

OREGON IN TOP 10 OF AMERICA'S MOST ARTS-VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

SMU DataArts Unveils Top 100: Oregon's Creative Economy Shines on National Stage

Salem, Oregon, January 26, 2026 – Oregon has once again secured its place as a national cultural powerhouse, ranking **No. 10** in the 10th annual [SMU DataArts Arts Vibrancy Index](#). This marks the third consecutive year Oregon has appeared in the top 10, underscoring a sustained commitment to the arts and culture that spans from our bustling metro centers to our historic rural hubs.

From the world-class stage of the Oregon Symphony in Portland and the Hult Center in Eugene to the murals and bronze trails of Pendleton and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, our vibrancy comes from a unique blend of urban innovation and deep-rooted rural traditions statewide.

“Oregon’s creative landscape has long drawn people to live, work and create here,” said Amy Lewin, director of the Oregon Arts Commission and the Oregon Cultural Trust. “This recognition belongs to Oregonians who fuel this vibrancy, leveraging resources and innovation to strengthen arts and culture in every corner of the state. Their creativity shapes the roadmap for a thriving future.”

While the index traditionally looks at data-driven metrics like supply, demand and public investment, for Oregonians, this ranking reflects a lived reality: a state where creativity is woven into the landscape. Oregonians don't just consume art and culture; they live it.

To mark its 10th anniversary, SMU DataArts expanded its list to 100 communities, analyzing more than 900 areas nationwide. The index measures 13 unique factors, including the number of independent artists, total nonprofit arts and culture dollars and government support.

“Oregon’s ranking is a testament to the fact that arts vibrancy isn't accidental,” said Dr. Jennifer Benoit-Bryan, executive director of SMU DataArts. “It is built through long-term commitment to funding, public investment in infrastructure, and a culture that values creativity as essential to quality of life.”

For more information on the Arts Vibrancy Index and to explore the data for specific Oregon communities, please visit <https://culturaldata.org/arts-vibrancy-2025>.

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About the Oregon Arts Commission

The [Oregon Arts Commission](#) provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of Business Oregon (formerly the Oregon Economic and Community Development

Department) in 1993, in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. In 2003, the Oregon Legislature moved the operations of the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Arts Commission, streamlining operations and making use of the Commission's expertise in grantmaking, arts and cultural information and community cultural development. The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon Legislature and with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. More information about the Oregon Arts Commission is available online at: artscommission.oregon.gov.

About SMU DataArts

[SMU DataArts](#), the National Center for Arts Research, is a project of the Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University. The mission of SMU DataArts is to provide the evidence-based insights needed to collectively build strong, vibrant and equitable arts communities. Its research efforts range from academic papers published in leading journals, applied research undertaken with community partners, and actionable insights shared directly with arts practitioners. Its programs provide business intelligence tools and resources to help arts leaders leverage data to answer critical management questions and connect research analyses to their own work.

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Media Contacts

Emma England, Meadows School of the Arts, 214-768-3785, eengland@mail.smu.edu

Dana Turell, Turell Group, 541-525-2207, dana@turellgroup.com