# 2025 CREATE IN IOWA REPORT

IOWA CULTURAL COALITION



# ABOUT

## IOWA CULTURAL COALITION (ICC)

As a member-supported, statewide nonprofit organization, the ICC serves as a strong and unified voice in promoting public investment, research and policy beneficial to Iowa's growing arts and culture industry.

# WELCOME

The Iowa Cultural Coalition (ICC) is proud to share this comprehensive report and portrait of Iowa's dynamic, vibrant and growing creative sector.

In late 2022, an Envision Iowa report included a call to action to Iowa business, education, civic and cultural leaders: Iowans must work together to meet an urgent need to grow our state's population and workforce.  As the Iowa Business Council, which represents our state's largest companies, put it then, "Iowa's population growth must be accelerated to ensure long-term economic prosperity."

The ICC – along with the hundreds of Iowans whose voices animate this report – have taken up this challenge, knowing the creative sector must be part of any successful strategy to grow our state.

Last year, the Iowa Arts Council, part of the Iowa Economic Development Authority, and McIver Communications engaged more than 500 Iowans through surveys, interviews, and conversations about the arts and creative sector. Their findings are summarized throughout this report.

Building on this foundation of research, we hope that this report sparks new conversations and inspires Iowans - including creative and civic leaders, funders and policymakers - to take meaningful actions towards realizing our common purpose and shared vision: Iowa grows with creativity.

**Lindsay Bauer**
*President*
IOWA CULTURAL COALITION

OPPOSITE: Bread & Puppet Theatre performs at Mercer Park in Iowa City. Photo by Jason Smith.

# INTRODUCTION

Through its **Create in Iowa initiative**, the ICC seeks to grow and amplify the impact of Iowa's creative sector to grow our state and opportunities for Iowans.

## VISION

**Iowa grows with creativity.** We envision Iowa as a welcoming and growing state where partnerships with the creative sector lead to greater opportunities for all Iowans.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• The arts, culture, heritage, and creativity are fundamental to what makes Iowa special and our appeal to new residents and visitors.

• The arts, culture, heritage and creativity drive positive outcomes in other areas and can improve everything else that matters to Iowans.

## GOALS:

**Through the Create in Iowa initiative, the ICC seeks to:**

**1. ENGAGE** a broad spectrum of Iowa leaders for input and ideas.

**2. BUILD** a shared vision and set of focused and actionable policy recommendations for advancing Iowa's creative sector and economy.

**3. INFORM** key stakeholders about the role the creative sector plays in creating an overall climate for growth in our state.

OPPOSITE: Farah Siraj and her band pose with the Oskaloosa Middle School Choir after their first rehearsal. Photo credit: Danielle Devlin.

## SPOTLIGHT:

**Oskaloosa** and the **George Daily Community Auditorium** were selected as the Iowa host partner for World Fest, an Arts Midwest program touring international musicians to small Midwestern communities.



## SPOTLIGHT

The **Sioux City Art Center** celebrated the 30th annual ArtSplash Art Festival in 2024 with a public art project that engaged hundreds of Siouxland volunteers and attracted visitors from beyond the region.

# CONTENTS


**I. SUMMARY: THE ARTS DRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN IOWA ..... P.8**

**II. CREATIVE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES ..... P.10**

- Arts Strengthen Communities and Improve Well-Being
- Arts Education Drives Career Readiness
- Arts Spark Rural Vitality

**III. CREATIVE SECTOR IN IOWA ..... P. 20**

- What Is The Creative Sector?
- Creative Sector Employment and Value Added
- Iowa Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations

**IV. LEVERAGING CREATIVE ECONOMY IMPACT ..... P. 32**

- Empowering Creative Businesses
- Enhancing Creative Infrastructure
- Expanding Nonprofit Capacity and Public-Private Partnerships with the Arts

**V. CALL TO ACTION ..... P. 42**

**VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..... P. 47**


OPPOSITE: Volunteers pose with artist Amanda Browder at the unveiling of Razzle Dazzle, a community-based public art installation unveiled at the Sioux City Art Center in fall 2024. Photo courtesy of Amanda Browder.

# I. SUMMARY

## THE ARTS DRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN IOWA.

### 1. Arts and cultural production in Iowa is a $5 billion industry that supports nearly 42,000 full-time jobs.

+ **Arts and culture wages amount to $2.4 billion annually** and have a demonstrated ripple effect in local economies.

+ **Arts and cultural production accounts for a greater share of the state's economy** than utilities and educational services do.

+ The creative workforce **is equivalent to some of Iowa's largest employers.**

### 2. Arts and culture generate tourism and strengthen the visitor economy in Iowa.

+ Visitors to arts and cultural events in Iowa spend more than **$277 million annually**, with visitors spending an average of nearly $31, per event, on top of the price of tickets and admission. Out-of-state visitors spend even more, averaging $55.79 in event-related spending.

+ **1 in 7 arts and cultural attendees are visitors** from outside the State of Iowa. More than **2 out of 3 visitors** report the purpose of their visit was to attend the performance, event, exhibit, venue, or facility.

### 3. Arts and culture attract, grow and keep talent in Iowa.

+ Iowa employers, residents and potential residents all agree: **the arts and culture are a major part of their decision to live – and stay – in Iowa.** The research also backs this up:

- A community's social offerings/openness, aesthetics, and recreational assets are the **top three factors influencing residents' decisions to stay** *(Soul of the Community, Knight Foundation)*

- **Social connections, outdoor recreation opportunities, and arts and culture are the top three factors** motivating employees *(Greater Des Moines Partnership & Baton Global).*

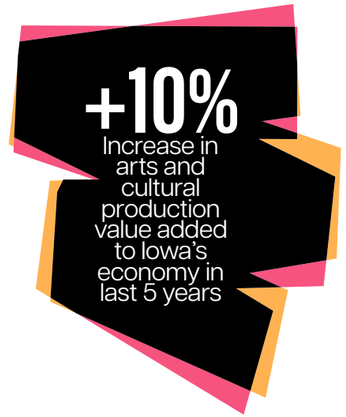
## IOWA'S CREATIVE SECTOR CONTINUES TO GROW

### 4. Arts and culture are a growth industry.

+ **Arts and cultural production value added has grown 8.4 percent** in Iowa, compared **with an increase of 7.8 percent** for the United States. Prior to the pandemic, Iowa's creative sector was growing at a faster rate than the state's overall economy.

+ **Iowa ranks 32nd among all states in arts and cultural employment** and 23rd among all states in arts and cultural employment growth.

+ **Iowa ranks 31st among all states in value added from arts and cultural production** and 26th among all states in value added growth.




