking and transportation. This data was obtained from intercept surveys administered at the events.

1.42 VISITOR SURVEY

Direct intercept surveys of visitors to AHA! Thursday Nights were administered at each event. Student Research Assistants from the Public Policy Center conducted face-to-face interviews at a cross-section of locations determined by AHA! staff. Interviewers were trained intensively before they began interviewing, including practice interviews. A copy of the survey instruments can be found in Appendix A.

The visitor surveys were conducted to achieve four objectives:

- To develop a basic profile of visitors, including where they live and what they do when they attend the event.
- To measure visitor satisfaction with the event and to use this data to optimize the visitor experience.
- To measure visitors' perceptions of the event and of New Bedford.
- To provide expenditure data for the purpose of estimating the economic impacts of the event.

2.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Cultural economic impact analysis estimates the total effect of cultural tourism by tracking the flows of spending associated with an event.⁴ Importantly, economic impact analysis measures the total spending that occurs both on-site (direct impacts) and in the economy as a whole as subsequent spending occurs (indirect and induced impacts). Estimates of the direct, indirect, induced and total annual economic impacts of AHA! Thursday Nights are based on expenditures that were collected from the following sources:

- **Organizational Expenditures.** Includes AHA! expenditures necessary to organize and hold the event such as spending on staff salaries, payments to artists, office supplies, travel, advertising, and printing.
- **Visitor Expenditures.** Includes the amount spent by AHA! visitors on items such as food/drinks, art, retail, parking, and transportation. This data was obtained from intercept surveys administered each month at various AHA!.
- **In-kind Expenditures.** Donated items such as printing, signage, advertising, city work crews, volunteers, space rental, and web site design.

2.1 ORGANIZATIONAL EXPENDITURES

AHA! made a total of \$210,128 in expenditures in FY 2015, which included \$123,701 in direct AHA! expenditures and \$86,427 in in-kind expenditures provided by the AHA! partners. In-kind items include staff, marketing, goods, services, and space and facilities rental (see Table 1).

Table 1
AHA! Expenditures, FY 2015

Type of Expense	Value
Organizational	
Personnel	\$52,000
Marketing	\$32,160
Overhead	\$6,484
Outside Fees & Services	\$8,580
Programming/Event Expenses	\$7,100
Travel	\$2,915
Other	\$14,462
Total:	\$123,701
In-Kind	\$86,427
Grand Total:	\$210,128

⁴ See: Government of Alberta, CA Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation: <http://tpr.alberta.ca/tourism/tourismdevelopment/startingatourismbusiness/impactanalysis.aspx>

2.2 VISITOR EXPENDITURES

It is estimated that there were 24,000 total visitations to AHA! Thursday Nights in FY 2015.⁵ Over eighty-eight percent (88.3%) of AHA! visitors report they spent money in downtown New Bedford during AHA! on items such as art, food/drinks, miscellaneous retail, transportation, gas, and parking.⁶ The total estimated amount spent by visitors as a direct result of AHA! Thursday Nights is \$342,238, or an average of \$16.20 per person (see Table 2).⁷

Table 2
AHA! Thursday Nights Visitor Expenditures, FY 2015

Item	Avg. Amount Spent on Item	Percent Visitors Spending	Total FY15 Expenditure
Galleries/Art	\$14.50	14%	\$48,720
Food/Drinks	\$11.28	78%	\$211,162
Miscellaneous Retail	\$8.33	31%	\$61,975
Other Items	\$8.98	4%	\$8,621
Transportation	\$5.00	9%	\$10,800
Parking	\$4.00	1%	\$960
Total/Average:	\$16.20	88%	\$342,238

⁵ Visitations are not the same as visitors since patrons may attend AHA! more than one time annually. Results of the Visitor Survey show that eighty-eight percent attend AHA! Thursday Nights more than once per year. The number of *unique* AHA! visitors is estimated to be 8,415.

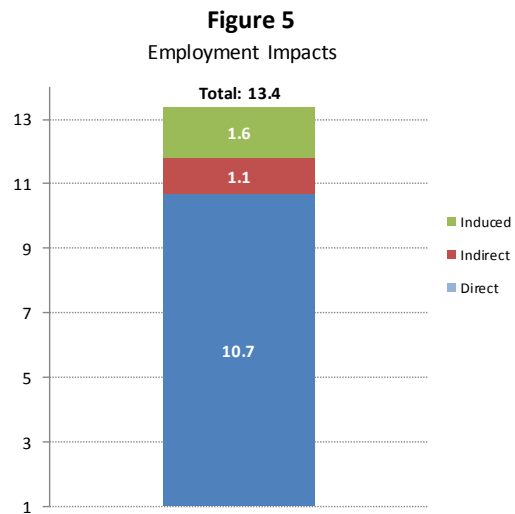
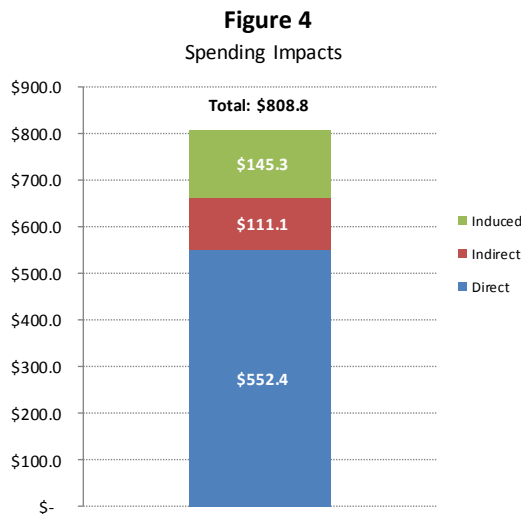
⁶ The average amount spent per transaction is \$13.38.

