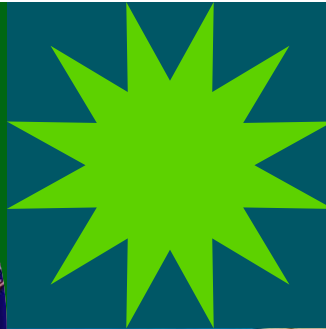


OUR CREATIVE FUTURE

A regional framework to advance arts & culture for all

Portland Metro Region including Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties



A Cultural Plan for
Portland's Tri-county Region



*“Art isn’t just a tool to help us cope;
it’s a way to tell the stories of our lives
and what we understand.”*

— Houseless Youth Discussion Participant



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"I remember I didn't feel so proud to be a part of art groups such as Ballet Folklórico because I was embarrassed to be different as a kid, although I really liked ballet. What we need to do is say this is your culture and you need to embrace it. Being a youth is hard, but it's even harder being a youth in a different culture."

— Latino Community Conversation Participant



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Land Acknowledgment

The tri-county Portland area rests on traditional village sites of the Multnomah, Wasco, Cowlitz, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Bands of Chinook, Tualatin, Kalapuya, Molalla, and many other Tribes who made their homes along the Columbia River.

We recognize that the tri-county region today is a community of many diverse Native peoples who continue to live, work, and contribute to the dynamic fabric of our shared world. We respectfully acknowledge and honor all Indigenous communities—past, present, future—and are grateful for their ongoing and vibrant presence.

We also acknowledge that the reverberations of systemic policies of genocide, relocation, and assimilation still impact Native American families today. Recognizing that acknowledgment without action is meaningless, contributors to this plan endeavored to include Indigenous input and perspective in its development, and to root our recommendations in principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion aimed at arresting and remedying the legacy of exclusion and oppression.

We respect the work of Indigenous leaders and families, and pledge to make ongoing efforts to recognize, include, and uplift their knowledge, creativity, and resilience.



Our Creative Future Steering Committee

The Steering Committee represented the voice of the community and assisted greatly in advising the planning effort, assisting with and leading engagement efforts, and co-creating the plan with the consultant team. The committee met 12 times over 15 months.

Trieste Andrews, *Oregon City Arts Commission*

Nicole Bradin, *Explore Tualatin Valley*

Julie Bunker, *Milestone Initiatives*

Joe Cantrell, *Artist*

Gus Castaneda, *Aloft Hotels*

Corinn deTorres, *Chapel Theatre*

Jerry Foster, *PassinArt*

Subashini Ganesan-Forbes, *New Expressive Works*

John Goodwin, *Portland Art Museum*

Kimberly Howard Wade, *Caldera Arts*

Joaquin Lopez, *Creative Laureate of Portland*

Jaimie Lorenzini, *City of Happy Valley*

Barbara Mason, *Artist*

Jeremy Okai Davis, *Artist*

Sushmita Poddar, *Small business Owner*

Sankar Raman, *The Immigrant Story*

Barbara Steinfeld, *Consultant*

Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, *MERC Commission*

Toni Tabora-Roberts, *Consultant*

Tonisha Toler, *Collins Foundation*

Tammy Jo Wilson, *Art in Oregon*

Committee members were nominated by officials from participating jurisdictions, including Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties; the cities of Beaverton, Hillsboro, and Portland; the Metro regional government; and the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC). They represent diverse backgrounds, races, ethnicities, cultural practices, and ways of knowing (e.g., disability; Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and People of Color; LGBTQIA+ identities; and veteran communities). They also represent multiple sectors of the community, including arts, culture, creative economy, education, business, social justice, “unlikely allies,” and others.



Project Management Team

Dianne Alves, Executive Director, Clackamas County Arts Alliance

Laura Becker, Arts Program Manager, City of Beaverton

Cynthia Castro, Chief of Staff, Commissioner Sharon Meieran, Multnomah County

Jeff Hawthorne, Arts Program Manager, City of Portland

Stephan Herrera, Arts Policy Advisor and Council Liaison, City of Portland

Michele McCall-Wallace, Cultural Arts Manager, City of Hillsboro

Mario Mesquita, Manager of Advocacy and Engagement, RACC

Cristina Nieves, Policy Director, Commissioner Sharon Meieran, Multnomah County

Nancy Nye, Senior Manager for Arts, Culture and Events, City of Hillsboro

Raziah Roushan, Executive Director, Tualatin Valley Creates, Washington County

Robyn Williams, Executive Director, Portland's 5 Centers for the Arts, Metro

Consultant Team

Cultural Planning Group

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Marlena Reese McKnight, Ed.D.

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Metropolitan Group

Eric Block

Nicole Adams

LaShawn McCarthy Jr.

Michael Alexander, Ret., Urban League of Portland

Kathleen Holt, Holt Strategies

Funders

This effort would not be possible without support from the following generous funders:

City of Beaverton

City of Hillsboro

City of Portland

Clackamas County

Metro

The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation

Multnomah County

Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

Tualatin Valley Creates

Washington County





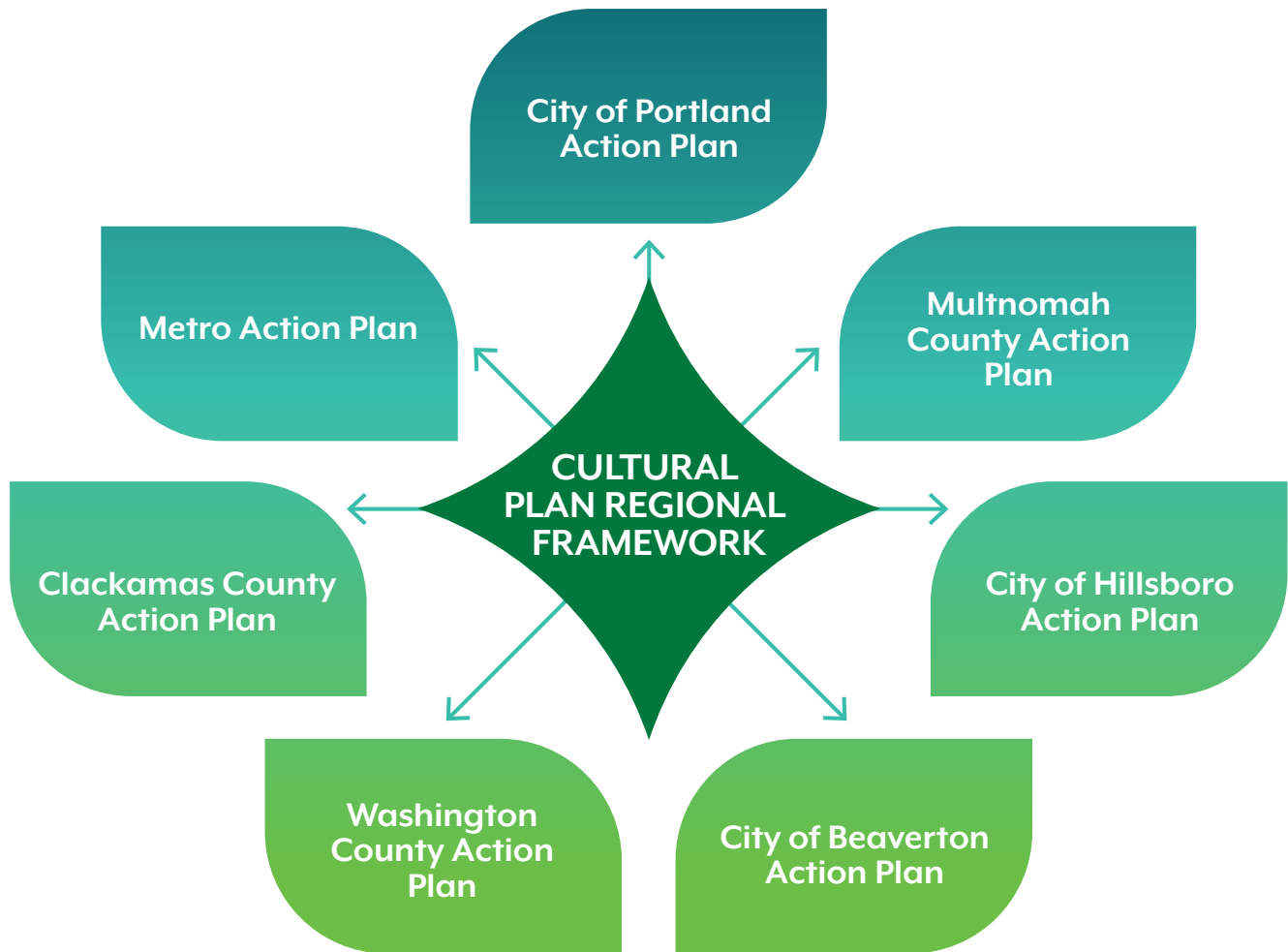
“My vision: arts are integrated into all aspects of life and community, not just in arts spaces. Funded by government, buy-in from small business and corporations.”

— Clackamas County Community Conversation Participant

ABOUT THIS PLAN

Our Creative Future is a regional framework to advance arts and culture throughout the tri-county Portland area. There are seven local governments currently participating and creating action plans based on the regional framework. Other cities, towns, communities, and individuals are invited to use the framework as a resource.

Regional Cultural Plan Framework



All communities have access to the framework to adapt to their community

Our Creative Future is a community-led vision for arts and culture in the tri-county region.