### 5. Arts and culture are a catalyst for growth in the broader economy.

+ Growth in the arts sector and arts employment has a **positive and causal effect on overall growth and employment.**

+ The arts' growth appears independent of other sectors, **providing a diversification strength for state economies.**

+ **There is a causal link between growth in the creative economy and broad economic growth in the U.S.** The growth stemming from the creative economy is not restricted to large states, either; smaller states also experienced notable growth rates on a per capita basis.

*"The arts and creative industries offer a powerful strategy for states and localities to reignite economic growth and diversity and stimulate economies."*

-Arts and Creativity Drive Economies and Build Resilience, 2024
CREATIVE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES




ABOVE: Community members and visitors gather for the annual Snake Alley Festival of Film in Burlington.

# II. CREATIVE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

## CREATING MORE CONNECTED AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Across the board, Iowa leaders and economic developers view the arts and culture as critical to efforts to recruit workers and families.

### Key Considerations

- Although enhancing community livability and quality of life through the arts is widely understood by Iowa leaders to be important, **work remains to be done to show how the arts are an economic driver.**
- **Iowa leaders see a disconnect between an appreciation of the arts and a full understanding of how important they are for the long-term success of the community**. Likewise, not all arts organizations are engaged in local economic development conversations as much as they could be.
- **People choose where they want to live before where they want to work.** As one Iowa leader said, "Businesses choose to be in, grow, or to leave a community based on [the existing] workforce."
- The needs and required inputs in Iowa communities look different depending upon size:
  - **Enhancing the quality of life remains foundational to support for the arts in smaller communities.** Iowans embracing small town life want to feel more deeply connected and rooted, and maintaining support for arts and cultural events, festivals and gathering spaces is important.
  - **Regional hubs know their residents expect greater amenities.** Not every community can make huge investments, but maintaining some level of cultural amenities is a key for Iowa's regional hubs to grow and attract talent. **Proximity to these regional amenities is important** for smaller communities, too.
  - In Iowa's metropolitan regions - where a strong base of arts activities and amenities already exists - the **conversation has moved beyond quality of life to integrating the arts within other sectors, enhancing major attractions, and leveraging tourism for talent attraction** (i.e. "today's tourists are tomorrow's talent").




*"Creativity is what attracts people to your city. It's an extension of business if you're investing in the creative economy."*

- IOWA BUSINESS LEADER

*"People know what kind of community they want to live in – [it's] not just chain stores on every corner. Each community has to embrace its character and creativity ... and developers often invest in communities based on how much they embrace public art and creativity."*

- LEADER INTERVIEWEE



*"Creating a welcoming and inclusive culture will yield the long-term results essential to help Iowa thrive."*

- IOWA BUSINESS COUNCIL

### SPOTLIGHT

The arts are a vital part of **Marshalltown**, representing and uniting cultures and people throughvibrant murals, dynamic sculptures, festivals and performances.

TOP: Somos Marshalltown by artist Ally Frame. Drills by Gail Folwell, CENTER: Marshalltown High School Roundhouse

# 1. ARTS STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES AND IMPROVE WELL-BEING.

Arts and creativity make us stronger—as individuals, families, communities, and as a state. They are the backbone of innovation, prosperity, and thriving people and places.

As Iowans revitalize their communities, the arts and cultural experiences can bring people together and increase feelings of attachment, belonging, and connectedness – what is known as "social capital."

**72%** of Americans believe "the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity"




ABOVE: Musicians perform in the Historic Valley Junction Cultural and Entertainment District in West Des Moines during the Valley Junction Farmers Market.

## Key Considerations

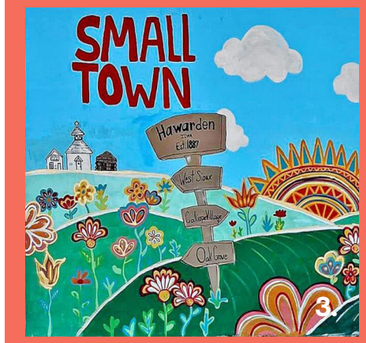
- **Iowans see creative and cultural experiences as essential to attracting and bringing together residents.** There is a desire for more programming that appeals to residents from different cultural backgrounds and experiences.
- **The arts improve community resilience and are a driving force to bring together communities after economic setbacks and natural disasters.** Collaboration and connecting residents directly to the work is key.
- Maintaining support for **creative places** and "third spaces" that enable community connectedness is **critical in smaller and rural communities, especially.**
- Engaging youth in creative place-based projects is an opportunity to **build civic pride and increase the odds of them staying in or returning to Iowa.**

ADULTS WHO ATTENDED ARTS EVENTS AND/OR CREATED ART WITHIN THE PREVIOUS MONTH WERE MORE LIKELY THAN THOSE WHO DID NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIAL GROUPS AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS—AND TO DO SO AT HIGHER FREQUENCY LEVELS.

SOURCE: NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS AND U.S. CENSUS BUREAU'S HOUSEHOLD PULSE SURVEY, 2024.)


1.


2.



3.


4.

## SPOTLIGHTS:

1. Common Chord placed pianos throughout high foot traffic areas in the **Quad Cities** and **Scott County**, bringing music to the community in a unique and accessible way.
2. The **Mason City** Chamber of Commerce introduced an initiative to grow and diversify the workforce in **Cerro Gordo County** with a mural painted by community members.
3. A grant to the local arts council in **Hawarden** (pop. 2,700) in **Sioux County** engaged residents and helped restore a popular mural on a local landmark damaged by fire four years earlier.
4. In collaboration with Iowa artist Isaac Campbell, the Grinnell Area Arts Council installed nine large wheat paste murals around downtown **Grinnell** celebrating the history of the community.

*"One of the pillars of the wealth capitals approach is to allow communities to define their assets. This is a key element for communities that want to attract or retain residents—not just workers. It could be as basic as being able to go to the movies or perform in a community band, or to enjoy a mural on a downtown alley wall."*

-IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION & OUTREACH, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**73%** agree that the arts "helps me understand other cultures better"—a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories.

# 2. ARTS EDUCATION DRIVES CAREER READINESS

Iowa leaders know that education is a key driver for economic and workforce development.

They also view the creative sector as playing an essential role in preparing well-rounded students with the innovative mindset and skills to succeed in any career.

