



Lexington

Arts and Cultural Economy Audit

LexArts and the City of Lexington

Final Report

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1. Introduction

1.1. About the Project

Lexington, known as the "Horse Capital of the World," is a city nestled in the heart of Kentucky's Bluegrass region, a place where natural beauty lives alongside a vibrant creative culture and arts scene.

To facilitate economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and invest in the wider creative economy, LexArts, Lexington's arts agency, was provided with a one-off allocation of funding from the Lexington-Fayette Urban Council Government to deliver a comprehensive, economic-focused creative arts masterplan. In 2023, Sound Diplomacy was commissioned to work with LexArts, the city government, and relevant stakeholders to develop a comprehensive arts strategy for Lexington, spanning performing arts, music recording and publishing, cultural and natural heritage, visual arts and crafts, books and press, audiovisual and interactive media, and culinary arts.

This report, and its actionable recommendations of what needs to happen now and in the future, presents an opportunity for Lexington to leverage its existing arts and culture economy and develop the sector so that it can better support artists, retain local talent, support sustainable social and economic development, and compete with cities, both regionally and nationally, in this rapidly growing sector of the economy.

According to Sound Diplomacy's analysis, the arts and cultural ecosystem in Lexington supports 4.20% of the city's overall local employment, generates a total output of over \$1 billion, and generates a total of \$616.5 million in Gross Value Added (GVA). This, along with unanimous feedback from stakeholders that one of the city's greatest strengths is the people who form the creative ecosystem, from performing and visual artists to producers, non-profits, authors and chefs, demonstrates the importance of the arts in Lexington.

As well as being an economic driver, the creative economy:

- Grants people access to the arts and arts practice, which is important to quality of life and community building.
- Is at the forefront of innovation and research and development.
- Drives tourism, especially through events and cultural heritage.
- Is a key element of placemaking and branding efforts.

From the start of this work, the objectives that were set in accordance with LexArts and relevant stakeholders in the arts ecosystem and that have guided the process are:

- Create an ecosystem that supports and values the creative sector in Lexington, and in particular independent artists and intermediary professionals
- Define a welcoming environment for the arts to thrive and develop sustainably in Lexington
- Strengthen and support the organizations and initiatives that are working to foster the creative ecosystem in Lexington
- Grow sustainable creative careers through ecosystem support and decent work
- Provide the Lexington community and visitors with a quality, attractive, accessible and thriving cultural offer
- Retain workers, students, businesses, and organizations in the creative sector
- Further enrich and strengthen Lexington's cultural identity of diverse heritage and future possibility
- Increase the role that the creative sector plays in Lexington's diverse tourism offer

The plan builds on existing mapping and policy work completed by LexArts over the past few years, focusing on equitable and inclusive development of Lexington's wider creative economy, inclusive of all its artforms and disciplines.

1.2 About LexArts

LexArts is Lexington's official local arts agency and United Arts Fund, creating opportunities for quality arts experiences in central Kentucky through leadership, funding, advocacy, programming, and communication. LexArts is a catalyst for creating a progressive and innovative community inspired by the arts.

LexArts provides annual funding to over 50 arts organizations and individual artists through General Operating Support grants, Community Arts Development grants, Arts Equity Grants and more. Additionally, LexArts provides a wide range of programs, initiatives, and services designed to integrate the arts into our daily lives including the LexArts Gallery Hop, LexArts Network, Arts Everywhere for Students: A Teacher's Guide, institutional art purchases, public art and more.

LexArts also owns and operates ArtsPlace, a former YWCA turned cultural edifice, which offers rehearsal space and office space for nonprofit arts organizations. ArtsPlace is also home to LexArts Gallery, one of Lexington's premier visual art galleries, dedicated to showcasing high quality works by Kentucky artists.

1.3 About Sound Diplomacy

Sound Diplomacy is a global music, culture and creative economy consultancy. We use research and data to demonstrate the economic and social value of the creative industries, and provide strategic planning for cities, places and communities to maximize their impact. Our work unlocks new opportunities, fosters sustainable development and builds more dynamic, inclusive environments.

For more information, please visit www.sounddiplomacy.com.

1.4 Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

Figure 1. The UN's SDGs



In 2015, through the United Nations, world leaders agreed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 17 commitments and 169 targets with the aim of building a better world by 2030. These goals have the power to end poverty, fight inequality and address the urgency of climate change. Guided by these goals, it is now up to governments, businesses, civil society and the general public to work together to build a better future for everyone.¹ While culture is not explicitly mentioned in the SDGs, it is viewed as a key element of all SDGs. The UN has conducted research to better understand the role culture can play in meeting sustainable development goals. The

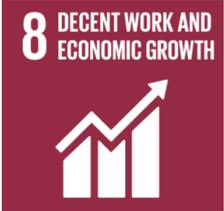
¹ United Nations, "The 17 Goals," accessed January 9, 2024, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Culture in the SDGs research, conducted by the United Cities and Local Governments organization,² is one example, and provides guidance on this topic.

Sound Diplomacy’s work takes the SDGs into account, with particular focus throughout the Action Plan. The key SDGs and targets that the recommendations respond to are:

GOALS	TARGETS
 <p>1 NO POVERTY</p>	<p>1.2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions</p>
 <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	<p>4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university</p> <p>4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship</p> <p>4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations</p>
 <p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<p>5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life</p> <p>5.a: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws</p> <p>5.c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels</p>

² United Cities and Local Governments, “Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals,” 2nd September 2024, https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/culturesdgs_web_en.pdf.

 <p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<p>8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services</p> <p>8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value</p> <p>8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training</p> <p>8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products</p>
 <p>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>9.4: By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities</p>
 <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<p>10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status</p> <p>10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard</p> <p>10.4: Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality</p>
 <p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons</p> <p>11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities</p>

 <p>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p>	<p>12.6: Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle</p> <p>12.b: Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products</p>
 <p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p> <p>16.b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development</p>

1.5. Commitment to Inclusion, Equity and Diversity

Sound Diplomacy embraces Inclusion, Equity and Diversity:

- Inclusion involves ensuring that all are represented, engaged with, and have access to music and cultural life. Sound Diplomacy endeavors to be inclusive of the communities we work for and that these voices inform our proposals. Inclusion is about ensuring that no group is deliberately excluded from our research process, and that our conclusions and recommendations have the broadest possible impact, particularly for historically marginalized or underrepresented communities.
- Equity involves distributing resources to ensure diversity while combating economic and social inequalities. Sound Diplomacy works to embed cultural equity within our research methodology. We strive to propose policies and programs that challenge established inequities and level the playing field for the full spectrum of music ecosystems. Equity is ensuring that every community has the same access to the power and benefits of music.
- Diversity involves ensuring that all groups are recognized as contributing to music and cultural ecosystems and supported in doing so. Sound Diplomacy places this recognition at the center of our work so that voices from a wide range of backgrounds are represented in our research and prescriptions. Diversity is about celebrating our differences and recognising the vital contribution every community makes to our cultural fabric.

1.6. Scope and Methodology

The scope of work for this report has been a process of desk research, stakeholder consultation and data analysis. This was completed in the following stages:

Literature Review and Regulatory Assessment: Coordinating with our partners in Lexington, Sound Diplomacy conducted thorough research into the strategies (including the Lexington Public Art Master Plan; Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic and Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organizations & their Audiences in Lexington-Fayette Urban County; and Kentucky Arts Council Annual Report 2022), regulations, laws and programs that are related to the arts and cultural ecosystem in Lexington and Kentucky.

Each topic of research was benchmarked with a case study from elsewhere in the US and globally. The outcome of this research is presented in the appendix, and will serve LexArts in many different ways:

- Provides an initial analysis for future regulatory edits and changes.
- Presents examples of how several regulations related to the creative industries are addressed worldwide with successful results so LexArts can learn from them in future regulatory reform.
- Provides LexArts with the information that can later be displayed in a website or resource guide for the sector.

Asset Mapping Analysis: The mapping process identified a total of 312 cultural assets in Lexington, Kentucky, and surrounding areas of the city. The mapping database was produced using publicly available sources on the web before being cleaned to ensure that open/in operation arts and culture-related assets were considered in the analysis. The information was georeferenced with Sound Diplomacy's mapping tool and added to an online, interactive [map](#). The result is a resource that lists arts and culture-related assets in the Greater Lexington area, containing information such as their address, phone number, or website that the city can transform into a database to provide information to facilitate the identification of local music resources locally, nationally and internationally. This data can be used to identify strengths and gaps when determining skills development and support allocation.

Stakeholder Engagement: Sound Diplomacy engaged with stakeholders through an online survey, and in person and online interviews and roundtables:

- The sampling method of the online survey was non-probabilistic, involving volunteers³ who responded to the survey distributed by LexArts, as well as survey takers provided by a panel provider.⁴ The survey had an approximate duration of 15 minutes and was open for responses from December 2023 to March 2024. When considering all responses, a total of 1,190 were collected (623 complete, 430 partial but not usable, 88 partial and usable for some sections, and 49 disqualified).⁵
- 10 roundtables and two 1-1 interviews were organized and held in April 2024, gathering stakeholders across multiple areas of the arts and cultural ecosystem (Performing Arts; Culinary Arts; Executive Directors; Visual Arts; Cultural and National Heritage; Civic Leaders; LexArts Staff; Government; Audiovisual; Public) to discuss their lived experiences as part of the local ecosystem.

Economic Impact Assessment: The economic impact calculation is based on the Input-Output Model (I-O), which explains how production is determined by the total amount of products and services consumers buy. The model shows which sectors need supplies from other industries to generate a chain reaction or a multiplier throughout the economy. Thus, intersectoral impacts are estimated, as are how respective sales and purchases are distributed through economic activity. For the direct impact, data on the workforce, number of assets, and average output per worker are used for calculations on output, Gross Value Added (GVA), and number of workers.

The result is a full impact analysis that shows the economic value of the creative industries in the city, which can become a tool for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and communities in understanding the broader economic implications of the creative industry ecosystem, which in turn facilitates informed decision-making, strategic planning, and investment initiatives to support its growth and sustainability.

SWOT Analysis: All findings were assessed and summarized into a SWOT analysis, highlighting the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based on each stage of research. This SWOT analysis is used to assess the main aspects that need to be addressed in the Action Plan and support the definition of the recommendations.

³ Individuals were selected based on non-random criteria, and not every individual had a chance to be included due to the approach being an online survey, where people volunteer themselves to respond. As a result, there is a higher risk of bias in the sampling. Nonetheless, each survey respondent was classified as part of one of the 3 segments: creatives and artists, creative and cultural-related businesses and organizations, and cultural audiences.

⁴ We utilized a panel provider to gather additional responses from the local cultural audiences segment. This approach aimed to achieve a more representative sample and diversify our data sources, mitigating potential biases.

⁵ The sample for creatives and artists was made up of 147 observations (considering complete and partial responses). The sample of businesses and organizations was made up of 56 observations (considering complete and partial responses). The sample of cultural audiences was made up of 508 observations.

Action Plan: A set of 24 actionable recommendations form the Arts and Cultural Action Plan for Lexington to take forward. These are categorized into 7 areas of focus, and include a proposed timeline for establishing each recommendation, how to implement them, any further considerations to take into account, and, where relevant, a best case example of another location, organization or partnership that is leading on a similar initiative. All recommendations were informed by the research and stakeholder conversations.

1.7 Definitions

Cultural and Creative Economy

This report is based on the taxonomy provided by UNESCO, with one adaptation according to Lexington’s needs, and defines the cultural and creative economy as being composed of 12 sectors:⁶

1. Performance & Celebration
2. Music Recording & Publishing
3. Cultural & Natural Heritage
4. Visual Arts & Crafts
5. Books & Press
6. Audiovisual & Interactive Media
7. Culinary Arts⁷
8. Artistic Creation
9. Industry Support - retail
10. Other Professional & Business Support
11. Cultural Education
12. Festivals, Fairs and Conventions

The first six of these are the sectors that we research for our qualitative work. The latter five are treated as transversal in the qualitative work.

UNESCO and UNCTAD, define the the Cultural and Creative Industry (referred to in this report as creative economy or arts economy) as a group of sectors that “have as a main

⁶ UNESCO, “Framework for Cultural Statistics,” United Nations, 2009, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000191061>.

⁷ For this report, to meet Lexington’s needs, we substituted “Design and Creative Services” from the original UNESCO taxonomy for “Culinary Arts”.

purpose the production or reproduction, promotion, distribution, commercialization of goods, services, and activities of cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature.”⁸

The agents that make up the creative economy can work across diverse areas of the sectors. The common thread is that their activities are related to creativity and culture. Some elements of the economy, such as exhibition venues or producers, are obvious. Others, such as lawyers and managers, are less so. However, these actors still play an indispensable role in the economy.

For the creative economy to be healthy and to thrive, institutions must support, connect and provide resources to the agents that form it. Developing and implementing a creative and cultural strategy is a helpful tool for achieving this goal, as supportive programming, policies, and regulations can facilitate cultural activity, fostering strong relationships and increasing collaboration between the diverse actors in the ecosystem.

The agents in the creative economy can be grouped into one of the five links in the value chain: Creation, Production, Distribution, Exhibition, and Transversal.

The Creative Ecosystem

The creative industries in a place are part of an ecosystem. Like in nature, this ecosystem is formed by a group of stakeholders, a set of resources and an environment where they develop their activities and they connect with each other and other ecosystems. Like in all ecosystems, these relationships are interdependent. Some stakeholders exist because others exist, and because there is a sustainable environment that favors their survival.

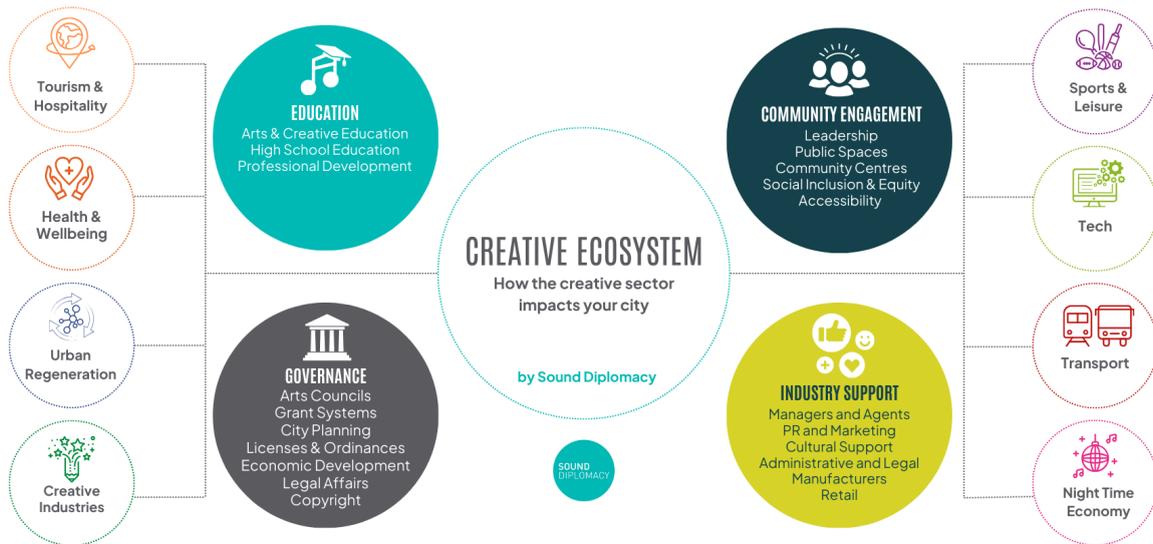
In the case of the arts, these agents are responsible for everything, starting from the artists and going all the way to the audience. Some of its elements, like music venues or theater companies, are obvious. But others aren't, like IT suppliers, police officers or government organizations. Yet they are all relevant, and play an important role in the chain.

Policy-makers and academics have increasingly adopted the notions of 'ecology' and 'ecosystems' as metaphors to enrich our comprehension of how location-based

⁸ UNESCO, “Framework for Cultural Statistics,” United Nations, 2009, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000191061>. And UNCTAD, “Creative Economy Outlook,” 2022, <https://unctad.org/webflyer/creative-economy-outlook-2022>.

cultural activities work and evolve. As stated above, for the ecosystem to be healthy and thrive, all the agents must be resourced, connected and supported by the institutions. This is done by developing a creative industries strategy and implementing it through policies and regulations that take into account every step of the chain, eases the operations, and facilitates the relationships between all of them.

Figure 2. The Creative Ecosystem



2. SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Arts Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arts and cultural ecosystem in Lexington supports 7,080 local jobs (4.20% of the city's overall local employment), a total output of \$1.047.1 billion, and generates a total of \$616.5 million in GVA. • The arts and cultural ecosystem, which directly employs 2.50% of the city's workforce, surpasses sectors like Wholesale Trade (2.25%) or Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (1.94%) but is significantly smaller than sectors like Health Care and Social Assistance (15.23%) or Educational Services (14.05%). • The local arts sector produces high quality work. • Lexington is welcoming an influx of talent who have experienced the arts in other cities and are eager to contribute to Lexington's creative scene. • Local stakeholders and arts organizations foster a supportive environment without competitiveness. • There are frequent accessible opportunities to experience arts and culture in Lexington. 	<p>Arts Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arts community is segmented and there is a lack of cohesion. <p>Arts Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of arts education in public schools. <p>Professional Development, Talent Retention and Business Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development opportunities are generally lacking in the arts sector, especially for disciplines outside the visual arts. • There is an absence of a clear talent development pipeline. • Artists in Lexington lack legal, administrative and marketing resources and support. • Creatives do not collaborate much with cultural intermediary stakeholders (including managers, booking agents, physical and digital distributors, and producers)

- The arts scene has improved significantly in recent years, and the city's public art campaign has played an important role in this improvement.
- There is a large number of audiovisual assets in the city.

Arts Education

- There are a large number of cultural education assets.
- High quality private arts programming is available for young people. (I.e., Lexington Children's Theatre, Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra, Lexington Ballet Company).
- Lexington's post-secondary arts education offerings include a diverse array of programming, with opportunities for exhibition, practical training, internships, international study and more.

Professional Development, Talent Retention and Business Development

- Artists in Lexington can access initiatives led by various support organizations that help to connect them with the latest Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and Requests for Qualifications (RFQs), artist calls, and employment opportunities.
- There are opportunities in Lexington for visual artists to showcase their work and to celebrate the industry.

- Support for the arts community primarily operates at an individual level, and the sector relies heavily on interpersonal relationships.
- Lexington currently lacks dedicated programs for export and internationalization within the cultural industries. 70% of creatives and organizations do not have clients, users or audiences outside the state.
- No professional associations, guilds or unions specific to the visual arts, recorded music, audiovisual, and books and press sectors exist in Lexington.
- Lexington lacks industry events or conferences specific to culinary arts and music.
- Young artists face low wages and a lack of paid opportunities. The average income for workers in the creative and cultural ecosystem sector is \$45,764, 3.7% below the average for the rest of the economy, which is \$47,516.
- Approximately one-third of creatives and organizations have considered leaving Lexington in the past, are currently considering leaving, or previously left Lexington due to insufficient opportunities in the cultural sector.
- The businesses operating within the creative and artistic sub-sectors included in the scope of this assessment have fewer employees than what is observed when examining the national average for the number of employees at businesses operating in the same sub-sectors.

- Lexington hosts several book industry events.
- The VisitLEX film and entertainment team offers personalized project plans and facilitates connections with the city's artistic and film communities.
- The Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning serves as a hub for the books and press industry, providing a range of classes, programs, and events to foster literary engagement.

Resource Guides and Directories

- There are regulations for waste management during special events and some initiatives and organizations connect the cultural sector to environmental sustainability.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Some cultural organizations offer targeted DEI programming. (I.e. the Carnegie Literary Center).

Cultural Infrastructure

- Several spaces provide opportunities and equipment to the local community and act as de facto cultural hubs in Lexington, particularly in the downtown area.

Financial Support and Incentives

- There is a notable absence of dedicated health programs for artists in Lexington.

Licensing, Regulations and Zoning

- The city's online resources for business licensing and development do not provide any specific information regarding cultural businesses.
- Lexington's sound regulations lack defined decibel levels; zoning distinctions to separate noise-sensitive and noise-generating areas; differentiated permits for music venues; and overlook cultural activities. There is also no formal process for noise complaints.
- There are no specific street performance programs or resources for street performers in Lexington.
- The process of licensing and organizing cultural events is time-consuming, and requires coordination with multiple entities for approvals related to licensing, electricity, security, and cleaning.
- Local liquor regulations overlook cultural venues, have excessively long delays, and there is a lack of online resources to navigate the different requirements.

Resource Guides and Directories

- Several grants are available for the arts sector in Lexington. They include LexArts' Community Arts Development Grants and General Operating Support Grants, and Downtown Lexington Management District's Public Art Grant.
- The Percent for Art Fund sets aside one percent of capital funds for public art projects in Lexington.

- Lexington lacks a centralized online resource for the arts sector, including maps and directories.
- There are no dedicated policies or initiatives for environmental sustainability within the cultural sector at the city level.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- Men in the creative and cultural ecosystem, on average, earn 28.9% more than women (\$51,364 vs \$39,860).
- White individuals working in the creative and cultural ecosystem earn more than other racial groups.
- DEI events are not integrated into the city's main events and programming, and many DEI-focused initiatives struggle to receive funding.

Knowledge, Transparency and Governance

- There is no comprehensive strategy for the arts in Lexington, and there is a lack of collaboration and coordination in planning for the arts.
- LexArts' role and purpose is not clear to the community, and many organizations and artists do not view LexArts as an institution capable of providing them with meaningful support.
- The city lacks a unified dialogue to communicate what the arts community needs.

- Many artists and organizations face challenges stemming from LexArts grant application, selection and disbursement process.
- The selection and disbursement processes for the LexArts DEI grants lack transparency. There is no clear statement communicating the program's objectives, or publicly available application and selection criteria.

Financial Support and Incentives

- Arts organizations in Lexington face a funding shortage, leading to sustainability challenges, and a difficulty for arts organizations to compete locally, statewide, and nationally.
- Creatives and organizations find accessing public and private funding very challenging.

Cultural Infrastructure

- Existing cultural infrastructure is in high demand, expensive, and is challenging to book.
- The city lacks a versatile space that can serve as both a large venue for major arts attractions and a facility for local organizations to rehearse and perform.
- Accessibility in cultural spaces is not given adequate consideration.

- Many cultural establishments close before residents finish working.
- There is an overall lack of museums in Lexington.

Marketing, Communication and Audience Development

- There is a general lack of communication, coordinated marketing and branding for Lexington’s arts sector.
- There are no local newspapers or newsletters in Lexington to allow arts and cultural events, artists, and organizations to garner exposure at the local and regional level.
- Although LexArts has an app, it is not maintained and there is limited awareness of its existence.
- Current tourism marketing efforts incorporate the arts minimally.

Cultural Tourism

- Lexington does not have a cultural tourism strategy or plan.

Public Transportation

- The city does not offer shuttle services or specific transportation options for cultural events.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Arts Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lexington has a large student population. As such, there is a robust population of young talent in the city. • Universities in Lexington offer guidance on cultivating artistic identities and developing professional pathways, and internships. <p>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lexington has historically been celebrated for its diverse community, and for being welcoming to the LGBTQIA+ community. <p>Cultural Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Townbranch Park development will provide a new space for events. • Lexington has a number of well-preserved historic buildings, including Victorian-era homes, as well as modern architecture. • The Bluegrass area is home to heritage museums that showcase the region's history. • The Rupp Arena is attracting new audiences to Lexington. 	<p>Arts Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts are under threat of being defunded by the state government. <p>Financial Support and Incentives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide, there is a diminished emphasis on the arts. • Convincing individuals and organizations to donate to the local arts sector is challenging. • Inflation has caused costs to rise dramatically, while donations have remained flat. <p>Marketing, Communication and Audience Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance and participation in public events have not fully rebounded since the pandemic. • There is a lack of integration between different communities and cultures in Lexington, resulting in an absence of a diverse, mixed audience. <p>Public Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city's public transit network is poorly connected.

Financial Support and Incentives

- The city has great philanthropic potential.

Marketing, Communication and Audience Development

- Analysis revealed Lexington residents are willing to engage with all the creative and cultural sectors.

Cultural Tourism

- With its natural landscapes, its horse and bourbon industries, its sports and its arts scene, Lexington has a unique identity that has the potential to attract visitors from other cities and states.
- Lexington's tourism department, VisitLEX, presents the arts and culture sector as a draw for tourists.
- The city has a national airport (Blue Grass Airport), that flies to cities across the United States.

Public Safety

- There are safety concerns in downtown Lexington, especially at night.

3. Action Plan

This section summarizes our research and provides recommended actions to address challenges and leverage opportunities, all with the aim of strengthening and growing the creative economy in Lexington. There are a total of 24 recommendations, with proposed timeframes for initiating implementation, instructions on how to implement and, where relevant, a best practice example from another location. Recommendations have been divided into 7 themes that describe the current state of the Lexington creative ecosystem.

Each recommendation has been written with the intention of meeting one or more of the following goals (determined during inception of this work, and through research):

- Create an ecosystem that supports and values the creative sector in Lexington, and in particular independent artists and intermediary professionals
- Strengthen and support the organizations and initiatives that are working to foster the creative ecosystem in Lexington
- Grow domestic production and export in the Lexington creative ecosystem
- Grow sustainable creative careers through ecosystem support and decent work
- Provide the Lexington community and visitors with a quality, attractive, accessible and thriving cultural offer
- Retain workers, students, businesses, and organizations in the creative sector
- Grow the amount and degree of expertise that exists throughout the entire ecosystem
- Attract artists, intermediaries, businesses, and other entertainment related operations from elsewhere
- Define a welcoming environment for the arts to thrive and develop sustainably in Lexington
- Foster cross-collaboration between the creative industries
- Increase the number of accessible, affordable and sustainable spaces for the arts
- Identify and support key resources and expand organizational capabilities, particularly around establishments' sustainability
- Increase accessibility, equity, and diversity within the creative ecosystem
- Improve and support arts education for all in Lexington
- Further enrich and strengthen Lexington's cultural identity of diverse heritage and future possibility
- Increase the role that the creative sector plays in Lexington's diverse tourism offer

Sector snapshots with information specific to each of the sectors under study (audiovisual and interactive media, books and press, cultural and natural heritage, performing arts, visual arts and crafts, music recording and publishing, and culinary arts) have also been included at the end of this document.

Diversity, Access, Equity, Inclusion, and Sustainability Imperatives

Examining the crucial aspects of diversity, access, equity, and inclusion within the creative ecosystem is imperative. For this reason, Sound Diplomacy recommends the following considerations to be applied to all creative industry-related programs and initiatives:

- Consider gender balance of the artists, creators and performers involved in creative ecosystem programs.
- Consider gender balance of the speakers, trainers, and mentors involved in all training sessions, panels and workshops and, where possible, consider sessions that specifically address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by underserved groups.
- Ensure that the different brands and promotional materials feature a diverse representation of the Lexington population, including gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity.
- Establish criteria that considers gender, ethnic diversity and cultural inclusivity when providing financial support.
- For each program or initiative, actively seek collaborations with cultural organizations that focus on gender equity and cultural diversity, in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky, and the United States.
- Include KPIs and metrics specifically related to gender equity and cultural diversity in the strategy's impact assessment of each initiative.

Additionally, recognizing the pressing need for environmental consciousness, creative ecosystems must prioritize sustainability. Embracing sustainability is not just an ecological imperative but a strategic move that aligns with global environmental goals and attracts environmentally conscious consumers, fostering a responsible and resilient creative economy. For these reasons, Sound Diplomacy recommends the following considerations to be applied to all culture-related programs and initiatives:

- Consider environmental sustainability in the commissioning of artists, creators, and performers through creative ecosystem programs.
- Ensure that environmental sustainability is a concern for speakers, trainers, and mentors participating in training sessions, panels, and workshops, with a focus on addressing the unique challenges and opportunities faced by marginalized groups wherever possible.

- Establish eco-criteria or bonuses when providing financial support.
- Actively seek collaborations with organizations that prioritize environmental sustainability and cultural diversity in Lexington, Kentucky, and the United States, for each program or initiative.
- Include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and metrics specifically related to environmental sustainability in the impact assessment of each initiative.

Additional specific imperatives related to these topics can be found across the recommendations.

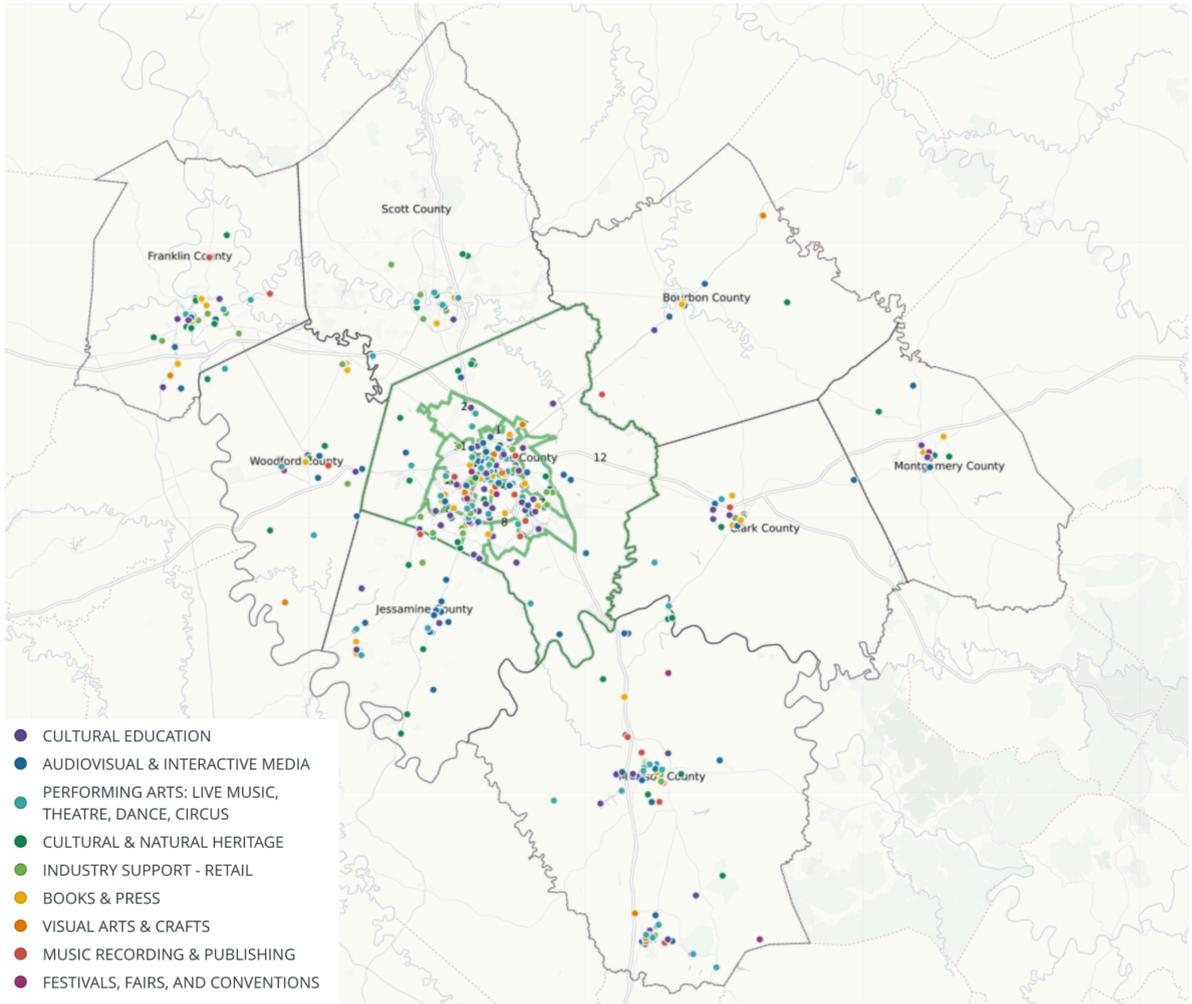
Creative Economy: Development and Governance

The Lexington Creative Industries

The creative industries are defined as the group of actors and organizations that have as their main purpose the creation, production, reproduction, promotion, distribution, or commercialization of goods, services, and activities related to all aspects of the arts and culture in a particular place. As part of our analysis we have identified all arts and cultural economy related assets in and in proximity to Lexington–Fayette, Kentucky, and included them in an [interactive map](#). This geolocation exercise identifies both strengths and gaps, highlights clustering patterns, and points to issues of access and decentralization within the region’s cultural economy.

The results of this mapping exercise will be explained and interpreted in the following sections, alongside findings and outcomes of all the other research, and serve at this point to start defining the creative ecosystem in Lexington (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Map of all arts and cultural economy related assets in and in proximity to Lexington-Fayette, Kentucky



Developed by Sound Diplomacy

The Lexington Creative Community

Lexington's arts community is home to a vibrant, welcoming, and supportive community of local talent. Stakeholder engagement revealed that local stakeholders and arts organizations are committed to creating a nurturing environment that prioritizes collective growth over competition. This atmosphere of mutual support provides a robust foundation for the continued development of the arts and cultural community.

Across all sectors of the arts and cultural ecosystem, stakeholders expressed a strong desire to collaborate, share resources, and form strategic partnerships. According to survey data, local creatives have significant interaction with other creatives, both within their sub-sector and across other sub-sectors, indicating a high level of interconnectedness within the local talent pool. In addition, survey respondents identified creatives and artists as the most accessible and highest-quality stakeholders in the arts sector. This suggests that there is a strong community of artists with well-developed skills in their respective crafts.

The city also attracts a steady influx of creative students who bring diverse experiences from other cities and are eager to contribute to Lexington's thriving arts scene.

The Lexington Creative Ecosystem in numbers

The creative and cultural ecosystem plays a vital role in Lexington's economy, both in terms of employment and economic output: it makes a significant direct economic contribution, employing 4,210 individuals (or 2.50% of the city's total workforce), generating \$648 million in direct output, and contributing \$368 million in GVA. Among the industries analyzed, the audiovisual and interactive media sector leads the way, accounting for 41% of direct output (\$265.5 million) and 23% of direct employment (975 individuals). This highlights the sector's pivotal role in driving the city's creative economy.

When the indirect and induced effects are included, the total economic impact of Lexington's creative ecosystem is even more pronounced. The indirect impact, through supply chain activities, adds an additional \$196.8 million in output, \$126.1 million in GVA, and supports 1,410 jobs. Meanwhile, the induced effects - which capture the local spending of employees within the sector - generate an additional \$202.3 million in output, \$122.4 million in GVA, and 1,460 jobs. Together, these effects bring the total output of the sector to \$1.047 billion, contributing \$616.5 million in GVA and supporting 7,080 jobs. The output multiplier of 1.62 means that for every \$1,000 of output generated within the creative and cultural ecosystem, an additional \$620 is created in other industries across the local economy.

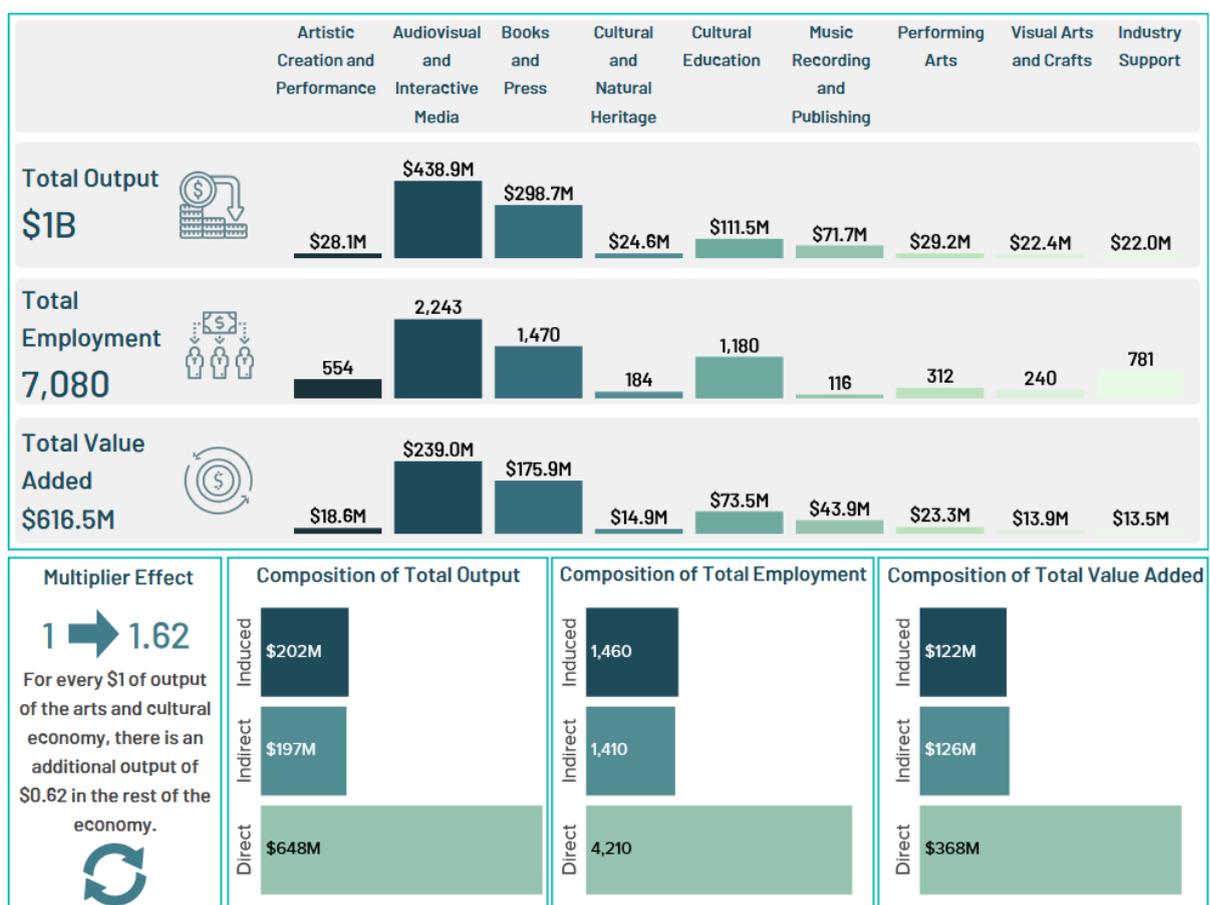
Despite these impressive contributions, the ecosystem has faced challenges in recent years. Between 2019 and 2021, the sector's GVA declined by an average of 6.2% annually, dropping from \$784.4 million to \$648 million, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Comparatively, the creative and cultural ecosystem supports more jobs than sectors like Wholesale Trade (2.25%) and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (1.94%) but

remains smaller than larger sectors such as Health Care and Social Assistance (15.23%) and Educational Services (14.05%).

Finally, Lexington exhibits local specialization in several key creative sectors, with 6 out of 9 sectors showing a higher density of businesses than the national average. High densities are observed in cultural education, retail, and audiovisual and interactive media. However, businesses in these sub-sectors tend to have fewer employees than the national average, suggesting potential opportunities for workforce development and business growth in areas like cultural heritage, music recording, and audiovisual media. Finding ways to increase the current funding for the arts, coupled with mechanisms to support the businesses and individuals working in the sector, will set the stage for a sustainable development of the creative economy in Lexington.

Figure 4. Key Findings: Lexington-Fayette, KY Arts and Cultural Economy Total Economic Impact, 2021⁹



Source: County Business Patterns 2021, BEA RIMS II, Sound Diplomacy Research

⁹ Due to rounding, numbers may not add up.

Governance and Leadership of the Creative Sector

Research and stakeholder engagement revealed a need for a comprehensive strategy for the arts in Lexington. Stakeholders expressed a lack of collaboration and coordination in planning for the arts. In addition to developing a strategy, accountability mechanisms need to be created to ensure the strategy is implemented and indicators need to be defined to measure progress towards the strategy's intended outcomes.

Effective mechanisms to promote knowledge, transparency and good governance are important to a thriving arts ecosystem. Enhancing efforts to understand and meet the needs of the community allow institutions to make informed decisions about funding and programming to better serve the local arts and cultural sector. Moreover, improving the transparency of internal processes will help build public trust.

LexArts offers the local arts community guidance and funding, arts programming, and resources to bolster the arts sector, including calls for artists, a public art map, and some professional development opportunities. Stakeholders also acknowledged that LexArts' plays a critical role as a clearing house for the arts in Lexington. However, research revealed that LexArts' granting process would benefit from increased transparency efforts. To address this, the criteria for assessing grants and the responsibilities of grantees who receive money should be standardized and made public and accessible to applicants online.

Stakeholder engagement also revealed a lack of community understanding regarding LexArts organizational goals and the support that it provides for the arts and cultural community. LexArts has an opportunity to enhance its communication regarding its organizational mission, key objectives, and processes - especially granting processes - to increase public awareness and understanding.

The presence of effective governance and accountability structures with clearly defined roles within Lexington's arts and cultural ecosystem, as outlined in the recommendations below, will spearhead action for the sector. By establishing oversight of the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit, communicating LexArts mission to the public, and improving the transparency of granting processes, LexArts can strengthen community trust and reaffirm its position as a leading organization dedicated to serving and advancing Lexington's arts sector.

Available Funding and Financial Support

Presently, there are several grants available to Lexington's arts and cultural ecosystem. Most city grants for the arts are provided by LexArts, but local artists and arts organizations can also benefit from funding offered by the Downtown Lexington Management District, the Kentucky Arts Council, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Most creatives (61%) who responded to the survey have not received grants in the past two years. Among those who did, the primary sources were LexArts (20% of the total) and the state government (14% of all creatives). The performing arts sector received the most grant funding, with 71% of respondents having received it. Among them, LexArts was the most common source, utilized by half of the respondents. Conversely, the visual arts sub-sector received the least public funding, with only 19% of all respondents receiving public funds. The most common source for this group was the federal government, accessed by 5% of respondents.

By contrast, the majority of organizations (81%) have received grants in the past two years. Among surveyed organizations, 55% received grants from LexArts, 53% from non-governmental institutions, and 34% from the city government.

