







TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from ArtsFund	04	Importance of the Arts in Rural Washington	29
Introduction	06	National Comparisons Unequal Access to Arts Resources Across Washington	29 30
Executive Summary	08	Arts Vibrancy Throughout the State Access to nonprofit arts organizations	30 30 32
Methodology & Definitions	11	State investment in arts & culture	32
Why Measure Community Livability and the Arts? What Arts Metrics Are Included?	12 12	Conclusion	34
What is Community Livability?	13	Key Takeaways	36
How Do These Findings Connect with the Experiences of Arts Leaders?	15	Action Items & Recommendations	38
Access to Arts & Cultural Organizations	17	Appendix A: Interviewee Snapshots	42
Volunteerism Active Voters	18 19	Field Arts & Events Hall Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture	43 43
Income Inequality Gathering Spaces	20 21	Seattle Symphony Benaroya Hall YAMA Yakima Music en Acción	44 44
Public Support of the Arts in Washington Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue	24 25	Appendix B: Detailed Methodology What Kinds of Cultural Resources Were Considered?	46 47
Active Voters	26	Controlling the Analysis to Compare "Like" Communities	50
Seniors Living Alone Health Outcomes	26 26	References	52
Geography	28		3

LETTER FROM ARTSFUND

Arts and culture play an important role in the health and well-being of communities across the State of Washington. Building on our work from previous studies, including our Economic Impact Studies (EIS), Social Impact Study (SIS), and, most recently, our COVID Cultural Impact Study (CCIS), we are excited to present findings from our latest investigations into the connections between the arts and community health.

At the time of writing, Washington State ranks in the top 10 Overall Best States, according to U.S. News¹. While our state is top-performing in some metrics, we still face challenges similar to the rest of the nation when it comes to rebuilding and strengthening our communities post-pandemic. Our public, private, and nonprofit sectors have been critical to addressing these needs, and leaders of these organizations have been exemplary in positioning our state for the future. This report highlights a key component of successfully rebuilding our communities and preparing them for the future.

Our research demonstrates that there are significant correlations between an accessible and well-funded arts and culture landscape and a vibrant community overall. We recognize that the path to a healthy, equitable, and creative Washington requires a combination of successful initiatives that span economic policy, health and human services, education, and more. This data offers strong quantitative evidence of the correlation between art and healthy communities, but it also offers a qualitative reflection of how those numbers translate into impact for individuals. It shows that building and maintaining a healthy arts and culture sector is a tool that can be used to create a better quality of life with statistically significant outcomes for all Washingtonians.

At ArtsFund, we understand that the research we collect and the dollars we provide are only as important as the people they benefit. The case studies and interviews that accompany this work are a testament to how real people are positively affected by access to arts and culture. For everyone that is using this report



and its data to advocate for better access and more dollars, we encourage you to also leverage the human stories and the community feedback to demonstrate your case. The arts benefit our communities, and our communities are made up of individuals. Access to, and funding for the arts makes life better for us, our neighbors, and the people we care about. That should never get lost in the data.

Throughout this case for increased access and funding for the arts is the implied necessity of equity at every level. Access is only effective if it is available to everyone, and funding only works if it is distributed to all communities that are doing the work. Whether it is race, gender, orientation, ability, or geography, inequitable distribution of access and resources will only further the polarization of communities. A key component of how arts create a more livable society is its ability to provide space for multiple perspectives and uncomfortable conversations. If access to that space is not equitably provided, not only will we reduce the overall effectiveness of the power of the arts, but we risk furthering divisions by supporting the echo chambers that amplify divisiveness.

At ArtsFund, our mission is to support the arts through leadership, advocacy, and grantmaking, in order to build a more healthy, equitable, and creative Washington. This research is part of a long-standing commitment to translate that mission into action. Through the efforts of our partners, our donors, our staff, and our board, we support the underpinnings of this research by providing resources to those that are doing the work on the ground. We believe that arts and culture are a tool for social change, and we encourage everyone to read through this data, reflect on how it aligns with your priorities, and advocate for a healthy arts and culture sector in your specific community. Washington State is a leader in cultural access, and the more we acknowledge the benefits of the arts across

multiple aspects of our lives, the stronger our communities will become for everyone.

¹ U.S. News. (2025). Best States Rankings. https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings



Michael Greer
President & CEO



Katy Corella *Vice President of Strategic Initiatives & Communications*



Cindy Snyder Chair, ArtsFund Board of Trustees



Sandy McDade *Chair, ArtsFund Foundation Board*

INTRODUCTION

With the underlying belief that art improves lives, ArtsFund and SMU DataArts sought to measure the ways that the arts contribute to livable communities across the State of Washington. We found that regions with more physical access to-and more state funding for-arts and culture nonprofit organizations have higher civic engagement, better economic opportunity, and stronger community cohesion.

This work builds on several ArtsFund Economic Impact of the Arts studies conducted across the Central Puget Sound, as well as a broader Social Impact Study and the statewide COVID Cultural Impact Study (CCIS). Expanding on previous research, this study explores the relationships between cultural resources and a wider range of community well-being indicators, such as civic engagement and social connection. Research shows that fostering these connections is not just beneficial for individuals but is essential for building strong, healthy, and thriving communities (World Health Organization, 2021).

Three key goals shaped the design of this study:

- 1. Measure how cultural resources (like organizations, artists, and public support) are connected to vibrant, livable communities.
- **2. Explore** how these connections play out differently in rural and urban communities.

3. Activate these new insights to support thriving communities across Washington.

This research enables us to analyze, on a large scale, the connections between cultural resources and various aspects of community livability and vitality across a diverse range of communities.

As the National Center for Arts Research, SMU DataArts is a leading, globally recognized research center working to provide evidence-based insights to build strong, vibrant, and equitable arts communities. DataArts works with the nation's largest arts funders to evaluate and grow impact, collaborates frequently with service organizations across artistic genres, and mines data and insights to inform strategic grantmaking in cities and states across the country.

We found that regions with more physical access toand more state funding forarts and culture nonprofit organizations have

higher civic engagement, better economic opportunity, and stronger community



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ArtsFund has long studied the impact of the arts in Washington, and this study takes a groundbreaking approach by exploring how arts and culture contribute to the overall livability of Washington communities. In the first-of-its kind collaboration, ArtsFund and SMU DataArts set out to answer a simple yet profound question:

Does the presence of arts and culture improve community livability, and in turn, enhance the lives of Washingtonians?

This study found that people living in Washington communities with abundant cultural resources tend to be more connected, more engaged in supporting their communities, and have greater economic opportunities compared to those in similar communities with fewer resources.

Additionally, two key cultural resources play the most significant role in community livability: the presence of nonprofit arts organizations and the level of state arts funding directed to a community.

People living in Washington communities with many cultural resources are

More connected, More involved

in helping their communities, and have

More economic opportunities.







In Washington counties with the highest density of arts and culture nonprofit organizations, compared to the lowest, there are:

33% more volunteers to nonprofit organizations

70/0 more active voters who are registered and eligible for voting

3% lower levels of income inequality

times more community gathering spaces

Similarly, when comparing Washington counties with the highest per capita state arts funding through ArtsWA grantmaking to those with the lowest, we find that well-funded counties have:

\$22.03 more in hotel/motel tax revenue per capita on average

2% more active voters

10/0 fewer seniors live alone

A common assumption is that the arts primarily benefit people who live in wealthy neighborhoods or urban areas. However, our research found strong connections between arts resources and community well-being even when controlling for population size, income, education levels, and rural vs. urban settings. In fact, the positive economic impact of arts resources were even more pronounced in rural communities than in cities across Washington.

Since these two types of cultural resources (availability of arts and culture nonprofits and the levels of state funding) emerged as most connected to community livability, we also present findings about areas of opportunity around their distribution and through comparisons to other regions.

- Across the state, there are 6,378 nonprofit arts and culture organizations—about 3 per 10,000 people. However, access varies widely from just one per 10,000 residents in Skamania County to 19 per 10,000 residents in San Juan County. This indicates that your address makes a big difference in your access to arts and culture organizations in Washington.
- Washington ranks among the lowest states in per-person state government spending on the arts, allocating just \$0.98 per resident—far below the national average of \$2.29 across all arts-related appropriations. In more than half of Washington counties, funding from state ArtsWA grantmaking, specifically, is less than \$0.10 per person.
- Despite these funding challenges,
 Washington still ranks in the top third of all
 states in overall arts vibrancy, as calculated
 by SMU DataArts. This strong ranking is
 reflective of the state's rich and dynamic arts
 and culture landscape.