## Key Considerations

- **Iowans envision a state where all children experience the arts** and develop their own creative abilities.
- **Iowans expressed concerns about declining public investment in arts education and budget cuts to K-12 fine arts programs, particularly at the middle and high school level.** Lowered fine arts requirements, which is in part fueled by a lack of qualified teachers, pose an added challenge in many districts. Investing in early-career training and mentorship programs for art educators and community partnerships are viewed as important.
- Iowa leaders report that many **high school graduates don't feel ready for what is next**, while higher education and business leaders are also seeing a greater variance in students' and graduates' readiness for college and the workplace.
- **Creating a continuum of arts learning opportunities throughout students' K-12 education is the top priority of arts and civic leaders.** There is broad optimism about out-of-school learning opportunities and partnerships with post-secondary educational institutions.
- **Work-based learning (WBL) programs represent a strength for Iowa and an opportunity for the creative sector.** Iowa leaders noted the need to expand WBL opportunities beyond high-demand and targeted industries to include more creative occupations.



ABOVE: Iowa artist Catherine Reinhart demonstrates and speaks with Creston Community High School students during a classroom visit supported by Mainframe Studios in Des Moines and the Iowa Arts Council.

*"Our investment in the arts is not allowing students to realize their full potential. That's a problem for us as a society; we are leaving untapped talent on the table."*

-IOWA HIGHER EDUCATION LEADER

## SPOTLIGHTS:







- ★ **ASAP, After School Arts Program** ensures access to creative and cultural experiences for undeserved young people across greater Des Moines through high-quality, multidisciplinary arts programs led by trained Teaching Artists. ASAP delivers nearly 6,000 enrollments per year in grades K–8 (ages 5–14).
- ★ Through **Fresh Films'** Career Path Program, Scott County teens attend an immersive media arts program to build skills and learn about careers in arts and media production in Iowa.
- ★ The **Sioux City Symphony Orchestra**'s "Carnegie Hall Link Up" concerts at the Orpheum Theatre engage thousands of elementary students in Northwest Iowa.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS:

+ Students engaged in the arts are **five times less likely to drop out of school** and four times more likely to be recognized for high achievement.

+ Students engaged in the arts have **higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and college-going rates.** These benefits are reaped by students across all socio-economic strata.

+ Children engaged in the arts are **better able to collaborate** with peers and communicate with parents and teachers.

+ The arts prepare students to **train for a workforce and succeed in an economy driven by creativity and innovation** and produce critical thinkers and problem-solvers that are attractive to employers.

SOURCE: NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, REINVESTING IN ARTS EDUCATION, 2011.

EMPLOYERS RATE CURIOSITY, CREATIVITY AND THE ABILITY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES IN EMPLOYEES– EVEN OVER TECHNICAL SKILLS.

-READY TO INNOVATE, THE CONFERENCE BOARD

**91%**
of Americans believe that arts are part of a well-rounded K-12 education.

FEATURE:

# ARTS PARTICIPATION IN IOWA

CREATE

**NEARLY 1 IN 2** IOWA ADULTS PERSONALLY PERFORM OR CREATE ARTWORKS

READ

**36.1%**

Percent of Iowa adults read literature (plays, poetry, short or novels)

LIVE EVENTS

**37.1%**

Percent of Iowa adults **attend** visual or performing arts events

DIGITAL MEDIA

**3 OUT OF 5**

Iowa adults consume art or arts programming through digital media (TV, radio, and/or the Internet)

**2.1 MILLION**

# times **Iowa adults engaged** with funded organizations and project activities

**1.47 MILLION**

# times **Iowa youth engaged** with funded organizations and project activities

IOWA RANKS **#8** IN THE U.S. FOR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ARTS FOR ADULTS.

Sources: 50 States of Arts Participation: 2022 – A geographical analysis of results from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. Accessed at 50 States of Arts Participation: 2022 | National Endowment for the Arts.

IOWA ARTS COUNCIL GRANTEE DATA FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024.

"Best States for the Arts." Smilehub.org. Scores and ranking based on publicly available data.

## 3. ARTS SPARK RURAL VITALITY

Across Iowa, the **arts and design are acting as a catalyst for rural economies** by attracting workers and visitors, creating social and cultural vibrancy, and supporting local businesses.

### Key Considerations

- **Smaller dollar creative placemaking projects in rural communities can be transformative. As one leader said, "It doesn't take huge amounts of money to make positive things happen.** Small things connecting together can lead to big things." Iowans noted the importance of seed and innovation fund programs, including those offered by Empower Rural Iowa.
- **Iowa leaders cited a lack of local investment in arts and culture as a challenge.** As one leader said, "In a lot of rural communities, arts and culture is left to figure itself out." Leaders noted that support for the arts in rural Iowa may be hindered by perceptions of arts nonprofits as insignificant economic contributors and by a lack of visibility of arts and creative workers.
- **Programs that grow civic pride and engage younger and diverse residents are key.** Programs like Heart & Soul and Keep Iowa Beautiful's Hometown Pride foster the type of deeper community engagement required to sustain longer-term placemaking efforts.
- **A lack of staff and volunteer capacity is an ongoing challenge in many rural organizations.** As one leader said, "The folks that can make these things happen are wearing multiple hats already, so it's hard to take on new things." Increasing the capacity of rural arts and culture organizations should be a priority.
- **Working with elected officials to create incentives to live - and return to live and work - in rural Iowa should be a top priority.** Competition for talent and investment from border states and cities is incredibly high, particularly in the Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA.




ABOVE: Local students participated in the creation of a postcard mural completed by the Osceola Chamber and Main Street and supported by the Iowa Arts Council.

> *"There is a tremendous opportunity for rural Iowa to leverage the creative sector for economic development and a renaissance for our smaller towns. Where this is happening, Iowa communities have seen significant gains and benefits."*
>
> -IOWA WEST FOUNDATION



ABOVE: **Fairfield** (pop. 9,300) showcases a world of arts and culture at the Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts and Fairfield Arts and Convention Center, while the monthly 1st Fridays Art Walk has grown into a signature community and cultural event.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS:

- Rural counties with performing arts organizations experience **faster population growth** than counties without them.
- Rural communities with performing arts organizations are **twice as likely to have innovative and design-integrated businesses and recover faster** from economic recessions, seeing faster growth in average weekly earnings.
- Rural arts organizations **draw non-local visitors at higher rates** than those in urban areas.

SOURCE: RURAL PROSPERITY THROUGH THE ARTS & CREATIVE SECTOR, NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION, 2019.




**Winneshiek County, home to Decorah and Luther College, is among the 15 most arts-vibrant rural counties in the U.S., according to research from SMU DataArts.**

LEFT: ArtHaus in Decorah

# SPOTLIGHTS




Hundreds of local volunteers, including area high school students, have worked alongside professional artists to add colorful murals throughout **Creston** (pop. 7,392) since 2020. The murals have become a tourism draw, attracting visitors and bus tours. The project even won a prize from the National Academy of Art and Design– making Creston the smallest community to win the prestigious award.