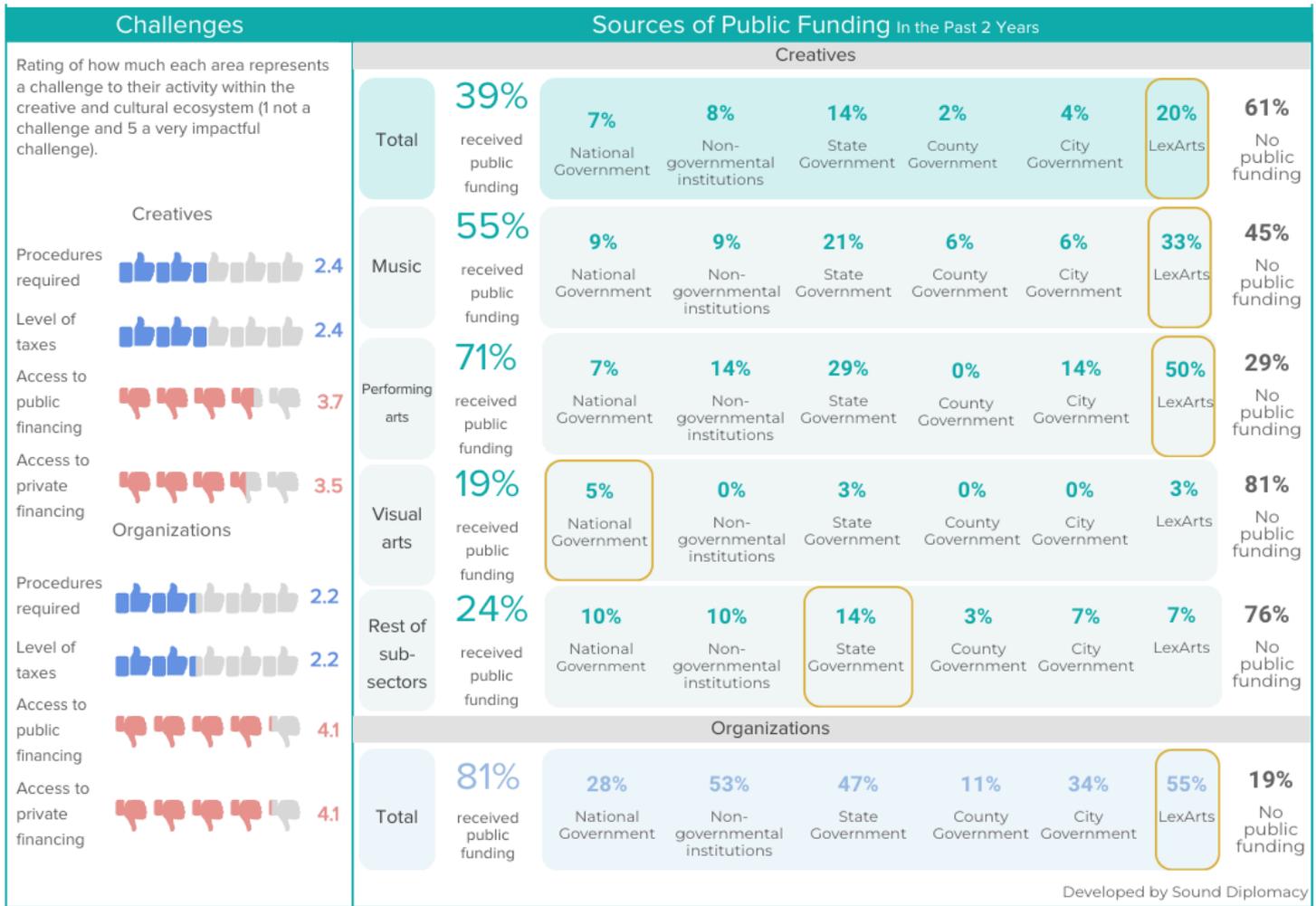
Respondents who received public funding were asked how crucial it was for their creative work, with 87% of creatives and 95% of organizations stating that it was very important. It is worth noting that LexArts is the most common funding source for both creatives and organizations. This, combined with the importance attributed to this funding, underscores the significant role LexArts plays in providing financial support to facilitate cultural and creative production in Lexington.

Looking into private funding, research revealed that the city possesses high philanthropic potential, as evidenced by the success of projects like Town Branch Park in gathering substantial funding from the private sector. Lexington also benefits from significant revenue generated by the horse and bourbon industries, presenting an opportunity for expansion into the arts sector.

Among creatives, 45% of respondents did not receive assistance from private sources but are interested in doing so, while 35% neither received nor are interested, and the remaining 25% did receive private funding. Among the sources of private financing, private donations (not requiring future return on investment) emerged as the most common source of private funding, with 19% of respondents having received them. Private donations are notably high in the music sub-sector of the arts ecosystem, with 39% of respondents from the sub-sector having received them.

The landscape looks different for organizations, with a relatively high percentage (74% of the total surveyed) receiving private financing. The most common source of private financing for organizations is private investments (requiring future return on investment).

Figure 5. Arts and Cultural Ecosystem Challenges: Key Findings



How to read the chart

Percentages on the far right side and percentages on the left side add up 100%, as they show the proportion of creatives by group/sector that did or did not receive public funding. In the middle, percentages in the green boxes show the sources of public funding for those creatives that claimed to have received it. Percentages in green aren't meant to add up to the value on the left or 100%, as one creative could have received public funding from more than one source.

In terms of economic development incentives, while the Kentucky Entertainment Incentive Program provides tax credits for film and entertainment businesses and projects, and the Jobs Fund Program could potentially apply to the creative industries, Lexington lacks financial incentives or tax exemptions specifically dedicated to the arts and cultural ecosystem.

Funding Accessibility and Transparency

Despite the prevalence of grant-receiving organizations, many still encounter challenges in covering their costs. Survey findings indicate that both creatives and organizations encounter significant challenges in accessing financing, whether from public or private sources. On average, creatives rated the difficulty level at 3.6 for public funding and 4.1 for private. The lack of operational funding hampers talent retention and attraction, making it difficult to cover daily expenses and maintain buildings, which leaves minimal budget for art and programming. It also makes it difficult for arts organizations to compete locally, statewide, and nationally.

When creatives and organizations were asked about their preferred forms of support from the city, both ranked the facilitation of access to public and private arts financing as their second most preferred option (49% of creatives and 47% of organizations).

LexArts has an opportunity to enhance its role as a leader and advocate for financial support within the local arts sector. In addition to continuing to provide grants and increasing transparency in their distribution process, LexArts should also advocate for increased economic development support and incentives – such as tax credits or allocating a portion of other taxes such as the hotel tax to the arts. Creating sustainable funding streams for arts and culture is essential, both for supporting local artists and arts organizations, and for successfully implementing the recommendations outlined in this strategy.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Creative Ecosystem

Although Lexington has historically welcomed the LGBTQIA+ community, research revealed action should be taken to improve diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the city's arts and cultural scene.

The local arts scene must take steps to be more inclusive of individuals from diverse backgrounds, especially people of color, not only to benefit individuals from these groups, but to improve the vitality and vibrancy of the overall arts and cultural ecosystem.

The arts are integral to the holistic and inclusive development, resilience, and overall well-being of individuals and societies. To truly reflect the richness and complexity of society, the arts and cultural sector must represent the full diversity of the local community, fostering stronger connections and a more vibrant, innovative arts scene. Ensuring access to arts and culture for everyone is essential to promoting well-being on both individual and societal levels.¹⁰ Equity and inclusion efforts are key to breaking

¹⁰ UNESCO, "UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education", UNESCO.org, accessed September 6, 2024, https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2024/02/WCCAE_UNESCO%20Framework_EN_0.pdf

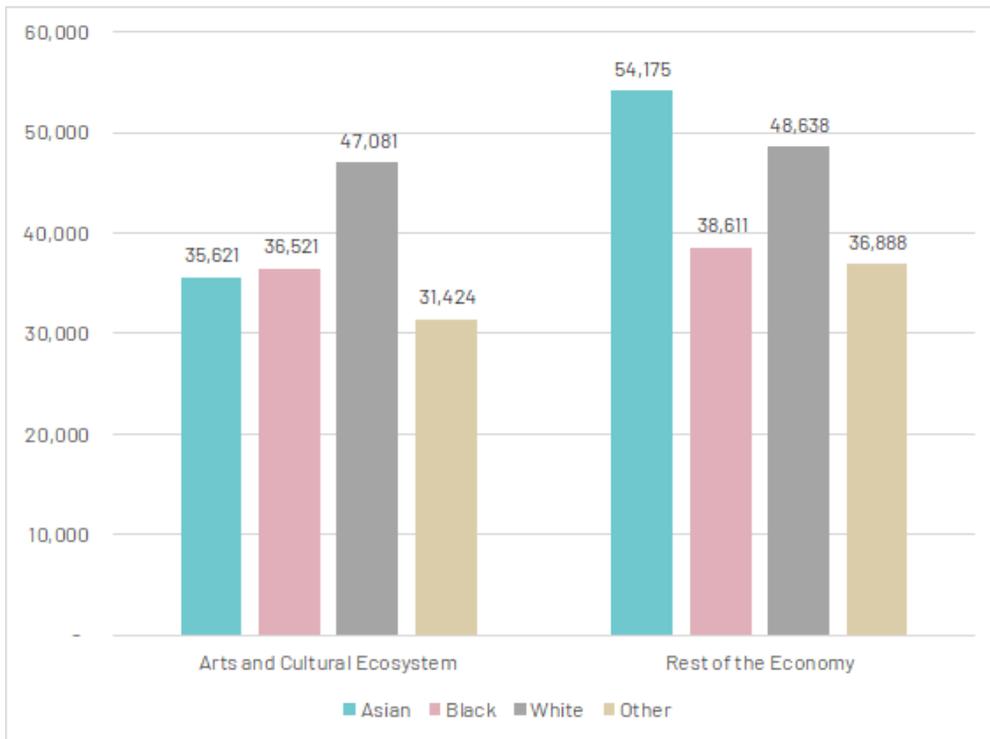
down barriers and enabling underrepresented groups to participate fully in the arts sector.

While several organizations in the arts sector, including the Lexington-Fayette county and city government, the Lexington Theater Company, Arts Connect, the Lexington Art League, the Lexington Living Arts & Science Center, the Lyric Theater and Cultural Arts Center and LexArts, provide funding for projects that engage diverse artists and audiences and place DEI within their priorities, research and stakeholder engagement conducted by Sound Diplomacy highlighted the need for greater proactive efforts on DEI issues.

Stakeholders expressed the perception that LexArts should be doing more to improve DEI outcomes. In an effort to address this, DEI should be incorporated in all LexArts' initiatives, events and processes and not only considered through a standalone grant. Moreover, steps should be taken to ensure LexArts committee's and leadership team reflects the diversity of the city.

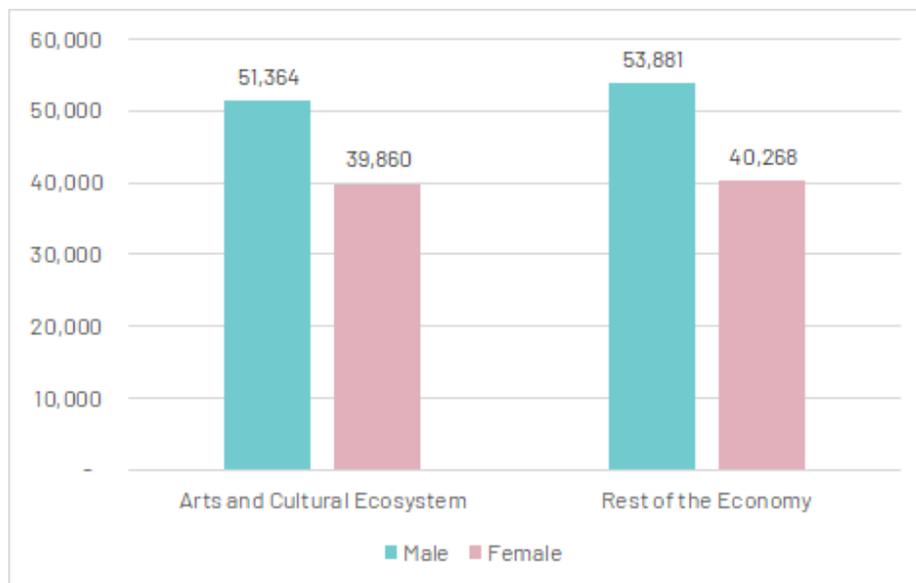
Furthermore, while the composition of the creative and cultural ecosystem closely mirrors the city's demographic composition in terms of race (89.2% "White", 6.3% "Black/African-American", 3.2% "Other", 1.3% "Asian") and gender balance (48.7% Women), there are significant wage gaps based on gender and race within the sector.

Figure 6. Annual Average Income by Race (\$ USD)



Source: American Community Survey, Sound Diplomacy Research

Figure 6.1 Arts and Cultural Ecosystem Annual Average Income (\$ USD)



Source: American Community Survey, Sound Diplomacy Research

Men in the creative and cultural ecosystem, on average, earn 28.9% more than women (\$51,364 vs \$39,860). And “White” individuals command the highest average income, at \$47,081, followed by “Black/African-American” at \$36,521, while “Asian” and “Other” racial categories are shown to have comparatively lower average incomes, at \$35,621 and \$31,424, respectively. Addressing these disparities is imperative to foster a more inclusive and equitable economic environment.

Recommendation 1: Establish Oversight of the Implementation of the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit

Initiators	LexArts, City of Lexington
Supporting Stakeholders	LexArts’ Board of Directors
Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement the strategy. ● Measure progress towards achieving recommendations.

Description: A member of LexArts staff should be tasked with monitoring the implementation of the actionable recommendations made in this strategy. To facilitate this effort, a counterpart at the City of Lexington should also be designated as being responsible for overseeing implementation. This individual would also play a key role in strengthening the relationship between LexArts and the city government by leading advocacy efforts and coordinating stakeholders in the implementation of the recommendations. They should determine which actions should be led by LexArts, the City of Lexington, VisitLEX, and other involved entities. Additionally, they would work to create collaboration and partnership opportunities among these organizations to ensure a cohesive and effective arts strategy.

Those responsible should also be tasked with developing and publishing annual reports that measure progress against the goals outlined in the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit. This will enhance transparency, raising awareness for LexArts’ impact on the local arts community.

Implementation Considerations:

The following implementation steps should be undertaken by both the City and LexArts.

- Determine the strategy for recruitment and selection of the staff member.
- Recruit, select, and appoint an individual to the role.
- Establish a regular meeting cadence with relevant stakeholders to coordinate the steps required to implement the recommendations made in the report.
- Determine priority recommendations.
- Establish KPIs and benchmarks.
- Collect data to measure success.
- Develop and publish annual status reports that detail the progress of the recommendations' implementation.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of recommendations implemented.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from the arts community and audiences.

Recommendation 2: Review, Update and Communicate the LexArts Strategic Governance Plan to the Public

Initiators	LexArts
Supporting Stakeholders	City of Lexington, Local arts community
Timeframe	Short term (0–12 months)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate relevant portions of the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit in LexArts’ Strategic Plan. ● Educate the local community about LexArts’ mission, key objectives, and programming. ● Enhance transparency and build public trust for LexArts.

Description: To address the lack of awareness regarding LexArts’ organizational goals, LexArts should initiate a communications effort to educate the community about its mission and key objectives. First, the LexArts Strategic Governance Plan should be reviewed and updated if necessary to ensure alignment with the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit. Once this has been completed, a communications plan should be launched to educate the community. This should include a brief digestible press release

disseminated through LexArts email channels and made available online. By communicating key information from LexArts' Strategic Governance Plan to the community, LexArts can raise public awareness and understanding of the services, support and programming it provides.

Implementation Considerations:

- Review and update the LexArts Strategic Governance Plan.
- Publish the updated plan on LexArts' website.
- Publish a press release summarizing key information from the Strategic Governance Plan on LexArts' website.
- Create a strategy to communicate the information to the public through email, social media, and other relevant channels.
- Undertake targeted communication efforts to ensure the information reaches the Lexington community.
- Organize public meetings to communicate the plan and gather community feedback.

Further Considerations:

A further step to the update of LexArts' strategy would be to design an export program. This program would focus on showcasing the city's talent on regional, national, and international stages. It could include initiatives such as artist residencies abroad, participation in global art fairs, international collaborations, and partnerships with cultural institutions beyond the city's borders. By expanding the reach of local artists, this program would not only enhance their career opportunities but also elevate Lexington's reputation as a hub for creativity and innovation, and support the entire ecosystem around it, including companies and non-profit organizations, especially those which are small and mid-sized.

The export strategy could focus only on certain creative industries at first, such as the audiovisual and interactive media sector, which was identified as the strongest in the city.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of visits to the web page showcasing LexArts' strategic plan.
- Number of newsletter recipients.
- Engagement on social media posts communicating about LexArts and its strategic plan.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from the arts community and audiences regarding the transparency of LexArts' role in the community.

Recommendation 3: Increase Cultural Funding Through Existing Revenue Streams (Hotel Tax)

Initiators	LexArts, City of Lexington
Supporting Stakeholders	VisitLEX, local hotel sector
Timeframe	Long term (3+ years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a sustainable source of funding for the arts. ● Provide funding for the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit.

Description: It is recommended that programs to promote and develop the arts and cultural industries should be partially funded through either the reinvestment of a portion of the Fayette County hotel and motel tax or an increase of the existing tax, such as 25¢ more per night.

As arts and culture are an important draw for tourists, the contribution they make towards tourism can be augmented by improving the quality and availability of local arts and culture. Investing a portion of the county’s hotel and motel tax into a dedicated city fund will allow the city to create grants that provide financial support for initiatives that will further local arts and culture. Adding a surcharge that is used for arts and cultural development will allow new funding to be raised, rather than diverting existing funds.

Implementation Considerations:

- Identify existing revenue streams that should be leveraged to increase cultural funding.
 - A portion of the Fayette County hotel and motel tax, or an increase in this tax, should be invested in a fund for arts and cultural initiatives in Lexington.
 - The feasibility of increasing Lexington’s Percent for Art program should be assessed.
 - Explore alternative ways to raise money from visitors and tourism, such as an admissions tax or redirecting part of any sales tax revenue derived from entertainment, or look to other models such as Coldplay’s

commitment to directing 10% of tour proceeds to the UK's Music Venue Trust.¹¹

- Develop a proposal indicating funding sources, the structure of the fund, uses, and how it would support the city's overall economic development.
- Advocate for implementation.
- Use this additional revenue stream to support the local arts sector by funding initiatives outlined in this strategy.
 - Funded initiatives should include:
 - Establish a Creative Economy Stimulus and Cultural Entrepreneurship Program ([Recommendation 7](#))
 - Arts education partnerships between Lexington schools and local artists, arts professionals, and organizations ([Recommendation 20](#)).
 - Incentives designed to recruit businesses ([Recommendation 9](#)).
 - Job creation incentives and the freelancer support program ([Recommendation 8](#)).
 - Communication campaigns for all new initiatives, and for the cultural tourism strategy ([Recommendation 24](#)).

Impact Indicators:

- Amount of funding raised to support arts and culture through new measures.
- Number of new or existing arts and cultural initiatives funded.
- Economic impact on the arts and cultural industries.
- Number of partnerships with tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Revenue generated from the hotel tax.
- Number of non-local attendees to cultural events.

Benchmark: Austin Live Music Fund, an Increased and Redirected Hotel Occupancy Tax for the Music Industry (Austin, Texas)¹²

What Is It: In Fall 2019, the City of Austin's Economic Development Department reassessed the Department's Hotel Occupancy Tax-funded programs, which led to the creation of the city's Live Music Fund. Austin City Council established the Live Music Fund in 2019, through a city Ordinance. The Live Music Fund aims to support Austin's diverse live music industry: professional music businesses,

¹¹ Music Venue Trust, "Coldplay Announce 2025 Wembley and Hull dates with 10% of Proceeds," musicvenuetrust.com, accessed September 28, 2024, <https://www.musicvenuetrust.com/2024/09/coldplay/>

¹² City of Austin, "Cultural Funding Review: Arts, Heritage, Music", austintexas.gov, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/cultural-funding-review-arts-heritage-music>

organizations, musicians and bands performing live and virtual shows, recording studio production, video production and merchandise.

How Is It Funded: The Live Music Fund was created through a 2019 increase in hotel occupancy taxes. The City of Austin's Hotel Occupancy Tax rate is 11 percent, comprising a 9 percent hotel occupancy tax and an additional 2 percent venue project tax.¹³ The city tax is levied in addition to the 6 percent rate imposed by the State of Texas, which must be remitted separately to the State. Since the Live Music Fund is funded through the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenues, all activities supported by the fund should encourage, promote, improve, and showcase Austin's live music industry. The ultimate goal of the fund is to sustainably develop infrastructure and experiences that attract tourism and develop Austin's convention and hotel industries.¹⁴

What Has It Done: Since the city created the Live Music Fund in 2019, it has grown to more than \$3 million.¹⁵ The disbursement of the funds collected is planned for mid-2023. The reasons for this delay are assumed to be because the fund is the first of its kind; therefore, there is no concrete plan to govern how to distribute it. In addition, Austin is suffering from a shortage of city staffers, including 20 positions in the Economic Development Department. Consequently, management of the fund has been shifted to a third-party contractor. Eventually, the program will include between 250 and 500 contracts issued, disbursing between \$5,000 and \$10,000 in funding to Austin-based musicians and independent promoters to help support events¹⁶. The funds will be used towards venue rentals, performance fees, equipment

¹³ City of Austin, "What is the City of Austin's Hotel Occupancy Tax rate?", [austintexas.gov](https://www.austintexas.gov), accessed September 6, 2024,

<https://www.austintexas.gov/faq/what-city-austins-hotel-occupancy-tax-rate#:~:text=The%20city%20of%20Austin%20Municipal%20Hotel%20Occupancy%20Tax%20rate%20is%2011%20percent>

¹⁴ Speak Up Austin, "Live Music Fund Community Engagement", speakupaustin.us, accessed September 6, 2024,

<https://speakupaustin.us/engagementhq.com/live-music-fund?tool=ganda>

¹⁵ McQueen, E. & Bloxson, M, "The city has millions of dollars to support the Austin music scene. But who gets the money?" NPR, accessed September 6, 2024,

<https://www.kut.org/austin/2022-03-01/the-city-has-millions-of-dollars-to-support-the-austin-music-scene-but-who-gets-the-money>

¹⁶ Music and Entertainment Division, City of Austin Economic Development, "Live Music Fund Event Program", services.austintexas.gov, accessed September 6, 2024,

<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=382331>

rentals, or other costs associated with hosting a live performance.¹⁷

In 2023, the program had a nearly \$4 million budget, to which \$525,000 in funds have been added to cover administrative fees paid to the Long Center for the Performing Arts,¹⁸ the organization approved to oversee the program.¹⁹

Relevance for Lexington: Allocating a portion of hotel occupancy taxes presents a funding opportunity to support the local arts sector. Given Lexington's existing tourism appeal, this initiative could significantly enhance the city's support to the arts community. Such an approach would also foster a collaboration between the tourism and cultural sectors, creating a mutually beneficial partnership that could inspire future projects and initiatives. By positioning the arts as a key element of Lexington's strategy to attract tourists, as suggested in [Recommendation 24](#), this would not only enrich the city's cultural landscape but also contribute to increased hotel occupancy and overall tourism revenue.

Recommendation 4: Review and Communicate the Standardized Scoring System to Assess LexArts Grant Applications

Initiators	LexArts
Supporting Stakeholders	Local arts community
Timeframe	Short term (0–12 months)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve transparency in application processes.

¹⁷ Austin Monitor, “city staffing shortages to delay Live Music Fund deployment until mid-2023”, austinmonitor.com, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2022/05/city-staffing-shortages-to-delay-live-music-fund-deployment-until-mid-2023/>

¹⁸ Long Center for the Performing Arts, “About Us”, longpac.org, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://longpac.org/about>

¹⁹ Swiatecki, C, “Council votes clear path for April rollout of Live Music Fund”. AustinMonitor.com, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2023/02/council-votes-clear-path-for-april-rollout-of-live-music-fund/>

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster public trust in granting and funding agencies. ● Ensure the arts programming reflects the needs of the community. ● Support local cultural organizations and artists. |
|--|--|

Description: LexArts should update their grant criteria to develop a quantifiable and transparent scoring system used to assess all applications for its grants. Once the standardized process has been finalized, it should be made accessible online, and communicated to all grant applicants. In addition to enhancing transparency and facilitating the grant application, selection and disbursement processes, this initiative would provide an opportunity to review the criteria for awarding grants to ensure it is an effective measure for assessing the cultural organizations most deserving of grant funding.

Implementation Considerations:

- Develop the criteria for scoring and assign weightings.
- Criteria should be based on data and in line with LexArts’ larger objectives.
- In addition to existing criteria, key evaluation areas should also include:
 - Fair pay: To what extent does the applicant adhere to fair pay guidelines for artists and creative collaborators.
 - DEI: At what level does the applicant uphold diversity, equity, and inclusion standards in its practices, staffing, events, and choice of collaborators.
 - Accessibility: To what degree does the applicant ensure accessibility at its events and within its spaces.
 - Environmental sustainability: To what extent does the applicant respect environmental sustainability principles in its practices and events.
- Write descriptions of the criteria and the weight they carry in the assessment of the application.
- Publish application criteria alongside the grant descriptions to ensure transparency for applicants.
- Communicate these criteria and descriptions to grant applicants and application evaluators. The scoring system should be made available to the public, and should be detailed in any calls for applications or requests for proposals.
- Develop and share guidelines and conduct workshops to educate stakeholders and facilitate the grant application process.
- Publish the evaluation results.
- Publish data about grant recipients and funding disbursed through each grant online.

Further Considerations: A database of grantee application information should also be developed to facilitate the proofing and verification once grants are awarded and to streamline the renewal process. Data collection should include the number and name of grant recipients, as well as the number of applications submitted and the name of all organizations who applied. Grant applications should be a source for LexArts to collect the necessary data to measure success through the defined impact indicators.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of grants assessed using the scoring system.
- Number of applicants accessing or downloading details outlining the scoring system.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from the arts community about the scoring system and its transparency.
- Number of initiatives to communicate the scoring system publicly (newsletters, social media publications etc).

Benchmark: National Endowment for the Arts grant application guides and resources (United States)²⁰

What Is It: The NEA is an independent federal agency that operates in the United States. It is the largest funder of the arts in the country and its main activity is grantmaking. The NEA provides grants to organizations and individuals across a broad range of artistic disciplines.

Who Is Responsible: The NEA is responsible for disbursing grants to nonprofit arts organizations, public art agencies and organizations, colleges, universities, and individuals.

Grant applications are reviewed by Arts Endowment panelists. Panels are made up of individuals who represent a range of artistic and cultural viewpoints, with a specific effort to create panels that have geographic and ethnic diversity. Individuals who serve on these panels are either arts professionals or knowledgeable laypeople who are engaged by the NEA as Special Government Employees.

What Has It Done: The NEA has developed comprehensive guidelines for each of its grant programs, which can be easily accessed online. Each grant provides

²⁰ National Endowment for the Arts. "What is the NEA" accessed September 9, 2024, <https://www.arts.gov/about/what-is-the-nea>

detailed information on the program, artistic disciplines, eligibility, application procedures, unallowable activities and costs under the grant, review criteria, and reporting requirements. This transparency helps applicants understand what is required and how their applications will be evaluated.

Moreover, the NEA website provides numerous resources for applicants, including a guide for first time applicants, a user-friendly explanation of the grant review process, sample application narratives, a list of common mistakes, and a list of previously funded projects and grant recipients.

The NEA also regularly hosts webinars and workshops that offer guidance on preparing and submitting grant proposals. In addition, they provide opportunities for applicants to ask staff their questions and receive feedback through informal virtual office hours.

Relevance for Lexington: The NEA case provides an example of an arts granting body that has successfully made its grant application process transparent and easy to understand. Through clear guidelines, a user-friendly online portal, comprehensive resources, and accessible support, the NEA has enhanced the accessibility and efficiency of its grant process. Importantly, the NEA has also made concerted efforts to ensure grant reviewers are diverse, representing a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints. LexArts should strive to mimic similar processes for its own grants, as this approach will help to make the application more fair and accessible, streamline operations, and build trust within the arts community.

Recommendation 5: Continue to Convene DEI Co-Chairs and Appoint a Member of LexArts Staff Dedicated to DEI to Build Out DEI Strategy

Initiators	LexArts
Supporting Stakeholders	Local community
Timeframe	Short term (0–12 months)

Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritize DEI and highlight its importance in the local arts and cultural landscape. ● Reduce inequalities and actively engage underrepresented groups in the arts sector.
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Description: To build on LexArts’ existing DEI efforts, a member of LexArts staff should be appointed to focus on furthering the organization’s DEI objectives. This individual should be tasked with improving equity in Lexington’s arts ecosystem. To achieve this, they should collaborate with LexArts’ two DEI Co-Chairs to establish key goals and objectives, as well as a method to measure progress against those objectives. Related to [Recommendation 2](#), this person should review the selection and disbursement processes for the LexArts DEI grants to improve transparency, including making application and selection criteria publicly available.

Implementation Considerations:

- Appoint a staff member to champion DEI, in partnership with LexArts’ existing DEI Co-Chairs.
- Collaborate with the arts community to define DEI objectives and measure progress, collecting data to measure success against established KPIs.
- Administer a survey to gather community feedback on DEI needs.
- Major DEI-related objectives should include:
 - Offer a wider variety of events that cater to different genres, age groups, and demographics.
 - Incorporate diverse groups into existing arts and cultural events in the city.
 - Reduce the current gender and race-related wage gaps for artists in the city.
 - Identify the causes of issues that may detract from equal access to entertainment by all residents and guests, including pricing, transit, and public perception of safety.
 - Improve access to performance opportunities for underrepresented groups.
 - Recommend strategies and initiatives to improve diversity, equity and inclusion within Lexington’s arts ecosystem, such as diverse events, more accessible grant applications, guidelines etc.
 - Further formalize LexArts’ DEI grant application process and ensure transparent assessment and disbursement processes.

Impact Indicators:

- Average wage by gender and race-related for members of the arts and cultural industries.
- Number of performance opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- Race and gender statistics for program participants and audiences.
- Number of underrepresented groups accessing the arts.
- Amount of funding and grants awarded to underrepresented artists and DEI initiatives.
- Number of individuals who identify as part of an underrepresented group in leadership positions in local arts organizations.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from underserved communities.

Benchmark: Equity in Music and Entertainment Task Force and Report, (Madison, Wisconsin)²¹

What It Is: The Equity in Music and Entertainment Report was published in 2018 as a result of the establishment of the Task Force on Equity in Music and Entertainment. The main aim of the task force was to combat the lack of access to performance opportunities within licensed commercial venues, such as bars, parks, and festivals, experienced by musicians and entertainers of color (and particularly those from the hip-hop community).

While the main focus of the task force was to improve representation of all underrepresented genres of music and entertainment, the impetus for its formation was focused on hip-hop, due to negative associations regarding its impact on public safety that led to it being ‘misunderstood and, at times, feared’.²² This resulted in venues’ being reluctant to program hip-hop shows, and a lack of local hip-hop shows in Madison.

With recognition that the unequal access experienced by performers of color can cause detrimental impact to Madison’s cultural diversity, sense of community, and economy more generally, the report outlines a series of best practices in other cities regarding security, structured events, and arts in education; in addition to proposing 31 recommendations with focus on five areas, including:

- Culture and Community
- Venues
- Equity of Access

²¹ City of Madison, WI, “Task Force on Equity in Music and Entertainment,” accessed January 25, 2024, https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/Arts_112818_TFEME_Final%20Report.pdf.

²² Ibid.

- Public Safety and Media Coverage
- Transportation

Who Is Responsible: A result of 9 years' worth of efforts by the hip-hop community in Madison, and 7 years as part of the official mission of the Urban Community Arts Network (a local organization 'dedicated to supporting sustainability in the Madison music community and advocating for equity in the local arts and entertainment ecosystem'),²³ the Task Force on Equity in Music and Entertainment was convened in June 2017 after unanimous approval by the City of Madison Common Council and held its first meeting in September later that year. As per the resolution submitted for its convening, the task force comprised 11 members representing different sectors of the city and community, including musicians, college students, entertainment promoters, and policymakers.

In the 9 years prior to establishing this Task Force, citizens of Madison had already begun to call on government and private entities, including the Madison Police Department, the Office of the Mayor, the Alcohol License and Review Committee (ALRC), the Madison Arts Commission (MAC), the Division of Civil Rights, and owners of music venues, to explore how Madison's music and entertainment scene could become more inclusive.

Upon its establishment, the task force had four main aims:²⁴

- Identification of the root causes of issues that may detract from equal access to entertainment by all residents and guests including transportation and public perception of safety concerns
- Explore best practices used in other communities, especially those that are home to large populations of college students, young professionals, residents who are active in urban arts that can be adapted to [Madison's] downtown
- Recommend long-term and short-term strategies to establish an atmosphere of continued communication, which will assure the sustainability of the desired environment and benefits
- Analysis of costs, revenues, and timelines that will support both short term and long term recommendations.

²³ Urban Community Arts Network, "Home," [ucanmadison.com](https://www.ucanmadison.org/), accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.ucanmadison.org/>.

²⁴ City of Madison, WI, "Task Force on Equity in Music and Entertainment," accessed January 25, 2024, https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/Arts_112818_TFEME_Final%20Report.pdf.

As of 2019, this task force is no longer active as it was instituted to develop the Equity in Music and Entertainment Report. However, several work groups, which focus on areas such as economic impact and tourism, have since been established. The work groups are responsible for implementing the recommendations set out by the report, with more changes expected to be put in place in 2024.

What It Has Done: This report has informed the creation of other related reports, such as Sound Diplomacy’s Music Recovery Framework for the Greater Madison Music City Project. As of August 2022, the city has begun to implement the recommendations set out in the Equity in Music and Entertainment report, including:

- Formalizing plans for a full-time staff position at the Mayor’s office focused exclusively on promoting equity in arts and entertainment.
- Creating the Equal Opportunities Commission Certified Partners training to ensure that equity is maintained in all music and entertainment events.
- Working on an ordinance to add an Affirmative Action Plan to the entertainment license application process.
- Implementing grants or sliding-scale fees for arts events that require permits.

In March 2023, the City Department of Civil Rights started to develop anti-bias, bi-cultural, and cross-cultural training for all music venues. More generally, as a result of the establishment of both the task force and the report, awareness for underlying racial inequality in the sector has increased, leading to an increase in bookings made at Black-owned venues as well as support for hip-hop artists.²⁵

Relevance for Lexington: This example demonstrates the benefits of working groups and task forces that rely on collaborative efforts between government, private business, and local residents in garnering recognition and action to address racial inequality in the arts. Though the Task Force outlined here focused more on the promotion of hip-hop music, it tackled systemic racial bias and equity issues. A similarly focused and cooperative approach to improving diversity in Lexington’s arts and cultural ecosystem is much needed and can generate the awareness and political will needed to generate system change to improve diversity, equity and inclusion in the city’s arts sector.

²⁵ Karen Reece, in discussion with Sound Diplomacy, April 19, 2023.

Professional Development, Talent Retention, and Business Development

The Creative Economy Value Chain

The analysis of Lexington's creative and cultural ecosystem reveals important dynamics in terms of stakeholder relevance, collaboration patterns, and market orientation. By examining the key players in the value chain and their interrelationships, we can better understand the overall structure and efficiency of the ecosystem, highlighting areas that contribute to its strengths and those that may require further development.

Both creatives and organizations show a high reliance on stakeholders within their own sub-sector. Creatives rated their peers 4.2/5, while organizations scored them even higher at 4.5, demonstrating a strong intra-sectoral dependency. This indicates a well-connected network within specific creative disciplines, where collaboration and mutual support are crucial for achieving goals. Similarly, arts and culture education emerged as another strength, with organizations and creatives rating it 3.7 and 3.6 respectively, highlighting its role in nurturing talent and providing vital knowledge across the ecosystem.

On the other end of the spectrum, distributors, both physical and digital, as well as managers, booking agents, and local promoters, scored very low on relevance, with ratings between 1.6 and 1.9. This suggests that these intermediaries are not fully integrated into the value chain, pointing to a gap in the professionalization and commercialization of creative output. Many creatives, particularly in sectors like music, seem to adopt a DIY (do-it-yourself) approach, managing their own distribution, promotion, and event organization, which can hinder their long-term growth and scalability.

The perceived quality of stakeholders closely mirrors their relevance. Creatives and organizations consistently rated their peers from the same and other sub-sectors highly in terms of quality, with scores around 4.0. This suggests that when creatives and organizations find certain actors relevant, they also perceive their services as high quality. Exhibition venues were another well-regarded stakeholder, which reinforces the importance of physical spaces for presenting and consuming creative work in Lexington.

Conversely, managers, booking agents, and distributors were rated poorly in terms of quality, with creatives giving these entities an average score of 2.3, and organizations scoring them similarly. This low perception suggests that even where these

intermediaries exist, they are not delivering services at the level expected by creatives and organizations, pointing to a need for improvement in these areas. A potential solution could be targeted programs aimed at improving the capabilities and professionalism of intermediaries, thereby elevating the entire value chain.

When looking at the location of clients and suppliers, the findings reveal a strong local focus. 94% of creatives report having clients within Lexington, and 70% do not have clients outside of Kentucky. This suggests that while the ecosystem is deeply interconnected at a local level, it is relatively insular, with limited engagement beyond the city and state borders. This presents an opportunity for strategic efforts aimed at expanding market reach, particularly in sectors like visual arts, which have a more scalable product that could attract national or international clients.

The strong local interdependence is also evident in the supplier relationships, with 93% of creatives collaborating with other local creatives, and 92% working with local exhibition venues. This dense network of local relationships contributes to a cohesive ecosystem but also risks creating a bubble that limits exposure to external markets. Diversifying collaborations and focusing on exporting creative products could unlock significant growth potential for Lexington’s creative economy.

Figure 7. Arts and Cultural Ecosystem Value Chain: Relevance, Quality and Availability

Stakeholders in the Arts and Cultural Ecosystem	Creatives and Artists - Relevance	Creatives and Artists - Quality	Creatives and Artists - Availability	Organizations - Relevance	Organizations - Quality	Organizations - Availability
Creatives, artists, and performers from the same cultural and creative sector	3.5	3.6	3	4.2	3.8	3.1
Creatives, artists, and performers from other cultural and creative sectors	2.9	3.6	3.3	3.7	4	3.6
Managers, booking agents, and local promoters	1.9	2.5	2	2.2	2.9	2.7
Equipment suppliers	2.1	3	2.3	2.5	3.5	2.5
Producers	1.8	2.5	1.9	2	2.9	2.3
Physical distributors	1.6	2.1	1.6	1.9	2.6	1.7
Physical retail stores or rental outlets	2.4	2.8	2	1.7	3	2.3
Exhibition venues	3.3	3.2	2.4	3.3	3.4	2.7
Festivals and fairs	2.7	3.2	2.7	2.8	3.4	3
Local authorities or regional and national governments	2.2	2.7	2.4	2.8	2.9	2.5
Cultural education	2.4	3	2.5	3	3.2	2.4
Composers and creators associations	1.8	2.4	2	2	3	2.3

Conventions

- Creation
- Exhibition
- Top three lowest ratings
- Production
- Transversal
- Top three highest ratings
- Distribution

Intermediaries and Business Support Structure

The Lexington Chamber of Commerce's website outlines three key incentives available to businesses in Lexington Fayette Urban County. These include the Industrial Revenue Bonds, the Jobs Fund Program, and the Public Infrastructure Program.²⁶ Although the Jobs Fund Program - which aims to support business expansion particularly in industries such as advanced manufacturing, technology, professional shared services, and healthcare, or businesses establishing their primary base in Lexington via forgivable loan of up to \$100,000 for high-growth companies meeting specific criteria, and a loan of up to \$250,000 for businesses in Lexington - could apply to the cultural sector, there are no economic development incentives or tax exemption specifically aiming to support the creative industries.²⁷

In addition to the absence of economic development incentives for supporting creative businesses and intermediaries, the city lacks sufficient resources and information for establishing or relocating a cultural business.

The majority of workers (73.8%) in the arts and cultural ecosystem are employees of private for-profit businesses.²⁸ This is comparable to the rest of the economy (76.8%). However, there are some differences, particularly concerning self-employment. 12.4% of the arts and cultural ecosystem is made up of self-employed people who do not operate as an incorporated business, while only 8.3% of the rest of the economy falls under this category. This indicates a higher level of job vulnerability in the arts and cultural ecosystem, since freelancers assume higher risks and costs in comparison to employees.

²⁶ Commerce Lexington, "Local Incentives", accessed December 19, 2023,

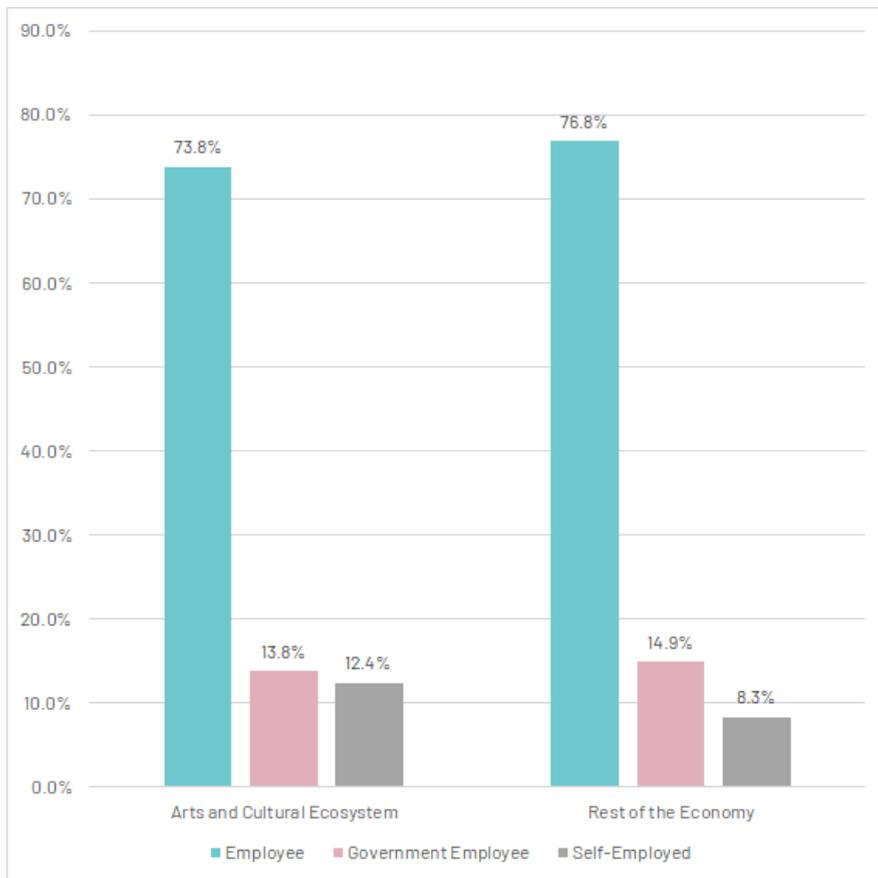
<https://locateinlexington.com/site-selection-services/local-incentives/>

²⁷ Lexington Economic Partnership, "Lexington Jobs Fund", accessed December 19, 2023,

<https://www.lexingtonky.gov/economic-development/lexington-jobs-fund>

²⁸ In ACS the complete description is 'private for-profit company or business of an individual, for wages, salary, or commissions'.