ArtsFund has developed three key actionable recommendations for leaders in Washington, which are outlined below. Additional strategies tailored for public officials, the private sector, and arts and culture participants can be found at the conclusion of this report on page 39.

- 1. Match Washington
 State's investment in arts and culture to the national average.
- 2. Foster and maintain a healthy environment for arts and culture nonprofit organizations.
- 3. Include arts and culture as a key tool for building community health.



Why Measure Community Livability and the Arts?

Much past arts research has focused on economic impacts, but there's increasing evidence of the critical supportive role that arts & culture plays in enhancing the livability of communities.

While many studies highlight the economic value of the arts to justify investment in the sector (Americans for the Arts, 2023; Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, 2022; ArtsFund, 2014), economic prosperity is just one dimension of the broader impact. Cultural engagement plays a critical role in shaping community well-being, fostering connection, and enhancing overall livability—both inside and outside of economic frameworks (National Endowment for the Arts, 2024; Rodriguez et al., 2023; ArtsFund, 2018). This study examines, on a large scale, how cultural resources contribute to a thriving, connected, and resilient society.

What Arts Metrics Are Included?

We'll refer to cultural resources throughout this report, which is shorthand for the two arts inputs that we found contribute most to community livability: 1) nonprofit arts organizations and 2) state arts funding for communities.

We explored more than 15 measures of arts and culture assets in this analysis, including dimensions of arts supply (such as artists, arts employees, and nonprofit and for-profit arts organizations), arts demand (including revenues, expenses, and compensation), and arts support (public funding from state, federal, and other sources). While all of these measures are interrelated, our analysis highlights the two dimensions with the most consistent and broad connections to community livability.



What is Community Livability?

We prioritized five metrics of community livability in this research: social cohesion, safety, economic opportunity, health, and housing.

The research team at SMU DataArts developed an initial list of potential livability metrics from a mix of consumer-focused and academic sources (Lau & Hashim, 2010; Arpan & Sen, 2020; AARP Livability Index, 2024). To identify the most relevant measures of community outcomes, the initial scoping phase of this project involved discussions among SMU DataArts, ArtsFund staff, and an advisory board composed of arts leaders representing different art forms and regions of Washington. Through an iterative discussion, we identified topic areas of interest, explored data availability for those topic areas, and refined a core set of livability metrics

for the research. As the data sources were integrated to create the models for analysis, large variability across the state on some measures required some adjustment for outlier Census tracts to ensure high data quality (more information is available in Appendix B).

Ultimately, we landed on a set of 24 community outcome variables that are grouped into five major categories: social cohesion, safety, economic opportunity, housing, and health. All variables are measured on a per capita basis as is relevant. A set of control variables for the regression models include rural/urban geography, socioeconomics of the community, and population (see Appendix B for the full list of variables).

For this analysis, community refers to either the county (average size of about 200,000 people) or the much smaller Census tract (average size of about 4,000 people), depending on the granularity of available data.

This research looked at outcomes of arts and culture on



social cohesion



economic opportunity



health



How Do These Findings Connect with the Experiences of Arts Leaders?

Interviews with arts leaders across Washington helped connect stories of community livability to the metrics analyzed in this report.

The quantitative findings show strong connections between cultural resources and community livability, but they don't capture the personal stories that explain how or why these impacts matter to community members. The research team conducted a series of indepth interviews with a variety of arts and culture nonprofit organizations across the state to learn more about how their work is connected to the livability outcomes identified through this research. We interviewed the leaders of the following nonprofit arts organizations: Field Arts & Events Hall, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, the Seattle Symphony, and Yakima Music en Acción. Insights from these interviews are integrated into the key findings outlined below.



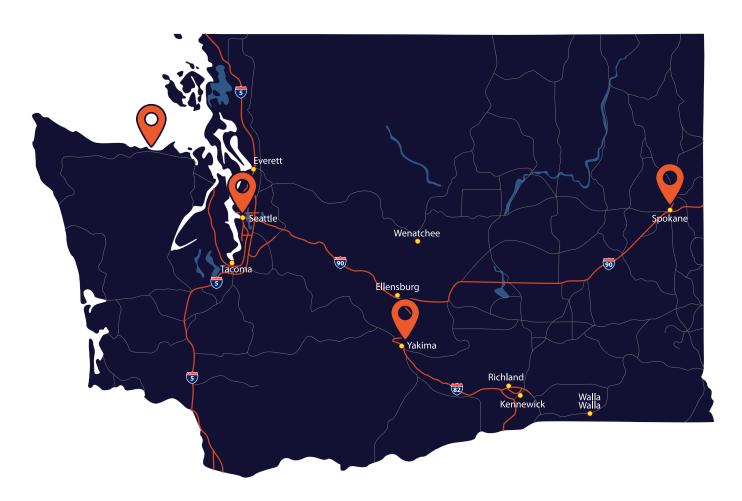
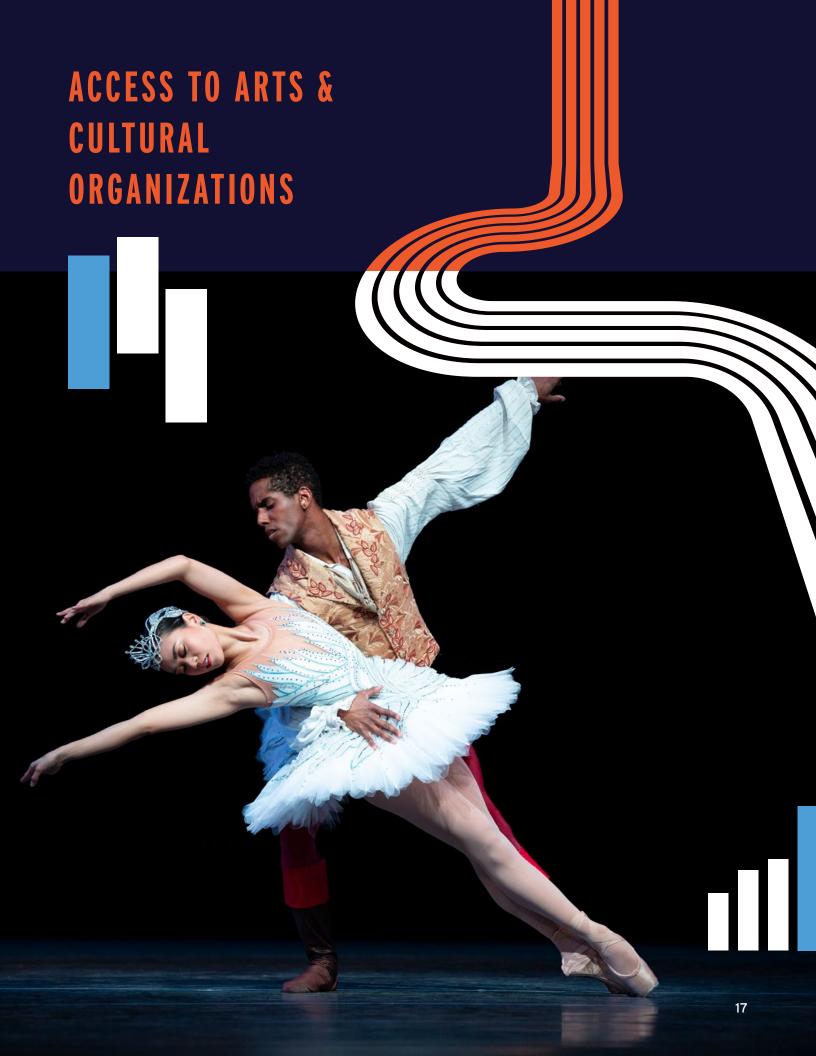


TABLE 1: Community Characteristics of Arts Organization Interviews

	County	Population (2021)	Median Household Income	Arts Vibrancy (Percentile)
Field Arts & Events Hall	Clallam	78,209	\$66,108	67
Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture	Spokane	546,040	\$70,394	83
Seattle Symphony	King	2,252,305	\$116,340	98
Yakima Music en Acción	Yakima	256,035	\$64,910	53

Note: Arts vibrancy is a composite score that incorporates 13 distinct measures encompassing facets of supply, demand, and public support for arts and culture across both non-profit and forprofit contexts.

To explore the arts vibrancy in more detail, visit SMU DataArts https://culturaldata.org/what-we-do/arts-vibrancy-index/



Counties with the highest density of arts and culture nonprofit organizations also have more positive community health outcomes, including more volunteerism, active voters, and community gathering spaces, as well as lower levels of income inequality.

