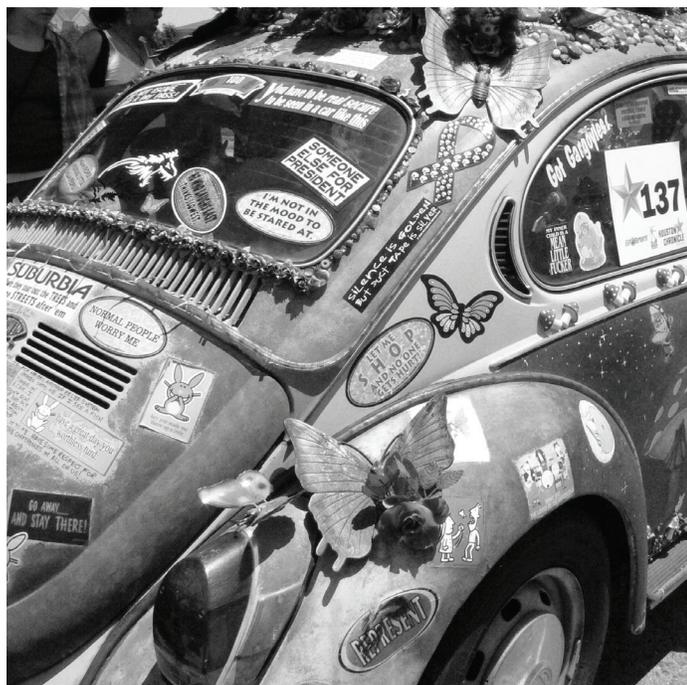


# arts and culture

## HOW OUR REGION'S CREATIVE RESOURCES BENEFIT RESIDENTS—SOME MORE THAN OTHERS

Houston is more than just the energy capital of the world. In addition to our world-famous energy sector, medical center, and aerospace industry, Houston is one of the only U.S. cities with resident, year-round professional ballet, opera, symphony, and theater companies. In fact, Houston's Theater District alone contains more than 12,000 seats, second only to New York City in the number of theater seats located in a specific area.<sup>1</sup> All-in-all, these arts and cultural institutions are estimated to generate \$45.6 million per year in local tax revenues and \$51.8 million in state taxes for Harris County. Houston's artistic and cultural offerings also attract more than two million tourists annually, contributing roughly \$132 million to our local economy per year.<sup>2</sup>



The benefits of arts and culture in Houston extend well past the economy. Arts and culture organizations play a key role in promoting neighborhood improvements, community connections, and civic engagement.<sup>3</sup> As our region becomes increasingly diverse, these organizations become even more valuable, as community-based arts programs have been shown to increase tolerance and

understanding between people of different backgrounds.<sup>4</sup> The health of our arts and cultural programs is also vital to the continued success of our other industries. As our region continues its shift toward an information economy, the arts will play an increasingly important role in our ability to attract and retain the talent necessary for a modern workforce.

Consistent with the rest of the nation, designers (interior, graphic, etc.) represent the largest portion of working artists in our region at 32%.<sup>5</sup> However, Houston trails the national average when it comes to arts occupations' share of regional employment.<sup>6</sup> Within our region, opportunity gaps in both pay and employment persist between counties and races/ethnicities. Whites represent the majority of arts employees in all categories but one (performing arts), and the majority of these jobs are located in Harris County. While artists in our region generally make enough to meet their basic needs, many are still underpaid relative to their overall skill and education levels.<sup>7</sup>

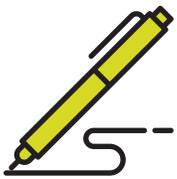
Many of Houston's art and cultural programs primarily rely on the resources of nonprofit organizations to keep their work accessible to the public. And while these organizations are largely growing throughout our region, they aren't necessarily keeping up with our rapidly growing populations. Harris County boasts the most arts and cultural organizations with 11.6 organizations per 100,000 residents as of 2015 compared to 6.8 in Fort Bend County and 5.0 in Montgomery County. Harris County also leads the way in arts spending by both nonprofits and government organizations.

Similarly, attendance at artistic events and performances relies heavily on socioeconomic trends in the Houston area. While most residents report that they believe the arts are important and deserve support, attendance levels vary by household income and educational attainment.

