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ARTS VIBRANCY IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST, 2020

Cities & Metros Fact Sheet No. 8 | June 2022

Prepared by: Joshua Padilla, Ally M. Beckwith, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This fact sheet highlights data on various arts vibrant communities in the United States from the 2020 Arts Vibrancy Index Report.¹ The growth of arts communities across the country contributes to the increased intensity of the United States’ cultural sector. Using the original data prepared by Southern Methodist University (SMU) Data Arts, this fact sheet focuses on the arts vibrancy of communities in the Mountain West.

ABOUT THE DATA:

The original report explores all metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas in the U.S. and their respective arts vibrancy scores. In March 2020, arts and cultural organizations across the country were forced to close their doors due to COVID-19. Three main metrics are used to evaluate each community’s score out of 100: arts providers (45% of score), arts dollars (45% of score), and government support (10% of the score).

Four sub-metrics contribute to the “arts providers” metric: independent artists; arts and culture employees; arts and cultural organizations; and arts, culture, and entertainment firms. Four sub-metrics contribute to the “arts dollars” metric: program revenue; contributed revenue; total expenses; and total compensation. Four sub-metrics contribute to the “government support” metric: state arts dollars; state arts grants; federal arts dollars; and federal arts grants. These sub-metrics are also scored out of 100. These data relate only to public arts, and not the commercial art and entertainment sectors of respective communities. This fact sheet includes data on medium communities (Boulder, CO; and Santa Fe, NM) and small communities (Glenwood Springs, CO; Steamboat Springs, CO; and Heber, UT) in the Mountain West appearing in the top arts-vibrant communities in their respective size categories.

Large Communities	Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with populations of 1,000,000 or more
Medium Communities	MSAs with populations between 100,000 to 1,000,000
Small Communities	MicroSAs with populations less than 100,000

KEY FINDINGS:

1. The Mountain West has no communities ranked among the top 20 arts-vibrant large sized communities (1,000,000 or more residents).
2. Santa Fe, NM ranks first among art-vibrant medium sized communities (100,000 to 1,000,000 residents) in the U.S. in 2020.
3. Santa Fe, NM ranks higher than Boulder, CO in the medium communities (100,000-1,000,000) in the Mountain West despite having a smaller population.
4. Heber, UT ranks as one of the top ten arts-vibrant small communities (less than 100,000) since 2015.
5. Neither Nevada nor Arizona has any communities that rank within the top 20 of arts-vibrant communities.

¹ See full 2020 report from *SMU Data Arts*, “Arts Vibrancy Index Report VI: Hotbeds of America’s Arts & Culture” (https://culturaldata.org/media/2152/arts-vibrancy-index-report-vi_smu-dataarts_sept2020.pdf).

Table 1 presents the two Mountain West metropolitan areas that are ranked within the top 10 medium communities for arts vibrancy. Santa Fe, New Mexico ranked first as the top arts-vibrant medium community in the United States with perfect scores in both the arts providers and arts dollars metrics. Both Santa Fe, New Mexico and Boulder, Colorado are two of the top medium communities in the Mountain West with small populations (less than 350,000 people) living in the metropolitan area.

Table 1: Top Ten Ranking Arts-Vibrant Medium Communities in the Mountain West, 2020

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Areas	2018 Population	Arts Providers Score	Arts Dollars Score	Government Support Score
1	Santa Fe, NM	150,358	100	100	99
5	Boulder, CO	326,196	99	90	88

*Adapted from “Arts Vibrancy Index Report VI: Hotbeds of America’s Arts & Culture”. *SMU Data Arts*. <https://sites.smu.edu/Meadows/ArtsVibrancyMap/>

Table 2 presents the three Mountain West micropolitan areas that are ranked within the top 10 small communities for arts vibrancy. Steamboat Springs, Colorado is ranked higher than both Heber, Utah and Glenwood Springs, Colorado while having the smallest population among the Mountain West micropolitan areas (25,638).

Table 2: Top Ten Ranking Arts-Vibrant Small Communities in the Mountain West, 2020

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Areas	2018 Population	Arts Providers Score	Arts Dollars Score	Government Support Score
2	Steamboat Springs, CO	25,638	99	98	73
3	Heber, UT	76,236	99	96	98
5	Glenwood Springs, CO	77,828	89	65	41

*Adapted from “Arts Vibrancy Index Report VI: Hotbeds of America’s Arts & Culture”. *SMU Data Arts*. <https://sites.smu.edu/Meadows/ArtsVibrancyMap/>

Table 3 presents the overall metric rankings for the five Mountain West arts-vibrant communities presented above, compared to the total 947 unique nationwide communities that were analyzed in the report. Santa Fe, New Mexico is ranked 1st in the nation for the Arts Dollars metric as a medium community (100,000 to 1,000,000 residents).

Table 3: Mountain West Art-Vibrant Community Metrics Overall Ranks, 2020

Community Area	Arts Providers Rank	Arts Dollars Rank	Government Support Rank
Santa Fe, NM	3 rd	1 st	4 th
Boulder, CO	14 th	111 th	124 th
Steamboat Springs, CO	4 th	12 th	257 th
Heber, UT	8 th	40 th	10 th
Glenwood Springs, CO	68 th	23 rd	134 th

*Adapted from “Arts Vibrancy Index Report VI: Hotbeds of America’s Arts & Culture”. *SMU Data Arts*. <https://culturaldata.org/arts-vibrancy-2020/executive-summary/>

Table 4 presents the sub-metric rankings for the five Mountain West arts-vibrant communities, compared to the total 947 unique nationwide communities that were analyzed in the report. Santa Fe, New Mexico ranked 1st in the nation for the “program revenue,” “total expenses,” and “total compensation” sub-metrics. Steamboat Springs, Colorado ranked 1st in the nation for the “arts and culture organizations” sub-metric.

Table 4: Mountain West Art-Vibrant Community Sub-Metrics Overall Ranks, 2020

Community Area	Arts Providers				Arts Dollars				Government Support			
	Independent Artists	Arts & Culture Employees	Arts & Culture Organizations	Arts, Culture, & Entertainment Firms	Program Revenue	Contributed Revenue	Total Expenses	Total Compensation	State Arts Dollars	State Arts Grants	Federal Arts Dollars	Federal Arts Grants
Santa Fe, NM	3 rd	16 th	2 nd	7 th	1 st	2 nd	1 st	1 st	147 th	55 th	6 th	2 nd
Boulder, CO	14 th	88 th	41 st	12 th	98 th	146 th	116 th	102 nd	451 st	291 st	86 th	97 th
Steamboat Springs, CO	4 th	280 th	1 st	6 th	10 th	15 th	10 th	13 th	122 nd	58 th	793 rd	690 th
Heber, UT	5 th	124 th	73 rd	8 th	41 st	40 th	37 th	45 th	63 rd	47 th	9 th	14 th
Glenwood Springs, CO	45 th	565 th	11 th	54 th	19 th	25 th	34 th	23 rd	365 th	277 th	186 th	59 th

* Adapted from “Arts Vibrancy Index Report VI: Hotbeds of America’s Arts & Culture”. *SMU Data Arts*. <https://culturaldata.org/arts-vibrancy-2020/executive-summary/>