

Core Narrative for External Reactive Use

Arts and culture build stronger communities. Every day, more than 100,000 nonprofit arts and culture organizations in the U.S. are making their communities better places to live and work by beautifying cities, fueling creativity, celebrating diversity, and bringing joy to residents. They also employ people locally, purchase goods and services from nearby businesses, and produce the authentic cultural experiences that are magnets for visitors, tourists, and new residents.

So how do you measure the power of arts and culture? Over the past 30 years, Americans for the Arts has conducted the most comprehensive and inclusive economic impact study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry. The newly released **Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6)** study shows us that when we invest in arts and culture, we strengthen our economy and build more livable communities.

America's nonprofit arts and culture sector is a \$151.7 billion industry—one that supports 2.6 million jobs, provides \$101 billion in personal income to residents, and generates \$29.1 billion in government revenue.

Arts and culture are kindling for the economy—enticing people out of their homes and spending money in the community. When people attend a cultural event, they often make an evening of it—dining at a restaurant, paying for parking or public transportation, enjoying dessert after the show, and returning home to pay for child or pet care. Few other industries can compete with arts and culture's event-related spending, which brought in an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences in 2022.

Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) represents a reset from its previous versions, establishing a new benchmark in the AEP study series.

- **Social Impact:** For the first time, AEP6 expands beyond the economic and financial data to include social impact measurements of arts and culture's effect on the well-being of communities and residents.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Americans for the Arts transformed its approach and expanded the inclusion and participation of organizations serving or representing communities of color.



AEP6 makes clear that when we fund the arts, we are not supporting a frill or an extra. Rather, we are investing in an industry—one that stimulates the economy, supports local jobs, and contributes to building healthy and vibrant communities.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA HIGHLIGHTS

AEP6 uses a highly regarded, conservative approach to analyze the economic impact of the nonprofit arts and culture industry, which generates a significant amount of economic activity by its organizations and event-related spending by its audiences.

Highlights of the study include:

- In 2022, arts and culture generated \$151.7 billion in economic activity
- Total spend by arts and culture organizations: \$73.3 billion
- Event related spending by arts and culture audiences: \$78.4 billion
- Jobs supported: 2.6 million jobs
- Personal income to residents: \$101 billion
- Government tax revenue: \$29.1 billion

Local Impact

What continues to set AEP6 apart from other national studies is exactly why it is so useful. It is local. Every study region uses the same rigorous methodology and each receives its own customized report. Surveys from 16,399 nonprofit arts and culture organizations and 224,677 of their attendees were collected by local and statewide research partners, and customized economic input-output models were built for every study region.

Arts and Culture Audience Impact

AEP6 is also the only national study that incorporates the event-related spending by arts and culture audiences. When attendees go to an arts and culture event, they may also pay for parking, eat dinner at a restaurant, enjoy dessert after the show, and return home to pay child or pet care. The typical attendee spends \$38.46 per person per event, not including the cost of admission.

Visitor Impact

Vibrant arts and culture communities attract visitors who spend money and help local businesses thrive. The study found that one-third of attendees (30.1%) were from outside the county in which the arts event took place. They spent an average of \$60.57, twice that of their local counterparts (\$29.77). All vital income for local merchants.

For 77% of nonlocal respondents, the primary purpose of their visit was to attend that cultural event. When we asked local arts and culture event attendees what they would have done if the event where they were surveyed had not been available, 51% said they would have “traveled to



a different community to attend a similar arts or cultural activity”—and 64% of nonlocal visitors would have selected another community to visit as well.

Arts and culture attract and hold dollars in the community longer—a value-add that few industries can compete with.

Social Impact

For the first time, organizations and audiences were asked social impact questions. Beyond its economic and financial impacts, arts and culture provide social contributions that benefit the wider community such as neighborhood pride and cultural identity. Surveys completed by 214,048 individual attendees demonstrate a deep appreciation for how arts and culture impact the development and well-being of communities and their residents. It found:

- 89% of respondents agreed that the activity or venue they were attending was “a source of neighborhood pride for the community.”
- 86% said they would “feel a sense of loss if that activity or venue was no longer available.”
- 86% felt it important that future generations also be able to have that cultural experience.

This high level of appreciation is found across all socioeconomic groupings.

Equity and Inclusion

With the goal of making AEP6 more inclusive and reducing systemic bias, Americans for the Arts transformed its approach and expanded the inclusion and participation of organizations serving or representing communities of color by:

- Hiring an AEP6 community engagement and equity research director
- Adding an equity consultant to the research team
- Establishing an AEP6 Equity Task Force composed of leaders from all segments of the industry
- Completing a full review and restructuring of the methodology
- Ensuring publishing accessibility guidelines were met and providing inclusive language offerings (e.g., the audience survey was available in 25 languages).
- Creating a series of community engagement tools to help our research partners identify, approach, and establish new and strengthen existing relationships with organizations representing BIPOC- (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and ALAANA- (African, Latine, Asian, Arab, Native American) identifying communities.