Art installations are found in a surprising place - rooftops – in **Jefferson** (pop. 4,100). A local art committee has commissioned artists to produce vibrant works of art atop downtown businesses, which can be viewed from the observation deck of the Mahanay Bell Tower—a well-known local landmark and top tourism attraction.



The annual Southwest Iowa Arts Tour links together more than a dozen rural communities in Southwest Iowa, driving traffic to artist studios and creative businesses. Individual communities like **Woodbine** and **Malvern** (pop. 1,718) and have embraced significant arts projects to drive greater expansion – including the Art Church and a popular summer live music series in Malvern that attracts visitors from outside the region.



**Maquoketa** (pop. 6,051) in Eastern Iowa has leveraged partnerships between the city, Grant Wood Scenic Byway and the Jackson County Economic Alliance to add new artworks and murals and redevelop a popular green space that hosts live music. The Maquoketa Arts Experience hosts classes and rotating exhibits by local & regional artists.



Every summer, theatre students and lovers flock to the Cedar Summerstock Theatre near **St. Ansgar** (pop. 1,160). The popular summer performances in rural Mitchell County attract visitors from across North Iowa and Southern Minnesota.




Each summer in **Earlham** (pop. 1,413), residents and visitors gather for free, outdoor concerts through the Levitt AMP Earlham Music Series. Now in its fifth year, the popular series transforms Earlham City Park into a vibrant, music-filled community hub for ten weeks.




ABOVE: The Octagon Art Festival takes place each fall in downtown Ames and is among the longest-running juried art festivals in the state.

# III. CREATIVE SECTOR IN IOWA

As home to one of the 40 most arts-vibrant cities (Des Moines) and top 10 small creative cities (Iowa City) in the country - along with art-filled main streets, dynamic college towns, and rural arts attractions - Iowa abounds with art and creativity.

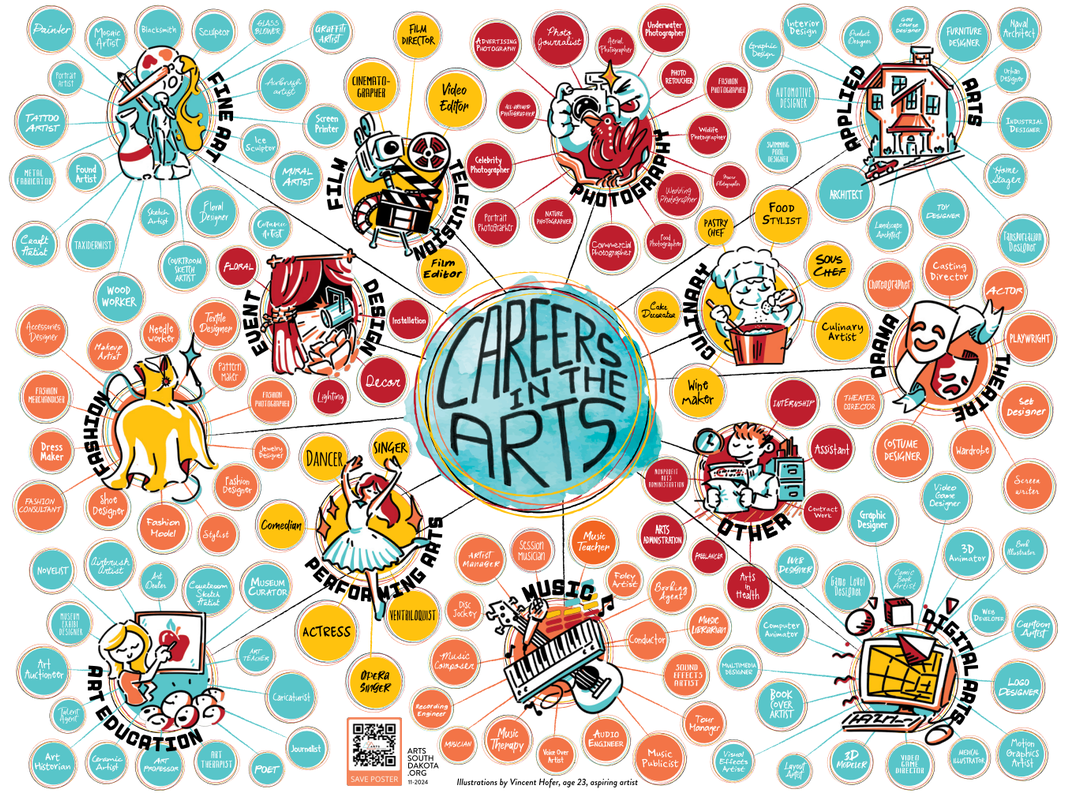
Through decades of sustained leadership, Iowa's creative sector has grown and evolved to include major cultural institutions, a strong and growing network of mid-and small-sized arts organizations, and nationally recognized arts events.

Iowa has proven to be fertile ground for artists, creatives and makers of all kinds, too. From designers, filmmakers, and creative writers, to photographers, folk and traditional artists, and musicians, thousands of Iowans are at work every day preserving our heritage, documenting our stories, and imagining our future.

**For Iowa to continue to grow and leverage its creative sector and economy, we first need to understand who it includes, what it does, and how far its' impact extends.**

> *"We have talked about it and are ready for the next big surge of the creative economy. It's time to mature what the creative economy means."*
>
> - LEADER INTERVIEWEE

SOURCE: SMU DATAARTS, TOP 40 ARTS VIBRANT COMMUNITIES OF 2022. CREATIVE VITALITY SUITE, THE 30 MOST CREATIVE SMALL CITIES, 2023.




CREDIT: ARTS SOUTH DAKOTA AND KNOLL & ASSOCIATES. ARTIST VINCENT HOFER

## 1. WHAT IS THE CREATIVE SECTOR?

The creative sector is a connected ecosystem of individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations working together to **produce, present, preserve and promote cultural, artistic, and heritage works.**

+ Iowa's creative sector spans a wide range of non-profit and for-profit participants—from museums, theaters, and performing arts centers, to independent artists and directors, live music venues, galleries, dance studios, filmmakers and design firms.

+ It also includes venues, event organizers, and an essential network of suppliers, manufacturers, and retailers who all play key roles in equipping and sustaining the creative economy.

+ The creative economy encompasses all the goods and services produced by Iowa's creative sector and the ripple effects created by spending by creative businesses.




SPOTLIGHT:

# GREATER DES MOINES

Arts and culture are significant drivers of tourism in Greater Des Moines, drawing more than a million attendees from outside the region annually (AEP6).

