

Public and Private Investment in the Arts Creates Multiple Benefits for Civic Life

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies documents diverse economic, educational, health and civic benefits derived from public investment in the Arts.

With communities that are annually cited among the top national rankings of livable cities, Johnson County offers a high quality of life for residents, businesses, tourists and visitors. The Arts help define our community's culture, heritage, character and magnetism. Johnson County offers a broad array of Arts offerings, and residents demonstrate a strong affinity for the Arts by:

- Delivering the highest attendance rates and largest philanthropic contributions to Arts and cultural organizations across the Kansas City region.
- Supporting and participating in Arts activities at a level that is among the highest in the nation.

Investment in the Arts benefits the Johnson County community across multiple aspects of civic life, adding to a high quality of life, including the many ways described here.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The Arts help communities to prosper.

Arts organizations and creative enterprises make significant contributions to state and local economies, generating employment and tax revenues and providing goods and services.

The Arts put people to work.

The Arts employ artists, managers, marketers, technicians, teachers, designers, carpenters, and workers in a wide variety of other trades and professions. The 905,000 creative businesses in the United States employ 3.35 million workers.

In Johnson County, 4.5% of businesses are part of the creative sector, and 2% of employees in the county work in these firms. These statistics are higher than national average.

The Arts attract tourism revenue.

Cultural tourism contributes more than \$171 billion each year to the U.S. economy. Cultural tourists spend more than twice as much as local arts patrons. Johnson County features many Arts performances, programs, exhibits, festivals and events that attract thousands of visitors each year.

The Arts are a business magnet.

Arts organizations purchase goods and services that help local merchants thrive. Arts audiences buy admission tickets and spend additional money on transportation, food, lodging, gifts and

souvenirs. A strong Arts community attracts companies that want to offer their employees and clients a creative climate and community with high amenity value.

The Arts give industries a competitive edge.

American companies face an international marketplace in which value is increasingly determined by a product's artistic qualities, uniqueness, performance and design. Creative workers help businesses to innovate product lines and effectively market their services.

The Arts enhance property values.

The Arts make neighborhoods attractive places to live, work and play. The Arts help to revitalize blighted areas and strengthen both commercial and residential housing markets.

EDUCATIONAL AND WORK-FORCE BENEFITS

Students engaged in the Arts perform better academically.

Numerous longitudinal research studies document that students who receive Arts education exhibit improvements on standardized test scores in other subjects, including reading and math.

The Arts help kids to succeed in school and life.

Students who receive Arts education have stronger social skills, improved motivation to learn, and more esteem for themselves and their peers. Arts education creates a positive school environment in which learning and human development can occur.

Arts education provides skills critical to 21st-century success.

In a global economy driven by knowledge and ideas, the best-paying jobs require workers with creativity and higher-order thinking and communication skills. Companies are increasingly looking for these qualities in the workers they recruit. While studying the Arts, students hone their perceptual, analytic and interpretive skills while developing creative thinking, communications and problem-solving abilities.

The Arts address a shortage of creative workers.

Eighty-five percent of business leaders say they can't find enough job applicants with creativity and innovation skills. Arts education, K-12 and beyond, is part of the solution to this challenge. The Arts keep kids in school. Numerous studies have found that Arts education programs help to reduce dropout rates, increase student engagement and raise educational attainment levels.

The Arts help at-risk youth.

Participating in arts programs decreases young people's involvement in delinquent behavior, increases academic outcomes for disadvantaged children, and improves students' attitudes about themselves and their future.

The American public believes the Arts are vital to a well-rounded education.

Studies indicate that a majority of voters, regardless of political affiliation, are willing to cast their ballots against elected officials who oppose education programs designed to foster student imaginations.

CIVIC BENEFITS

The Arts contribute to community vitality.

A growing body of research points to the Arts as an engine for civic renewal. Citizen engagement in the arts creates a strong shared identity and instills pride in a state's cultural heritage.

The Arts bring public spaces to life.

Artworks and arts activities make public spaces livable, attractive and distinctive, engaging residents in the creation of welcoming and sustainable places to live, work, play and raise families.

The Arts contribute to collective efficacy.

The Arts build resiliency, foster social capital, strengthen interpersonal ties and empower residents, which nurtures the collective efficacy of a community to address major problems, including poverty.

The Arts foster civic participation and a strong democracy.

The Arts enhance our ability to illustrate viewpoints, to engage issues, to inspire action and to see things through the eyes of others—all necessary components of a thriving democracy. Americans who participate in the Arts are more likely to engage in other aspects of community life, such as voting and volunteering.

The Arts are a communications asset in a global society.

The Arts build bridges among people. They facilitate intercultural understanding and provide a common lexicon for building relationships in an increasingly diverse and global society.

HEALTH BENEFITS

The Arts promote physical health and expedite medical recovery.

The Arts have a positive effect on physical health and help facilitate recovery processes of ill and injured people. Arts engagement enhances patient resilience and coping skills, and it has been associated with reducing hospital stays and decreasing health care related infection rates and need for pain treatments.

The Arts contribute to healthy aging.

Seniors who participate regularly in the Arts report better health, fewer doctor's visits and less medication usage. The Arts can help ameliorate age-related conditions, such as dementia and cognitive decline.

The Arts can help wounded warriors and trauma survivors.

The Arts have been used effectively to treat soldiers, combat veterans and survivors of physical and emotional trauma. The Arts open avenues for expression, engagement and trauma recovery.

The Arts improve medical environments.

Arts opportunities for patients in hospitals and medical facilities increase their levels of satisfaction with the health care experience. The Arts are good for mental and emotional wellness and can be an effective treatment tool for mental and emotional health issues. The Arts can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, and they can increase self-esteem.

Source: *Why Government Should Support the Arts* Policy Brief

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