⁷ Note that this amount is higher than what is reported in the economic impact analysis because adjustments were made to the impact model to account for substitution spending by New Bedford residents. More about this methodology can be found in Appendix C.

2.3 ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS

PPC constructed a model in IMPLAN, a commonly used input-output modeling program that describes the flow of money between sectors within a region’s economy. The data used in the model are for FY 2015 and model outputs are reported in 2015 dollars.⁸ The direct, indirect, and induced impacts of AHA! are significant:

- The \$552K in direct spending by AHA! and its visitors generated an additional \$111K in sales to vendors who supply AHA! and its partners (indirect impacts) and \$145K in sales in other areas of the region’s economy from the wages spent by employees (induced impacts) (see Figure 4). Or put another way, AHA! leveraged an additional \$256 inn economic output for businesses throughout the region.
- The total output multiplier is 1.46 (total impact/direct impact), which implies that for every \$1,000 in direct expenditures, an additional \$460 in sales is generated for other businesses in the region.
- The total employment impact is 13.4, which includes approximately 11 people directly employed by AHA! and its downtown partners, 1 employee who supplies inputs to AHA! (indirect impacts), and 2 employees who benefit from wages spent by creative individuals and businesses (induced impacts) (see Figure 5).
- In terms of the state’s return on investment, a total of \$33,750 of the Massachusetts Cultural Council grant was spent by AHA! in FY2015. With a total economic impact of \$809K (including in-kind), 24 dollars have been leveraged for every state dollar spent in grant money.



The total impacts of AHA! are conservative estimates for three reasons:

- Some AHA! visitors who would normally not shop in downtown New Bedford return to make purchases when AHA! is not taking place. In other words, the AHA! event attracts new people to downtown by raising awareness about the quality and types of businesses offered in the downtown area. This is one of the central missions of AHA!; to create a vibrant and economically vibrant downtown during all periods of the day, not simply when an AHA! event is taking place. Estimates of these economic activities are not included in the economic impact estimate.

⁸ A detailed methodology can be found in Appendix C.

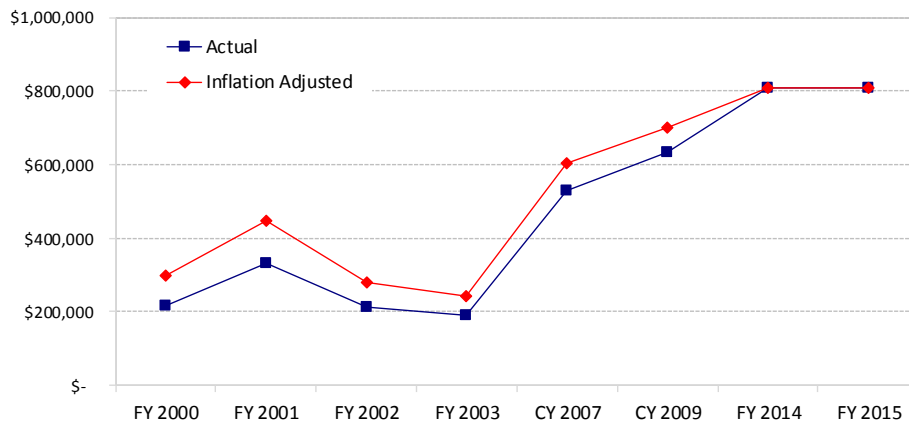
- Visitations on AHA! Night may result in future sales as visitors return to purchase items later in the week (delayed effect sales). For example, many business owners have commented that their businesses have experienced significant patron traffic on AHA! nights, though not all customers are buying during AHA!. Owners feel that a number of visitors are returning at other times to make purchases and thus the sales data collected from the intercept surveys does not entirely reflect their total sales as a result of AHA!.
- AHA! provides an opportunity for performers, business owners, artists and other AHA! participants who are not located downtown to increase their exposure and sales in other locations. For example, participants in the farmer’s market may see an increase in sales at their normal location, artists may see more visitors to their studios in other locations and cultural institutions may gain new members from the cross-marketing exposure that AHA! offers. Estimates of these economic activities are not included in the economic impact estimate.

2.4 HISTORICAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The estimated total economic impact of AHA! increased by 171 percent from FY 2000 to FY 2015 in terms of inflation-adjusted dollars (see Figure 6). The increase in economic activity since 2000 is primarily driven by four factors: higher attendance at AHA! events, an increase in the number of AHA! partners, an increase in in-kind contributions from AHA! partners, and improvements in the reporting of in-kind expenditure data from AHA! partners.