## IOWA'S CREATIVE SECTOR AT-A-GLANCE

| | |
|---|---|
| 5,800+ | Arts-Related and Creative Businesses |
| 1,000+ | Film and Media Professionals |
| 400+ | Local Museums and Historical Collections |
| 60+ | Local Arts Agencies |
| 86+ | Performing Arts and Live Music Venues |
| 50+ | Local Arts Festivals |
| 20 | Local Independent Film Festivals |
| 19 | Locally designated Cultural & Entertainment Districts |

**42,000** Iowans are employed in the creative sector.



DES MOINES' MUSIC ECOSYSTEM GENERATED 1,226 DIRECT JOBS, EARNINGS, AND $139 MILLION IN ECONOMIC IMPACT.

-DES MOINES MUSIC ECONOMY ASSESSMENT & STRATEGY, SOUND DIPLOMACY, 2019.

OPPOSITE: Ingersoll LIVE, a family-friendly community block party, takes place annually along the Avenues of Ingersoll & Grand in Des Moines and features live music, art, food and entertainment. ABOVE: Iowa musician Halen Becker performs at an album release show at xBk in Des Moines. Photo credit: Alyssa Liecht.

# 2. CREATIVE SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Iowa's creative sector can be thought of as including core, supporting, and related industries and jobs, which work together to produce the goods and services that make up the creative economy.

**58%**
**Supporting Arts and Cultural Production and Related Creative Industries**
- Event managers and fundraisers
- Printing and graphics businesses
- Equipment sales

**22%**
**Core Arts and Cultural Production**
- K-12 fine art teachers
- Independent artists, writers, musicians
- Museum curators and exhibit technicians

**16%**
**Related Creative Industries**
- Videographers
- Art directors
- Film production assistants

**4%**
**All other Industries**

Iowa's artist labor force has increased by **36%** over the last decade.

-NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, NATIONAL ARTS STATISTICS AND EVIDENCEBASED REPORTING CENTER. 2015-2022.



## IOWA'S CREATIVE SECTOR AT WORK

Nearly 42,000 Iowans are employed in the creative sector. Here's where they work.

**Employment and Value Added by Major Categories (2022)**

| CORE ARTS AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION | JOBS | % OF CORE ACP JOBS | VALUE ADDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| Performing Arts | 1,848 | 20% | $ 136 M |
| Museums | 1,044 | 11% | $ 65 M |
| Advertising | 1,392 | 15% | $ 218 M |
| Architecture and Design | 1,745 | 19% | $ 277 M |
| Photography | 580 | 6% | $67 M |
| Creating and Performing Art | 252 | 3% | $ 60 M |
| Arts Education and Education Services | 2,308 | 25% | $ 63 M |
| **TOTALS** | **9,169** | | **$885 M** |

| RELATED CREATIVE INDUSTRIES | JOBS | % OF SUPPORTING ACP AND CI JOBS | VALUE ADDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| Publishing: Books and Press | 1,772 | 6% | $ 456 M |
| Film, Audio-Visual Media, Broadcasting | 4,782 | 15% | $ 908 M |
| **TOTAL JOBS** | **6,554** | **21%** | **$1.36 B** |

| SUPPORTING ARTS AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND RELATED CREATIVE INDUSTRIES | JOBS | % OF SUPPORTING ACP AND CI JOBS | VALUE ADDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| Retail, Manufacturing, Goods and Support Services | **24,433** | **79%** | **$2.4 B** |

| ALL OTHER INDUSTRIES | JOBS | | VALUE ADDED |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **1,656** | | **$276,041,000** |

| TOTAL JOBS AND VALUE ADDED | 41,800 | | $4.9 B |
|---|---|---|---|

ARTS AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION SATELLITE ACCOUNT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS, AND NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS.




SPOTLIGHT:

## IOWA CITY

Known as "the greatest small city for the arts", Iowa City's concentration of creative industries is 22% higher than the national average. More than 1,200 creative workers are employed within the city, generating $25.5 million in creative industry earnings.

(CREATIVE VITALITY SUITE, 2022).

# 3. IOWA NONPROFIT ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofit arts and culture organizations are businesses. They employ people locally, purchase supplies and services from nearby businesses, and engage in the marketing and promotion of their cities and regions. Their very act of doing business–creating, presenting, exhibiting, engaging–has a positive economic impact and improves community well-being.

**Iowa nonprofit arts and cultural organizations have a major return on investment, generating:**

**$705 MILLION**
IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

**$428 MILLION**
BY ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

**$277 MILLION**
BY AUDIENCES

**12,441 JOBS**

**$151 MILLION**
IN LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL TAX REVENUE

**$277 MILLION**
IN EXPENDITURES BY VISITORS TO ARTS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

**$431 MILLION**
IN PERSONAL INCOME FOR IOWA RESIDENTS

OPPOSITE: Guests arrive for opening night of the Refocus Film Festival, presented by FilmScene at the historic Englert Theatre in the Downtown Iowa City Cultural and Entertainment District. Photography by David Greedy.

# IOWA ARTS NONPROFITS ARE ECONOMIC ENGINES

The results of the sixth national Arts & Economic Prosperity study (AEP6) were released in the fall of 2023. Nearly **6,000 Iowans** and **565 nonprofit organizations**, representing **10 Iowa communities** and regions, **participated in AEP6** between May 2022 and June 2023.

AEP6 is an economic and social impact study of the nation's nonprofit arts and culture industry, conducted by Americans for the Arts. A total of 373 communities, representing all 50 states and Puerto Rico, participated in AEP6.

## RESULTS BY REGION

| | ECONOMIC ACTIVITY | BY ARTS ORGANIZATIONS | BY AUDIENCES | JOBS | TAX REVENUE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DAVENPORT | $29M | $16.2M | $12.8M | 712 | $6.2M |
| MARION | $9M | $5.4 | $3.6 | 122 | $1.4M |
| MASON CITY | $2.2M | $1.1M | $1.1M | 30 | $38.1M |
| JOHNSON COUNTY | $31.9M | $15.6M | $16.2M | 528 | $5.4M |
| GREATER DES MOINES | $310M | $162M | $149M | 5,439 | $66.9M |
| GREATER CEDAR VALLEY | $129M | $101M | $28M | 1,545 | $27.5M |
| AMES | $18.2M | $10.6M | $7.6M | 358 | $3M |
| POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY | $14.9M | $14M | $900K | 244 | $2.67M |
| DUBUQUE | $70M | $40M | $30M | 1,527 | $13.6M |
| SIOUX CITY | $9.6M | $5.4M | $4.2M | 162 | $1.7M |



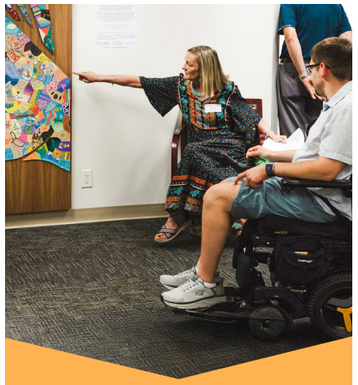
ABOVE: An excerpt from Tom Mattingly's world premier Love Letters. Photo courtesy of Ballet Des Moines.