The expression of arts and culture around us is vital to what makes our region great. It gathers us as a community, gives us a new perspective on our neighbors, and helps heal and address our region's most critical issues. What was true in 2009 when the last regional plan was created is even more evident 15 years later. The arts are an integral part of our everyday lives.

This plan, Our Creative Future, is a regional framework that is positioned to realize the community's shared vision, and that every community may use to advance arts and culture for their residents.

From the murals that rose up during the social justice movement to the poetry and essays that were written to preserve this moment in history, we turned to art as an expression of beauty and pain. As our community navigated loneliness and isolation throughout the pandemic, the festivals and performances in our outdoor spaces brought us together safely. We are now turning to cultural events and creative businesses to revitalize our post-pandemic economy, and we are investing in arts-based programs to help individuals heal from the traumas of racism and homelessness.

All community members rely on our arts and culture system in big and small ways to make our home a joyful, vibrant, and resilient place to live. Our region's leaders partnered with community members to answer a central question: "What do we want our future cultural life to look like for the people who live here?"

During the planning process, the steering committee served as the community voice.

Together, we reached over 3,500 people across 50 listening sessions, 40+ interviews, and two regional surveys. We spoke with artists of all disciplines, culture bearers, creatives, arts and cultural nonprofits, creative businesses, donors, audience members, aspiring professionals, students, amateurs, and others who enjoy arts and culture in all forms.

What we heard was clear. Arts and culture are fundamental to the livability and health of each community. We see the work of artists, creatives, culture bearers, and cultural nonprofits as:

- Essential to the region's economic vitality
- Critical to promoting a sense of well-being and belonging
- Assisting with our most pressing community issues, such as homelessness, urban vitality, mental health, transportation, affordable housing, public safety, and more

It is clear that artists and cultural nonprofits make a tangible difference in people's lives while supporting government priorities. The arts and cultural community are part of the solution to create impact!

The community-based steering committee reviewed the connections and conversations and created a shared vision for arts and culture:

A tri-county region where every resident can access relevant and dynamic arts, culture, and creative experiences as an essential part of our lives.



The foundation of that vision is a healthy arts and cultural community supported by our governments, community leaders, artists, creatives, culture bearers, and each of you.

We are working with community and government partners to fully resource this plan and advance the community's vision. As part of this work, the steering committee created a set of shared goals with strategies to be tailored to each jurisdiction. Our goals are to:

- Build towards an inclusive arts and cultural community that reflects, serves, and welcomes all
- Forge purposeful connection and coordination within the arts and cultural community

- Empower the arts and cultural community with sufficient, sustainable funding and other resources
- Drive economic growth through the arts and cultural community
- Utilize the arts and cultural community as a vital partner in the health and development of every community

These goals and strategies will help us meet the needs of our local communities while providing powerful ways for us to partner as a region.

This work is a call to action for our local governments, community leaders, and the arts and cultural community to continue to work together to build a sustainable, vibrant future. Our Creative Future awaits!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

Ways to help implement this plan in addition to local government action:

ADVOCATE

- Participate in and support advocacy for funding, programs, and change in your community.
- Participate in and support advocacy for implementation of the recommendations of this plan.

PARTICIPATE

- Participate in directories, information sharing, networks, calendars, and joint marketing.
- Attend community convenings and stay connected.

LEAD

- Take a community leadership role—serving on a committee, board, commission, or advocacy group, or running for office.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIES AND TOWNS

Ways to advance arts and culture in your community:

- Choose among the plan's recommendations and take action on something important in your community.
- Reach out to the network of local arts agencies for information and assistance. Consider joining that network.





“[Our community] wants more diverse cultural activities. We lack the resources and person power to do the events. There is no public space, for example, to do youth ceramic classes and other spaces. We need a larger space for a variety of artists.”

— Mayor of Smaller Washington County City

VISION STATEMENT

The community's definition of future success for arts and culture, based on community engagement and formulated by the Steering Committee

We envision a tri-county region where all of us have access to relevant and dynamic arts, culture, and creative experiences as an essential part of our lives.

In support of this vision, we commit to:

- Diversity in arts, culture, and creativity:** Uplift and support a wide range of artistic, cultural, and creative practices, disciplines, and activities from diverse artists, creators, organizations, groups, and businesses.
- Financial and resource investment:** Funding, resources, and economic policies are abundant, diverse, easily accessible, and sustainable.
- Access for all communities:** Every person and community is able to participate in relevant arts, culture, and creative expressions, inclusive of diverse geographies, socioeconomics, identities, and abilities.
- Strong and supportive relationships:** Artists, culture bearers, and creatives—as well as funders, supporters, and partners—will communicate, collaborate, promote, and support each other.
- Resilient communities:** The expression of diverse arts, culture, and creative practices encourages understanding, healing, and relationships between people and groups of different geographies, socioeconomics, identities, and abilities.





“I want the arts scene in Washington County, and Beaverton specifically, to be more representative of the demographics of the community, and for the arts to be more interwoven into daily commerce.”

— Community Survey Respondent



THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Project Management Team (“PMT,” representatives from local governments and RACC) and Steering Committee (community members nominated by the PMT) launched a process in the fall of 2022 to identify priority stakeholders, communities for engagement, and areas of inquiry.

Convenings for community engagement occurred from November 2022 through June 2023, with regular meetings to identify and address any gaps. The Steering Committee and PMT members actively assisted in arranging, and in some cases led, discussion sessions.

Overarching Goals

1. Engage with members of diverse communities in the region
2. Co-create an inclusive approach to engagement that serves the needs of the region and that is flexible and responsive
3. Create and disseminate compelling communications that spur interest, involvement, and transparency

What We Asked

1. Where are the opportunities for this plan to help your community thrive?
2. In thinking about the future of this region, what do you want to be different from today? What is working? What is not working?
3. What are the top 2–3 priorities you would want the plan to address/accomplish?
4. What is the definition of success for this plan?



Community Engagement

The team adopted an engagement commitment for the planning process. This commitment was revisited in every Steering Committee meeting and planning session.

Our Engagement Commitment

We will center our thinking of transformation around meaningful community engagement and exploration.

We commit to work that serves the diverse needs of BIPOC and underrecognized communities.

We will listen for community voices and stories.

Our approach is rooted in respect and driven by equitable principles.

Engagement Sessions

Adults Who are Recently Houseless
 African American/Black Artists and Creatives
 Artists and Creatives
 Arts and Cultural Organizations #1
 Arts and Cultural Organizations #2
 Asian American Listening Session
 Beaverton City Councilors
 Beaverton Diversity Advisory Board & Arts Commission Members
 BIPOC Tri-county Community Conversation #1
 BIPOC Tri-county Community Conversation #2
 Clackamas County Arts and Cultural Organizations
 Clackamas County Community Conversation
 Contemporary Arts #1
 Contemporary Arts #2
 Corporate Arts Funders
 County Cultural Coalitions
 Creative Economy, Economic Development, Tourism & Travel

Dance Community Discussion Group
 East Multnomah/East Portland Community Conversation
 Estacada Community Conversation
 Events Action Table
 Film & Media Community
 Foster Program Young Adults
 Foundation Arts Funders #1
 Foundation Arts Funders #2
 Immigrant & Refugee Artists
 Indigenous Arts and Cultural Community
 Large Arts Institutions
 Latino Community Conversation
 Music Community
 Open Virtual Artists and Creatives
 Open Virtual Arts and Cultural Organizations
 Open Virtual Community Conversation
 Queer Artists of Color
 Student Artists
 Tri-county Libraries
 Tri-county Teaching Artists
 Urban League Seniors Center
 Washington County Business & Chambers
 Washington County City Managers Network
 Washington County Community Conversation #1
 Washington County Community Conversation #2
 Washington County Community Event Organizers/
 Tourism Leaders
 Washington County Mayors Network
 Westside Architecture/Real Estate Development
 Westside Arts and Cultural Organizations
 Westside Electeds/Government
 Westside Mayors
 Westside Neighborhood Association & Community Planning Organization Chairs
 Youth Discussion
Plus approximately 40 key person interviews, presentations and discussions

50

DISCUSSION
GROUPS

40+

INTERVIEWS

2,184

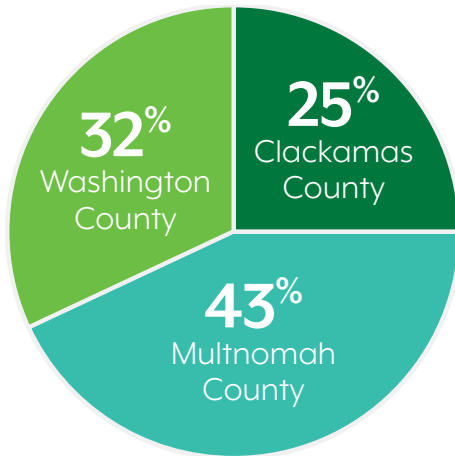
SURVEY
PARTICIPANTS

Complementary Research

All research reports are available on the [Our Creative Future website](#).