Figure 6

Historical Total Economic Impacts of AHA!



3.0 VISITOR SURVEY

A total of 796 intercept surveys were conducted with AHA! visitors throughout FY 2015 at various locations, including galleries, restaurants, on the street, and at live performances.⁹ A similar survey was conducted in previous years and results are presented side-by-side where data is available.¹⁰ The purpose of the visitor survey is to determine a respondent's place of residence, to establish visitation patterns, to measure satisfaction levels with AHA!, and to obtain expenditure data.

3.1 PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Forty-eight percent of respondents (48%) reside in New Bedford, while smaller percentages reside in Dartmouth (15%), Fairhaven (13%), and Acushnet (9%) (see Table 3). Ninety-two percent of respondents (92%) reside in the Southcoast and 1 percent reside outside of Massachusetts.

Table 3
Top Ten Places of Residence

City/Town	Percent
New Bedford	48%
Dartmouth	15%
Fairhaven	13%
Acushnet	9%
Wareham	2%
Marion	2%
Westport	2%
Mattapoisett	2%
Lakeville	1%
Rochester	1%

⁹ A copy of the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

¹⁰ The 2007, 2008, 2014, and 2015 reports are based on fiscal year data (July through June), while 2009 and 2010 data is based on the calendar year (January through December).

3.2 SOURCE FROM WHICH RESPONDENT HEARD ABOUT AHA!

Respondents are most likely to have heard/known about AHA! by word of mouth (63%), because they attended previously (59%), and from a friend or family member (55%) (see Figure 7). Table 4 presents historical results for this question going back to 2007.

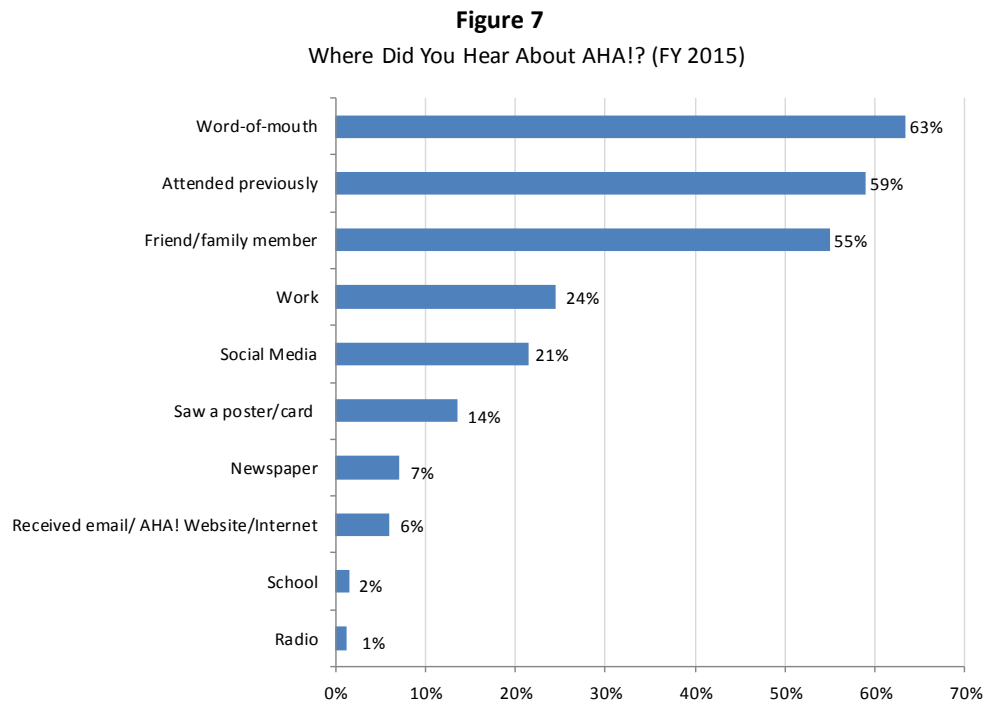


Table 4
Where Did You Hear About AHA!?

	FY 2007	FY 2008	CY 2009	CY 2010	FY 2014	FY 2015
Word-of-mouth	39%	49%	47%	28%	45%	63%
Attended previously	NA	NA	NA	56%	53%	59%
Friend/Family member	NA	NA	NA	37%	57%	55%
Work	NA	NA	NA	11%	14%	24%
Social Media	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	21%
Saw a poster/card	8%	5%	4%	10%	10%	14%
Newspaper	27%	20%	19%	23%	15%	7%
Received an email	4%	1%	2%	6%	2%	6%
School	NA	NA	NA	13%	6%	2%
Radio	6%	4%	2%	6%	2%	1%
Other	15%	20%	25%	4%	0%	0%
Internet	0.60%	1%	2%	9%	NA	NA

Note: Table sorted by 2015 percentages.