*"Investment in the nonprofit arts and culture industry builds the communities where people want to live and work. It is where entrepreneurs and creative economy businesses are launched and where nighttime economies flourish.* ***When we prioritize diverse cultural expressions and traditions, it nurtures social connections, promotes community pride and identity, and boosts tourism by providing authentic experiences that draw visitors to the community.*** *If visitors have a positive experience, it may become a place to work—and ultimately one in which to live."*

-AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS, ARTS & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY STUDY 6

## IOWA ARTS NONPROFITS ARE VITAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

| PERCENTAGE OF NONPROFIT ARTS AND CULTURE ATTENDEES THAT AGREE WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE ARTS IN THE STATE OF IOWA | AGREE |
|---|---|
| *"This venue or facility is an important pillar for me within my community."* | 83.8% |
| *"I would feel a great sense of loss if this activity or venue were no longer available."* | 86.3% |
| *"This activity or venue is inspiring a sense of pride in this neighborhood or community."* | 90.3% |
| *"My attendance is my way of ensuring that this activity or venue is preserved for future generations."* | 87.4% |



**1 OUT OF 10 IOWA NONPROFITS HAS A MISSION RELATED TO THE ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE**

**2,883** estimated number of Iowa nonprofit arts and cultural organizations

(AEP6 STUDY, 2022)

SPOTLIGHT:

## GREATER CEDAR VALLEY

Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences account for **$129M in annual economic activity** and more than **1,500 Jobs** in the Greater Cedar Valley of Waterloo and Cedar Falls.

OPPOSITE: Students arrive at a youth concert presented by the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony. UPPER RIGHT: As part of its Momentum Arts Program, Community Support Advocates serves unique individuals from across central Iowa through hands-on workshops and collaborative art projects. Photo credit: Community Support Advocates.



ABOVE: Iowa artist Ann Brugenhemke working in her studio at the Harvester Artist Lofts in Council Bluffs.

# IV. LEVERAGING CREATIVE SECTOR IMPACT

## 1. EMPOWERING CREATIVE BUSINESSES

Artists and creative businesses enrich the fabric of Iowa communities and local economies. Much work remains to be done to raise the visibility and livelihoods of these creative entrepreneurs, leverage their talents for civic initiatives, and better connect them to existing business supports.

### Key Considerations

- A range of small business development resources already exist to support Iowa artists; however, there is an **urgent need for improved access and navigation for creatives.** The creative sector may not see itself in existing resources, due to perceptions around who they are for. Intentional partnerships between higher education, small business success organizations, and arts partners are helping and could be expanded.
- **Opportunities to grow earnings, access to capital, and business development support are Iowa creatives' top needs.** In smaller communities, artists may also be challenged by a lack of visibility and marketing opportunities and stigmas around pursuing art as a career.
- Iowans recognize **a need to involve artists in civic efforts to strengthen local processes and civic engagement.** Iowa leaders emphasized a need to bring artists onto more boards and commissions and into the design process. They also see a need to identify individuals who can translate between the different languages and processes of art-making and local government. As one leader said, "it could really help if we had more cross pollination between the arts community and appointed and elected officials, especially in rural areas."
- In some communities, city code may need to be updated to allow for greater flexibility for establishing creative businesses. **Creatives are seeking assistance with navigating complex planning, zoning, special event permits** and processes.




**ARTISTS ARE 3.6 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE SELF-EMPLOYED**

ARTISTS AND OTHER CULTURAL WORKERS: A STATISTICAL PORTRAIT", NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, 2019.

ABOVE: Artist Robert Sunderman demonstrates for students from his studio through the Artist Connect program offered by ARTSwork, a Des Moines-based arts nonprofit.



**SPOTLIGHT:**
**GABBI TORRES, CLINTON**

Through community art projects and the Paint it Back mural program, Torres works to activate and transform community spaces into unexpected arts experiences and gathering places.



BOTTOM: Caption: Iowa musician James Tutson performs with his band James Tutson and the Rollback.



The District: Czech Village & New Bohemia in Cedar Rapids - reborn after a historic flood - today is home to two leading museums, artist studios, and NewBo City Market, which fosters regional economic development by uplifting entrepreneurs and artists. Photo credit: Cedar Rapids Tourism.

# 2. ENHANCING CREATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

lowans view infrastructure for the creative sector – including the strategic development of districts, flexible and repurposed facilities, and dedicated workspaces for artists and creative businesses – as a statewide need and priority.

## Key Considerations

- **Space is a rate-limiting factor for the creative sector** in urban and rural communities. Iowans shared a need for more scalable and flexible space for creatives to create, rehearse and perform and sell their works. Identifying dedicated funding streams for upkeep is also critical.

- Iowa leaders see **opportunities for cities to think more creatively about their assets.** Early efforts, like murals, can lead to larger projects with greater investment and multi-sector involvement. State and local support for building rehabilitation costs and bringing property owners on board with transformation efforts are very important.

- Leaders noted the importance of infrastructure grants that emphasize major attractions but also seek funding for smaller, catalytic types of projects. As one leader noted, **"it's important for the state to support programming on the small and on the transformational level."** Unrealistic match expectations can also pose a barrier to fundraising.

- Iowa leaders see **opportunities to better integrate the creative sector within housing and district development strategies.** Cultural and entertainment districts (CED) can have a positive effect on property values and the local tax base. Commercial property tax rollbacks have created budget challenges for some in SSMID districts.

- **Affordable housing and childcare are crucial** to attract and keep the creative workforce, like other skilled workers.

- **Mainframe Studios in Des Moines was cited by multiple leaders as a model for attracting and retaining creative workers.** Opened in 2017, today the fully renovated facility offers 180 studios supporting more than 220 artists across 30+ disciplines.



*"When we employ and provide opportunities to artists here in Iowa, they'll continue creating locally; when we have creative and talented communities, then we all win."*

- IOWA FILMMAKER

*"We need to focus more on the "cycle of disinvestment" and what changes this – it's often the arts and culture coming in and rejuvenating neighborhoods or spaces. It all comes down to community vibrancy and having unique cultural assets."*

- EASTERN IOWA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

*"Creatives are like water and can flow into spaces other people can't and fill them up."*

-REGIONAL ARTS FORUM PARTICIPANT



TOP: Quilt making sessions take place at the Azubuike African American Council for the Arts in Davenport. BOTTOM: Iowa filmmaker Antoinette Lavalle directs the action on the set of her film Peck in Des Moines.

