



10 Reasons to Support the Arts

The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They ennoble and inspire us—fostering creativity, goodness, and beauty. The arts bring us joy, help us express our values, and build bridges between cultures. The arts are also a fundamental component of a healthy community, strengthening them socially, educationally, and economically—benefits that persist even in difficult social and economic times.

1. **Arts improve individual well-being.** 63 percent of the population believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences,” 64 percent feel the arts give them “pure pleasure to experience and participate in,” and 73 percent say the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world.”
2. **Arts unify communities.** 67 percent of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 62 percent agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better”—a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories.
3. **Arts improve academic performance.** Students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs and standardized test scores, and lower drop-out rates. The Department of Education reports that access to arts education for students of color is significantly lower than for their white peers, and has declined for three decades. Yet, research shows that low socio-economic-status students have even greater increases in academic performance, college-going rates, college grades, and holding jobs with a future. 88 percent of Americans believe that arts are part of a well-rounded K-12 education.
4. **Arts strengthen the economy.** The arts and culture sector is a \$730 billion industry, which represents 4.2 percent of the nation’s GDP—a larger share of the economy than transportation, tourism, and agriculture (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). The nonprofit arts industry alone generates \$135 billion in economic activity annually (spending by organizations and their audiences), which supports 4.1 million jobs and generates \$22.3 billion in government revenue.
5. **Arts are good for local businesses.** Attendees at nonprofit arts events spend \$24.60 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and babysitters—valuable revenue for local commerce and the community. Attendees who live outside the county in which the arts event takes place spend twice as much as their local counterparts (\$39.96 vs. \$17.42).
6. **Arts drive tourism.** Arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more to seek out authentic cultural experiences. Arts destinations grow the economy by attracting foreign visitor spending. The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that, between 2003-2015, the percentage of international travelers including “art gallery and museum visits” on their trip grew from 17 to 29 percent, and the share attending “concerts, plays, and musicals” increased from 13 to 16 percent.
7. **Arts are an export industry.** The arts and culture industries had a \$30 billion international trade surplus in 2014, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. U.S. exports of arts goods (e.g., movies, paintings, jewelry) exceeded \$60 billion.
8. **Arts spark creativity and innovation.** Creativity is among the top 5 applied skills sought by business leaders—with 72 percent saying creativity is of high importance when hiring. The Conference Board’s *Ready to Innovate* report concludes, “The arts—music, creative writing, drawing, dance—provide skills sought by employers of the 3rd millennium.” Research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are 17 times more likely to be actively engaged in the arts than other scientists.
9. **Arts improve healthcare.** Nearly one-half of the nation’s healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff. 78 percent deliver these programs because of their healing benefits to patients—shorter hospital stays, better pain management, and less medication.
10. **Arts and healing in the military.** The arts are part of the military continuum—promoting readiness during pre-deployment as well as aiding in the successful reintegration and adjustment of Veterans and military families into community life. Servicemembers and Veterans rank art therapies in the top 4 (out of 40) interventions and treatments.

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