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LEXARTS



LEXINGTON

LEXINGTON

ARTS & CULTURAL ECONOMY AUDIT

Presented by Sound Diplomacy
and LexArts for the City of Lexington

1. ABOUT THE PROJECT

To facilitate economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and invest in the wider creative economy, LexArts was provided with a one-off allocation of \$300,000 from the Lexington-Fayette Urban Council Government to deliver a comprehensive, economic-focused creative arts masterplan.

This report 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 and compete with cities, both regionally and nationally, in this rapidly growing sector of the economy.

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.

Cover Image courtesy of the Lexington Theatre Company
Back Cover Image courtesy of the LexArts Arts & Health Symposium



Image © Casa de la Cultura

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The research methodology was composed of the following steps that led to the final recommendations:

LITERATURE REVIEW AND REGULATORY ASSESSMENT

Coordinating with our partners in Lexington, Sound Diplomacy conducted thorough research into the strategies, regulations, laws and programs that are related to the arts and cultural ecosystem in Lexington and Kentucky.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Sound Diplomacy engaged with over 1,200 stakeholders through an online survey, and in person and online interviews and roundtables.

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.

ASSET MAPPING ANALYSIS

The mapping process identified arts-related assets in Lexington, Kentucky, and surrounding areas of the city. Following web scraping, information was georeferenced with Sound Diplomacy's mapping tool and added to an online, interactive [map](#).

ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Sound Diplomacy conducted measurements of the direct, indirect and induced impacts of the creative industries in Lexington.

ACTION PLAN

The above steps led to the creation of a set of 24 actionable recommendations for Lexington to take forward. These are categorized into 12 areas of focus, and include a proposed timeline for establishing the recommendation, how to implement it, and any further considerations to take into account.

2. REGULATORY ASSESSMENT

Coordinating with our partners in Lexington, Sound Diplomacy conducted thorough research into the regulations, laws and programs related to the creative economy.

CROSS-SECTOR FINDINGS:

- Several of the city's regulations affecting the arts ecosystem could be updated to facilitate the growth of the sector. This includes streamlining processes for event permitting, liquor licensing, busking, and reducing excessive administrative barriers and fees that currently hinder the organization of cultural events.
- Artists and art stakeholders need more professional development opportunities and business support.
- The local arts sector could benefit from further efforts to embrace the city's diversity.
- The city's arts strategy could be strengthened by developing a more cohesive approach.
- There is a lack of performance, rehearsal, exhibition, storage and working spaces for the arts.
- There is a need for targeted audience development and tourism strategies to promote the arts.

SECTOR-SPECIFIC FINDINGS:

- High quality performing arts programming is available for young people. (I.e., Lexington Children's Theater, Central Kentucky Youth Orchestra, multiple ballet and dance programs).
- Several initiatives such as the Percent for Art Grant and public art maps actively support and promote public art, with a strong emphasis on visual arts.
- Various events in Lexington provide opportunities for visual artists to showcase their work or celebrate the industry, including Art on the Town and LexArts Hop.
- Lexington hosts several book industry events, such as the Kentucky Book Festival and Book Trails. Additionally, the city commemorates Kentucky Writers' Day, with celebrations taking place at the University of Kentucky.
- Lexington boasts a vibrant culinary arts scene, yet it remains underrepresented compared to other art forms. Greater collaboration is needed to fully integrate it into the broader arts landscape.



Image © Kentucky Ballet Theatre

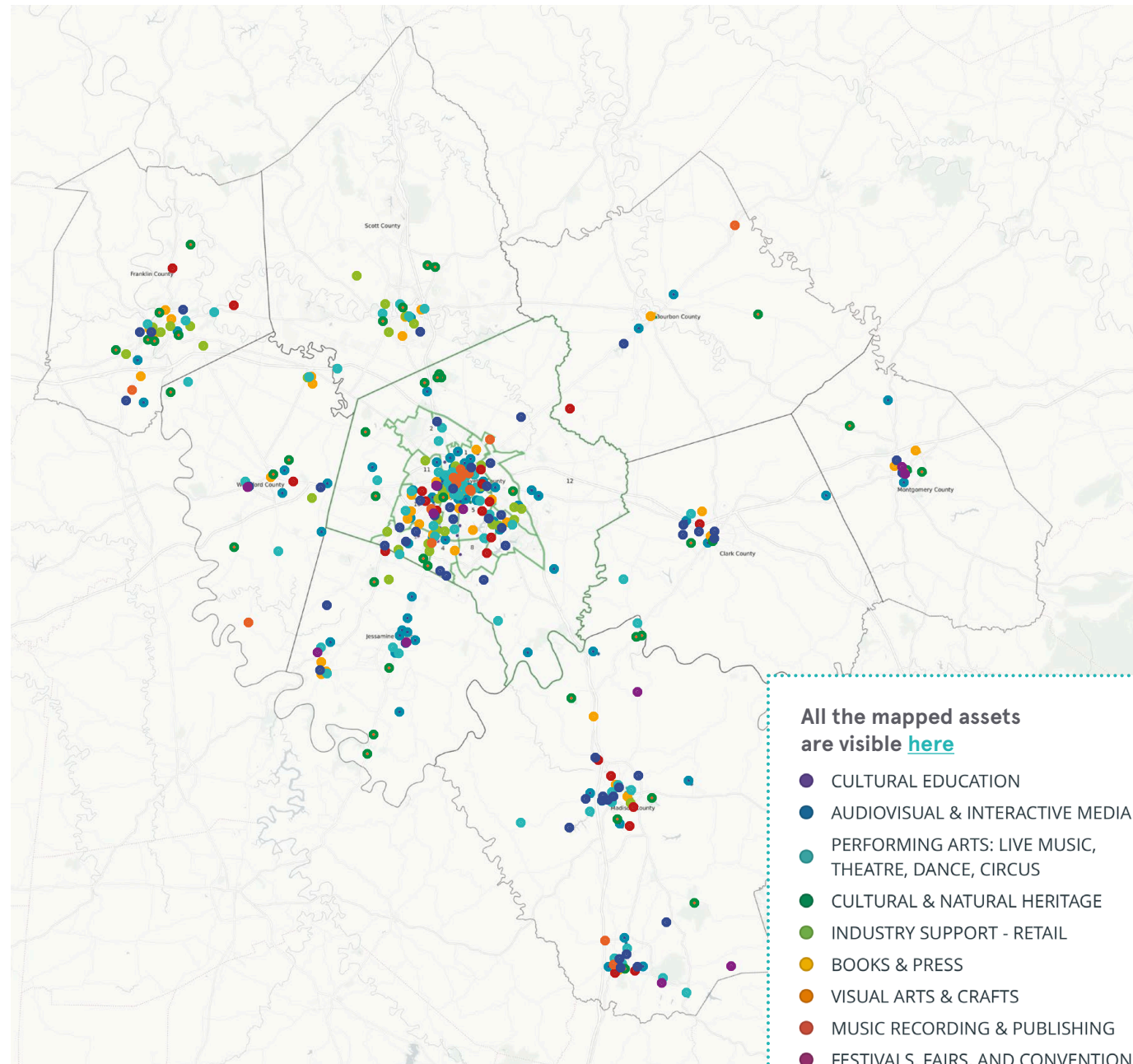
3. MAPPING



Image © Woodford Theatre

3. MAPPING

Within the geographical scope of the analysis, the total number of identified assets is 637. The cultural education sector forms the greatest proportion of the creative industries with 19% of assets, followed by performing arts and audiovisual/interactive media sectors, each with 18%.