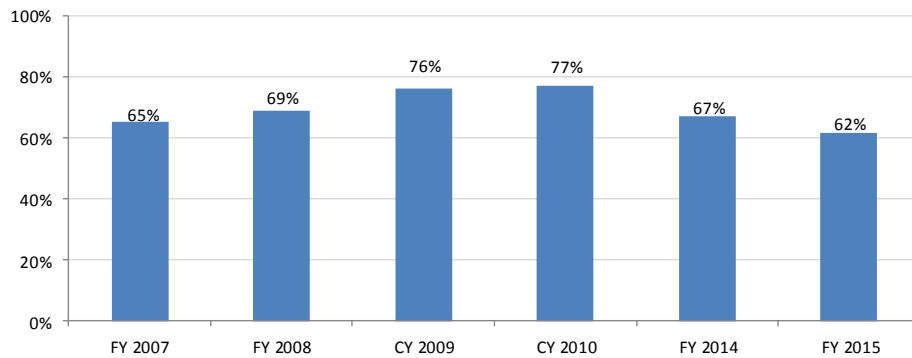
Percentages do not add to 100% because respondents were allowed to choose more than one response.

3.3 ATTENDANCE PATTERNS

Have You Previously Attended AHA!?

One of the strengths of AHA! is that the program is able to attract new visitors to downtown New Bedford, while also continuing to maintain a core of repeat visitors. Sixty-two percent of respondents in FY 2015 report they have previously been to an AHA! event, which means that 38 percent of AHA! visitors in FY 2015 were new to the event (see Figure 8).

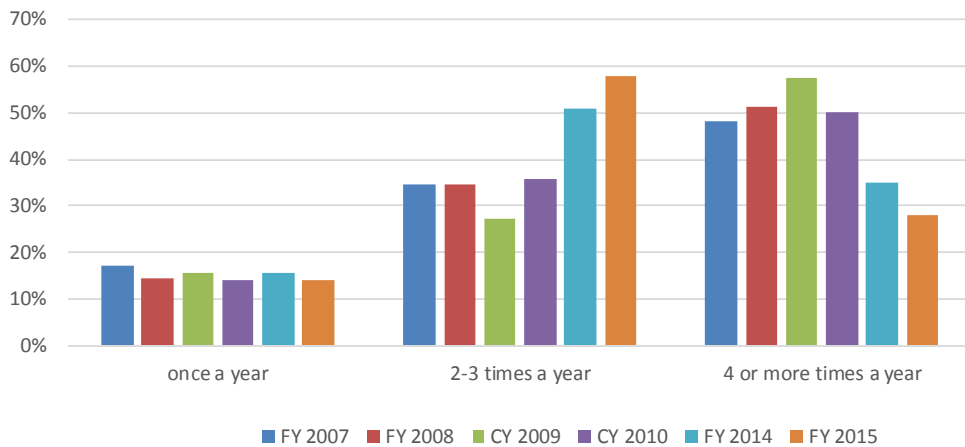
Figure 8
Have You Previously Attended AHA!?



Frequency Respondent Attends AHA!

Respondents who report they previously attended AHA! were asked the frequency in which they attend. In FY 2015, 87 percent of respondents report they attend AHA! more than once per year, with 58 percent attending 2 to 3 times per year and 29 percent attending 4 or more times per year (see Figure 9).

Figure 9
How Often Do You Attend AHA!?



3.4 RATING OF AHA! EVENT

Respondents were asked to rate that night’s AHA! event on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent. Respondents rate AHA! highly; 86 percent rate that night’s AHA! as an “8” or higher and 20 percent rate the event as a “10,” while only 1 percent of respondents rate the event as a 5 or below (see Figure 10). Overall, respondents in FY 2015 rate the events they attended an average of 8.6 on the ten point scale, which is consistent with previous years (see Figure 11).

Figure 10

Overall, How Would You Rate Tonight’s AHA! Event
On a scale of 1 to 10, With 1 Being Poor and 10 Being Excellent?

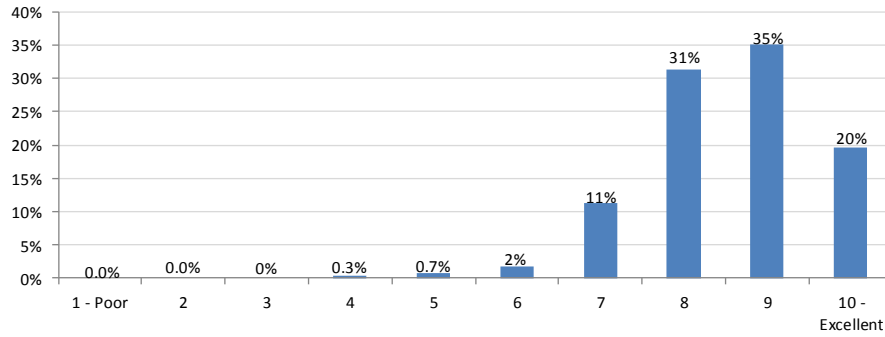
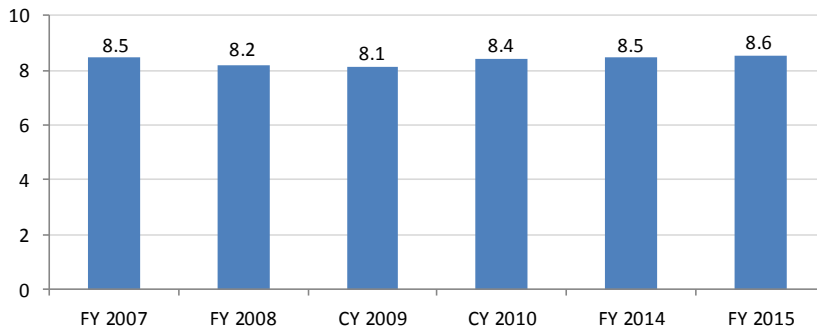