# 3. EXPANDING NONPROFIT CAPACITY AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Iowa foundations are increasingly focused on community and cultural vibrancy, while arts nonprofits drive impact through collaboration, adapt to an uncertain funding landscape, and look to cultivate new volunteer, staff and board leadership.

## Key Considerations

- **Community foundations and regional affiliates are investing more in what makes places unique** through place-based arts and culture projects. These efforts can be transformational for smaller communities.
- **Collaboration and strategic partnerships are essential—and evolving towards connecting the arts to other sectors.** Arts nonprofits are increasingly collaborating to drive impact within other sectors (e.g. health, education, tourism). In some communities, a single nonprofit may serve as a 'backbone organization' and provide back-end administrative support, space and other resources to one or more smaller arts organizations—driving greater efficiency and delivery of services.
- **Declines in corporate giving are of concern for many arts organizations.** Some larger companies have shifted funding priorities, scaled back giving, or are no longer investing in their local communities. For performing arts organizations, this trend may be exacerbated by lower ticket sales, as **attendance has not returned to pre-pandemic levels for many presenters.**
- **Iowa arts leaders stressed the importance of stable, ongoing sources of funding**, such as hotel-motel taxes, as a means of ensuring the sustainability of cultural organizations.
- **Iowans are looking to cultivate the next generation of leaders to bridge gaps in board and volunteer service.** Iowans see opportunities to better engage older adults and retirees as volunteers and younger adults through leadership roles and advisory councils.
- **Iowans shared concerns about compensation levels at arts nonprofits.** Wages are a significant concern.
- Related to this, investments in individual leaders are viewed as vitally important. Fellowships, paid internships and apprenticeships help to invest in actual people doing the work.

"WE CAN ONLY GO SO FAR – AS GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES OR AS AN ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR – WITHOUT PRIVATE INDUSTRY. AT THE CITY LEVEL WE SEE IT'S ALL ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING ALLIANCES AMONG PRIVATE, CITY, AND NONPROFIT PARTNERS."

- MAYOR TIFFANY O'DONNELL, CITY OF CEDAR RAPIDS

OPPOSITE: Bird Dog, one of more than 40 colorful murals found throughout downtown Dubuque, was created by artists WERC & GeraLuz through an initiative led by Voices Productions. Brad Noonan Photography




## SPOTLIGHT: DUBUQUE

Colorful murals are found throughout Iowa's first city, which is home to dozens of arts organizations, independently owned creative businesses, and anchor cultural institutions that add $70 million annually to the local economy.




SPOTLIGHT:

## COUNCIL BLUFFS

Pottawattamie Arts, Culture and Entertainment (PACE) serves as a hub for multiple arts, cultural and historical organizations in Southwest Iowa. Formed in 2016, PACE leveraged state grants and private funds to transform a historic warehouse into the 50,400-sq. foot Hoff Family Arts Center, which features a theater, culinary arts kitchen, gallery, dance studios, and more.

Iowans see the State's leadership and public investment in the creative sector as essential to building alliances and as a signal for private investment.

### KEY FINDINGS:

**+ The State's role in convening, partnering, and facilitating with communities is viewed favorably by Iowa leaders.** Comprehensive planning and visioning efforts are appreciated by Iowa leaders to ensure projects reflect community input and priorities.

**+ A spectrum of resources is desired to support the growth of creative businesses at different stages of development.** Capacity-building support is valued by small and early-stage creative organizations, while major anchor organizations seek greater funding to expand programs.

**+ Local and city finances are an urgent concern.** Iowa leaders expressed concerns that demands on city budgets, combined with constraints created by the new combined general levy, may lead to a downgrading of arts and cultural programs and cities face tough choices. As one leader said, "the arts and public safety are both critical."

**+ The matching power of State dollars is an asset.** Arts and cultural organizations have demonstrated they can leverage state investment multiple times over in private philanthropy. While local and private support are key, there is a strong desire for more direct State investment in the arts at a local and county level, in particular.

*"The creative sector complements other industries and can boost the efficacy of state economic development policies, partnerships and plans."*

- NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION, 2019

EVERY $1 OF DIRECT PUBLIC FUNDING LEVERAGES UP TO $9 IN PRIVATE AND OTHER LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS.

SOURCE: NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

OPPOSITE: Hoff Family Arts and Culture Center



ABOVE: Brucemore and Theatre Cedar Rapids partnered on an outdoor children's theatre production, held on the grounds of the historic site.

In recent years, many states have seen success by keeping the arts and culture industry at the forefront of policy and investment planning, resulting in increased economic competitiveness and a more attractive national profile for tourism and talent acquisition.

Iowans agree: the creative community is an asset worth leveraging. With simple and incremental adjustments today, we can set the stage for even greater growth and vitality in all sectors of our state in the coming years.

## WHERE IOWA RANKS: MIDWEST STATES

| STATE | PER CAPITA SPENDING ON STATE ARTS FUNDING | NATIONAL RANK |
|---|---|---|
| Illinois | $5.22 | 5 |
| Indiana | $0.76 | 36 |
| **IOWA** | **$0.69** | **42** |
| Michigan | $0.88 | 31 |
| Minnesota | $9.62 | 1 |
| North Dakota | $1.66 | 17 |
| Ohio | $2.16 | 15 |
| South Dakota | $1.20 | 25 |
| Wisconsin | $0.18 | 49 |

SOURCE: HTTPS://NASAA-ARTS.ORG/NASAA_RESEARCH

MIDWEST STATES AVERAGED 10% GROWTH IN ECONOMIC VALUE ADDED BY ARTS AND CULTURE TO THEIR ECONOMIES. THIS SURPASSES THE RATE (5.9%) OF TOTAL U.S. ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE SAME PERIOD.

SOURCE: ARTS MIDWEST, MIDWEST STRONG: WHAT RECENT DATA SAYS ABOUT THE MIDWEST'S CREATIVE SECTOR

## SUMMARIZED ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Iowa Cultural Coalition works with statewide partners to advance strategic actions and investments that can grow the impact of Iowa's creative sector to grow our state. The following recommendations resulted from the Create in Iowa process conducted with the Iowa Arts Council:

### Short-Term

- **A** **Better integrate the creative sector** within strategies led by foundations, chambers, cities and tourism organizations to drive rural, community and economic development efforts.
- **B** **Promote better regional coordination and explore cross-sector partnerships to leverage** expanded investment in the full range of Iowa's creative sector.
- **C** **Educate and inform key stakeholders** about the creative economy and local policies and investments that have produced results. Include the creative economy in every other story our state is trying to tell.
- **D** **Better connect Iowans working in the creative sector** to existing business development and support opportunities.
- **E** **Following the example of other Midwestern states**, establish a Creative Economy Task Force to recommend additional strategies to incentivize and leverage Iowa's growing creative sector to meet key goals related to economic and population growth.
- **F** **Seek pathways to increased investment in Iowa's growing creative sector**, which is responsible for more than 42,000 jobs and nearly $5 billion in annual economic activity.