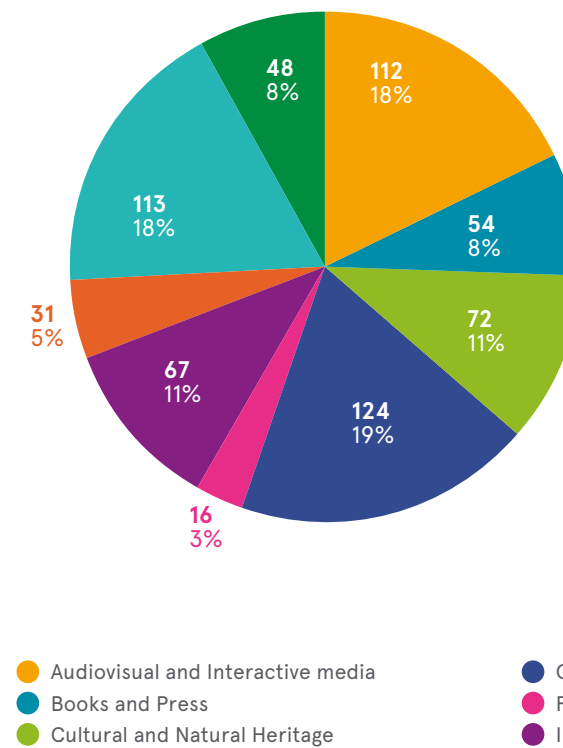
OVERVIEW OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSETS IN LEXINGTON-FAYETTE (INCLUDING SURROUNDING COUNTIES)

637 Total Assets in Arts and Culture

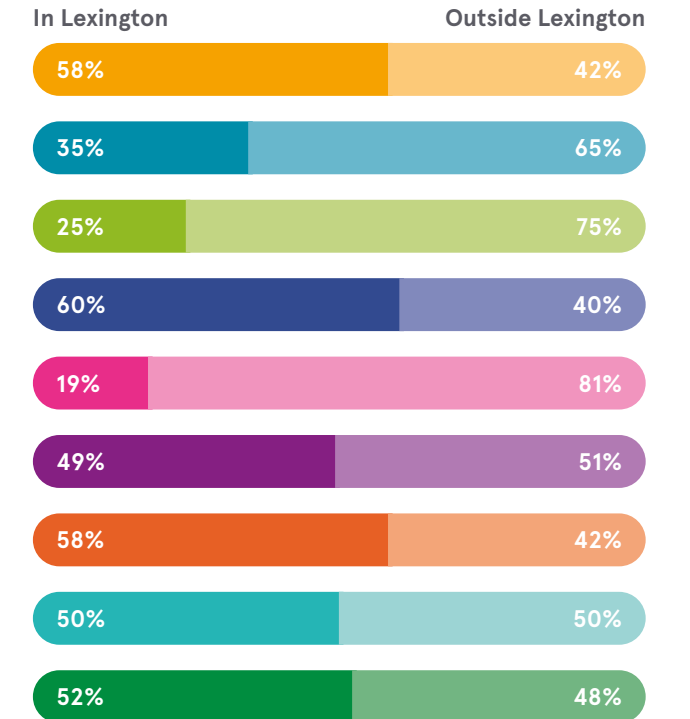
312 49% Assets (in Lexington)

325 51% Assets (outside Lexington)

DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS BY SECTOR



DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS BY SECTOR AND LOCATION



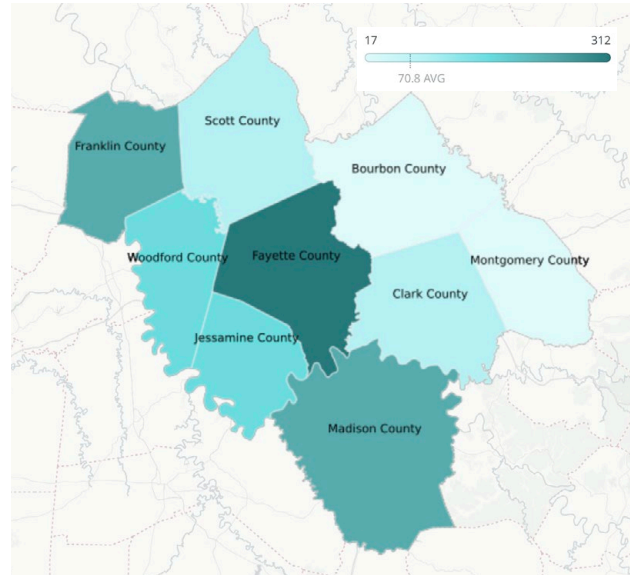
Developed by Sound Diplomacy

49% of the total assets are located in Lexington-Fayette. **Madison County** is home to **16%** (101) assets, and the rest of the **surrounding counties** have a total of **35%** (224) assets altogether. In most sectors, **Lexington-Fayette holds half or almost half of the assets**, especially in cultural education (60%),

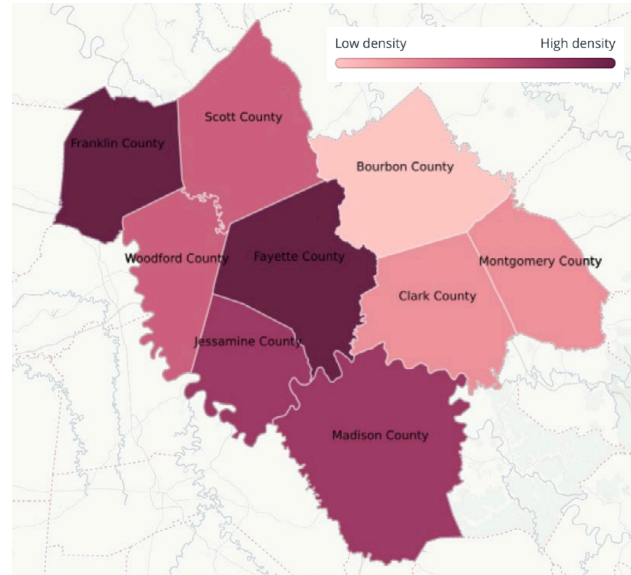
audiovisual and interactive media (58%), and music recording and publishing (58%). However, books and press (35%) and cultural and natural heritage (19%) are exceptions, with a smaller percentage of assets located in Lexington-Fayette than in the other areas.