Statistically Valid Public Opinion Survey

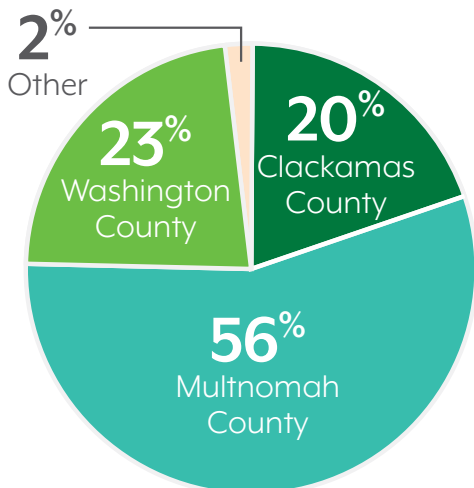
705 completed



Base sample of $n=603$ residents, with an oversample of an additional $n=102$ people of color; overall credibility interval of $\pm 3\%$

Open Call Community Survey

1,479 completed



Survey was open to all and distributed through individual emails, mailing lists, and social media platforms. Requests include the forwarding of the survey to other channels and individuals.

Open community survey respondents are significantly more connected to the arts and creative sector than respondents of the statistically valid survey

Arts Grantmaking Review and Summary

Analysis of grant data for a five-year period from the nine largest public and private arts funders in the tri-county region

Arts Funding Models Report

A scan of a range of approaches to arts funding across the United States, with potential lessons for the tri-county region

Arts Demand Study

Assessment of the amount, demographics, and location of arts activity among the tri-county population

Creative Economy Portrait

A portrait of the creative industries and employment in the tri-county region

"We want to integrate and infuse all cultures in arts opportunities across our county and beyond. We want to share and build on our experiences."

— Community Survey Respondent



WHAT WE LEARNED

Community engagement and other research conducted for Our Creative Future elicited clear messages across the three counties. Many of these messages echo findings from the past two cultural plans in 1992 and 2009, underscoring the imperative to act on continuing needs and opportunities.

1. Throughout the region, residents highly value arts and culture for themselves and their communities. About two-thirds participate actively. They prioritize equity, accessibility, inclusion, and funding for arts and culture.

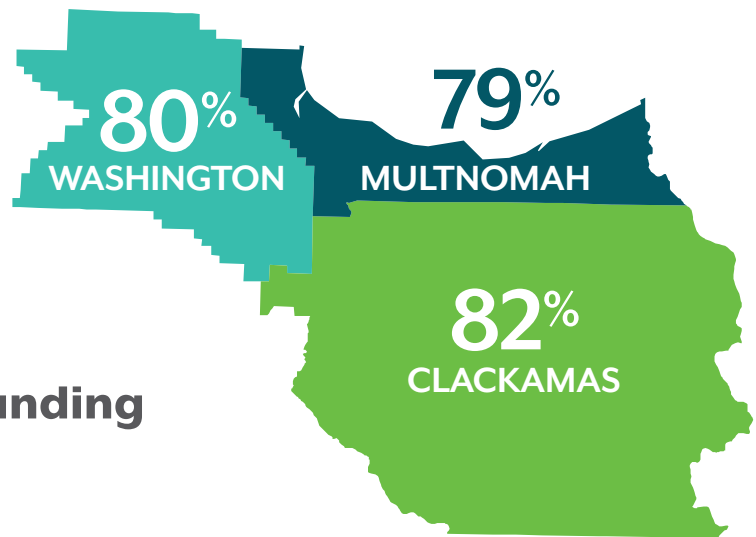
Note: all survey figures cited are from the statistically valid survey.

- **Residents across all three counties support government spending on arts and culture even among those who participate less often in arts activities.** 80% somewhat or strongly support an increase in dedicated government funding. Consistently, within each county, we see high levels of support community-wide, across all levels of participation in the arts.
- **Residents want the cultural plan to prioritize equitable access to arts opportunities, support for artists and arts and cultural organizations, sharing cultural experiences through inclusive events, and dedicated funding for the arts.** This is true in each of the three counties and across different population groups—people of color, artists, and low-income residents.
- **Participants in the planning process want to see more equitable support for BIPOC, queer, and immigrant artists through recognition of their contributions, inclusion in decision making and partnerships, and funding.**
- **Residents believe arts and culture are vital to the community, the economy, and their families, although this is not reflected in government spending in the arts.**
- **They actively participate in arts and culture.** 74% have participated at least once in the past six months and 64% at least three times a year.
- **They generally like the quality of what's offered.** 71% rate offerings in their community as excellent or good.
- **They face barriers to arts participation.** The primary barriers are cost, lack of awareness of opportunities, and inconvenient schedules and locations. Underrecognized communities often face greater barriers to accessing arts and culture for themselves and their children.
- **Most have a personal creative practice.** 62% describe themselves as artists, craftspersons, or creative workers. Two-thirds of this group do art as a hobby or leisure activity.



- **It's important to provide support for culturally relevant offerings for communities.** Echoing familiar patterns of arts attendance, people who participate less in mainstream arts activities are more likely to have lower incomes and educational levels and speak a language other than English at home. This underscores the need to first direct funding to artists and organizations in these communities. It also highlights the need to be inclusive, provide culturally relevant offerings, and address barriers in a thoughtful and nuanced manner.
- **There is a critical need for new messaging about the value of the arts.** Despite strong measures of community support, the arts and culture community and its funders believe education is needed about the role and value of the arts. They recommend a communitywide campaign to promote arts and culture throughout the region and galvanize public will for greater support.

Across the region,
80%
of tri-county residents
support dedicated arts funding



PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Most residents agree that artistic, cultural, and creative communities are beneficial to themselves, their families, and their local communities.

"Having opportunities to enjoy the arts and creative learning is essential to me and my family."

41% 44% **85%**

TRI-COUNTY RESIDENTS:

 Strongly Agree
 Somewhat Agree

"Our arts, cultural, and creative communities help fuel creativity and innovation crucial for our economy."

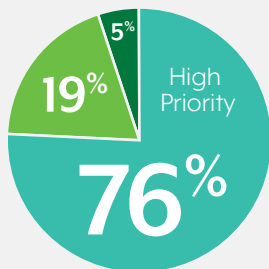
52% 36% **88%**

74% of tri-county residents have participated in at least one arts/cultural event in the past six months.

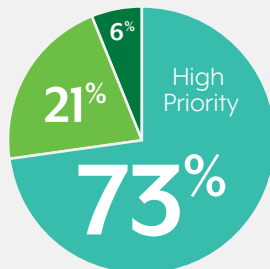
RESIDENTS' PRIORITIES

for Arts and Culture

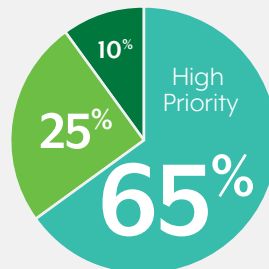
 High Priority  Lower Priority  Not a Priority



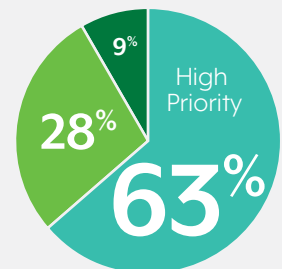
Making the arts and creative opportunities more accessible to everyone



Ensuring all communities have equitable access to creative activities and opportunities



Providing more inclusive events for all residents to share cultural experiences



Providing dedicated funding for the arts

Q17. The tri-county arts and cultural plan is intended to enhance the quality of life for residents. Thinking about long-term priorities the plan should focus on, please rate the following.



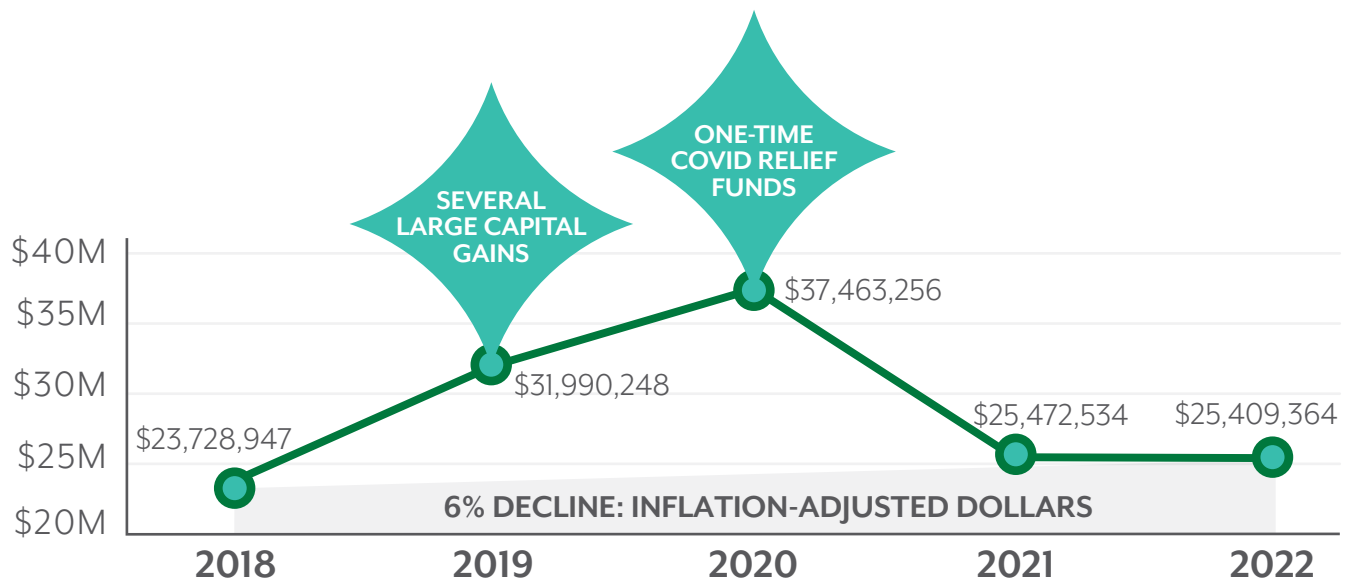
2. The arts and cultural community faces multiple and worsening challenges, and the reputation of our tri-county region as a creative hub and desirable place to live has diminished.

