

# iSOMOS UNO!

A Cultural Heritage Strategy for Tucson



*Nutcracker, Dancing in The Streets. Image Credit: Anna & Scott Griessel Creatista.  
Photo courtesy of Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona.*



*Josefina  
Lizarraga,  
Tucson Meet  
Yourself, 2011*

*YOEME, Salvador  
Salvaqui, TRHIVE  
in the 05 Mural  
Unveiling Event.*

## STATE of CULTURE

Report issued  
**August 2024**

Lord Cultural Resources is a global professional practice dedicated to making the world a better place through culture.

We assist people, communities and organizations to realize and enhance cultural meaning and expression.

We distinguish ourselves through a comprehensive and integrated full-service offering built on a foundation of key competencies: visioning, planning and implementation.

We value and believe in cultural expression as essential for all people. We conduct ourselves with respect for collaboration, local adaptation and cultural diversity, embodying the highest standards of integrity, ethics and professional practice.

We help clients clarify their goals; we provide them with the tools to achieve those goals; and we leave a legacy as a result of training and collaboration.

Our New York office is located on the traditional lands of the Lenape peoples. Our Long Beach office is located on the land of the Tongva/Gabrieleño and the Acjachemen/Juaneño Nations, who have lived and continue to live here. Our Toronto office is located within the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples.

We encourage you to acknowledge the presence of the people who came before, wherever you are.



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- **Genesis Cubillas**, *Policy Advisor, Office of the Mayor*
- **Charlene Mendoza**, *Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor*
- **Lane Mandle**, *Chief of Staff, Office of the City Manager*
- **Kelly Wiehe**, *Project Manager, iSomos Uno! A Cultural Heritage Strategy for Tucson, Office of the City Manager*
- **Adriana Gallego**, *CEO, Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona*

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- **City of Tucson Office of the City Manager**
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- **Demion Clinco**, *CEO, Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation*
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- **Staff and team of Tucson Museum of Art**
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*Tucson's All Souls Procession, 2015. Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*

## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

# The Purpose of this Report

The State of Culture Report marks the first major milestone of *iSomos Uno! A Cultural Heritage Strategy for Tucson*. This report aims to establish a broad understanding of the current cultural ecosystem in Tucson, including a comprehensive evaluation of its strengths, challenges and opportunities.

The purpose of this report is not to draw final conclusions or offer concrete recommendations, but to present consolidated findings and emerging insights from the research and public engagement conducted in Phases 1 and 2 of this initiative.

In Phase 3 of the planning process, these emerging insights will be used to develop priorities and strategies, as well as actionable recommendations for their implementation, all of which will help shape the future of history, heritage, arts and culture in Tucson.

## *Elements included in this report:*



### **Analysis**

Analysis of existing data and plans pertaining to the Tucson heritage, history, arts and culture sector.



### **Engagement**

Learnings from robust areawide community engagement



### **Cultural Assets**

A cultural assets inventory and map



### **Peer City Analysis**

An examination of funding and governance in comparable communities across the nation



### **Economic Impact**

Arts, Culture & Creative Sector economic impact analysis



### **Current Funding**

Assessment of funding mechanisms and models



# Glossary of Terms

*In alphabetical order*

## **Belonging**

More than just being seen or feeling included, belonging entails having a voice and the opportunity to use it to make demands upon society and political institutions. Belonging is more than having access; it is about the power to co-create the structures that shape a community.<sup>1</sup>

## **Cultural Equity**

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people — including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion — are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.<sup>2</sup>

## **Cultural Heritage**

An expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values.<sup>3</sup> In this report, “cultural heritage” is used interchangeable with the term “history, heritage, art, and culture.”

## **Direct impact**

The businesses, revenue, jobs, wages, and other economic activity generated from the operations of a particular industry or industries.

## **Economic impact**

The direct, indirect, and induced impacts of spending in a particular industry or industries on a given region’s economy.

## **Emerging insights**

A synthesis, analysis or meaningful interpretation of available information that seeks to understand context and implications. Emerging insights reveal initial connections, patterns, and motivations that can guide future strategies.<sup>4</sup>

## **Findings**

Concrete observations and principal outcomes of a research project; what specific data suggested, revealed or indicated.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/redefining-who-belongs/glossary#:~:text=More%20than%20just%20being%20seen,structures%20that%20shape%20a%20community>.

<sup>2</sup> Americans for the Arts Statement on Cultural Equity [https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2016/about/cultural\\_equity/ARTS\\_CulturalEquity\\_updated.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2016/about/cultural_equity/ARTS_CulturalEquity_updated.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Definition from Heritage of Peace: [heritageforpeace.org/heritage-for-peace/what-is-cultural-heritage/](https://heritageforpeace.org/heritage-for-peace/what-is-cultural-heritage/)

<sup>4</sup> Aguayo UX Design and Technology Firm

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from the Association of Qualitative Research (AQR)  
And Aguayo UX Design and Technology Firm



### **Food heritage**

Traditional food origins, knowledge, and culinary traditions that are passed down through generations. This includes a mix of tangible elements (i.e., ingredients, dishes) and intangible customs and practices that contribute to the cultural values and characteristics of a place.<sup>6</sup>

### **History, Heritage, Art and Culture**

A collective term used in this report to refer to Tucson's expansive and diverse arts and culture sector, which is also inclusive of food heritage and history complex and diverse cultural ecosystem.

### **Indirect impact**

The supply chain of goods and services from other industries that enable activity in a particular industry or industries.

### **Induced impact**

The results, or spending, of increased personal income (salary and wages) caused by the direct and indirect impacts.

### **Key stakeholder**

An individual with deep knowledge in a specific area of importance or relevance to the project that is called upon to gather information and input, usually in the format of a one-on-one interview.