Figure 8. Worker Status by Sector



Source: American Community Survey, Sound Diplomacy Research

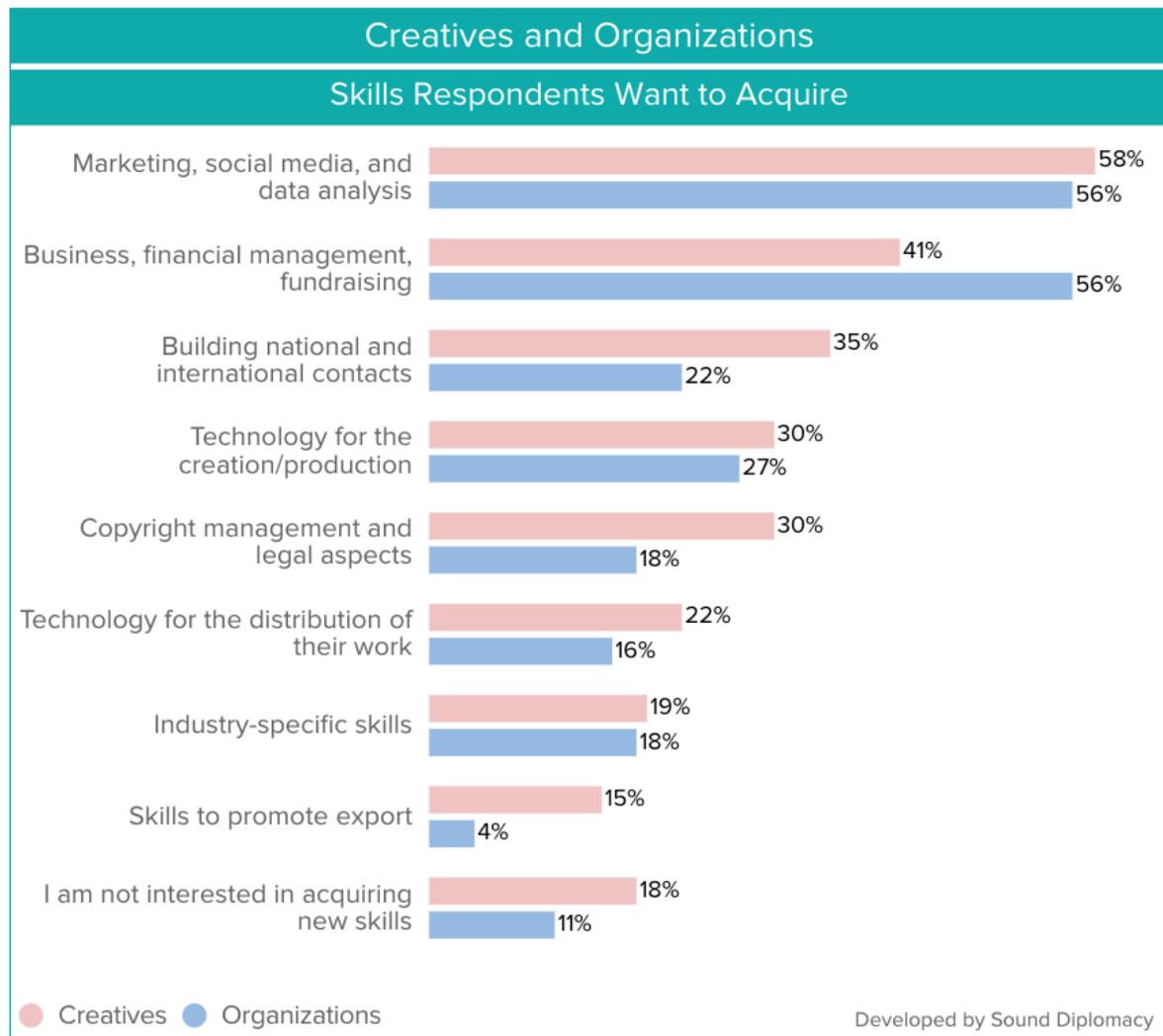
In Lexington, businesses operating within the creative and artistic sub-sectors included in the scope of this assessment have fewer employees than what is observed when examining the national average for the number of employees at businesses operating in the same sub-sectors. This indicates that there may be opportunities to enhance local employment in these fields through targeted workforce development initiatives or business expansion strategies.

Skills Development

When asked about the skills they wish to develop or enhance, creatives and organizations mainly selected those that are traditionally provided by intermediaries

operating within the creative and cultural ecosystem. In addition, the two income sources with the lowest impact on total earnings across all sub-sectors are "Licensing and intellectual property"²⁹ and "Digital and online revenue"³⁰, contributing only 1% and 3% of creatives' total income, respectively (see figure 9). This highlights the need for professional development resources in these specific areas.

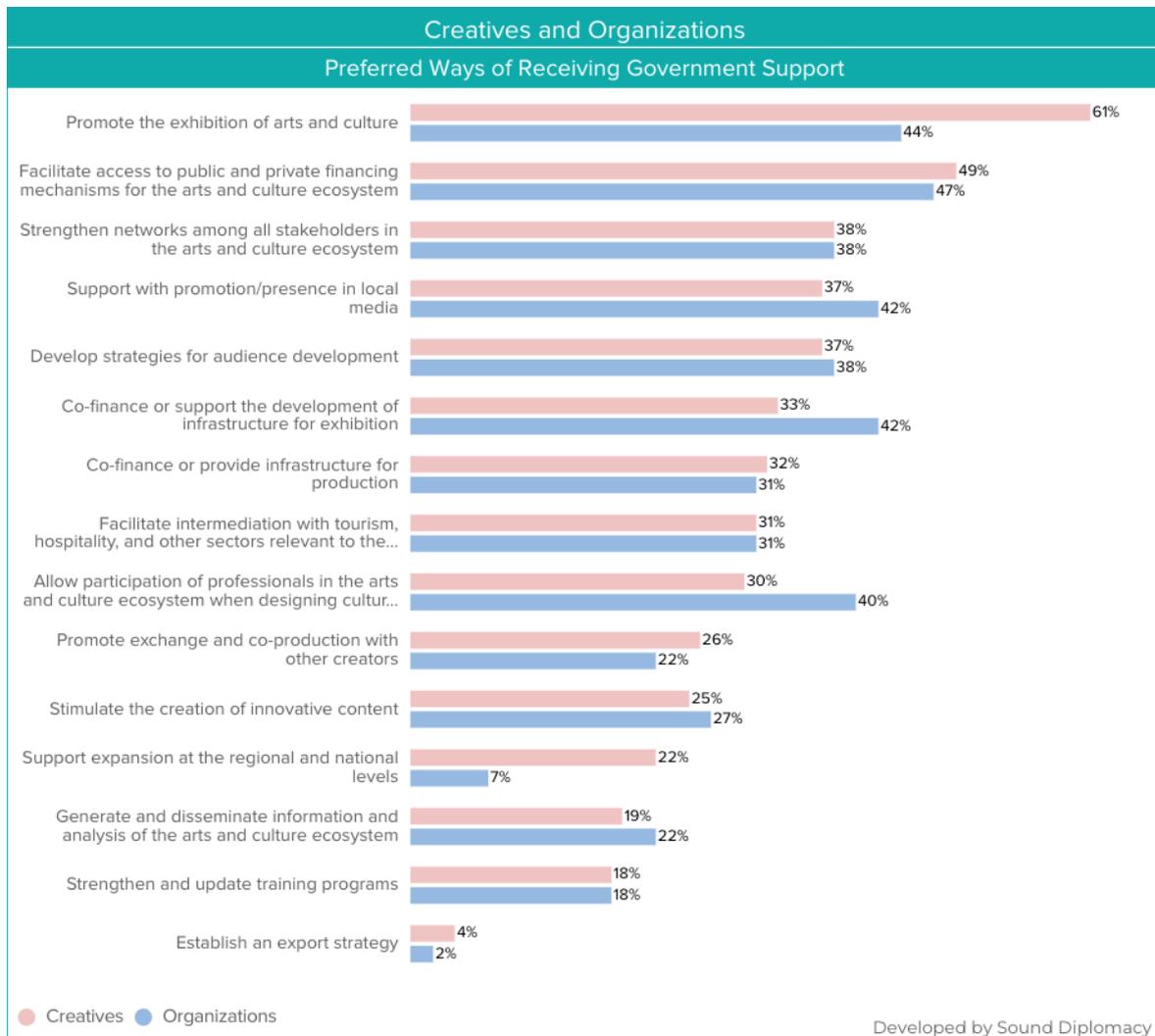
Figure 9. Skills or Knowledge Gaps in the Creative and Cultural Ecosystem



²⁹ Royalties from music, film, or television content, brand licensing, character licensing, and copyright permissions
³⁰ Streaming services, digital downloads, e-commerce sales of digital content, online subscriptions, and advertising revenue from digital platforms

In line with the aforementioned need to develop business-related skills amongst artists, both organizations and creatives chose aspects related to services typically offered and carried out by cultural intermediaries as some of the most useful ways for the government to support the creative and cultural sector, such as: promoting the exhibition of arts and culture; providing support with promotion/presence in local media; and co-financing or supporting the development of infrastructure for exhibition. Their third preferred way of receiving support from the city is to strengthen networks among all stakeholders in the arts and culture ecosystem. This finding further emphasizes the need to enhance the quality and availability of intermediary agents in Lexington and strengthen their relationship with the organizations and creatives acting as local suppliers of culture.

Figure 10. Priority Areas of Government Support Selected by Participants of the Creative and Cultural Ecosystem



Industry Development Support

Building on this finding, the desire among many survey respondents from the creative sector to acquire or improve business and management skills suggests a lack of individuals or organizations trained in these areas to support their business needs. This is further evidenced by creatives and organizations who report limited collaboration with cultural intermediaries – such as managers, booking agents, distributors (both physical and digital), and producers – because they do not view these stakeholders as relevant in

helping them achieve their goals. As explained above, they rated them low (with an average score of 1.8 out of 5) in terms of their relevance in helping them achieve their goals.

As previously mentioned, creatives and organizations have significant interaction with other creatives, both within their sub-sector and across other sub-sectors. The collaborative spirit within the arts community presents an opportunity to host networking events and conferences where individuals can exchange resources, skills, and knowledge, contributing to the overarching growth of the arts sector.

Various professional development opportunities are offered by LexArts, Arts Connect, and the Lexington Art League. However, these programs largely focus on visual arts, leaving other art forms less well served. Current opportunities include:

- LexArts: A web page featuring Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) for arts projects and employment opportunities, and artist calls in the creative industries.
- Arts Connect: A platform showcasing artist calls, and an art workshop.
- The Lexington Art League: Internships, artist calls, group critique events, and membership subscriptions. Members benefit from a 10% discount on gallery and gift shop acquisitions, exclusive invitations to member-only events, reduced fees for specific Lexington Art League applications and booth fees, access to artist critique and networking nights, the opportunity to submit artworks for solo or curated exhibitions, assured participation in the biennial Members Exhibition, and exclusive access to educational workshops designed specifically for artists.

These findings highlight three key needs for the arts sector in Lexington: enhancing professional development opportunities for creatives and organizations, increasing the availability of intermediaries, and fostering stronger connections between creatives and intermediaries.

Working Conditions

Another significant challenge for professionalization in Lexington's arts sector is the scarcity of paid opportunities, which complicates talent and student retention. Many trained creatives leave the city, as stakeholders noted that it is challenging for most creatives, especially musicians, to make a living solely through their creative pursuits. Approximately one-third of creatives and organizations have considered leaving Lexington in the past, are currently considering leaving, or previously left Lexington due to insufficient opportunities in the cultural sector.

Figure 11. Creatives: Professionalization and Income by Sub-sector

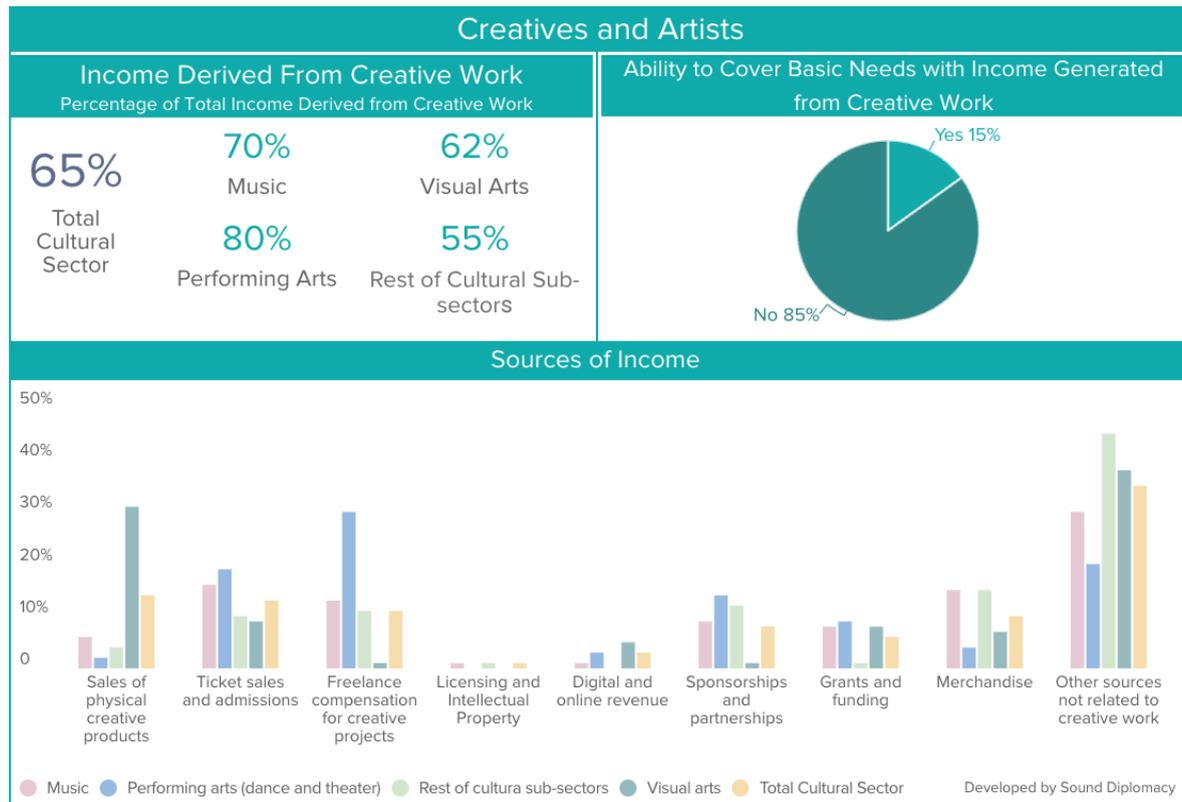
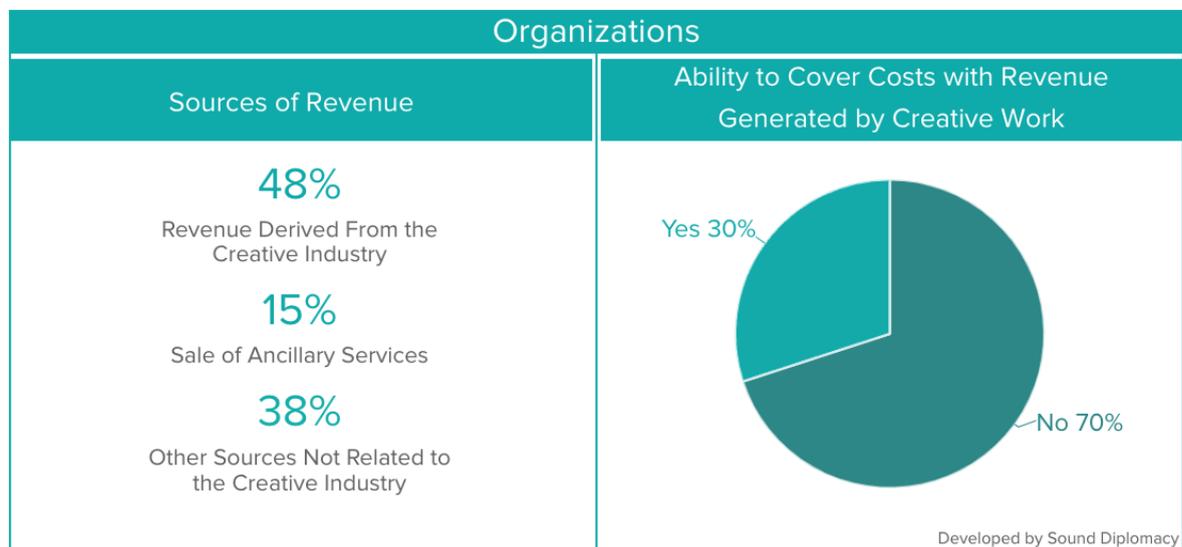


Figure 11.1 Organizations: Main Findings



A substantial majority – 85% of creatives and 70% of organizations – reported that the income from their creative work is insufficient to meet basic needs and cover costs. This challenge persists even for those who rely entirely on creative endeavors for their income. The average income for workers in the creative and cultural ecosystem sector is \$45,764, 3.7% below the average for the rest of the economy, which is \$47,516. Although 41% of creatives and 38% of organizations aim to improve their income soon, many have dismissed the possibility of achieving this.

There needs to be a general shift in the perception of local artists and creatives in Lexington to combat the misconception that creative pursuits are a hobby rather than a viable career. Developing a set of ‘Fair Pay Guidelines’ should help to change this viewpoint, as establishing a benchmark for fair pay acknowledges the value of artistic work and creativity, putting it on par with other professions.

Guides and Resources

While the LexArts Artist Registry is a relevant tool for sharing the latest RFPs, RFQs, and artist calls with registered artists, it lacks functionality for arts stakeholders to browse the registry and connect with one another. Stakeholders see significant potential in establishing a centralized, collaborative platform. This platform, which could take the form of a database, should serve as a hub for resource sharing, partnership building, and networking, uniting diverse sectors – including often overlooked areas like the culinary arts – into the broader arts community.

Stakeholder engagement also revealed that existing infrastructure is in high demand, expensive, and challenging to book. Including arts spaces in the previously mentioned platform would enhance coordination between art groups, organizations and venues. Providing a comprehensive list of available arts venues and spaces, along with detailed descriptions, contact information, and booking procedures, would enhance the utilization of existing spaces by raising awareness around them within the local arts community, enabling artists to find suitable venues for their needs and directly engage in the booking process. This would also represent an opportunity for cross-organizational collaboration, which would allow groups to connect with each other to share office and event spaces, thereby fostering mutual support and creating a more vibrant arts environment. This approach would aim to improve access to rehearsal, performance, exhibition, and creation spaces while ensuring that groups and artists are matched with venues that meet their specific needs.

In addition to a platform for networking, collaboration and arts space booking and allocation, there is an opportunity to develop a broader range of online resources to further support Lexington’s arts community. While LexArts’ website currently provides valuable information, such as calls for artists, resources for arts educators, and grant opportunities, expanding these offerings will greatly benefit the sector. Additions

should include a one-stop shop for licensing and permitting processes, best practice guidelines, and professional development resources. This enhanced support will provide artists and arts organizations with accessible tools to support them and enhance their ability to contribute to a dynamic arts ecosystem.

Best practice guidelines made accessible on such a platform will serve as a valuable resource for navigating challenging areas within the local arts ecosystem. Resources could include guidelines for creating fairly paid opportunities for artists and creatives, strengthening the accessibility of cultural infrastructure, and enhancing environmental sustainability practices within the arts.

Recommendation 6: Organize Workshops, Lectures and Networking Sessions to Provide Professional Development Opportunities for the Creative Industries

Initiators	LexArts, industry professionals
Supporting Stakeholders	Local creatives and arts organizations
Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer professional development opportunities for local artists and creatives wanting to develop business-related skills. • Offer networking opportunities to connect artists to industry professionals. • Increase intra and inter-sectoral collaborations in the arts and cultural industries. • Increase business opportunities.

Description: LexArts should offer professional development to respond to local artists’ and creatives’ desire to develop specific skills in selected priority areas and improve communication between creatives and professionals who currently provide those services in Lexington. This would strengthen the relationship between intermediary agents and the organizations and creatives who act as local suppliers of culture.

To achieve this, LexArts should lead a series of workshops, lectures and networking events for artists and arts professionals focused on skills artists and creatives currently lack. This would help to target current gaps and enhance artists and creatives skills and knowledge in these areas, expanding available career opportunities.

These sessions should also be occasionally targeted toward sectors related to but outside of the creative industries, such as businesses that may wish to collaborate with local creatives. For example, a copyright lawyer should offer strategies for local musicians to protect their work during a discussion on intellectual property rights. This would allow for a platform to bridge gaps in understanding identified amongst Lexington's artists and creatives. The sessions should also serve as a platform for stakeholders from Lexington's universities, tourism agencies, and other sectors interested in collaborating with the arts and cultural sector.

Ultimately, these sessions would foster improved communication and collaboration across different industries, enhancing business acumen amongst local artists and creatives, and partnership and business opportunities. This should also offer artists additional avenues for funding and support by connecting them with potential clients and collaborators, while providing the business community increased access to creative and innovative thinkers.

Implementation Considerations:

- Use the results of the survey analysis to inform the draft list of priority topics in key areas such as:
 - Marketing, social media and data analysis
 - Business, financial management and fundraising
 - Grant-writing
 - Internationalization
 - Copyright management and legal aspects
- Disseminate the draft list to the creative community and allow them to rank their preferences.
- Begin with a selection of priority topics, with potential for expansion into other areas as the initiative progresses.
- Partner with experts, professionals and organizations to lead the sessions.
- Create a structured plan for the content of the lectures, workshops, and panel discussions, ensuring a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills.
- Design the structure of networking sessions to follow the professional development sessions.
- Work with universities and other local cultural institutions to co-host or participate in the sessions.
- Select accessible spaces to host the sessions.
- Determine the budget and resources required.
- Establish a schedule suiting the availability of participants and speakers.
- Promote the program and invite key stakeholders.
- Facilitate participation during the sessions and collect feedback.
- Track attendance and participant satisfaction.

- Ensure that any resources shared during the sessions, such as guides, handbooks, and other materials, are published on the one-stop shop and made accessible online to the entire arts community ([Recommendation 14](#)).

Further Considerations: Certain sessions should be targeted towards students, with the goals of strengthening the talent pipeline and supporting their career development in an effort to improve student retention and professionalization within the city’s arts and cultural sectors.

Consideration should be given to the scheduling of all professional development programming. To maximize accessibility, sessions should be offered at times when stakeholders can attend. Though workshops can be offered in-person, they should be streamed, recorded, and made available online for greater access.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of training workshops, lectures and networking sessions developed.
- Number of participants.
- Participant feedback.
- Number of professional development guides and online resources created and disseminated.
- Number of partnerships/collaborations/business opportunities created thanks to the sessions.

Benchmark: New York Foundation for the Arts Professional Development Programs (New York)

What Is It: The New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) offers professional development programs that provide artists, creators, students, and arts administrators with tools, strategies, and advice for building sustainable careers. It collaborates with organizations, academic institutions, and cultural partners to bring its programs to a broad range of national and international creative communities. Many of these programs are free or low-cost, and open to the public. They include workshops, individual consultations, intensive training opportunities, targeted programming that reflects current trends and developments across creative industries, online resources and networking opportunities.³¹

³¹ New York Foundation for the Arts, “Professional Development”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/>

- **Live workshops** for artists and cultural workers of all disciplines are held year round. Workshops are offered to participants for free or at a low cost and are 60–90 minutes each.³² Topics include:
 - Art Law: Copyright & Intellectual Property
 - Marketing: Social Media & Websites
 - Career Panels: Discussions with Arts Professionals
 - Strategic Planning: Structuring Your Career
 - Fundraising: Grant Writing & Individual Donations
 - Artist Statements: Writing About Your Work
 - Public Art: Commission-Based Opportunities
 - Taxes: For Artists & Creative Businesses
 - Finance: Managing Your Money
 - Work Sample Reviews: Structuring Your Portfolio
- **Career advice services** offer organizations, artists, creatives, students, and arts administrators online opportunities to receive practical and actionable career advice from industry professionals and specialized NYFA staff.³³
- **The Artist as Entrepreneur Program** is a training program that serves artists, creatives, students, and arts administrators. Topics such as finance, law, marketing, and fundraising are addressed.³⁴
- **Free leadership development programs** were offered to over 150 arts administrators from arts and cultural New York City-area organizations representing all creative disciplines, within commuting distance to New York City.³⁵
 - **The NYSCA Stabilization Program for Small Arts Organizations** serves eligible nonprofits through a combination of tailored advisory services and financial support.³⁶
 - **The Emerging Leaders Program** is a free year-long program that provides leadership training for manager-level arts administrators.³⁷

³² New York Foundation for the Arts, “Online Learning”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/online-learning/>

³³ New York Foundation for the Arts, “Career Services”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/career-advice/>

³⁴ New York Foundation for the Arts, “Entrepreneurial Intensives”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/entrepreneurial-intensives/>

³⁵ New York Foundation for the Arts, “Leadership Initiatives”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/leadership-initiatives/>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

- **The Incubator for Executive Leaders of Color** is a free program that provides leadership training and community support for up to 16–18 arts administrators.³⁸
- **The Immigrant Artist Program** serves a community of artists with diverse backgrounds who share the experience of immigration. It aims to connect artists with services and resources to foster their creative careers, gain support and exposure for their work, and integrate into the cultural world of New York and beyond while upholding their distinct identities.³⁹
- **Online professional development opportunities** include workshops, learning courses, virtual networking for artists, arts administrators, and arts professionals, and documentation.⁴⁰
 - **“The Profitable Artists” guidebook** is a “best practices” approach to planning and organizing an arts career. This paperback handbook identifies common challenges; examines specialized areas of strategic planning, finance, marketing, law, and fundraising; and distills these topics in an easy-to-digest way so that artists and creatives of all disciplines can apply them to their own experience and practice. It includes techniques for planning an arts career, innovative fundraising tips, best practices for marketing and selling artwork to new audiences, networking strategies for a digital world, budgeting and financial basics, legal requirements and terminology.⁴¹
 - **Online articles and documentation** serve as guides and tools for a variety of arts career development topics such as arts administration, salary negotiation, resources for teaching artists, digital marketing for artists, fundraising and grant application, finance and legal issues, filmmaker advice and more.⁴²

Who Is Responsible: The New York Foundation for the Arts is a 501(c)(3) service organization established in 1971.⁴³ NYFA Learning’s professional development

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ New York Foundation for the Arts, “Immigrant Artist Program”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/immigrant-artist-program-iap/>

⁴⁰ New York Foundation for the Arts, “Online Learning”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/online-learning/>

⁴¹ New York Foundation for the Arts, “The Profitable Artist”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/the-profitable-artist/>

⁴² New York Foundation for the Arts, “Business of Art”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/business-of-art>

⁴³ New York Foundation for the Arts, “About”, NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/about/>

programs are supported by Altman Foundation, Con Edison, Deutsche Bank, The Stephen and Palmina Pace Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.⁴⁴

What Has It Done: NYFA's Learning programs provide thousands of artists with professional development training and support. NYFA's website is used by more than 1 million people and features more than 20,000 opportunities and resources available to artists in all disciplines.⁴⁵

Through its programs, NYFA also recognizes the historic and systemic marginalization of people by race, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, age, geography, ability, sexual orientation, and/or gender and gender-identity. The organization is committed to providing the necessary resources to empower artists to define and achieve success on their own terms, and continuously works to identify, acknowledge, understand, and dismantle both its own institutional structures of oppression and those of the larger world, to uphold the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.⁴⁶

Relevance for Lexington: LexArts could take inspiration from NYFA's professional development initiatives, particularly the topics they address. LexArts could adopt a similar approach by hosting year-round workshops for artists and creative professionals across all disciplines. Additionally, LexArts could offer online meetings, guides, and videos accessible anytime through the proposed one-stop shop ([Recommendation 14](#)). To further enhance their resources, LexArts could draw from NYFA's "Profitable Artist" guidebook and online articles and documentation to develop and publish the best practices

⁴⁴ New York Foundation for the Arts, "Professional Development", NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/> and Altman Foundation, "Missions and Values", altmanfoundation.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.altmanfoundation.org/about/mission-and-values> and Con Edison, "homepage", coned.com, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.coned.com/en> and Deutsche Bank, "homepage", db.com, accessed September 4, 2024, https://www.db.com/index?language_id=1&kid=sl.redirect-en.shortcut and Stephen and Palmina Pace Foundation, "homepage", stephenandpalminapace.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.stephenandpalminapace.org/> and Rockefeller Brothers Fund, "homepage", rbf.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.rbf.org/> and National Endowment for the Arts, "homepage", arts.gov, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.arts.gov/> and New York State Council on the Arts, "homepage", arts.ny.gov, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://arts.ny.gov/> and New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, "homepage", nyc.gov, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dcla/index.page>

⁴⁵ Mercy University Career & Professional Development, "New York Foundation for the Arts", career.mercy.edu, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://career.mercy.edu/organizations/new-york-foundation-for-the-arts-nyfa/>

⁴⁶ New York Foundation for the Arts, "About", NYFA.org, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.nyfa.org/about/>

guidelines recommended in [Recommendation 12](#). In line with NYFA's Equity and Inclusion Statement, LexArts could also create specific programming to support underserved communities in Lexington.

Recommendation 7: Establish a Creative Economy Stimulus and Cultural Entrepreneurship Program for Cultural Businesses

Initiators	City of Lexington, LexArts, Commerce Lexington
Supporting Stakeholders	VisitLEX, local financial institutions, creative entrepreneurs, private sector investors, cultural organizations
Timeframe	Long term (3+ years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revive Lexington's creative sector and increase its Gross Value Added (GVA) post-pandemic. ● Foster sustainable growth in key sectors like audiovisual and interactive media. ● Empower cultural entrepreneurs through training, financial support, and mentorship.

Description: The Creative Economy Stimulus and Cultural Entrepreneurship Program aims to address the post-pandemic decline in the creative sector's GVA while fostering long-term growth and innovation of cultural companies. This unified approach integrates financial incentives, tax breaks, grants, and entrepreneurship support to create a robust framework for revitalizing the sector and empowering cultural entrepreneurs.

The program will allocate targeted financial resources through grants and tax incentives to stimulate key industries, especially audiovisual and interactive media, which have demonstrated local strength. Simultaneously, it will provide business training, access to financing programs, and mentorship to support cultural entrepreneurs, ensuring they can grow their businesses and contribute to Lexington's creative economy.

This integrated program will create a pipeline for sustained creative growth by addressing both immediate financial needs and long-term capacity building in the sector.

Implementation Considerations:

- Identify funding sources for financial incentives, including potential public-private partnerships.
- Design tax incentive structures specific to the creative industries, and focused on growth sectors like audiovisual and interactive media.
- Establish training programs in partnership with local universities and business development organizations to provide business staff and entrepreneurs with essential skills.
- Develop mentorship networks that pair experienced industry professionals with emerging creative entrepreneurs.
- Advocate for policy support to secure ongoing tax incentives and investment attraction for creative enterprises.

Further considerations:

Incentives and grant requests should be a source for LexArts to collect the necessary data to measure success through the defined impact indicators.

Impact Indicators:

- Growth in GVA and employment in Lexington's creative sectors, particularly audiovisual and interactive media.
- Number of entrepreneurs benefiting from business training and mentorship programs.
- Total financial investment mobilized for creative enterprises.
- Increase in the number of new creative businesses or expansions.
- Economic impact on Lexington's creative and cultural industries.
- Long-term sustainability and retention of creative talent in the city.

Benchmark: Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Act (Georgia)

What Is It: The Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Act grants an income tax credit of twenty percent to qualified productions. Qualified productions include: feature films, television movies or series, documentaries, commercials, and music video projects. A \$500,000 minimum investment of qualified expenditures related to materials, services, and labor in the State of Georgia is required to take advantage of the incentive and participants that

place a Georgia promotional logo on their website are eligible for an additional ten percent credit on top of the initial twenty. The \$500,000 minimum can be met with a single project or multiple projects as long as they take place in the same fiscal year.⁴⁷

Who Is Responsible: The State of Georgia, via the Georgia Department of Economic Development and the Georgia Department of Revenue. The Georgia Department of Economic Development certifies projects that meet the qualifications for the Film Tax Incentive, and the Georgia Department of Revenue oversees the earning and claiming of the credits.⁴⁸

What Has It Done: According to Olsberg SPI, which published an Economic Impact analysis of the Georgia Entertainment Industry Tax Credit, Georgia offers a strong incentive, a variety of locations, highly developed studio infrastructure, a skilled and deep workforce, and a relatively affordable cost of living. Together, these elements have been fundamental to the growth of the film and television production industry in the state. Film and television production spending in the state was worth \$4.39 billion in FY2022. The growth of Georgia's film and television production industry has spurred a major expansion in studio infrastructure in the state. Georgia has approximately 5.7 million square feet of dedicated stage space across 212 stages. Of this total, 2.6 million square feet is dedicated stage space across 141 purpose-built stages. A further 1.4 million square feet across 77 new stages is planned across six proposed studio developments.

The strong increase in production activity in Georgia has been accompanied by significant private sector investment in studio development. Between FY 2012 and FY 2022, \$1.28 billion was spent on constructing new studio facilities, expanding existing facilities, and converting existing buildings in Georgia. There is \$2.93 billion investment in studio construction planned for FY 2023 to FY 2027, and studio owners and operators confirmed that 100% of the investment is dependent on a stable tax incentive.

The combined economic impact generated for Georgia by incentivised production activity and non-incentivized studio construction activity leveraged by the Georgia Entertainment Industry Tax Credit has been significant. In FY 2022, the combined impact generated \$8.55 billion in total economic output, \$5.54 billion in total value added (GVA), \$3.54 billion in total labor income and

⁴⁷ Georgia USA, "Incentives and Applications", georgia.org, accessed September 4, 2024,

<https://www.georgia.org/industries/film-entertainment/georgia-film-tv-production/production-incentives>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

supported 59,700 jobs.

Incentivised production activity and non-incentivised studio construction activity leveraged by the Georgia Entertainment Industry Tax Credit have delivered a combined economic return on investment (RoI) of 6.3. This means that every \$1 invested through the incentive program, generates \$6.30 in terms of additional economic value from direct, indirect, and induced effects.⁴⁹

Relevance for Lexington: The Georgia Entertainment Industry Investment Tax Incentive demonstrates how an income tax credit can both support and attract businesses and professionals to a region and foster the growth of a sector. Implementing a similar initiative in Lexington would represent an additional funding source to support local organizations and professionals and foster sustainable growth in targeted sectors such as audiovisual and interactive media. It could also recruit and encourage professional activity amongst intermediaries, such as managers, booking agents, distributors (both physical and digital), and producers, thus addressing the current gap and supporting long-term sustainability and retention of creative talent in the entire arts ecosystem in Lexington and surrounding area.

Recommendation 8: Advocate for a Job Creation Program and a Freelancer Support Group

Initiators	LexArts, Commerce Lexington
Supporting Stakeholders	City of Lexington, local businesses, creative freelancers and organizations, the Freelancers Union, CivicLex, State of Kentucky
Timeframe	Long term (3+ years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Increase the number of paid professional opportunities in the arts and cultural industries.● Improve student retention.

⁴⁹ Olsberg.SPI, "Economic Impact of the Georgia Entertainment Industry Tax Credit", o-spi.com, accessed September 4, 2024, <https://www.o-spi.com/projects/georgia-incentive-economic-impact-assessment#:~:text=In%20FY%202022%2C%20the%20combined,%2C%20indirect%2C%20and%20induced%20effects.>

- Support freelancers in the arts and creative industries.
- Encourage collaboration and partnerships within the sector.
- Promote sustainable practices in the industry.
- Stimulate economic growth.

Description: LexArts should collaborate with Commerce Lexington, the City of Lexington, CivicLex and the State of Kentucky to create programs aimed at stimulating job creation within the arts sector. These programs should offer tax incentives to arts-related businesses that generate well-paid employment opportunities for Lexington residents. Recognizing the often precarious nature of labor within the arts industries, the City of Lexington and Commerce Lexington should also partner with the Freelancers Union, a nonprofit organization that serves freelancers across the United States, to devise a support system that extends social services and medical care benefits to freelance workers in the arts.

Tax incentives should also extend to organizations offering paid internship opportunities in the arts sector. This should encompass businesses and universities that hire students for internships to ensure they receive compensation, through wages or stipends. This would strengthen the talent development pipeline by allowing individuals trained in arts and culture access to opportunities in the field, diminishing the number of arts students educated in Lexington who leave the city seeking opportunities elsewhere.

Additional support should be provided to organizations that hire youth and individuals from underrepresented communities.

Implementation Considerations:

LexArts should take the lead in advocating for this initiative before passing implementation and management to the City of Lexington and Commerce Lexington.

- Use Sound Diplomacy’s work and the following case studies to develop a proposal detailing the type of tax incentives that should be offered to support local arts organizations and freelancers to support job creation in the sector.
 - Highlight the benefits of these incentives for the city’s economic growth and job creation.
- Advocate for the City of Lexington to implement the tax incentives.
- Advocate for Commerce Lexington to manage the program.
 - To maximize efficiency, the proposed job creation program and freelancer support group should be managed in a similar way to Commerce Lexington’s Minority Business Development program.

- After implementation, actively promote the program and publish guidelines on the one-stop shop outlining how to access and benefit from it ([Recommendation 14](#)).

Impact Indicators:

- Number and amount of tax incentives to support arts-related businesses generating well-paid employment opportunities.
- Number of paid professional opportunities in the arts and cultural industries.
- Number of compensated internship opportunities in the arts sector.
- Number of students engaged in compensated internships.

Benchmark: Brown University's ArtsCrew Program (Providence, Rhode Island)

What Is It: The ArtsCrew program at Brown University, launched by the Brown Arts Institute, is a workforce development program offering local artists and Brown students opportunities for training, freelance jobs, and career development.⁵⁰

The program supports the creation of a pipeline of local arts professionals by hiring and training them on artistic, administrative and technical skills for performances at the Lindemann Performing Arts Center and other Brown arts facilities. These facilities are premier arts destinations, staging a mix of events, concerts, theater productions, dance performances and visual arts exhibits, which requires multiple highly-skilled teams. The ArtsCrew tackles this challenge by providing hands-on training, skills development, employment opportunities and a supportive community for aspiring arts professionals in various part-time roles, such as stage management, marketing, and technical design. ArtsCrew members receive cross-training across multiple roles, enabling them to work in various capacities such as exhibition assistants, preparators, producing assistants, production assistants, and visitor services staff, allowing the program to adapt to the needs of Brown's arts programming.

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Open to local residents and students with a high school diploma, the ArtsCrew program was created not only to connect workers with employment but also to

⁵⁰ Brown University, "ArtsCrew program at Brown offers training, flexible jobs and career development for local artists", Brown.edu, May 31, 2024, accessed September 3, 2024, <https://www.brown.edu/news/2024-05-31/artscrew>

⁵¹ Ibid.

foster a sense of community and introduce young people and emerging artists to a variety of job opportunities in the arts. The program offers entry-level roles with wages ranging from \$18 to \$22 per hour and flexible schedules that align with the academic calendar.⁵²

Who Is Responsible: Brown University's Brown Arts Institute.⁵³

What Has It Done: Since its launch in fall 2023, nearly 100 new Brown ArtsCrew members have been hired and trained to fill a variety of part-time positions, including in areas such as box office and front-of-house management, stage management, visitor services, producing, marketing, exhibit preparation, and sound and lighting design. According to program leaders, more than half of the new hires are budding Rhode Island-based artists, dancers, musicians and performers, along with other local arts educators, administrators and production staff.⁵⁴

The ArtsCrew program aligns with Brown University's commitment to fostering local partnerships that benefit the Providence community by offering flexible work opportunities in the arts. The program serves the employment needs of both Brown students and local creative professionals, enabling young and local artists to focus on their craft while earning an income, thereby reducing the burden of gig work. Over the next few years, ArtsCrew plans to offer paid training, including certification programs and workshops on soft skills like resume building and interview preparation, tailored specifically to career paths in the arts.⁵⁵

Relevance for Lexington: The ArtsCrew program demonstrates the significance of professional development opportunities, and local partnerships in cultivating the artistic workforce in a city. Providing career pipelines reinforce the local economy, and, in this case, are proven to reduce brain drain following graduation. This is particularly relevant to Lexington, as more opportunities are needed for career progression following higher education.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Benchmark: Louisiana Music Job Creation Program (Louisiana)⁵⁶

What Is It: The Music Job Creation Program provides a tax credit on annual W2 wages to music industry related companies (known as a Qualified Music Company or “QMC”) that create well-paid jobs for Louisiana residents. Companies must be engaged directly/indirectly with the production, distribution, and promotion of music; and must be authorized to operate in Louisiana. 10% credit is offered for new jobs whose QMC payroll is between \$35,000 to \$66,000 per year, and 15% is offered for those on \$66,000 to \$200,000 per year. The State also has a Sound Recording Program to encourage professional music recording.⁵⁷

Who Is Responsible: State of Louisiana Economic Development Department.

What Has It Done: These tax credits are part of broader efforts by the State of Louisiana to improve the state's creative economy. In 2022, Louisiana witnessed \$286 million in resident payroll and \$607 million in in-state expenditure thanks to its investments in the entertainment industry.⁵⁸

Relevance for Lexington: Although limited to music, this program offers an important example of job creation in the creative industries. By studying and potentially adapting elements of this program, LexArts and Commerce Lexington could explore avenues to attract and support arts intermediaries, thus stimulating job creation and economic development in the arts sector. The specific tax credit structure, with differentiated percentages based on salary levels, may offer insights into tailoring its own incentive program.

Recommendation 9: Partner with Commerce Lexington to Recruit Businesses that Fill Gaps in the Arts Sector

Initiators	LexArts, Commerce Lexington
Supporting Stakeholders	City of Lexington

⁵⁶ Louisiana Entertainment, "Incentives," Louisianaentertainment.gov, accessed September 5, 2024, <https://www.louisianaentertainment.gov/music/music-job-creation-program>.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Louisiana Entertainment, "Projects", Louisianaentertainment.gov, accessed September 5, 2024, <https://www.louisianaentertainment.gov/interactive/projects>

Timeframe	Long term (3+ years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate the arts into the city's economic development strategy and recognize the arts and cultural industries as an important economic development agent. • Recruit businesses and professionals to Lexington.

Description: LexArts should collaborate with Commerce Lexington to fully integrate the arts industry into their business recruitment strategy. This approach would recognize the arts not only as a vital component of the local economy but also as a sector that requires specialized talent, necessitating the recruitment of skilled workers and businesses.

Part of the collaboration should involve prominently showcasing the economic impact of the local arts economy on Commerce Lexington’s website by highlighting figures detailing the quantitative impact of arts and culture on the local economy, as well as incentives for artists and cultural businesses to operate in Lexington.

To augment this effort, LexArts should advocate for the implementation of new incentives to attract arts businesses and talent to Lexington. Efforts should strategically target gaps in Lexington’s arts and cultural ecosystem that are currently lacking from the local landscape, especially intermediaries, as a shortage of certain types of arts and cultural organizations impede the growth of the overall local arts and cultural sector.

Tax credits could be offered to arts intermediary professionals, such as bookers, promoters, and agents, who work with Lexington artists and organizations and relocate to the city. Encouraging these professionals to relocate to Lexington serves to strengthen and support the local arts community. Other incentives could include the provision of office space.