- **There is a crisis in affordability.** Costs of living and working space and of doing business have risen significantly.
- **There is a shortage of arts spaces.** Existing spaces are often not known, too expensive, unsuitable, or unavailable. Currently, there is no inventory of available spaces in the region. Few new spaces are being developed, and there is a perception that there are regulatory barriers to facility/space development. There is a need for all types of arts-focused spaces: performance, exhibition, rehearsal, education, studio, retail, live-work, office, production, and maker spaces.
- **Urban problems and changing audience behaviors are discouraging arts participation.** These include increased reluctance to come downtown, concerns about safety, changing and less predictable audience preferences, homelessness, and other urban conditions.
- **Individual artists and creatives face significant challenges with affordable housing and space.** These include spaces across the board to make, exhibit, perform, and sell their work. Artists are moving out of the city and the area due to financial challenges.
- **There are ongoing inequities in resources available to artists, nonprofits, and creative businesses in BIPOC and other underrecognized communities.** The majority of arts grants now go to a small number of large-budget organizations. Individual artists and smaller-budget organizations face barriers in accessing available resources, yet they often are a direct way to benefit diverse communities.
- **Thirty years of plans and studies have documented how arts and culture has been underresourced.** Conditions are now worsened by overall economic and societal factors. Total arts grants have declined by 6% over the past five years in inflation-adjusted dollars, while costs have risen by 13% during that period.
- **The arts and cultural community needs specific supports.** More than additional funding is needed to better enable the power of the arts to benefit communities. Nonprofits, artists, and creatives seek greater connections, networking, services, work opportunities, respect, partnership, leadership, advocacy, and other supports. Despite challenges, they are already doing the work and lack the infrastructure to amplify their impact.



FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW—TOTAL ARTS AND CULTURE GRANTS

Covers grants to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and individual artists by the nine largest public and private arts funders in the Portland tri-county region.



3. Arts and culture play multiple roles benefiting our communities.

- **People recognize that arts and culture reflect and promote equity** in our communities and are a powerful tool to bring people together, bridging differences.
- **Beyond arts appreciation, people recognize and value the role of arts and culture in non-arts areas of community life**—education, social services, health care, downtown vibrancy, affordable housing, transportation, public safety, and many more.
- **There is a desire to invest more in arts and culture as an instrument of civic life.** There can be many more opportunities for artists to work in local government and bring creative approaches to mental health, houselessness, fostering youth, placemaking, civic dialogue, and other endeavors. The arts and culture community places a strong value on service to the community.

4. Arts and culture drive growth in the region's economy and generate a high rate of return on public investment. There are multiple opportunities for targeted investment and further growth.

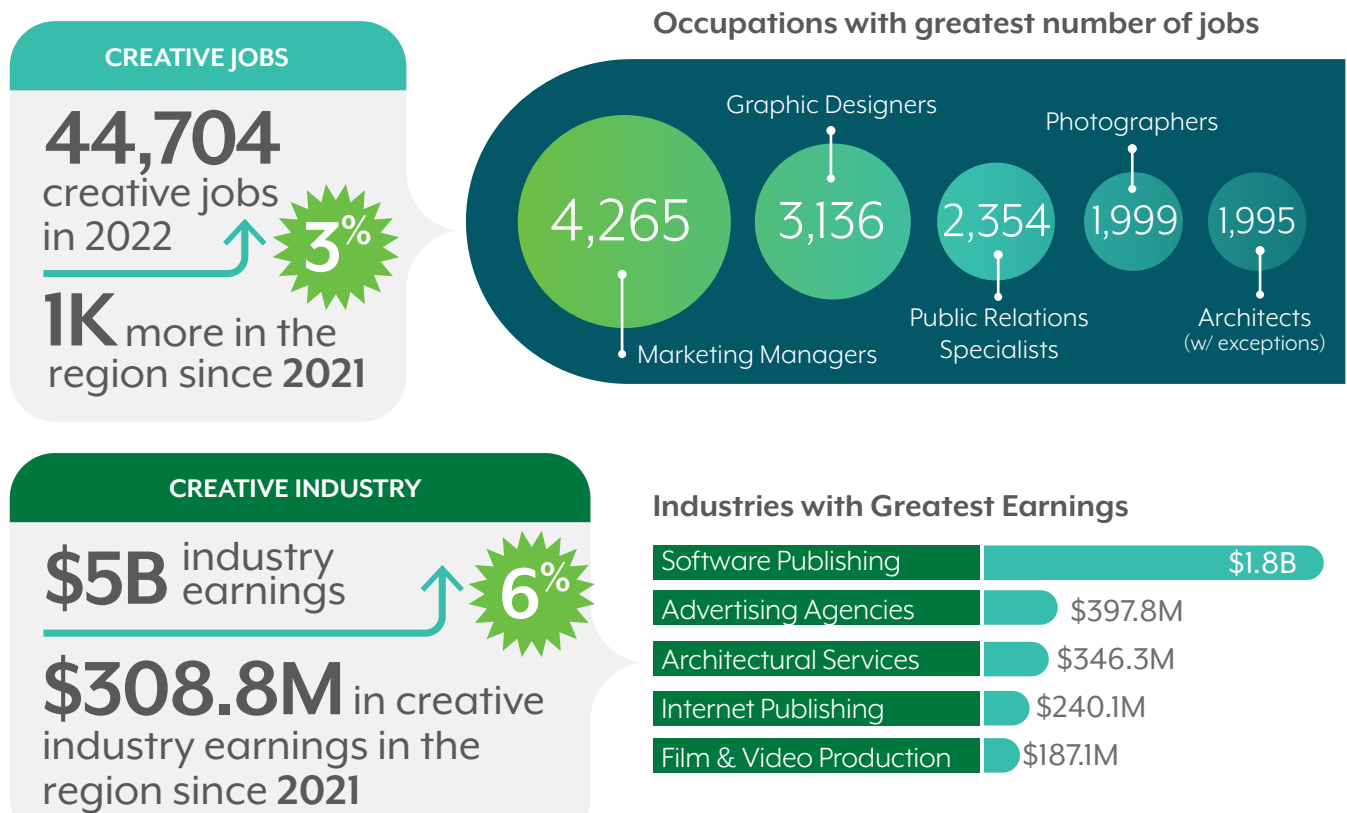
- **The tri-county creative economy generated total 2022 earnings of \$5 billion** and supported nearly 45,000 full-time jobs in industries including software, advertising, architecture, internet publishing, and film and video production.
- **Total creative economy earnings grew 18% between 2020 and 2022.** Total employment grew by 10% in the same time period.
- **Our nonprofit arts and culture generated \$459 million in economic impact in 2022,** despite challenges and while transitioning out of the pandemic. This supported about 6,900 full-time jobs.
- **Our nonprofit arts and culture generated \$10.5 million** in city and county taxes in 2022 and served a total audience of about 5.2 million people.
- **Investing strategically in arts and culture can drive growth and increase vibrancy.** There are successful local examples of economic development supports in arts and culture that point the way—financial investments, permit assistance, convenings, and partnerships in subsectors such as music, film/media, and events.



IN 2022, OUR NONPROFIT ARTS AND CULTURE GENERATED...