AEP6 also included an expectation—for the first time—that our research partners would collect a portion of audience surveys from attendees to events that were presented, produced, or hosted by BIPOC and ALAANA organizations. Nationally, 37,805 of the 224,677 audience-intercept surveys (17%) were collected from attendees to BIPOC and ALAANA organizations. The study found:

- Spending by attendees at BIPOC and ALAANA organizations was nearly identical to the overall national average (\$38.29 and \$38.46 per person, respectively).



- Social impact survey results were also nearly identical. For example, 81.2% of attendees at BIPOC and ALAANA organizations agreed, “This venue or facility is an important pillar for me within my community.” The figure for all attendees was 81.4%.

With the research showing proportional economic and community impacts, these findings should initiate new, and escalate existing, critical funding conversations about BIPOC and ALAANA organizations receiving fair and proportional financial support.

- A 2019 report by Americans for the Arts, for example, found that among local arts agency grantmaking organizations, the largest 16% of grant recipients (by budget) received 73% of the dollars awarded.
- The 2022 survey found that the pandemic’s impact was not felt equally. Organizations serving and representing BIPOC communities were more likely to report that they lacked the financial resources needed to return to in-person programming than non-BIPOC organizations (55% vs. 38%).

Ensuring equitable funding for arts and culture organizations is a vital step in creating an inclusive, balanced, and vibrant cultural landscape.

ARTS AND CULTURE INDUSTRY OUTLOOK: BUILDING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Arts and culture were among the economic sectors most devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and remain among the slowest to recover. Yet, they still helped us heal socially and recover economically. The arts infused our lives with joy when it was hard to find, staved off isolation and loneliness when it was most persistent, and increased life satisfaction when it lagged the most.

Arts and culture are kindling for the economy—enticing people out of their homes and spending money in the community. AEP6 shows that the typical attendee spends \$38 per person per event.

The study makes clear that when we fund arts and culture, we are not supporting a frill or an extra. Rather, we are investing in an industry—one that stimulates the economy, supports local jobs, and contributes to building healthy and vibrant communities.



KEY MEDIA Talking Points

1. **Arts and culture build stronger communities.** The Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) study shows us that when we invest in arts and culture, we strengthen our economy and build more livable communities.

2. When we fund arts and culture, we are not simply supporting a frill or an extra. **Arts and culture organizations are a critical economic driver of vibrant communities** by employing people locally, purchasing goods and services from nearby businesses, and producing the authentic cultural experiences that are magnets for visitors, tourists, and new residents. The AEP6 study demonstrates:
 - **Nonprofit arts and culture organizations are businesses**—a \$151.7 billion industry that supports 2.6 million jobs and generates \$29.1 billion in government revenue.
 - **The arts drive commerce to local businesses**—arts attendees spend \$38.46 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and lodging—vital income for local merchants.
 - **Arts and culture travelers are ideal tourists**—they stay longer and spend more to seek out authentic culture experiences. One-third (30.1%) of attendees travel from outside the county in which the activity takes place; they spend an average of \$60.57, twice that of their local counterparts (\$29.77).

3. We also know that **arts and culture beautify public spaces** and **strengthen community pride and identity.**
 - 89% of arts attendees say, “the event they are attending inspires a sense of pride in the neighborhood or community.”
 - 87% of attendees at BIPOC and ALAANA events agree, “my attendance is my way of ensuring that this activity or venue is preserved for future generations.”
 - Furthermore, a national public opinion study revealed 86% of Americans say, “arts and culture are important to their community’s quality of life and livability.”
(*Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2023*)

4. Across the country, competition for talent is at an all-time high. **Communities that invest in artists, creative workers, and arts organizations can strengthen their creative economy** by fueling innovation, attracting and retaining a creative workforce, and stimulating job growth.
 - Nonprofit arts and culture generated \$151.7 billion of economic activity and created 2.6 million jobs in 2022.



- Arts are a bigger industry than anyone expects. The nation’s arts and culture sector—nonprofit, commercial, education—is a \$1.02 trillion industry that supports 4.9 million jobs (2021). That is 4.4% of the nation’s economy—a larger share of GDP than powerhouse sectors such as transportation, construction, and agriculture. (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis)
- Combining the arts with workforce development programs helps create well-rounded workers who not only have “hard,” technical skills in their field, but also have creative thinking skills that foster innovation and drive our global economy.
- For the second year in a row, “Creativity” tops the list as #1 soft skill needed in business. (*LinkedIn*)
- A remarkable 79% of the American public believe that the arts are “important to their community’s businesses, economy, and local jobs.” (*Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2023*)

5. Beyond the immense economic and social contributions, **arts and culture bring inspiration and joy to residents.**

- 85% of attendees to arts and culture events “would feel a great sense of loss if this activity or venue were no longer available.”
- While the arts are a critical economic driver of vibrant communities, nobody goes to an arts event on a Friday night because it’s good for the economy. The arts are fundamental to our humanity.
- That’s why we must keep the arts accessible so everyone can experience and engage in the arts.