### **Percent for Art**

A program, often a municipal ordinance, where a percentage of a large-scale development project is used to fund and install public art. In Tucson, Percent for Art currently assigns 1% of capital improvement project budgets over \$100,000 toward public art. The 1% for art program is by ordinance applied to selected City Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). These projects are generally funded by bonds. Water Department projects are not included with CIP projects. Street projects, such as widening, are included on a discretionary basis. Since 1986, more than 300 public art projects have been completed in metropolitan Tucson.<sup>7</sup>

### **State of Culture**

A broad understanding of the current cultural ecosystem of a place, including its strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

### **Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)**

A hotel or lodging tax, charged to guests when they rent accommodations in a hotel, inn, motel or other lodging.

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<sup>6</sup> adapted from <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/13877#:~:text=The%20term%20culinary%20heritage%20mainly,preparation%20and%20consumption%20of%20food.>

<sup>7</sup> <https://artsfoundtucson.org/public-art/public-art-policy/#:~:text=PERCENT%20FOR%20PUB-LIC%20ART&text=The%201%25%20for%20art%20program,are%20generally%20funded%20by%20bonds.>





# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Why a cultural heritage strategy for Tucson?

This State of Culture report is a major milestone for **iSomos Uno!** – a municipal initiative to create a cultural heritage strategy for the City of Tucson. As the culmination of the planning team’s research and public engagement conducted over the last 11 months, the State of Culture serves to inform and underpin the strategic recommendations, which will be presented in the final strategy. But why create a cultural heritage strategy in the first place?



*The Artist's Epidemiology of District Two's 2020 Experience, Barbea Williams, Celebrate SaludArte District 2 Event. Image credit: Ammi Robles. Photo courtesy of Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona.*



## Tucson's culture of place

The sense of place in Tucson is powerful and abundant with palpable pride. The city is sited within the oldest continuously inhabited place in the United States — a region stewarded by the Tohono O'odham, who consider themselves to be direct descendants of the original Hohokam inhabitants, and Pascua Yaqui people who have lived in the Sonoran Desert for over 4,000 years. A borderlands city, Tucson exists as a point of convergence of cultures and histories that have been influenced and shaped by the distinctive natural environment of the desert landscape, the surrounding mountain ranges, Saguaro National Park and the Santa Cruz River. It is the intersection of this deep history, diverse cultural traditions and an ethos of environmental stewardship of natural resources that make Tucson truly one-of-a-kind.

As the second largest city in Arizona, today Tucson is home to over 540,000 residents and accounts for well over half of Pima County's population of one million. It is a well-known regional destination for its many historic sites, archaeological projects, cutting-edge science studies and a vibrant arts and culture scene. Indeed, history, heritage, arts and culture are essential ingredients to the city's unique identity, which boasts an array of world-class offerings, including annual cultural and food festivals and convenings like the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, Festival of Books, Mariachi Conference and the beloved and long-running cultural festival Tucson Meet Yourself.

Local artists and culture bearers have distinctly shaped the built environment by adding colorful and expressive murals, musical sounds and numerous film and theatre productions. The city is also internationally recognized for its multicultural food traditions, and in 2015, became the first UNESCO City of Gastronomy designated in the United States, joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).<sup>8</sup> All of these elements together influence the understanding of place in Tucson and its enormous impact upon the quality of life for residents.



*Sergio Mendoza and Salvador Duran.  
Photo courtesy Visit Tucson.*

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<sup>8</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations with the aim of promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network is a flagship city program of UNESCO launched in 2004 to promote cooperation among cities which have recognized culture and creativity as strategic drivers of sustainable urban development. As of 2022, there are almost 300 cities from around 90 countries in the network.



## Creating a shared understanding of history, heritage, arts and culture

Tucson is a city of multitudes and crossroads — it is multiethnic, cross-cultural, cross-national and cross-temporal. In turn, its cultural and creative ecosystem is comprised of diverse stakeholders and constituent groups who embody many different roles, and numerous organizations, large and small, that provide various services across artistic disciplines, history and science. These range from established institutions such as the Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson Symphony Orchestra and Children’s Museum Tucson, to small- and mid-size organizations such as Southwest Folklife Alliance, Borderlands Theater, African American Museum of Southern Arizona and Tucson Chinese Cultural Center. The city is also home to hundreds of creative individuals, businesses and art collectives such as Flowers & Bullets, Artemiss Gallery and Events Venue and Blue Lotus Artists’ Collective. Festivals, faith-based activities, folklife traditions, agricultural and culinary traditions, as well as spaces within the built environment such as parks and public art, are also all crucial elements within this ecosystem.

Through the preceding research and public engagement phases of work, the depth of Tucson’s cultural ecosystem was revealed across multidisciplinary forms of artistic expression and production, as well as cultural practices and initiatives that often derive from and preserve history, heritage and tradition. Each of these aspects distinctly impacts the community’s values, practices and lived experiences. During this period of inquiry and listening, it also became evident that the contribution and influence of culinary arts and traditions is a vital component of the city’s identity —demonstrated most visibly by Tucson’s international designation as a City of Gastronomy, which recognizes its rich culinary heritage, particularly the traditional agriculture practices and use of heritage ingredients by the area’s Indigenous peoples.







Given that this distinct cultural ecosystem is unlike any other in the U.S., it was important to establish an overarching theme for this planning process through a descriptive term that could signal a much more generous and expansive understanding of what arts and culture encompass in Tucson. Moreover, there is a need to uplift the related sectors of history and heritage alongside arts and culture because of how integral and inter-dependent these aspects are to the city's vitality and identity. For example, Tucson's rich Mariachi tradition is a practice that resists unilateral categorization, and instead reaches across multiple aspects of history, heritage, arts and culture.

For this reason, within the State of Culture report the phrase “history, heritage, arts and culture” is employed as a collective term to refer to Tucson's complex and diverse cultural ecosystem and is used interchangeably with “cultural heritage.” It is also important to note that both phrases are inclusive of Tucson's food traditions and are meant to provide a shared context of the scope of this report as well as the broader initiative.