Volunteerism

Communities with the greatest access to arts and culture organizations have

33%

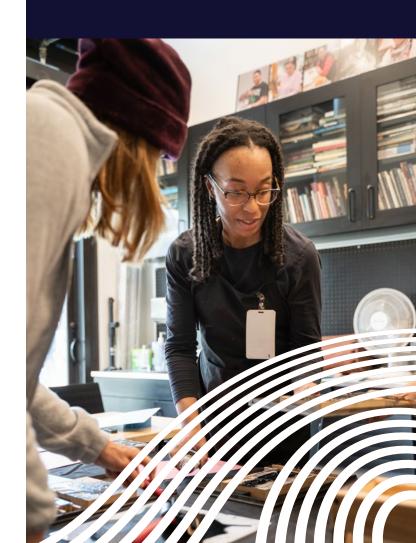
more volunteers supporting nonprofit organizations and their missions.

Volunteerism is a critical component of connected communities, reflecting the willingness of residents to contribute their time and effort to support the benefit of the community as a whole. In Washington, about 10% of residents² regularly volunteer their time to nonprofit organizations.

The cultural analysis for Washington State reveals a strong positive correlation between the presence of nonprofit arts organizations and the level of volunteerism in a community. As with all of the findings shared in this report, this positive relationship holds even when controlling for key community characteristics such as income level, education level, and urban/rural

We have a supportive and active parent group who volunteers their time with us. They meet monthly, organize events, fundraise, and even sell chocolates. From that support, we became like family attending each other's baby showers and celebrating milestones like siblings' quinceañeras. We have a close-knit and vibrant community.

Stephanie Hsu Founding Executive Director, *Yakima Music en Acción*



geography. This boost is likely influenced by the increased volunteer opportunities provided by a greater number of arts and culture organizations. Additionally, it's possible that people are meeting or connecting through arts and culture spaces, feeling more connected to their community, and seeking opportunities to give back through volunteering, even outside of the arts and culture context.

One example of how arts and culture may foster volunteerism is the pipeline approach implemented by Yakima Music en Acción, which encourages students to progress from volunteer participants to volunteer leaders. High school-aged student musicians develop leadership and teaching skills by mentoring and working with younger musicians. This approach cultivates a culture of service within the student community, inspiring former students to return to Yakima Music en Acción as volunteers, supporters, and staff members. Additionally, support networks surrounding these students also engage in volunteering, helping sustain the organization's work.

Active Voters

Counties with increased access to arts and culture organizations have

7%

higher rates of active voters.

Voting is a critical dimension of civic participation in a functioning democracy. Active voters are registered voters that have not been disqualified from voting in the state, an indicator of readiness or preparation to participate in elections. This measure of active voters per capita provides insight into the level of potential participation in the voting process. Research by the US Elections Project (a non-partisan group) estimates that the proportion of the "voting-eligible population" within the "voting-age population" is similar in Washington (90%) compared to the U.S. overall (93%). In this research, we found 10% higher levels of active voters in counties with the most access to arts and culture nonprofit organizations compared to those with the least access in Washington.

Individuals who feel connected to others are more likely to engage in civic activities and to contribute to the common good (Putnam, 2000). Nonprofit arts organizations serve as hubs for connection, which may explain their positive influence on voting. In Washington, Yakima Music en Acción has intentionally fostered opportunities for connection and engagement among the parents of their students. By creating a family-like atmosphere, they have built a space for celebrating one another, sharing information, and offering support beyond the organization's musical focus. This strong sense of community was well established even before the pandemic.

² For this metric, the total number of volunteers reported through IRS 990 forms by nonprofit organizations of any type (not just arts and culture) was considered.

Income Inequality

Communities with a high concentration of arts and culture nonprofit organizations per capita have

3%

lower levels of income inequality among residents.

Research shows that economic inequality can lead to divisions that erode trust, increase social tensions, and limit opportunities for upward mobility. When wealth and resources are unevenly distributed, it restricts access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and hindering overall societal progress (Norris et al., 2019).

Using a Gini index, a method commonly used by the U.S. Census Bureau to assess societal income distribution with higher scores signaling greater disparity, this analysis found that scores in Washington State range from 0.38 to 0.54, with an average of 0.45. The national average for the Gini index measure of income inequality is 0.49, meaning Washington State has a slightly more equitable distribution of incomes than the nation overall. These figures indicate a moderate to high level of income inequality, which can have important implications for social stability, access to services, and overall quality of life. Regions with higher levels of inequality may experience more pronounced disparities in health outcomes, educational attainment, and community cohesion.

Arts organizations may help reduce income inequality by providing accessible arts programming (McCarthy et al., 2001) and job opportunities to underserved communities, allowing individuals from lower-income backgrounds to gain employment and skills in creative fields (Bodvarsson & Hsieh, 2009). Additionally, community-based arts initiatives can stimulate local economies (Americans for the Arts, 2019), empower marginalized groups, and foster social cohesion, contributing to more equitable economic opportunities (Bishop, 2014).

Field Arts & Event Hall in Port Angeles, Washington described a program exemplifying this investment in local workforces. Recognizing



the need for arts professionals and workers, specifically theatre techs, Field Arts & Event Hall is working collaboratively to develop an arts education pipeline with their local community college. This provides new employment opportunities in the community as well as benefits to arts organizations locally. They are focused on investing in future arts workers and practitioners who can continue investing in their creative communities.

Investing in our local talent can reduce the financial burden of bringing in professionals from outside the areas, which is often challenging for small, rural arts organizations.

Steve Raider-Ginsburg,
Executive & Artistic Director,
Field Arts & Event Hall

Gathering Spaces

There are over

8x

more community gathering spaces available to residents in counties with the highest levels of nonprofit arts organizations per capita (16 gathering spaces) compared to the lowest (fewer than two).

Art spaces like Field Arts & Event Hall understand their power to link people within their community by fostering connection through intentional space-making. With their vision that extends beyond hosting programs, Field Arts & Event Hall utilizes its café space to invite the community to share, connect, and engage.



I see the Field Arts as a community center for [all] arts people...I want the focus to be on creating a home—a place where people feel truly connected. I want our facility to be more than just a venue for programs; I want it to be a real space for the community.

Steve Raider-Ginsburg, Executive & Artistic Director, Field Arts & Event Hall

Arts and culture spaces aren't the only options for social cohesion and gathering within a community. The research team at SMU DataArts developed a new composite measure of non-arts gathering spaces that includes nonprofit libraries, community centers, and senior centers. On average, Washington State has 6 gathering spaces available for every 10,000 residents. This new metric will be included in future research inquiries at SMU DataArts with the potential to expand it to

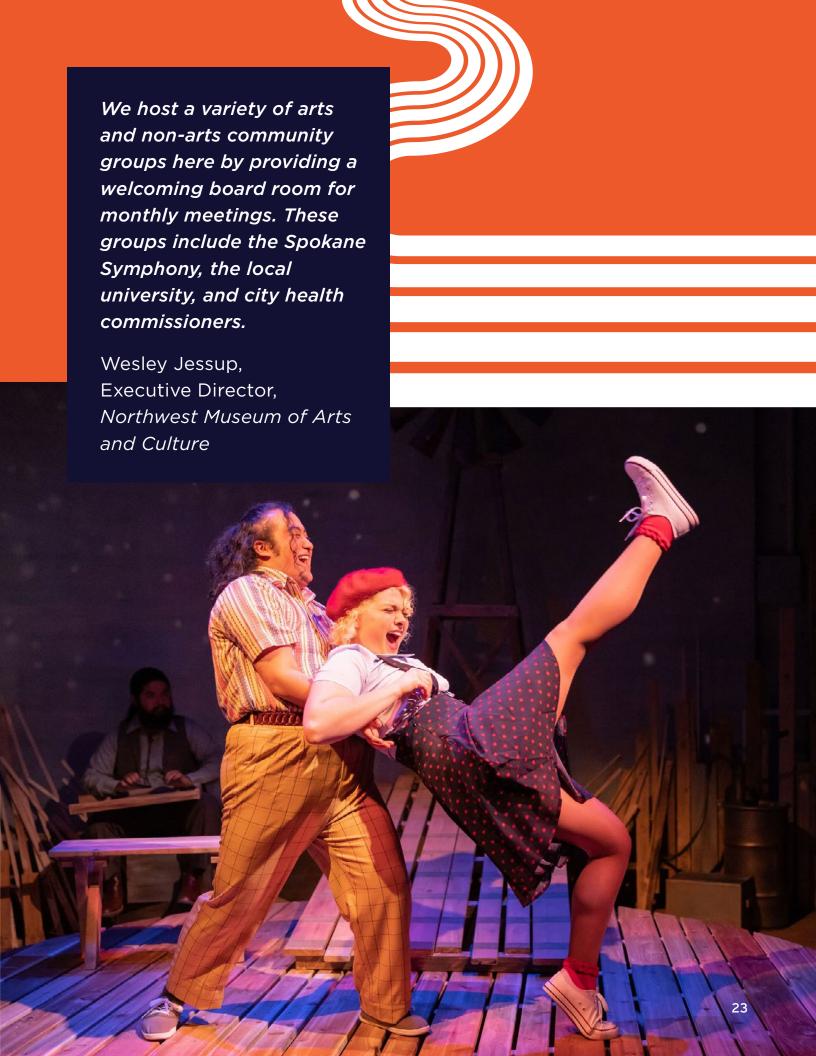
include city or county resources as well as nonprofit organizations.