Figure 11

Average Rating On 1 to 10 Scale



3.5 VISITS TO DOWNTOWN RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS, AND SHOPS AND EVENTS ATTENDED

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of respondents report that they patronized or planned to patronize one of New Bedford’s downtown restaurants or cafes before, during, or after the event. This percentage has increased steadily since FY 2007 (see Table 5). Sixty-eight percent (68%) of respondents report they shopped or planned to shop at one of downtown’s retail establishments, which has also increased since the baseline year (see Table 6).

Table 5
Do You Plan to or Have You Patronized
One of the Downtown Restaurants or Cafes Tonight? (% Yes)

FY 2007	FY 2008	CY 2009	CY 2010	FY 2014	FY 2015
69%	67%	67%	72%	75%	77%

Table 6
Do You Plan to or Have You Shopped At
One of the Downtown Retail Establishments? (% Yes)

FY 2007	FY 2008	CY 2009	CY 2010	FY 2014	FY 2015
51%	55%	57%	57%	67%	68%

The average number of programs and events attended by respondents in FY 2015 was 3.3, which is an increase from previous years (see Table 7). In FY 2015, 12 percent reported they attended one event, while 13 percent attended two events, 34 percent attended three events, and 42 percent attended four or more events.

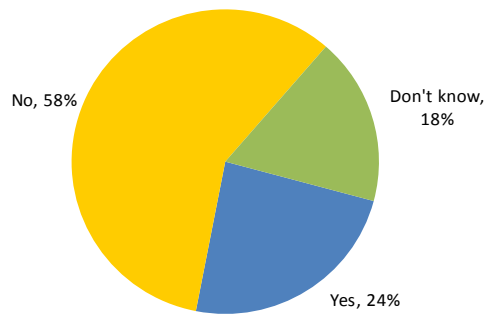
Table 7
Number of Programs/Venues Respondent Attended

# Programs/Events Attended	FY 2007	FY 2008	CY 2009	CY 2010	FY 2014	FY 2015
Average	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.9	2.8	3.3
1 Event	28%	34%	27%	23%	18%	12%
2 Events	25%	25%	24%	24%	30%	13%
3 Events	21%	19%	22%	19%	23%	34%
4 or More Events	26%	22%	28%	34%	29%	42%

3.6 ATTRACTING VISITORS TO DOWNTOWN NEW BEDFORD

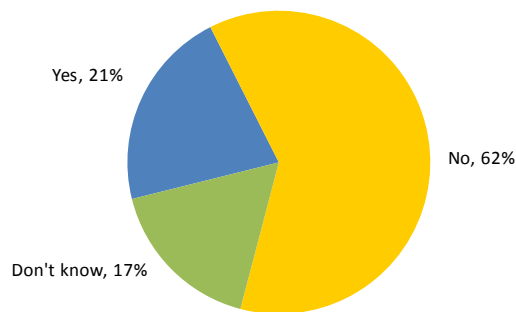
A primary goal of AHA! is to invigorate the downtown New Bedford cultural scene, which in turn promotes economic development in the area. AHA! is succeeding in meeting this goal in that the program attracts people who normally might not visit downtown New Bedford, including out-of-towners. For example, 58 percent of respondents report they would have not come to downtown New Bedford that night if the event was not held (see Figure 12).

Figure 12
Would You Have Come to Downtown
New Bedford Tonight If This Event Were Not Held?



AHA! is an important catalyst in promoting downtown's galleries because it sponsors a diverse array of programming that appeals to a wide audience. For example, only 21 percent of respondents report they would attend a gallery night with no additional AHA! programming (see Figure 13).

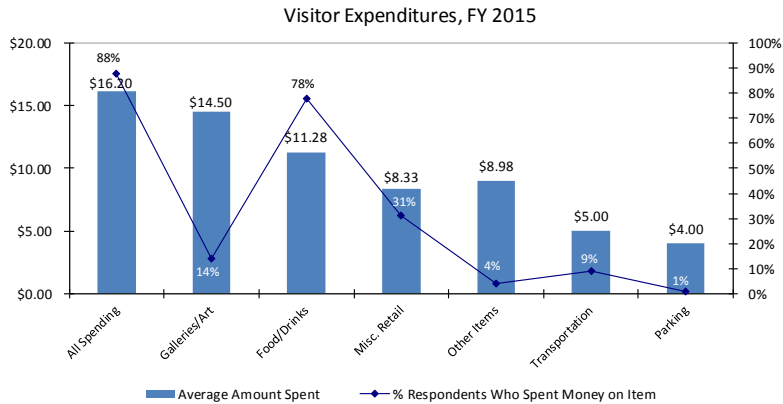
Figure 13
Would You Come To a Gallery Night
With No Additional Programming?



