

Figure 1.



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Building on the Past, Facing the Future: Renewing the Creative Economy of New Mexico

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Abstract

Arts and cultural industries in New Mexico enjoy a national reputation that is far beyond the state's size or economic standing. Narrowly defined, these industries employ 43,031 persons in New Mexico, equal to 1 of every 18 jobs in the state (5.5%). More broadly defined, including persons employed in cultural tourism, art and cultural education, and industries linked to the unique culture and heritage of the state, the arts and cultural industries employ 76,780 persons, equal to nearly one in ten jobs (9.8%) in the state. That is more than the state's construction and manufacturing industries combined.

New Mexicans are, to a much greater extent than residents of other states, employed professionally as artists and artisans, in galleries and museums, and in other activities and industries most closely associated with the creative aspects of arts and culture. However, New Mexicans are far less likely to be employed in rapidly growing and higher paying applied fields such as media, advertising and software publishing.

Creative professionals working in New Mexico perceive new opportunities as well as new challenges. In some regards, circumstances are similar to those in all parts of the world. Globalization means the development of new markets but greater competition as well. Emerging technologies both allows for and demands the development of new ways of delivering art and culture, no matter the location. In New Mexico and elsewhere, creative professionals and organizations are experimenting with new strategies to develop and engage audiences, with a greater focus on participation, collaboration and the creation of community.

However, some of the circumstances facing creative professionals in New Mexico are unique. In more than 200 in-depth interviews conducted for this project, creative professionals in New Mexico commonly described the state's arts and cultural industries as a 'small pond', with both advantages and disadvantages. According to these varied accounts, the small pond offers intimacy, social access, natural beauty, quality of life and allowance for experimentation. But the small pond can also mean a scarcity of material support, limited market opportunity and isolation from the rapid currents that drive innovation. For some, the small pond is a welcoming space with a long history of shared experience, but for others it is a place of intense struggle for access, influence and identity.

Cities, states and nations across the world are embracing arts and culture, and creative industries generally as a foundation for the development of a 21st century economy. With a genuinely unique history, a creatively engaged population and a strong national and global reputation, New Mexico is well positioned to succeed in the development of its own creative economy. A successful long-term strategy must involve a balance of policies that preserve and renew the state's unique social and cultural environment with initiatives that avail its creative professionals with the energy and opportunities that globalization and emerging technologies offer. Specifically, policymakers and advocates of the state's creative economy should undertake and integrate work in four broad areas: capacity building in support of creative enterprises; cultural programming that furthers community development; promotion of arts and cultural education and engagement; and branding initiatives that give greater emphasis to diversity, accessibility, innovation and quality.

Executive Summary

The arts and cultural industries are among the main drivers of New Mexico's economy. Arts and culture in New Mexico enjoy a national reputation far beyond the state's size or economic standing. With the proper level of support and evolution, the arts and cultural industries could be leveraged to help power the New Mexico economy as it emerges from the economic recession.

To appreciate the importance of arts and culture to New Mexico's economy, consider that these industries are the primary source of employment for 43,031 New Mexicans – roughly equal to the state's construction industry and 50% larger than the manufacturing industry. The arts and cultural industries account for about 1 of every 18 jobs in the state (5.5%). These industries pay \$1.37 billion in wages and salaries, roughly equal to the total paid by the state's mining industry, and more than the total paid by hotels and restaurants.

These figures are based on a narrow definition of the A&C industries. If we include persons employed cultural tourism, arts and cultural education and industries linked to the unique culture and heritage of the state (e.g. crafts, salsa, and adobe), the arts and cultural industries employ 76,780 persons - equal to about one in ten jobs (9.8%) in the state. That is more than the construction and manufacturing industries combined.

Arts and cultural industries generate \$137.1 million in revenues for state and local governments in New Mexico. Approximately two-thirds of the total is received by the state government as gross receipts taxes, income taxes paid by cultural workers, federal transfers and various fees and private grants. The total cost of cultural services to public agencies in New Mexico is \$168.0 million. Most of these costs are borne by local (and especially municipal) governments, with the largest share of the funds allocated to libraries as well as museums and cultural services and events. These figures do not include revenues or spending on public education.

Comparisons with other states. New Mexico's arts and cultural industries are similar to other states in terms of the total share of employment. However, the specific subsectors and occupations that employ artists and cultural workers in New Mexico differ substantially from national patterns. New Mexicans are, to a much greater extent than residents of other states, employed professionally as artists and artisans in galleries and museums, and in other activities and industries most closely associated with the creative aspects of arts and culture. Moreover, there are specific regions within New Mexico where the association with specific activities is truly extraordinary, such as galleries in Santa Fe and artisanship among the Native Nations. Yet, New Mexicans are also far less likely to be employed in more rapidly growing and higher paying applied fields such as media, advertising and software publishing.

Changes in arts and cultural industries. This study includes detailed surveys of the assets, impacts and challenges of a number of key sectors of New Mexico's arts and cultural economy. These include: fine arts, museums, libraries, galleries, performance venues, monuments and

parks, fairs, festivals, farmers' markets, historic preservation, heritage and craft industries, cultural tourism, and funders of arts and cultural activities and institutions. Challenges facing New Mexico's cultural economy are numerous. Arts and cultural institutions, as well as individual artists, have been hit hard by the recent recession, but they are also facing more general and ongoing changes. Globalization has made arts and cultural markets more competitive. New markets are emerging, aesthetics are changing, consumption habits are evolving and emerging technologies are providing entirely new ways to deliver and experience art and culture. In important ways, the new technologies and consumer patterns are driving the arts and cultural markets in directions that are difficult to predict.