Implementation Considerations:

- Provide content and insights to spotlight the arts industry on Commerce Lexington’s website and in their promotional media, enabling Commerce Lexington to advertise the strength of the local arts community as part of its attraction strategy.
- Highlight existing reasons that make Lexington an attractive place for individuals working in the arts and cultural industries.
- Use Sound Diplomacy’s work to identify gaps in the arts and cultural ecosystem.
- Develop a proposal detailing the type of incentives that should be offered to attract arts and cultural businesses and talent to Lexington, including income tax

credits, and their framework and conditions.

- Highlight the benefits of these incentives for the city’s economic growth and job creation.
- Advocate for the city government to implement the incentive program.
- After implementation, actively promote the incentive program.
- To ensure that recruited talent and businesses are effectively integrated into the local arts scene, invite them to the networking sessions outlined in [Recommendation 6](#). This would help foster connections that help sustain the growth and vibrancy of the city’s arts industry.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of economic development incentives available to cultural businesses.
- Number of businesses and professionals recruited.

Recommendation 10: Host an Annual Arts and Cultural Industries Conference

Initiators	LexArts, local arts community, industry professionals
Supporting Stakeholders	VisitLEX
Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a unified vision for the arts sector. ● Foster learning and professional development opportunities. ● Showcase talent and raise awareness for the sector. ● Connect stakeholders and build community.

Description: LexArts, should organize and host an annual arts industry conference in partnership with VisitLEX. This gathering will bring the arts community together in an effort to foster a unified vision for Lexington’s arts and cultural ecosystem, including the culinary arts. This event should include panel discussions, conferences, workshops, networking opportunities, knowledge-sharing sessions, and strategic alignment activities involving key organizations from across the arts sector and from the city government. Open to the public, it should serve as a platform to gather community feedback, identifying opportunities across various stakeholders and sectors.

The budget for organizing and promoting the event can be secured through partnerships and sponsorships with private stakeholders. Additionally, a portion of the

hotel tax could be allocated to support event planning and promotion ([Recommendation 3](#)), with the revenue generated being reinvested to fund the future editions of the conference.

Implementation Considerations:

- Define the objectives, scope and structure of the event.
- Define the budget required to organize the event.
- Identify the target audience and key stakeholders who should participate in the event.
- Identify potential sponsorship and partnership opportunities for the event.
- Design activities that promote collaboration across different sectors.
- Create a small committee with representatives from the local community and arts sector to organize, coordinate and promote the event.
- Organize regular meetings to coordinate the organization of the event.
- Determine where and when the event will take place.
- Invite experts to hold workshops/panels, and artists to be showcased during the event.
- Build a communication strategy to promote the event.
- Gather feedback from the event and compile key takeaways.

Further Considerations: As VisitLEX works to attract visitors to the city, it should play a key role in defining, organizing, and promoting the conference to visitors.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of panel discussions, conferences, workshops, networking sessions, knowledge sharing-sessions and strategic alignment sessions organized.
- Number of participants.
- Number of stakeholders engaged to lead the sessions.
- Number of visitors attracted to the event.
- Participants feedback.
- Number of sponsorships and partnerships formed.
- Revenue generated from the event.

Benchmark: SXSW Music Conference (Austin, Texas)

What Is It: Established in 1987 in Austin, Texas, South by Southwest (SXSW) is a renowned event that aims to offer programming and opportunities that will aid creative individuals in achieving their goals. Best known for its annual conferences and festivals, SXSW celebrates the convergence of technology, film, music, education, and culture. The SXSW Conference offers a platform for

the global community of digital creatives to engage with innovative ideas and network with creative industries professionals.⁵⁹

The Music & Tech Track of the conference focuses on the intersection of technology and the music industry, exploring breakthroughs such as artificial intelligence, virtual pop stars, next-generation streaming services, and the impact of technology on music creation, distribution, and consumption. The Music & Tech track includes sessions covering topics such as growing audience on music streaming apps, music's role in virtual worlds, mergers and acquisitions in the industry, inclusive innovation, song stock exchanges, augmented reality marketing, and the influence of AI on music marketing and promotion.⁶⁰

Additionally, the Music Careers Track is designed for both emerging artists and professionals navigating the dynamic music business landscape. The track offers valuable guidance and insights into advancing one's trajectory in the music industry.⁶¹

Who Is Responsible: SXSW LLC.

What Has It Done: Over the years, the event has evolved, boasting a rich history of speakers, artists, filmmakers, and more. Despite changes, SXSW retains its fundamental purpose as a valuable tool for creatives worldwide, providing a platform for networking, learning, and idea-sharing to foster career development.⁶²

SXSW also has had a significant impact on Austin, Texas, in several ways. It brings in a massive influx of visitors, including artists, tech professionals, entrepreneurs, and enthusiasts to the city. This surge in tourism significantly boosts the local economy through increased spending on accommodation, dining, transportation, and entertainment.⁶³ Many local businesses, including bars, restaurants, and venues, experience a surge in business during SXSW.

⁵⁹ SXSW, "About", accessed February 12, 2024, <https://www.sxsw.com/about/>

⁶⁰ SXSW, "Music and Tech Track", accessed February 12, 2024, <https://www.sxsw.com/conference/music-and-tech/>

⁶¹ SXSW, "Music Careers Track", accessed February 12, 2024, <https://www.sxsw.com/conference/music-careers/>

⁶² SXSW, "History", accessed February 12, 2024, <https://www.sxsw.com/about/history/>

⁶³ Austin Monitor, "SXSW's \$380M economic impact shows return to prepandemic heights," accessed September 16, 2024, <https://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2023/11/sxsws-380m-economic-impact-shows-return-to-prepandemic-heights/>

They often host official and unofficial events, benefiting from the increased foot traffic and exposure.

SXSW has also become a major platform for networking and collaboration among industry professionals and creatives from various artistic fields. This has led to partnerships, business deals, and the exchange of ideas that have benefited both individuals and companies. As a result, the festival has helped shape Austin's identity as a hub for music, film, and interactive media. It has brought international attention to the city's vibrant arts and technology scenes, attracting talent and investment.

Relevance for Lexington: LexArts could look to the SXSW Conference as a best-practice model for organizing its own city-wide event for the arts industries in Lexington. This event would provide a platform for the entire arts community to connect, learn, and network, while also offering a showcase for local artists. By highlighting creative trends and innovation, the event could attract visitors and talent, further establishing Lexington as a hub for the arts.

Recommendation 11: Create a Database of Lexington Arts Stakeholders and Spaces

Initiators	LexArts
Supporting Stakeholders	Local artists, arts organizations and venues, Commerce Lexington
Timeframe	Short term (0–12 months)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost local business activity by connecting artists and professionals. • Support careers in the arts and cultural industries. • Improve communication between members of the arts and cultural ecosystem. • Simplify scheduling process • Promote cross-venue collaboration • Improve accessibility and transparency in the booking process

Description: In collaboration with Commerce Lexington, LexArts should develop a database of actors, businesses, spaces and other entities such as schools or nonprofits within the city’s arts ecosystem to provide an essential resource that can be used to connect diverse members operating within the larger arts and cultural ecosystem with one another, as well as with other industries.

This would also help streamline the cultural spaces booking processes ([Recommendation 16](#)) by clearly listing the available spaces, their facilities and equipment, and how to contact or book them. It should also include spaces that can be used for performances, rehearsals, storage, and workspaces, and the proposed repurposed vacant and underused spaces. Additionally, such a database would enable better coordination of arts spaces and artists, ensuring that groups and individuals can rehearse and perform in venues that are appropriately suited to their size and needs whenever possible.

Implementation Considerations:

- The mapping database developed by Sound Diplomacy and any existing lists, including the LexArts Artist Registry, should be the starting point for this work.
- Further information can be gathered via a simple Google Form that allows arts and cultural stakeholders to fill out and submit their information. The form should be distributed to the Lexington community to gather the broadest group of submissions possible.
- Create the online directory and feature it on LexArts’ website and/or on Commerce Lexington’s website. It should include information on:
 - Artists
 - Recording studios
 - Film and digital entertainment studios
 - Creative businesses
 - Rehearsal spaces
 - Record labels
 - Publishers
 - Producers
 - Promoters
 - Venues
 - Festivals
 - Creative educators and schools
 - Creative associations and foundations
 - Music tech
 - Music media
 - Entertainment lawyers
 - Collection societies

- Music suppliers (web, design, accountants, equipment rentals, etc.)
- Sponsors and partners
- Libraries and archives
- Printing establishments
- Book, periodic and newspaper publishers
- Books and press wholesalers and book stores
- Musical instrument and equipment stores
- Museums and cultural heritage institutions
- Art galleries, auction houses and dealers
- Bars, cafes, restaurants
- Office spaces
- Storage spaces
- Food trucks
- Other sectors' relevant contacts: real estate, education, tourism, etc.
- Include the following contact information, if available: name, email, phone, address, website, services offered for each stakeholder.
- For spaces, ideally, the database would describe each place indicating name, location, dimension, facilities and equipment, audio capability, which organization owns it and how to book it, with direct links if applicable.
- Ensure the directory is regularly updated.
- Determine where to house the directory, it could be on LexArts' website and/or on the app.
- Promote the directory and the option to submit entries to the local community.

Further Considerations: A feature could be added to the database specifically for arts spaces, allowing venues to display their availability for selected dates.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of monthly visitors to the database webpage. Metrics analyzed should include:
 - Unique visitors
 - Page views
 - Session duration
 - Bounce rate
- Number of users who submit information to the database.
- Number of organizations, artists and spaces listed in the database.
- Number of interactions with the links provided in the database (links for space bookings and contacts with stakeholders).

Benchmark: Texas Music Directory (Texas)

What Is It: The Texas Music Office (TMO) works as a liaison between music businesses and government agencies, advocates for and promotes the music industry and fosters economic growth. In fulfilling this role, it created the Texas Music Industry Directory, a fundamental business referral network tool to which around 16,000 music businesses are currently subscribed.⁶⁴ Industry professionals can register themselves on the TMO's website, as well as search existing listings. Businesses are required to enter information regarding their services offered, while bands and artists can specify their genre and link their discography to better connect them with potential performance opportunities.

Who Is Responsible: The Texas Music Office.⁶⁵

What Has It Done: The Texas Music Industry Directory search tools allow users to connect with:

- More than 15,900 music businesses.
- Over 100 music industry professionals that are operating across the state.
- Over 8,000 recording artists, musicians, and bands that are based or were born in Texas.
- Over 1,000 radio stations that broadcast in and across Texas.⁶⁶
- Colleges and universities with music education programs, along with specific information including type of degrees offered, key departmental contacts, campus performance opportunities and spaces, recording facilities, scholarship information, registration deadlines, and links to each school's music department website.⁶⁷
- 550 private schools or institutions in Texas teaching music.⁶⁸
- Music libraries and archives in Texas.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Texas Music Office, "About Us", accessed October 16, 2024, <https://gov.texas.gov/music/page/about-the-tmo>

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Texas Music Office, "Resources", accessed January 19, 2024, <https://gov.texas.gov/music/page/resources>

⁶⁷ Texas Music Office, "Texas Music Industry Directory, Search Colleges and Universities with music education programs", accessed January 19, 2024, <https://gov.texas.gov/Apps/Music/Directory/results/tmep/p1>

⁶⁸ Texas Music Office, "Colleges and and Universities with Music Education Programs", accessed January 19, 2024, <https://gov.texas.gov/Apps/Music/Directory/results/tmep/p1>

⁶⁹ Texas Music Office, "Music Libraries and Archives in Texas", accessed January 19, 2024, <https://gov.texas.gov/Apps/Music/Directory/results/archives/p1>

Relevance for Lexington: LexArts could draw inspiration from the Texas Music Directory to decide what to include in the proposed database, how to browse it, and how to showcase it on its own webpage. Presenting all the information relevant to the arts ecosystem in one centralized hub, similar to the Texas Music Office website, would create an opportunity for LexArts' website to become a go-to resource for professionals, enthusiasts, and the general public alike. Through its user-friendly search tool and comprehensive content, the database would bridge the gap between LexArts, arts stakeholders, arts spaces, and the broader community, promoting collaboration, creativity, and economic growth in the local arts industry.

Recommendation 12: Create Best Practice Guidelines to Make the Cultural Ecosystem more Equitable, Accessible and Sustainable

Initiators	LexArts
Supporting Stakeholders	City of Lexington, The Lexington Musicians' Association, Kentucky Disability Resources and Advocacy Organizations, The Center for Accessible Living, Lexington Commission for People with Disabilities, Access Lexington Commission, VisitLEX, the Bluegrass Green Source, Lexington Environmental Commission, local arts community.
Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrich the cultural landscape, making the community more vibrant and diverse, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. • Help the creative sector to thrive, thus driving in tourism, creating jobs, and contributing to the community's overall economic health.

Description: LexArts should write and disseminate guidelines that outline best practices for the arts sector. The guides should address identified challenges that the

arts community faces, especially fair pay for artists, accessibility in cultural spaces, and sustainability in arts practices.

Fair pay guidelines will help to set a benchmark for pay standards in an effort to encourage managers, promoters, venues and organizers to adequately compensate artists for their work, which will help to sustain a thriving arts community. Fair pay guidelines should give direction and suggestions to event organizers regarding how much they should be paying artists and performers. Factors considered should include the size of the event, the length of the performance, and other relevant metrics. Fair pay guidelines should aim to:

- Set industry standards for fair pay.
- Increase artist wages.
- Improve perceptions of the economic value of art.
- Raise public awareness for the importance of fair compensation through tailored educational campaigns.
- Reduce the likelihood of exploitation by promoting the development of professional standards.
- Foster a more respectful and supportive environment for artists.
- Provide an example of good practices for hiring artists.
- Contribute to artists' financial stability, allowing them to pursue their work as a full-time career.
- Support the work of individuals and organizations leveraging economic equity for artists.
- Guarantee equitable compensation across all demographics, addressing disparities and ensuring that all artists, regardless of background, are paid fairly.

Accessibility guidelines should encourage local arts organizations to update their spaces to improve accessibility and create more inclusive environments.

Given that cultural events can generate litter and significant carbon emissions, sustainability guidelines can help event organizers, both public and private, reduce the impact they have on the people of Lexington and elsewhere, and ensure that Lexington remains up to date with topical issues and its role in influencing others to follow suit. Sustainability guidelines can also include social sustainability topics, such as suggesting a quota of local artists to be programmed at events, or quotas for diversity (e.g. diversity of genre, performer, style, etc.).

All guidelines should be published on the one-stop shop to encourage adoption by arts organizations, venues, event organizers, etc ([Recommendation 14](#)).

Implementation Considerations:

Fair Pay Guidelines

- Use the Hamilton Musicians Fair Payment Policy case study outlined below as a guideline for formulating Lexington's fair pay guidelines.
- Work with the Lexington branch of the American Musicians' Association and other relevant organizations to determine minimum payment levels.
- Identify relevant stakeholders for engagement and implementation.
- Work with artists, arts professionals and labor lawyers to outline best practices for the fair compensation of artists according to Lexington's cost of living.
- Advocate that the City of Lexington ensures that all government-run events follow guidelines for fair remuneration for artists and performers, and that all public venues adhere to the guidelines.
- Promote and advocate for the fair pay guidelines.
- Liaise with artists to educate them on the guidelines in an effort to establish an understanding of fair pay for various types of performance.

Accessibility Guidelines

- Collaborate with Kentucky Disability Resources and Advocacy Organizations, The Center for Accessible Living, Lexington Commission for People with Disabilities, Access Lexington Commission, other relevant organizations and the local community to write accessibility guidelines for arts spaces and events. These should include details on the following elements:
 - Accessibility for artists, performers and technical staff.
 - Ramps, elevators, automatic doors, and widened entryways.
 - Accessible parking options.
 - Clear, wide, and unobstructed pathways inside and outside the building, with appropriate signage.
 - Information about building accessibility, as well as notable event characteristics, such as noise levels, variations in volume, lighting, and any other sensory triggers.
 - Standardized accessibility symbols and icons to represent specific features or warnings.
 - Accessible seating options and accessible restrooms in performance spaces, galleries, and other public areas.
 - Assisted events, where adjustments are made to cater to individuals with access requirements (both physical and mental), such as captioned, audio described, relaxed performances and programming.
 - Staff training to interact with individuals with accessibility needs, including access-friendly customer service and how to assist individuals with disabilities effectively.
 - Emergency evacuation procedures that account for individuals with physical disabilities.

- Ticketing options that allow purchasers to specify any accessibility needs (ticket plus carer/support discounts, audience ‘access’ list sign up option at theaters and venues).
- Support or information packs at the venue’s or event’s entrance such as earplugs, and printed descriptions/scripts of an event.
- Promote the guidelines on VisitLEX’s accessibility web page.⁷⁰
- Promote and advocate for these guidelines, and liaise with arts organizations so that they are educated in what the guidelines say, and how to update their spaces.

Sustainability Guidelines

- Research initiatives taking place across the region and state and learn best practices from them. The Lex for Good Certified Sustainable Business program should also be taken as an example, or extended to the arts sector.
- Work with relevant stakeholders such as the Bluegrass Green Source to develop sustainability guidelines for arts cultural practices.
- Ensure that the guidelines are actionable and also relevant for those who will be encouraged to follow them.
- When complete, ensure that the guidelines are seen by event organizers by promoting them and including them in the one-stop shop ([Recommendation 14](#)).

Further Considerations:

To encourage venues and event organizers to adhere to fair pay guidelines, accessibility guidelines, and/or sustainability guidelines, adhering businesses should be awarded badges, both physical stickers that can be placed in a storefront, as well as digital badges for business websites, to highlight their commitment to equitable and sustainable practices. The list of venues should benefit from free promotional support from LexArts and form a preferential talent pool to staff city events. Property tax abatement schemes for these organizations should also be considered.

Additionally, adhering to these guidelines should be considered as part of the criteria included in the grants scoring system proposed in [Recommendation 4](#).

Impact Indicators:

- Number of guides created.
- Number of monthly visitors to the guidelines’ web page/one-stop shop.
- Number of artists being paid for performances at local venues or events.

⁷⁰ VisitLEX, “Accessibility”, VisitLEX.com, accessed August 23, 2024, <https://www.visitlex.com/lex-for-good/accessibility/>

- Average amount received by performers at city-sponsored events and on city property.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from artists regarding the fairness of compensation received.
- Number of accessible venues and events.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from audiences regarding the quality of accessibility amenities.
- Number of sustainable practices at cultural venues and events.
- Number of venues and promoters certified with the fair pay, accessibility and sustainability badges.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from the arts community regarding the quality and helpfulness of the guidelines.

Benchmark: Musicians Fair Payment Policy (Hamilton, Canada)⁷¹

What It Is: In 2021, the City of Hamilton formalized fair payment of musicians who perform at “City-led” events by enacting the Musicians Fair Payment Policy. The policy requires that musicians hired for City-led events are paid, at minimum, the current minimum annual rates established by the Canadian Federation of Musicians who are represented locally by the Hamilton Musicians Guild Local 293.

Who Is Responsible: The local chapter of the Canadian Federation of Musicians, the Hamilton Musicians Guild Local 293, was instrumental in getting the policy through municipal government.⁷² Fair wages for performance was a recommendation made by the Hamilton Music Advisory Team (HMAT) during the development of Hamilton’s Music Mondays series. The recommendation was endorsed again in the 2020 Mayor’s Task Force for Economic Recovery Report.⁷³ The policy was enacted by Hamilton City Council and applies to City staff responsible for organizing and managing internal or external City-led events or staff who oversee contracts for third-party vendors where musicians are hired for in-person or virtual performances.⁷⁴

⁷¹ "Our Network", South East Local Enterprise Partnership, accessed September 6, 2024,

<https://www.southeastlep.com/our-network/working-groups/south-east-creative-economy-network/>.

⁷² Jeff Mahoney, "New policy ensures fair wage for musicians at city of Hamilton-led events," *The Hamilton Spectator*, July 7, 2021, accessed September 6, 2024,

<https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/2021/07/06/new-policy-ensures-fair-wage-for-musicians-at-city-of-hamilton-led-events.html>.

⁷³ City of Hamilton, "Fair Payment of Musicians for City-Led Events Staff Policy (Policy) Rates of Pay and Factors for Consideration," September 6, 2024,

<https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=275905>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

What It Has Done: Hamilton is the first city in North America to enact a fair wage policy specifically targeted towards musicians. In addition to codifying the respectable payment for musicians, the policy has been a means of raising general public awareness around the importance of fair compensation for musicians. The policy has also garnered public recognition for the value of the work musicians do, especially with respect to live performances.

Rates can vary based on the type of performance and venue, however, the guidelines establish a minimum of \$200 and above per musician per performance.⁷⁵

Relevance for Lexington: By establishing minimum wage standards and formalizing respectable payment practices for musicians and creatives in general, Lexington can create a fairer and more equitable compensation structure for those that work within its creative economy. Hamilton is a model to follow as it ensures that remuneration is in accordance with annual minimum pay rates and therefore can adapt with inflation. Ultimately, the implementation of fair payment guidelines and awareness campaigns can lead to a more sustainable and thriving creative ecosystem in the city, benefiting artists and audiences alike. In addition, the implementation of a standard for minimum payment will help make the performance and other creative sectors a more sustainable, feasible career choice, thereby making Lexington a more attractive place to live and work.

Benchmark: Handbook for a Zero-Waste Festival (Amsterdam, Netherlands)⁷⁶

What Is It: A comprehensive and accessible handbook on how to strategize and implement waste-free festivals.

Driven by the emergence of sustainable policies and the growing number of festivals, the Handbook aims to provide a guide for before, during, and after a music festival. It emphasizes the importance of accurately mapping the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Metabolic NL, “Zero-Waste Festivals of the Future: A How-To Handbook”, metabolic.nl, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.metabolic.nl/news/zero-waste-festivals-of-the-future-a-how-to-handbook/>

material flows and identifying all waste streams surrounding the organization of a festival, with the goal of achieving circularity and sustainability.⁷⁷ This resource can be utilized by festival organizers prior to and after the event, as well as by volunteers during the festival, enhancing waste management practices and promoting sustainability.

This handbook aims to present a systematic guide that establishes the standard procedure for mapping all relevant waste streams related to festivals. Within the guide, various checklists and tables are provided to facilitate the creation of a detailed overview of waste streams originating from festival visitors, catering companies, and bars, as well as waste generated during stage assembly, tent installation, and decorative arrangements.⁷⁸

Who Is Responsible: Green Events, a private event services company, and Metabolic, a “cleantech” consulting firm.

What Has It Done: Beginning in 2015, six prominent Dutch festival organizers joined the Green Deal for Waste-free Festivals initiative,⁷⁹ which later evolved into the Circular Festivals concept.⁸⁰ This collaborative effort, led by Green Events and co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, has brought together over 40 festivals across 14 countries, all united in their commitment to pursue circularity until 2025.⁸¹ The core focus areas encompass food and drink, water, energy, transport, mobility, and material and plastic usage. Within each category, a range of festival case studies showcase diverse approaches undertaken to embrace the principles of circular festivals.⁸²

Festivals such as Amsterdam Dance Event, Awakenings Festival, EXIT Festival, Roskilde Festival and many more were a Green Deal Circular Festival (GDCF) affiliate in 2022.⁸³

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Metabolic NL. (n.d.) “HANDBOOK FOR A WASTE-FREE FESTIVAL”, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.metabolic.nl/publications/handbook-for-a-waste-free-festival/>

⁷⁹ Green Events, “Waste Free Festivals”, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.greendeals.nl/green-deals/afvalvrije-festivals>

⁸⁰ Green Events, “Green Deal Circular Festivals”, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.greendeals.nl/green-deals/green-deal-circulaire-festivals>

⁸¹ Green Events, “Green Events: Circular Festival”, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.greenevents.nl/projecten/circular-festivals/>

⁸² Green Events, “Green Events: The 6 Key Focus Areas”, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.futurefestivaltools.eu/green-festival-stories-a-collection-of-inspiring-examples-from-across-europe-en/>

⁸³ Green Events, “Green Events: Circular Festival”, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://www.greenevents.nl/projecten/circular-festivals/>

Relevance for Lexington: A sustainable events guide or handbook, such as this, is a necessary step for Lexington to provide the strategic and regulatory framework to ensure sustainability is on the local agenda, making the city a leader in the field. It encourages event organizers to be mindful and considerate of their approaches and rethink their business models to be sustainable, and places importance on the arts industry and how it can be a leader in events-based sustainable infrastructure.

Licensing, Regulations and Zoning

Regulatory and Permitting Environment

The regulatory assessment revealed that for Lexington's arts sector to grow, certain regulations and licensing processes should be modified and simplified, and new regulations should be implemented to encourage arts and cultural activity:

- Sound regulations: Restrictions are set on the operation of loudspeakers and musical instruments between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., but regulations lack defined decibel levels. Zoning distinctions to separate noise-sensitive and noise-generating areas do not exist, and the ordinances do not explicitly include cultural activities.
- Liquor licensing: Guidance does not explicitly address cultural venues, and there is a need for online resources to guide venues and event organizers in understanding their specific liquor requirements, and to streamline this process for them.
- Street performance: Regulations are located across five different sections of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Code of Ordinances. Although these establish that street performers are permitted to perform upon the public sidewalks, public squares, and other outdoor public property in the downtown, between 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.; allow the sale of recordings; prohibit the play of amplified instruments and mandate a permit for performances during special events; there is no specific street performance program or guide. Such a program would be beneficial to provide opportunities for local artists to perform, as well as to support individual artists by helping them navigate the regulations.

- All ages access: There are no specific regulations or licenses for all ages events in Lexington.

After review, all the regulations, permitting and licensing processes, resources and application forms should be gathered on a centralized platform to facilitate and encourage cultural activities. A one-stop shop should look like a centralized platform that streamlines and simplifies the licensing processes for organizing cultural events. Currently, these processes are hindered by excessive administrative barriers, high fees, and the time-consuming task of coordinating with multiple entities for approvals related to licensing, electricity, security, and cleaning. The one-stop shop could also include guidance for cultural business licensing, which is currently missing among the business licensing resources offered on Commerce Lexington's website.

Business Licenses and Zoning

Additionally, the city's online resources for business licensing and development do not provide specific information regarding cultural businesses.

The Agent of Change is not in place in Lexington. The Agent of Change Principle holds the entity that creates a change in an area responsible for the impact this change can have in that area. In the case of music, usually, the Agent of Change either requires the building that arrives the latest (be it the music venue or the residential development) to soundproof adequately to avoid nuisances and complaints and/or to inform the new residents that they are moving next to a music venue or within an entertainment area which permeates higher sound levels.

Cultural Districts

Stakeholder engagement highlighted that the local arts scene is hindered by both the lack of walkability and the perception of downtown as unsafe. Often venues, galleries, art shops, restaurants, cafes, and other arts establishments rely heavily on foot traffic and spontaneous visits. A lack of walkability and a reputation for being unsafe discourages people from exploring the city, attending events, or visiting galleries and museums, while simultaneously discouraging artists and art organizations from hosting events in the area.

By making it easier for people to access events and cultural establishments, a safer and more walkable downtown will offer a better experience for both tourists and residents. A walkable area of the city that offers an array of local attractions can play an important role in elevating the area's reputation, making it a desirable destination for experiencing arts-related activities. Additionally, a walkable downtown with well-designed public

spaces will provide numerous opportunities for public art installations, murals, sculptures, and other forms of outdoor art.

Stakeholder engagement identified the Distillery District and the heart of Lexington's East End, home to the artists' village, as prime locations for becoming vibrant entertainment districts. A successful entertainment district would bring together cultural venues, art businesses, restaurants, and other entertainment-related businesses, many of which already exist in downtown Lexington. Establishing such a district, with specific regulations to support the organization of cultural events would not only boost the city's economic growth by attracting tourists and creating jobs, but also concentrate cultural activities in designated areas, providing residents and visitors with a vibrant, dynamic hub.

As demonstrated by Michael Porter's Cluster Theory, when organizations or industries cluster in a specific area—such as in a creative district—they benefit from shared resources, reduced costs, and increased productivity. In creative districts, the close proximity of artists and creative businesses fosters collaboration and innovation. This concentration of talent, ideas, and specialized services leads to greater efficiency, higher productivity, and more innovation.⁸⁴

This, along with complementary initiatives, such as improved walkability, extended transit services, and public lighting, would also help address concerns about safety, especially at night.

Moreover, establishing an entertainment district with more lenient regulations and permitting processes for cultural events in Lexington will promote and support the organization of festivals and fairs, an asset currently underrepresented in Lexington-Fayette when compared to other areas.

Environmental Policies

While there are regulations for waste management during special events and some initiatives and organizations that connect the cultural sector to environmental sustainability, Lexington's government currently lacks dedicated policies or initiatives for environmental sustainability within the cultural sector.

⁸⁴ Swords, Jon, "Michael Porter's Cluster Theory as a local and regional development tool – the rise and fall of cluster policy in the UK", *Local Economy*, 28 (4), pp. 367-381, accessed September 6, 2024, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/9990887.pdf>

Recommendation 13: Advocate for Arts Friendly Regulations and Licensing Processes

Initiators	LexArts
Supporting Stakeholders	City of Lexington Planning Commission, Lexington Police Department, Downtown Lexington Partnership
Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustain and grow Lexington’s arts sector. ● Facilitate the organization of cultural events. ● Support local artists. ● Create opportunities for a richer tourism offering.

Description: LexArts should advocate for the implementation of regulations and licensing processes that align more closely with the specific needs of the arts sector. By doing so, it can create a supportive environment that not only empowers artists of all disciplines, but also facilitates the growth and success of cultural events, ultimately fostering a thriving and vibrant arts community.

Implementation Considerations:

- Use Sound Diplomacy’s work to determine which regulations and permitting processes need modifications. These would include:
 - Sound regulations: include concrete decibel levels depending on the hours and city zones to separate noise-sensitive and noise-generating areas. Cultural activities and events should explicitly be addressed in the ordinances.
 - Liquor licensing: explicitly address cultural venues in the liquor ordinances and develop guidelines to help these venues and event organizers navigate their specific liquor requirements.
 - Street performance: a street performance program should be established to promote live performing arts in Lexington and further solidify the city as a thriving arts hub. Specific regulations should allow amplified sound up to a certain decibel level in designated areas and during specified hours. Clear guidelines should be developed and connected to the ordinances to simplify the navigation of regulations and the permitting process.

- Cultural business licensing: the city's "Licensing, permits and development" web page should include a specific section for cultural businesses, including guidelines on how to create a cultural business, and how to apply for the available incentives. These should include the incentives proposed in [Recommendation 7](#), [Recommendation 8](#) and [Recommendation 9](#).
- All ages: creating a singular, clearly-defined pathway to combine an on-premises alcohol sales permit with all-ages permissions will broaden opportunities for both venues and bands to expand their audience reach.
- Draft policy proposals based on this information and on the provided regulatory assessments' benchmarks.
- Once implemented, ensure all the regulations and permitting processes relevant to the arts sector are included and easily accessible in the proposed one-stop shop ([Recommendation 14](#)).
- If guides are created to navigate certain processes, they should also be added to the one-stop shop, along with the proposed best practices guides (see [Recommendation 12](#)).

Impact Indicators:

- Number of regulations reviewed.
- Number of cultural events organized.
- Feedback from cultural events organizers.
- Number of visitors and audience members to these events.
- Establishment of a street performance program.
- Number of performers registered in the program.
- Number of musical street performances per month.
- Feedback from a public survey geared towards locals and visitors who experienced the program, as well as artists participating in it, to evaluate its design and impact
- Number of cultural businesses licenses issued.

Benchmark: Street Performers Guidelines (Asheville, North Carolina)⁸⁵

What Is It: Asheville provides guidelines for street performers in its "Street Performers" brochure. Permits are not required for sidewalk performers who wish to busk downtown during periods when sidewalks, streets, and parks are not otherwise reserved for outdoor special events.

⁸⁵ The City of Asheville, "Street performers make downtown a fun and exciting place to be.", accessed March 8, 2024, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13hWP6zBPbr2geqbYqwbhZNcJebCk9jX3/view>.

The Asheville Buskers Collective provides a number of guidelines for overall busking etiquette, such as using two-hour turns, managing crowd size, and keeping volumes low. Buskers are expected to adhere to a set of city rules including: avoid obstructing sidewalks, doorways or streets and provide a minimum of 6 feet of pedestrian passageway; no selling or displays of any tangible goods in exchange for money or donation; performances may only be between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.⁸⁶

Who Is Responsible: City of Asheville

What Has It Done: The guidelines make busking easy for local performers, and as such benefits residents and local business owners with a bustling downtown. Asheville’s open approach to busking has produced a music-filled downtown, and while problems persist, such as unclear sound ordinances and an occasional violation of guidelines, the program has been deemed an overall success.⁸⁷

Relevance for Lexington: The promotion of street performance, especially in lively areas can provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy the local arts scene, thus expanding the audiences that are exposed to local art. This would not only ensure an all encompassing experience but would also represent an opportunity for local artists to showcase their work and obtain an income from their artistic activities.

As this case study highlights, it is also important to create clear guidelines so that the city can develop in a vibrant, engaging way whilst encouraging harmonious relationships between businesses, performers, residents, and audiences.

Recommendation 14: Create a One-stop Shop for Art and Cultural Permits, Licenses, Grants, and Guides

Initiators	LexArts
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⁸⁶ The City of Asheville, "Street performers make downtown a fun and exciting place to be." accessed March 8, 2024, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13hWP6zBPbr2geqbYgwbhZNcJebCk9jX3/view>.

⁸⁷ John Boyle, "Answer Man: Guidelines for Buskers? City Regulations for Busking?," Citizen-Times.com, February 11, 2020, <https://www.citizen-times.com/story/entertainment/events/asheville-scene/2020/02/11/answer-man-rules-buskers-city-regulations-busking/4711893002/>.

Supporting Stakeholders	City of Lexington, Lexington Police Department, Lexington Fire Department, electricity services, cleaning services
Timeframe	Short term (0–12 months)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve user experience. ● Improve the process of hosting cultural events. ● Encourage and facilitate the organization of arts events and the establishment of arts businesses. ● Offer accessible resources for artists, creatives, and cultural organizations.

Description: In partnership with supporting stakeholders, LexArts should build and implement a “one-stop shop”, a portal dedicated to providing resources for the arts and culture community on its website.

A one-stop shop is a digital platform that shows all permitting, licensing and regulatory processes, any financial support and other resources and opportunities for the creative sector in one place. A one-stop portal centralizes and simplifies application processes, allowing for instance organizers and promoters to apply for an event permit, liquor license, and acquire any necessary permits in one place. There should be a clear step-by-step guide on how to request permits via the platform available on the site.

The one-stop shop should be overseen by LexArts and hosted on its website, with management responsibilities handled by the relevant department for each specific case.

Implementation Considerations:

- Run a user experience test on the existing system and processes to understand current gaps and identify areas for improvement and streamlining.
- Use Sound Diplomacy’s regulatory assessment to build on work undertaken as part of [Recommendation 13](#) by including information on regulations, permitting and licensing processes related to the arts sector. This would include:
 - Permitting and licensing requirements related to the creation of cultural businesses, and to the organization of cultural events (permits and license requirements and costs to organize events, to film, food handlers and food management permits, food trucks permits, permits to play live

music and amplified music, for busking, for liquor sales, etc.). It should also include direct access to the permits and licenses, and a possibility to apply online.

- Regulations applying to the arts sectors, including sound regulations, hours of operation, curfews, busking regulations etc.
- All the resources and opportunities available for the arts, such as educational and professional development opportunities and resources ([Recommendation 6](#)), fair pay, accessibility and environmental sustainability guidelines ([Recommendation 12](#)), local and state financial incentives such as grants and tax rebates that event organizers may be eligible for, and guides on how to apply for them.
- District-specific regulations/policies should also be included if they are implemented ([Recommendation 15](#)).
- It can also include the database proposed in [Recommendation 11](#)
- Collaborate with public agencies and licensing departments to feature other regulations and licenses that apply to the arts sector.
- Create application guides which act as “walkthrough” documents for different types of application processes.
- Create an online platform with embedded links to required applications.
- Promote the platform to the arts community.
- Collect feedback on usability and proposed improvements for the platform.

Impact Indicators:

- Website metrics should be analyzed monthly and should include:
 - Online visits
 - Page views
 - Session duration
 - Bounce rate
- Number of successful grant applications for the listed opportunities.
- Number of licenses awarded to arts and cultural organizations and event organizers.
- Number of times the online guides are accessed.
- Amount of funding awarded to Lexington residents through the grants and funding opportunities listed on the one-stop shop.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from grant and license recipients regarding the efficiency and clarity of the application processes.

Benchmark: One Stop Shop (New Orleans, Louisiana)⁸⁸

What Is It: Events and liquor licensing are run by New Orleans' One Stop Shop for Permits and Licensing. In addition to a dedicated webpage, complete with search engine to ease user navigation to different licensing information and forms, the One Stop Shop is also available via an app which allows users to find licensing information and apply for permits from their mobile devices. Each permit type has its own drop-down menu including:

- Business Permits and Licenses
- Event/Film Permits and Licenses
- Building Permits and Licenses
- Residential Permits
- Hazard Permits

Beneath each specific permit or license, there is information regarding what the document is for, who should apply for it, how to successfully complete the application process, and what to expect following submission. The summary also indicates whether or not the permit or license can be completed online.

Who Is Responsible: The City of New Orleans

What Has It Done: In 2021, 50 new permits were issued, 23 building permits were acquired, and almost \$1.7 million in construction value has been partially attributed to the ease of the One Stop Shop. In addition, the Shop is available in app form to allow for easier navigation on mobile devices. Fillable PDF applications can be downloaded directly from the app.

Relevance for Lexington: A one-stop shop for permits and licenses can be a cost-effective way to facilitate application processes, making city processes for hosting arts and cultural activities more efficient, by diminishing the number of individual inquiries and incorrectly completed applications, amongst others. Creating a single place for all relevant information will make it easier for event organizers to comply with the regulations and expectations for events, encouraging more music and cultural activities in the city.

By implementing this modern and accessible approach, Lexington can bolster efficiency, promote compliance, and support the growth of its creative

⁸⁸ City of New Orleans (2022) "City of New Orleans One Stop Permits & Licenses". Online at <https://onestopapp.nola.gov/> accessed 14-08-2023.

industries. Emulating New Orleans' successful model would pave the way for a more seamless licensing process, benefiting stakeholders and improving the process for hosting local arts and cultural events.

Recommendation 15: Advocate for the Creation of a New Downtown Master Plan

Initiators	LexArts, Downtown Lexington Partnership
Supporting Stakeholders	City of Lexington, Lexington Police Department, VisitLEX
Timeframe	Long term (3+ years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve safety and walkability downtown. ● Support the arts sector by boosting attendance at arts events and drive sales in arts-related businesses and restaurants. ● Create a shared vision for the future of Lexington's downtown. ● Promote the local cultural offering and preserve cultural heritage. ● Create an entertainment district to boost local arts and cultural activity, attracting tourists and residents. ● Provide a place for the community to gather. ● Contribute to urban revitalization.

Description: LexArts should advocate for the creation of a new Downtown Master Plan in partnership with the City of Lexington, and led by the Downtown Lexington Partnership, prioritizing walkability, safety, and the development of an entertainment district to support the arts.

Implementation Considerations:

- Collaborate with the City of Lexington and the Downtown Lexington Partnership to develop vision, goals and objectives for the Downtown Master Plan, ensuring the arts are considered and supported.
- Considerations to improve walkability and safety should include:
 - Increasing number of sidewalks.
 - Creating pedestrian-only streets.
 - Enhancing street art and food offerings.
 - Improving street lighting.
- Advocate for the plan to include the establishment of an entertainment district:
 - Use Sound Diplomacy’s stakeholder engagement and mapping analysis, and engage with relevant stakeholders such as the city government, the Downtown Lexington Partnership, VisitLEX, and members of the community to select a location and create a strategy for an entertainment district.
 - Create a proposal for entertainment district-specific regulations. These should include extended hours of operation for venues, businesses and catering establishments; more flexible sound and liquor regulations; and the establishment of the proposed busking program within the district ([Recommendation 13](#)).
 - Collaborate with the Downtown Lexington Partnership and VisitLEX to develop branding specific to the entertainment district and its cultural and entertainment offer to promote it as part of a marketing campaign.
 - Encourage the organization of interdisciplinary events that bring together different sectors.
 - Place particular focus on showcasing Lexington’s diverse arts scene.
 - Give a platform to local artists and businesses from diverse backgrounds and types of performance.
 - Launch the entertainment district with an arts event that showcases local talent.
 - Collaborate with artists to showcase public art in the district.

Impact Indicators:

- Creation of a new Downtown Master Plan.
- Establishment of an entertainment district.
- Number of arts offerings in the district.
- Number of district-specific regulations to support the arts.
- Number of cultural events organized downtown per month.
- Number of visitors attracted to the district per month.

Benchmark: Huntsville's Purple Cup Districts (Huntsville, Alabama)

What Is It: The City of Huntsville, Alabama has five Arts and Entertainment Districts. These districts help to animate certain areas of the city by attracting cultural events and entertainment, facilitating outdoor dining options and promoting local arts and culture. To complement the outdoor activities within these districts the city established an open container law in 2013 that allows patrons to purchase an alcoholic beverage from a participating, licensed establishment and carry it around within the district.

The districts are often referred to as “purple cup districts” because alcoholic beverages must be served in distinctive purple cups. According to the Huntsville’s Code of Ordinances, the cup may only be provided by a seller who is an Arts and Entertainment District permittee. It must be purple-coloured, non-glass, bear the name or logo of the district or permittee and not exceed a volume of 16 fluid ounces.

All on-premise alcoholic beverage licensed retailers in the arts and Entertainment Districts may apply for a permit to sell drinks “to go” in the special district purple plastic cups. Patrons are then able to explore the district while carrying their drink but are not able to enter any other licensed establishment with their beverage, including the original place of purchase. Businesses that do not serve alcoholic beverages may elect to allow patrons to carry a beverage into their establishment. Patrons are not allowed to bring their own alcohol into the district and no alcohol is permitted in parking lots and parking garages. Participating establishments must clearly display signs near their entrance and district boundary lines are indicated by painted signage on the sidewalks.

The purple cup policy originally ran from Thursday to Sunday in accordance with the Arts and Entertainment District hours of operation. In 2019, with public support, the district opening hours and the purple cup policy were extended to include every day of the week, from 12 p.m. to 11 p.m.⁸⁹

Who Is Responsible: The City of Huntsville.

What Has It Done: The Arts and Entertainment Districts coupled with the open container policy have created a more vibrant city by encouraging more people

⁸⁹ Smith, Adam, “In the purple: A&E districts benefit Huntsville citizens, businesses”. cityblog.huntsvilleal.gov, accessed September 6, 2024,

<https://cityblog.huntsvilleal.gov/in-the-purple-ae-districts-benefit-huntsville-citizens-businesses/>

onto the streets to enjoy communal events and activities, such as art trails, and support local businesses.⁹⁰

Relevance for Lexington: Establishing an entertainment district in Lexington presents an opportunity to implement targeted regulations and initiatives designed to support the local arts sector. Such an initiative would boost Lexington's vibrancy and increase its appeal to both residents and visitors.