Ultimately, history, heritage, arts and culture are broad concepts with meanings that often overlap. As language and meaning are always evolving, the hope is that this descriptive phrase serves as a guide for common understanding, rather than prescribing a static or conclusive definition.

*“One of the best things about Tucson cultural events is that they often blur the lines between these categories. For example, the Agave Heritage Festival is performance, history, culture, food, religious, botanical and all the rest. We're best when we explore and celebrate the intersections of cultures and traditions and art, together!!!” – Survey participant*



YOEME, Salvador Saluaqui, Thrive in the O5 Mural Unveiling Event. Image credit: Ammi Robles.  
Photo courtesy of Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona.

## Key planning concepts

Cultural practices in Tucson trace their roots back several thousand years, many of which were formed in relation to survival in the desert region and reinforce the human connection to landscape and sense of place. Artistic and creative practices in the modern era in Tucson organically evolved from this tradition, primarily through grass-roots-led initiatives, which have resulted in dense offerings both for artists and the public that transcend a city of its size.

### Creative Placemaking

Cultural planning endeavors in the broader region's more recent past have embraced a place-based approach — or what is referred to more commonly in the sector as “creative placemaking” — which have emphasized arts- and community-based civic engagement and the concept of belonging as a framework for transforming and reimagining the possibilities of neighborhoods in Tucson.

### Cultural Equity

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies and practices that ensure that all people — including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented — are represented in the development of arts policy, the support of artists, the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression, and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial and informational resources.

Two related initiatives conducted over the last two decades have had considerable influence over Tucson's current state of culture:

- **2008 Pima County Cultural Plan**, developed by what today is the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona. The plan recognized both the practice and the products of the planning initiative as significant cultural assets for the region and offered three key recommendations for building upon its momentum:
  - Advance arts-based civic engagement programs in Tucson
  - Promote economic well-being in marginalized populations
  - Increase social capital for communities
- **PLACE (People, Land, Arts, Culture, and Engagement)** is a community-based arts initiative of TPAC, funded 53 projects from 2010-2013 over four rounds of grants to both small and mid-sized organizations and artists dealing with a wide range of social issues. The PLACE initiative enabled activities and projects that centered community partnerships and collaborative efforts to address systemic problems and established innovative ways of engaging community constituents as essential project collaborators, not solely as audience members.

## CREATIVE PLACEKEEPING

The concept of placekeeping has been driven by Indigenous architects and planners who have pointed out their traditional role in protecting the land, honoring its history and water systems and environment and its layers of change over time. It shifts traditional creative placemaking concepts to acknowledge, honor and retain historic elements or contributions by historically underserved constituents who have helped shape a location's unique identity.



*Chef Mateo Otero, Rollios Mexican Patio.  
Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*





## Positive impact of history, heritage, arts and culture

History, heritage, arts and culture intersect in a variety of important ways that positively impact communities, and that have been well documented and researched, especially in the last two decades. Americans for the Arts — the nation's largest arts and cultural advocacy group — recently developed the Arts + Social Impact Explorer, an online primer that draws together top-line research, example projects, core research papers and service/partner organizations from 26 different sectors, all in an effort to make more visible the incredible, wide-reaching impact of the arts and educate local decision-makers about the social, cultural, educational and economic impact of arts and culture in building healthy and vibrant communities.<sup>9</sup>

Some salient impact points of history, heritage, arts and culture activities include:



Sixty-eight percent of tourism is cultural. When combined with tourism, arts and cultural heritage can be a significant economic catalyst. Sixty-eight percent of long-distance (more than 50 miles) American travelers say they included a visit to an arts/cultural heritage site during their trip.



Engaging in cultural heritage improves academic success. Three decades of research confirm that well-implemented immersion in heritage language and culture improves language acquisition, enhances test performance, increases school retention and graduate rates, college entry and parent involvement and cultural pride.<sup>10</sup>



Arts and cultural activities can facilitate an understanding of controversial history. Preserving and promoting cultural heritage can help reconcile difficult history, encourage self-expression and aid in family healing in service to community empowerment and change.



Arts and cultural heritage activities improve community health and well-being outcomes, leading to healthier people and healthier communities.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ww2.americansforthearts.org/explorer>

<sup>10</sup> [https://ww2.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/AFTA%20fact\\_Arts%2BHistory\\_ADA.pdf](https://ww2.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/AFTA%20fact_Arts%2BHistory_ADA.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine has conducted comprehensive research on this topic and published numerous studies and articles on arts and well-being indicators. <https://arts.ufl.edu/academics/center-for-arts-in-medicine/researchandpublications/#completed-research>



*The River Returns, Regenerates, Restores. Pasqualina Azzarello, Christina Devine, Kim Young, 2001/2022. Image credit: Julius Schlosburg. Photo courtesy of Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona.*

Despite the rich cultural heritage traditions found in Tucson, the city has never undertaken a focused planning effort to evaluate what is at stake — what are the historical and cultural heritage assets, why are they critical to quality of life and what actions can the city take to ensure they are managed, maintained and continue to thrive? The lack of a focal point within the City of Tucson to preserve and evolve arts and cultural heritage activities may impede future growth and economic opportunities, particularly as the population continues to expand and diversify demographics.

Spurred by the tremendous leadership of Mayor Regina Romero — the city's first Latina to hold this role — there is now an incredible opportunity to bring together Tucson's community around acknowledging, preserving, and evolving the city's distinct array of cultural heritage assets to the benefit of all and in support of myriad other efforts. Research has shown the effectiveness of arts and cultural strategies in advancing development opportunities and addressing the challenges that many cities face as they scale resources and infrastructure to support population growth. Most importantly, a strategy for history, heritage, arts and culture in Tucson will create an operational framework for the city to effectively preserve its current cultural assets and amplify its creative communities while seeding new opportunities for growth that connect to a range of other priorities, from health and safety to climate resiliency to economic development initiatives.



