

The logo icon for CVINDEX is a dark teal circle containing a white bar chart with three vertical bars of increasing height from left to right.

# CVINDEX

CVI METHODOLOGY  
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# Introduction

This document details the methodological approach and uses of the Creative Vitality™ Index (CVI™) value. The CVI™ is a robust and inclusive measure of the economic vitality of the arts and arts activities in a specified geographic or political region of the United States. Rigorously constructed and updated annually, a region's CVI™ report is a credible and clear data source for arts research and advocacy purposes.

## What is an Index?

An index is generally an efficient means of summarizing quantities of interrelated information and describing complex relationships. An index can be, as in the case of the CVI™, a single indicator of multiple variables and interactions between these variables. Changes in an index will reflect changes in the data used to generate the index. Standardization and unification of data mean that indexes are ideally suited for comparative analysis. The comparative nature of the CVI™ has added analytical and policy value.



## What is the Creative Vitality™ Index?

The Creative Vitality™ Index (CVI™) measures annual changes in the economic health of an area by integrating economic data streams from both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Using per capita measurements of revenue data from both for-profit and non-profit entities as well as job data from a selection of highly creative occupations, the research aggregates the data streams into a single index value that reflects the relative economic health of a geography's creative economy. The CVI™ provides an easily comprehensible measure of economic health to help communicate information from a broad arts coalition to policymakers and stakeholders. This longitudinal data allows for compelling year-to-year comparisons as well as cross-city, county, and state comparisons. The CVI™ research system also provides

users with a series of reports on the rise and fall of key data factors measured by the index. The CVI™ goes beyond an annual tally of what is often inflation-driven growth in the non-profit art sector. Instead, it is a more inclusive reporting mechanism that is rooted in robust data streams that reflect the entire arts-based creative economy.

The Creative Vitality™ Index is a resource for informing public policy and supporting the work of advocates for creative economies. CVI™ reports have been used as a way to define the parameters of an area's creative economy and as a means of educating communities about the components and dynamics of a creative economy. The CVI™ is frequently used as a source of information for arts advocacy messaging and to call attention to significant changes in regional creative economies. This research has also been used to underscore the economic relationships between the for- and non-profit sectors and as a mechanism for diagnosing a region's creative strengths and weaknesses.

## What does the Creative Vitality™ Index Measure?

The CVI™ measures a carefully selected set of economic inputs related to the arts and creativity in a given geographic area, with measurements of both for-profit and non-profit arts-related activities. The index has two major components including measurements of community participation based on per capita revenues of arts-related goods and services, and measurements of per capita occupational employment in the arts. The weighted indicators within the community participation portion of the index are the following: non-profit arts organization income, non-profit humanities organizational income, per capita book store sales, percent of per capita electronic media store sales (29.2% of sales), per capita performing arts revenues, and per capita art gallery and individual artist sales. These indicators account for sixty percent of the overall index values. A forty percent weighting has been assigned to occupational employment in the arts that captures the incidence of jobs associated with measurably high levels of creative output.

The rationale for this approach is the cause-and-effect relationship between participation levels and jobs. The

underlying theory is that public participation in the arts or public demand for arts experiences and events ultimately drives budgets and organizational funding levels, which in turn support artists and art-related jobs within the economy.

### **Developing the Creative Vitality™ Index**

The CVI™ was developed in the context of innovations in cultural policy and economic development. The CVI™ was initially conceived to help public sector arts agencies clearly communicate that their work encompasses a much larger segment of creative economic activity than had previously been the case. This was necessary because, beginning in the mid 1960s, when state arts agencies were established and city arts agencies were either founded or expanded, the primary focus of these entities was on the growth of the supply and quality of primarily non-profit-based arts activities.

These entities made great progress in this area. Once the supply and quality of non-profit arts activities was greatly bolstered, however, the public sector funders of the non-profit arts field began to consider how their goals and the work of the non-profit arts were part of a much larger creative system. They also became aware that the non-profit arts and public arts policy depended on the health of that larger system to survive in the present and thrive in the future.

Simultaneous with these developments, practitioners from fields representing for-profit creative activities and occupations began to discuss the creative economy in broad, highly inclusionary terms. The arts field and public sector arts funders embraced this broader concept as reflective of how they envisioned their work—as a stimulative part of an overall creative system and not simply as suppliers of funding to maintain a supply of non-profit-sourced arts opportunities. The CVI™ reflects this broader systems-oriented thinking and reinforces the fact that the non-profit arts and public arts agencies are part of an interdependent whole called “the creative sector.”

The CVI™ grew out of a conversation about whether to undertake an economic impact study of the arts. The staff leadership of the Washington State Arts Commission and the Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, in collaboration with others, explored ways to expand and enrich the economic argument for support of the arts and especially public funding of the arts. In doing so, the group was influenced by two national

conversations concerning economic development: the defining of a creative economy and the outlining of the concept of economic development clusters. Those conversations did something the non-profit arts community was very late in doing—they included the related for-profit creative sector in a universe normally reserved for non-profits.