The vibrant and visually captivating Purple Cup District in Huntsville fosters a sense of community pride, as well as economic benefits for local businesses who take part in the program. The district serves as a dynamic gathering place that hosts a variety of events, festivals, and cultural activities, catering to both locals and visitors.

Infrastructure

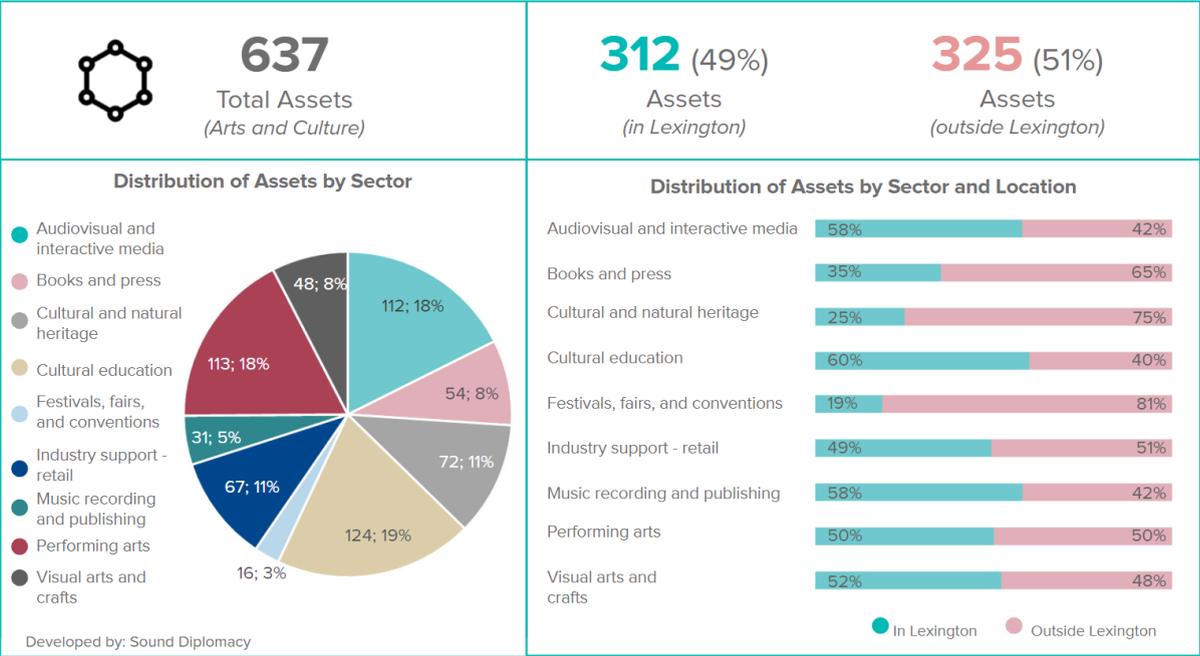
The Lexington Creative Ecosystem Geographical Makeup

The total number of mapped assets in the Lexington–Fayette area and its surrounding counties amounts to 637. Lexington–Fayette itself hosts 312 assets (49%), with the remainder distributed across surrounding counties, including 101 assets (16%) in Madison County. The sector leading in number of assets across Lexington–Fayette and its surrounding counties is cultural education, which accounts for 19% (124) of the total, followed by performing arts and audiovisual/interactive media, each representing 18% (113 and 112 assets, respectively).

Within Lexington–Fayette proper, the local cultural education sector remains strong, making up 24% (74) of the assets, fostering knowledge and skill development across all creative industries. A significant strength is the local specialization in audiovisual and interactive media, which represents 21% (65) of the total assets in the city. Within the performing arts (live music, theater, dance) sector of Lexington–Fayette (excluding the surrounding counties), the largest number of assets are bars, cafés, restaurants with live music, and dedicated performing arts venues, each with 18 (32%) assets. This indicates a wide array of spaces that have the adequate infrastructure (i.e. scenario, lighting and sound system) for performers, but also shows that there is a variety of spaces that lack such dedicated infrastructure.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

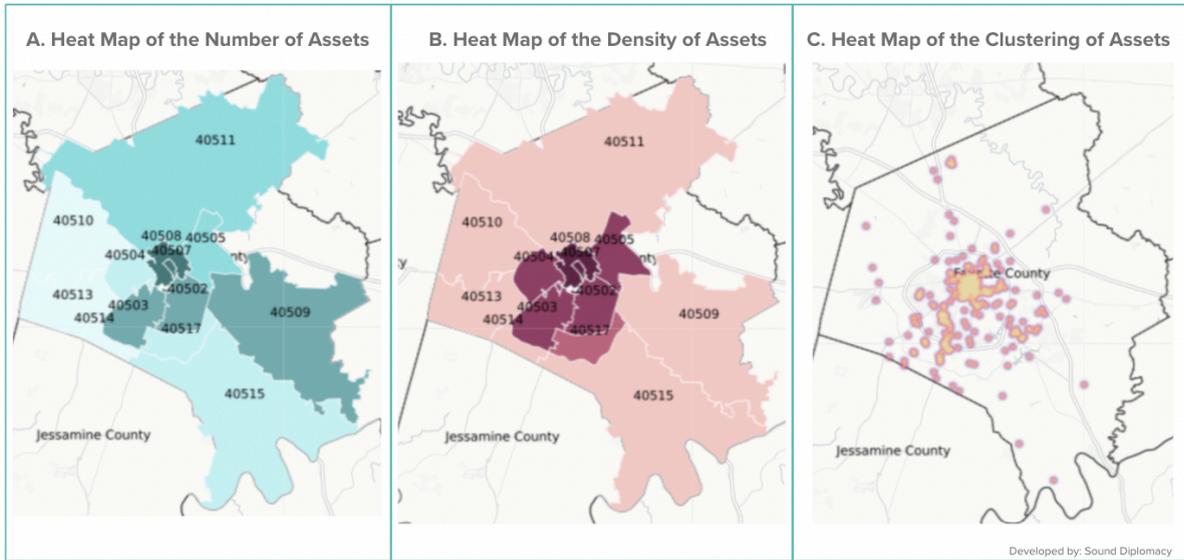
Figure 12. Overview of Arts and Cultural Assets in Lexington-Fayette (Including Surrounding Counties)



Clustering, Access and Decentralization

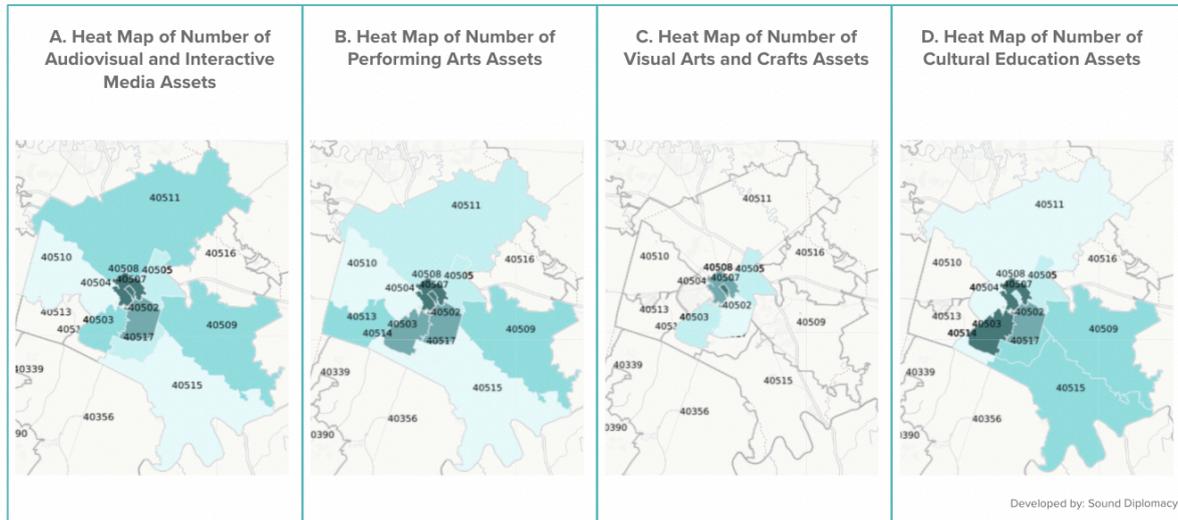
The mapping highlights a notable clustering of cultural assets in the center of Lexington-Fayette, particularly within ZIP codes 40508 and 40507, which account for 40% of the total assets within Lexington. The performing arts and visual arts and crafts sectors are especially concentrated in these areas, reflecting the city center's central role in the creative economy.

Figure 13. Spatial Concentration of Arts and Cultural Assets in Lexington-Fayette



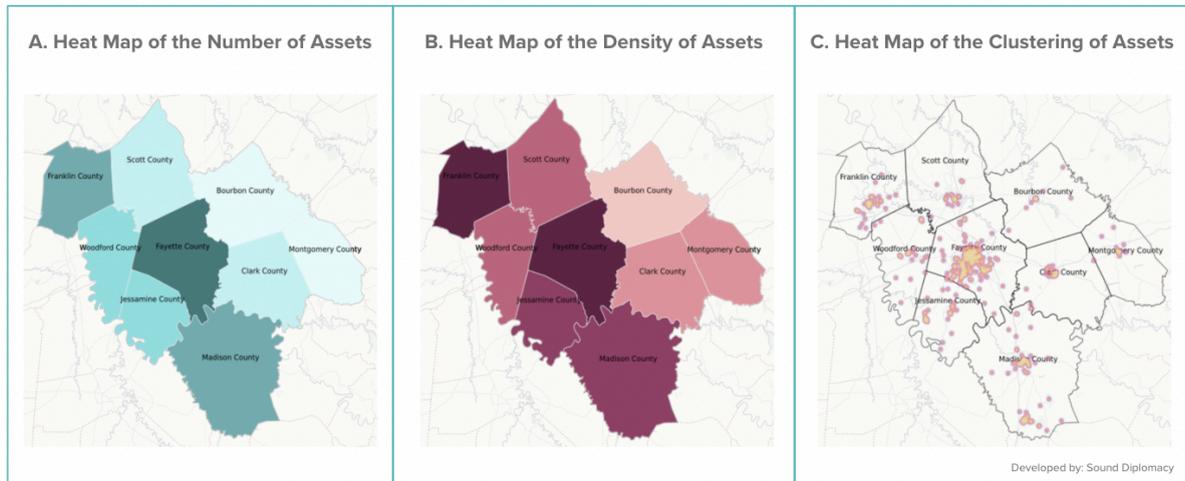
However, beyond the city center, the audiovisual and interactive media sector exhibits the most decentralized geographic distribution, with assets spread across a wider area of Lexington-Fayette. This decentralization in audiovisual media suggests opportunities for creative development in areas beyond the traditional cultural hubs.

Figure 14. Asset Heat Map for Specific Sectors in Lexington: Audiovisual and Interactive Media, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Crafts, and Cultural Education



Outside of Lexington-Fayette, Madison County stands out, housing the largest number of assets in the performing arts (22 assets), cultural education (21 assets), and audiovisual and interactive media (12 assets) sectors, suggesting some level of decentralization in the broader region's cultural economy. Nonetheless, other surrounding counties have relatively fewer assets, pointing to possible gaps in access to cultural resources.

Figure 15. Spatial Concentration of Arts and Culture Assets in and around Lexington–Fayette



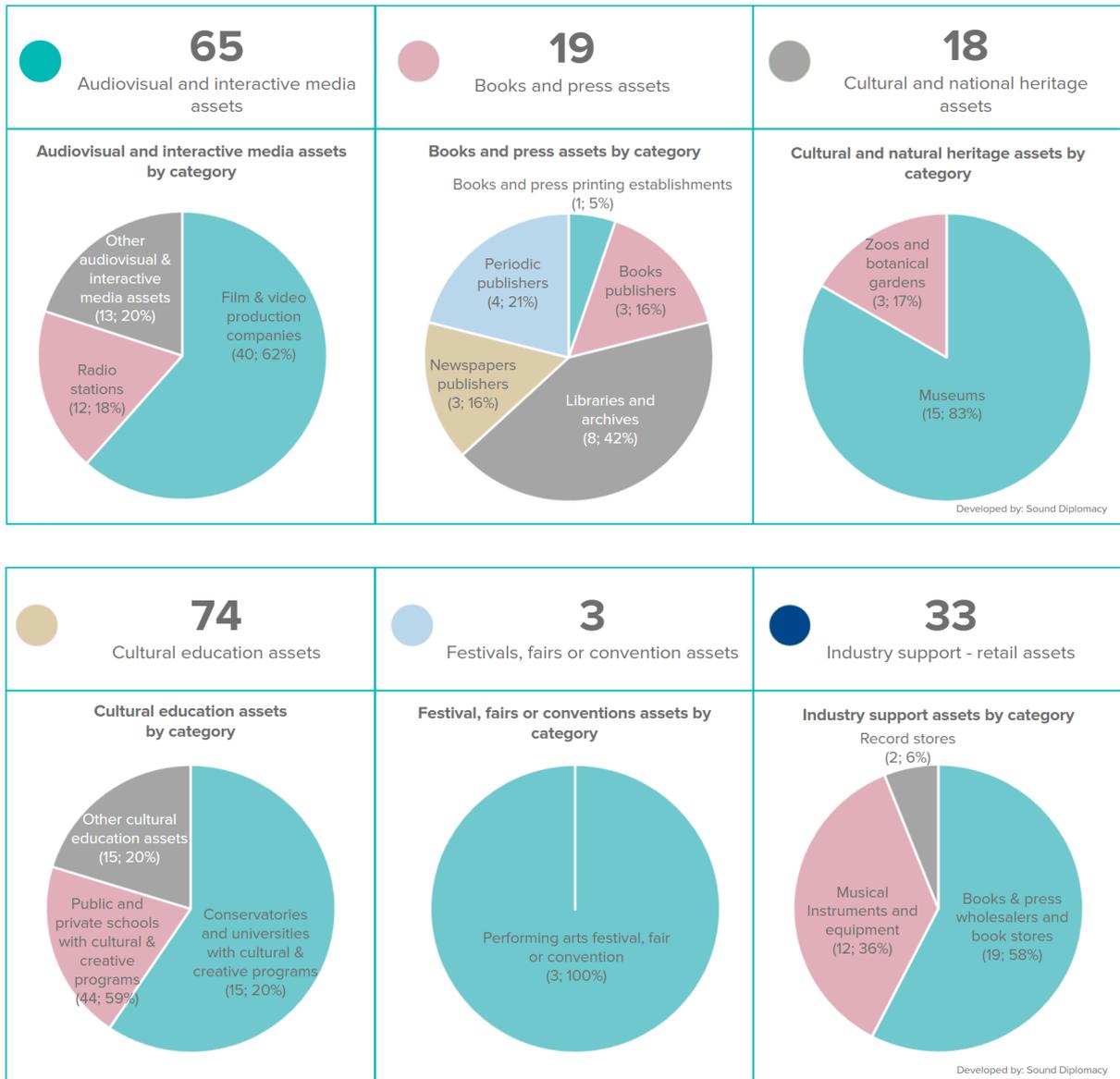
While the concentration of cultural assets in the city center of Lexington–Fayette creates a vibrant creative core, it raises concerns about access for residents in more peripheral areas. The spread of audiovisual and interactive media assets indicates a potential for more decentralized growth, but performing arts and visual arts remain heavily clustered, suggesting a need for broader distribution of these assets to ensure wider community access.

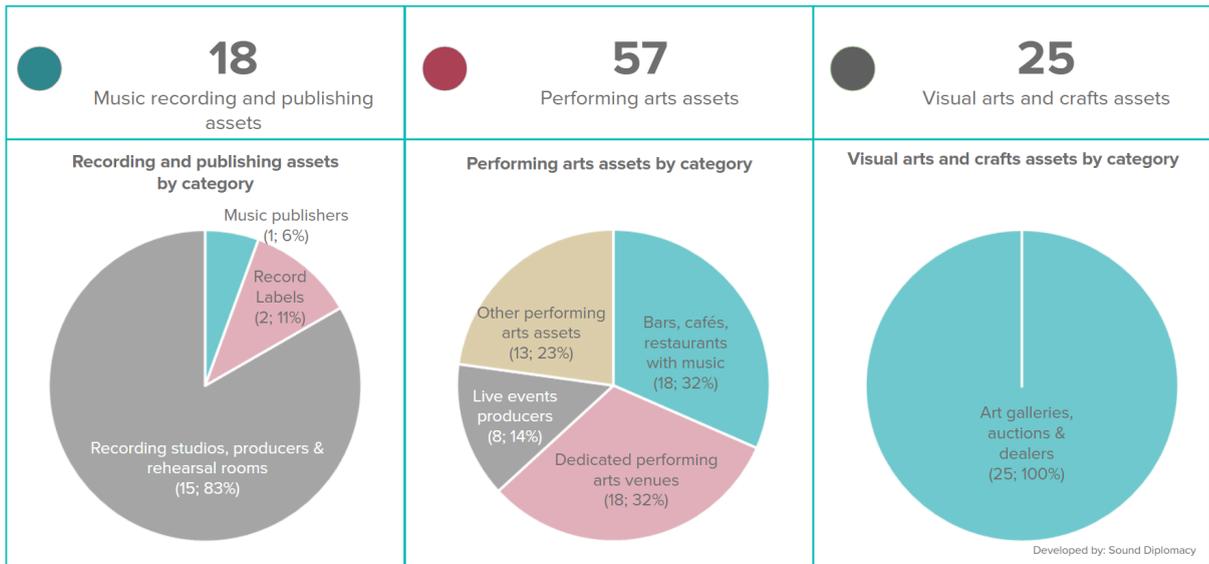
Specific gaps highlighted by stakeholders include:

- The lack of a concert hall or larger space to host bigger groups and attract more visitors, talent, and teachers.
- The general lack of event spaces and performance spaces.
- The lack of rehearsal spaces and storage spaces.
- The need for more accessible and affordable places for artistic creation for both artists and residents.
- The lack of recording studios.
- The need for more exhibition spaces.

For the performing arts, venues such as the Rupp Arena, the Opera House and the Singletary Center stand out as significant venues. The Townbranch Park development will also provide a larger space for cultural events.

Figure 16. Overview of Arts and Cultural Assets in Lexington–Fayette (Excluding Surrounding Counties)





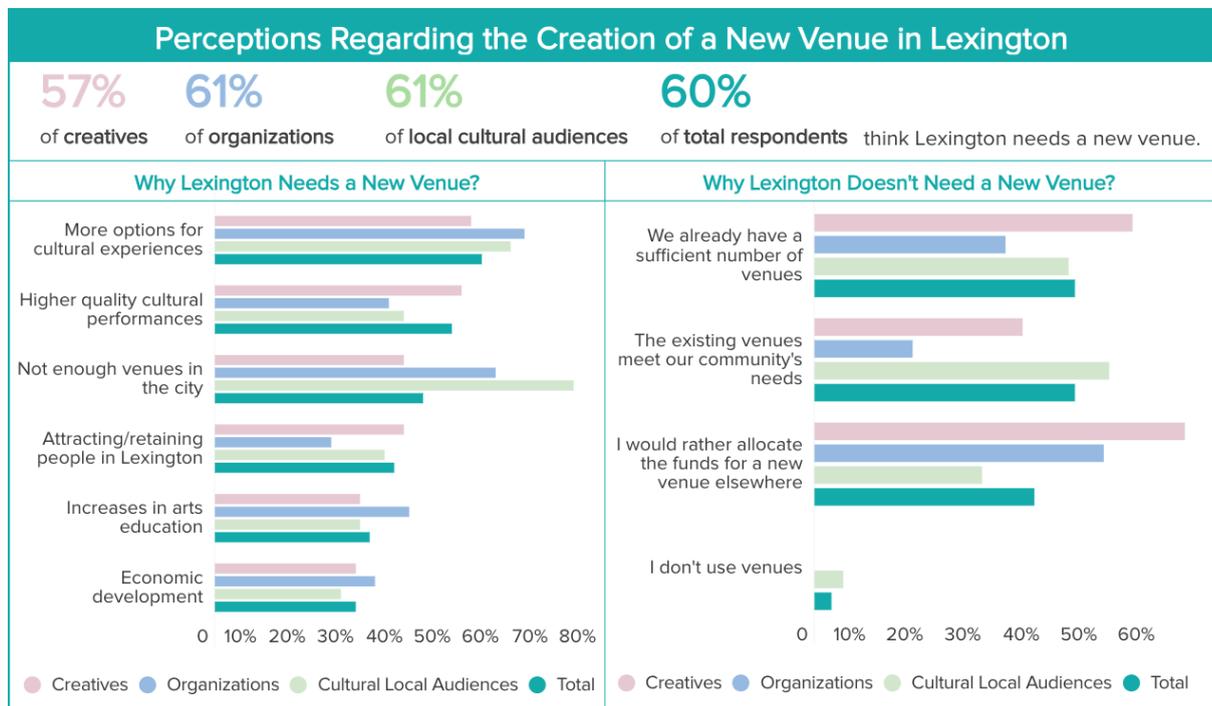
The Need for a New Venue in Lexington

When asked about the need for a new venue, the general agreement on this point reflects a common belief amongst respondents that there is a need for additional spaces for cultural offerings. However, differences emerge in the motivations driving each segment's belief in the need for a new venue.

When asked why they believe Lexington needs a new venue, the main reason cited by respondents was the desire for "more options for cultural experiences" (55%). This was the top choice for both creatives (53%) and organizations (64%), whereas for local audiences, it was the second (61%). Instead, audiences most often pointed to a "lack of enough venues in the city" (64%), which was also the second most common reason for organizations (58%), but not for creatives. Creatives chose "higher quality cultural performances" (51%) as their second reason.

For those who do not think Lexington needs a new venue, the reasons varied by group. Creatives mainly believe "we already have enough venues" (55%), organizations prefer to "allocate funds elsewhere" (50%), and local audiences feel "existing venues meet the community's needs" (51%).

Figure 17. Lexington's Need for a New Cultural Venue: Community Views.



As ongoing projects, such as the Fund for Greater Lexington's venue initiative, are addressing the potential need for a new major venue in Lexington, LexArts should take the lead in addressing other infrastructure gaps. This includes things such as the shortage of rehearsal and storage spaces, the need for additional performance venues (beyond constructing a new large venue), and the demand for workspaces and exhibition spaces for the arts.

Research indicates that Lexington has many vacant spaces and empty buildings that could be repurposed to support the arts ecosystem. Some of these existing spaces should be used to showcase local artists on an ongoing basis and meet the demand for flexible, multipurpose venues that can also serve as rehearsal and creative spaces. This approach would not only foster greater collaboration within the arts community but also offer a solution to pressing challenges in the arts ecosystem.

Investments should also be made in Lexington's existing cultural infrastructure to address current gaps. Stakeholder engagement revealed that many cultural organizations struggle to maintain their buildings, which often require urgent repairs or

adaptations. Several venues need financial support for infrastructure improvements, including maintenance and repair costs for the building and equipment, as well as measures to enhance accessibility.

Current gaps hinder the extent to which these spaces can facilitate artistic and cultural performance and production. For example, some venues lack the capacity to support sculptures or other heavy art pieces or instruments, while certain visual arts studios are not equipped with the necessary facilities, such as equipment-washing stations. LexArts can support the effort to invest in existing infrastructure by advocating for targeted financial support from the government.

Cultural Hubs

Several organizations' establishments serve as cultural hubs in Lexington. They include:

- LexArts, with its gallery, the different spaces it offers to rent for diverse events, and its "space to create".
- The Lyric Theater and Cultural Arts Center, with nearly 50 years as an entertainment hub for African-American families.
- The Living Arts and Science Center (LASC), self-proclaimed "the place where creativity grows".
- The Pam Miller Downtown Arts Center, offering various arts and entertainment activities in theater, dance, music, and visual arts.⁹¹
- The Lexington Public Library, embodying principles of free and open access to information for all Lexingtonians,⁹² with its dynamic learning spaces such as the Northside Digital Studio, Kloiber Foundation STEAM Lab, and Makerspace, where patrons can engage in hands-on activities and explore technology.
- The Otis A. Singletary Center for the Arts, with its venues and educational programs.
- The Lexington Art League, with its gallery, for-rent studios to emerging and established Lexington artists, diverse exhibition program, public events, arts education, and collaborative partnerships.⁹³

However, like many other cultural establishments, these hubs require repairs and upgrades to operate at their full potential and offer higher-quality programming.

⁹¹ Lexington Government, "About the Pam Miller Downtown Arts Center", accessed December 4, 2023, <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/about-downtown-arts-center>

⁹² Lexington Public Gallery, "About", accessed November 30, 2023, <https://www.lexpublib.org/about>

⁹³ Kentucky Arts Council, "Homepage", accessed November 30, 2023, <http://artsCouncil.ky.gov/> and Lexington Art League, "Studio Artist Program", accessed November 30, 2023, http://www.lexingtonartleague.org/studio_artists.html

Accessibility in Cultural Spaces

Another challenge identified in local cultural infrastructure is the lack of accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Many stakeholders in Lexington indicated that numerous venues lack proper spaces for individuals with mobility issues, with stairs often being the only option for entry or navigation. This oversight creates barriers for those with limited mobility, preventing them from fully participating in local arts and cultural offerings. The feedback underscores the need for more inclusive design and improved accessibility features in arts and cultural spaces for all members of the community. This challenge could be addressed through the creation of best practices guidelines in terms of accessibility in cultural spaces, as proposed in [Recommendation 12](#) above, accompanied by a reward program for organizations applying these guidelines.

Public Transportation

Four bus routes operate at night in Lexington, complemented by various daytime and evening routes.⁹⁴ Additionally, transportation options such as taxis, Uber, and Lyft are available. The city is also connected through Blue Grass Airport.

Several transportation services exist for students, including discounted Uber rides during designated hours, On-Demand Shuttle for late-night transportation from midnight to 5:00 a.m. during fall and spring semesters, campus buses into the evening, and the Safe And Free Escort (SAFE) program for students attending cultural night events, offered to University of Kentucky students at night, from Sunday to Thursday.⁹⁵

However, shuttle services or specific transportation options for cultural events and venues do not currently exist. Stakeholder engagement revealed that the city's areas and communities are segmented and travel across the city can be challenging due to traffic conditions, lack of affordable parking opportunities, poor walkability, and limited public transit.

This represents an opportunity for LexArts to advocate for extended public transit during major cultural events. This can significantly benefit Lexington's arts ecosystem and community by making it easier for residents and visitors to access cultural venues and events.

⁹⁴ Lexington Government, "Bus routes and schedules", accessed January 3, 2024, <https://lextran.com/schedules-fares/bus-routes-schedules/>

⁹⁵ University of Kentucky Transportation Services, "Wildcabs Vouchers", accessed January 16, 2024, <https://transportation.uky.edu/wildcab-vouchers>
And University of Kentucky Transportation Services, "Campus Bus Routes", accessed January 16, 2024, <https://transportation.uky.edu/about-us>
And University of Kentucky Police Department, "SAFECATS", accessed January 3, 2024, <https://police.uky.edu/safety/safecats>

Additionally, extended transit hours can enhance the overall event experience, reduce traffic congestion, and promote inclusivity by ensuring that all community members, regardless of their transportation and mobility options, can participate in and enjoy the city's vibrant cultural offerings. Providing reliable transportation options late into the evening could also positively impact on the perception of safety before and after cultural events, encouraging greater participation in the city's art scene.

Safety Perceptions

Safety concerns in Lexington are a significant deterrent for many individuals attending events in the city, particularly those in the downtown area and those held after dark. The lack of perceived safety in downtown Lexington inhibits event attendance by discouraging people from participating in cultural events.

Several initiatives proposed in the strategy would contribute to improving the perception of safety, benefitting attendance at cultural venues and events. They include:

- Creating a new Downtown Master Plan and establishing an entertainment district with better street lighting, which will encourage more activity on the streets ([Recommendation 15](#)).
- Extending public transit services during large-scale events ([Recommendation 18](#)).
- Offering more evenings and weekend events ([Recommendation 23](#)).

LexArts has the opportunity to augment parallel efforts to address this issue by organizing workshops focused on safety during cultural events.

Recommendation 16: Repurpose Vacant and Underutilized Spaces for the Arts and Cultural Sector

Initiators	LexArts, City of Lexington
Supporting Stakeholders	Local landowners, local arts community, real estate professionals
Timeframe	Short term (0–12 months)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more spaces for the arts.

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitate the development of pop up events, artist studios, rehearsal spaces, and other arts and cultural activities. |
|--|--|

Description: Research revealed that there are unused or underused spaces in Lexington that could be repurposed and used as workshops, pop-up retail units, storage spaces, rehearsal spaces, office spaces and, if possible, performance spaces for individuals, organizations and businesses in the arts ecosystem. This would cover an identified gap in infrastructure and provide the creative sector with affordable working spaces or alternative showcase opportunities. LexArts should start a list of spaces that could be used for the arts, and advocate for simplified permits that would allow for use of the spaces for arts and cultural purposes along with incentives for owners to let them.

Implementation Considerations:

- Work with the city government, landowners, property companies and other relevant stakeholders to develop a list of assets that should be used for the arts.
- Survey proposed sites for suitability.
- Compile basic information for each site, including:
 - Location
 - Size
 - Basic layout plans
 - Services available together with photographs for each site (similar to an estate agents sales pack)
 - Landlord responsibilities (lease period, use of electrical grid/water system/internet, rent), tenant responsibilities and leasing conditions (prioritizing events, meeting spaces, artist studios, galleries, rehearsal or performance spaces, independent retailers)
 - Whether the property will be demolished/redeveloped
 - Contract terms, including rent, deposit, insurance and potential tenant incentives.
- Coordinate with the City of Lexington to develop incentives for owners and permits and processes that would allow for use of the spaces.
- Develop an online application for potential tenants to apply through, providing information on:
 - What they intend to use the space for.
 - How long they want to use the space.
 - Who their potential target audience is.
 - Their previous experience.

- Publish the list of spaces in the database ([Recommendation 11](#)), provide guidance outlining how to apply for their use on the one-stop-shop ([Recommendation 14](#)), and promote it to the arts community.
- Users of these spaces should align with the sustainability, accessibility, DEI and fair pay guidelines outlined in [Recommendation 12](#) when possible.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of times the database of spaces is accessed.
- Number of permits granted to repurpose spaces for arts uses.
- Number of spaces repurposed.
- Occupancy rate of the spaces.
- Number of pop-up events and temporary installations.
- Number of arts and cultural work spaces created.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings of space users.
- Number of partnerships with landowners and real estate organizations.

Benchmark: Cultural Space Program, (Seattle, Washington)⁹⁶

What It Is: The City of Seattle has created a special division to work with artists, arts organizations, developers and builders to manage and support cultural spaces, allocate grants and activate unused or underused spaces. The website hosts links to resources across other city departments, such as information on building codes, noise codes, fire safety codes, financing, administrative services and incentives. There is also a comprehensive and clearly written handbook available for artists and arts administrators to use to help them navigate how to lease, purchase or operate a cultural space in the city.

Who Is Responsible: The Cultural Space program is headed up by the city's Office of Arts and Culture, which has a dedicated 'cultural space liaison' with the office to work alongside the 'arts permit liaison' at the City of Seattle's Department of Construction and Inspections.

What It Has Done: One of its biggest accomplishments to date was the introduction of SpaceFinderSeattle.org.⁹⁷ Launched in 2015 and free to use, this website is a database compiling 443 rental space listings in the region (as of January 2024) that are available for artists, community organizations and

⁹⁶ City of Seattle, "Cultural Space," accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.seattle.gov/arts/programs/cultural-space>.

⁹⁷ Spacefinder Seattle, "Home," accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.spacefinderseattle.org>.

cultural entities to use for meetings, events, workshops, rehearsals, performances and presentations.

In addition, the program provides a number of grants, including:

- Cultural Facilities Fund: Awarded for facilities projects, with a focus on creating greater access for individuals who have historically been excluded from owning, managing and leasing property.
- Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (LHPAI) Facility Grant: The grant provides in-kind support, allowing for up to 40 hours of building use for a public arts or cultural event at LHPAI.

Relevance for Lexington: Creating an online database of cultural spaces and providing support through a program similar to Seattle’s Cultural Space Program will help to expand the spaces available to artists, creators and other members of the arts and cultural sector. Improving the availability of cultural spaces improves access for artists and cultural organizations and provides decentralization, which helps to foster a more accessible and inclusive cultural landscape. Moreover, efforts modeled after Seattle’s program will support an increase in the creation, presentation, and enjoyment of arts and culture in Lexington.

Recommendation 17: Advocate for Incentives to Retrofit and Upgrade Existing Cultural Infrastructure

Initiators	LexArts, City of Lexington
Supporting Stakeholders	Local landowners and arts organizations, Fund for Greater Lexington
Timeframe	Long term (3+ years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade infrastructure. • Revitalize existing cultural spaces. • Invest in the community. • Improve accessibility. • Enhance visitor experience.

Description: Stakeholders pointed out that Lexington’s current cultural infrastructure is in need of repair, restoration, and measures to improve accessibility. To support this endeavor, LexArts should advocate for the City of Lexington to establish a grant dedicated to offsetting the costs of investing in existing buildings to make repairs, technical improvements, and to increase the accessibility of the spaces for artists and performers and patrons with disabilities.

Establishing a grant to upgrade and retrofit cultural infrastructure would enable cultural organizations to remain operational, reduce operational costs, enhance working conditions, and increase performance capabilities and production efficiency at venues. This will allow cultural organizations to offer higher quality programming. Additionally, it would help ensure that all community members can fully participate in and enjoy the city’s cultural and artistic offerings.

Implementation Considerations:

- Meet with local arts organizations to define which infrastructure needs repairs, restorations or improved accessibility, and estimate the costs.
- Partner with the city to identify funding sources, structure, application process, disbursement, and reporting process.
- Once implemented, promote the program to the arts community.
- Accept applications and determine successful applications.
- Administer funding.
- Accept required reporting from communities.

Further Considerations: If city funding for establishing a grant is not feasible, a tax incentive program should be implemented instead. Tax rebates should be offered to cultural organizations that undertake repairs and upgrades to their buildings.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of repairs and upgrades funded and completed.
- Number of accessibility and sustainability initiatives.
- Feedback and satisfaction rating from the staff of the organization completing the upgrades or repairs.
- Feedback and satisfaction rating from audiences and visitors.
- Growth in venue usage.
- Cost savings from upgrades (reductions in maintenance and operational costs).

Recommendation 18: Advocate for a Pilot Program that Offers Extended Public Transit during Major Events

Initiators	LexArts, City of Lexington, LexTRAN
Supporting Stakeholders	Local arts organizations, Team Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
Timeframe	Long term (3+ years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attract more attendees. ● Reduce parking issues by providing additional transit options, making it easier for visitors to reach events. ● Improve accessibility and safety at events. ● Promote the usage and benefits of public transit.

Description: LexArts and strategic partners and stakeholders throughout the city should advocate for the implementation of a pilot program for extended public transit during major events. It is recommended that the pilot program is initiated with the Railbird festival, but it should also encompass sports events and other major events taking place in the city.

Implementation Considerations:

- Identify city events that draw significant audiences.
- Select the shortlist of events for the extended transit program. The Railbird Festival is recommended as a starting point for the pilot.
- Collaborate with event organizers to determine transit needs and peak times.
- Define the program's geographic coverage area, including venues and neighborhoods.
- Define the hours of operation and the service's frequency.
- Optimize routes and scheduling depending on this information.
- Collaborate with event organizers, LexTRAN, the police department, and traffic management to secure funding and resources, and implement the program.
- Specific safety measures should be considered, especially during night routes. Such measures can include appropriate lighting in bus stops or on demand stops in every route particularly for women and minors.
- Market and promote the program to the community and also targeting potential visitors from a broader region.

- Collect data and monitor the pilot program’s performance to evaluate its impact on attendance and determine if the service usage justifies making it a permanent offering.

Impact Indicators:

- Increase in attendance at night time arts events.
- Increase in public transit passengers during major events.
- Reduction in parking usage near the events.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from audiences regarding accessibility, safety and ease of the transportation program to major events.
- Reduction of safety-related incidents, especially related to traffic.
- Feedback from event organizers.

Benchmark: Extended SXSW Transit Measures, (Austin, Texas)

What It Is: During the nine-day South by Southwest (SXSW) event in Austin, which draws over 300,000 attendees each spring, the city implements a range of measures to manage transportation, traffic, and parking, in an effort to enhance access and safety for festival attendees.⁹⁸

CapMetro, Austin, and the Central Texas' public transit agency created a direct route to the Austin Convention Center, the epicenter of the festival, and offer several extended transportation services during the event:⁹⁹

- An extended rail service operates until 2:30 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, and until midnight every other night of SXSW.
- Night owl buses operating from midnight to 3 a.m.
- High frequency bus routes, arriving about every 15–30 minutes, daily.
- Bus service to and from the airport for \$1.25.
- The on-demand rideshare CapMetro Pickup, with a \$1.25 standard fare per ride, and discounts for seniors, active and reserve military not in uniform, riders with disabilities, and qualifying low-income riders through the Equifare program. Kids under 18 and military or emergency personnel in uniform ride for free.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Kameryn Griesser, “SXSW traffic, parking, safety: Everything you need to know”, CommunityImpact.com, March 6, 2024, <https://communityimpact.com/austin/south-central-austin/transportation/2024/03/06/sxsw-traffic-parking-safety-everything-you-need-to-know/>

⁹⁹ Austin Chamber, “Navigating SXSW: CapMetro Keeps the Good Times Rolling”, March 6, 2024, <https://www.austinchamber.com/blog/navigating-sxsw-capmetro-keeps-the-good-times-rolling>

¹⁰⁰ CapMetro, “Fares and Passes”, accessed September 18, 2024, <https://www.capmetro.org/fares-passes>

The CapMetro App allows users to see schedules, maps, and real-time arrival information, and to use their phones as tickets.¹⁰¹

Other transportation services during the event include:

- MetroBike: 75 bike-share docking stations conveniently placed throughout downtown, accessible day and night.
- Carter Transportation Austin offers a shared-ride service to and from the airport for SXSW.
- Rental Cars: Enterprise is the car rental company of choice for SXSW.
- Pedicabs operate throughout Austin day and night. Pedicab drivers are licensed and regulated by the City of Austin Ground Transportation Department and usually work for tips or a charge-per-block fare.
- Cabs and Electric Cab provide a ride for evening entertainment and special event pedestrians in Downtown Austin.¹⁰²

All CapMetro services except MetroBike are free for students. CapMetro buses connect the University of Texas to venues, theaters and big tech events in the downtown or East Austin areas.¹⁰³

Who Is Responsible: CapMetro, Austin and Central Texas' public transit agency.¹⁰⁴

What It Has Done: Recent data on extended transit services during the SXSW event is not readily available online. However, in 2015, when extended transit was first introduced for SXSW, record-breaking ridership was reported. With extended hours and a new bus system, Capital Metro ridership increased between 50–70 percent during 2015's SXSW conferences and festivals.¹⁰⁵ That year, CapMetro added 1,700 more service hours compared to previous years. MetroRapid and MetroRail saw a 15% increase in ridership over the 2014 event, with both services running extended schedules. CapMetro provided nearly 63,000 train rides during the festival—over 8,000 more than in 2014—peaking

¹⁰¹ SXSW, “Getting Around”, accessed September 18, 2024, <https://www.sxsw.com/hotels/getting-around/>

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ The Daily Texan, “Save Your Money By Riding Transit to SXSW”, March 6, 2023, <https://thedailytexan.com/2023/03/06/save-your-money-by-riding-transit-to-sxsw/>

¹⁰⁴ CapMetro, “homepage”, accessed September 18, 2024, <https://www.capmetro.org/>

¹⁰⁵ Amy Denney, “Capital Metro ridership during SXSW increased more than 50 percent”, CommunityImpact.com, March 25, 2014, accessed September 18, 2024, <https://communityimpact.com/austin/news/2014/03/25/capital-metro-ridership-during-sxsw-increased-more-than-50-percent-2/>

at over 9,000 rides on a single day. MetroRapid routes together saw nearly 100,000 rides, with Route 803, in its first year of SXSW service, accounting for nearly 37,000 trips.¹⁰⁶

By 2020, CapMetro had further expanded its services to accommodate the tens of thousands of attendees for the SXSW Interactive, Film, and Music Festival. Over the years, CapMetro has continued to meet the growing demand, offering convenient transportation to and within Austin’s downtown, allowing festival-goers to focus on enjoying the event.¹⁰⁷

Relevance for Lexington: This example highlights the importance of offering extended and dedicated public transportation services for major events. Doing so helps alleviate traffic congestion, enhances safety before and after events, and makes it easier for attendees to participate. Implementing a similar initiative for major events in Lexington could attract larger audiences, including both residents and visitors. Offering specific incentives, such as free or discounted fares for students, would further encourage their involvement in the local arts scene. Additionally, promoting extended transit services through VisitLex materials for major events could boost visitor attendance at arts and cultural activities.

Recommendation 19: Host Regular Workshops on Safety during Cultural Events

Initiators	LexArts, Lexington Public Safety Department (overseeing Community Corrections, Emergency Management, Enhanced 911, Fire & Emergency Services, Police and Security)
Supporting Stakeholders	Local arts community

¹⁰⁶ Melissa Ayala, “Capital Metro Hits Record-Breaking Ridership During SXSW”, MassTransit.com, March 30, 2015, accessed September 18, 2024,

<https://www.masstransitmag.com/bus/press-release/12059645/capital-metropolitan-transportation-authority-capmetro-capital-metro-hits-record-breaking-ridership-during-sxsw>

¹⁰⁷ CapMetro, “CapMetro Increases Service for SXSW 2020”, Accessed September 18, 2024,

<https://www.capmetro.org/news/details/2020/05/11/capital-metro-increases-service-for-sxsw-2020>

Timeframe	Short term (0–12 months)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve safety during cultural events and at cultural venues.

Description: Given the concerns around safety in Lexington, it is important that venues and cultural event organizers feel safe and welcoming for residents and visitors. The arts ecosystem should make efforts to ensure its spaces and events are welcoming and safe for all people, including women, LGBTQIA+ and minority groups, in a number of ways. Safety workshops should be developed for management, staff, security, and artists, with relevant information also available to audiences and the wider community.

Implementation Considerations:

- Collaborate with Lexington Public Safety to determine the program's scope.
- Lexington Public Safety should select the individuals to lead the workshops, in consultation with LexArts and local cultural organizations.
- Coordinate with local cultural organizations and event organizers to find a suitable time for the workshops that accommodates their schedules.
- Organize workshops with police, event security, cultural stakeholders, and the wider community to share relevant information and promote safety at venues and events.
- Create and share a safety checklist for every event that organizers, security and other event staff are required to follow.
- Create and display posters featuring tip lines, clear statements outlining behaviors that are not tolerated, and guidance on how to assist someone in distress, and how to seek help when in distress.
- Introducing an “Ask for Angela” program (see case study below), which allows individuals attending cultural events to ask for help in a discreet manner.

Further Considerations: A best practices guide could be created from these workshops and published alongside other best practice guidelines (outlined in [Recommendation 12](#)) and made available on the one-stop shop ([Recommendation 14](#)).

