



FACT SHEET

Organization: HandMade in America

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Founded: 1995

Mission: Celebrate the hand and the handmade, to nurture the creation of traditional and contemporary craft, to revere and protect our resources, and to preserve and enrich the spiritual, cultural and community life of our region.

Description Non-profit organization based in Western North Carolina governed by a regional board of directors.

According to a 1995 study conducted by Appalachian State University for HandMade in America, the total economic contribution of the craft industry to Western North Carolina is approximately \$122 million.

- Full-time professional producers provide \$25.6 million in incomes while second income or part-time producers contribute \$22.7 million in income annually.
- Retail shops and galleries produce craft sales of \$70.8 million annually

With its long history in quality craftsmanship, this area is recognized as a traditional haven for craft artists. Now, the need exists to recognize this skilled group as an industry and economic driver in the region.

Service area: 21-county area of Western North Carolina including: Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, and Yancey counties.

The region spans from the Virginia border in the north, west to the Tennessee border, to the Georgia and South Carolina borders in the south; and across the eastern plateau toward Hickory.

FACT SHEET (continued)

Staff:

Geraldine Plato, Executive Director
Jenny Moore, Associate Director
Betty Hurst, Director of Rural Entrepreneurship
Donna Abranches, Director of Operations
Erin Elder, Director of Data Management
David Quinn, Director of Small Towns Program
Norma Bradley, Director of Education

Unique Programs:

While HandMade in America does not directly sell craft, it facilitates the growth and sustainability of quality handmade objects in the region. The programs launched in Western North Carolina have become models for other regions and countries. Some innovative initiatives launched in the last decade include:

- ***The Craft Heritage Trails of Western North Carolina*** guidebook. America's first regional guide to encourage travel to artisan studios and cultural-based attractions and places. Now in its third edition with over 500 listings. – More information: <http://www.handmadeinamerica.org/tourism/trails.php>
- ***The Farms, Gardens & Countryside Trails*** guidebook is companion to the craft heritage trails guidebook, focusing on the region's agricultural offerings. More information <http://www.handmadeinamerica.org/tourism/gardens.php>
- **Craft Registry** is an electronic database listing information on more than 500 artists in the region. More information <http://www.handmadeinamericacraftregistry.org>
- **Small Town Revitalization Project** assists local communities in the restoration, improvements and enhancements of their built and natural assets.
- **Craft Across the Curriculum** is an in-school educational program to encourage craft as a teaching tool for creativity and development.
- ***The HandMade Institute for Creative Communities*** www.handmadeinamerica.org/institute
- ***HandCrafted Architectural Elements*** and the ***HandCrafted Home Furnishings and Design Elements Sourcebooks*** showcase the fine quality work of many craft artisans in Western North Carolina.