## Intersection with current plans

To ensure that this strategy builds upon and reflects recent planning efforts, the research and discovery phase began with a thorough review of current initiatives and processes taking place in Tucson. At the same time as the Cultural Heritage Strategy, Tucson is concurrently undergoing a general plan update, Plan Tucson, which is required to be updated every 10 years and provides an opportunity for both future-looking strategies to be in conversation and align with one another.

Current Plans	Summary	Opportunities for Synchronicity
<b>Plan Tucson</b> <sup>12</sup> (currently in Phase 2)	Plan Tucson is a 20-year general roadmap for Tucson's future and will guide city decisions about investments, programs, policies and land-use decisions.	Though it is not a required element of the general plan, Plan Tucson specifically includes the arts, cultural events and public art as part of its planning efforts.
<b>Tucson Resilient Together: Climate Action and Adaptation Plan</b> (2023) <sup>13</sup>	Tucson Resilient Together provides a pathway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provides strategies for adaptation and resilience for climate change impacts. Overall, the plan supports healthy communities, environmental stewardship and a just economy and society.	Arts and culture directly impact community health and wellness and Tucson Resilient Together is a plan that supports healthy communities. <sup>14</sup> The plan identifies opportunities and strategies for increasing more equitable, accessible and safe public transit along with improved infrastructure for walking and biking to have increase options for convenient transportation, which directly relates to the State of Culture public engagement findings on transit improvements as a way to access arts and culture activities and events. <sup>15</sup>
<b>Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)</b> (2022)	A roadmap for Tucson's economic future, including job growth, economic development and opportunities for economic mobility and wealth creation for all Tucsonans.	One of the strategy's priorities under Goal 4 is to "support workforce development programs" that connect residents to opportunities for economic upward mobility, including services like skills training, networking and mentoring. There is an opportunity to connect this priority to developing stronger and more robust workforce development within arts and culture, including supporting individual artists and creators in business development (work currently being conducted by Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona) as well as the ongoing initiatives spearheaded by Tucson City of Gastronomy to support local chefs, food artisans and small heritage food business owners. In addition, a priority under Goal 5 of the strategy is to "invest in special events, partnerships and placemaking initiatives to promote Tucson's appeal." There is potential for intentional

<sup>12</sup> [plantucson.org](https://plantucson.org)

<sup>13</sup> [assets.tucsonaz.gov/share/gis-docs/caap/TucsonResilientTogether\\_20230228.pdf](https://assets.tucsonaz.gov/share/gis-docs/caap/TucsonResilientTogether_20230228.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> See page 22 for more information on the positive impact of arts and culture.

<sup>15</sup> See page 39 for the public engagement findings.



		overlap between this economic initiative and the cultural heritage sector, with opportunities to partner with artists, culture bearers and cultural organizations in the ideation, planning and implementation of special events and placemaking initiatives.
Office of Equity – City of Tucson	The Office of Equity currently has four key initiatives: <sup>16</sup> capacity building; data analytics; departmental programming; and public engagement.	Equity is a key aspect of comprehensive cultural heritage strategies. Initiatives to increase and embed cultural equity are being spearheaded across the country. For example, the Culture Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative is a robust plan to implement cultural equity in Los Angeles County. <sup>17</sup>

## The planning process

*iSomos Uno! A Cultural Heritage Strategy for Tucson* is a joint planning endeavor led by the Office of Mayor Regina Romero and Office of the City Manager, and in collaboration with the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, the region's local arts agency, with professional support from consulting firm Lord Cultural Resources and a steering committee of arts, culture and history sector leaders. The process kicked off in May 2023, and is comprised of the following phases:



<sup>16</sup> [equity.tucsonaz.gov/pages/initiatives](https://equity.tucsonaz.gov/pages/initiatives)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.lacountyarts.org/about/cultural-equity-inclusion-initiative/strengthening-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-arts-and>





The **State of Culture Report** marks the first major milestone of this initiative. This report synthesizes an array of qualitative and quantitative data gathered through the first and second phases, over the course of 11 months from May 2023 to April 2024:

- Contextual research and a scan of history, heritage, arts and culture identified existing practices, policies and operations.
- A study of comparable peer cities, including a review of detailed profiles of seven cities and nine UNESCO Creative Cities, revealed best practices for engaging cultural audiences, planning for a sustainable sector, and supporting the growth of creative economies.
- A robust seven-month public engagement process captured feedback and insights from over 2,000 community members and stakeholders.
- An extensive economic and fiscal impact analysis of Tucson's arts, culture, and creative sectors quantified the economic and fiscal impacts of the city's cultural assets and creative economy.
- A comprehensive cultural asset inventory captured and organized over 3,000 businesses, nonprofit organizations, performance venues, museums and more.
- An assessment of the funding mechanisms and models identified strengths, challenges and opportunities for the City of Tucson.





*Tucson Meet Yourself. Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*

## Chapter 2

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



## 2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### Who did we engage and how?

#### Demographic context

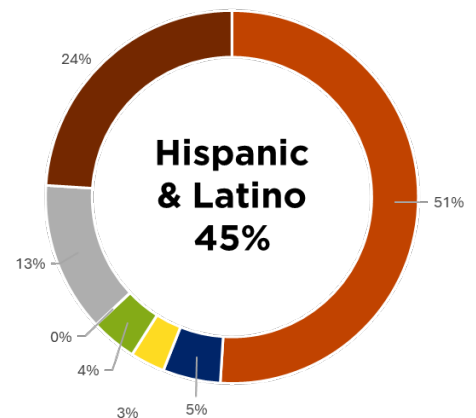
To create a cultural heritage strategy in Tucson that serves all residents and visitors, it is important to understand the demographic characteristics of the population and emerging trends that may shape the region's future. This step ensures that the objectives and priorities of any such strategy will represent and resonate with the community's diverse backgrounds.