SPATIAL CONCENTRATION OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSETS IN AND AROUND LEXINGTON

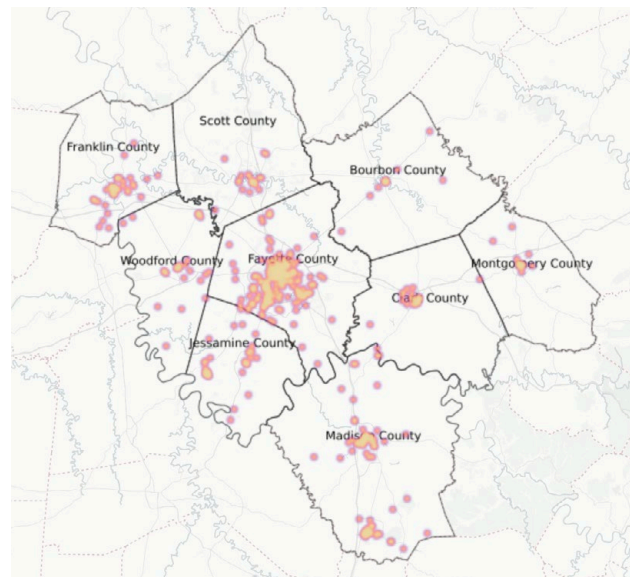
A. Heat Map of the Number of Assets



B. Heat Map of the Density of Assets



C. Heat Map of the Clustering of Assets



Developed by Sound Diplomacy

When looking at Lexington-Fayette by ZIP code, **40% of the mapped assets are located in the center of Lexington-Fayette** (ZIP codes 40508 and 40507), and **15% are located in the southwest region of the city center** (ZIP code 40503).



Image © Operation be You

4. ECONOMIC IMPACT SUMMARY



Image © CKYO

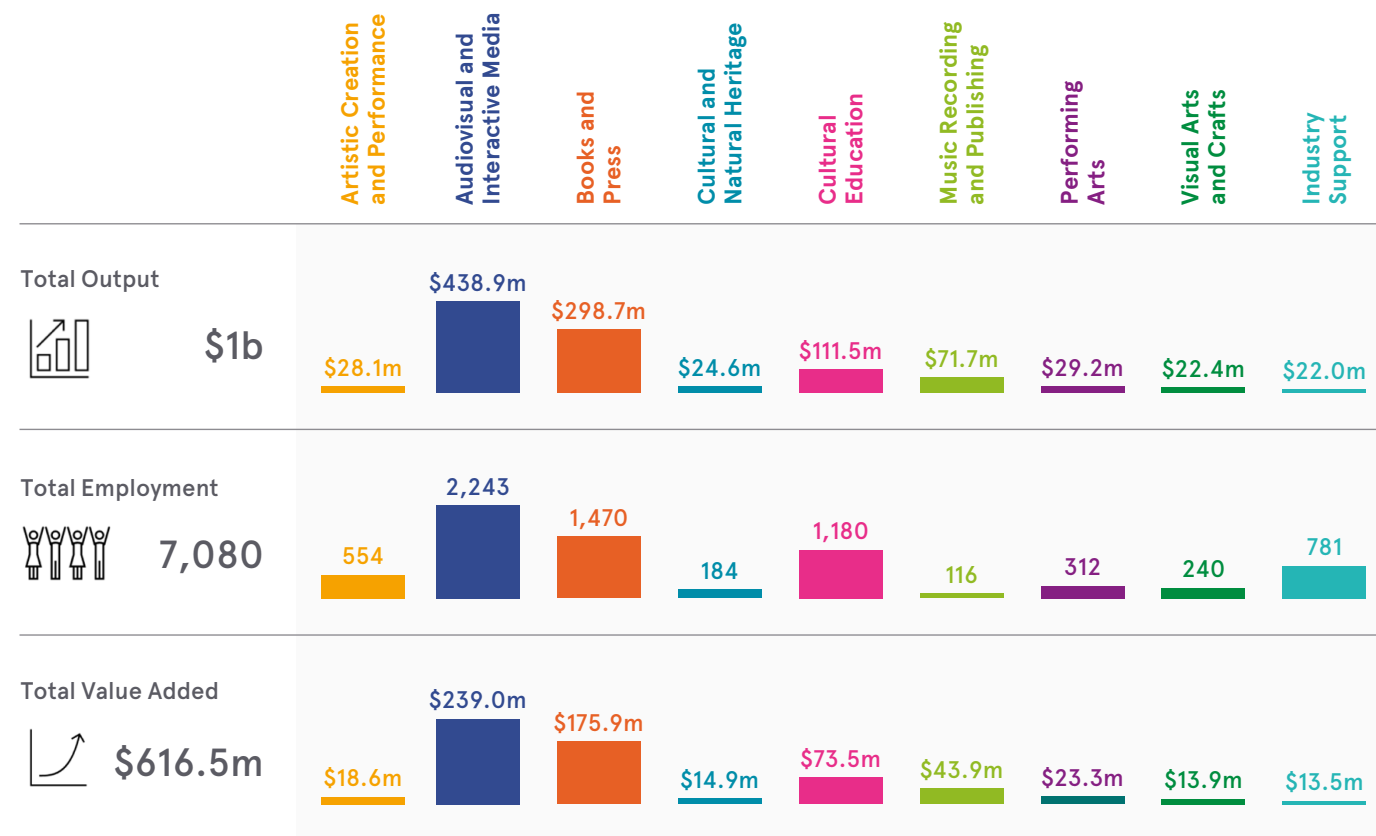
4. ECONOMIC IMPACT SUMMARY

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

The arts and cultural ecosystem in Lexington supports 7,080 local jobs (4.20% of the city's overall local employment), generates a total output of \$1,047.1 billion, and \$616.5 million in Gross Value Added (GVA).

The output multiplier effect in Lexington is equal to 1.62. This means that for every \$1,000 of output generated by the arts and cultural ecosystem, an additional \$620 is created locally across other industries.

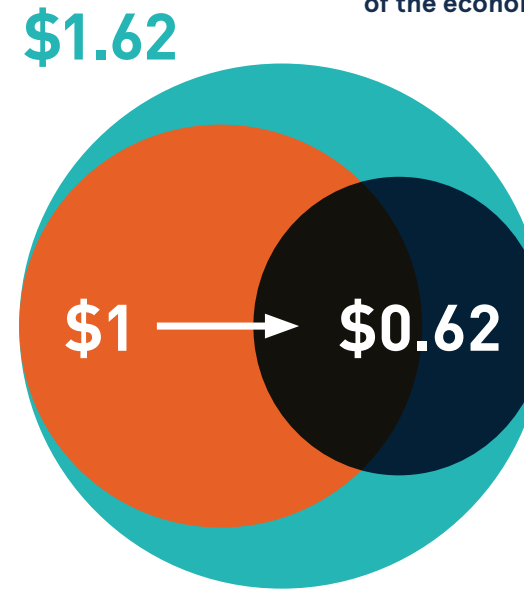
KEY FINDINGS: LEXINGTON-FAYETTE ARTS AND CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT, 2021¹



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

TOTAL MULTIPLIER EFFECT

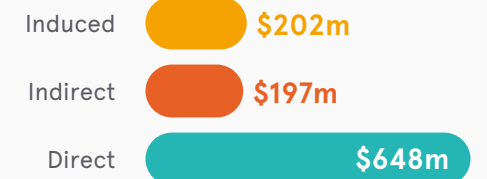
For every \$1 of output of the creative economy, there is an output of \$0.62 in the rest of the economy.