3.7 VISITOR EXPENDITURES

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents report they spent money in downtown New Bedford during AHA! events and spent an average of \$16.20 on items such as art, food/drinks, miscellaneous retail, transportation, and parking (see Figure 14).¹¹ The highest per capita dollar amount was spent on galleries/art (\$14.50), followed by food and drinks (\$11.28), other items (\$8.98), miscellaneous retail (\$8.33), transportation (\$5.00), and parking (\$4.00). In terms of the percentage of visitors who spent money, the highest percentage spent money on food and drinks (78%), followed by miscellaneous retail (31%), galleries/art (14%), transportation (9%), other items (4%), and parking (1%) (see Figure 14).¹²

Figure 14



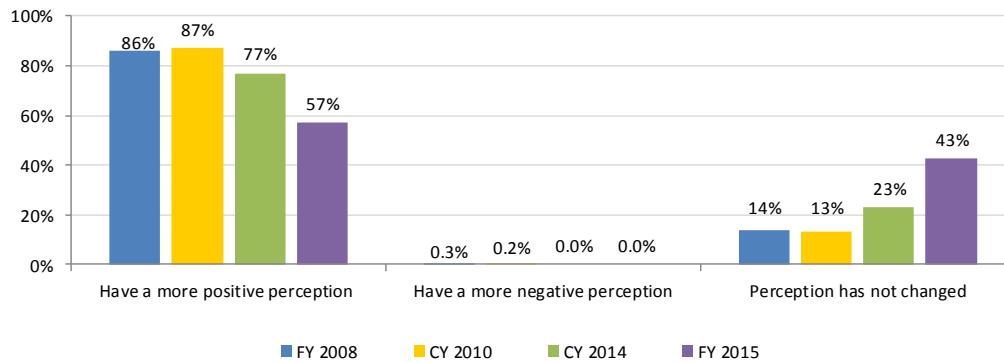
3.8 RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DOWNTOWN NEW BEDFORD AND AHA!

Perception of Downtown New Bedford

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents indicate they have a more positive perception of downtown New Bedford as a result of attending AHA!, while no respondents have a more negative perception and 43 percent have a perception that has not changed (see Figure 15).¹³

Figure 15

How Has AHA! Changed Your Perception of Downtown New Bedford?



¹¹ Average does not include respondents who did not spend money.

¹² Does not include off-site spending during AHA! events.

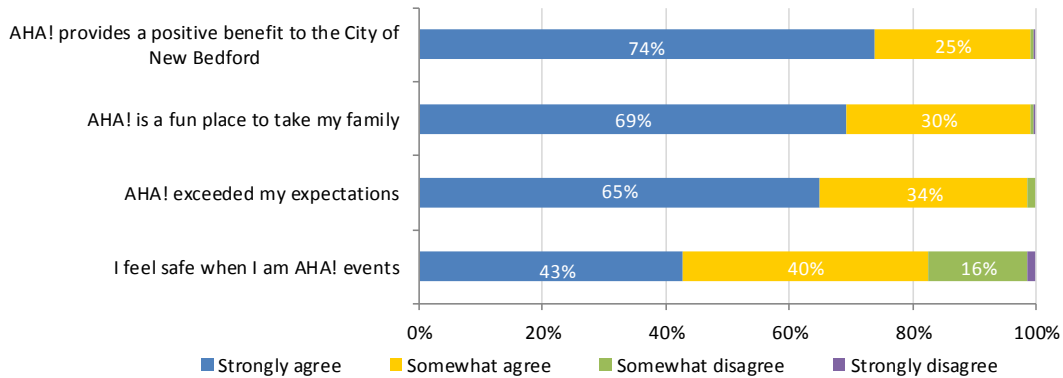
¹³ This question was not asked in FY 2007.

Perceptions of Various Aspects of AHA!

Respondents were provided four statements and asked the degree to which they agree with each on a scale of strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and strongly disagree. Overall, respondents agree strongly with each statement; 74 percent strongly agree that AHA! provides a positive benefit to the city, 69 percent strongly agree that AHA! is a fun place to take their family, 65 percent agree that AHA! exceeded their expectations, and 43 percent strongly agree that they feel safe when at AHA! events (see Figure 16).¹⁴

Figure 16

How Strongly Do You Agree or Disagree With the Following Statements?