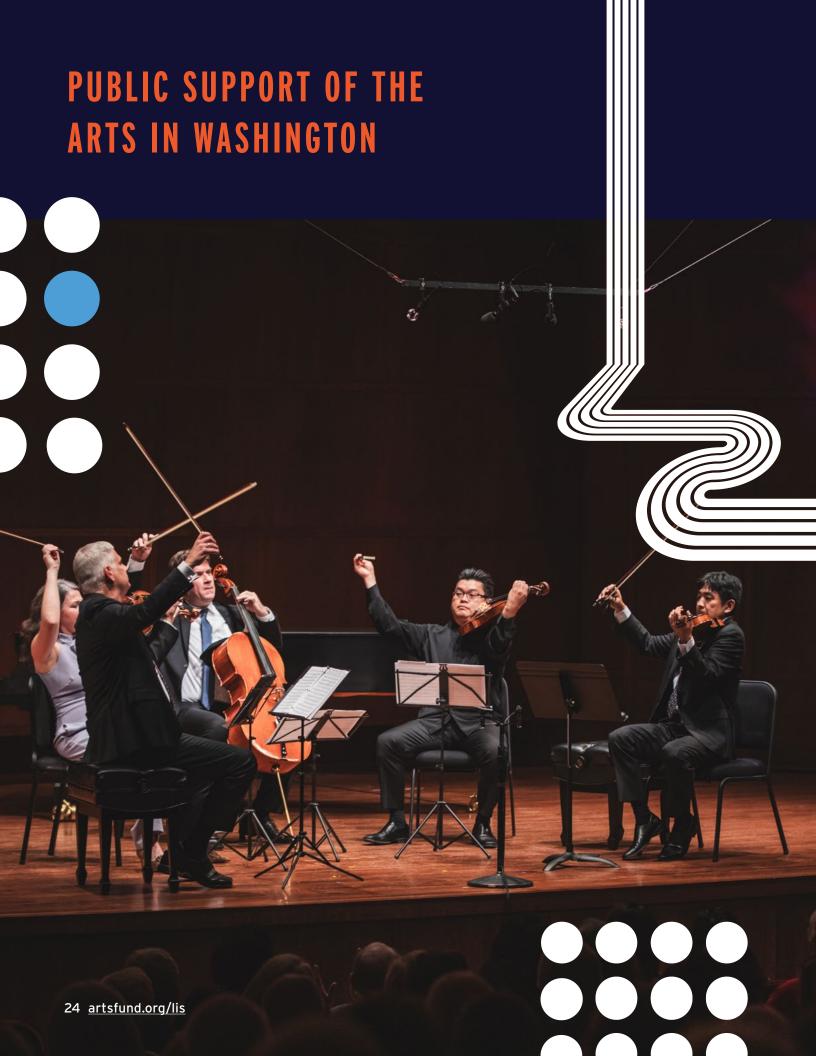
Nonprofits often collaborate and support one another by sharing resources, expertise, and networks, helping to strengthen their collective impact within the community. Through partnerships and mutual aid, they can tackle larger social issues together, amplify their voices, and create more sustainable solutions for those in need. It seems possible that communities with more arts and culture nonprofits might also have more gathering spaces given the supportive relationships across organizational contexts.

Indeed, the analysis shows that the density of arts organizations in a community is positively connected with the prevalence of non-arts gathering spaces in that community. For every three nonprofit arts organizations in a community, there is one associated non-arts nonprofit gathering space available to residents. This outcome suggests that arts organizations are an important part of the physical and social infrastructure supporting additional spaces for connection and community engagement.

One example of the ways that nonprofit arts and culture organizations facilitate and support community outside of the arts is the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (MAC) in Spokane. The MAC encourages a wide range of local organizations and groups to use its spaces and frequently collaborate with other nonprofit organizations in the community.







Counties with more state funding supporting arts and culture see stronger economic and social outcomes including higher local tourism revenue and higher levels of active voters.

Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue

\$22+

of additional tax revenue is collected per capita in counties with the highest levels of state arts support compared to those with the lowest levels.



Hotel and motel tax revenues serve as a key indicator of tourism and cultural engagement within a region. Higher revenues often reflect increased attendance at cultural events, festivals, and performances, which, in turn, drive demand for local accommodations. These cultural activities not only draw visitors from outside the region but also encourage longer stays, boosting direct spending and increasing tax revenue generated from local hotel stays (Americans for the Arts, 2020).

In Washington, hotel/motel tax revenue totals roughly \$9 per resident. Counties with the highest levels of state arts funding generate an average of \$22.36 per capita in hotel/motel tax revenue, compared to \$.03 in the least-funded communities. Distribution is highly uneven, ranging from \$0 dollars in Douglas, Benton, Stevens, and Garfield counties to \$121 per resident in San Juan County. Major urban centers account for a large share of this revenue, with King County generating the highest total—exceeding \$33 million, or \$15 per resident.

It's logically sound that increased investment in arts and culture resources within a community may enhance tourism by attracting visitors to engage with or attend cultural programming. Additionally, cultural organizations often serve as central hubs or magnets for cities, a strategy endorsed by ArtsWA.

One prominent example is the Seattle Symphony, which has long been a cultural cornerstone in downtown Seattle, playing an essential role in bringing people to the city center—a contribution that became even more crucial during the pandemic. While many small businesses closed, the symphony adapted, expanding its offerings to remain an anchor for the area.

Active Voters

Counties with more funding to arts and culture nonprofits also have

2%

higher levels of active voter engagement.

The rate of active voters is the only community metric with positive outcomes from both state arts funding levels and the density of arts and culture organizations. Counties that excel in both areas experience amplified impacts. Counties with the highest levels of state arts funding have 2% more active voters than those with the lowest levels of support.

Seniors Living Alone

In communities where arts and culture receive high levels of support,

1%

fewer seniors live alone, lessening adverse impacts of isolation.

Data reveals an interesting connection between state arts funding and the percentage of seniors (ages 65 and older) who live alone. Washington counties with the highest levels of state arts grant funding have 1% fewer seniors living alone compared to those with the lowest funding. If Washington's state arts funding were tripled to match the national per capita average, this could be associated with approximately 1,500 fewer seniors living alone across the state.

Research consistently shows that strong social ties can reduce stress, boost immune function, and even increase life expectancy (Holt-Lunstad, 2015). Human beings are inherently social creatures, and our ability to form and maintain meaningful relationships is vital to our sense of belonging and self-worth. Social connections help buffer against the negative effects of loneliness, which have been linked to a range of mental health challenges, including depression and anxiety (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008).

Arts funding may help reduce isolation among seniors by supporting community-based programs that foster social engagement, such as group art classes, theater performances, and participatory music activities. Studies have shown that these programs not only enhance emotional well-being and reduce feelings of loneliness, but also encourage seniors to develop meaningful social connections, thereby improving their overall quality of life (Creech et al., 2013).

Health Outcomes

State arts funding is linked to small improvements in mental and physical health within a community.

Data shows a slight positive correlation between state arts grant funding and residents' mental and physical health outcomes. While communities receiving more arts funding experience marginal health benefits, further research is needed to understand the mechanisms behind these connections. Interviews with arts leaders frequently reinforce the idea that arts and health are deeply intertwined.

Arts initiatives in community settings can strengthen social cohesion and reduce

When healthcare and mental healthcare services have so many barriers, like being insured or uninsured, language... we've had parents share that YAMA was like medicine for their kid.

Stephanie Hsu Founding Executive Director, *Yakima Music en Acción* isolation, particularly for vulnerable populations, leading to long-term benefits in mental health and overall quality of life (Clift & Camic, 2016). Stephanie Hsu, Founding Executive Director of Yakima Music en Acción, highlighted how successfully learning and playing music through their programs fosters a sense of self-worth among participants.

