



Arts Data Profile #11: State-Level Estimates of Arts Participation Patterns (2012-2015)

Research Brief #1: Highlights of Arts Participation by State (2012-2015)

Both the NEA's Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) and the short-form version—the Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS)—can be used to report reliable state estimates for selected categories of arts participation. Neither survey can be used, however, to rank arts participation rates by state. In fact, once the sample designs are considered, arts participation rates in most states tend to approximate the U.S. average.¹

In 34 states, for example, the proportion of adults who attended art exhibits over a 12-month period is not significantly different from the U.S. average of 18.7 percent; in 39 states, the movie-going rate is similar to the U.S. average—58.4 percent.

Even so, some geographic patterns of arts participation emerge from the two surveys. Western states such as Utah and Colorado tend to exhibit participation rates significantly greater than the U.S. average. In the East, states such as Maryland and Vermont also exhibit above-average arts participation rates.

Conversely, below-average arts participation is evident in several southern states, including Mississippi, West Virginia, and Florida.

Although these patterns are common for many of the categories of state arts participation captured by the AABS and SPPA, exceptions nonetheless stand out. For example, in Virginia, Indiana, Maine, and Kansas, arts participation rates tend to be average. The exceptions: Virginia ranks highly in art exhibit attendance; Indiana scores above-average in the share of adults visiting sites for their historical or design value; personally performing or creating artworks is popular in Maine; and Kansas ranks highly among adults who use TV, radio, or the Internet to consume art or arts programming.

Below are highlights of state-level estimates of arts participation rates from both the AABS and the SPPA.² To more easily visualize these patterns, readers may also wish to examine the accompanying map book [add hyperlink], included in NEA Arts Data Profile #11.

(Arts participation terms are listed at the end of this document.)

Performing Arts Attendance, 2015

Attendance rates significantly greater than the U.S. average: Alaska; Washington; Montana; Wyoming; Utah; Colorado; Minnesota; District of Columbia; Vermont, and Connecticut.

Attendance rates significantly less than the U.S. average: Oklahoma; West Virginia; Arkansas; Mississippi; Alabama; Georgia; and Florida.

In 2015, nearly 32 percent of U.S. adults attended at least one live music, theater, or dance performance in the past 12 months. In Utah, that rate was 51 percent. Other states with performing arts attendance rates significantly greater than the U.S. average are Colorado and Vermont, where attendance was roughly 44-45 percent of adults, as well as Wyoming and Connecticut, where attendance rates were approximately 42 percent.

Performing arts attendance rates were roughly 40 percent in: Washington, Alaska, Montana, and Minnesota.

The performing arts attendance rate in the District of Columbia—treated as a state for statistical purposes—was 49.2 percent.

Performing arts attendance was below average in several southern states such as Mississippi and Alabama, where fewer than 20 percent of adults attended live music, dance, or theater performances.

Art-Exhibit Attendance, 2015

Rates significantly greater than the U.S. average: Alaska; Colorado; District of Columbia; Maryland; Oregon; Utah; Vermont; Virginia; and Wyoming.

Rates significantly less than the U.S. average: Florida; Georgia; Louisiana; Mississippi, Nevada; North Carolina; North Dakota; and West Virginia.

While 18.7 percent of all U.S. adults attended art exhibits in the past year, that rate was 30 percent or more in DC, Vermont, Utah, and Colorado. In Virginia and Oregon, the share of adults attending art exhibits surpassed the U.S. average by 8 to 10 percentage points.

Relatively low attendance at art exhibits was evident in Nevada (11.9 percent), North Dakota (10 percent), and several southern states, including North Carolina (12 percent).

Movie-Going

Rates significantly greater than the U.S. average: Alaska; Colorado; Idaho; New Mexico; Oregon; Utah; Washington; and Wyoming.

Rates significantly less than the U.S. average: Alabama; Florida; Mississippi; South Carolina; and Tennessee.

Most U.S. states display an average movie-going rate of roughly 55 to 60 percent of adults. States where movie-going is more popular tend to be clustered in the West, including Idaho, where 73 percent of adults went to the movies at least once in the past 12 months—and New Mexico, where 67 percent went to the movies.

Movie-going was less common in states such as Tennessee, Mississippi, and South Carolina, where 47 percent of adults went to the movies in 2015.

Touring or Visiting Buildings, Neighborhoods, Parks, and Other Sites for Their Historic or Design Value

Rates significantly greater than the U.S. average: District of Columbia; Colorado; Montana; Maryland; Minnesota; Indiana; Oregon.

Rates significantly less than the U.S. average: Louisiana; Georgia; Oklahoma; Nevada; South Carolina; Mississippi.

In 2015, 27.4 percent of all U.S. adults toured or visited at least one site primarily for its historic or design value. In Washington, D.C., however, that rate was 50.2 percent. Although not quite as high as in D.C., the percentage of adults visiting sites was also above average in Indiana (36.8 percent); Minnesota (37.4 percent); and Montana (39.6 percent).