City population **546,598**  
 MSA population **1,057,597**  
 Median Age **33.8**  
 Median Age U.S. **39**  
 Persons 65 years and more **16.3%**  
 Persons under 19 years **23.8%**

**Key insight: Tucson's population skews young**

#### Race and Ethnicity



#### Other Characteristics

<b>57%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>\$51,281</b>	<b>19.2%</b>
Employment Rate	Other Language	BA or Higher	Median Household Income	Persons in Poverty

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Some other race
- Two or more races

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022



The planning team made note of the following demographic findings to inform the overall public engagement strategy:

### **TUCSON'S POPULATION HAS STEADILY GROWN OVER THE PAST DECADE.**

- The population of Tucson increased from 521,132 in 2010 to 545,340 in 2020, reflecting a notable growth trend.
- The Tucson Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) also experienced population growth, rising from 982,154 to 1,038,476 during the same period.
- Similarly, Arizona State and the USA as a whole saw population increases over the decade.

### **THE RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF TUCSON REFLECTS DIVERSITY.**

- Tucson has a significant Hispanic or Latino population, comprising 45% of the total population. The city is only one hour from the Mexico-U.S. border.
- Other notable demographic groups include individuals of “two or more races” (24%) and “some other race” (13%).

### **TUCSON HAS A RELATIVELY YOUNG POPULATION AND STRONG EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT.**

- Tucson boasts a relatively young population with a median age of 33.8 years, which is lower compared to the broader Tucson MSA (39.6 years), State of Arizona (38.8 years), and U.S. (39 years).
- The educational attainment among residents aged 25 and over is noteworthy, with 88% having completed high school or higher education.
- Approximately 31.7% of residents in this age group hold a bachelor's degree or higher, showcasing a commitment to education and skill development.

### **TUCSON EMPHASIZES EDUCATION, WITH NOTABLE ENROLLMENT LEVELS.**

- A significant percentage (35.1%) of Tucson residents are enrolled in college or undergraduate programs, reflecting the city's focus on higher education.
- Strong enrollment numbers across age groups, from nursery school to graduate or professional school.



## Engagement methods

Central to developing a cultural heritage strategy for Tucson is understanding public perspectives and creating a shared vision based on the needs and desires of those who live, work, play, create, visit and learn in the city. In close collaboration with the initiative's steering committee, which consists of 14 dedicated volunteers from a variety of arts, culture and history sectors, the planning team designed and organized a variety of engagement methods to listen and connect with stakeholders.

Over seven months, from October 2023 to April 2024, the team utilized a variety of methods during the public engagement phase:



Online and in-person written survey (available in English and Spanish)



Sector-specific community workshops



Virtual "office hours" with members of the planning team



One-on-one and group stakeholder interviews



Pop-up engagement events



A project-specific website [somosuno.tucsonaz.gov](https://somosuno.tucsonaz.gov)

The forms of engagement emphasized "meeting community members where they are," for example at pop-ups at events and festivals, as well as through community conversations and workshops held across the city. Nuanced input was also gathered via one-on-one interviews, and the planning team also created space to informally hear from participants through virtual drop-in office hours. Throughout this process, the project's community coordinator, Joanna Goldberg, and a team of nine community ambassadors comprised of Tucson residents and community leaders, facilitated conversations and connected with community groups to collect their perspectives on the city's cultural heritage strengths and challenges. Overall, the engagement process reached and gathered input from over 2,000 individuals in Tucson.

The branding and language chosen for the public engagement phase of this planning process aimed to convey a sense of engagement and unity within the community. The tagline **"Somos Uno! A Cultural Heritage Strategy for Tucson"** was carefully selected to resonate with the public and emphasize the collective nature of the initiative. This tagline served to inform the community about the intention of this endeavor and underscored the idea of inclusivity and solidarity, encouraging residents to see themselves as integral participants in shaping the city's cultural landscape moving forward.





## iSomos Uno! A Cultural Heritage Strategy for Tucson



A collection of photographs showing various public engagement methods, including pop-ups, surveys, and workshops.





## Public engagement by the numbers

From October 2023 to March 2024

**1,748**   
completed public surveys

**35**   
one-on-one  
interviews  
with community  
& opinion leaders

**12**   
Community engagement  
workshops & gatherings  
organized and attended  
with over  
**235**  
residents engaged

  
**2,000+**  
individual participants

 **3**  
VIRTUAL  
OFFICE HOURS

Attended  
by **8** participants

**3**   
pop up  
events

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### Public survey

The public survey sought to comprehensively understand how Tucson residents perceive and engage with heritage, history, arts and cultural initiatives and activities, as well as their thoughts on the current offerings in the city and any barriers to participation. The questionnaire targeted individuals living, working, studying, planning, creating and visiting the area, aiming for a diverse and representative sample.

Both paper and digital formats were distributed from October 2023 to March 2024, with paper-based surveys and QR codes linking to the online version available at public engagement events such as workshops, festivals and sector meetings. The online version of the survey was also accessible through the *iSomos Uno!* website and both formats of the survey were shared in English and Spanish, to reflect the linguistic diversity of Tucson's community. This strategic and intentional dissemination approach was meant to facilitate a broad and inclusive outreach process.

The targeted sample size of 384 filled surveys, based on population data of the City of Tucson, aimed to provide statistically significant insights with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. However, the engagement phase exceeded expectations, with a total of 1,748 filled surveys received, indicating a strong community interest in shaping the cultural landscape of Tucson.