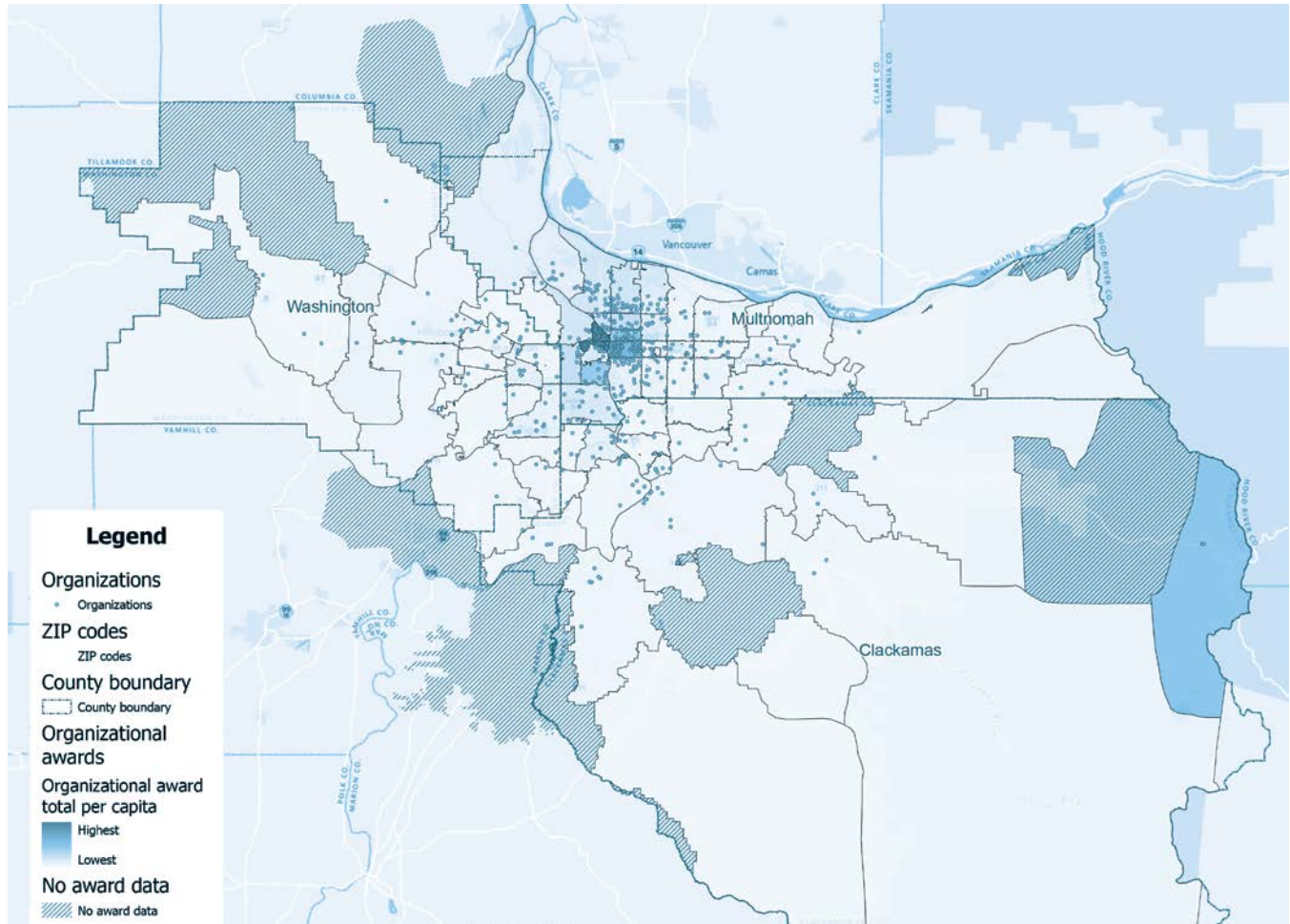


IN 2022, OUR FULL CREATIVE ECONOMY, INCLUDING BOTH NON-PROFIT AND FOR-PROFIT CREATIVE BUSINESSES, GENERATED:



Opportunities for Investment in Smaller Cities and Unincorporated Areas of the Region

Organizational Grants

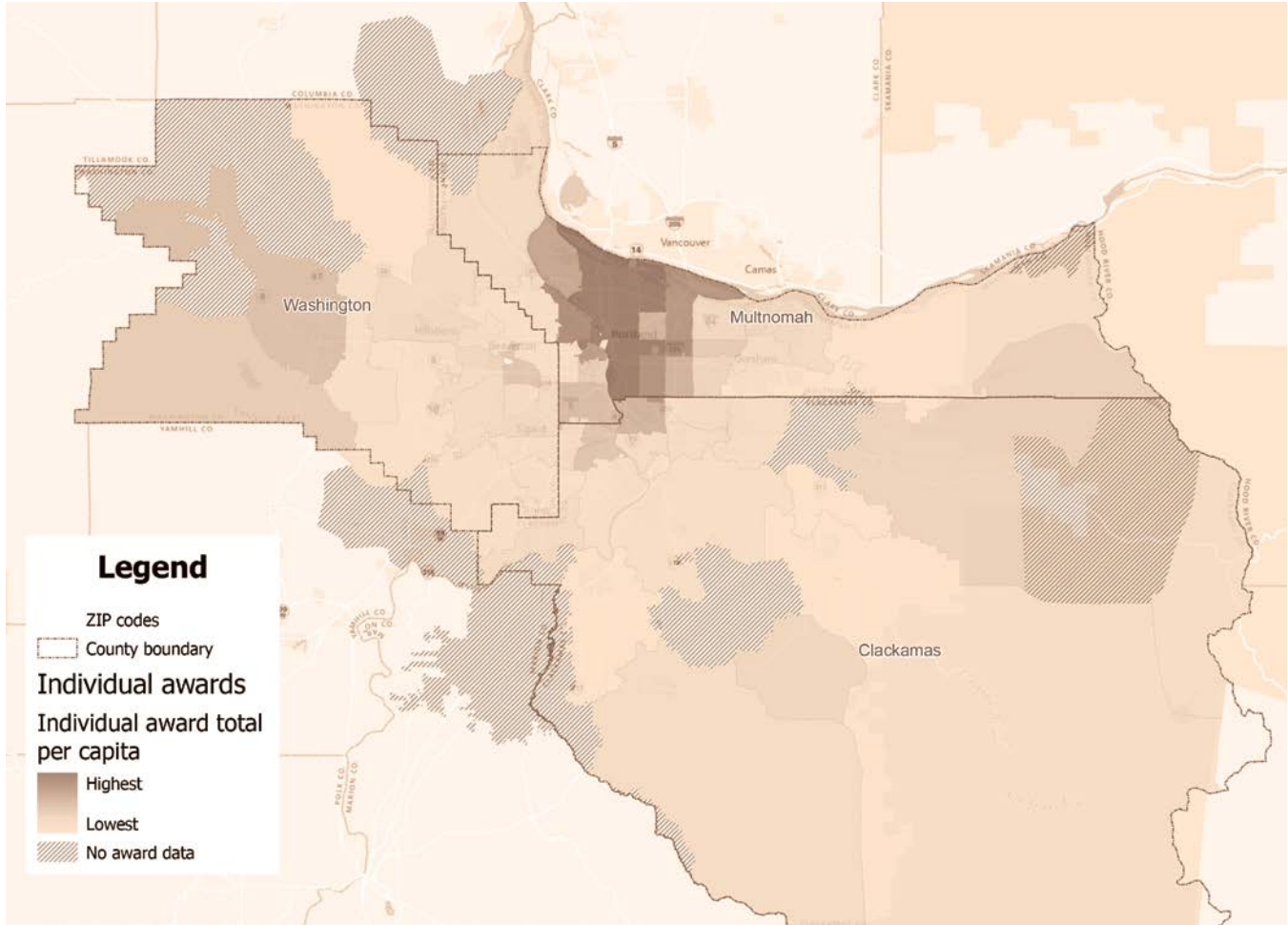


This map shows the concentration of nonprofit arts grantees* in Portland and nearby urban areas. It also illustrates the opportunity to target investment in the smaller cities and unincorporated areas of the region. This aligns with the needs assessment and vision of Our Creative Future. It is important to note that the data shows the location of the grantee but not necessarily the programs funded, so some services to smaller communities and geographic areas may not be fully represented.

**All nonprofit arts and cultural organizations receiving grants from the nine largest public and private arts funders in the tri-county region between 2018 and 2022. The funders were: Collins Foundation, Lamfrom Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Miller Foundation, Murdock Trust, Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Community Foundation, Oregon Cultural Trust, and RACC.*

[Link to Arts Grants Review](#)

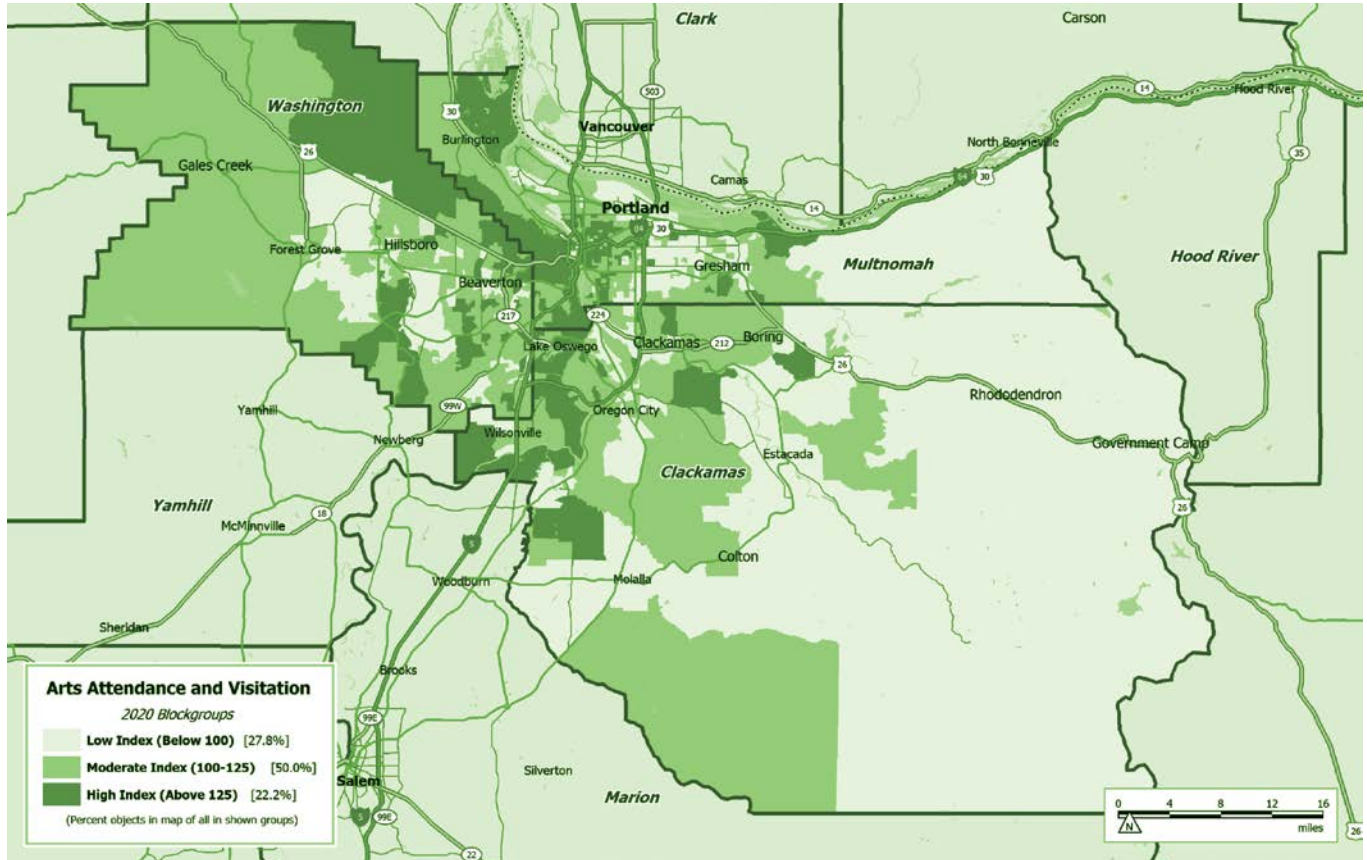
Individual Grants



This map shows the concentration of grant awards to individual artists during the five-year period of 2018 to 2022. Awardees are found throughout the region but are concentrated in and near Portland. The review of arts grants in the region, also found that only about 2% of total grant dollars went to individuals. Our Creative Future recommends increasing and broadening support for individuals as way to better and more directly serve the community.