Alternatively, the percentage of adults visiting sites was significantly below average in states such as South Carolina (17.4 percent); Mississippi (15.6 percent); and Oklahoma (18.8 percent).

Literary Reading

Rates significantly greater than the U.S. average: Vermont; Oregon; Alaska; Colorado; Montana; Utah; New Hampshire; Idaho; Wyoming; Maryland; Hawaii; District of Columbia; Massachusetts.

Rates significantly less than the U.S. average: Texas; West Virginia; Florida; Nevada; and Mississippi.

While the average U.S. literary-reading rate was 43 percent in 2015, it was significantly greater in a number of western states, including Oregon, Colorado, and Montana. In each of those states,

the share of adults who had read at least one novel or short story or poem or play in the past 12 months ranged from roughly 58 to 60 percent.

Literary-reading rates were also high in parts of the East—in Maryland, for instance, and in several New England states. For example, the percentage of adults reading literature was nearly 63 percent in Vermont and 57 percent in New Hampshire.

On the other hand, Texas, which exhibits average rates of participation in most forms of arts engagement, scored a literary-reading rate significantly below the U.S. average. In 2015, 37.5 percent of Texans read literature. Literary-reading rates were also low in Mississippi, Nevada, West Virginia, and Florida.

Personal Performance or Creation of Artworks

Rates significantly greater than the U.S. average: Colorado; Vermont; Montana; Oregon; Alaska; Maine; Wyoming; Connecticut; Minnesota; District of Columbia; Massachusetts; Kansas; Wisconsin; Michigan.

Rates significantly less than the U.S. average: South Carolina; Georgia; Florida; Oklahoma; West Virginia.

Like the geographic patterns evident in literary reading, rates of personal performance or creation of artworks is above average in a number of western and New England states.

In both Colorado and Vermont, for example, the percentage of adults who engaged in personal performance or creation of art in the past 12 months was approximately 64 percent—a rate more than 19 percentage points greater than the national average of 45.1 percent.

However, rates of personal performance and creation of art are also quite high in certain Great Lakes states, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, where, in 2015, more than 53 percent of adults engaged in these activities.

At the other end of the scale are states such as Oklahoma and Florida—in both states, fewer than 32 percent of adults personally performed or created artworks.

Consuming Art through Electronic Media

Rates significantly greater than the U.S. average: Washington; District of Columbia; Idaho; Oregon; Kansas; Maryland; Maine.

Rates significantly less than the U.S. average: Georgia; Florida; Iowa; Oklahoma; Tennessee.

The 2012 SPPA reported that more than 61 percent of U.S. adults used TV, radio, or the Internet at least once in the past 12 months to consume art or arts programming. The rate is 77-80 percent in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and the District of Columbia. It is roughly 71 percent in Kansas, Maryland, and Maine.

As discussed above, the percentage of adults who went to the movies was below average in Tennessee. Similarly, Tennessee ranked below average in arts consumption through media—44.8 percent in 2012.

Other states with below-average media use include Iowa, Oklahoma, Georgia, and Florida. In each of these states, roughly 47-50 percent used TV, radio, or the Internet to consume art or arts programming.

Notably, adults in Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Virginia, who reported below-average rates of arts participation in nearly all other state categories captured by the AABS, were average in their rates of consuming art through media. In 2012, for instance, nearly 60 percent of adults residing in West Virginia used TV, radio, or the Internet to consume art or arts programming. That rate was comparable to the U.S. average of 61 percent.

Clarification of Terms

Personal performance or creation of artworks:

Created pottery, ceramics, or jewelry; created leatherwork, metalwork, or woodwork; did weaving, crocheting, or other textile art; played a musical instrument; did acting; performed or practiced dance; did social dancing; performed or practiced singing; created films or videos as an artistic activity; took photographs as an artistic activity; created visual arts such as paintings, sculptures, or graphic designs; did creative writing.

Arts consumption via electronic media: Used TV, radio, and/or the Internet to Consume Art or Arts Programming:

Watched, listened to, or downloaded any: jazz; Latin, Spanish, or salsa music; classical music; opera; other music (e.g., rock, pop, country, folk, rap, or hip-hop); musical or stage plays; ballet, modern, or contemporary dance; other dance programs or shows; programs about visual arts such as painting, sculpture, graphic design, or photography; programs about books or writers; or books, short stories, or poetry read out loud.

Endnotes

¹See *Why it is Difficult to Rank States by Arts Participation*, included in ADP #11 [Add Hyperlink]

²State-level attendance at visual and performing arts events, movie going, literary reading, and personal performance or creation of artworks are based on the 2014 and 2015 AABS. State-level estimates of arts consumption through media, a subject not covered by the AABS, are based on the 2012 SPPA.