In response to these pressures, cultural institutions nationwide, including those in New Mexico, are experimenting with new strategies to engage audiences. Artists and organizations recognize that they no longer can wait for their audiences to approach them, nor can they expect their audiences to be content with a passive one-directional experience of culture. Instead, organizations are increasingly reaching out with social media, mobile exhibits and experiential programming to engage their audiences. Organizations are making new efforts to collaborate and to attract and engage new audiences, especially youth. Some organizations are establishing multi-function facilities that are flexible, accommodate multiple niches and foster a sense of community and participation. These strategies require new skills, can be initially expensive and work better in some contexts than others. Some artists and organizations have flourished while many continue to struggle.

Creative professionals in New Mexico: advantages and disadvantages of working in a 'small pond.' BBER conducted 200 interviews, including 125 in-depth surveys, with creative professionals in New Mexico. In these interviews, creative professionals commonly described the state's arts and cultural industries as a 'small pond', noting both advantages and disadvantages. According to these varied accounts, the small pond offers intimacy, social access, natural beauty, a high quality of life and allowance for experimentation. But it can also mean a scarcity of material support, limited market opportunity and isolation from the rapid currents that drive innovation.

A greater number of those who participated in the study reported that location in New Mexico was, on balance, more of an advantage than a disadvantage in their professional lives. Interestingly, there was no discernible pattern, in terms of ethnicity, age, gender, location, type of work, time spent in the state, or even one's account of their professional success, among those who counted more advantages than disadvantages. Also, participants were more likely to express a commitment to remaining in the state than a willingness to relocate under the right circumstances. Yet, here, the differences among respondents were sharp. For those committed to remaining in the state, their decision was almost entirely a matter of personal history and identity; their professional lives were an extension of their identity and could not be thought of separately. But for those willing to relocate, it was largely a matter of professional opportunity and development; many have an affinity for life in New Mexico but it was a secondary consideration.

The difference among creative professionals in terms of their willingness to stay or leave the state suggests that perhaps, rather than a small pond, New Mexico's creative industries are divided among many still smaller ponds with little flow or interaction among them. This account questions the narrative of 'tri-culturalism' that has been influential in the development of the state's cultural industries and suggests instead that amidst the global changes described above there is an increasingly intense competition for access, influence and identity among creative professionals in the state.

Recommendations to revitalize New Mexico's creative industries. Cities, states and nations across the world are embracing arts and culture, and creative industries generally, as a foundation for the development of a 21st century economy. The findings of this study suggest that New Mexico is well-positioned to succeed in this regard, by leveraging its genuinely unique history, creatively engaged population and strong national and global reputation for the development of a 21st century creative economy. However, to be effective, the state must implement cultural policies that foster the capacity necessary for the growth of creative enterprises, renew and integrate its diverse communities, promote education and engagement, and update its national brand to emphasize accessibility, opportunity and quality.

Specifically, based on the findings of this comprehensive study BBER offers twelve interrelated policy recommendations:

1. Establish a business development center for creative enterprises, supported by services such as career advising, business plan development, fundraising and investment solicitation, accounting and financial management and marketing.
2. Utilize the business development center to provide at-cost Information Technology services and training to support artists and creative enterprises.
3. Develop and administer a web-based platform for statewide networking among creative professionals in New Mexico, and for the collection and distribution of cultural data generated by arts institutions, creative businesses and funders.
4. Promote the enforcement of the Indian Arts & Crafts Act to protect Native American artists against misrepresentation, and support the capacity of Native communities and professionals to exercise greater influence in the marketplace for their work.
5. Emphasize cultural programming that builds cultural capacity in communities, emphasizing local-over-global narratives, community over individual artists and grassroots organizations over the sponsorship of large centralized institutions.
6. Develop initiatives that expose New Mexico's communities to broader and more contemporary regional, national and global markets; inviting more diverse perspectives, providing more opportunities for engagement and emphasizing renewal as well as preservation.
7. Implement strategies to ensure the effective administration of the 2003 Fine Arts Education Act (FAEA) in elementary schools and advocate for the extension of the FAEA to middle and secondary schools.

8. Establish collaborative efforts between DCA, PED and HED to better prepare educators to teach in New Mexico's culturally diverse classrooms with the development of teacher training, community-engagement programs and culturally sensitive curriculum aligned with Common Core Standards.
9. Develop technically-advanced audience engagement programming to utilize the business development infrastructure outlined above.
10. Prioritize cultural and economic policy that promotes collaborative relationships among communities, beginning with partnerships between the Albuquerque-Santa Fe creative corridor and other regions of the state.
11. Establish a robust economic development plan to promote the state's creative industries cluster, with collaboration among state departments and drawing from the experiences of the film incentive program and the national laboratories.
12. Refashion the state's national marketing campaigns to integrate New Mexico's history and traditions with a more modern, quality-first brand relevant to a broader segment of the state's creative industries.

New Mexico's creative industries are an essential component to both the state's economy and identity. With the proper support, New Mexico has the ability to leverage the arts and cultural industries for economic development while preserving and renewing the state's cultural assets and quality of life.

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