Impact Indicators:

- Number of participants in the program.
- Number of organizations implementing the protocols and guidelines, and using the checklist or other content shared during the workshops.

- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from audiences regarding safety during cultural events.
- Number of safety-related incidents reported during cultural events.
- Feedback from attendees on the relevance, usefulness, and clarity of the safety information provided in the workshops.
- Increase in arts events attendance at night.

Benchmark: Safer Sounds Partnership (United Kingdom)¹⁰⁸

What It Is: Safer Sounds is a London-wide partnership that spans the events and music industry. It promotes consistency of operations, sharing best practices, and facilitating information sharing whilst supporting venues, promoters and artists related to the topic of venue and event safety. Its mission is to create safer events for all. It provides grassroots training which aims to increase confidence in business and improve operations. To do this, it collaborates with the Met Police Borough Licensing teams, Local Authority Licensing, Met Police Licensing Governance & Partnership Hub, SIA and the Night Czar.¹⁰⁹

Safer Sounds aims to deliver its work through five key strands:¹¹⁰

- Strong partnership, by bringing together the music industry, venues, promoters and artists with Police and Local Authorities.
- Using an intelligence platform to allow sharing of intelligence safely between venues, promoters and the Police.
- Event management planning, included risk assessments, so that everyone in events in London can work from best practices.
- Training and safety awareness across operators and promoters by contributing to a skilled workforce by developing and delivering bespoke training modules for new and existing SIA security staff, venues and promoters.
- An industry charter, which is due to set out an agreed set of standards which promoters and venues operate to.

Who Is Responsible: Safer Sounds Partnership was established in March 2019 and is an arm of the Safer Business Network supported by the Greater London

¹⁰⁸ Safer Sounds Partnership, "Homepage," [saferounds.org.uk](https://www.saferounds.org.uk), accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.saferounds.org.uk/>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., "About Us," [saferounds.org.uk](https://www.saferounds.org.uk/about-us), accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.saferounds.org.uk/about-us>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., "The Plan," [saferounds.org.uk](https://www.saferounds.org.uk/the-plan), accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.saferounds.org.uk/the-plan>.

Authority and Metropolitan Police. It has a core team of two, and a steering group composed of twelve members which represent various music venues and events.¹¹¹

What Has It Done: The Partnership offers interactive training sessions which are scenario based. Working with a variety of businesses across the day and night-time economy, it offers tailored packages (which businesses pay for) depending on the situation and context of the business and staff. 95% of attendees report that the training sessions have positively affected how they will work in the future.¹¹²

The Partnership provides venues with WAVE training, which is a training session which aims to increase the skills, knowledge and confidence of those working in licensed premises focusing on identifying vulnerability and making appropriate interventions. It also promotes the “Ask for Angela” scheme. This is a consumer facing campaign which allows people who feel like they are in an unsafe situation to ask for help using the “Angela” code word, informing a staff member of their need, and allowing them to access discreet help.¹¹³

Safer Sounds was commissioned by the Greater London Authority to manage the LGBTQ+ Venue Forum for 2020–21. During this time Safer Sounds consulted on the structure of the group and format of meetings, in the process facilitating LGBTQ+ venues to create an independent organization that represents the views and needs of that community.¹¹⁴

Relevance for Lexington: The Safer Sounds Partnership shows how civil society, private business, and public bodies can come together to improve safety and make the night economy safer for more people. By running training sessions that businesses have to pay for, it also creates revenue that helps to sustain the project, meaning that it can plan on making long term plans and impact. In offering training and promotion of the Ask for Angela program, Safer Sounds helps to disseminate knowledge of the program, which in turn makes it more effective. LexArts, in collaboration with Lexington Public Safety Department, could draw inspiration from the program's organization and scope

¹¹¹ Ibid., “Our Team,” [safersounds.org.uk](https://www.safersounds.org.uk/our-team), accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.safersounds.org.uk/our-team>.

¹¹² Ibid., “Training,” [safersounds.org.uk](https://www.safersounds.org.uk/training), accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.safersounds.org.uk/training>.

¹¹³ Ibid., “WAVE Program,” [safersounds.org.uk](https://www.safersounds.org.uk/wave), accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.safersounds.org.uk/wave>.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., “LGBTQ+ Venue Forum,” [safersounds.org.uk](https://www.safersounds.org.uk/lgbtq-venues-forum), accessed August 9, 2024, <https://www.safersounds.org.uk/lgbtq-venues-forum>.

to create its own safety workshops and training for cultural events.

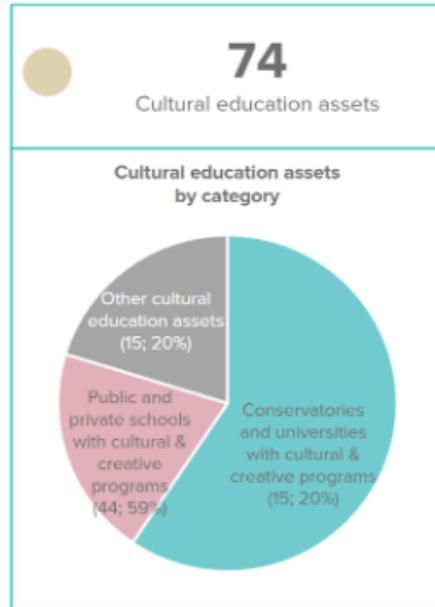
Arts Education

Arts Education in Schools

The array of private sector arts opportunities, training, and programs available to young people stands out as a strength of Lexington's arts and cultural ecosystem. 24% (74) of Lexington-Fayette's cultural assets are arts education assets, indicating a significant offering of arts education resources within the city. This is further supported by the establishment location quotient of 1.50 for cultural education, meaning that Lexington has a higher concentration of cultural education establishments than the rest of the nation.¹¹⁵ Moreover, organizations such as the Lexington Children's Theatre and the Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra play pivotal roles in nurturing talent from a young age, fostering a rich culture of artistic development in the community.

¹¹⁵ A location quotient (LQ) measures a region's industrial specialization relative to the country. An LQ of 1.0 in an industry means that the region and the nation are equally specialized in that industry. An LQ of 1.5 signifies that the region has a higher concentration in the industry than the nation.

Figure 18. Cultural Education Assets by Category in Lexington-Fayette



However, research and stakeholder engagement indicate a gap in accessible, high-quality public arts education in Lexington. This is partly due to the limited presence of arts education in the city's public schools. This risk can be mitigated through collaborative partnerships with local artists, arts educators, and arts institutions to make arts education and programming accessible to a broader, more diverse population, particularly in underserved and underfunded communities.

LexArts' ART Teachers Guide aims to connect local nonprofit arts professionals and organizations to schools' curricula and students, and can serve as a basis to develop further public arts education programs.

Secondary Arts Education

Lexington public schools offer arts education and professional guidance for individuals aged 11 to 18 through its advanced art courses. These cover diverse art disciplines, including band, orchestra, vocal music, classical guitar, visual arts, theater performance, technical theater, dance, piano/keyboard, programming, video, cinematography, and graphic design. The programs emphasize a professional focus, incorporating work-based learning, career and technical education, job shadowing, educational trips, and other enrichment activities. The educational experience includes performance opportunities, internship opportunities, and regular opportunities for publication or

exhibition. Moreover, the programs incorporate digital tools and software for graphic design, animation, and multimedia projects.

Post-Secondary Arts Education

Lexington's post-secondary arts education encompasses a diverse array of programming, including visual arts, performing arts, arts education, arts history, culinary arts, journalism, music production, audio engineering, photography, graphic design, animation, filmmaking, theater, library technology, video game design and more. The programs emphasize a strong professional focus, providing students with opportunities for exhibition, field experience, practical training, internships, international study, teaching experiences, and hands-on involvement in performances and exhibitions.

Internship and Career Paths

LexArts supplements the above mentioned programs by offering practical internship opportunities specifically designed for aspiring arts administrators. The Lexington Art League also provides internship opportunities. The University of Kentucky also offers paid internships through its arts department.

Arts Education Funding

The LexArts Arts in Schools Impact Grants subsidize arts engagement in Fayette County Public Schools. The program seeks to support students, teachers, and learning throughout the community. The grants focus on providing arts education for all pre-K-12 students and addressing the opportunity gap for those who may lack access to high-quality arts education.¹¹⁶ However, this grant alone is not sufficient to compensate for the threat of cuts to public arts funding by the Kentucky state government, which could result in the removal of arts education from the curriculum at Kentucky's public schools, diminishing children's exposure to the arts.

Recommendation 20: Foster Partnerships to Augment Public Arts Education

Initiators	LexArts, Fayette County public schools
Supporting Stakeholders	City of Lexington, local artists, local arts organizations, local universities

¹¹⁶ LexArts, "Arts in School Impact Grants", accessed November 24, 2023, <https://lexarts.org/arts-in-schools-impact-grants/>

Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance public arts education by providing additional financial resources, facilities, and materials. ● Help schools and organizations offer more comprehensive, high-quality arts education programs. ● Make arts education accessible to a broader and more diverse population, especially underserved or underfunded communities.

Description: A thriving cultural and creative city starts with education to grow the authors, performers, industry professionals and audiences of the future. LexArts should address the lack of accessible, high-quality public arts education in Lexington by facilitating partnerships between schools and local artists, arts professionals, and organizations to develop arts programming accessible to public school students, with free and discounted options available to low-income students. LexArts should also continue to provide funding to schools via its Arts in Schools Impact Grants to allow free or low cost arts programming for youth in need.

In addition, artists-in-school residencies that send local artists into public schools to augment arts learning should be established in public schools. These residencies should cover various disciplines (visual arts, music, theater, dance, etc.) to allow students to engage more deeply with the arts, over several weeks or months.

To foster these programs and partnerships, LexArts should advocate for more funding from the city for its Arts in Schools Impact Grants. With state-level arts education funding at risk, Lexington must commit to maintaining its status as an arts hub for the community by supporting high-quality and equitable arts education.

Implementation Considerations:

- Residency program:
 - Collaborate with Lexington public schools to identify the students’ needs and the goals of the residencies program.
 - Objectives should include increasing arts engagement at school, integrating arts with core subjects, and developing specific skills.
 - Develop partnerships with education partners using LexArts’ ART Teacher Guide as a resource, and identify and recruit teaching artists willing to participate in the program.
 - Work with teachers, education partners and teaching artists to create the framework of the program, including the number of sessions.
 - Coordinate with schools to schedule the residency sessions.

- Maintain communication during the program and ensure that all necessary equipment and space are available.
- Showcase potential students' work created during the sessions to share the outcomes of the residencies and highlight success to the broader community.
 - This should represent an opportunity to advocate for more funding for arts education.
- Measure the impact of the program.
- For free or low cost arts opportunities for underserved students, we suggest that LexArts conducts an in-depth analysis of the current situation of arts education in the city. Some of the following considerations should be relevant regardless of the findings:
 - Gather data on underserved communities and on potential benefits of increasing their access to arts education.
 - Engage key stakeholders such as arts organizations and educators, parents, and advocacy groups to collate information and advocate to the city government for the establishment of a grant or tax incentive program for private arts education organizations.
 - Collaborate with the city government to define the amount of funding required and the framework for the program.
 - Collaborate with local private arts education organizations to define the type of programming they should offer, pricing, and target communities.
 - Monitor the impact of the program.
 - If it shows success, advocate for its continuation or expansion.

Further Considerations: Partnerships could also be established with Lexington universities, which should be encouraged to provide financial support to expand access to free and low cost arts education programming for students both at the K-12 and university levels.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of partnerships formed.
- Number programs developed.
- Number of students engaged.
- Number of students enrolled in programming.

Benchmark: The Creative Advantage and School and Community Arts Partnerships in Seattle Public Schools (Seattle, Washington)

What Is It: The Creative Advantage is the Seattle Public Schools arts plan, a city-wide initiative dedicated to establishing equitable access to arts learning for every student in the district. This initiative was established with the support of the Wallace Foundation, and brings together the resources from the school district, the city, and local arts organizations to create a comprehensive, inclusive arts education plan.¹¹⁷

The Creative Advantage envisions a city where arts education empowers students to express themselves, drive positive change in their schools and communities, and develop vital skills for success in work and life. It aims to ensure that all young people, regardless of background, have the opportunity to engage in high-quality arts education throughout their K-12 journey. Recognizing that equitable access to the arts is essential, The Creative Advantage focuses on addressing gaps in arts education, particularly for students of color and those from low-income backgrounds, who are often the most underserved.¹¹⁸

The initiative started in 2013 with 13 schools in the Central Arts Pathway, and has expanded each to include more regional K-12 pathways to eliminate disparities in arts access across the city.¹¹⁹

School and community arts partnerships are highly valued in Seattle for their ability to engage students in diverse arts learning experiences with professional artists. These partnerships inspire teachers to integrate the arts into their classrooms and help build connections between cultural communities and schools. The Creative Advantage supports the expansion of these partnerships across all Seattle schools, ensuring that every student and teacher has the opportunity to engage with the city's vibrant arts community each year. The Creative Advantage prioritizes multi-session teaching artist residencies that offer integrated or culturally relevant arts learning and provide professional development for school staff in arts integration. Schools can access the Community Arts Partner Roster, which includes cultural institutions, community

¹¹⁷ Seattle Schools "The Creative Advantage", seattleschools.org, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/>

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

arts organizations, and individual teaching artists, to find programs that align with their arts education goals.¹²⁰

Additionally, The Creative Advantage has developed tools to help teachers and arts partners design collaborations that enhance student learning and foster a culture of collaboration within schools and the broader community. These tools, which are developed by a team of Seattle Public Schools teachers, school leaders, teaching artists, and arts organization administrators and facilitated by the Seattle Art Museum and funded by The Wallace Foundation, include:¹²¹

- The Partnership Project Design Tool: A form used to outline the partnership's goals, roles, and responsibilities, created collaboratively by teachers, arts partners, and other key stakeholders.¹²²
- The Arts Partnership Budget Tool: A form to assist project planning and determine fees for school arts partnerships.¹²³
- The Partnership Lesson Planning Tool: A template for community arts partners to plan school-based residencies, including timelines, learning objectives, and assessment checkpoints.¹²⁴
- The Partnership Reflection Tool: A form for teachers and arts partners to reflect on their collaboration and gather insights for future projects.¹²⁵

To ensure consistent access to arts learning, The Creative Advantage provides funding for classroom arts residencies and professional development. Schools receive \$15,000 over the first three years of participation to support their arts plan goals. After these initial funds are used, schools are eligible for up to \$5,000 annually through the Arts Sustainability Funds to maintain and grow their arts partnerships. Schools in certain areas are eligible for up to \$10,000 per year to fulfill equity criteria. Schools can apply for these funds using a simple application process, with approvals determined monthly. The Creative

¹²⁰ Seattle Schools "School and Community Arts Partnerships in Seattle Public Schools", seattleschools.org, accessed August 20, 2024,

<https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/arts-partnerships/>

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² The Creative Advantage "Project Design Tool", seattleschools.org, accessed August 20, 2024,

https://www.seattleschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/1_Project-Design-Tool_form.pdf

¹²³ The Creative Advantage "The Arts Partnership Program Budget", seattleschools.org, accessed August 20, 2024, https://www.seattleschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ArtsPartnershipProgramBudget_ADA.pdf

¹²⁴ The Creative Advantage "LESSON PLAN: What Will We Do Together?", seattleschools.org, accessed August 20, 2024, https://www.seattleschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/3_Lesson-Plan-Tool_ADA.pdf

¹²⁵ The Creative Advantage "REFLECTION: What Did We Accomplish?", seattleschools.org, accessed August 20, 2024, https://www.seattleschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/4_Reflection-Tool_ADA.pdf

Advantage’s efforts ensure that students across Seattle have meaningful and lasting access to the arts as part of their education.¹²⁶

Who Is Responsible: The Creative Advantage is a coordinated network that includes Seattle Public Schools, the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle Foundation, and more than 100 community arts partners.¹²⁷ It was established with the support of the Wallace Foundation.¹²⁸

What Has It Done: Each year, a third-party evaluator collects both quantitative and qualitative data to assess the implementation and impact of The Creative Advantage. Their findings show that arts learning has become a growing priority, not only within Seattle Public Schools but across the entire city and community.¹²⁹

Key highlights from the first three years of The Creative Advantage include:

- Over 5,000 elementary students now have access to music classes that would not have been available without this initiative.
- The number of elementary schools offering K-5 music and visual arts classes has more than doubled.
- In schools within The Creative Advantage pathways, there has been a significant improvement in the number of students meeting arts education standards.
- There is evidence of growth in certain skills among students, such as perseverance, critical thinking, and culturally responsive learning.
- Strong partnerships with community arts organizations have been established and continue to thrive.

By 2023, The Creative Advantage expanded to 89 of the 106 schools in the district. The initiative is also developing more opportunities to connect arts education with potential career pathways for secondary students, including

¹²⁶ Seattle Schools “Funding an Arts Partnership”, [seattleschools.org](https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/arts-partnerships/), accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/arts-partnerships/>

¹²⁷ Seattle Schools “The Creative Advantage”, [seattleschools.org](https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/), accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/>,

Seattle Government, “Office of Arts and Culture”, [seattle.gov](https://www.seattle.gov/arts), accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.seattle.gov/arts>,

Seattle Foundation, “Homepage”, [seattlefoundation.org](https://www.seattlefoundation.org), accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.seattlefoundation.org/>

¹²⁸ Wallace Foundation, “Homepage”, wallacefoundation.org, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://wallacefoundation.org/>

¹²⁹ Seattle Schools “The Creative Advantage”, [seattleschools.org](https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/), accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/>

Media Arts Skills Center courses, which are offered during the summer as well as the school year.¹³⁰

In the 2019–2020 school year, The Creative Advantage’s Arts Sustainability Fund supported a total of 16 projects across Seattle schools, covering disciplines such as dance, creative audio production, digital audio production, percussion, photography, playwriting, public speaking, songwriting, theater, visual arts, and writing.¹³¹

Relevance for Lexington: LexArts should take inspiration from the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture initiative (among other stakeholders), to develop its own arts education plan and partnership program. The goals are similar in both cities: to provide every student with access to high-quality arts education, and addressing existing gaps. Similar to the Seattle model, partnerships should be established between public schools, teaching artists, cultural institutions, and community arts organizations. Comprehensive guides should also be created to assist stakeholders before, during, and after these residencies. Additionally, the case study offers budget examples for implementing such programs in schools.

Benchmark: Artists In Residence at Schools, Barcelona¹³²

What Is It: Since 2009, the Barcelona Institute of Culture (ICUB) and the Barcelona Education Consortium (CEB) have collaboratively championed the Artists In Residence at Schools in Barcelona initiative. This pioneering program represents an effort to bring contemporary art directly into state secondary schools, fostering ongoing interactions between artists and students. The program invites artists to conceive and produce works collaboratively with

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Seattle Schools “School and Community Arts Partnerships in Seattle Public Schools”, [seattleschools.org](https://www.seattleschools.org), accessed August 20, 2024,

<https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/arts/the-creative-advantage/arts-partnerships/>

¹³² En Residencia, “Artists at Schools”, accessed October 16, 2024, <https://www.enresidencia.org/en>

groups of compulsory secondary education (ESO) pupils over the course of an academic year.¹³³

Under the Artists In Residence initiative, artists create original works of art within the school environment, while engaging students in the conception and creation process. The program is integrated into the school timetable, allowing students to participate in the artistic journey actively throughout the academic year. Students directly engage with the artists through discussions. In addition to the importance of hands-on creation, the project emphasizes the value of the thought and analysis that informs art.

The Artists In Residence program aims to achieve a three-fold objective through direct interactions between art and education:¹³⁴

- Encourage students to discover their own processes of contemporary creation by fostering sustained contact and direct discussion with artists, encouraging them to think about art through personal experience.
- Create environments that stimulate artistic innovation and creativity within schools.
- Transform schools into active hubs for culture, art, and artistic thought and create spaces for artistic experimentation and innovation.

Who is Responsible: The Barcelona Institute of Culture (ICUB) and the Barcelona Education Consortium (CEB) jointly lead the Artists In Residence initiative. Their key functions include program design and monitoring, partnership development and promotion, program continuity, and fundraising.¹³⁵

A mediation team, which is composed of experts in developing creation processes in a formal educational context, coordinates the residency, a key factor in the program's success. Individuals that make up these teams work at the intersection of education and culture, and members often include educational teams from museum and cultural facilities and independent spaces.¹³⁶ They handle artist selection, as well as project approval, providing

¹³³ En Residencia, "Description," accessed October 16, 2024, <https://www.enresidencia.org/en/description>

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ En Residencia, "Participants," accessed October 16, 2024, <https://www.enresidencia.org/en/participants>

¹³⁶ En Residencia, "Mediation Teams," accessed October 16, 2024

<https://www.enresidencia.org/en/mediation-teams>,

guidance and direction as the project progresses, managing relationships between the diverse stakeholders who take part in the project, and raising awareness for the residency.¹³⁷

Mediation team partners include:¹³⁸

- A Bao A Qu, a non-profit cultural association.
- El Mercat de les Flors and el Graner, two public institutions dedicated to dance creation.
- La Sala Beckett / Obrador Internacional de Dramatúrgia, an experimental theatre venue.
- L’Espai 13 (Fundació Joan Miró de Barcelona), an exhibition hall dedicated to promoting and supporting the work of young up-and-coming local and international creators.
- El Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, a museum of Catalan visual art.
- Antic Teatre - Espai de Creació, one of Barcelona’s leading venues for contemporary independent live art.
- L’Afluent, a cultural services co-operative dedicated to music and education.
- La Central del Circ, a rehearsal and training space for circus professionals.
- El MACBA, a museum of contemporary art.
- Experimentem amb l’ART, a space for research and experimentation between art and education.
- La Caldera, a space for creation focused on artistic practices centered around the body and movement.
- La Poderosa, a non-profit cultural association for the performing arts.
- Teatre Lliure, a cultural center made up of two theaters that focuses on scene, culture, education and the digital world.
- El Born Centre de Cultura i Memòria,
- Transductores, an interdisciplinary platform focused on research and mediation projects in education, the arts, and public intervention.

Artists who participate in the program are invited by the mediation team; however, to participate, artists should be well-established and able to generate discussion. Though it is not necessary for participation, it is beneficial if the artist has a tie to teaching.

¹³⁷ En Residencia, “Participants”, accessed October 16, 2024 <https://www.enresidencia.org/en/participants>

¹³⁸ En Residencia, “Mediation Teams.” accessed October 16, 2024 <https://www.enresidencia.org/en/mediation-teams>.

Teachers at the school where the Artists In Residence program play a key role in linking the residency to the school, which includes connecting the Artists In Residence program to their teaching material, building partnerships, and managing learning after the residency.¹³⁹

Participating students are ESO compulsory secondary education pupils at Barcelona's state schools, meaning they range from 12–16 years in age. However, participants are usually in their final year of study. Students are expected to take an active role in all program processes.

What Has It Done: The Artists In Residence program has achieved remarkable success, both for the artists involved and the teachers and students participating. This initiative has become a cornerstone in Barcelona's schools, establishing meaningful links between contemporary art and Barcelona's youth.

The direct engagement and continuous collaboration between artists and students have encouraged artistic exploration and empowered schools to act as active promoters of art, culture, and artistic thought.

Since the initiative was first launched, the Artists In Residence program has established formal program processes.¹⁴⁰

Notable elements of the program include:

- A weekly session with the artists, which takes place until the end of the residency.
- A weekly session without the artist's presence, to allow for further discourse.
- A session to discuss the residency's current state and future horizons, organized by each participating school.
- A public presentation of each residency, held at the most appropriate venue, as determined by the development process.
- An evaluation session held with students, teachers, artists, and mediators after the public presentation.
- A follow-up stage to present final processes in one of the two collective shows held annually.

¹³⁹ En Residencia, "Participants" accessed October 16, 2024 <https://www.enresidencia.org/en/participants>

¹⁴⁰ En Residencia, "Cycle", accessed October 16, 2024 <https://www.enresidencia.org/en/cycle>.

In addition to providing hands-on experience for participating students, teachers and artists, the Artists In Residence program aims to generate a forum for study and thought about the links between contemporary artistic creation and education.¹⁴¹

To further this goal a website and blog exists for each participating artist. The website summarizes each stage of the project, which is illustrated by photos and short explanatory texts. The blog serves as a forum for the artist to detail their creative process in greater detail. The blog includes photographs, videos, texts, drawings and PowerPoint presentations documenting the artist's process and materials.

In addition to the artist's website and blog, there is a blog for each residency. The residency blogs detail the day-to-day operations of the residency. Elements of the program that are documented include: working with the artist, activities and processes carried out during the project, and the project evolution, amongst others. The blogs for the residencies at each school are also consolidated as part of the IN RESIDENCE general blog.¹⁴²

Relevance for Lexington: The Artists In Residence program encourages direct engagement between artists and students, fostering creativity and innovation within the educational context. The collaboration between the ICUB, CEB and the diverse stakeholders that make up the program's mediation teams also showcases the value created by meaningful partnerships. The diversity of actors represented ensures that participants benefit from a breadth of knowledge and experience from key stakeholders in the arts and culture sectors. This element of the program should serve as inspiration for LexArts when strategizing as to how to best engage educational institutions.

The Artists In Residence program's emphasis on documenting and sharing the learning process through its various blogs and websites, coupled with the evaluation session that takes place during the program, provide a framework for how to build opportunities for evaluation into a program. This allows for an improved ability to assess the impact and success of the program. Demonstrating impact is important for program sustainability, building new partnerships and maintaining existing ones, and for securing and maintaining funding. As such, it is a programming element that LexArts should seek to mimic when designing and executing its own initiatives.

¹⁴¹ En Residencia. "Web and Blog" accessed October 16, 2024 <https://www.enresidencia.org/en/web-and-blog>.

¹⁴² Ibid.

The Artists In Residence program's efforts to showcase artwork created in the residency through collective exhibitions across Barcelona demonstrates a commitment to showcasing the outcomes of the program to a broader audience. Moreover, the decision to partner with spaces across the city is an effective way to generate new partnerships and develop relationships with the local arts and culture community. This should serve as inspiration for how LexArts can highlight the achievements of its programs.

In summary, Barcelona's Artists In Residence program serves as a noteworthy example of a program that successfully integrates art into public education, fostering creativity, and transforming educational spaces. The unique features of the program should be considered by LexArts as it seeks to enhance its impact on the community through the development of arts and culture education opportunities for local youth.

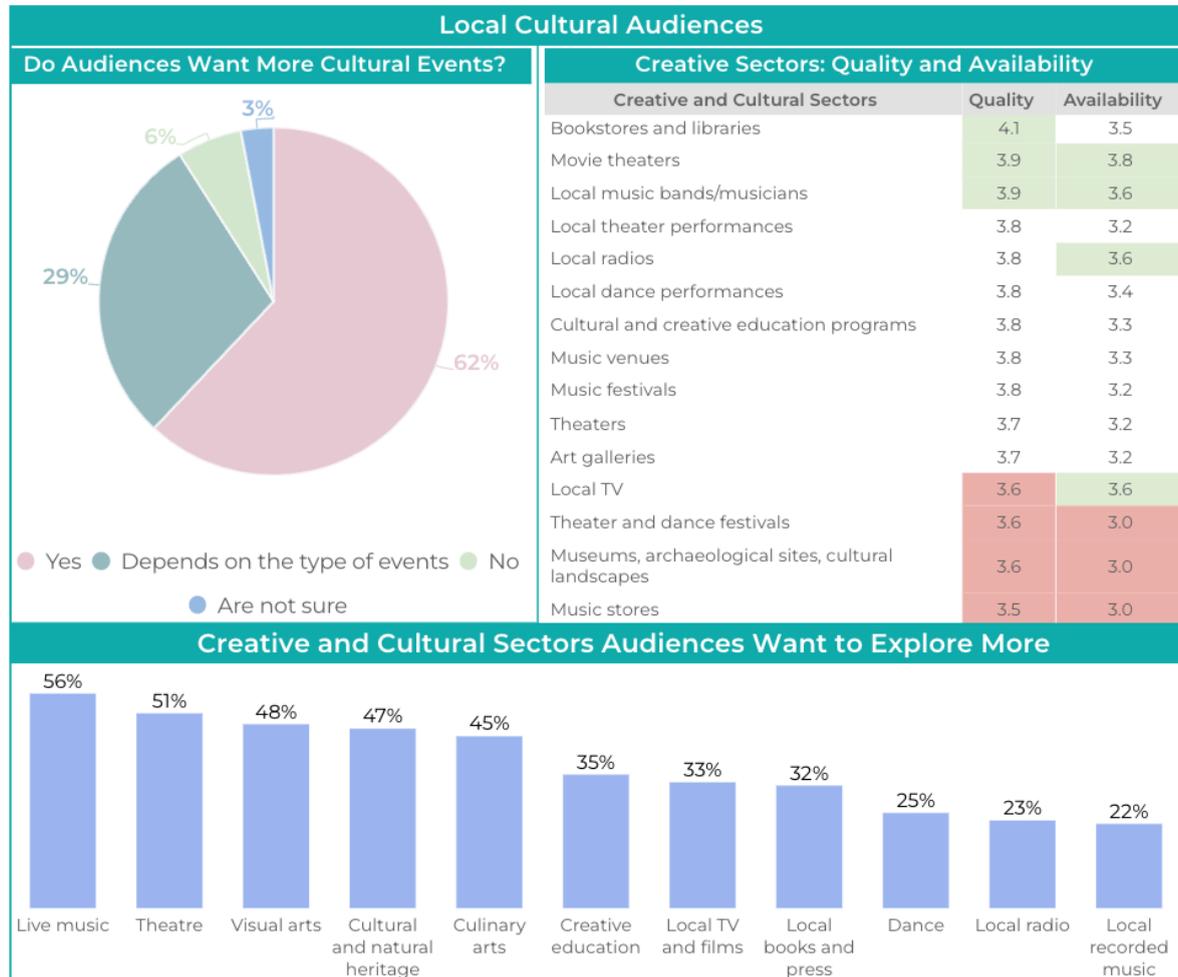
Marketing, Audience Development, and Participation

Audience patterns and Profiles

Lexington benefits from frequent opportunities to experience local arts and culture, as well as an enthusiastic community excited to experience local arts and cultural events. Programs such as the free outdoor live music events, organized every Thursday night by Downtown Lexington Partnership, and LexArts' HOP nights are areas of strength for the city.

According to survey responses, local audiences in Lexington frequently consume cultural services, with 54% engaging with music, TV, film, and radio at least once a week. When asked about the desire for additional arts and cultural events, experiences, or products locally, the majority (62%) of local cultural audiences affirmed their interest, while 29% express interest depending on the event type. Interest in expanding cultural offerings was most pronounced among the 35–45 and 45–54 age groups, both at 69%, in contrast, respondents over 64 years in age showed the least interest, at 47%.

Figure 19. Local Cultural Audiences: Interest in an Increase in Local Cultural Offerings



These findings demonstrate interest among local audiences in increasing the variety and availability of arts and cultural events, experiences, or products in their vicinity.¹⁴³

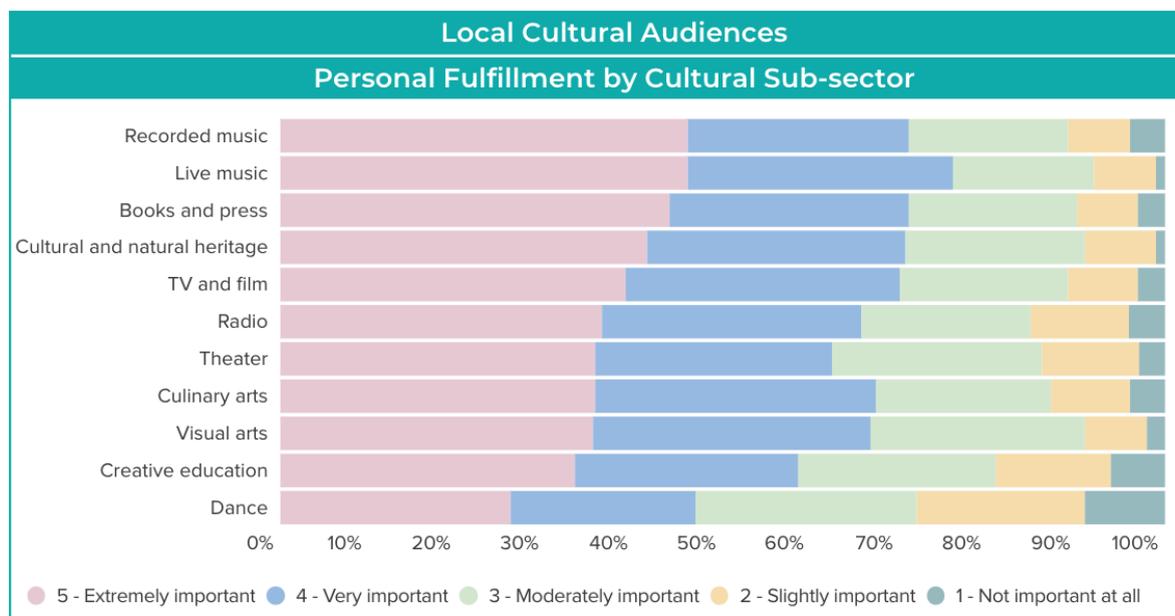
¹⁴³ Here are examples of what types of activities were included for each cultural sub-sector:

- Cultural and natural heritage: museums and archaeological sites' exhibitions
- Live music: concerts, festivals
- Theater: theater festivals and performances
- Dance: dance performances, dance festivals
- Visual arts: art installations and galleries' exhibitions
- Local books and press: books, magazines, blogs
- Local TV and films: movies and documentaries
- Local radio: radio shows and podcasts

Live music (56%), theater (51%), and visual arts (48%) are the sub-sectors that attract the most interest. In contrast, local recorded music (22%), local radio (23%), and dance (25%) are the areas with the lowest levels of interest amongst respondents. Quality ratings highlight bookstores (4.1/5), local bands (3.9/5), and movie theaters (3.9/5) as top-rated, while music stores (3.5/5) and local TV and museums (3.6/5) score lower.

To gauge the impact of cultural participation on personal fulfillment and its contribution to individual well-being, survey respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of engaging in activities or consuming goods and services from the arts and culture sector. They rated their responses on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 signifies "not important at all" and 5 denotes "extremely important."

Figure 20. Local Cultural Audiences: Personal Fulfillment Through Cultural Participation



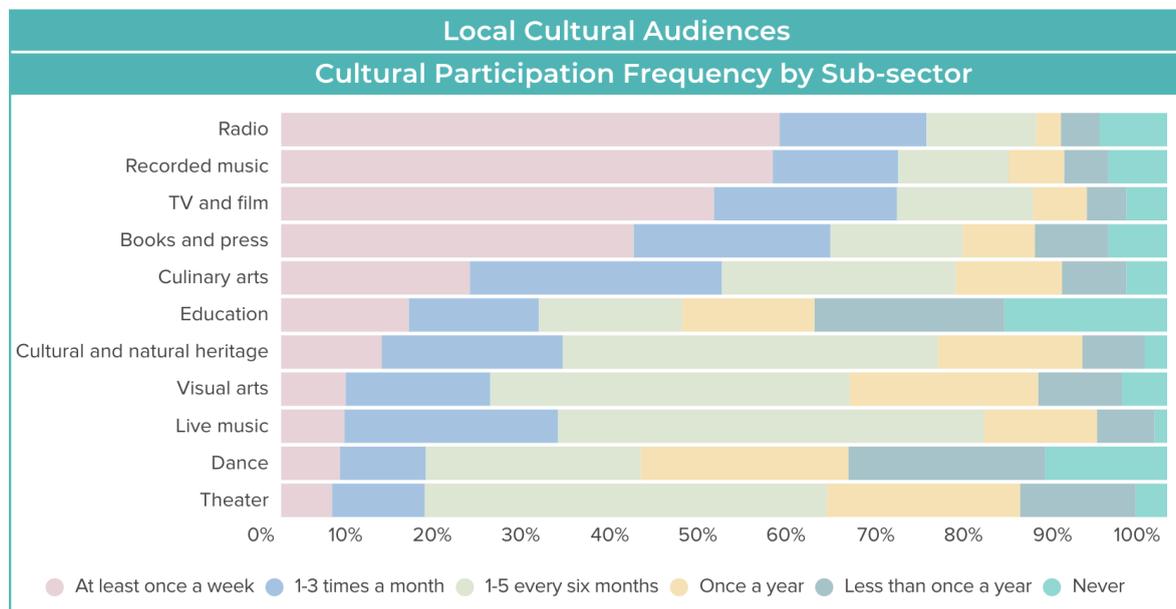
Overall, all cultural activities are considered significant for respondents' personal fulfillment, suggesting that enhancing the accessibility of cultural offerings will positively impact overall well-being. Recorded music and live music were rated as the activities with the greatest impact on personal fulfillment, with 46% of respondents

- Culinary arts: establishments which serve food and support the culinary heritage of a place and/or innovate new styles of cooking
- Creative education: creative writing, music instrument, painting courses.

rating them as "extremely important." When including individuals who selected a rating of "very important," live music emerges as the most valued. Interestingly, despite radio, TV, and film being the most frequently consumed activities (refer to Figure 20), they are not ranked among the most crucial for fostering personal fulfillment.

The cultural sub-sectors with the highest weekly participation rates are radio and recorded music, which rank highest both at 56%, followed by TV and film at 49%. Despite not being the most frequently consumed, live music, with 92% of respondents participating, along with TV and film, and cultural and national heritage, each at 91%, are identified as the creative sub-sectors consumed by the greatest proportion of the population. These findings highlight a distinction between frequency of engagement and participation within the cultural landscape.

Figure 21. Cultural Local Audiences: Cultural Participation Frequency by Sub-sector



Additionally, stakeholder engagement highlighted a wealth of family-friendly cultural events and activities, as well as numerous programs specifically designed for children. Major organizations such as the Lexington Living Arts and Science Center and the Lexington Children's Theatre play a key role in organizing these child-focused cultural events, offering a rich array of opportunities for young audiences to engage with the arts.

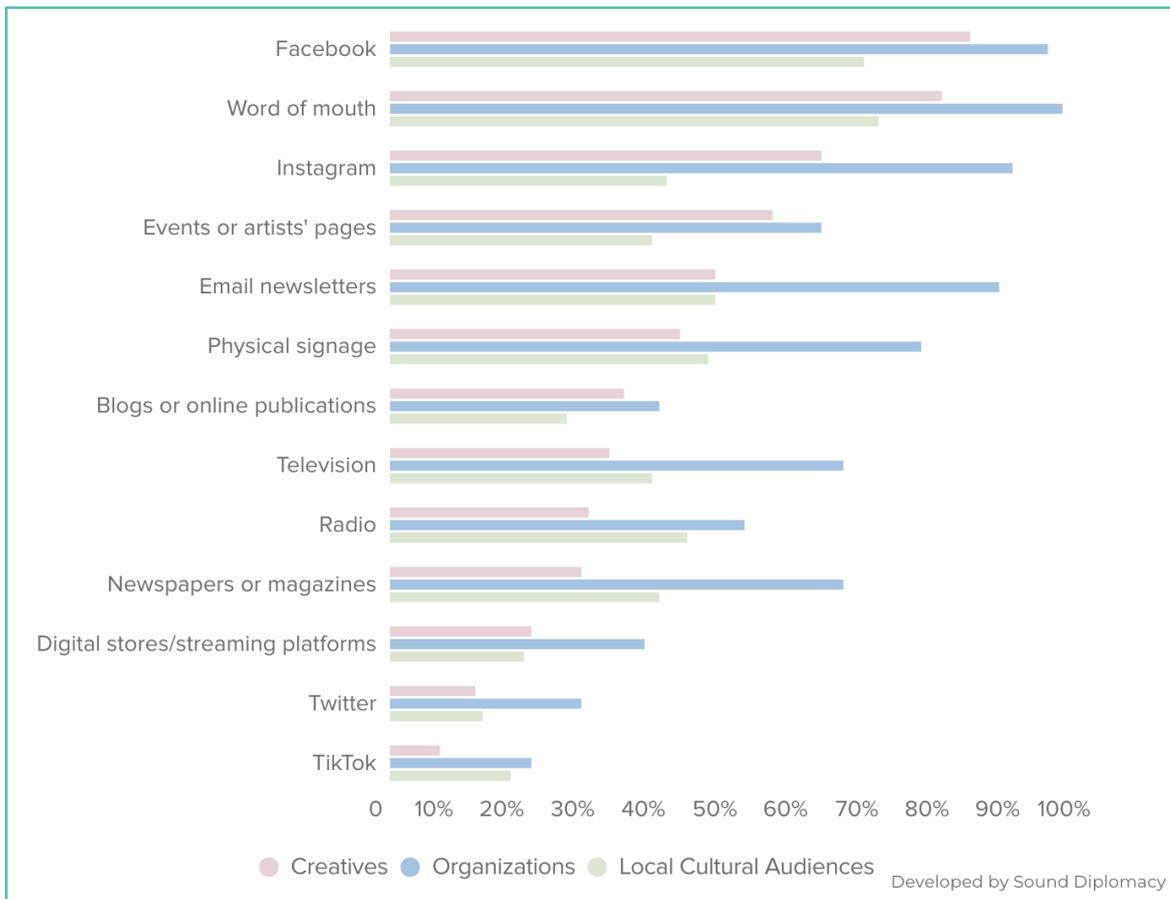
Promotion and Marketing of the Arts

There is an opportunity to boost audience engagement and participation in arts events by enhancing communication and outreach efforts. The survey disseminated to Lexington residents examined the channels utilized by creatives and organizations to promote their cultural offerings, as well as those preferred by audiences to stay informed about cultural updates. This data is crucial for helping to bridge any existing gaps between the communication channels used by cultural suppliers and those preferred by audiences, thereby facilitating better connectivity between producers and consumers of culture.

The two most commonly used channels across all three groups are Facebook (82% of creatives use it, 93% of organizations and 67% of audiences) and word of mouth (78%, 95% and 69%, respectively). However, there are differences regarding the third most utilized channel: for creatives and organizations, it is Instagram (61% and 88%, respectively), whereas for audiences, it is email newsletters (46%); newsletters are widely used by organizations, but used less frequently by creatives.

Differences emerge when examining the use of different channels by the age group of the cultural audience. The 18–24 age group primarily relies on social media for information, particularly Instagram (61%), Facebook (52%), and TikTok (50%). Conversely, those aged 64 and older predominantly rely on word of mouth (76%), email newsletters (69%), and newspapers and magazines (63%).

Figure 22. Channels Used by Creatives, Organizations and Local Audiences



Presently, several platforms and organizations, including LexArts, VisitLEX, Smiley Pete Publishing and Infinite Industries, display local events through online calendars. LexArts' app also enables users to discover art events and programs, engage with the arts, and support the sector. However, there is a significant lack of awareness about the app's existence, and the presence of multiple platforms that offer information about events is disjointed, with users who only use one of the calendars left unaware of specific events. A coordinated communication effort for arts events, particularly for those related to the culinary arts and literary arts sectors, who are often overlooked in current promotional efforts, will help to increase awareness for events taking place in Lexington's arts and cultural ecosystem. To achieve this, LexArts' app should be leveraged as a centralized and coordinated channel to efficiently promote all arts events.