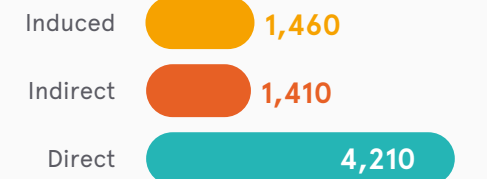
Source: County Business Patterns 2021, BEA RIMS II, Sound Diplomacy Research



TOTAL OUTPUT



TOTAL EMPLOYMENT



TOTAL VALUE ADDED



Image © UK Opera Theatre

DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT



Image © Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning

KEY DATA:

Direct Output **\$648.0m**

GVA **\$368.0m**

Employment **4,210**

Lexington's arts and cultural ecosystem directly employs 4,210 workers (2.50% of the city's employment), generating a direct output of \$648.0 million and a GVA of \$368.0 million.

Among the analyzed industries, **audiovisual and interactive media generate the highest direct output and employment**, with an output of \$265.5 million (41% of the ecosystem's direct output) and employment of 975 individuals (23% of direct employment in the ecosystem).

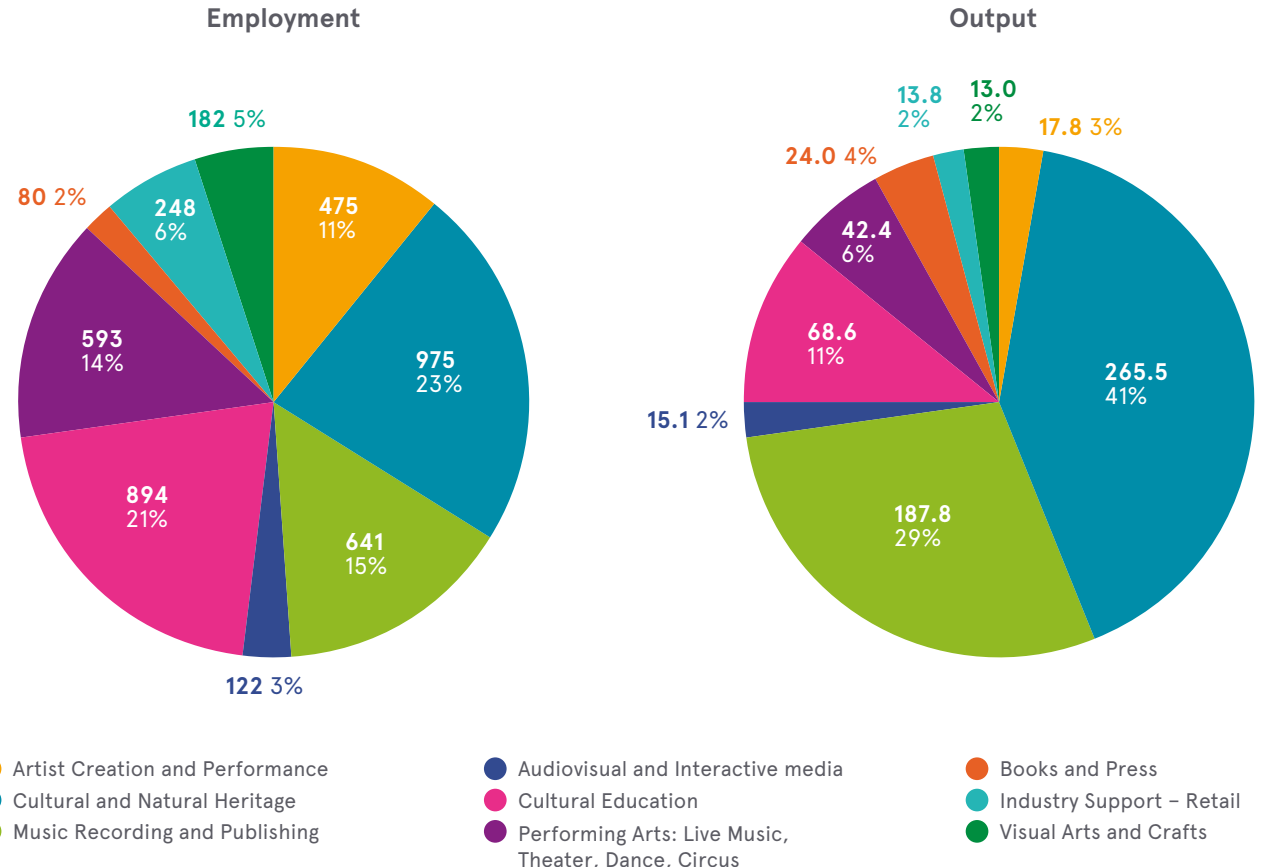


Image © Matchstick Coods



Image © The Lyric Theatre and Cultural Arts Center

EMPLOYMENT AND OUTPUT GENERATED BY THE ARTS AND CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM



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

INDIRECT & INDUCED IMPACT

KEY INDIRECT DATA:

	Direct Output	\$196.8m
	GVA	\$126.1m
	Employment	1,410 jobs

The indirect impact measures the ripple effect that the arts ecosystem has on the broader economy. The ecosystem's indirect impact amounts to \$196.8 million in output, \$126.1 million in GVA, and 1,410 jobs.



KEY INDUCED DATA:

	Direct Output	\$202.3m
	GVA	\$122.4m
	Employment	1,460 jobs

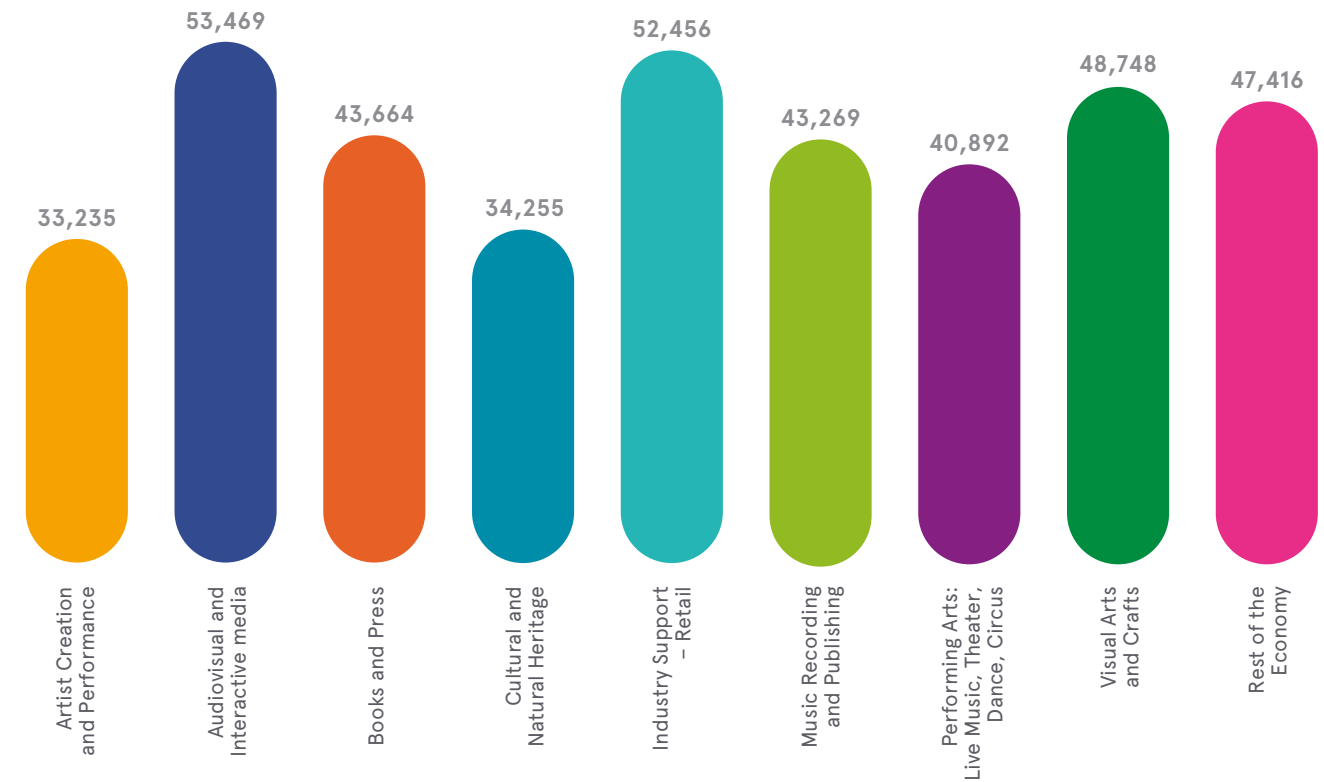
The induced economic impact is the value (output, employment, and GVA) resulting from spending carried out by workers whose wages were supported directly and indirectly by the arts and cultural ecosystem. Induced effects result in an output of \$202.3 million, GVA of \$122.4 million, and 1,460 jobs, which indicates significant local spending by workers in the sector and their chain.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The arts and cultural ecosystem sector's composition closely follows 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).

The average income for workers in the arts and cultural ecosystem sector is \$45,764, 3.7% below the average for the rest of the economy, which is \$47,516. However, the average income in the ecosystem is heterogeneous, with the highest average income found in the audiovisual and interactive media sector at \$53,469, while the lowest average income is found in artistic creation and performance at \$33,235, well below the average income for the rest of the economy.

AVERAGE INCOME WITHIN THE ARTS AND CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM²



Source: American Community Survey, Sound Diplomacy Research

Men in the arts and cultural ecosystem, on average, earn 28.9% more than women (\$51,364 vs \$39,860), which is a smaller gender pay gap when compared to other sectors (unrelated to arts and culture) in the rest of the economy, where men earn 33.8% more (\$53,881 vs \$40,268).

"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.



Image © Soma's Troupe/Belles of the Bluegrass

SPECIALIZATION

In Lexington, 6 out of 9 of the creative and artistic sectors examined have a higher density of businesses compared to the national average, indicating some level of local specialization. The high density of these businesses also suggests the existence of a robust support system that promotes the growth and development of these industries. The three highest densities are in cultural education, retail, and audiovisual and interactive media.

In Lexington, the businesses operating within the creative and artistic sub-sectors included in the scope of this assessment have fewer employees than the national average for the number of employees at businesses operating in the same sub-sectors. Businesses with the lowest number of employees are found in cultural and natural heritage, music recording and publishing, and audiovisual and interactive media.

5. SURVEY



Image © Central Music Academy

5. SURVEY

The survey had an approximate duration of 15 minutes and was open for responses from December 2023 to March 2024. 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).³

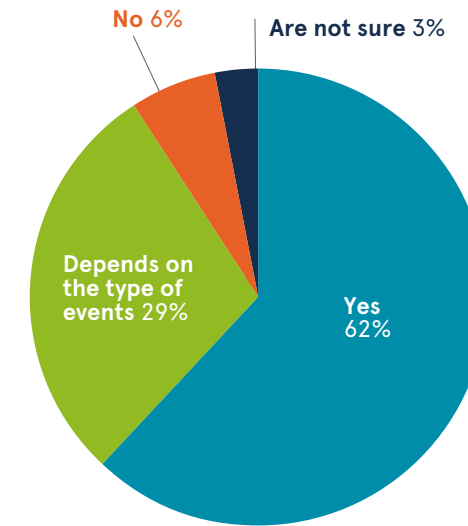
Respondents rated the relevance, quality, and availability of creatives from both their own and other sub-sectors very highly, indicating a strong local talent pool. Creatives and organizations have significant interaction with other creatives, both within their sub-sector and across other sub-sectors. Findings from local audience responses also highlight regular engagement with local arts and culture, a high interest in seeing more cultural events in the city, high quality ratings for bookstores, libraries, local bands and movie theaters, and live and recorded music and books and press receiving 5 out of 5 ratings by just under 50% of respondents for personal fulfillment.



Image © Lexington Philharmonic MusicLab

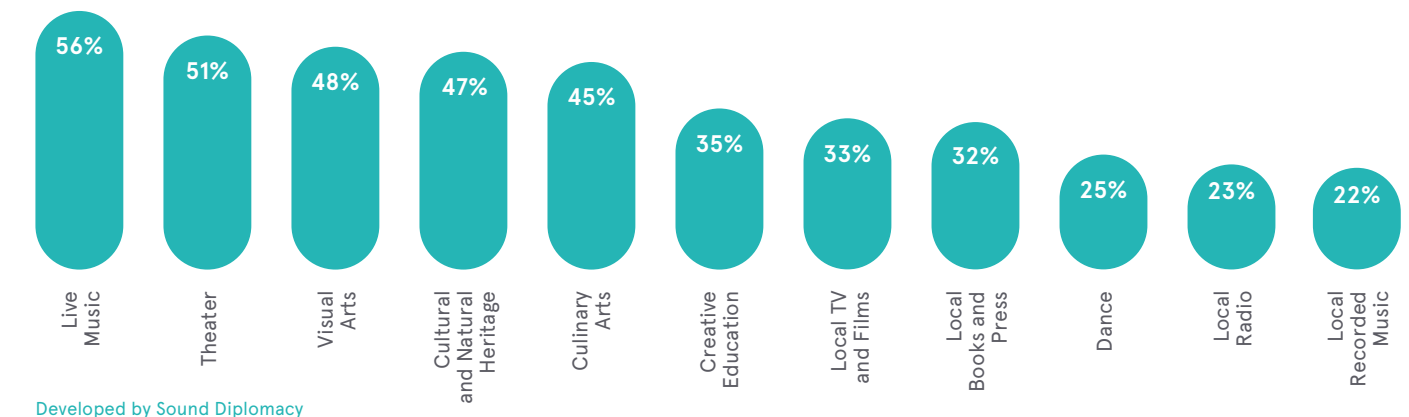
LOCAL CULTURAL AUDIENCES: INTEREST IN AN INCREASE IN LOCAL CULTURAL OFFERINGS

DO AUDIENCES WANT MORE CULTURAL EVENTS?



CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTORS	QUALITY	AVAILABILITY
Bookstores and libraries	4.1	3.5
Movie theaters	3.9	3.8
Local music bands/musicians	3.9	3.6
Local theater performances	3.8	3.2
Local radios	3.8	3.4
Local dance performances	3.8	3.3
Cultural and creative education programs	3.8	3.3
Music venues	3.8	3.2
Music festivals	3.7	3.2
Theaters	3.7	3.2
Art galleries	3.7	3.2
Local TV	3.6	3.6
Theater and dance festivals	3.6	3.0
Museums, archaeological sites, cultural landscapes	3.6	3.0
Music stores	3.5	3.0

CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTORS AUDIENCES WANT TO EXPLORE MORE



Developed by Sound Diplomacy

However, there are areas that require improvement to continue to retain and attract talent as 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 visual arts sub-sector has the highest

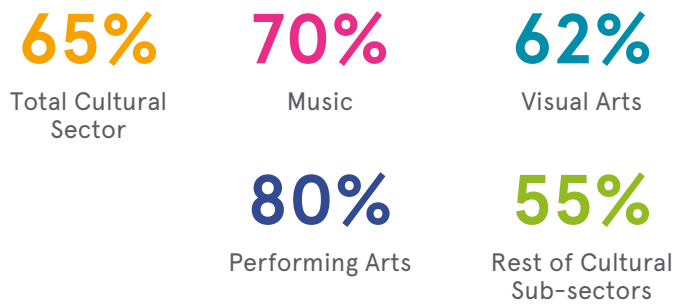
proportion of individuals (50%) who have previously considered relocating (although all ultimately decided not to do it) and the performing arts sub-sector contains the highest percentage of individuals, 10%, who are currently contemplating leaving. However, 76% of the music sub-sector has never contemplated this option.

85% of creatives and 70% of organizations reported that the income generated from their creative work is insufficient to cover basic needs and costs, even among those who earn 100% of their income from creative endeavors and among professionals (in the case of creatives).

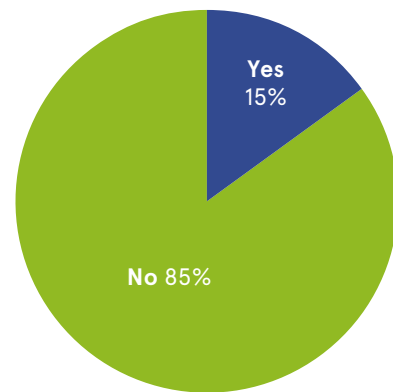
CREATIVES: PROFESSIONALIZATION AND INCOME BY SUB-SECTOR

CREATIVES AND ARTISTS

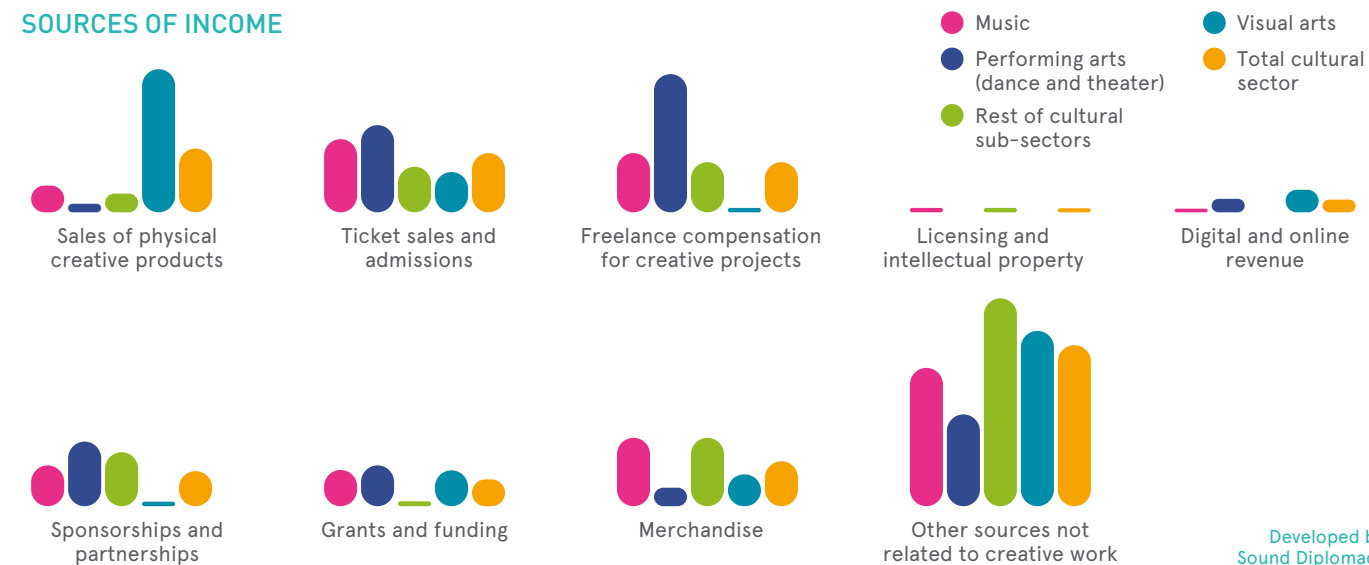
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME DERIVED FROM CREATIVE WORK