### Longer-term

1. **A** **Learning from states** like Nebraska (Nebraska Cultural Endowment) and Texas (Texas Cultural Endowment Fund), **evaluate models of public-private endowments and trusts** that can leverage state investment and **matching philanthropic contributions to promote the long-term sustainability** of Iowa's nonprofit arts and cultural sector.



# V. CALL TO ACTION

When we support the arts, we are investing in an industry that stimulates and grows Iowa's economy, supports local jobs and businesses, and contributes to building healthy, vibrant, and more livable communities.

## THE NEXT ACT IS YOURS

### Become a Create in Iowa Partner

There is more information and resources at iowaculturalcoalition.com. Sign up for the newsletter and stay abreast of what is happening with Iowa's creative sector

### Share the Report

Tell your fellow Iowans about the important impact the arts and creative sector have on education, the economy, health and well-being and our way of life.

### Keep Informed and Engaged

Stay informed about potential legislation impacting the arts and creative sector by signing up for ICC newsletters at iowaculturalcoalition.com and following the Iowa Cultural Coalition on social media. Use the report's key findings and data in your own messaging. There are opportunities to share what is important to you.

"MAKE THE ARTS "PLAN A."

-REGIONAL ARTS FORUM ATTENDEE

"WHAT WE INVEST IN TODAY WILL DETER-MINE HOW WE GROW TOMORROW."

-JAMES CHUNG, REACH ADVISORS
THE TOMORROW PLAN SPEAKER SERIES
GREATER DSM PARTNERSHIP

*"Your best collaborators will come from areas that surprise you and that are unexpected. Start by talking to different groups and seeing what possibilities there are."*

-REGIONAL ARTS FORUM ATTENDEE

OPPOSITE:Marshalltown's annual Festival Cultural celebrates the community's rich cultural diversity. Photo Credit: Arts + Culture Alliance, Marshalltown.

# VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Iowa Cultural Coalition wishes to thank the nearly 500 Iowans whose voices and ideas animate this report, including the Iowa leaders and organizations who took part in statewide surveys and interviews in 2024.

## STATEWIDE SURVEY AND LEADER INTERVIEWS

Between June-August 2024, McIver Communications, Inc., an Iowa-based firm conducted a statewide survey of Iowa arts, cultural, and civic leaders. 130 unique organizational representatives responded to the survey.

McIver Communications, Inc. also engaged 15 Iowa leaders in one-to-one leader interviews. Interviewees primarily included CEOs, executive directors or senior leaders of regional or statewide service organizations, major companies, and private foundations or philanthropic organizations. Interviews spanned between 30-60 minutes in length.

### Leader Interview Participants

- Bravo Greater Des Moines
- Community Colleges for Iowa
- Community Foundation for Western Iowa
- Greater Des Moines Partnership
- Grow Cedar Valley
- Iowa Alliance for Arts Education
- Iowa Council of Foundations
- Iowa Cultural and Entertainment District Leaders
- Iowa League of Cities
- Iowa Rural Development Council
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
- Iowa State Association of Counties
- Iowa West Foundation
- Institute for Decision Making, University of Northern Iowa
- John Deere Des Moines Works
- United Way of Central Iowa

### Public Input Meetings

This report also draws on public information collected and shared by the Iowa Arts Council (IAC). The IAC conducted a series of six regional meetings between February-April 2024, which engaged more than 300 Iowans. Each in-person event featured a discussion among local arts and civic leaders about issues facing their communities and the opportunities available to address these challenges through the arts. Regional meetings and hosts:

- Northeast: ArtHaus, Decorah
- East Central: Theatre Cedar Rapids, Cedar Rapids
- Southeast: Fairfield Arts & Convention Center, Fairfield
- South Central: IEDA Offices, Des Moines
- Southwest: Iowa Western Community College, Council Bluffs
- Northwest: Sioux City Art Center, Sioux City

OPPOSITE: Isaac Campell. Coralville Central Installation.



# SOURCES


- "America's Creative Economy: A Study of Recent Conceptions, Definitions, and Approaches to Measurement across the USA", A Report from the Creative Economy Coalition (CEC), a Working Group of the National Creativity Network, 2013.
- Artists and Other Cultural Workers: A Statistical Portrait, National Endowment for the Arts, 2019.
- "Arts Attendance, Art-Making, and Social Connectedness: Spring/Summer 2024", National Endowment for the Arts and U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey, 2024.
- "Arts and Creativity Drive Economies and Build Resilience", Douglas S. Noonan, Ph.D., Indiana University Indianapolis, 2024.
- Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and National Endowment for the Arts.
- Arts & Economic Prosperity Study 6, Americans for the Arts, 2023. Full report findings are available at https://aep6.americansforthearts.org.
- Business Publication Corporation and Baton Global, "Envision Iowa: Statewide Leaders Economic Outlook Survey Report', 2022.
- Creative Economy State Profiles, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. Accessed online at https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles.
- "Des Moines Music Economy Assessment & Strategy", Sound Diplomacy, 2019.
- "Ready to Innovate", The Conference Board, September 2008.
- "Reinvesting in Arts Education", National Endowment for the Arts, 2011.
- "Rural Prosperity through the Arts & Creative Sector", National Governors' Association, 2019.
- Timothy Wojan and Bonnie Nichols, "Rural Arts, Design, and Innovation: Research Findings from the Rural Establishment Innovation Survey," U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Office of Research & Analysis, National Endowment for the Arts, 2017.
- Accessed online at https://www.arts.gov/ADP15.
- "50 States of Arts Participation: A geographical analysis of results from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts," National Endowment for the Arts, 2022.
- SMU DataArts, The Arts Vibrancy Index Report, 2023. Accessed at https://culturaldata.org/what-we-do/arts-vibrancy-index
- Creative Vitality Suite, The 30 Most Creative Small Cities, 2022. Accessed at https://cvsuite.org/cvlist-homepage/the-30-most-creative-cities/#iowacity.


OPPOSITE: Paint Madison County Plein Air Festival, Winterset Cultural District.




Students take the stage during Girls Rock! Des Moines’ popular summer camp.