Krishna Thiagarajan, President & CEO of the Seattle Symphony, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that music is not only a form of entertainment but also a fundamental pillar of health and wellness. He described how music is deeply woven into human life—from celebrations to providing comfort and healing during difficult times.

Art is good for us. It's an essential part of human life. It nurtures the heart, mind, and body. From the moment we're born, through birthdays, celebrations, and even at life's end, music is with us. When we're having a bad day, we often turn to our favorite song to comfort and uplift us. The healing power of music is undeniable...

Krishna Thiagarajan President & CEO, Seattle Symphony





Importance of the Arts in Rural Washington

The positive connections between cultural resources, income equality, and tax revenues are particularly strong in rural communities.

For a few of the livability metrics we explored, we found that the connection between cultural resources and community livability was even stronger in rural communities compared to urban ones. This suggests that, in some cases, the impact of cultural resources may be greater when they are more dispersed.

Increasing state arts grant funding in rural communities is associated with a greater increase in hotel and motel tax revenue (\$21 per capita in rural counties compared to \$10 in non-rural areas) and a larger decline in the proportion of senior residents living alone (an additional 0.3% drop in rural areas). Additionally, increasing the number of arts organizations is linked to a slightly greater reduction in income inequality in rural areas than in urban ones.

It's possible that in rural areas, where arts resources are generally fewer and more dispersed, the incremental value of additional investment is particularly noticeable and impactful for community members. Further research on the mechanisms behind the relationship between arts resources and livability outcomes in rural areas across the country would be valuable.

National Comparisons

Washington State ranks in the top third of all states on arts vibrancy, boasting a diverse array of arts resources and a highly engaged arts community.

The state's arts scene is marked by a wide array of artistic expressions, from visual and performing arts to music and digital media. According to a report by the Washington State Arts Commission (2020), nearly 60% of Washington residents engage with the arts in some capacity, whether by attending performances, visiting galleries, or participating in arts education programs. In addition to its cultural and social benefits, the arts sector is also a vital economic driver, supporting 191,245 jobs (ranked 6th among all states) and contributing \$70.2 billion (ranked 3rd) to the state's economy (Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, 2022). This broad impact underscores the arts' role in shaping both daily life and long-term prosperity for Washington residents

Washington ranks 13th nationally on overall arts vibrancy, placing it in the top third of all states, according to SMU DataArts (Arts Vibrancy in All 50 States, 2024). Arts vibrancy is a composite score that incorporates 13 distinct measures encompassing facets of supply, demand, and public support for arts and culture across both non-profit and forprofit contexts. Rigorously adjusted for cost of living and population size, the Arts Vibrancy Index (AVI) offers unparalleled insights into the cultural pulse of each state. Washington scores particularly high on for-profit arts and culture vibrancy, outperforming 90% of states in this category. However, among the 13 arts vibrancy metrics, Washington performs lowest in state arts funding per capita, placing it in the bottom 20%.



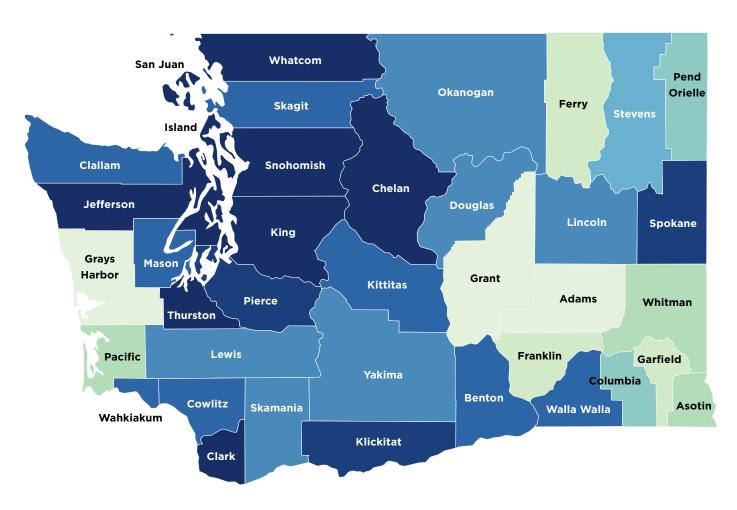
Unequal Access to Arts Resources Across Washington

Arts Vibrancy Throughout the State

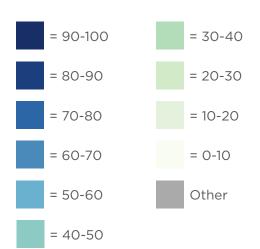
Access to arts and culture varies across Washington. While some counties rank in the top 20% nationally for arts vibrancy, others fall in the bottom 20%.

Arts vibrancy levels vary widely across Washington, with the highest-performing county ranking in the top 1% nationally and the lowest performing county in the bottom 15%. This gap reflects significant differences in access to arts providers, funding, and government support for arts and culture organizations. A common explanation for this disparity is that resources are concentrated in high-population urban areas. However, to ensure a fair comparison, we calculate arts vibrancy metrics per capita, adjusting for population size. The wide range of arts vibrancy scores in Washington suggests substantial variation in which geographic areas benefit most from arts and culture resources and activity.

Arts Vibrancy Map 2024



Arts Vibrancy Index Range Key



Note: Arts vibrancy is a composite score that incorporates 13 distinct measures encompassing facets of supply, demand, and public support for arts and culture across both non-profit and for-profit contexts.

To explore the arts vibrancy in more detail, visit SMU DataArts

https://culturaldata.org/what-we-do/arts-vibrancy-index/

Access to nonprofit arts organizations

Washington State has

6,378

arts and culture nonprofits, but access to arts organizations per capita is unequally distributed.

Nonprofit arts organizations represent just a portion of the diverse and rich cultural lives of Washington residents, with much creative activity occurring outside formal organizations. Nevertheless, this measure offers meaningful insights into community livability due to its connections with several key outcomes. On average, there are 2.8 nonprofit arts organizations per 10,000 residents in Washington.

There are significant disparities in the availability of nonprofit arts and culture organizations across the state, ranging from just 1 per 10,000 residents in Skamania County to 19 per 10,000 in San Juan County. Notably, the top five counties with the highest per capita availability of nonprofit arts organizations are all rural: San Juan, Garfield, Pacific, Jefferson, and Wahkiakum.

State investment in arts & culture

State arts spending in Washington lags significantly behind the national average, at

57% less per person.

Among all arts vibrancy metrics, this was where Washington fell furthest behind other states. In fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025), Washington's state government allocated \$0.98 per resident on arts and culture support, compared to a national average of \$2.29 per person (NASAA, 2025). This figure includes both direct and indirect arts funding provided by the state, as measured by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

A more focused look at state arts funding examines direct support for nonprofit arts and culture organizations distributed through ArtsWA, Washington's state arts commission. Direct arts funding to nonprofit organizations through ArtsWA totals just \$0.16 per resident. Many counties receive even less, with per capita funding ranging from \$0 in 15 counties to \$1 per resident in San Juan County, followed by \$0.52 per resident in Jefferson County, as shown in Table 2. (Note: Table 2 focuses solely on ArtsWA grants.)



TABLE 2: WA County Level Funding Per Capita State Arts Funding through ArtsWA in 2022

County Name	State Arts Funding Per Capita	County Name	State Arts Funding Per Capita
San Juan	\$1.02	Benton	\$0.06
Jefferson	\$0.52	Grant	\$0.04
Okanogan	\$0.49	Clark	\$0.04
Clallam	\$0.40	Snohomish	\$0.00
Pacific	\$0.33	Pend Orielle	\$0.00
King	\$0.32	Klickitat	\$0.00
Stevens	\$0.28	Columbia	\$0.00
Walla Walla	\$0.26	Lincoln	\$0.00
Skagit	\$0.23	Ferry	\$0.00
Chelan	\$0.22	Garfield	\$0.00
Asotin	\$0.19	Wahkiakum	\$0.00
Thurston	\$0.18	Grays Harbor	\$0.00
Kittitas	\$0.16	Franklin	\$0.00
Whatcom	\$0.11	Mason	\$0.00
Island	\$0.11	Douglas	\$0.00
Spokane	\$0.10	Adams	\$0.00
Pierce	\$0.10	Cowlitz	\$0.00
Lewis	\$0.09	Skamania	\$0.00
Yakima	\$0.08	Whitman	\$0.00
Kitsap	\$0.06	Washington State (ArtsWA)	\$0.16

Some cities and counties have stepped in to fill this funding gap by providing financial support to nonprofit arts and culture organizations through initiatives such as Tacoma Creates and Doors Open. While these efforts benefit communities that broadly support arts and culture, they may also widen disparities between Washington communities with greater access to cultural resources and those with fewer.