*iSomos Uno! survey participant*



## Survey demographics

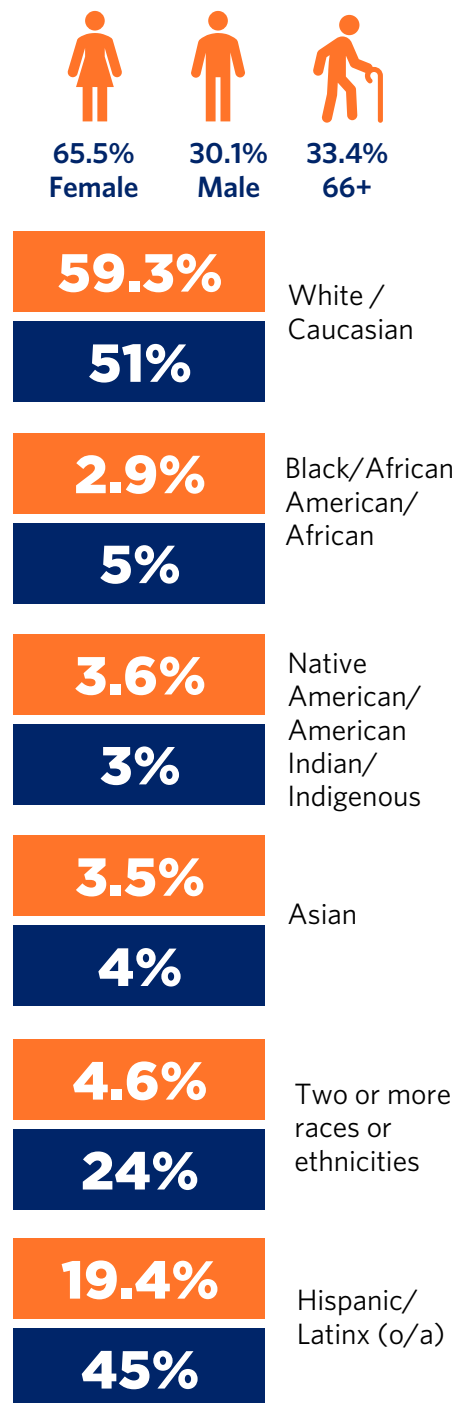
The demographic composition of survey participants largely reflects the diverse population in the City of Tucson.

In terms of gender, the survey results indicate a higher representation of females at 65.5%, compared to the general gender distribution of Tucson, which is approximately 50.1% female. Male respondents make up 30.1% of the survey sample, lower than the city's male population percentage of 49.9%. Additionally, 2.3% of respondents identify as gender nonbinary, genderqueer or gender non-conforming, while 2.1% preferred not to disclose their gender.

In terms of age, the survey respondents represent a broad spectrum of age groups. The largest group among respondents is aged 66 and older, comprising 33.4% of the total responses, which is notably higher than the overall 65 and over population in Tucson (16.2%). This higher representation is slightly more reflective of the 65 and over population in the entire Tucson Metro Area which reaches 21%. The survey demographics for ages 35 to 44 years (14%) are comparable to Tucson's general demographic for that age group (15%). Younger demographics such as those aged 18-24 and 25-34 shows participation at 6.4% and 10.4%, respectively. However, there is a lower percentage of respondents in these ranges compared to the age group's representation in the broader demographic profile of the City of Tucson, which stands at around 12% and 15%, respectively.

In terms of race and ethnicity, White/Caucasian/European respondents make up the majority at 59.3%, reflecting a higher representation than the general population in Tucson, which is 51%. There is a notably lower percentage of Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx respondents at 19.4%, compared to the city's total population makeup at 44.6%. Though this demographic gap was present in the survey results, the remaining public engagement methods were used to further reach the populations that the survey did not adequately cover. The survey also reveals notable representation from two or more races or ethnicities (4.6%), Native American/American Indian/Indigenous (3.6%), Asian (3.5%), Black/African American/African (2.9%) and those identifying with a different identity (2.5%). A minority of respondents (4.4%) chose not to disclose their race or ethnicity.

### Survey respondent ethnicity vs. City of Tucson ethnicity



Legend:

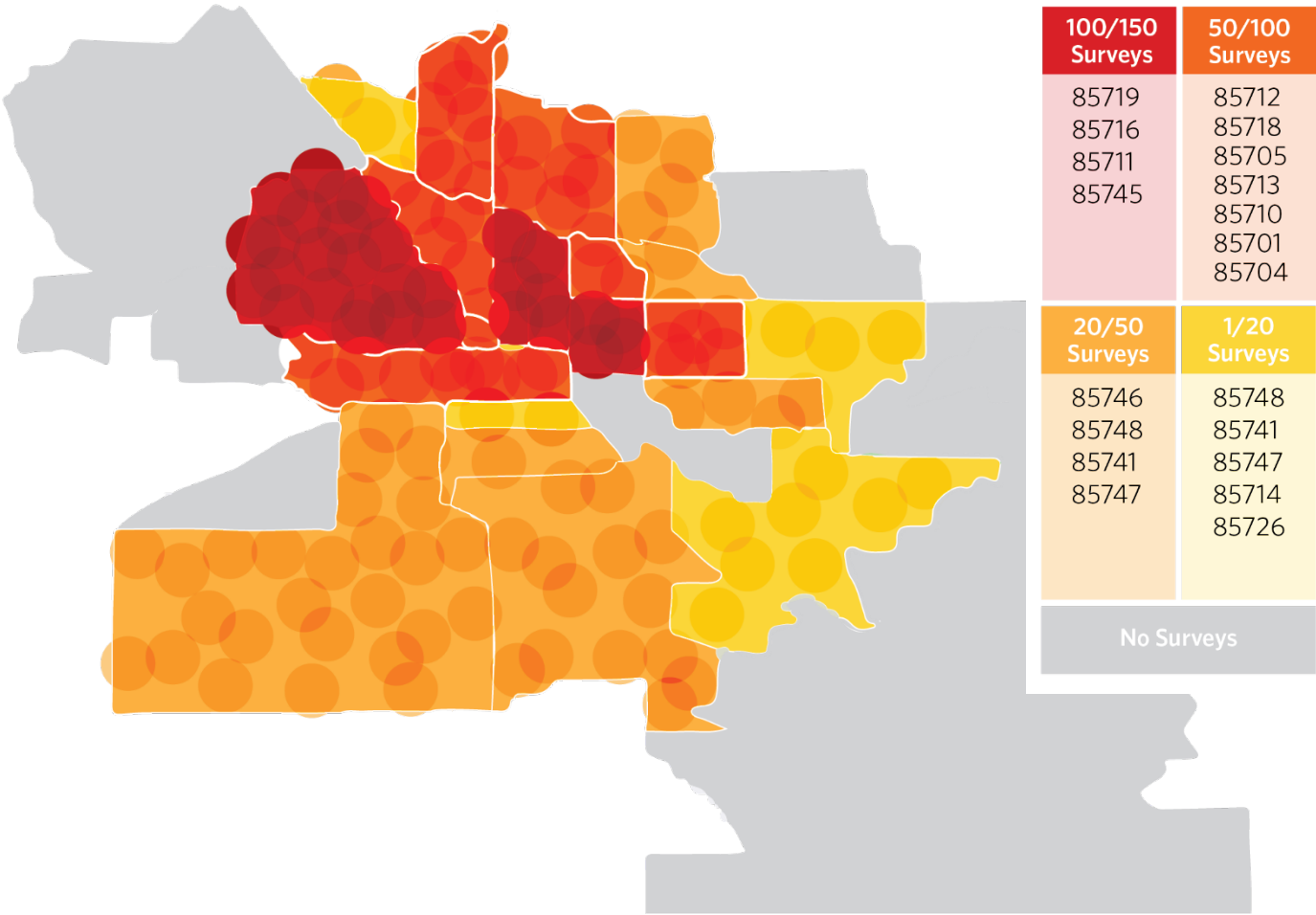
**Survey results**

**City of Tucson census**



## Geographic distribution of survey participants

The survey achieved a wide geographic reach, capturing responses from a diverse range of postal codes across Tucson and beyond. Of the 1,748 completed surveys, 1,472 respondents provided their postal codes, with the majority coming from within Tucson's zip codes. Responses also came from other cities in Arizona and different states across the country.



The accompanying map illustrates the distribution of survey responses within the city of Tucson, highlighting concentrations of respondents, particularly in the downtown core. Notably, there was a dearth of survey participation from areas such as the southeast (e.g., zip codes 85747, 85756) and northwest (e.g., zip codes 85705, 85743, 85745) sides of the city. Moving forward, targeted and intentional engagement efforts should focus on these areas to ensure comprehensive representation and inclusion in the planning process.

It's important to acknowledge that the survey captured data from 144 unique postal codes, although some of these extend beyond Tucson's city limits and are not visually represented on the map.



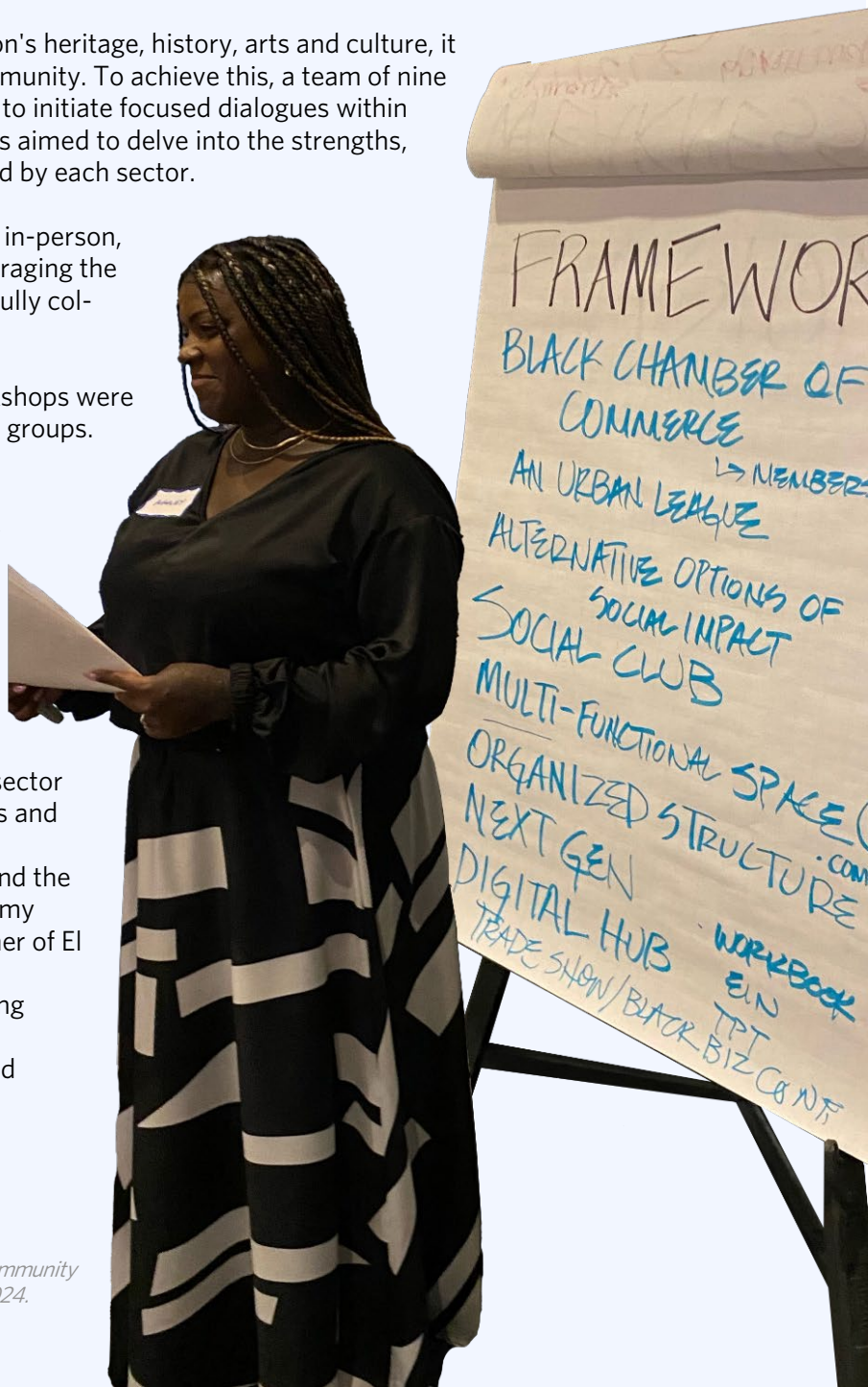
## Community ambassadors and sector workshops