ABILITY TO COVER BASIC NEEDS WITH INCOME GENERATED FROM CREATIVE WORK



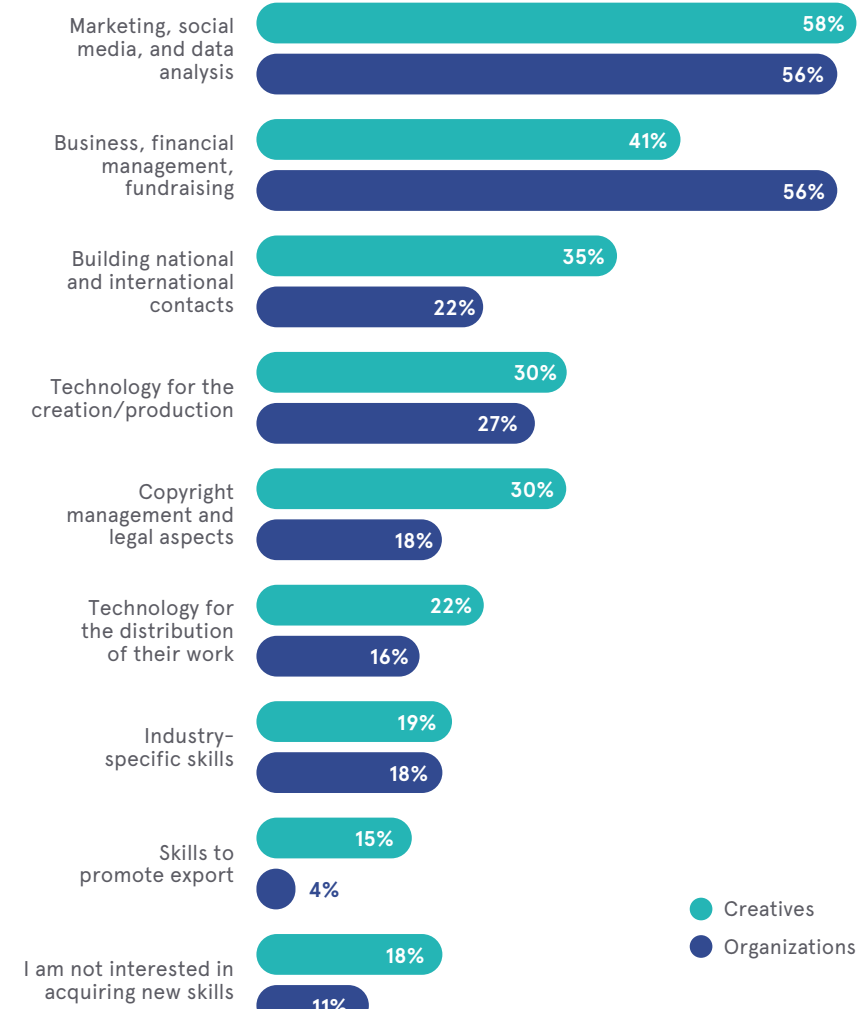
SOURCES OF INCOME



SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE GAPS IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM

CREATIVES AND ORGANIZATIONS

SKILLS RESPONDENTS WANT TO ACQUIRE



Developed by Sound Diplomacy

To increase their knowledge and professionalization within their sub-sector, and feel encouraged to remain in Lexington, there are a number of skills that creatives and organizations would like to acquire. The findings align with the shared perception that accessing public or private financing is a major obstacle to their success. Both groups gave this challenge an average rating of 3.6 out of 5, where 1 denotes no challenge and 5 indicates a significant challenge.



INTEREST IN HAVING A NEW VENUE IN LEXINGTON

- The majority of respondents across all three segments (local audiences, creatives, and organizations) believe that Lexington would benefit from a new venue.
- While local audiences and creatives prefer a multi-purpose venue, organizations lean towards a concert hall.
- Regarding capacity, local audiences favor a large venue that can accommodate 1,000 to 5,000 attendees, whereas creatives and organizations prefer a medium-sized venue suitable for 500 to 1,000 attendees.

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE: MAIN FINDINGS

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE CREATION OF A NEW VENUE IN LEXINGTON



WHY LEXINGTON NEEDS A NEW VENUE?



WHY LEXINGTON DOESN'T NEED A NEW VENUE?



Developed by Sound Diplomacy

6. SWOT



Image © Lexington Chamber Orchestra

STRENGTHS

- 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.
- There are a **large number of cultural education assets**.
- **High quality private arts programming is available for young people**. (I.e., Lexington Children's Theater, 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.
- **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.
- **Lexington hosts several book industry events**.
- There is a **large number of audiovisual assets** in the city.
- The **VisitLEX film and entertainment team** offers personalized project plans and **facilitates connections** with the city's artistic and film communities.
- **Several organizations provide opportunities, spaces to create and equipment to the local community** and act as de facto cultural hubs in Lexington, particularly in the downtown area.
- **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 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.
- **Some cultural organizations offer targeted DEI programming**. (I.e. the Carnegie Literary Center, and LexArts with the Arts Equity Grants).
- There are **regulations for waste management** during special events and some initiatives and organizations that connect the cultural sector to environmental sustainability.
- **The Percent for Art Fund** sets aside one percent of capital funds for public art projects in Lexington.

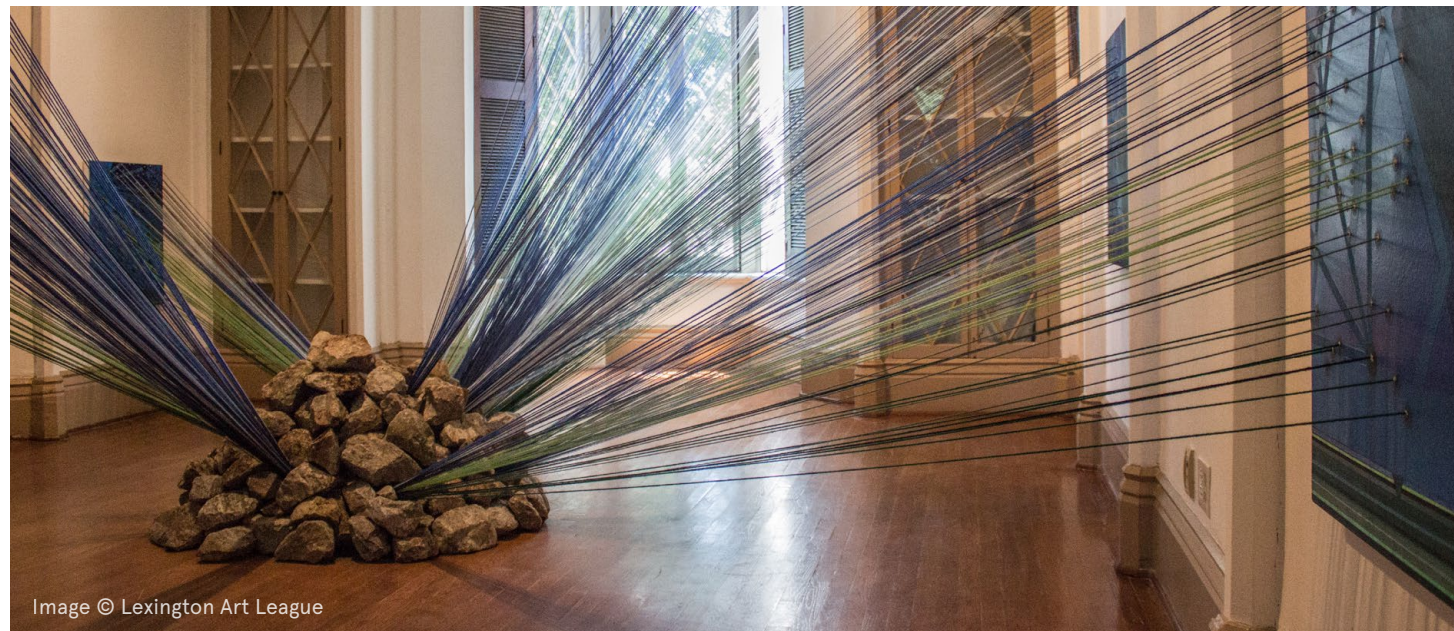


Image © Lexington Art League



Image © Robert Morgan

WEAKNESSES

- The **arts community is segmented** and there is a lack of cohesion.
- There is a **lack of arts education in public schools**.
- **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)
- Support for the arts community primarily **operates at an individual level**, and the sector relies heavily on interpersonal relationships.
- **Young artists face low wages** and a lack of paid opportunities.
- **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**.
- 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.
- 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**.
- Lexington **lacks a centralized online resource** for the arts sector, including maps and directories.
- 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.



