



HIGHLIGHTS 2020 COLORADO CREATIVE ECONOMY REPORT

WITH INITIAL IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS



Bohemian Rhapsody by the Reagan High School Art Car Club
Photo by Joe Kusomoto

Creative industries are a key part of Colorado's economy with higher than average growth in all areas of the state.

The largest and fastest growing industries (music, theater and dance) have been impacted the most by COVID-19.

Investment is needed as the creative industries will play an important role in helping our community recover from the COVID-19 crisis

1. COLORADO AND CREATIVITY GO HAND-IN-HAND.

Creativity in Colorado cuts across artistic disciplines and industries to form a broader, "creative economy." This economy stretches from the musicians, artists, dancers, filmmakers, and others who create the paintings, films, and performances we enjoy to the designers, chefs, curators, teachers, and more who work both in the arts and in other industries such as education, outdoor recreation, technology, and aerospace.

This report is designed to offer a brief look into Colorado's creative economy, in terms of employment and revenue while highlighting trends which offer insight into its comparative health statewide. The initial effects of the COVID-19 crisis are also addressed with suggestions for how to mitigate them and move forward.

[Access the full report here.](#)



Arts and culture generate more than **5 million jobs** nationwide. Colorado's creative industries are responsible for **\$31.6 billion in sales of goods and services**. This figure represents 4% of all goods and services sold within the state, more than mining or transportation.



Colorado ranks in the **top ten of all states** regarding the number of people performing and creating art; it leads all other states for the number of people attending performing arts events.



II. KEY DATA HIGHLIGHTS



EMPLOYMENT

191.2K JOBS

Are supported by Colorado's creative industries

172.9K

Are employed in creative occupations across multiple industries

25% GROWTH

Employment in creative industries grew by 25%, or 38.1 thousand jobs, from 2010 to 2019

ALL 3 REGIONS

The Front Range, Western Slope, and Eastern Plains all experienced employment growth

TOP 5 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CLUSTERS

By employment in 2019: Music, Theater, Dance, and Visual Arts; Culinary Arts; Design and Advertising; Creative Technology; and Architecture and Living Spaces

By growth (2010 - 2019): Culinary Arts; Music, Theater, Dance, and Visual Arts; Creative Technology; Culture and Heritage; and Architecture and Living Spaces



REVENUE

\$31.6B

Colorado's creative industries produced \$31.6 billion in sales of goods and services in 2019

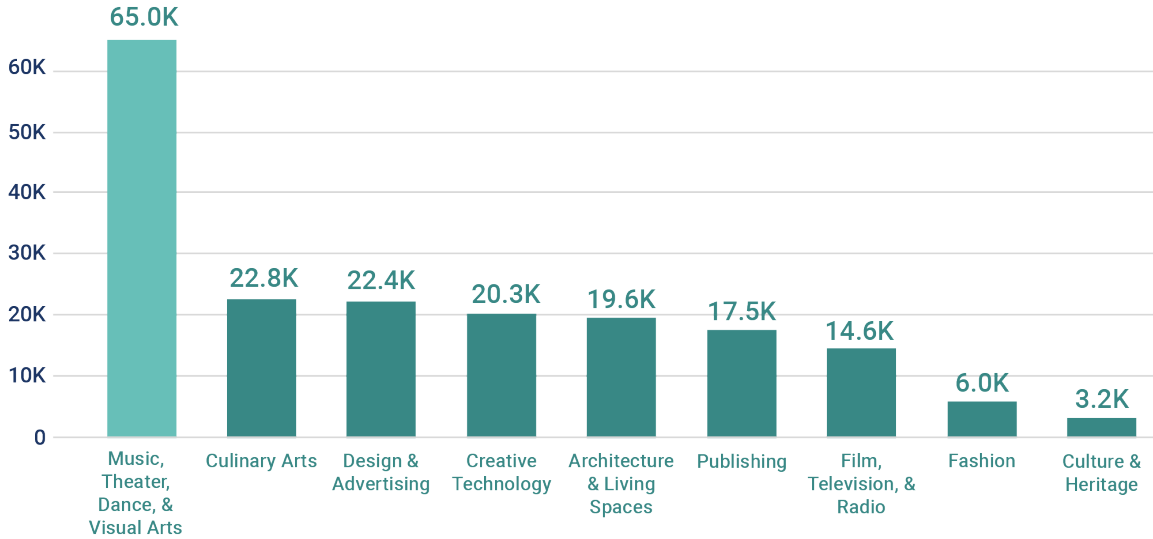
TOP 3 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CLUSTERS