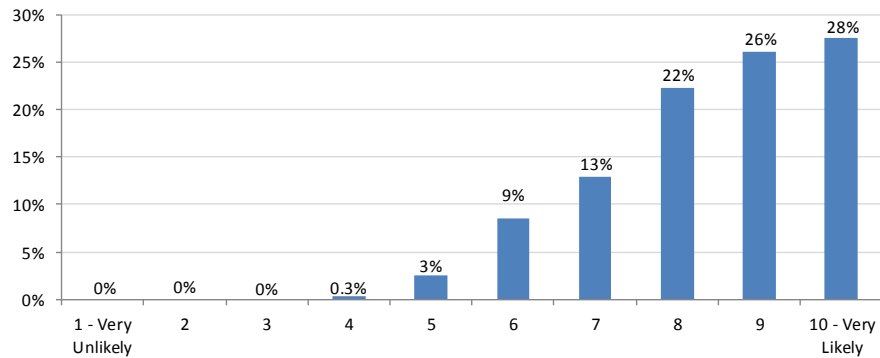


Likelihood to Recommend AHA! to a Friend

As noted earlier, 63 percent of respondents heard about AHA! from a friend or family member, and thus word of mouth remains an important marketing tool for AHA! To that end, respondents were asked the likelihood that they would recommend AHA! to a friend on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very unlikely and 10 being very likely. Most respondents are likely to recommend AHA! to a friend; 76 percent rate the likeliness as an “8” or higher on the 1-10 scale, with 28 percent rating their likeliness a “10” (see Figure 17).

Figure 17

On a Scale of 1 to 10, With 1 Meaning Very Unlikely and 10 Meaning Very Likely, How Likely Are You To Recommend AHA! to a Friend?



¹⁴ A majority of respondents who feel less safe in downtown New Bedford are first time visitors to AHA!

3.9 OPEN-END COMMENTS¹⁵

Primary Reason Respondents Enjoy Attending AHA!

Respondents were asked to indicate the primary reason they enjoy coming to AHA! Responses were numerous and varied and are grouped into the themes listed below.

- Going into the shops/Shopping (n=62)
- Having fun with friends/family (n=48)
- Art/Galleries/Artisans/Exhibits (n=44)
- Going to restaurants/bars/café/food (n=43)
- Something different to do (n=22)
- Student art work (n=18)
- Entertaining/fun (n=16)
- Walking around downtown (n=13)
- Museums (n=12)
- Music (n=10)
- Culture (n=6)
- Getting out (n=6)
- Children events (n=4)
- Nice night out (n=3)
- Pumpkin contest (n=3)
- Seeing what AHA is all about (n=3)

Suggestions for Improving the Formatting of AHA! Night

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions for improving the format of AHA! Night. Responses are varied and the major themes are presented below. In addition, a significant number of respondents feel that AHA! is fine the way it is and that nothing should be changed.

- Nothing/Don't change it (n=88)
- Better/more music (n=23)
- More seating/Seating Outside (n=19)
- More events and entertainment (n=6)
- A parade (n=5)
- More kids groups (n=4)
- More shops/open bars (n=2)
- Better scheduling (n=2)

What artists or performers would you like to see at AHA!?

Respondents were asked what other artists or performers they would like to see at AHA! night. Responses are varied and the major themes are presented below. The complete list can be found in Appendix B.

- Folk music (n=16)
- Jazz music (n=12)
- Country music (n=10)
- Magic tricks (n=3)
- Jugglers (n=3)
- New Bedford high school band (n=2)

¹⁵ A detailed list of responses can be found in Appendix B.

What Do You Feel AHA! Contributes to the Community?

Respondents were asked what they feel AHA! contributes to the community. Responses are varied and the major themes are presented below. The complete list can be found in Appendix B.

- Brings people into New Bedford (n=34)
- Fun (n=26)
- Great art/Shops/Museums (n=26)
- Shows what New Bedford has to offer (n=23)
- Lots of interesting and fun stuff to see and do (n=19)
- Shops/Bars open late (n=19)
- Brings people together (n=11)
- Educates people (n=7)
- Something to do (n=4)
- Children activities (n=2)

APPENDIX A – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



Please take a few moments to tell us about your experience at AHA!
Your responses are very important in assuring the continued success of
the program. All information is confidential.

1. Zip code? _____
2. Age _____
3. How many people are with you tonight? _____
4. Where did you hear about AHA!?! (please check all that apply)
 - Have attended previously
 - Newspaper
 - Radio
 - Friend/family member
 - School
 - Work
 - Saw a poster/card
 - Word-of-mouth
 - Received an email/ AHA! Website/ Internet
 - Social Media
 - Other _____
5. Have you previously attended AHA!?
 - Yes
 - No
6. If yes, how often do you attend AHA!?
 - Once a year
 - 2-3 times a year
 - 4 or more times a year
7. Overall, how would you rate tonight's AHA! event on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent? (please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 - Please check here if you have not seen enough to rate the event
8. Do you plan to/or have you patronized one of the downtown restaurants or cafes tonight?
 - Yes
 - No
9. Do you plan to/or have you shopped at one of the downtown retail establishments?
 - Yes
 - No
10. How many AHA! programs/venues have you attended tonight? _____
11. How many other AHA! programs/venues do you plan to attend tonight? _____
12. Would you have come to downtown New Bedford tonight if this event were not held?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
13. Approximately how much did/will you spend on the following items in downtown New Bedford tonight?
 - a) Food/Drinks \$ _____
 - b) Galleries/Art \$ _____
 - c) Miscellaneous retail (e.g. souvenirs, books, T-shirts) \$ _____
 - d) Parking \$ _____
 - e) Transportation \$ _____
 - e) Other items \$ _____

14. Did you/will you spend any money at businesses OUTSIDE of downtown New Bedford that you would not have spent if you did not attend AHA!

