

Why the Arts Matter

Arts and culture tend to create a ripple effect which boosts local economies while also strengthening communities through improved quality of life, health outcomes, and public safety.

\$14B

economic impact in Cleveland (CreativeOhio, 2024)

59,093

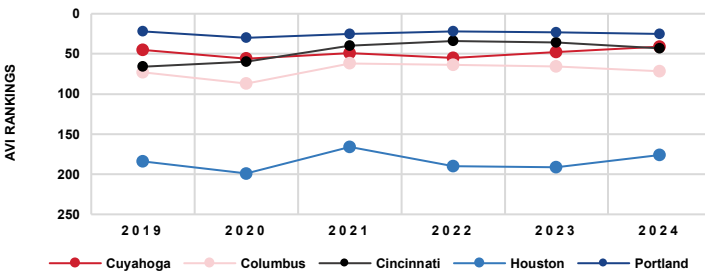
jobs supported in Cleveland (CreativeOhio, 2024)

Cuyahoga Has Built One of the Nation's Strongest Arts Ecosystems

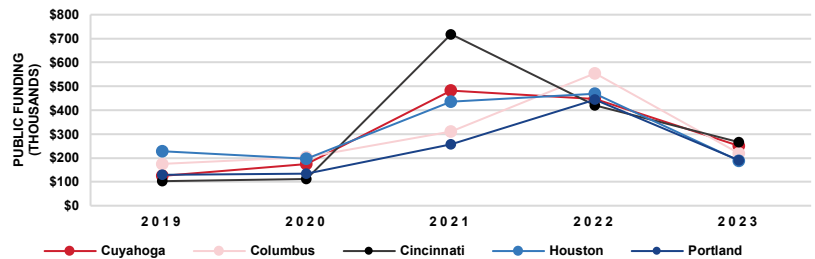
Nationally recognized anchor institutions and the many small and mid-sized organizations that make up 54% of the sector together create a diverse arts ecosystem that serves communities across Cuyahoga County.



Cuyahoga has maintained a consistently strong arts vibrancy position relative to peer counties
(SMU DataArts)



From 2019 to 2023, Cuyahoga had higher average levels of public support than most peers
(SMU DataArts)



The Model is Strong, but Needs to Evolve

Relying on a single revenue source creates long-term sustainability challenges.

2006



Long history of public investment: Cigarette tax approved in 2006 and was renewed twice by voters.

2016

34%

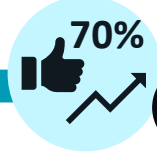


However, challenges related to single-source revenue: Cigarette tax receipts declined 34% between 2016–2023 and the tax rate per pack stayed constant at 30 cents.

2023

30 cents per pack

2024



Support continued through 2024, with 70% of voters approving an increased rate to 70 cents per pack, extending funding through 2035.

2035

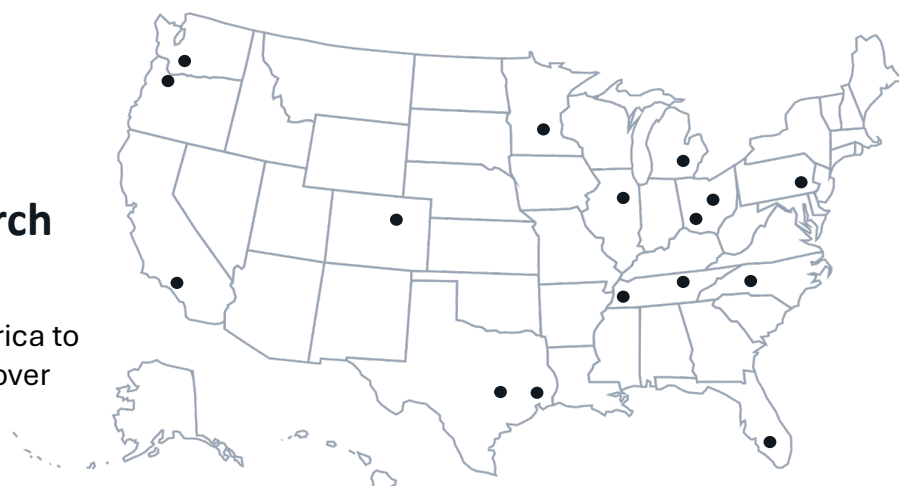
70 cents per pack

Looking Ahead

How We Approached the Research

We examined funding approaches from communities across the United States of America to understand what makes arts funding resilient over time.

These communities fund the arts in different ways, offering distinct tradeoffs between financial scale, predictability, and equitable distribution.



Hotel-Motel or Transient-Occupancy Tax

Percent of overnight stays earmarked for arts

General Fund-based

Annual municipal or county appropriations

Privately Led

Greater reliance on private philanthropy

Dedicated Arts Tax

Earmarked tax specifically for arts support

Collaborative/ Hybrid

Public and private funding through an intermediary

No single mechanism dominates, and the most resilient systems tend to layer multiple approaches rather than relying on any single source.

Two Ideas Worth Exploring

Two approaches have the potential to shield Cuyahoga against risks presented by shifts in funding, political and municipal priorities: revenue diversification and multi-county collaboration.

1 Revenue diversification through dedicated mechanisms that track economic activity rather than fixed rates produce more durable revenue capacity.

2 Multi-county collaboration has potential power to unify diverse stakeholders, further protecting the sector from risks related to shifting priorities or funding sources.



Lord
Cultural Resources

A
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