Almost 90% of Americans believe that arts and culture is important to their community's quality of life and livability¹. Our findings, as presented in this report, confirm that the majority of Americans are right: Accessible and well-funded arts and culture organizations improve livability outcomes for all. When Washingtonians have well-resourced and accessible arts and culture organizations in their communities, everyone benefits.

The critical role of these organizations became especially clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their support for communities was undeniable, proving essential in rebuilding the economy, fostering unity, and promoting well-being. Washingtonians value and recognize the benefits of having arts and culture organizations where they live. We are encouraging everyone to think of the arts as a vital component of their community's livability.

When publicly funded arts and culture nonprofits are better supported, we see higher civic engagement, increased tax revenue, and improved outcomes for the most vulnerable populations. Expanding access to these organizations reduces economic inequality, strengthens civic participation, and creates more spaces for communities to come together. Simply put, the arts make our communities stronger.

1 Americans for the Arts. (2023). Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic & Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organizations & Their Audiences. Americans for the Arts. https://www.americansforthearts. org/



KEY TAKEAWAYS

36 <u>artsfund.org/lis</u>

Takeaways

Here are five key takeaways from this groundbreaking arts research by ArtsFund and SMU DataArts:

- 1. Arts and culture are vital to the social fabric of our neighborhoods, serving as the glue that keeps our communities strong, healthy, and vibrant.
- 2. State arts funding and access to nonprofit arts and culture organizations are critical to fostering thriving, livable communities.
- 3. Inequities in access to arts and culture exist across Washington counties. While urban-rural divides play a significant role in access to arts and culture across Washington, there are notable exceptions to this pattern.
- **4. Rural areas experience even greater benefits from arts and cultural resources.**Compared to urban areas, rural communities benefit from larger gains in key outcomes, including higher tourism tax revenue and reduced income inequality.
- 5. Despite below average state arts funding, Washington's arts ecosystem is highly vibrant raising the question: how much more livable could our communities be with stronger support?





Based on our findings, we believe that collective action on the following recommendations will help secure the benefits of arts and culture across the state.

Recommendation 1:

Match Washington State's current investment in arts and culture of \$0.98 with the national average of \$2.29 per person.

The data demonstrates that increased public investment in arts and culture fosters social cohesion, economic opportunity, and civic engagement across all communities. We encourage support for a state-level investment in arts and culture equal to the national average. At the time of writing, this would require a 104% increase in state arts and culture funding from approximately \$8M to \$16.2M.

Action Items

Public Officials:

Support federal, state, and local funding to arts and culture nonprofits.

Champion the arts as a tool for improving the lives of Washington residents.

Explore new policies and strategies to bolster funding for nonprofit arts organizations across the state.

Private Sector:

Contribute to arts and culture nonprofits. Since public funding is only a small portion of overall financial support, private investment is crucial to the health and sustainability of organizations.

Recognize the invaluable role of arts and culture in fostering livable communities.

Advocate for arts and culture funding in the regions where you do business as a part of your broader strategy to create thriving business.

Arts & Culture Particpants:

Advocate for the arts by engaging with elected officials, attending committee meetings, and sharing your experiences to influence policy decisions.

Use data from this report and other research to demonstrate the role arts play in building healthier, more livable communities.

Build relationships with legislators at all levels of government. Invite elected officials to your programs, engage in conversations, and share your priorities year-round.

Recommendation 2:

Foster and maintain a healthy environment for arts and culture nonprofit organizations.

With Washington's vibrant and diverse cultural landscape, it is vital for leaders and communities across the state to provide resources and infrastructure that sustain existing arts organizations and cultivate new ones. As the data shows, increased access to arts organizations leads to better outcomes for all.

Action Items

Public Officials:

Support initiatives and policies that recognize arts and culture nonprofits as a critical part of a healthy community.

Get involved with arts and culture organizations in your district to better understand the barriers they face and collaborate on creating policies to address them.

Private Sector:

Engage with local arts and culture nonprofits by developing employee matching programs, volunteer opportunities, and workplace engagement initiatives.

Serve on arts and culture organizations boards, using your expertise to amplify their impact and strengthen cross-sector connections.

Recognize the role of arts and culture in product development and business strategies. Partner with nonprofits to integrate creative practices into your processes.

Arts & Culture Particpants:

Build and steward partnerships with other arts and culture organizations to strengthen collective impact.

Advocate for the infrastructure needed to fully participate in and contribute to your community.

Stay persistent. Success is a catalyst for greater engagement from all stakeholders.

Recommendation 3:

Include arts and culture as a key tool for building community health.

Research shows that communities with strong arts and cultural sectors experience improved livability across multiple measures. These positive outcomes extend beyond enrichment—they are essential to building strong, resilient communities with better outcomes for all residents.

Action Items

Public Officials:

Participate with arts and culture organizations and their audiences. These institutions serve as community gathering spaces—host town halls at their venues and attend their events.

Include arts and cultural advocates and administrators in decision-making processes, advisory roles, and committees to bring creativity and new perspectives to civic challenges.

Empower the arts and cultural community to actively participate in legislation that impacts them.

Private Sector:

Appoint arts and cultural leaders to corporate boards and workgroups to ensure cultural perspectives are considered in business decisions.

Include arts and culture

organizations in focus groups and design reviews to gain insights from key community stakeholders.

Showcase artists as partners in innovation.

Arts & Culture Particpants:

Collect and share data that demonstrates the impact of your work.

Frame your work as a part of a broader strategy to improve community well-being.

Remember that your contributions are essential to a healthy and thriving community.





Field Arts & Events Hall

Port Angeles, WA fieldhallevents.org

Steve Raider-Ginsburg, Executive & Artistic Director

About

Field Arts & Events Hall represents the newest and most significant arts, entertainment and special events facility found anywhere in the region. Field Hall hosts local, regional, national, and international music and performance artists inside the 500-seat Donna M. Morris Theater. Field Hall also includes a cutting-edge waterfront conference and event center suitable for groups from 20 to 300 people, overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Field Arts & Events Hall is a private 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The construction of Field Hall was made possible through the generous donations of Port Angeles locals Donna M. Morris and Dorothy Field, along with corporate and individual donors who value a vibrant arts community on the northern Olympic Peninsula.

Mission

To be a home for arts and events that brings people together and strengthens our community.

Vision

To inspire, nurture, and empower the local arts community, enrich local cultural and educational experiences, and spark economic activity throughout the region.

To learn more visit:

fieldhallevents.org

Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture

Spokane, WA northwestmuseum.org

Wesley Jessup, Executive Director Carol Summers, Director of Marketing & Communications

About

Founded in 1916, the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture is the largest cultural organization in the Inland Northwest, serving more than 100,000 visitors a year. It is one of Washington State's five Smithsonian affiliates and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The museum resides in the historic Browne's Addition neighborhood of Spokane, Washington.

Commonly referred to as the "MAC," the museum preserves and cultivates the heritage of the Inland Northwest people through collections, exhibitions, and programs that bring their stories to life. Our collection of Plateau Indian art and artifacts is the largest in the world; more than one million objects are maintained and preserved, including fine art, artifacts, documents, photographs, and material culture from the Americas, Europe, and Asia. The world-renowned Joel E. Ferris Research Archives offers researchers from around the world an opportunity to explore our vast collection.

Mission

To engage our audiences in the appreciation of art, history, and culture of the Inland Northwest and beyond through collection stewardship, exhibitions, and programs that enrich and inspire.

Vision

The Museum's leadership, staff, and volunteers are committed to operating transparently and with integrity in all matters, honoring our commitments, listening with empathy, and being approachable, inclusive, and respectful of others.

To learn more visit:

Seattle Symphony | Benaroya Hall

Seattle, Washington seattlesymphony.org

Krishna Thiagarajan, President & CEO, Leslie Jackson Chihuly Chair (at the time of research)

About

The Seattle Symphony unleashes the power of music, brings people together and lifts the human spirit. Recognized as one of the "most vital American orchestras" (NPR), the Seattle Symphony is internationally acclaimed for its inventive programming, communityminded initiatives, and superb recordings on the Seattle Symphony Media label. With a strong commitment to new music and a legacy of over 150 recordings, the orchestra has garnered five Grammy Awards, 27 Grammy nominations, two Emmy Awards and was named Gramophone's 2018 Orchestra of the Year. The Symphony performs in Benarova Hall in the heart of downtown Seattle from September through July, reaching over 750,000 people annually through live performances and radio broadcasts, and through the Seattle Symphony+ streaming service, the orchestra's concerts reach audiences at home and around the world.