[Link to Arts Grants Review](#)

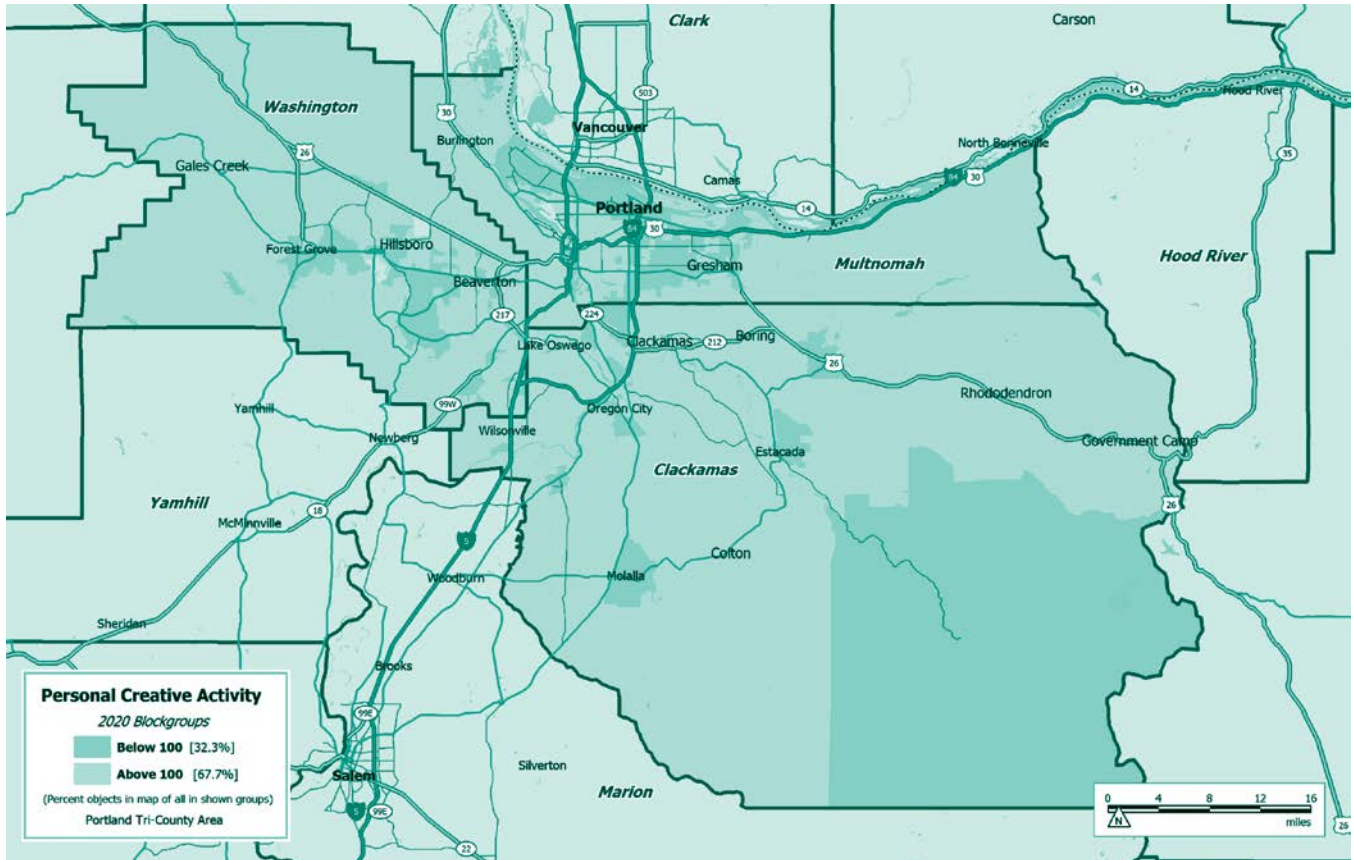
Arts Attendance



This map shows concentrations of arts attendance in the tri-county region. Almost three-quarters of the population (71%) are concentrated in areas with high or moderate demand for arts activities, such as visiting art galleries or museums, live music, and live theater. 29% of the population shows low demand, although this measure often indicates that these households have less access to the arts and/or are participating in other ways. As with the map of Organizational Grants above, this demand map illustrates the opportunity to target investment in the smaller cities and unincorporated areas of the region.

[Link to Arts Demand Study](#)

Personal Creativity



This map shows areas of above-average participation in personal creative activities, such as playing a musical instrument, drawing, dancing, and crafting. The region clearly has an active culture of informal or amateur personal creativity, found throughout the three counties. This illustrates the opportunity to support and celebrate amateur creativity and, as with the other maps above, to target support in the smaller cities and unincorporated areas of the region.

[Link to Arts Demand Study](#)

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The Steering Committee developed working definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion to guide our work in advancing arts and culture in the region. As overarching principles for all plan goals and strategies, they are working definitions to reflect the evolving nature of these ideas. These statements were adapted from materials developed by Americans for the Arts.

Equity: The principle of equity acknowledges that there are populations that have been and are systemically underrecognized and underserved, and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups. Equity is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement in the systems, protocols, practices, and policies that allow everyone to be treated fairly, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Diversity: The practice or quality of including or involving people of different backgrounds, ensuring representation of all community groups and racial identities. These differences can be defined as race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical abilities, nationality, language, religious beliefs, socioeconomic background and status, learning style, and education, among other areas of identity.

Inclusion: The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and bring their full, authentic selves. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in the words and actions of all people. This can manifest in the intentional integration of diverse voices and perspectives within organizational and community conversations. Inclusion is closely tied to a sense of belonging for all members of the group.



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following five goals describe what we want to see change and improve through plan implementation. Each goal includes vision language to clarify and amplify the meaning. The strategies describe how we will make progress towards each goal. Strategies have sample actions that can be adopted and customized by local governments, funders, and other partners.

Goal one: Build towards an inclusive arts and cultural community that reflects, serves, and welcomes all.

All communities and people are valued members of the region's arts and culture community and share in its cultural richness. BIPOC, immigrants, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, and people in every town and every city across the three counties are supported as contributors to our collective regional culture.

Strategies and Actions

- 1.1 Provide specific and accessible support—funding and other resources—for the arts and culture of people who are BIPOC, immigrants, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, the unhoused, neurodiverse, seniors, opportunity youth, and their community-based organizations.
 - 1.1.1 Reevaluate and reprioritize funding programs to address funding inequities in the region, including for diverse and smaller-budget organizations, individual artists, and community-based organizations serving underrecognized communities.
- 1.2 Provide increased support for programs in libraries, parks, and other community settings for underrecognized populations and communities.
 - 1.2.1 Create a regional resource hub connecting artists and arts and cultural organizations with libraries and parks. Opportunities include convening, assistance with engagement and accessibility, coordination, connections with artists in communities of color, program funding, artist residencies, and technical assistance.
 - 1.2.2 Expand the existing My Discovery Pass program (Multnomah County Library's free admissions partnership program).
 - 1.2.3 Utilize tools such as the Metro Equity Focus Areas map to identify communities of concern (Metro's maps identify communities with concentrations of people of color, people with limited English proficiency, or people with low income).
- 1.3 Provide support services for cities throughout the region to develop their local arts and culture.
 - 1.3.1 Develop toolkits for replicable programs, such as public art, equity policies and practices, funding, community festivals and events, and grantmaking.