By sales revenue in 2019: Creative Technology; Culinary Arts; and Film, Television and Radio

ALL 3 REGIONS

The Front Range, Western Slope, and Eastern Plains all benefited financially from creative industries activity with regional sales revenue

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES 2019 JOBS: 191,248 TOTAL



EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN COLORADO'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES BY CLUSTER: 2010 - 2019


Industry Cluster	2010 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2010-2019 Change	Percentage Change
Culinary Arts	13,008	22,779	9,771	75%
Music, Theater, Dance, and Visual Arts	48,080	64,961	16,881	35%
Creative Technology	15,059	20,260	5,201	35%
Culture and Heritage	2,388	3,212	824	35%
Architecture and Living Spaces	14,612	19,552	4,940	31%
Design and Advertising	18,447	22,352	3,905	21%
Film, Television, and Radio	12,504	14,611	2,107	17%
Fashion	5,299	5,977	678	13%
Publishing	23,733	17,544	-6,189	-26%
Totals	153,130	191,248	38,118	25%

COLORADO'S TOP TEN CREATIVE OCCUPATIONS BY EMPLOYMENT: 2019

Rank	Occupation	2020 Jobs	2019 Jobs
1	Photographers		23,616
2	Writers and Authors		12,058
3	Graphic Designers		10,955
4	Musicians and Singers		10,921
5	Public Relations Specialists		6,336
6	Architects, Except Landscape and Naval		6,077
7	Marketing Managers		5,548
8	Fine Artists, including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators		5,457
9	Interior Designers		4,882
10	Editors		4,770


III. INITIAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19

As COVID-19 continues to spread throughout Colorado, arts and culture organizations are witnessing dramatic, unexpected losses in employment and revenue unlike anything seen in our lifetime. Colorado's largest and fastest growing creative industries have also been some of the hardest hit by the impacts of COVID-19.



Major industry clusters estimated to lose 31,8K jobs and \$823M
 The Music, Theater, Dance, and Visual Arts industry cluster is responsible for the majority of losses due to the COVID-19 crisis. The cluster is estimated to lose 31,781 jobs and \$823 million in sales revenue between April and July 2020. This represents just over half of all estimated jobs lost and 31% of all estimated sales revenue lost in the state's creative industries during the time period.

Creative industries as a whole estimated to lose 59.6K jobs and \$2.6B
 The estimated losses will contract the region's creative economy by 31% in terms of employment and 8% in annual sales revenue.



Unemployment claims in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector are among the top 5 highest in the state.

ESTIMATED CUMULATIVE LOSSES FOR THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES BY INDUSTRY CLUSTER: APRIL TO JULY 2020

Cluster	Jobs	Sales Revenue
Music, Theater, Dance, and Visual Arts	31,781	\$823,063,643
Culinary Arts	5,513	\$413,115,466
Design and Advertising	4,470	\$225,642,805
Publishing	4,184	\$222,690,502
Architecture and Living Spaces	4,106	\$159,890,951
Creative Technology	4,052	\$339,580,683
Film, Television, and Radio	3,561	\$366,566,395
Fashion	1,439	\$48,799,476
Culture and Heritage	482	\$75,063,541
Totals	59,588	\$2,674,413,462

IV. CREATIVITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ESSENTIAL TO RECOVERY



Olivia Pevec and Matteo Sandate,
letthemroar.com
Photo by Joe Kusomoto



The creative economy is a collection of **agile industry clusters that was an engine of growth** following the last recession and is a proven asset for rural as well as urban economic development.



Looking towards the future, it is important that policymakers, private industry, philanthropic institutions, and the highly skilled workers that drive the creative economy **think regionally and statewide while looking for ways to facilitate the intersection of Colorado's creative economy with other industries across the state.** Cross-pollinating Colorado's abundance of artists, musicians, chefs, dancers, designers, architects, and more with others in the state pushing boundaries in industries like health care, technology, and outdoor recreation will propel Colorado's creative economy to new heights while helping position the state as a hub of creativity for the entire country



According to Americans for the Arts research, **72 percent of Americans believe "the arts unify our communities** regardless of age, race, and ethnicity and **81 percent say the arts are a "positive experience in a troubled world."** This research further demonstrates the arts are an asset to recovery.

"Arts and culture have always been essential to resilience during times of crisis. They provide healthy outlets for expression, keep people connected and generate positivity and hope in the face of adversity."