Mission

The Seattle Symphony unleashes the power of music, brings people together, and lifts the human spirit.

Values

$$\label{eq:continuous} \begin{split} & \mathsf{Excellence} \cdot \mathsf{Innovation} \cdot \mathsf{Curiosity} \cdot \mathsf{Collaboration} \\ & \cdot \mathsf{Respect} \cdot \mathsf{Inclusivity} \cdot \mathsf{Integrity} \cdot \mathsf{Service} \end{split}$$

To learn more visit: seattlesymphony.org

YAMA Yakima Music en Acción

Yakima, Washington yamamusic.org

Stephanie Hsu, Founding Executive Director

About

The YAMA Preludio Orchestra is where YAMA students begin their musical journeys. A focus on building a strong musical and group foundation is emphasized. Students in the Preludio Orchestra play great music from all around the world, often arranged by YAMA Staff, each chosen specifically to help them reach our musical goals. Every quarter, Preludio students will be nominated by a Teaching Artist to audition for a chance to enter the Chamber Orchestra.

The YAMA Chamber Orchestra consists of our most advanced 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year instrumentalists. Students in the Chamber Orchestra tackle longer pieces (some unarranged classical masterpieces), are required to take their instruments home for practice, and serve as peer teachers to our newer YAMA students when asked.

The YAMA Philharmonia Orchestra, which consists of our most advanced students, is a four day a week intensive workshop to further students' understanding of their instruments and offer critical thinking and leadership development. Students of Philharmonia will also be offered the chance to travel to the Garfield site to serve as Assistant Teachers.

To learn more visit:

yamamusic.org



APPENDIX B: DETAILED METHODOLOGY



The initial scoping phase of this project involved discussions among SMU DataArts, ArtsFund staff, and an advisory board composed of arts leaders representing different art forms and regions of Washington. Through an iterative discussion, we identified topic areas of interest, explored data availability for those topic areas, and refined the research question and framing to identify what data were available and limitations of the various data sources.

The analysis began with a data integration process that involved cleaning and consolidating county-level data for Washington State. This model examines the impact of arts-related variables at the Census tract level within Washington State. By zooming in to this level of detail, the study provides insights into how arts investments affect individual communities, accounting for local variations that are often masked in broader datasets. This research applied standard processes of outlier identification and mitigation through removal or winsorization where appropriate.

This model utilizes a series of arts input variables and control variables to assess their relationships with 24 different community outcomes. In these models we adjust all relevant values so that they are measured on a per capita basis at the Census tractlevel. This multi-layered approach allows for a detailed examination of how arts funding and organizational presence correlate with various indicators of community health and economic prosperity.

What Kinds of Cultural Resources Were Considered?

We tested a wide range of cultural resources (inputs to our model) in three key categories as shown in Table 3, below: dollars flowing through the arts, arts providers, and public support of the arts. We only considered variables which had data available for every census tract or county within Washington State within the 3-year period of 2020-2022. Unfortunately, this set of cultural resources doesn't include measures of arts participation because rates of arts participation aren't available at the county level.

TABLE 3: Arts-Related Inputs

Metric	Measures	Source				Source		
Arts Providers								
	Number of Nonprofit Arts Organizations	IRS Business Master File, NTEE "A" Organizations						
	Distance between residents and arts orgs	Census Block Group Centroid to Nearest Nonprofit Arts Org						
Arts Dollars/ Public Support								
	Dollars awarded by the Washington Stata Arts Commission	Washington State Arts Commission: https://www.arts.wa.gov/wp-content/ uploads/2022/05/GTO_FY22_Webpage- Archive_Full.pdf						
	Government Support	As listed on 990 and 990PFs						
Controls								
	Population	Census American Community Survey						
	Rural vs Non-Rural Communities	US OMB Defines "Rural" as a county that is not part of a Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA)						
	Socio-Economics	Census American Community Survey/SMU DataArts						
Other								
	Arts Vibrancy Metrics	SMU DataArts						

Ultimately, we found that connections between two types of cultural resources and community livability were particularly strong: the concentration of nonprofit arts and culture organizations and the level of state funding of arts and culture in a neighborhood.

A range of twenty-four community livability variables were measured across the state (see table 4 on the next page).

TABLE 4: Community-Related Outputs

Metric	Measures	Source			
Social Connection & Cohesion					
	Voting registration/eligibility	Washington Secretary of State			
	Volunteerism	Extracted from full 990s of all nonprofits			
	Non-arts Nonprofit Gathering Places	IRS Business Master File, NTEE codes: 'B70 ','P28','X20','X21','X22','X30','X40','X50','X70', 'P81'			
	Rate of living alone	Census American Community Survey			
Safety					
	Crime rates	Washington State Statistical Analysis Center			
	Government Support	As listed on 990 and 990PFs			
Economic Opportunity & Supports					
	Unemployment Rates	Census American Community Survey			
	Graduation Rates	Census American Community Survey			
	Local Government Tourism Expenses	Washington State Open Data Portal			
	Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues	Washington State Open Data Portal			
Health					
	Physical Health	CDC PLACES: Local Data for Better Health			
	Mental Health	CDC PLACES: Local Data for Better Health			
	Overall Health	CDC PLACES: Local Data for Better Health			
Housing					
	Subsidized Housing	National Housing Preservation Database			
	% Owner Occupied Housing	Census American Community Survey			
	% Renter Occupied Housing	Census American Community Survey			

Controlling the Analysis to Compare "Like" Communities

We included a range of control variables to ensure that our analysis removed dimensions of communities from consideration that are not the focus of the investigation and might influence the outcomes. This helps ensure that we're effectively comparing similar communities by holding other dimensions constant while we examine the relationship we're interested in. The control variables in this study include rural/urban classification as defined by the US Office of Management and Budget, population, and a composite measure of socioeconomic status (income, education, and employment status).

The regression model which includes control variables is provided below in Table 5.



TABLE 5: Regression Model at the Census Block Level in Washington

	P-value	RSquared	Adjusted RSquared	Nonprofit Arts Organizations Per Capita	Rural Flag	ArtsWA Grant Dollars Per Capita	Constant
Active Voters per capita	0	0.95	0.95	14494.57***	-39.28***	1.58***	-15.66**
Count Fair or Poor Health per capita	0	0.11	0.1	0.71	-0.01	-0.0***	0.15***
Count Nonprofit Gathering Space Orgs per capita	0	0.16	0.16	0.32***	0	0	0.0***
Percent of those 65+ Living Alone	0	0.06	0.05	4380.12	54.7**	-0.26***	255.5***
Count Mental Health Not Good per capita	0	0.08	0.07	-2.13	-0.03*	-0.0***	0.12***
Count Physical Health Not Good per capita	0	0.11	0.11	-0.06	-0.01	-0.0***	0.1***
Hotel and Motel Tax Revenue per capita	0	0.99	0.99	3317.51	278.34***	46.01***	-44.72
Income Inequality (Gini Index)	0	0.57	0.57	-4.55***	0.04***	0.0***	0.43***
Nonprofit Volunteer Count per capita	0	0.16	0.16	518.86***	-0.16	0	0

^{*} for p < 0.1, ** for p < 0.05, *** for p < 0.01

REFERENCES

Americans for the Arts. (2023). Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic & Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organizations & Their Audiences. Americans for the Arts. https://www.americansforthearts.org/

Americans for the Arts. (2019). The Economic Impact of the Arts.

Arpan, P., & Sen, J. (2020). A critical review of liveability approaches and their dimensions. Geoforum. Volume 117.

Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2022 | U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). (n.d.). Www.bea.gov. https://www.bea.gov/news/2024/arts-and-cultural-production-satellite-account-us-and-states-2022

"Arts Vibrancy in All 50 States. SMU DataArts." SMU DataArts, 3 Mar. 2024, www.culturaldata.org/ state-of-the-arts-2023/overview/.

ArtsFund. 2014 Economic Impact. (2015, November 7). ArtsFund. https://www.artsfund.org/2014-economic-impact-study/

ArtsFund (2018). Social Impact Study. Artsfund.org. https://www.artsfund.org/social-impact-study-2018/

Bishop, R. (2014). The Arts and Economic Development: A Report to the City of San Francisco. Economic Policy Institute.

Bodvarsson, Ö. B., & Hsieh, C. (2009). The Economics of the Arts: A Survey of the Literature. Journal of Economic Surveys.

Cacioppo, J. T., & Patrick, W. (2008). Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection. W.W. Norton & Company.

Clift, S., & Camic, P. M. (2016). The Impact of Participatory Arts on Health: A Review of the Literature. Perspectives in Public Health.