- 1.3.2 Assist and encourage cities to increase funding and other resources for arts and culture.
- 1.4 Provide support services for programs, artists, groups, and venues in smaller cities and unincorporated areas throughout the counties.**
 - 1.4.1 Make intentional efforts to provide increased funding and other resources to these people and places and to include them in regional initiatives, such as leadership and advocacy.
- 1.5 Address barriers to facility and space use, such as fees, transportation, parking, and availability of food. See also 3.3, affordable space program, below.**
 - 1.5.1 The regional network of local arts agencies recommended in 2.5 can assess these barriers, formulate policies, and support local initiatives to increase the accessibility of facilities and spaces.
- 1.6 Create a racial and cultural equity fund for BIPOC organizations and other organizations serving underrecognized populations through arts and culture (e.g., houseless, opportunity youth, people with disabilities), creating a pathway to organizational growth and sustainability.**
 - 1.6.1 Consider a collaborative public/private fund for this purpose.
 - 1.6.2 Incorporate both funding and technical assistance to support sustainable organizational development.
- 1.7 Provide support and best practices for cities and counties to develop local arts agencies and cultural equity offices.**
- 1.7.1 The regional network of local arts agencies recommended in 2.5 can coordinate and support this work.
- 1.8 Improve and fund accessibility to arts and culture programs, venues, and opportunities for people with disabilities in a comprehensive manner.**
 - 1.8.1 Engage leadership in the disability community to identify issues and needed responses.
- 1.9 Continue and expand support for K–12 arts education and creative youth development.**
 - 1.9.1 Encourage and support arts education as part of well-rounded education as called for by the Every Student Succeeds Act, including standards-aligned instruction through arts as curriculum, arts integration, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math), and arts exposure.
 - 1.9.2 Encourage and support arts education across the arts disciplines: visual arts, music, dance, theater, and media arts.
 - 1.9.3 Advocate at the state level for fully funding schools at levels that allow for arts education to be an integral part of each student's schooling, kindergarten through 12th grade.
 - 1.9.4 Encourage the inclusion of arts education within STEM programs (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) becoming STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math).
 - 1.9.5 Create a regional service organization for arts education, building on recent efforts to serve the field. Opportunities include convening, networking, leadership, and advocacy.



- 1.9.6 Recognize and support the field of creative youth development and its work integrating arts education with youth development, and engaging young people as active agents in their own change.

1.10 Continue and expand support for public art programs in cities and counties in the region.

- 1.10.1 Develop and expand public art requirements and programs in cities and counties (see 1.3.1, toolkits for public art, above).
- 1.10.2 Support and facilitate community-initiated public art projects.
- 1.10.3 Provide professional development and specific commissioning opportunities for emerging/aspiring public artists.

1.11 Develop enhanced and inclusive leadership in the arts and culture community.

- 1.11.1 Develop civic leadership training and placement for artists, culture bearers, and creatives.
- 1.11.2 Invest in youth leadership development in the arts and culture community.
- 1.11.3 Invest in professional and leadership development for diverse arts administrators.
- 1.11.4 Convene biannual meetings of an implementation committee for Our Creative Future to report on progress, navigate changed circumstances, and leverage new opportunities.

Goal two: Forge purposeful connection and coordination within the arts and cultural community.

Arts and cultural community members are well-connected and working together as appropriate. They also recognize and express their interconnections, as both independent and interdependent (relying on one another) pieces of a regional arts and cultural community.

Strategies and Actions

2.1 View the arts and cultural community as inclusive and mutually supportive, with intentional efforts to include artists, culture bearers, artisans, nonprofits, commercial arts, and others.

- 2.1.1 Sustain a consistent message of inclusion—the regional arts and culture community as a “big tent”—throughout communitywide communications and initiatives for arts and culture.

- 2.1.2 Hold regular convenings of arts and cultural stakeholders among and across subsectors.

- 2.1.3 Hold regular regional conferences to report on progress in implementing Our Creative Future and reassess opportunities and challenges.

2.2 Broaden the efforts of funding, support services, and advocacy to include individual creatives and small businesses working in the commercial or quasi-commercial arts.

- 2.2.1 Realign eligibility for funding and other resources to address the needs of individual creatives—musicians, filmmakers, etc.—and small creative businesses working in the commercial or quasi-commercial arts.

2.3 Advocate for effective public policy and action in support of the work of the arts and cultural community.



- 2.3.1 Create or enhance a regional advocacy organization and network for arts and culture. Build on existing organizations and leaders already working in this space.

2.4 Build comprehensive public awareness and understanding of arts and culture in the region.

- 2.4.1 Develop a regional public will campaign to increase comprehensive awareness and valuing of arts and culture among all residents and workers in the region.

2.5 Develop a network of local arts agencies (e.g., Portland's City Arts Program, county arts programs, city arts programs, county Cultural Coalitions, RACC) to replace the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) and strengthen regional arts leadership.

- 2.5.1 Convene leaders from the local arts agencies to define and form the focus and structure of a network.
- 2.5.2 Form relationships and explore collaborations with additional arts and cultural agencies, such as Oregon Arts Commission and Oregon Cultural Trust.
- 2.5.3 Deepen existing relationships and explore collaborations with potential partners such as Indigenous Tribes, Travel Oregon, Oregon Heritage, Oregon Historical Society, Oregon Main Street, and other cultural agencies.

2.6 Promote information and resource sharing and networking within the arts and culture community. See also convenings, 2.1.2.

- 2.6.1 Develop an online directory for the arts and culture community—a “hub” of available resources—building on available information and directories.

- 2.6.2 Develop an enhanced regional arts marketing program, building on and coordinating existing calendars and marketing efforts, such as Travel Portland and Oregon Arts Watch.

- 2.6.3 Encourage and support collaborations of larger and smaller organizations for mentorship, audience sharing/building, shared facility use, etc.

- 2.6.4 Develop a collaborative initiative to address the changing audience behaviors in the performing arts. See 3.8 below.

- 2.6.5 Identify and address the potential for shared spaces/facilities as part of the affordable space initiative recommended in 3.3.



Goal three: Empower the arts and cultural community with sufficient, sustainable funding and other resources.

The arts and cultural community is robustly supported through significantly increased levels of funding, affordable space, arts-friendly policies, and more, sufficient to enable the full power of arts and culture in communities throughout the region.

Strategies and Actions

3.1 Significantly increase funding across the region for nonprofit organizations, individual artists/creatives, and small commercial arts enterprises.

- 3.1.1 This can include updating the Portland Arts Tax; creating a regional Metro revenue source; creating new local county and city tax initiatives; and/or increased county/city allocations. Prioritize funding for artists and arts and cultural organizations and programs. See additional detail in the Funding section.
- 3.1.2 Develop one or more campaigns for new and/or dedicated public funding for arts and culture.
- 3.1.3 Make specific efforts to expand funding available to individual artists and unincorporated groups, redressing the imbalance and lack of such funding and acknowledging the direct benefit of funding artists. Increase eligibility of individuals and unincorporated groups for grants programs, and streamline application and reporting requirements to improve accessibility.
- 3.1.4 Consider optional sources outlined in the Funding section.

3.2 Provide support services for artists and their networks, such as funding, networking, professional development/training, and mentoring.

- 3.2.1 Provide professional development and mentoring opportunities for BIPOC and other underrecognized groups, including making existing training, information, and services more accessible. Invest in current organizations and programs working in this space. See also 2.6 above.

3.3 Develop a comprehensive affordable space program, including elements such as a directory, rent subsidy, facilitation of space projects, technical assistance, matching capital grants, identification of opportunities, and support for increased accessibility. Identify opportunities to use empty commercial spaces.

- 3.3.1 Consider a public/private funder collaborative to provide resources and leadership for this program.
- 3.3.2 Develop a cultural facilities comprehensive plan to identify specific facility needs, gaps in available spaces, and options for solutions.

3.4 Align arts funding policies with best practices in equity and accessibility.

- 3.4.1 Build on the successful examples of funders that have been implementing best practices.
- 3.4.2 Create an inclusive leadership task force to research and identify best practices in arts funding, including data collection to track change and success.



3.5 Convene an active cohort of foundation arts funders and corporate arts funders to encourage increased support and collaboration.

- 3.5.1 Build on the recent convenings of arts funders brought together as part of the cultural planning process by continuing to gather regularly.
- 3.5.2 Develop shared best practices in equity and accessibility for arts funding.
- 3.5.3 Explore new interconnections between artists and corporations, such as artist residencies and other arts/business partnerships.

3.6 Explore rebuilding the existing United Arts Fund (an annual United Way-style fundraising campaign), reinvigorating the workplace giving program and providing recognition and support for individual donors. Restore corporate and foundation support for the fund.

- 3.6.1 Consider creation of a funding program allowing donors to connect to and fund specific artists and projects.

3.7 Acknowledge and support the strategic role of service organizations in achieving the goals of this plan, such as MusicPortland, Oregon Media Production Association (OMPA), Portland Events and Film Office, Arts Concierge, etc.

- 3.7.1 Provide funding and capacity building for service organizations.
- 3.7.2 Consider service organizations as intermediaries for funding programs serving the strategic needs of their fields.

- 3.7.3 Create a service organization for the arts education field, building on recent efforts to fill this need.

3.8 Promote creativity and the arts through a communitywide marketing and audience development program.

- 3.8.1 Create an inclusive, communitywide audience development initiative for the performing arts that addresses post-pandemic changes in the marketplace.
- 3.8.2 Expand public awareness of available arts and cultural offerings through an enhanced communitywide marketing program. Build on successful programs, such as Travel Portland and other aggregators.

3.9 Develop a systemic solution to the sustainability of Portland's and its users.

- 3.9.1 Acknowledge and address capital needs of the facilities, as well as rising operating and rental costs for both facility management and facility users. Build on existing studies and initiatives related to these challenges.
- 3.9.2 Consider the opportunities of collaborative action, such as 3.4.



Goal four: Drive economic growth through the arts and cultural community.

The arts and cultural community amplifies its role as a force for economic prosperity, job growth, entrepreneurship, revitalization, and quality of life for everyone.

Strategies and Actions

4.1 Provide economic development supports for the commercial arts sector, such as music, film, media, fashion, and design. Consult and partner with service organizations to identify and provide high-priority supports.