The public value work articulated by Mark Moore also played a role in the development of the CVI™. That work helped the public sector component of the non-profit arts funding community move away from a perspective oriented toward saving the arts to considering ways to be responsive to what citizens wanted in the arts. The approach also worked to shape agency deliverables to reflect their actual value to the public rather than the value arts aficionados considered them to have for the public. One result of this influence was that the CVI™ was developed in a context of thinking in which individuals are assumed to have choices and that, to remain viable, public sector arts funders need to offer choices the public will value and thus select. In this concept of selection is the understanding that choice in the arts ranges outside the non-profit arts and that the public sector arts agency needs to ensure that such choice is available.

### **The Relationship of the CVI™ to Economic Impact Studies**

Although it evolved from a discussion of whether to commission an economic impact study, the CVI™ is not an economic impact study of the arts. Economic impact studies are enumerations of the total economic value and impact of a specific basket of arts activities on the community, taking into account estimates of the ripple effect on jobs and revenues in other non-related industries. The majority of such studies focus on the non-profit art sector and either measure its impact exclusively or introduce measures of the impact of selected for-profit activities in a supplementary manner. The CVI™ utilizes some of the data typically included in arts economic impact studies; however, it draws on many more data streams, and its goal is quite different in that it seeks to provide an indicator of the relative health of the economic elements of the creative economy.

Economic impact studies are rooted in advocacy and generally have as a core purpose the definition of the non-profit arts sector as a meaningful component of the larger economic system. The results of such studies are commonly used to argue for the allocation of scarce

budget dollars to the arts because a dollar invested in the arts multiplies many times over and helps nurture a more robust overall economy. These studies have also been used to help the arts compete with other discretionary forms of government spending--and often these other interests have their own economic impact studies. The studies have been used most effectively to counteract the misguided notion that funds invested in the non-profit arts are removed from the economy and thus play no role in building or sustaining it.

Economic impact studies have also been commissioned to call attention to the size and scope of arts and culture as a component of the overall economic activity of an area. Often community leaders and the public are only familiar with one segment of the arts through their personal acquaintance with a single institution or discipline. The economic impact study aggregates information in ways that call attention to the size and scope of a cluster of endeavors that are often considered to be of minor importance in economic terms. As a result, the prestige of the arts and culture community in an area is enhanced, and the ability of the sector to be heard is often increased. Although the CVI™ can partially address each of the uses to which economic impact studies are employed, it has a different purpose. The CVI™ is about exploring a complex set of relationships and changes in the dynamics of those relationships over time. It is not a replacement for economic impact studies, but can be a complement to them.

### **Making Use of the Creative Vitality™ Index**

The Creative Vitality™ Index is designed to serve as a tool to inform public policy decision making and to support the work of advocates for the development of the creative economy. Here are some of the major uses of the CVI™: as a definitional tool, the index can be used to call attention to and educate the community at-large concerning the components and dynamics of the creative economy. Of particular significance is the promotion of the concept that the creative economy includes both the for-profit and the non-profit arts-related activities of an area. Many economic impact studies centered on the arts have focused almost entirely on the non-profit sector, and the inclusion of for-profit activities is, for many, a new conceptualization of the role of the arts in an economy. This approach locates all arts and arts-related creative activities in a continuum of creative activities.

The index can serve as a source of information for advocacy messaging. Individuals engaged in advocacy on behalf of the creative economy as a whole or elements of it can use the index to do some of the following:

Call the attention of the public to significant changes in the creative economy ecosystem. For example, if contributions from private foundations drop substantially in a year and three major architectural firms leave the area, advocates for a healthy creative economy can call attention to those factors as negative elements that will affect an overall ecosystem. Similarly, if non-profit arts groups at the same time experience increases in income from individuals and there are substantial increases in employment within other major creative occupations such as graphic design and advertising, the negative impact of the events noted above may be cushioned or alleviated altogether.

Underscore the economic relationships between the for-profit sector and the non-profit sector and make the point that a healthy non-profit arts sector is important to the development of a healthy for-profit sector.

Advocate for improvements to the allocation of resources or the creation of policies that will increase the index values through the expansion of the role of a creative economy in a region.

Serve as a framework upon which to define and build a creative coalition. With the components of the index setting forth a vision for a creative community rather than a non-profit arts community, those who wish to build coalitions to influence change for the benefit of the development of the creative economy have a broader and deeper platform from which to begin the conversation.

Benchmark an area of endeavor and lay the groundwork for the improvement of one or more aspects of the creative economy. The index can serve as an initial diagnostic tool to create a baseline and then can be used to measure progress in that area. Elected officials and civic leaders can use the index as a starting point for discussing ways in which an area's local economy can be enriched through the development of the creative-economy segment of that community.