AEP6 Key Messages for Stakeholder Communications

Building on its 30-year legacy as the largest and most inclusive study of its kind, Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) is the most comprehensive economic and social impact study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry ever conducted, taking place in 373 study regions representing all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

AEP6 uses a rigorous methodology to document the economic and social contributions of the arts and culture industry, demonstrating locally as well as nationally, arts and culture are a critical economic driver of vibrant communities.

1. Arts & Culture Build Jobs and the Economy.

Arts and culture support jobs, generate revenue for local businesses, and provide authentic cultural experiences that strengthen tourism.



- What makes the economic impact of arts and culture organizations unique is that, unlike most other industries, they induce large amounts of event-related spending by their audiences.
- In 2022, the arts and culture industry generated \$73.3 billion in spending by the organizations themselves, which leveraged an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related spending by their audiences. (Source: AEP6)
- We know a dollar ripples very differently through each community, which is why each study region has its own customized economic model to better demonstrate the impact of arts and culture at a local level.
- In 2022, arts attendees spent \$38.46 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and lodging—vital income for local businesses. (Source: AEP6)
- Arts and culture also strengthen a community’s visitor economy. Arts and culture travelers are ideal tourists—they stay longer and spend more to seek out authentic culture experiences. One-third (30.1%) of attendees travel from outside the county in which the activity takes place; they spend an average of \$60.57 per person, twice that of their local counterparts (\$29.77). (Source: AEP6)

2. Arts & Culture Build More Livable Communities.

Arts and culture beautify cities and towns, bring joy to residents, as well as celebrate and preserve diverse cultural expressions and traditions—improving emotional health and well-being.

- 86% of Americans say, “arts and culture are important to their community’s quality of life and livability.” (Source: *Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2023*)
- The presence of arts organizations, along with opportunities to participate in artmaking, help improve livability immediately. Creative placemaking projects, especially those that involve residents in planning and design, affect livability indicators long term.
- 78% of the population says the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world,” 69% of the population believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences,” and 71% feel the arts give them “pure pleasure to experience and participate in.” (Source: *Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2023*)
- The arts are an effective resource in reducing depression and anxiety and increasing life satisfaction. Just 30 minutes of active arts activities daily can combat the ill effects of isolation and loneliness associated with COVID-19 (Source: University College London in the U.K.)
- 60% of Americans say, “The arts have helped me cope during times of mental or emotional distress” and 69% say “arts and culture has a positive effect on their overall health and well-being.” (Source: *Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2023*)



- The arts are a proven contributor in keeping us mentally healthy, helping us heal when we are not well, and reducing healthcare costs.

3. Arts & Culture Build Creativity and Innovation.

Arts and culture power the creative communities where people want to live and work, where entrepreneurs and innovation thrive, and where businesses and night-time economies flourish.

Entrepreneurs & Innovation

- The arts open new avenues of thinking, force people out of their comfort zone, create collaborative and non-hierarchical spaces for new thinking, and encourage imagination.
- Communities can strengthen their creative economies by investing in the arts, creative workers, and arts and culture organizations.
- Three in five American workers say that the more creative or innovative they are at their job, the more successful they are at work (61%), and just over half of Americans say their job requires them to be creative and produce new and unique ideas (53%). (Source: *Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2023*)

Night-time Economy

- Attracting visitors to a community is economic development.
- A remarkable 79% of the American public believe that the arts are “important to their community’s businesses, economy, and local jobs.” (Source: *Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2023*)
- When people attend a cultural event, they often make an evening of it—dining at a restaurant, paying for parking or public transportation, enjoying dessert after the show, and returning home to pay for child or pet care.
- When we asked arts and culture event attendees what they would have done if the event where they were surveyed had not been available, 51% of local attendees said they would have “traveled to a different community to attend a similar arts or cultural activity”—and 64% of nonlocal visitors would have selected another community as well. (Source: AEP6)

4. Arts & Culture Build Empathy and Understanding.

Arts and culture foster empathy, tolerance and inclusion by enabling people to see the world from the diverse perspectives of their community.

- 72% of Americans believe “The arts provide shared experiences with people of different races, ethnicities, ages, beliefs, and identities (gender, political, national origin, etc.).” (Source: *Americans Speak Out About the Arts in 2023*)
- 73% agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better”—a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories. (Source: AEP6)



- 87% of attendees to BIPOC and ALAANA organizations agree with the statement, “My attendance is my way of ensuring that this activity or venue is preserved for future generations.” (Source: AEP6)

5. Arts & Culture Build Social Connections.

Arts and culture create opportunities for shared experiences that strengthen social bonds, sense of belonging, as well as community pride and identity.

- Arts participation contributes to social connections by reducing isolation, encouraging cooperation, and building community networks.
- 9 out of 10 say the arts increase connection to community. New friends and connections are a primary positive outcome of arts participation. (Source: Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP), University of Pennsylvania, 2001)
- 89% of arts attendees say, “the event they are attending inspires a sense of pride in the neighborhood or community.” (Source: AEP6)
- 70% agree that arts and culture “improve the image and identity of their community.” (Source: AEP6)