- Yes
- No

If yes, approximately how much did/will you spend?
\$ _____

15. How has AHA! changed your perception of downtown New Bedford?

- You have a more positive perception of downtown
- You have a more negative perception of downtown
- AHA! has not changed your perception either positively or negatively
- Don't know

16. What is the PRIMARY reason that you enjoy attending AHA!?

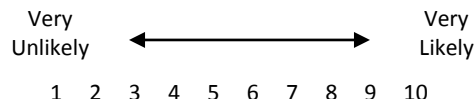
17. Any suggestions for improving the formatting of AHA! night?

18. Would you come to a gallery night with no additional programming?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

19. What artists or performers would you like to see at AHA!?

20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning very unlikely and 10 meaning very likely, how likely are you to recommend AHA! to a friend? (please circle)



21. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know/NA
21A. AHA! exceeded my expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21B. AHA! is a fun place to take my family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21C. I feel safe when I am AHA! events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21D. AHA! provides a positive benefit to the City of New Bedford	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. What do you feel AHA! contributes to the community?

23. Please provide your email address below so that we can send you periodic updates about AHA! events.

Email: _____

(Please write clearly)

APPENDIX B – OPEN-END RESPONSES

Primary Reason Respondent Enjoys Attending AHA!

- Going into the shops/Shopping (n=62)
- Having fun with friends/family (n=48)
- Art/Galleries/Artisans/Exhibits (n=44)
- Something different to do (n=22)
- Student art work (n=18)
- Entertaining/fun (n=16)
- Walking around downtown (n=13)
- Museums (n=12)
- Music (n=10)
- Culture (n=6)
- Getting out (n=6)
- Children events (n=4)
- Nice night out (n=3)
- Pumpkin contest (n=3)
- Seeing what AHA is all about (n=3)
- Daughter in one of groups, music
- Great people
- I like everything about New Bedford, old buildings, street lights
- Makes for a nice date night

Suggestions for Improving the Formatting of AHA!

- Nothing (n=88)
- Better/more music (n=23)
- More seating/seating Outside (n=19)
- More events/entertainment (n=6)
- A parade (n=5)
- More kids groups (n=4)
- More shops/open bars (n=2)
- Better scheduling (n=2)
- More activities outside

What artists or performers would you like to see at AHA!?

- Folk music (n=16)
- Jazz music (n=12)
- Country music (n=10)
- Don't know (n=4)
- Jugglers (n=3)
- Magic (n=3)
- New Bedford High School Band (n=2)
- Kids chorus
- Bluegrass
- New Bedford High School Chorus

- Clowns
- Outdoor portrait landscape artists in the streets
- Parade with school band
- Portuguese music

What Do You Feel AHA! Contributes to the Community?

- Brings people into New Bedford (n=34)
- Fun (n=26)
- Great Art/Shops/Museums (n=26)
- Shows what New Bedford has to offer (n=23)
- Lots of interesting and fun stuff to see and do (n=19)
- Shops/Bars open late (n=19)
- Brings people together (n=11)
- Educates people (n=7)
- Something to do (n=4)
- Children activities (n=2)
- Great events something different each month
- Community spirit
- Enjoy New Bedford at night
- Getting out with the family
- Makes money for stores
- New Bedford opens up

APPENDIX C – ECONOMIC IMPACT METHODOLOGY

I. AHA! Thursday Nights

The economic impact analysis of AHA! Thursday Nights includes three types of expenditures: organizational expenditures, in-kind expenditures and visitor expenditures.

A. Organizational Expenditures

1. **AHA! Payroll:** included as direct impacts using appropriate IMPLAN sector code with no Regional Purchasing Coefficient (RPC) values.
2. **Programming Expenditures** (e.g. artists, musicians and performers): included as direct impacts using appropriate IMPLAN sector code with no RPC values (nearly all performers are local).
3. **Other AHA! Expenditures:** expenditures such as marketing, advertising, consulting services, printing and general overhead are included as indirect impacts using the appropriate IMPLAN code.

B. In-Kind Expenditures

1. In-kind expenditures are included as direct impacts and 100 percent of these expenditures are assumed to be spent locally.

C. Visitor Expenditures

1. Visitor expenditures are included as direct impacts with appropriate retail margins applied. While many economic impact analyses include only spending from visitors who live outside the community (i.e. “incremental” or “new” spending), expenditures from both local and non-local AHA! Thursday Night visitors are included in the model because there is little economic activity in downtown New Bedford on non-AHA! Thursday nights with most stores, restaurants, museums and attractions either closed or sparsely visited after 5pm. Thus, much of the spending by locals at AHA! represents new spending in the downtown area.

However, it is estimated that 20 percent of AHA! expenditures by *local* visitors would have been made in New Bedford regardless of the events, i.e. these are “substitute expenditures.” In other words, visitors are simply changing the times they visit downtown New Bedford and the spending would have occurred regardless of the AHA!/City Celebrates! event. Thus, visitor expenditures have been reduced by a factor of 20 percent.