*The more we know about arts and culture in Houston, the more we can enrich our lives, enhance our community, and support our creative economy.*

# 3 Subtopics of Arts & Culture

## EMPLOYMENT IN THE ARTS



**73% of Greater Houston writers are white**

Whites dominate every creative employment category in the Houston metro region except for performing arts.

**31% of Greater Houston media employees are Hispanic.**

The largest share of arts employment held by any non-white group in the Houston metro area.

## ACCESS TO THE ARTS

181 → 602

The three-county area had 602 art and culture nonprofits in 2015 compared to 181 in 1990.



## ARTS ATTENDANCE

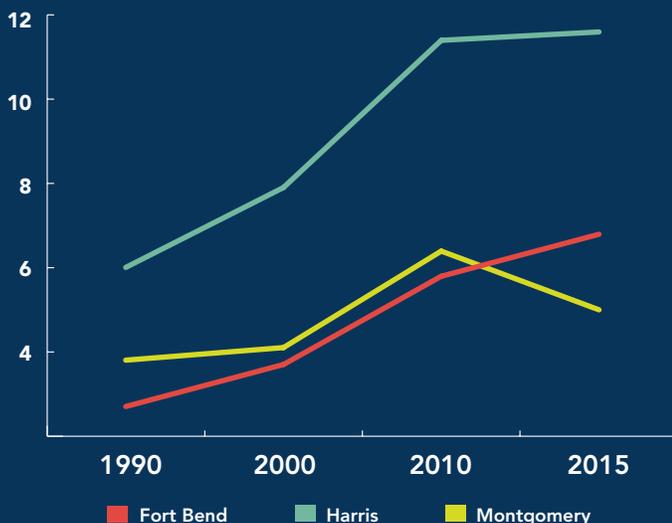
**29% of low-income Harris County residents attended an artistic performance**

Those earning \$37,500 or less attended artistic performances at half the rate of those earning \$100,000 or more in 2012.

EXPLORE ALL THREE SUBTOPICS FURTHER ON OUR WEBSITE.

## ARTS DENSITY

Number of Arts and Cultural Organizations per 100,000 Residents



Harris County nearly doubled in the number of total arts and cultural organizations per 100,000 residents between 1990 and 2015 (6.0 to 11.6, respectively). Fort Bend County experienced even greater growth while Montgomery County has seen less growth and less consistency with the number of arts and cultural organizations per 100,000 residents.

When compared to similarly sized communities throughout the country, all three counties fall near the middle or behind the pack with growth in arts access in Fort Bend and Montgomery not reflecting the rapid population growth in the area over the decades.

Trend over time:   
 Compared to nation:

## LEGENDS

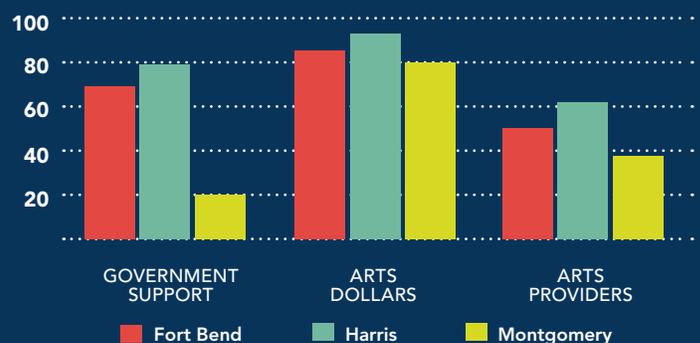
LOCATIONS: **FB** Fort Bend **H** Harris **M** Montgomery

COMPARISONS: Better Worse Same No Info

## ARTS VIBRANCY INDEX

SMU DataArts, a data partner of Understanding Houston, created the Arts Vibrancy Index to provide meaningful metrics about the health of the arts and culture sector in various geographies across the nation.

The Arts Vibrancy Index includes 12 measures that fall under three main rubrics: **total arts providers**, considering the number of independent artists, arts and culture employees, nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, and arts, culture, and entertainment firms in the community; **total arts dollars** in the community, including earned revenue from program activities, contributed revenue supporting the arts, total compensation to artists and staff, and total expenses; and **public support** using state and federal arts funding.



The scores are on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 as the highest. The scores are akin to percentiles—i.e., if a county's score on a given parameter is 56, it means it did better than 56% of counties on that measure.

The three counties appear to be spending more than 80 to 93% of other counties across the country, although government support and the number of arts providers is less in comparison and varies considerably by county.

See page 30-33 of 2019 Summary Report for references and data sources.