- 4.1.1 Develop or make available support services, such as small business training, assistance, and loans. Tailor support services to the specific needs and barriers of the commercial arts sector.
- 4.1.2 Explore tax and other incentives and grants programs for creative businesses and individual artists and creatives.
- 4.1.3 Make intentional efforts to ensure that economic development supports are equitable and accessible.

4.2 Build markets for commercial arts sectors. Consult and partner with service organizations to identify specific opportunities to build markets.

- 4.2.1 Assess opportunities to fill gaps and strengthen markets in the commercial arts sector.
- 4.2.2 Invest in existing markets to promote growth and visibility, including farmers', artisan, international food, and other cultural markets.
- 4.2.3 Reassess, streamline, and facilitate permitting for event production and other arts and cultural activities.

4.3 Invest in arts and culture as a tool to revitalize downtown Portland, city centers, town centers, Main Streets, cultural districts, and corridors.

- 4.3.1 Partner with local arts and cultural organizations, artists and creative businesses to identify strategies and interventions.

4.4 Strengthen cooperation and coordination with tourism organizations to enhance cultural tourism.

- 4.4.1 Convene tourism professionals in the region to identify opportunities and shared needs in relation to cultural tourism and marketing of the arts.
- 4.4.2 Measure and report on the impact of arts in tourism.
- 4.4.3 Build on and enhance Travel Portland and other marketing programs to improve the availability of information about arts and culture offerings.
- 4.4.4 Explore and develop a cross-sector partnership between arts and culture and agritourism.

4.5 Integrate arts and culture into workforce development. Create pathways for employment in the arts and culture community.

- 4.5.1 Partner with school districts, colleges, universities, and others to create internships and mentorships in arts and cultural organizations.



- 4.5.2 Identify and address the needs of the creative workforce, such as professional development, setting standards for fair pay, and mentorships/apprenticeships.

4.6 Expand documentation of economic impact and return on investment for arts and culture.

- 4.6.1 Establish annual or periodic measures of economic impact of the arts and make public reports to local government and the community. Build on successful efforts, such as Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 and Creative Vitality Suite.

4.7 Research and develop a creative economy strategic growth plan.

- 4.7.1 Assess and make the case for the creative economy in the region.
- 4.7.2 Articulate clear definitions of constituencies and growth goals for specific industries and occupations.
- 4.7.3 Align and intersect with other economic development agencies and plans.



Goal five: Utilize the arts and cultural community as a vital partner in the health and development of every community.

Arts and culture are recognized, valued, and supported as a partner in social services, health, healing, transportation, public safety, education, and other sectors.

Strategies and Actions

5.1 Local governments invest in arts and culture as a tool of their social service missions and other functions, such as health, transportation, housing, community engagement, public safety, etc. Consider arts and culture as part of solutions. Build on best practices of successful programs in other places.

- 5.1.1 Create artist residencies within city government. Artist residencies in this context refer to artists working within a city department or program to improve effectiveness through their creativity. This can include expanding Portland's Creative Laureate program.
- 5.1.2 Increase investment in artists and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations providing arts programming in social service settings, such as assisting houseless people, youth formerly in foster care, and immigrants.

5.2 Develop metrics and evaluations to demonstrate success in using arts and culture in municipal functions and to improve those efforts.

- 5.2.1 Build evaluation and data collection into programs, using arts and culture within municipal government.
- 5.2.2 Base success metrics on measures of community impact.
- 5.2.3 Convene a regional task force to define and promote shared metrics across the region.

5.3 Develop programs celebrating and supporting inclusive, amateur, community-based creativity throughout the region.

- 5.3.1 Increase support for showcases and celebrations of "everyday creativity" in local communities.

5.4 Explore and develop policies to require or incentivize public art within private real estate development. See 1.3 above. Build on the successful experience of public art programs in the region.

- 5.4.1 Consider the options to include commercial, industrial, residential, and affordable projects within the requirement or incentive program.



“A good cultural plan takes into consideration the needs of artists, arts organizations, students, families, seniors, and everybody else who already engaged with or makes art and those who don’t know what they want or need.”

— BIPOC Tri-county Community Conversations Participant



FUNDING FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

Options for the Tri-county Region

There is a well-documented need for additional funding for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, individual artists, artist networks, quasi-commercial arts sectors (music, independent film/media, events), community-based organizations, and others. Additionally, throughout the engagement and research, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and immigrant artists identified a significant need for more equity in funding, including with being part of the decision making for funding distribution. This must be implemented with best practices in equitable funding, in line with Our Creative Future's equity, diversity, and inclusion definitions and vision (see page 30). Where can this funding be generated? There are a number of potential sources, many of which will require advocacy and political will.

- Metro:** Create a regional public funding source for arts and culture, fulfilling the original intention of the IGA. There are successful examples from around the U.S. profiled in the Arts Funding Models report, including the new Open Doors revenue program in King County, Washington.
- Metro:** Increase the existing allocation for arts and culture.
- City of Portland:** Update the existing Arts Tax to increase revenues, advance equity, redefine the allocations (e.g., more funds for organizations and individual artists), and improve its community reputation. While there are multiple options for modifying the Arts Tax, one consideration is to not disrupt the progress generated by more than a decade of consistent arts education funding for Portland's public schools.
- State of Oregon:** Enact state-enabling legislation modeled after the new State of Washington Cultural Access program, which allows cities and counties to enact sales or property taxes for arts and culture, with or without a voter initiative.
- Counties:** Increase existing allocations from general funds and other sources (Washington County uses general funds, while Clackamas County uses Transient Lodging Tax funds and economic development monies). Continue and expand support for county arts councils.
- Cities, towns, and rural areas:** Establish or expand existing allocations for arts and culture, appropriate to local needs and opportunities.
- Oregon Cultural Trust:** Support efforts to grow the Oregon Cultural Trust Fund and its annual collections and expand existing support for county Cultural Coalitions.
- Oregon Arts Commission:** Support efforts to expand the Arts Commission's annual budget and its role in supporting efforts to implement this plan.



- **Cities of Hillsboro and Beaverton:** Continue and expand existing support for arts programs for specific community needs. In Hillsboro, this may include support for the city’s existing cultural plan recommendations.
- **Foundations funding arts and culture:** Expand the coalition of foundation arts funders, building on the momentum of increased investments from the Miller Foundation and the Oregon Community Foundation.
- **Corporate arts and culture funders:** create a corporate arts funder collaboration, building on the convening held during development of Our Creative Future.
- **Regional Arts and Culture Council:** Reinvigorate and expand the existing workplace giving program, including recognition and incentives for individual donors to the arts. Explore expansion into a larger United Arts Fund (a United Way-style coordinated annual fundraising campaign), including corporate and foundation giving.
- **City of Portland and Metro:** Explore funding solutions for the Portland’s venues and their users. This would require a combination of capital funding and ongoing operating or rental subsidy to ensure sustainability in the current economic and market environment. Draw on findings and recommendations of studies addressing the Portland’s facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE

Oversight of Implementation of the Cultural Plan

Each of the seven local governments sponsoring this regional cultural plan framework will select relevant goals and strategies for their jurisdictions, and prepare an action plan to best fit their communities and governmental role (Metro; Clackamas, Washington, and Multnomah Counties; and the cities of Portland, Beaverton, and Hillsboro). Other cities, towns, communities, and individuals are invited and encouraged to use the framework as a resource.

A regional Implementation Team of local governments and others is forming to support and advocate for implementation of the action plans. This “coalition of the willing” will provide reporting and accountability to the community. It will also assess new opportunities and challenges for arts and culture.



What Follows Dissolution of the IGA?

Now that the regional Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for arts and culture services has been dissolved, what is the best approach to regional governance and organization of arts and culture for current and future conditions? The original IGA was never fully implemented. RACC was a key element of the IGA and was formed in 1995, but a regional revenue source was never enacted. Also, the three counties have contributed to the IGA unequally, and Clackamas County has not been contributing at all in recent years. RACC's private fundraising has declined in recent years. There are other changes in the circumstances surrounding the IGA.

Here are options for arts and cultural leadership in the region moving forward:

- Form a committee or task force of elected officials from the local governments to be “champions for arts and culture,” providing political and strategic leadership for arts and culture in the region.
- Form a network of local arts agencies in the region, as recommended in 2.5 above. These currently include the City of Portland Arts Program, Clackamas Arts Alliance, Tualatin Valley Creates, Cities of Beaverton and Hillsboro, county Cultural Coalitions, and possibly RACC and Oregon Cultural Trust. This network could share information on an ongoing basis and coordinate efforts.
- Form an organization and network to lead advocacy in the cities, counties, and region, as recommended in 2.3 above, involving and building on existing advocacy organizations and leadership.

**Thank you to everyone involved in Our Creative Future.
Find out how you can get or stay involved at [Our Creative Future](#).**



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Upper right: Bootycandy—The OUTwright Theatre Festival 2019

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Top: Tiger Tiger

Bottom: Aaron Nigel Smith, The Right Brain Initiative

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Left: Chapel Theatre Winter Performance Series 2019

Right: La Strada Musicians,
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Page 8

Left: Rang Barse Holi Festival

Right: See me. I am. HEAR.

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Left: La Strada Musicians,
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Left: Carver, Bobby Mercer, 2021, The Portland Building, RACC

Right: Portland Center Stage—Coriolanus

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Left: Artist Alex Chiu, RACC

Right: SoundsTruck NW and Chamber Music NW