There is also an opportunity to meet the demand for more arts programming while also implementing audience development strategies to better serve specific population groups. Stakeholder engagement highlighted that many arts events currently take place during working hours, posing an accessibility challenge for the working population. Expanding evening and weekend programming should help address this issue.

The Opportunity of the University

Research revealed that the large student population is a unique feature of Lexington. Additionally, an article by The Lane Report based on a Commercial Café Study ranks Lexington among the top 10 mid-sized US cities for attracting Generation Z graduates to live and start their careers. According to this article, Gen Zers are attracted to the city’s close-knit communities, vibrant music scene, and renowned distilleries.¹⁴⁴ And survey findings show that youth are highly interested in the development of new arts and cultural programming in Lexington.

Therefore, specific audience development strategies aimed at increasing student and youth engagement in local arts programs should aim to retain students and recent graduates in Lexington, reducing their desire to seek entertainment in other cities, and meeting the increasing demand for programming. LexArts’ Cultural Pass pilot, launched in summer 2024, offers free access to many of Lexington’s arts and cultural institutions for youth in grades K-12. With further development, this initiative could be expanded to engage students and young adults more broadly.¹⁴⁵

Recommendation 21: Create a Centralized Calendar with Information for all Creative Events in the City, Including Events at Restaurants

Initiators	LexArts, software developer
Supporting Stakeholders	Local venues, arts organizations, artists and professionals, VisitLEX, Smiley Pete Publishing, Infinite Industries and other arts organizations.
Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)

¹⁴⁴ The Lane Report, “Lexington a Top 10 mid-size U.S. city at drawing graduating Gen Zers”, September 16, 2024, accessed September 19, 2024,

<https://www.lanereport.com/176631/2024/09/lexington-a-top-10-mid-size-u-s-city-at-drawing-graduating-gen-zers/>

¹⁴⁵ LexArts, “Cultural Pass”, accessed September 19, 2024, <https://lexarts.org/culturalpass/>

Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase visibility for events and activities ensuring broader audience awareness. ● Streamline communication. ● Create opportunities for cross-promotion.
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Description: LexArts should coordinate all current efforts to provide calendars of events and centralize all arts information for the city into a single calendar, and would be responsible for operating and updating it. The current multiple calendars are confusing for both audiences and event organizers, and a unified platform would streamline access to information. This centralized calendar should also be integrated into the LexArts app. Event organizers should have access to an online form or dedicated email address to submit their events for inclusion. Additionally, the calendar should feature events held at restaurants, which are currently under-promoted.

Implementation Considerations:

- Identify all organizations with arts events calendars on their websites and engage with them about the initiative (including VisitLEX, Smiley Pete Publishing, Infinite Industries).
- Host meetings or workshops to gather input and gain buy-in from local stakeholders.
- Utilize an existing platform that is considered optimal or collaborate with a web designer to create a user-friendly, centralized calendar system that allows event organizers to easily submit event information.
- Ensure the system includes features for seamless integration with various platforms, including websites and mobile apps.
- Publish the centralized calendar on LexArts’ website and app, and all partners’ platforms.
- Provide an option for event organizers to submit their events. Write and publish clear guidelines and processes for event organizers to submit their events.
- Assign a staff member to manage submissions and regularly update the calendar.
- Promote the new centralized calendar to the community.
- Regularly monitor the calendar’s usage and effectiveness, gathering feedback from both event organizers and the community.

Further Considerations: A marketing campaign should be launched to promote both the centralized calendar and the LexArts app, highlighting all the features and benefits they offer. This would increase awareness of the app while also showcasing the wide array of arts programs and events available.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of events listed on the calendar.
- Engagement with webpages and social media posts housing and promoting the calendar, including:
 - Reach
 - Clicks
- Number of events attended, month over month.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from audiences regarding the calendar.

Benchmark: Nashville Music City's Events Calendar (Tennessee)

What It Is: The Visit Nashville Music City website's "Nashville Events" webpage is a local cultural events platform. The design of the events page makes it a best practice example on how to promote cultural activities in a practical and attractive way for users. Users can search for events by category (e.g. concert, comedy, craft, culinary arts, dance, film, book arts etc), keywords, and they can further select a time period or date range to show all available events.¹⁴⁶

Users can read the basic information on the event at a glance, including date, artist name, promoter, venue and a short description. On the same preview, a list of cultural events is showcased, along with links to all upcoming events, upcoming concerts, annual events, and vacation packages bundling some of the most popular attractions and events together in convenient one-stop-shop deals.¹⁴⁷

Who Is Responsible: The Nashville Convention and Visitors Corp.¹⁴⁸

What It Has Done: Having this webpage and its calendar - a consolidated calendar for all entertainment events - not only allows artists to extend the reach of their own exposure, it also enhances audience engagement. As a one-stop-show, audiences spend less time browsing numerous platforms, and are less likely to miss events.

Relevance for Lexington: LexArts, in partnership with key stakeholders, could develop its centralized arts events calendar drawing inspiration from the

¹⁴⁶ Visit Nashville Music City, "Nashville Events", accessed October 16, 2024, <https://www.nowplayingnashville.com/>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Visit Nashville Music City, "Nashville Convention and Visitors Corp", accessed October 16, 2024, <https://www.visitmusiccity.com/about-nashville-convention-visitors-corp>

Nashville webpage, calendar and search tool. This calendar should feature a similar search tool with similar cultural categories. To maximize audience reach, a dedicated webpage—featuring the calendar, search tool, and a spotlight on upcoming and regular events, similar to the Now Playing Nashville one—should be integrated into the websites of all relevant organizations, including VisitLex. The featured content, calendar and search tool could also be showcased on a dedicated app, or in the LexArts’ app.

Recommendation 22: Create an Audience Development Program Targeting the Student Population

Initiators	LexArts, local cultural event organizers and venues
Supporting Stakeholders	Local universities and students, VisitLex
Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on Lexington’s large student population. • Attract new audiences. • Increase attendance at local cultural events.

Description: LexArts should create an audience development program specifically targeting the student population to increase engagement, cultivate arts appreciation, and foster local talent retention. This program should include:

- Outreach initiatives, such as partnerships with the universities to promote arts events and activities, social media promotion, and campus events.
- Discounted ticket offers.

Special attention should be given to the pricing of these events to ensure they remain accessible to students.

Implementation Considerations:

- Engage with the local universities to establish partnerships to promote arts events and activities directly to students.

- Design relevant programming and events.
- Organize on-campus events, such as art exhibitions or live performances, to bring the arts directly to students.
- Develop joint events, such as arts workshops or lectures to be held on campus or at local arts venues. This should include professional development programs and networking sessions proposed in [Recommendation 6](#).
- Engage with local arts organizations to create a discounted ticketing program specifically for students, offering reduced prices or exclusive deals for arts events. This could be established to build on LexArts' cultural pass pilot program.
- Publish a list of organizations that offer student discounts.
- Promote these offers through LexArts, universities and VisitLex channels, social media, apps and websites to engage with local students and attract new students to Lexington.
- Develop a social media strategy targeting students on platforms they frequently use to promote the programs and special pricing.

Further considerations:

In the long term, LexArts should consider the development of a program to promote events for all ages audiences. This program should be produced with the support of the city's young population, especially interns and students interested in the cultural sector and particularly the management of cultural events.

Additionally, a "cultural voucher" initiative could be considered, to provide youth between 13 and 21 with a yearly stipend to be spent on cultural activities or products.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of partnerships with arts organizations to create targeted programming and/or offer free or discounted tickets.
- Number of programs launched, month over month.
- Number of students and recent graduates attending local arts events and programming.
- Number of on-campus events and promotional initiatives for local arts programs.
- Engagement with targeted promotional and marketing efforts.
 - Reach
 - Clicks
- Number of cultural passes or discounted tickets distributed.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from audiences.

Benchmark: Culture Pass (New York City, New York)

What It Is: The New York Culture Pass program offers free admission to over 100 cultural institutions across NYC for library patrons aged 13 and older who hold a library card from the Brooklyn Public Library, New York Public Library, or Queens Public Library. With a library card, New Yorkers can reserve passes online to visit museums, historical societies, heritage centers, public gardens and more.¹⁴⁹

To be eligible for a free public library card in New York City, applicants must be residents of New York State, employed, or enrolled in school within the city. Library card applications can be completed through the respective library's website. Once obtained, passes for the Culture Pass program can be reserved online.¹⁵⁰

The full list of participating institutions is available on the Culture Pass website along with descriptions and links. The webpage also features an interactive map to help users locate cultural destinations. Additionally, the Culture Pass program has partnered with Bloomberg Connects, a free arts and culture app offering expert-curated content and guides to museums worldwide, including many NYC Culture Pass partner institutions.¹⁵¹

Who Is Responsible: The Brooklyn Public Library, Queens Public Library, and New York Public Library (serving the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island) are responsible for the program.¹⁵² Support for Culture Pass is provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust, and the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Culture Pass, "Homepage", accessed September 16, 2024, <https://www.culturepass.nyc/>

¹⁵⁰ New York Public Library, "Culture Pass: Get Free Access to NYC Museums with a Library Card", July 16, 2018, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2018/07/16/culturepass>

¹⁵¹ Culture Pass, "Partner Organizations", accessed September 16, 2024, <https://www.culturepass.nyc/organizations?category=All&type=All>

¹⁵² Queens Public Library, "homepage", accessed September 16, 2024, <https://www.queenslibrary.org/>
And Brooklyn Public Library, "Homepage", accessed September 16, 2024,

<https://www.bklynlibrary.org/media/press/brooklyn-new-york-and-o>

And New York Public Library, "Culture Pass: Get Free Access to NYC Museums with a Library Card", July 16, 2018, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2018/07/16/culturepass>

¹⁵³ Culture Pass, "Homepage", accessed September 16, 2024, <https://www.culturepass.nyc/>

And Bloomberg Philanthropies, "homepage", accessed September 16, 2024, <https://www.bloomberg.org/>

And Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, "homepage", accessed September 16, 2024, <https://thelmtif.org/>

What It Has Done: From the launch of the program in 2018 to May 2024, the program has distributed 315,000 passes, worth just over \$15 million.¹⁵⁴

In addition to providing passes, select cultural organizations provide educational programs at branch libraries including workshops, readings, artist or author talks, and other engagement opportunities.¹⁵⁵

During the first year of the program, the libraries also ran a campaign to engage underserved communities, creating materials in several languages and conducting outreach that led to more than 44,000 passes being reserved by residents in underserved neighborhoods. Culture Pass organizations donate passes monthly, with some passes specifically allocated to underserved communities.¹⁵⁶

In 2020, the Culture Pass launched a series of free online arts and culture programs in collaboration with 40 NYC museums and cultural institutions. The programs, available throughout the summer, catered to all ages and offered a variety of activities, from exploring Native American history to Colonial-style cooking, understanding the census, and creating amusement park-style games. As more digital programs were developed by NYC cultural institutions, they were added to the platform, making the arts accessible to a wider audience worldwide.¹⁵⁷

Relevance for Lexington: Young audiences are the audiences of the future, and their interest needs to be nurtured. And, as NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl noted, “To make our cultural institutions open, inclusive, welcoming spaces for all residents, it’s not enough to open doors—you also have to invite people through them, and Culture Pass does exactly that.” Extending and reviewing LexArts’ cultural pass pilot program in Lexington would offer LexArts the opportunity to engage specific groups in local culture, such as students or underserved communities, by providing free or discounted access to arts institutions and programming.

¹⁵⁴ Brooklyn Public Library, “Culture Pass Welcomes 100th Partner”, May 28, 2024, accessed September 17, 2024, <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/media/press/culture-pass-welcomes#:~:text=The%20New%2DYork%20Historical%20Society,worth%20just%20over%20%2415%20million.>

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Brooklyn Public Library, “Brooklyn, New York, and Queens Public Library Culture Pass Initiative Provided 70,000+ Free Passes in its First Year”, August 13, 2019, accessed September 17, 2024, <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/media/press/brooklyn-new-york-and-0>

¹⁵⁷ Brooklyn Public Library, “Brooklyn, New York, and Queens Public Library Systems’ Culture Pass Initiative Launches Online Programming with 40 NYC Museums and Cultural Institutions Offering Nearly 70 Programs This Summer”, June 29, 2020, accessed September 17, 2024, <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/media/press/brooklyn-new-york-and-1>

Recommendation 23: Develop a Wider Evening and Weekend Events Offer

Initiators	LexArts, local cultural event organizers and venues
Supporting Stakeholders	VisitLEX
Timeframe	Medium term (1–2 years)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve accessibility by providing options for individuals who do not have the flexibility to attend daytime events. • Attract residents and tourists.

Description: LexArts should strive to work with local cultural institutions and organizers to allow for special evening and weekend openings and programming. These events should be held on weekends, or during the week after 5 pm and take place in arts and cultural centers, museums, galleries, libraries, heritage sites, and more. The main advantage of this initiative is that it would extend opening hours for venues that typically close early, allowing them to be accessed by local audiences who may normally be unable to attend due to work and familial obligations. Extended hours would also serve to attract visitors to Lexington. These openings should feature a diverse array of arts programming, including live performances, visual arts showcases, workshops, food offerings, and more.

Implementation Considerations:

- Identify and list all relevant cultural spaces capable of programming special evening and weekend openings.
- Engage with the team managing the cultural spaces, as well as local artists and creatives, to define a vision, goals and potential benefits of the program.
- Engage the community and collect information about the level of interest, preferred times and preferred types of programming via a survey.
- Define roles and responsibilities for LexArts and the organizations involved regarding programming, communication, logistics and funding.
- Develop programming, targeting specific groups such as working individuals, families, or students.

- Ensure the programming reflects the city’s cultural diversity, keeping inclusivity and accessibility top of mind.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to finalize availability, type of programming and target, the required facilities and equipment, and the costs.
- Publish the programming schedule and locations, selecting accessible venues and considering affordable options.
- Advertise and market events. VisitLEX should be involved in promoting the program to potential visitors.
- Gather feedback from attendees, artists and organizers to evaluate success.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of partnerships with arts organizations.
- Number of evening and weekend events.
- Number of individuals attending the events.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from event attendees.
- Number of overnight stays.

Benchmark: Noches de Museo (Mexico City, Mexico)

What Is It: The “Noches de Museo” initiative in Mexico City aims to make art and cultural experiences more accessible to a broader audience by offering late-night events and activities at participating museums in the city.¹⁵⁸

Who Is Responsible: Mexico City’s “Noches de Museo” is organized and funded by Mexico City’s Ministry of Culture.

Participating museums include

What Has It Done: Mexico City has a rich culture, boasting over 150 museums. Typically, museums close between 5 to 6 pm each day. However, on the last Wednesday of each month, participating venues open their doors from 6 to 10 pm to take part in “Noche de Museos” (Museum Night).

Over 40 museums take part in this event. Opening times are extended to 10pm, and in some cases 24 hours, increasing the cultural offering in the city after dark. Programming varies from museum to museum, but may include programming

¹⁵⁸ Gobierno de la Ciudad de México. “Noche de Museos”, accessed September 10, 2024 <http://data.cultura.cdmx.gob.mx/nochedemuseos/>

such as guided tours, conferences, book presentations, concerts and film screenings.¹⁵⁹

The event was initiated to encourage and enable more individuals to visit the city's museums, particularly students and professionals who were otherwise unable to visit during the limited daytime opening hours. Most activities are free to attend, making it accessible to a wide range of people.

Relevance for Lexington: “Noche de Museos” provides an example of how a program can improve access to culture for a city’s residents, as well as for tourists. The “Noche de Museos” initiative allows museums to reach different demographics by extending programming hours, including younger audiences and those individuals who have daytime commitments. Moreover, late night events can enrich the cultural landscape, by offering cultural activities in a novel manner. As most of Lexington’s cultural institutions have regular operating hours during the daytime, an initiative that offers night programming stands to capture a new demographic of cultural consumers in the city. Night programming is likely to capture the student population as well, an important demographic within Lexington. Finally, night time activity promotes safety in the areas where it takes place.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural Tourism Efforts

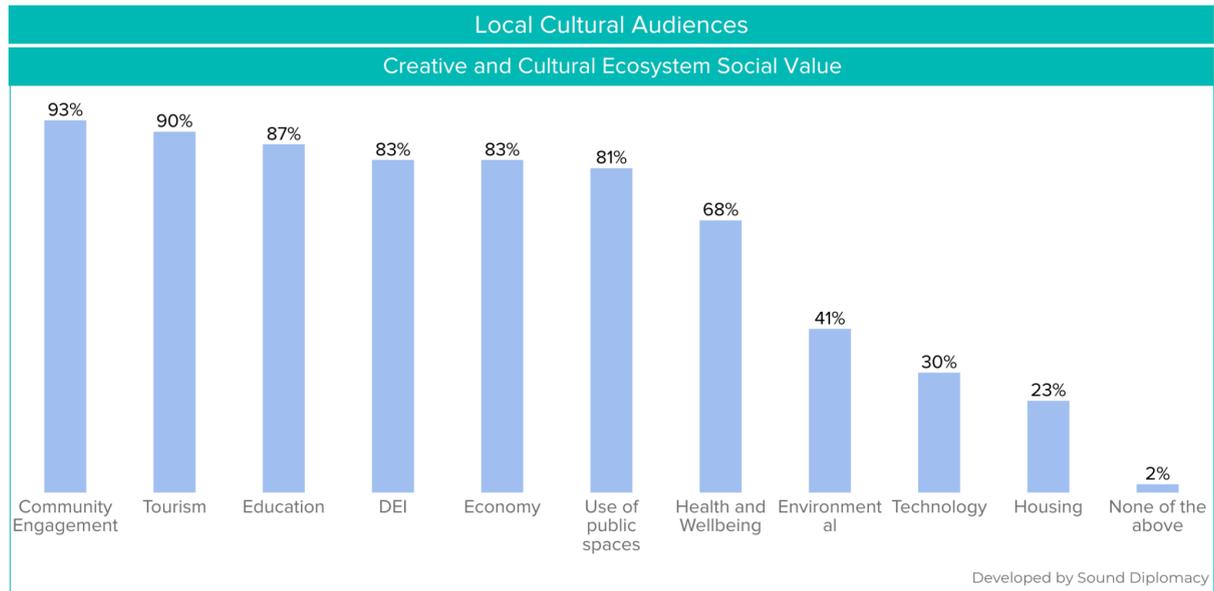
While organizations like VisitLEX and Arts Connect are making efforts to incorporate the arts into their tourism strategies - offering public art tours, food and drink experiences, and highlighting local live music, street art, visual arts, film, theater, literature, museums, historic sites, and culinary arts on their websites - there is no official cultural tourism strategy in place. Current tourism marketing efforts do not do enough to incorporate the arts.

The local community recognizes the positive impact of the arts and cultural industries on tourism. When asked for their opinions on the impact of the arts and cultural industries, participants strongly agreed that the creative sector positively impacts

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

various facets of community life (93% of respondents), followed by tourism, at 90%. These results show the high regard for culture among local audiences and demonstrate the belief amongst residents that boosting the sector would positively impact other critical aspects of local life, including the city's overall economy.

Figure 23. Local Cultural Audiences: Social Value



There is an opportunity for LexArts to collaborate with other stakeholders, such as VisitLEX, the City of Lexington, tourism agencies, and the local arts community to develop a cultural tourism strategy and marketing campaign.

Cross-sector Opportunities

With its natural landscapes, horse and bourbon industries, and college sports, Lexington, often referred to as the "Horse Capital of the World", has a unique identity that attracts visitors from other cities and states. Lexington is also part of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, and is becoming more of a culinary destination thanks to its bourbon industry, as well as food and drink tours. This, coupled with Lexington's vibrant cultural scene - featuring local live music venues, public art installations, galleries, performing arts events, and the Rupp Arena - has the potential to attract a significant number of visitors. Stakeholder engagement indicated that visitors frequently show a strong

interest in the arts and highlighted the city's robust hotel infrastructure, which is well-equipped to meet this demand.

By deepening the connection between the arts and other defining aspects of the city, there is significant potential to enhance Lexington's distinct brand and reinforce its reputation as a vibrant hub for the arts. Efforts such as the painted horses displayed in public spaces across Lexington, which represents a blend of public art with one of the city's iconic symbols, present a unique branding opportunity that could be further developed.

Cultural Heritage Promotion and Preservation

The Bluegrass area boasts numerous heritage museums, showcasing its rich cultural history. Lexington, in particular, stands out with one of the nation's most extensive LGBTQ+ archive collections and one of the most robust oral history collections in the country. Nevertheless, while stakeholders acknowledged that Lexington currently has the University of Kentucky Museum and the 21c Museum Hotel, there is an overall lack of museums in Lexington.

Additionally, while various organizations at both the city and state levels actively contribute to historic preservation, such as the Lexington Historic Preservation Department, the Lexington Historic Preservation Commission, and Preservation Kentucky, none of their publicly presented missions explicitly emphasize the preservation of cultural heritage.¹⁶⁰

In Kentucky, financial support is offered for preservation projects statewide, this includes grants and tax credits applicable to recreational or entertainment facilities.¹⁶¹ These resources are directed towards activities such as the restoration, rehabilitation, stabilization, and preservation of designated historic sites. However, no financial support or incentive specifically directed towards the arts sector could be found.

The Lexington Roots & Heritage Festival celebrates the African American heritage, culture, and contributions in Lexington. However, it is the only industry event related to the cultural and natural heritage sector. Therefore, there is an opportunity to more

¹⁶⁰ Lexington Government, "Historic Preservation", accessed January 11, 2024,

<https://www.lexingtonky.gov/departments/historic-preservation>

Lexington Government, "Historic Preservation Commission", accessed January 11, 2024,

<https://www.lexingtonky.gov/boards/historic-preservation-commission>

American Legal Publishing, "Lexington-Fayette Urban County Sec. 13-4. - Historic preservation commission.", accessed January 11, 2024,

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/lexingtonfayettecoky/latest/lexingtonfayettecoky_zone/0-0-0-16614

Preservation Kentucky, "About us", accessed January 11, 2024, <https://preservationkentucky.org/about/>

¹⁶¹ Preservation Kentucky, "Preservation Grants", accessed January 11, 2024,

<https://preservationkentucky.org/funding/>

effectively promote and integrate local cultural heritage into the broader arts tourism strategy.

Recommendation 24: Partner with VisitLEX to Create a Cultural Tourism Strategy and Marketing Campaign

Initiators	LexArts, VisitLEX
Supporting Stakeholders	Local arts community, local tourism organizations
Timeframe	Short term (0–12 months)
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attract tourists. ● Stimulate the local economy. ● Showcase local culture. ● Strengthen Lexington’s brand as a place for arts and culture.

Description: LexArts should partner with VisitLEX to develop a cultural tourism strategy and marketing campaign. By doing so, Lexington can enhance its unique brand and position itself as a vibrant hub for the arts.

The overarching goal of the campaign would be to develop Lexington’s brand as a place for arts and culture and attract more visitors by highlighting the city’s arts and cultural offerings. This initiative would also aim to capture tourists visiting Lexington for horses, bourbon, and sports, exposing them to the city’s vibrant arts scene.

Implementation Considerations:

- Identify cultural assets.
 - Evaluate existing tourism trends and visitor demographics.
 - Conduct market research and define audience segments.
 - Collaborate with VisitLEX to develop a cultural tourism strategy and write a plan.
- Key actions and objectives could include:
- Leveraging the city’s nationally and internationally renowned industries to further promote the arts and include them as a major part of the city’s branding. This should involve integrating the arts with other iconic aspects of Lexington, such as its horse and Bourbon industries, building on the

effort that has been undertaken through the painted horses and Bourbon bottle initiatives.

- Integrating the arts into the city's overall branding and marketing efforts.
- Showcasing artists and hosting live performances at key venues and events associated with these industries, such as distilleries, horse races, and other significant gatherings. This would also provide local artists with valuable opportunities for exposure and international recognition.
- Displaying local art at the airport alongside promotions for universities, bourbon, horses, and sports.
- Providing flyers and magazines showcasing the local arts scene onboard planes and at the airport.
- Updating and actively promoting the visitor guide to include comprehensive arts information.
- Utilize local resources such as the calendar of events proposed in [Recommendation 21](#) for tourism purposes, including linking it in the VisitLEX website and providing hotels and other hospitality businesses with relevant information of what's going on in the city.
- Creating a targeted strategy to reach rural audiences within a 1.5-hour driving distance who lack local access to arts and are unaware of Lexington's arts programming.
- Create a marketing plan for the cultural tourism strategy and the new initiatives, and develop promotional materials.
- Highlight unique features and craft compelling messaging.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of these initiatives, and publish yearly reports.
- Collaborate with VisitLEX to officially publish the cultural tourism plan, ensuring that all strategies, objectives, and initiatives are clearly outlined and formally established.

Impact Indicators:

- Number of partnerships established between arts organizations and tourism organizations.
- Number of arts events packaged with other tourism offerings.
- Engagement with arts tourism marketing content.
- Number of visitors attending arts programs.
- Number of visitors to Lexington.
- Feedback and satisfaction ratings from visitors regarding the amount and quality of arts programming.
- Number of overnight stays.

Benchmark: “X Marks the Arts” (Iowa City, Iowa)

What It Is: On March 28, 2024, the Iowa City Downtown District launched the “X Marks the Arts” campaign to highlight the vibrant Downtown Iowa City Cultural & Entertainment District, officially recognized by the state in December 2022. Leaders from over 15 local arts organizations unveiled the campaign during a celebration at FilmScene at The Chauncey.¹⁶²

The campaign was developed in collaboration with marketing firm Meld.¹⁶³ It aimed to promote Iowa City’s arts and cultural venues through various creative outlets, including street banners, sidewalk art, a weekly newsletter, and promotional videos.¹⁶⁴

The campaign sought to raise local awareness and attract audiences from nearby cities and out-of-state metro areas, celebrating the city’s rich cultural offerings, and spotlighting different arts organizations and venues.¹⁶⁵

Who Is Responsible: The campaign was developed by the Meld marketing firm, and received support from the Iowa City Downtown District, the City of Iowa City, Think Iowa City, and Travel Iowa.¹⁶⁶

What It Has Done: The branded campaign established a unified voice and visual identity to promote Iowa City’s Cultural & Entertainment District. It underscored the importance of collaboration between city departments, the university and local cultural organizations, such as the Iowa City Public Library.¹⁶⁷

The campaign included street banners, sidewalk art installations, a weekly newsletter, and promotional videos.¹⁶⁸ The Iowa City Downtown District’s website also features a “X Marks the Arts” webpage promoting the cultural and

¹⁶² Iowa City Public Library, “X MARKS THE ARTS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES IN DOWNTOWN IOWA CITY CULTURAL & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT”, April 2, 2024, accessed September 17, 2024,

<https://www.icpl.org/articles/x-marks-arts-campaign-launches-downtown-iowa-city-cultural-entertainment-district>

¹⁶³ Meld, “X Marks the Arts”, accessed September 17, 2024, <https://meldmarketing.com/portfolio/x-marks-the-arts/>

And Iowa City Public Library, “X MARKS THE ARTS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES IN DOWNTOWN IOWA CITY CULTURAL & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT”, April 2, 2024, accessed September 17, 2024,

<https://www.icpl.org/articles/x-marks-arts-campaign-launches-downtown-iowa-city-cultural-entertainment-district>

¹⁶⁴ Iowa City Public Library, “X MARKS THE ARTS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES IN DOWNTOWN IOWA CITY CULTURAL & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT”, April 2, 2024, accessed September 17, 2024,

<https://www.icpl.org/articles/x-marks-arts-campaign-launches-downtown-iowa-city-cultural-entertainment-district>

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

entertainment organizations that make Iowa City a vibrant arts hub and a key attraction for visitors.¹⁶⁹

The custom-designed "X" serves as both a memorable symbol and a literal wayfinding tool, guiding visitors to key locations for arts in the city. The flexibility of the campaign design allows for both practical and abstract applications.¹⁷⁰

The campaign was employed to engage the over 9 million visitors who come to downtown Iowa City each year, whether they are locals, state residents, regional visitors, or from farther afield.¹⁷¹

Relevance for Lexington: By highlighting local cultural assets through a unified brand and creative visuals, the "X Marks the Arts" campaign effectively promotes the arts as a central part of Iowa City's identity. In collaboration with VisitLex, LexArts could take inspiration from this campaign to develop its own arts tourism programs and marketing strategies. An integrated and collaborative marketing campaign would raise awareness of Lexington's vibrant arts scene, venues, and arts experiences among visitors and potential tourists, helping to shape a distinctive brand for the city as a cultural destination.

SECTOR SNAPSHOTS

Audiovisual and Interactive Media: Film, Video, Radio and TV

The Audiovisual and Interactive Media sector has the second largest number of assets in Lexington-Fayette, accounting for 21% (65) of total assets. This suggests that there may be local specialization in this sector, mainly in film and video production, which accounts for 62% of all audiovisual and interactive media assets.

The sector contributes significantly as the primary driver of Lexington's creative economy, with a \$265.5 million (41%) direct output in 2021. Audiovisual and Interactive Media is also the largest employer of the cultural ecosystem, generating 975 direct jobs

¹⁶⁹ Iowa Downtown City District, "X Marks the Arts", accessed September 18, 2024, https://downtowniowacity.com/listing_categories/x-marks-the-arts/?_gl=1*xivpv8*_ga*MTQxNzY5MjY2NDg0MTU.*_up*MQ..

¹⁷⁰ Meld, "X Marks the Arts", accessed September 17, 2024, <https://meldmarketing.com/portfolio/x-marks-the-arts/>

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

(23%). The sector's total output was \$438.9 million in 2021, generating a total of 2,243 jobs.

The establishment LQs show that Lexington-Fayette has a higher concentration of establishments in most of the sub-sectors that make up the arts and cultural ecosystem, including the audiovisual sector in first position. Our economic research found that the audiovisual sector has a relatively high establishment Location Quotient (LQ) of 1.17. This suggests specialization and the presence of a supportive ecosystem that fosters the growth and development of these sectors.¹⁷²

The employment LQs highlight a discrepancy between the number of establishments and employment, which may be due to the presence of smaller-scale establishments. The audiovisual sector has a relatively low employment LQ of 0.54. There may be opportunities to enhance the contribution of local establishments to employment through targeted workforce development initiatives or business expansion strategies.

Local audiences rated the quality of movie theaters with a score of 3.9 out of 5; and the quality of local TV with 3.6. 33% of respondents expressed desire for additional local TV and films experiences and products.

Regulation and Funding

The sector lacks industry standard permit practices. Some stakeholders mentioned the simplicity of obtaining filming permits, but this lack of policy and information about permitting online can pose a challenge for the sector, which needs a clear regulatory environment and licensing structures in order to grow to its full potential.

The audiovisual and interactive media sector is supported by the VisitLEX film and entertainment team. To further support productions interested in filming or producing audiovisual content in Lexington, the team offers personalized project plans and facilitates connections with the city's artistic and film communities.¹⁷³ This assistance is complemented by the "Camera Lights Lexington" online guidebook, enhancing

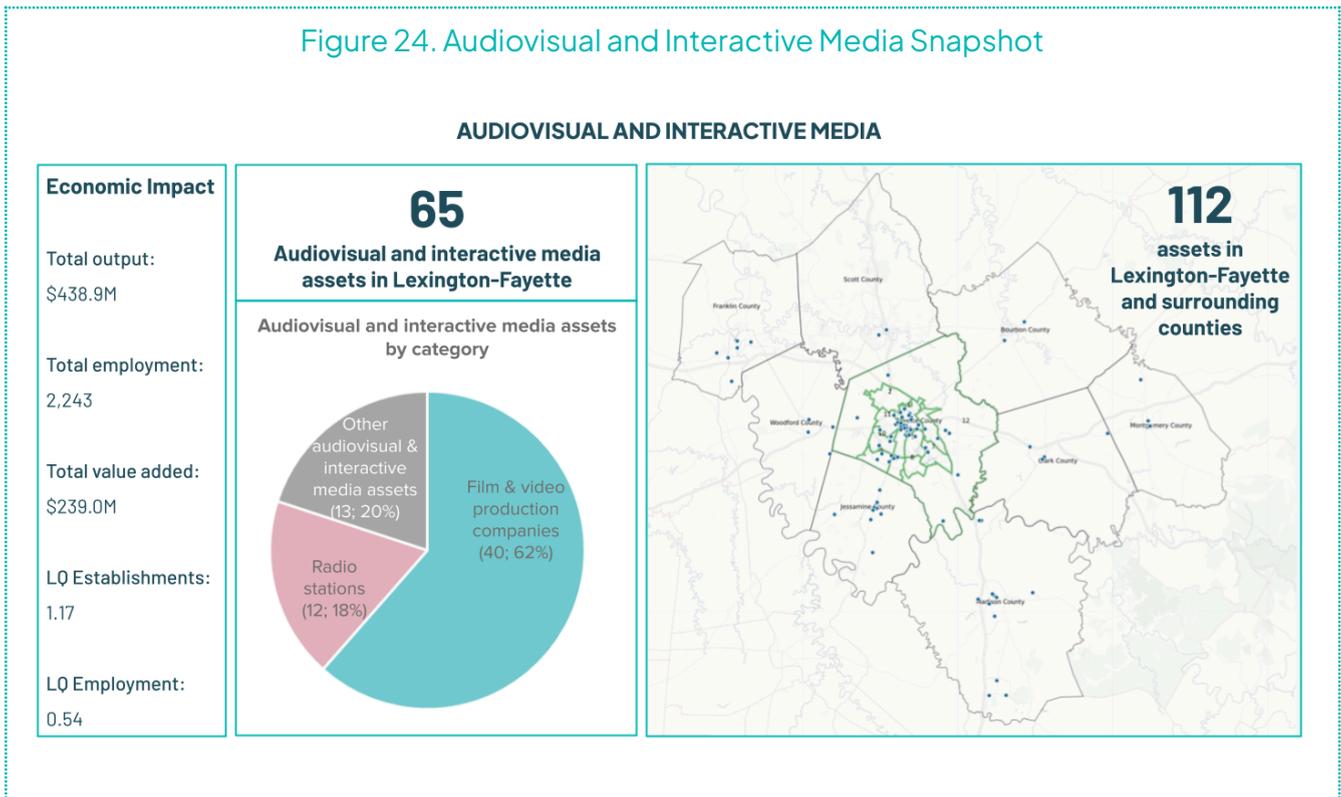
¹⁷² Stamps, K. (2008). *A Fortified Economy*. Archived from the original PDF on October 1, 2008. Retrieved April 17, 2024 from https://web.archive.org/web/20081001181613/http://www.delta-sky.com/ginc/portrait/lexington/pdf/03_business.pdf

¹⁷³ VisitLEX, "Lights.Camera.Lexington", accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.visitlex.com/film/>

resources for filmmakers in the region.¹⁷⁴ The VisitLEX website also features a list of local audiovisual and production organizations in Lexington.¹⁷⁵

Although there is no economic development incentive for the sector in Lexington, the Kentucky Entertainment Incentive program provides a tax credit incentive of 30 to 35% to film productions with the goal of fostering the growth of the local film industry, boosting employment, and improving production infrastructure.¹⁷⁶

Figure 24. Audiovisual and Interactive Media Snapshot



Books and Press

Lexington’s books and press industry was often mentioned as a strength among the city’s creative economy. Local audiences rated the quality of bookstores and libraries

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ VisitLEX, “AUDIO/VISUAL AND PRODUCTION”, accessed January 11, 2024,

<https://www.visitlex.com/meetings/planner-toolkit/services-directory/event-planning/audiovisual/>

¹⁷⁶ Team Kentucky, Cabinet for Economic Development, “Kentucky Entertainment Incentive (KEI) Program”, accessed January 11, 2024, https://ced.ky.gov/Locating_Expanding/KEI

with a score of 4.1 out of 5, with 44% rating their importance for their personal fulfillment 5 out of 5.

32% of respondents expressed the desire for additional local books and press events, experiences or products.

The sector is also the third largest employer in the creative industries with 641 direct jobs (15%) generated in 2021. It is the second largest in terms of direct output with \$187.8 million (29%) generated. The sector's total output was \$298.7 million in 2021, generating a total of 1,470 jobs. This is reflected in the 1.14 establishment LQ, suggesting specialization and the presence of a supportive ecosystem that fosters the growth and development of the sector.

Industry Unions, Associations and Events

The Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning serves as a hub for the books and press industry, providing a range of classes, programs, and events to foster literary engagement. Additionally, the Lexington Writer's Room offers a coworking space tailored for writers in Lexington, promoting networking opportunities and offering membership benefits.¹⁷⁷

Lexington hosts several book industry events, such as the Kentucky Book Festival and Book Trails.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, the city commemorates Kentucky Writers' Day, with celebrations taking place at the University of Kentucky.¹⁷⁹

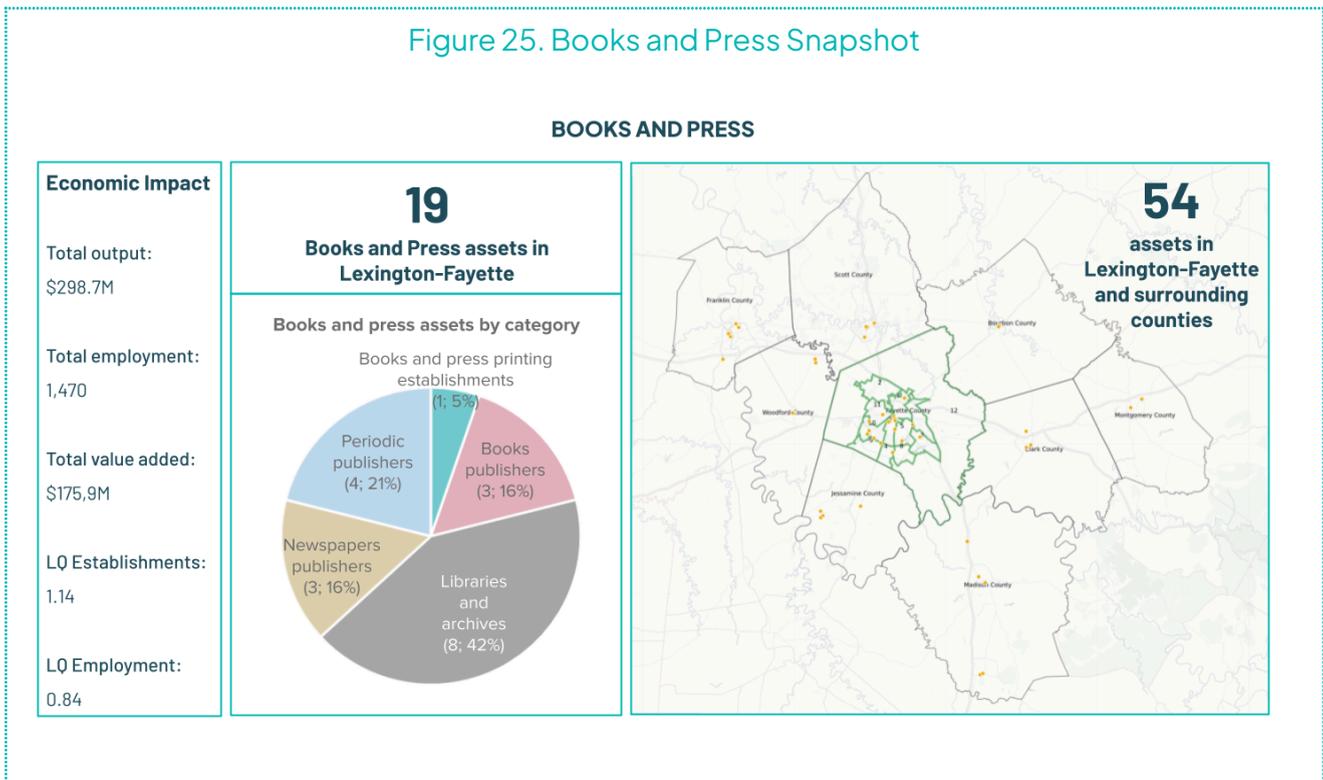
¹⁷⁷ The Lexington Writer's Room, "Become a member", accessed January 1, 2024, <https://www.lexwritersroom.com/become-a-member>

¹⁷⁸ LexArts, "Kentucky Book Festival", accessed January 17, 2024, <https://lexarts.org/events/kentucky-book-festival-3/>

Celebrate Lexington!, "Signature Projects", accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.celebratelexington.org/signature-projects>

¹⁷⁹ University of Kentucky College of Arts and Sciences, "Kentucky Writers Day", accessed January 16, 2024, <https://english.as.uky.edu/kentucky-writers-day>

Figure 25. Books and Press Snapshot



Cultural and Natural Heritage

There are 18 cultural and natural heritage assets in Lexington-Fayette, highlighting its presence in the local creative ecosystem. Despite this, the sector has one of the lowest employment levels among cultural industries, as indicated by an employment LQ of 0.28. This suggests that jobs in cultural and heritage arts are far less concentrated in Lexington-Fayette compared to the national average, potentially due to limited demand, fewer opportunities, or insufficient infrastructure to support large-scale employment in the sector.

However, the sector’s establishment LQ is relatively high at 1.07, pointing to a stronger-than-average concentration of heritage-related establishments. In 2021, the cultural and national heritage arts and crafts sector generated a direct economic impact of \$15.1 million (2% of the direct cultural output) and created 122 direct jobs (3%

of the cultural employment). The sector's total output was \$24.6 million in 2021, generating a total of 184 jobs.

This underscores the sector's economic contribution, demonstrating that while it may employ fewer people, it still plays an important role in the local economy by sustaining specialized businesses and contributing to Lexington-Fayette's cultural identity.

Local audiences rated the quality of museums, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes with a score of 3.6 out of 5, and 47% of respondents want to explore more cultural and natural heritage programs.

Regulation and Funding

In Kentucky, financial support is offered for preservation projects statewide, this includes grants and tax credits applicable to recreational or entertainment facilities.¹⁸⁰ These resources are directed towards activities such as the restoration, rehabilitation, stabilization, and preservation of designated historic sites. However, no financial support or incentive specifically directed towards the arts sector could be found.

While various organizations at both the city and state levels actively contribute to historic preservation, such as the Lexington Historic Preservation Department, the Lexington Historic Preservation Commission, and Preservation Kentucky, none of their publicly presented missions explicitly emphasize the preservation of cultural heritage.¹⁸¹

Industry Events

The Lexington Roots & Heritage Festival celebrates the African American heritage, culture, and contributions in Lexington. However, it is the only industry event related to the cultural and natural heritage sector, and no conference could be found.