Margaret Hunt, Director, Colorado Creative Industries

V. ACTION STEPS

Regional professional groups, philanthropic organizations, municipal governments, and arts agencies should coordinate efforts swiftly to address the state's creative economy by taking two steps.

Jane Chu, former Chair, National Endowment for the Arts, and Margaret Hunt, Executive Director, Colorado Creative Industries (CCI), at the CCI 2017 Summit
Photo by Joe Kusomoto

1

Advocate for local, state, and federal funding for creative workers, firms, and establishments. This funding will help with immediate needs in the creative economy and prevent it from losing all the momentum it had up until this point.

2

To thrive post-pandemic, Colorado must leverage our creative power, putting creative workers to work rebuilding, reimagining, unifying, and healing communities, as well as within tribal lands. To learn more visit www.americansforthearts.org/news-room/arts-mobilization-center/creative-workers-to-work

**THERE IS NO
RECOVERY
WITHOUT
CREATIVITY.**

“The creative industries are a primary driver of Colorado’s economy, contributing 4.5% of the GDP. The arts and culture sector was an engine of growth following the last recession and is a proven asset for rural as well as urban resilience and recovery.”

Betsy Markey, Director,
Colorado Office of
Economic Development and
International Trade

Case Studies

Tara Rynders “The Clinic”

In 2017, Tara Rynders, an artist and registered nurse, developed an immersive dance performance and a series of movement workshops for nurses at Rose Medical Center in Denver, CO to address compassion fatigue and nurse burnout. Rynders, alongside Diedre Bricker RN MSN, developed an IRB-approved research study, implemented during “The Clinic Workshops” to assess the outcomes of using art, movement, and play-based theater to help decrease burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Participants reported a dramatic decrease in burnout and secondary traumatic stress and a significant increase in empathy following the workshop. Since 2017, the project has grown to include online performances featuring ER nurses sharing their experiences of caring for COVID-19 patients, as well as a program to support incarcerated hospice care providers. Rynders is currently researching the correlation between compassion fatigue and burnout in healthcare providers and its role in health disparities. Her most recent project, “Resiliency Moments,” piloted this year in collaboration with Colorado Center for Nursing Excellence, pairs one artist with one nurse for a 10 minute creative experience or gift for them to feel seen, heard, and cared for through an artistic and creative experience.



DW Burnett



Liberty Rural Learning Cooperative, “Applied Rural Arts”

The Liberty Rural Learning Cooperative was founded to preserve and support the unique qualities found in rural education, arts and culture. The group, based in Joes, CO, designs projects principled on community engagement practices. Utilizing place-based learning opportunities they build alternative and effective modes of communication for diverse populations, encouraging cultural reinvigoration in rural Colorado. The group’s Applied Rural Arts Program offers creative-based classes to high school students in Yuma County. The goal of these courses is to “re-imagine our hometowns as laboratories, a place where farmers become our teachers and rural main streets become our classrooms.” The Applied Rural Arts program introduces students to the professional pathways and thriving creative industries in their own backyard by offering a Rural Musicology Program, The Prairie Writer’s Workshop, Traditional and Contemporary Art Forms, and Museology and Archive Preservation in Rural Museums.

Image from the Prairie Writer’s Workshop, creative writing workshop with Gregory Hill

Case Studies



Woman in front of This Machine Has a Soul art installation
Photo credit: Kenzie Bruce

Warm Cookies of the Revolution “This Machine Has a Soul!”

This Machine has a Soul! was a 2018 community project led by the Denver “civic health club,” Warm Cookies of the Revolution, that utilized artworks and performances to engage north Denver communities in participatory budgeting. Through the project, artists created rube goldberg-like machines to help participants understand complicated budgeting systems. Other artists utilized performances and creative workshops to lead participants through decision-making processes. Two successful participatory budgeting processes took place through the program, engaging the Auraria campus and the Cole Neighborhood and distributing over \$75,000. Following the completion of the project, the city of Denver approved \$1.7 million in 2020 for a municipal participatory budgeting process.

“The Boettcher Foundation has invested in Colorado’s creative industries through creative districts and Space to Create -- affordable live/work spaces in rural areas. Our multiple collaborations with the state of Colorado have supported strategic investments that are based in partnership and community impact.”

Katie Kramer, President and CEO, Boettcher Foundation

Research credit:

Dr. Michael Seman
Colorado State University
LEAP Institute for the Arts
Regional Economic Development Institute

Link to full study and more resources:

https://coloradocreativeindustries.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020_co_creative_econ_report_final.pdf
artsthroughitall.org
Americansforthearts.org