Image © Allegro Dance Project

- 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.
- 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.

- 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**.
- **DEI events are not integrated** into the city's main events and programming, and many **DEI-focused initiatives struggle to receive funding**.
- **Accessibility in cultural spaces** is not given adequate consideration.
- 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.
- Many **cultural establishments close early**, during working hours.

- 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.
- Lexington **does not have a cultural tourism strategy or plan**.
- There is an **overall lack of museums** in Lexington.
- The city **does not offer shuttle services** or specific transportation options for cultural events.
- There is a **notable absence of dedicated health programs** for artists in Lexington.
- There are **no dedicated policies or initiatives for environmental sustainability** within the cultural sector at the city level.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Lexington has a **large student population**. As such, there is a robust population of young talent in the city.
- **Universities in Lexington offer internships**.
- Lexington has historically been celebrated for its **diverse community**, and for being welcoming to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- The city has **great philanthropic potential**.
- The **Town Branch 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.
- 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.
- Analysis revealed Lexington **residents are willing to engage** with all the creative and cultural sectors.
- Lexington is **38% surface parking lots**.
- The **city has a national airport** (Blue Grass Airport), that flies to cities across the United States.

THREATS



Image © Project Ricochet

- Statewide, there is a **diminished emphasis on the arts** and the arts are under threat of being defunded by the state government.
- **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.
- **Attendance and participation** in public events have not fully rebounded since the pandemic.
- There are **safety concerns** in Downtown Lexington, especially at night.
- There is a **lack of integration between different communities and cultures** in Lexington, resulting in an absence of a diverse, mixed audience.
- The city's **public transit** network is poorly connected.
- Current **tourism marketing** efforts incorporate the arts minimally.

7. ACTION PLAN



The action plan outlined below will help nurture and grow Lexington’s growing creative economy. The objectives of these recommendations are to:

- Identify specific actions to take to grow and support Lexington’s creative economy.
- Identify how city council, economic development, tourism, equity, and community development can contribute to developing the wider creative economy.
- Unify the community to support the creative economy.
- Build Lexington’s identity around its creative economy and arts scene.
- Embed the values and imperatives of DEI into Lexington’s creative economy.

RECOMMENDATION LENGTH KEY:
SHORT TERM (1-24 MONTHS)
MEDIUM TERM (24-48 MONTHS)
LONG TERM (48+ MONTHS)

RECOMMENDATION	SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
CREATIVE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT			
RECOMMENDATION #1 Establish Oversight of the Implementation of the Arts and Cultural Economy Audit			
RECOMMENDATION #2 Review, Update and Communicate the LexArts Strategic Governance Plan to the Public			
RECOMMENDATION #3 Increase Cultural Funding Through Existing Revenue Streams (Hotel Tax)			
RECOMMENDATION #4 Review and Communicate the Standardized Scoring System to Assess LexArts Grant Applications, and Advocate for Other Funding Bodies to Follow Suit			
RECOMMENDATION #5 Continue to Convene the DEI Committee at LexArts to Build Out the Sector-wide DEI Strategy			

RECOMMENDATION

SHORT TERM MEDIUM TERM LONG TERM

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TALENT RETENTION, AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATION #6 Organize Workshops, Lectures and Networking Sessions to Provide Professional Development Opportunities for the Creative Industries			
RECOMMENDATION #7 Establish a Creative Economy Stimulus and Cultural Entrepreneurship Program for Cultural Businesses			
RECOMMENDATION #8 Advocate for a Job Creation Program and a Freelancer Support Group			
RECOMMENDATION #9 Partner with Commerce Lexington to Recruit Businesses that Fill Gaps in the Arts Sector			
RECOMMENDATION #10 Host an Annual Arts and Cultural Industries Conference			
RECOMMENDATION #11 Create a Database of Lexington Arts Stakeholders and Spaces			
RECOMMENDATION #12 Create Best Practice Guidelines to Make the Cultural Ecosystem more Equitable, Accessible and Sustainable			

LICENSING, REGULATIONS AND ZONING

RECOMMENDATION #13 Advocate for Arts Friendly Regulations and Licensing Processes			
RECOMMENDATION #14 Create a One-stop Shop for Art and Cultural Permits, Licenses, Grants, and Guides			
RECOMMENDATION #15 Ensure the Incorporation of the Arts as a Central Component of the New Downtown Master Plan			

RECOMMENDATION

SHORT TERM MEDIUM TERM LONG TERM

INFRASTRUCTURE

RECOMMENDATION #16 Repurpose Vacant and Underutilized Spaces for the Arts and Cultural Sector			
RECOMMENDATION #17 Advocate for Incentives to Retrofit and Upgrade Existing Cultural Infrastructure			
RECOMMENDATION #18 Advocate for a Pilot Program that Offers Extended Public Transit during Major Events			
RECOMMENDATION #19 Host Regular Workshops on Safety during Cultural Events			

ARTS EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATION #20 Foster Partnerships to Augment Public Arts Education			
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MARKETING, COMMUNICATION AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATION #21 Create a Centralized Calendar with Information for all Creative Events in the City, Including Events at Restaurants			
RECOMMENDATION #22 Create an Audience Development Program Targeting the Student Population			
RECOMMENDATION #23 Develop a Wider Evening and Weekend Events Offer			

CULTURAL TOURISM

RECOMMENDATION #24 Partner with VisitLEX to Create a Cultural Tourism Strategy and Marketing Campaign			
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8. CONCLUSION



Image © Patch Whiskey & Ghostbeard Mural at the Loudoun House

Lexington has potential to become a vibrant hub for arts and culture. The city has a deep cultural heritage, with a unique story, architecture, and Southern charm.

Moreover, the city's well-established horse, bourbon and sports culture provide the 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.



Image © Kentucky Humanities Council Book Festival

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Due to rounding, numbers may not add up.
- 2 Since a more detailed breakdown of the data is unavailable, the cultural education sector has been omitted. The data would only reflect the whole education sector in Lexington-Fayette.
- 3 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.

ABOUT SOUND DIPLOMACY



Comprising of consultants and experts worldwide, Sound Diplomacy has advised over 150 clients in over 30 countries, including the public sector such as cities, municipalities, governments, and international governmental organizations, and private entities in the real estate, investment and cultural and creative sectors.

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