Creative Economy Report. (2023). The Economic Impact of Washington's Creative Sector.

Holt-Lunstad, J. (2015). The Influence of Social Relationships on Mortality Risk. PLOS Medicine.

Lau, Jasmine & Hashim, Ahmad. (2010). Liveability dimensions and attributes: Their relative importance in the eyes of neighbourhood residents. Journal of Construction in Developing Countries.

McCarthy, K. F., Ondaatje, E. H., & Zakaras, L. (2001). The Performing Arts in a New Era. RAND Corporation.

McDonald, M. (2020, December 7). US Elections Project. www.electproject.org. https://www.electproject.org/2020g

NASAA. FY205 State Arts Agency Revenues Report. (2025). NASAA. https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa-ar

National Endowment for the Arts. "New Research Explores Arts Engagement and Social Connectedness," National Endowment for the Arts, Oct. 31, 2024. https://www.arts.gov/news/press-releases/2024/new-research-explores-arts-engagement-and-social-connectedness

Norris, E. D., Kochhar, K., Suphaphiphat, N., Ricka, F., & Tsounta, E. (2019). Causes and consequences of income inequality: A global perspective. IMF Staff Discussion Notes, 15(13), 1. https://doi.org/10.5089/9781513555188.006

Putnam, R. D. (2000). Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. Simon & Schuster.

Rodriguez, A. K., Akram, S., Colverson, A. J., Hack, G., Golden, T. L., & Sonke, J. (2024). Arts Engagement as a Health Behavior: An Opportunity to Address Mental Health Inequities. Community health equity research & policy, 44(3), 315–322. https://doi.org/10.1177/2752535X231175072

The AARP Livability Index: https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/

Washington State Arts Commission. (2020). The Impact of the Arts in Washington State.

World Health Organization (2021). Social Determinants of Health: Social Cohesion and Public Health.



THANK YOU TO OUR REPORT SPONSORS

The LIS is sponsored by:



NESHOLM FAMILY FOUNDATION



Research Partner

SMU DataArts

Design by:





Research Advisory Committee

Amy Briggs, Hummingbird Studio

Florangela Davila, Journalist

Jackie Jones, Gates Foundation

Cat Martin, Paul G. Allen Family Foundation

Roin Morigeau, Artist

Andrew Recinos, Tessitura

Krishna Thiagarajan, Washington State Arts Commissioner

Sharon Nyree Williams, Sharon Nyree Williams LLC

Jeremy Whittington, Spokane Arts

Alex Yang, Bank of America

Julie Zeigler, Humanities Washington

ArtsFund Policy & Advocacy Committee 2024

Kumi Baruffi, Umpqua Bank

Representative Liz Berry, Representative for Seattle's 36th District

Aaron Blank, Fearey Group

Patrick Evans, Evergreen Recovery Centers

Tiffiny Evans, T-Mobile

David Fischer, KNKX

Dwight Gee, Arts Advocate

Dianne Harris, University of Washington

Jackie Jones, Gates Foundation

Maria Mackey, Arts Advocate

Elizabeth MacPherson Hearn, Mithun

Andrew Recinos, Tessitura

Ginny Ruffner, Artist, (1952 - 2025)

Linda Walton, Perkins Coie

Sung Yang, Pacific Public Affairs

ArtsFund

Michael Greer, President & CEO

Katy Corella, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives & Communications

With special thanks to Calandra Childers and Audrey Querns, who facilitated this project across various points of its life.

About ArtsFund

ArtsFund supports the arts through leadership, advocacy, and grantmaking in order to build a healthy, equitable, and creative Washington. ArtsFund was originally founded to bring corporate and civic leaders together to help establish and sustain our region's arts and cultural institutions. Over its grantmaking history, ArtsFund has granted approximately \$130MM to over 1,000 organizations in 38 out of 39 Washington State counties. Through ArtsFund's advocacy work, including its longstanding arts impact research reports, which provide essential research on the value of the arts; and its leadership programs, like Board Leadership Training, which grow skills and build capacity among arts and cultural organizations, ArtsFund supports the health and wellbeing of our communities. Learn more at www.artsfund.org.

About SMU DataArts

SMU DataArts, the National Center for Arts Research, is a project of the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University. The mission of SMU DataArts is to provide and engage both organizations and individuals with the evidence-based insights needed to collectively build strong, vibrant, and equitable arts communities. Its research efforts range from academic papers published in leading journals, applied research undertaken with community partners, and actionable insights shared directly with arts practitioners. Its programs provide business intelligence tools and resources to help arts leaders leverage data to answer critical management questions and connect research analyses to their own work. Recent publications include research reports on emergence from the COVID-19 crisis; the alchemy that drives high performing arts organizations of color; audience diversity, equity and inclusion in large performing arts organizations; impact of investments made in diverse creative communities; using machine learning to evaluate equitable grantmaking practices; and more. Additional information about SMU DataArts' research can be found at smu.edu/artsresearch.



PHOTO CREDITS

Cover: Village Theatre, Cristian Rodriguez in How to Break, photo by Angela Sterling 2023. Page 2: Columbia City Theater, King Cobb, photo by Jonathan-Tran. Page 4: Wing Luke Museum, JamFest, July 2023, free arts and music festival in Canton and Maynard Alleys. YouthCAN table featuring printmaking for guests, with guest artist Erin Shigaki. YouthCAN is the free teen arts and culture mentoring program, photo provided by Wing Luke Museum. Page 7: Installation view of Flying Woman: The Paintings of Katherine Bradford, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, February 4-May 14, 2023, photo by Jueqian Fang. Page 8: Adam Stanley and Izzy Ritcher in Mr. Dickens and His Carol (2023), photo by Lindsay Thomas. Page 11: Photo courtesy of Seattle Theatre Group. Page 12: SAM Free First Thursday, Photo: Alborz Kamalizad. Musical Performance, photo courtesy of Path with Art. Page 14: SCT Young Actors Institute. Photo by Truman Buffet. Page 15: Photo by Rocio Nurena, courtesy of Early Music Seattle. Page 17: Pacific Northwest Ballet, Angelica Generosa and Jonathan Batista in Kent Stowell's Swan Lake. Photo © Angela Sterling. Page 18: Burke Museum, Fin'es Scott, photo courtesy of Burke Museum. Page 20: Photo courtesy of Seattle Theatre Group. Page 21: Photo courtesy of Northwest Sinfoniett. Page 22: Jack Straw Cultural Center, Concord Poetry and Song 2023, Photo by Sherwin Eng, courtesy of Jack Straw Cultural Center. Page 23: Seattle Public Theater with Reboot Theatre Company, 110 in the Shade, Colin Madison Photography. Page 24: Stephen Rose and Amy Schwartz Moretti, violins; Che-Yen Chen and Jun Iwasaki, violas; Edward Arron, cello. Photo by Jenna Poppe. Page 27: American Art: The Stories We Carry Gallery, photo by Chloe Collyer. Page 28: Hugo House, Hugo Literary Series featuring Jos Charles, Photo courtesy of Hugo House. Page 30: Mirabai Kukathas, Columbia-City-Theater, photo by Amy-Piñon. Page 32: Photo courtesy of Seattle Theatre Group. Page 34: Benjamin Cobb shaping glass sculpture, Photo courtesy of Museum of Glass. Page 35: Seattle Opera, Jashin, Photo by Sunny Martini. Page 36: Leanna Keith and Kelsey Mines - 2022 Earshot Jazz Festival photo by Lisa Hagen Glynn. Page 37: Jack Straw Cultural Center, Poesía de Denny 2023, Photo by Sherwin Eng, courtesy of Jack Straw Cultural Center. Page 38: Seattle Opera, Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World (Powell Barnett Park), Family, Photo by David Jaewon Oh. Page 42: Seattle Symphony Side-By-Side Concert at Benaroya Hall Seattle June 7, 2023, featuring students from Yakima Music en Acción, photo by Nick Klein. Page 45: Hugo House, Ada Limon Reading, Photo by Ted Zee. Page 46: Seattle Pro Musica, Annual Cabaret: Greatest Hits, photo by Chris Burch. Page 50: Photo by Lesley Martin, courtesy of Meany Center for the Performing Arts. Page 53: MoPOP, Aurora Avenue performing at Sound Off!, photo courtesy of MoPOP. Page 54: Seattle Public Theater, This Bitter Earth, John Ulman Photography. In Photo: Brodrick Ryans. Page 56: Velocity Dance Center, Seattle Festival of Dance + Improvisation (SFD+I), photo by Erin Johnson.



www.artsfund.org