¹⁸⁰ Preservation Kentucky, "Preservation Grants", accessed January 11, 2024, <https://preservationkentucky.org/funding/>

¹⁸¹ Lexington Government, "Historic Preservation", accessed January 11, 2024, <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/departments/historic-preservation>

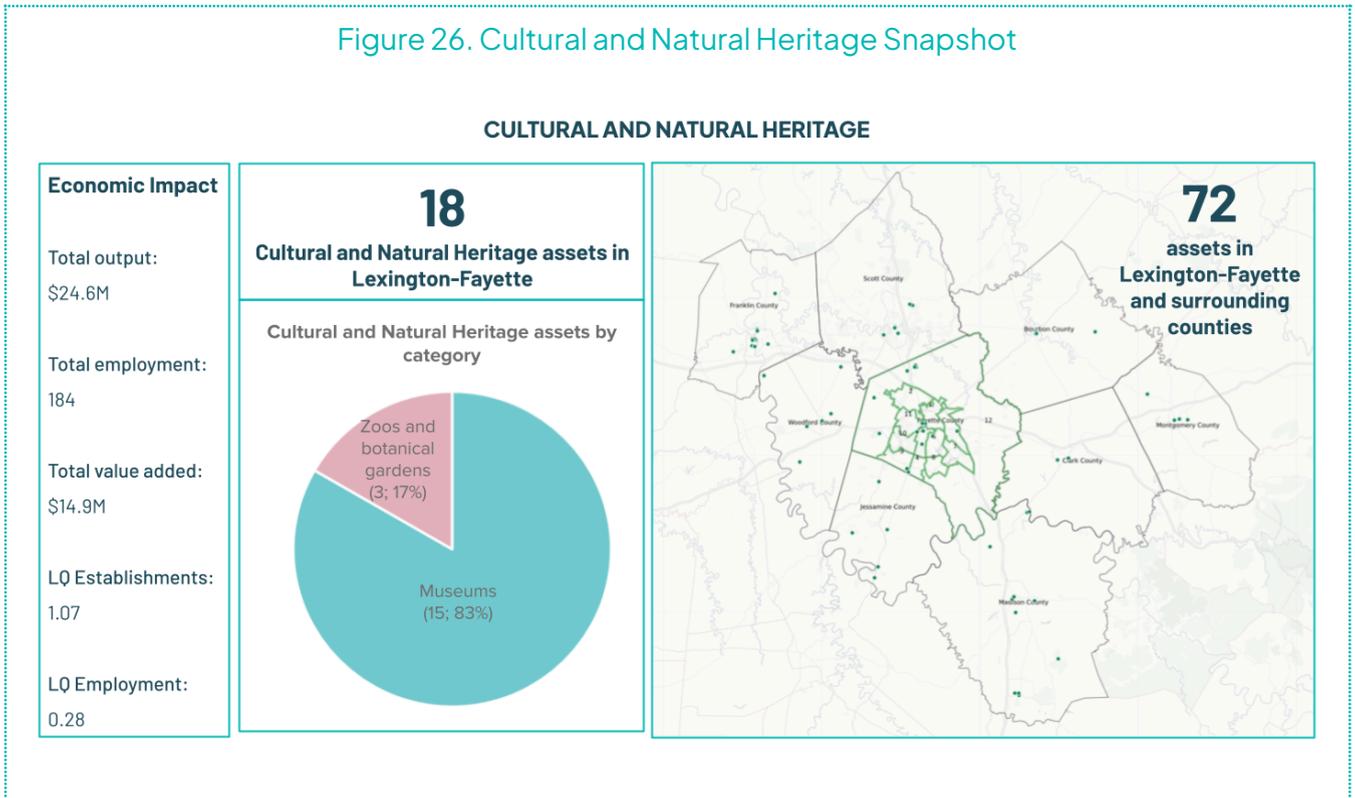
Lexington Government, "Historic Preservation Commission", accessed January 11, 2024, <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/boards/historic-preservation-commission>

American Legal Publishing, "Lexington-Fayette Urban County Sec. 13-4. - Historic preservation commission.", accessed January 11, 2024,

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/lexingtonfayettecoky/latest/lexingtonfayettecoky_zone/0-0-0-16614

Preservation Kentucky, "About us", accessed January 11, 2024, <https://preservationkentucky.org/about/>

Figure 26. Cultural and Natural Heritage Snapshot



Performing Arts: Live Music, Theater, Dance

The performing arts sector, which includes live music, theater and dance, is the third largest with 18% (57) of total cultural assets in Lexington-Fayette. The sector generated \$13.8M direct in output (2%), and supported 248 direct jobs, which represented 6% of Lexington-Fayette’s cultural employment in 2021. The sector’s total output was \$22.4 million in 2021, generating a total of 312 jobs.

The sector has an establishment LQ of 1, which signifies that the industry’s presence in Lexington-Fayette is proportionate to its presence in the national economy. Its employment LQ of 0.73 reveals a lower concentration of the industry in Lexington-Fayette. This could suggest that the region may be less competitive in that industry or that there are fewer resources or demand for that industry locally.

Within the sector, the largest number of assets are bars, cafés, restaurants with live music, and dedicated performing arts venues, each with 18 (39%) assets. This indicates a wide array of spaces that have the adequate infrastructure (i.e. scenario, lighting and sound system) for performers, but also shows that there remains a predominance of spaces that lack such dedicated infrastructure and adapt their space to enable artists to perform (bars, cafés and restaurants).

The distribution of performing arts assets is highly concentrated in the areas with ZIP codes 40507 and 40508. 33 (58%) assets in the sector are located there, with 19 assets in ZIP code 40508 and 14 assets in 40507.¹⁸² Notably, no other ZIP code contains more than 5 assets that fall within this sector: 40502 contains five assets, 40503 contains four assets, 40509 contains 3 assets etc. On average there are 4.4 assets per ZIP code in Lexington-Fayette (excluding the surrounding counties). However, performing arts is the only sector which is home to at least one asset in each of the ZIP codes that fall within Lexington. The highest number of assets in the sector are evenly distributed between dedicated performing arts spaces and bars, cafes, restaurants with music, both with 18 assets (32% each). Notably, Lexington-Fayette hosts one arena with a capacity of 19,000 seats, the Rupp Arena in the Central Bank Center.

Local audiences rated the quality of local music bands/musicians with a score of 3.9 out of 5; the quality of local theater performances and of local dance performances with 3.8; the quality of music venues and music festivals with 3.8; the quality of theaters with 3.7; and the quality of theater and dance festivals with 3.6. Additionally, live music was rated as one of the activities with the greatest impact on personal fulfillment, with 46% of respondents rating them as "extremely important." 56% of respondents expressed a desire for more live music programs.

Professional Development Opportunities and Funding Support

On average, creatives derive 65% of their income from sources related to their creative work. This percentage is even higher for those in the performing arts sub-sector, at 80%. "Freelance compensation"¹⁸³ is the main source of income, comprising approximately 30% of total income. No respondents from the performing arts sector protect or monetize their artistic work through copyright registration. For businesses and organizations in the performing arts, the sale of ancillary services make up the highest percentage of total income, at 21%.

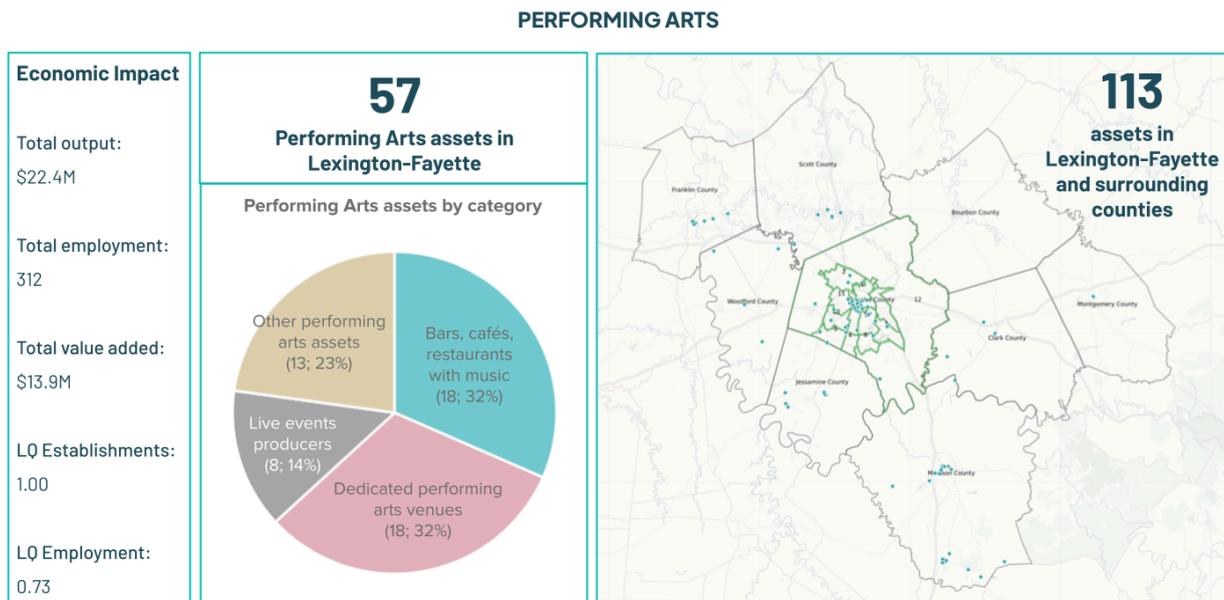
¹⁸² In the interactive map, under Sector, select only 'Performing arts: live music, theatre, dance, circus', and under County, select only "Fayette County". In the legend, select "Assets Heat Map by Zip Code", and unselect the rest of the options.

¹⁸³ Fixed amounts or percentage-based for creative projects (e.g., book publishing, illustration, music producer, etc) or live performances (e.g., playing live music, DJs, etc.)

Currently, the performing arts sub-sector contains the highest percentage of individuals, 10%, who are currently contemplating leaving the city due to a lack of paid professional opportunities.

The Kentucky Arts Council offers several grants dedicated to the performing arts at the state level. They include the Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Grant, as well as the Kentucky Touring Grant.¹⁸⁴ LexArts also offers several grants for the general arts sector that can apply to performing artists and performing arts organizations in Lexington. The performing arts sector received the most grant funding, with 71% of respondents having received it. Among them, LexArts was the most common source, utilized by half of the respondents. Nevertheless, the performing arts sub-sector also indicated the greatest difficulty securing public funding, with a rating of 4.2/5. Additionally, there is no financial support or incentives specifically dedicated to the performing arts in Lexington.

Figure 27. Performing Arts Snapshot



¹⁸⁴ Kentucky Arts Council, “FY2024 Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Grant”, accessed January 10, 2024, http://artscouncil.ky.gov/KAC/Creativity/FAA_guidelines.htm
 Kentucky Arts Council, “FY2025 Kentucky Touring Grant Guidelines”, accessed January 10, 2024, <http://artscouncil.ky.gov/KAC/Entrepreneurs/PAD-T-Guidelines.htm>

Visual Arts and Crafts

The visual arts sector had a \$13M direct economic impact and generated 182 jobs in 2021 representing 5% of the direct cultural employment and 2 % of the direct output. The sector's total output was \$22 million in 2021, generating a total of 240 jobs.

There are 25 visual arts and crafts assets in Lexington-Fayette, which is minor in comparison to other creative industries. This is reflected by the relatively low employment LQ of 0.62, which indicates a lower concentration of the industry in Lexington-Fayette. This could suggest that the region may be less competitive in that industry or that there are fewer resources or demand for that industry locally. This was also reflected during stakeholder engagement with visual arts stakeholders mentioning the lack of paid opportunities for visual artists, and 50% of survey respondents from the sector who have previously considered relocating (although all ultimately decided not to do it).

However, the establishment LQ of 1.11 points to a higher concentration of visual arts establishments relative to the national average, suggesting that while employment is lower, there may be local specialization or niche competitiveness in this industry. This could reflect certain local advantages, such as available infrastructure, specialized workforce skills, or long-standing historical patterns that support the development of visual arts businesses.

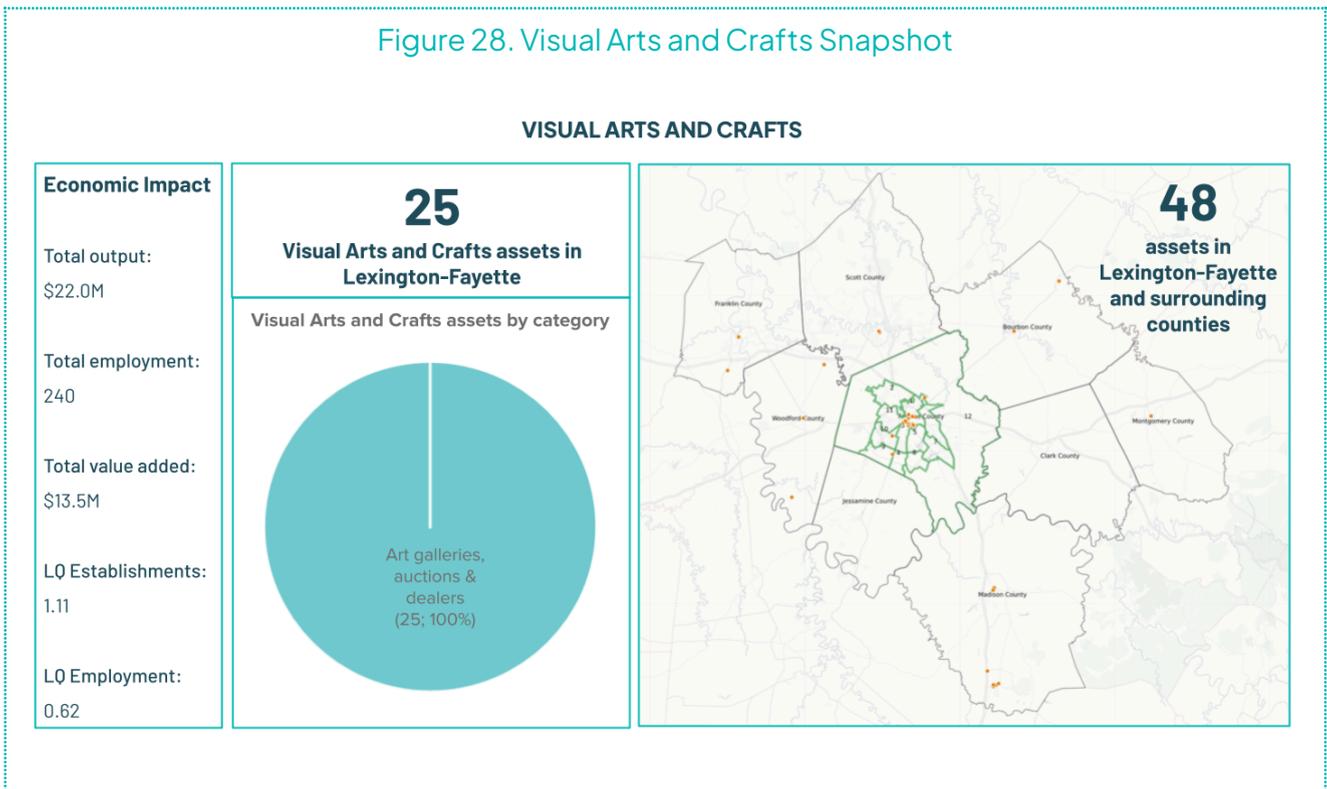
Local audiences rated the quality of local art galleries with a score of 3.7 out of 5, and 48% of respondents expressed desire for additional visual arts events, experiences or products.

Industry Support

The Percent for the Art program represents a funding opportunity for local visual artists.¹⁸⁵ The local efforts put on public art such as the showcase of public art maps and lists of galleries, museums, artists' studios and of crafted artists also offer a favorable environment and promotional opportunity for visual artists.

¹⁸⁵ Lexington Government, "Public Arts Commission", accessed January 11, 2024, <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/boards/public-arts-commission#:~:text=Lexington%2DFayette%20Urban%20Co.,is%20available%20for%20this%20project>

Figure 28. Visual Arts and Crafts Snapshot



Music Recording and Publishing

The music recording and publishing industry has less prevalence than any other creative sector in Lexington-Fayette with 18 assets. Relatedly, the sector has a below-average concentration of businesses (0.63) and employment (0.33). The industry generated 80 direct jobs (2%) and a \$24 million direct output in 2021 representing 4% of the cultural output. The sector’s total output was \$29.2 million in 2021, supporting a total of 116 jobs.

Local audiences rated the quality of local radios with a score of 3.8 out of 5, and rated the quality of music stores the lowest of all sub sectors with a score of 3.5. Although these were rated the lowest, overall, the cultural sector in Lexington is regarded as being of relatively high quality by local audiences.

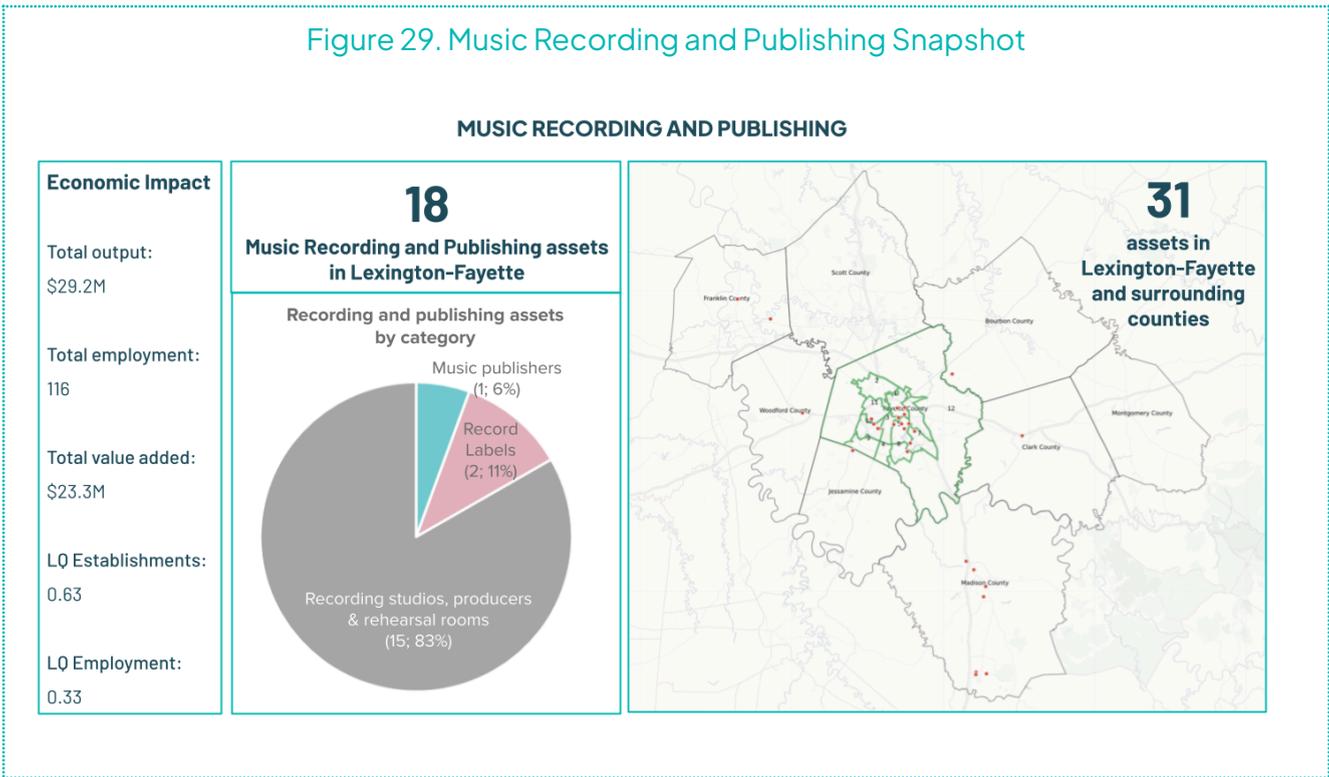
Revenues and Copyright Registration and Ownership

The average annual income for creatives in the recorded music sector is among the lowest of the creative economy, at \$43,269.

Copyright registration is of particular importance to this sector and, while an average of 24% of respondents protect their work through the United States Copyright Office, which is the highest proportion in comparison to the other creative industries, this is still a small percentage. Among those who have not registered their work, reasons vary. The most common is that their creative role or artistic work does not require it, cited by 33% of respondents. Additionally, 31% of creatives have not registered their work due to a lack of knowledge about how to do so, 9% are not interested, 7% have never owned the economic rights to their work, and 6% cite other reasons.

The copyright protected works' figures are very low, and they are aligned with the almost zero income creatives derive from licensing and intellectual property (only 1% of their total revenue) and digital and online revenue (3% of their total revenue). There is a lot of room for improvement in this regard, as helping creatives understand the importance of protecting their artistic work and helping them through the process is essential to professionalizing the sector.

Figure 29. Music Recording and Publishing Snapshot



Culinary Arts

Lexington was identified by stakeholders as a food destination thanks to its rich culinary arts sector, food and drink tours, and the bourbon industry. The sector is an asset for the local arts and cultural ecosystem, and is growing significantly in Lexington. However, the culinary arts industry needs support initiatives, promotional efforts, economic development and regulatory incentives.

There is significant potential for cross-collaboration between Lexington's creative industries, especially between the culinary arts and other sectors. These partnerships could be integrated into events, as well as the broader arts strategy, communication, and tourism efforts.

4. Implementation Timeline

RECOMMENDATIONS			
Timeline	Short term (1–24 months)	Medium term (24–48 months)	Long term (48+ months)
Creative Economy Development			
<p>Recommendation 1: Establish Oversight of the Implementation of the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the strategy. • Measure progress towards achieving recommendations. 			
<p>Recommendation 2: Review, Update and Communicate the LexArts Strategic Governance Plan to the Public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate relevant portions of the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit in LexArts’ Strategic Plan. • Educate the local community about LexArts’ mission, key objectives, and programming. • Enhance transparency and build public trust for LexArts. 			
<p>Recommendation 3: Increase Cultural Funding Through Existing Revenue Streams (Hotel Tax)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a sustainable source of funding for the arts. 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide funding for the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit. 			
<p>Recommendation 4: Review and Communicate the Standardized Scoring System to Assess LexArts Grant Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve transparency. ● Foster public trust. ● Ensure the arts programming reflects the needs of the community. ● Support local cultural organizations and artists. 			
<p>Recommendation 5: Continue to Convene DEI Co-Chairs and Appoint a Member of LexArts Staff Dedicated to DEI to Build Out DEI Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritize DEI and highlight its importance in the local arts and cultural landscape. ● Reduce inequalities and actively engage underrepresented groups in the arts sector. 			
<p>Professional Development, Talent Retention, and Business Development</p>			
<p>Recommendation 6: Organize Workshops, Lectures and Networking Sessions to Provide Professional Development Opportunities for the Creative Industries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer professional development opportunities for local artists and creatives wanting to develop business-related skills. 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer networking opportunities to connect artists to industry professionals. ● Increase intra and inter-sectoral collaborations in the arts and cultural industries. ● Increase business opportunities. 			
<p>Recommendation 7: Establish a Creative Economy Stimulus and Cultural Entrepreneurship Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revive Lexington’s creative sector and increase its Gross Value Added (GVA) post-pandemic. ● Foster sustainable growth in key sectors like audiovisual and interactive media. ● Empower cultural entrepreneurs through training, financial support, and mentorship. 			
<p>Recommendation 8: Advocate for a Job Creation Program and a Freelancer Support Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the number of paid professional opportunities in the arts and cultural industries. ● Improve student retention. ● Support freelancers in the arts and creative industries. ● Encourage collaboration and partnerships within the sector. ● Promote sustainable practices in the industry. ● Stimulate economic growth. 			

<p>Recommendation 9: Partner with Commerce Lexington to Recruit Businesses that Fill Gaps in the Arts Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrate the arts into the city's economic development strategy and recognize the arts and cultural industries as an important economic development agent. ● Recruit businesses and professionals to Lexington. 			
<p>Recommendation 10: Host an Annual Arts and Cultural Industries Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a unified vision for the arts sector. ● Foster learning and professional development opportunities. ● Showcase talent and raise awareness for the sector. ● Connect stakeholders and build community. 			
<p>Recommendation 11: Create a Database of Lexington Arts Stakeholders and Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Boost local business activity by connecting artists and professionals. ● Support careers in the arts and cultural industries. ● Improve communication between members of the arts and cultural ecosystem. ● Simplify scheduling process ● Promote cross-venue collaboration ● Improve accessibility and transparency in the booking process. 			

<p>Recommendation 12: Create Best Practice Guidelines to Make the Cultural Ecosystem more Equitable, Accessible and Sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrich the cultural landscape, making the community more vibrant and diverse, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. ● Help the creative sector to thrive, thus driving in tourism, creating jobs, and contributing to the community’s overall economic health. 			
<p>Licensing, Regulations and Zoning</p>			
<p>Recommendation 13: Advocate for Arts Friendly Regulations and Licensing Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustain and grow Lexington’s arts sector. ● Facilitate the organization of cultural events. ● Support local artists. ● Create opportunities for a richer tourism offering. 			
<p>Recommendation 14: Create a One-stop Shop for Art and Cultural Permits, Licenses, Grants, and Guides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve user experience. ● Improve the process of hosting cultural events. ● Encourage and facilitate the organization of arts events and the establishment of arts businesses. ● Offer accessible resources for artists, creatives, and cultural organizations. 			

<p>Recommendation 15: Advocate for the Creation of a New Downtown Master Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve safety and walkability downtown. ● Support the arts sector by boosting attendance at arts events and drive sales in arts-related businesses and restaurants. ● Create a shared vision for the future of Lexington’s downtown. ● Promote the local cultural offering and preserve cultural heritage. ● Create an entertainment district to boost local arts and cultural activity, attracting tourists and residents. ● Provide a place for the community to gather. ● Contribute to urban revitalization. 			
<p>Infrastructure</p>			
<p>Recommendation 16: Repurpose Vacant and Underutilized Spaces for the Arts and Cultural Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide more spaces for the arts. ● Facilitate the development of pop up events, artist studios, rehearsal spaces, and other arts and cultural activities. 			
<p>Recommendation 17: Advocate for Incentives to Retrofit and Upgrade Existing Cultural Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Upgrade infrastructure. ● Revitalize existing cultural spaces. ● Invest in the community. ● Improve accessibility. ● Enhance visitor experience. 			

<p>Recommendation 18: Advocate for a Pilot Program that Offers Extended Public Transit during Major Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attract more attendees. ● Reduce parking issues by providing additional transit options, making it easier for visitors to reach events. ● Improve accessibility and safety at events. ● Promote the usage and benefits of public transit. 			
<p>Recommendation 19: Host Regular Workshops on Safety during Cultural Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve safety during cultural events and at cultural venues. 			
Arts Education			
<p>Recommendation 20: Foster Partnerships to Augment Public Arts Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance public arts education by providing additional financial resources, facilities, and materials. ● Help schools and organizations offer more comprehensive, high-quality arts education programs. ● Make arts education accessible to a broader and more diverse population, especially underserved or underfunded communities. 			
Marketing, Communication and Audience Development			
<p>Recommendation 21: Create a Centralized Calendar with Information for all Creative</p>			

<p>Events in the City, Including Events at Restaurants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase visibility for events and activities ensuring broader audience awareness. ● Streamline communication. ● Create opportunities for cross-promotion. 			
<p>Recommendation 22: Create an Audience Development Program Targeting the Student Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capitalize on Lexington’s large student population. ● Attract new audiences. ● Increase attendance at local cultural events. 			
<p>Recommendation 23: Develop Evening and Weekend Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve accessibility by providing options for individuals who do not have the flexibility to attend daytime events. ● Attract residents and tourists. 			
<p>Cultural Tourism</p>			
<p>Recommendation 24: Partner with VisitLEX to Create a Cultural Tourism Strategy and Marketing Campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attract tourists. ● Stimulate the local economy. ● Showcase local culture. ● Strengthen Lexington’s brand as a place for arts and culture. 			

5. Conclusion

Lexington has so much potential to become a vibrant hub for arts and culture. The city has a deep cultural heritage, with a unique history, architecture, and Southern charm. Moreover, the city's well-established horse, bourbon and sports culture provide a unique backdrop for its artistic and cultural offerings. And the presence of the University of Kentucky and Transylvania University in the city also contribute significantly to Lexington's vibrancy by attracting a diverse and creative population of young people.

Research has shown that the Lexington community is engaged and interested in participating in arts and cultural activities. This coincides well with the city's revitalization efforts and growing arts scene. The city has undertaken efforts to revitalize its downtown, which have included upgrades to cultural institutions such as the Pam Miller Downtown Arts Center. At the same time, contributions from Lexington's local artists, as well as its arts and cultural organizations, have led to quality exhibitions, events and festivals, generating growing interest in the local scene.

With this unique charm and supportive infrastructure, Lexington is well-equipped to nurture and support its arts and cultural ecosystem. LexArts is already undertaking a range of initiatives and support efforts to further this goal. By building on what already exists, the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit aims to provide a clear roadmap for the development of Lexington's arts and cultural ecosystem. By identifying priorities, allocating resources effectively, and setting achievable goals, efforts will be directed where they are most needed, generating maximum impact and developing Lexington's identity as a hub for arts and culture.

6. Detailed Methodology

6.1 Regulatory Assessment and Comparative Analysis

Coordinating with our partners in Lexington, Sound Diplomacy has conducted thorough research into the regulations, laws and programs that are related to the arts and cultural ecosystem and cultural tourism. Sound Diplomacy has largely prioritized those regulations and programs which directly relate to our scope of work. When possible and necessary, in instances where there is less maturity in regards to a particular sector or

topic, regulations and programs with only indirect or associative relationships have also been noted. The regulations have been broken down into:

1. **Cross-sector Regulations**

These are topics that are transversal to all creative sectors in nature and are also typically organized at the city and county levels.

2. **Sector-specific Regulations**

These are topics which pertain specifically to the seven sectors we are studying, and which are typically organized at the state level.

The analysis of the regulations, laws and programs involves each topic being assigned one of the following three qualitative indicators:

- Underdeveloped: Nonexistent or no longer active.
- Room for growth: In place but outdated, limited, and/or producing uncertain results.
- Mature: Resembles a best practice for this topic.

Benchmarks have been selected to represent a “best case” example of an activity related to this topic. They are not necessarily fully applicable to Lexington’s situation or context, but can instead be used as starting points for thinking about improvements or necessary programs for topics that are deemed underdeveloped or have room for growth. Case studies chosen due to their relevance to Lexington’s unique situation will be discussed at a later stage of this research.

Throughout the Regulatory Assessment financial support and grants related to the different sectors are noted. For the sake of ease, the most relevant grants are listed in full at the end of this section.

6.1.2 Literature Review

The Literature Review contains summaries and assessments of key strategic documents relevant to the scope of this research. It is divided between state-wide and county-wide, and features literature that was supplied or recommended by LexArts. Where possible, it focuses on recent strategies related to the cultural sector. Where this is not possible, literature that is related and relevant to the scope of research has been reviewed.

6.2 Asset Mapping

5.2.1 Asset Definitions

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Audiovisual and Interactive Media (see Table 1).

Table 1. Classification: Audiovisual and Interactive Media

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Audiovisual production and broadcasting	Television broadcasting networks	An organization that distributes television program content (images together with sound), transmitting programs to the public.
Digital design, programming and publishing	Games and computer software publishers	Establishments that work on the activities necessary to produce and distribute computer software.
Digital hosting and broadcasting	Internet broadcasting organizations	Establishments engaged in operating studios and facilities for internet broadcasting.
	Web hosting, video and audio streaming organizations	Establishments that provide the infrastructure for hosting or the services for data processing.
Film and video distribution	Film and video distribution companies	Establishments that acquire distribution rights and distribute film and video productions to motion picture theaters, television networks and stations, and exhibitors.
Film and video exhibition	Drive-in movie theaters	Establishments that operate drive-in motion picture theaters.
	Movie theaters	Establishments that operate motion picture theaters (except drive-ins)

		and/or exhibit motion pictures or videos at film festivals.
Film and video production and post-production	Film and video production companies	Establishments that produce, or produce and distribute motion pictures, videos, television programs, or television commercials.
	Film and video post-production companies	Establishments that provide specialized motion picture or video post-production services, such as editing, film/tape transfers, subtitling, credits, closed captioning, and animation and special effects.
Radio broadcasting	Radio networks	Public, community and commercial music radio networks.
	Radio stations	Public, community and commercial music radio stations.

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Books and Press (see Table 2).

Table 2. Classification: Books and Press

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Books and press exhibition	Libraries and archives	Establishments that provide library or archive services. They are engaged in maintaining collections of documents (e.g. books, journals, newspapers, and music) and facilitating the use of such documents (recorded information regardless of its physical form and

		characteristics) as required to meet the informational, research, educational, or recreational needs of their user.
Books and press printing	Printing establishments	Establishments that print on apparel, paper and other materials.
Books and press publishing	Book publishers	Establishments that carry out design, editing, and marketing activities necessary for producing and distributing books. These establishments may publish books in print, electronic, or audio form.
	Newspaper publishers	Establishments that produce and distribute newspapers, including gathering news; writing news columns, feature stories, and editorials; and selling and preparing advertisements.
	Periodic publishers	Establishments known either as magazine publishers or periodical publishers. These establishments carry out the operations necessary for producing and distributing magazines and other periodicals, such as gathering, writing, and editing articles, and selling and preparing advertisements

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Cultural and Natural Heritage (see Table 3).

Table 3. Classification: Cultural and Natural Heritage

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
cultural and natural heritage	Museums	Establishments that preserve and exhibit objects of historical, cultural, and/or educational value.
	Zoos and botanical gardens	Establishments that preserve and exhibit displays of live plant and animal life.

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Cultural Education (see Table 4).

Table 4. Classification: Cultural Education

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Cultural education	Conservatories and universities with cultural and creative programs or business programs for the cultural and creative industries	Conservatories/ Universities with cultural and creative programs or business programs for the cultural and creative industries
	Public and private schools with cultural and creative programs	Public and private schools with cultural and creative programs
	Private instructors	People who operate independently of an organization, often offering cultural and creative-related skills tutoring services from their own studios or from home

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Music Recording and Publishing (see Table 5).

Table 5. Classification: Music Recording and Publishing

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Recording and publishing	Music publishers	Person (or organization) responsible for licensing and administering the composition copyrights of songwriters
	Record labels	Music labels with a physical presence.
	Recording studios, producers and rehearsal rooms	Registered music and audio studios offering music recording, mastering and rehearsal services.

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Performing Arts: Live Music, Theater, Dance, Circus (see Table 6).

Table 6. Classification: Performing Arts: Live Music, Theater, Dance, Circus

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Venue infrastructure	Dedicated performing arts venues	Establishments where performing arts performance is the main focus, with dedicated performing arts programming.
	Multi-purpose venues	Venues for hire, corporate event spaces, smaller sports facilities that host performing arts at least twice a year.

	Occasional venues	Spaces that are not dedicated venues that occasionally host performing arts performances (e.g. parks, churches).
	Arenas	Large capacity venues (over 2,000 seats) that primarily host sports and performing arts.
	Nightclubs	Nightlife establishments with regular DJ nights and occasional performing arts (e.g. live music) performances.
	Bars, cafés, restaurants with music	Establishments where performing arts (e.g. live music) is performed regularly, although their primary function is the sale of food and beverages.
Other support for performing arts	Bookers and programmers	Registered, tax-paying businesses working in performing arts talent booking and event promotion.
	Live event producers	Organizations that present and/or produce artistic performances and events.
	Performing arts managers	Person (or organization) who oversees the business affairs of a performing artist.

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Visual Arts and Crafts (see Table 7).

Table 7. Classification: Visual Arts and Crafts

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Art galleries, auctions and dealers	Art galleries, auctions and dealers	Establishments primarily engaged in retailing original and limited edition artworks created by others, such as art galleries

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Industry Support - Retail (see Table 8).

Table 8. Classification: Industry Support - Retail

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Books and press distribution	Books and press wholesalers and book stores	Establishments engaged in the merchant wholesale distribution and retail of books, periodicals, and newspapers as well as establishments that retail new books, newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals (without publishing).
Instruments and equipment	Musical instrument and equipment stores	Musical instrument and equipment stores, including rentals.
Recording and publishing stores	Record stores	Retail outlets that sell recorded music.

The table below details the classification system for assets related to Festivals, Fairs, and Conventions (see Table 9).

Table 9. Classification: Festivals, Fairs, and Conventions

SUB-SECTOR	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Audiovisual and interactive media festivals, fairs, and conventions	Audiovisual and interactive media festivals, fairs, and conventions	One or multiple day festivals, fairs, and conventions with a focus on audiovisual and interactive media.
Performing arts festivals, fairs, and conventions	Performing arts festivals, fairs, and conventions	One or multiple day festivals, fairs, and conventions with a focus on the performing arts.

6.3 Economic Impact Assessment

The economic impact analysis is based on official secondary sources and statistics, complemented by primary research conducted by Sound Diplomacy. It provides a reliable measure of the economic importance of the creative economy in Lexington Kentucky, on three scales: direct, indirect, and induced impact.

The results highlighted in this report correspond with 2021 data. This is due to most official data sources having a three-year delay. During the research process, the most up-to-date data available from the County Business Patterns and RIMS II multipliers was from 2021.

Important note: Due to the availability of official data at the time of the development of this report, the results correspond to the year 2021. Results may be impacted by COVID-19.

Table 3. Economic Impact Dimensions

ECONOMIC IMPACT	DEFINITION
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Direct Economic Impact	The direct impact is the economic value and employment directly generated by the economic activity of the arts and cultural ecosystem.
Indirect Economic Impact	The indirect economic impact measures the ripple effects on the economy, focusing on value and job creation in sectors that form part of the arts and cultural ecosystem's supply chain. It encapsulates the demand-driven benefits for supporting industries, such as advertising, legal services, and food and beverage suppliers, which are integral to the creative economy's operations.
Induced Economic Impact	Induced impact refers to the economic effects generated when the ecosystem's direct and indirect employees spend their wages on goods and services such as food, transportation, and entertainment in their daily lives. This spending stimulates further economic activity within the broader community.

The variables evaluated as part of the economic impact assessment include the arts and cultural ecosystem's output, employment and gross value added (GVA). Definitions of each measure are outlined below.

Table 4. Variables Evaluated in the Economic Impact

VARIABLE	DEFINITION
Output ¹⁸⁶	The economic value produced by the sales of goods and services in the ecosystem. For example, concert ticket sales, broadcasting services, etc.

¹⁸⁶ Bureau of Economic Analysis (2020)

Employment ¹⁸⁷	The number of active jobs producing goods and services in the ecosystem.
Gross Value Added (GVA) ¹⁸⁸	The output minus intermediate consumption (the costs of all inputs – food and beverage suppliers, legal services, transportation, equipment, etc.).

Classifications

To define and frame the creative ecosystem in accordance with available official data, Sound Diplomacy uses the Classification of Economic Activities of the North American Industrial Code System 2017 (NAICS), which is the standard used by federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments to collect, analyze, and publish statistical data related to the U.S. economy. Sound Diplomacy uses this data to calculate the value of the economic activity in Lexington that can be attributed to the arts and cultural ecosystem’s economy.

Geographical Scope

The geographical scope of this assessment is the City of Lexington–Fayette, Kentucky.

Data Sources

Six main data sources have been used to conduct the economic impact analysis.

Table 5. List of Data Sources

DATA SOURCE	DETAILS
County Business Patterns: 2021	This source allows the calculation of the number of establishments and employees in the ecosystem.
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages 2022	This source provides complementary data for the number of employees in the ecosystem. It is the source for the Location Quotients provided in this analysis.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

BEA Regional Economic Accounts GDP by State 2016 - 2021	This source provides GDP data by industry at the state and metropolitan levels.
Regional Input-Output Modeling System (RIMS II) ¹⁸⁹	RIMS II provides both Type I and Type II regional input-output multipliers to estimate the indirect and induced economic impact of the NAICS economic activities. Type I multipliers account for the direct and indirect impacts based on the economic dynamics of the ecosystem supply chain. Type II multipliers account for both indirect and induced impacts based on the purchases made by employees of the ecosystem.
American Community Survey 2016 - 2021	This source provides data on the income related to jobs and economic activities associated with the ecosystem across several characteristics.
Mapping Dataset	The mapping dataset provides ancillary data that allows Sound Diplomacy to identify missing data points.

6.4. Survey

Sound Diplomacy, in partnership with LexArts, developed an online survey distributed to local creatives and artists, arts and cultural-related businesses and organizations, and cultural audiences in Lexington. The sampling method was non-probabilistic by volunteers¹⁹⁰ for respondents to the survey distributed by LexArts, as well as for

¹⁸⁹ See definitions in Appendix 1

¹⁹⁰ Individuals were selected based on non-random criteria, and not every individual had a chance to be included due to the approach being an online survey, where people volunteer themselves to respond. As a result, there is a higher risk of bias in the sampling. Nonetheless, each survey respondent was classified as part of one of the 3 segments: creatives and artists, arts and cultural-related businesses and organizations, and cultural audiences.

survey-takers belonging to a panel provided by a panel provider supplier.¹⁹¹ The results of this survey complement the qualitative findings of the overall study.

The survey had an approximate duration of 15 minutes and was open for responses from December 2023 to March of 2024. When considering responses from both the panel provider and the public survey, a total of 1,190 responses were collected (623 complete, 88 partial and usable for some sections, 430 partial but not usable, and 49 disqualified)¹⁹².

The survey was organized using the following modules:

Section	Description	Group of Respondents Answering
1. Introduction and General Information	The questions included in this section were intended to classify respondents according to their broader role in Lexington’s arts and cultural ecosystem.	All
2. Relationships Within the Ecosystem	This series of questions was incorporated to grasp the dynamics of the interactions among the various stakeholders within the arts and cultural ecosystem. The aim was to discern the level of interconnectedness and collaboration among these players.	Creatives and Organizations
3. Regulatory Framework	This section explored the procedures, taxes, and sources of financing that create challenges for the arts and cultural ecosystem.	Creatives and Organizations
4. Characteristics	This section was designed for members of the creation link. The questions were intended to help better understand the characteristics of their	Creatives

¹⁹¹ We utilized a panel provider to gather additional responses from the local cultural audiences segment. This approach aimed to achieve a more representative sample and diversify our data sources, mitigating potential biases.

¹⁹² The sample for creatives and artists was made up of 147 observations (considering complete and partial responses). The sample of businesses and organizations was made up of 56 observations (considering complete and partial responses). The sample of cultural audiences was made up of 508 observations.

of Creatives and Artists	creative activity, including the percentage of income derived from arts and cultural-related activities and whether that income is sufficient to cover their basic needs, among other things.	
5. Characteristics of Businesses and Organizations	This section was designed for business or organization owners, CEOs, or General Managers (from the production, distribution, exhibition, and transversal links) to better understand their organizations' characteristics, such as the percentage of revenue derived from arts and cultural-related activities.	Organization s
6. Local Cultural Audiences	In this segment, questions explored respondents' interest in several cultural sectors and their perceptions of the availability and quality of the links in the value chain, among other things.	Local cultural Audiences
7. New Venue	This section was added to assess whether respondents believe Lexington needs a new exhibition venue, why it does or does not, and what type of venue it should be.	All
8. Demographic Information	A set of questions focused on collecting the respondents' demographic information.	All