The Economic Impact of Arts and Culture

One hundred ninety-three nonprofit arts organizations in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties participated in the study. Their combined spending in 2010 was $152 million, and they employed 5,397 FTE. These arts organizations combined rank as the region’s 14th largest employer.

More than 4.6 million people attended an arts event in 2010, and spent an average of $21.84 per person as a result of attending the event, above and beyond the cost of admission, for a total of $101.5 million. For example, when patrons attend a cultural event, they may pay to park their car, eat dinner in a restaurant, shop in nearby stores, and pay a babysitter when they get home. Non-local attendees may spend the night in a hotel. These dollars generate commerce for local businesses.

The combined spending of arts organizations and their audiences totaled $253.5 million. This spending supports 8,523 full-time equivalent jobs in the region and generates more than $21 million in local and state government revenue. Investments in arts and culture pay fantastic dividends for the greater economy and help fund other vital public services.

More than 16% of all attendees were visitors from outside the area, contributing more than $32 million to local hotels, restaurants, retail shops and other local companies. About 70% of these visitors reported that their primary reason for travelling was specifically to attend that arts and culture event.