To effectively grasp the intricate fabric of Tucson's heritage, history, arts and culture, it was imperative to directly engage with the community. To achieve this, a team of nine ambassadors and one coordinator was enlisted to initiate focused dialogues within their respective communities. These discussions aimed to delve into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges faced by each sector.

These workshops, conducted both virtually and in-person, served as crucial platforms for listening. By leveraging the ambassador model, the planning team successfully collected many diverse perspectives.

From January to March 2024, a total of 12 workshops were organized, covering a wide range of sectors and groups. These workshops, either standalone events or seamlessly integrated into existing community gatherings, facilitated widespread participation, heightened awareness, and provided invaluable feedback to the planning team. Through these engagements, a clearer understanding of the current landscape and sector challenges emerged, laying a strong foundation for informed decision-making.

The consultant team facilitated two additional sector workshops: one centered on cultural institutions and arts organizations, with support from the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, and the other focused on the culinary arts and gastronomy sector, led by Carlota Flores, local chef and owner of El Charro Cafe, the longest running family-owned Mexican restaurant in the country. The remaining workshops were organized and overseen by the community ambassadors, ensuring a diverse and inclusive range of engagements.



*Community ambassador, Ashley La Russa, leading a iSomos Uno! community workshop with Black business owners and entrepreneurs, January 2024.*



The sectors engaged include:



Black business  
owners



Education &  
youth



Historical preser-  
vation



Musicians



Artists  
& creators



Indigenous  
voices



Culinary arts & gas-  
tronomy



Cultural  
institutions &  
arts organizations





## Stakeholder interviews

To comprehensively understand the current landscape of heritage, history, arts and culture in Tucson, the planning team conducted a series of interviews with stakeholders from various sectors of the community. These stakeholders included artists, city officials, cultural organizers, representatives from other municipalities and community leaders. Over the course of several weeks, 27 one-on-one and small group interviews were conducted in-person and virtually.

To ensure consistency and effective analysis, an interview protocol was developed in collaboration with the working group and reviewed by the steering committee. This protocol included standardized base questions posed to all participants, along with sector-specific inquiries tailored to the respective stakeholder. Interviews were confidentially conducted, with all responses aggregated and analyzed holistically, to encourage candid responses and the input of high-quality data to inform findings and insights.

In the final phase of research, the planning team conducted interviews with three esteemed directors and deputy commissioners of cultural departments in other cities. These individuals brought invaluable knowledge and experience to the process, providing real-world feedback regarding tested practices and innovative strategies. Among them were:

### **Ann Hickey**

Deputy Commissioner of Operations at the Department of Cultural Affairs  
and Special Events (DCASE) in Chicago, IL

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### **Krystal Jones**

Director of the Department of Arts & Culture in San Antonio, TX

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### **Dr. Shelle Sanchez**

Director of the Department of Arts & Culture in Albuquerque, NM



## Office hours and pop-up events

To promote widespread participation, the planning team organized monthly virtual office hours during the final three months of the engagement period. These drop-in sessions provided members of the public with an informal and easily accessible opportunity to directly meet with members of the team to learn about the planning process and share their thoughts on heritage, history, arts and culture in Tucson. Over the course of three sessions, a total of eight attendees actively participated, offering valuable perspectives and feedback.

In addition to the open office hours, the team actively engaged with the community by showing up at local events such as Tucson Meet Yourself (Oct. 13-15, 2023), the Nuestro Tianguis Neighborhood Market at the Flowers & Bullets Midtown Farm (Feb. 24, 2024), and the Tucson Festival of Books (March 10, 2024) which provided platforms to connect with residents and raise awareness about the cultural planning process.

Through these touch points, the team was able to distribute surveys, solicit feedback and engage in meaningful conversations with community members.



*Community ambassador Flor Burruel during a community workshop, January 2024.*

# Public engagement findings

The following public engagement findings synthesize insights from each public engagement method, including survey results, interviews, sector workshops, office hours, and pop-ups at events.



The public highly values Tucson's rich arts and cultural presence and how it is so deeply tied to the history, heritage and environment of the city and its people.

There is a sense of pride among residents and attraction among visitors for the way Tucson's history, heritage, arts and culture are woven into its identity as a city. Almost every interview participant mentioned Tucson's unique borderlands location, long Indigenous history, proximity to the Tohono O'odham Nation, and distinctive desert landscape as integral parts of the city's sense of place. It is important to uplift, support and preserve these aspects of Tucson's cultural heritage.

*"The history the heritage of this area is what attracted me to want to live here, so there's that, the history of the southwest. Tucson seems to embody that more than any other communities in Arizona; it's well known around the country that culture is what Tucson is about." - interview participant*

*"I love celebrating Tucson's uniqueness and creativity. 'Sense of place' is a critical component of our economy and pride, and that influences so much about local attitudes." - survey participant*



Tucson's history, heritage, arts and culture community are dedicated and organized, but need more support.

Despite a lack of funding and investment in the sector, the quality, number, size and impact of Tucson's cultural events are comparable to and sometimes even outshine those in larger cities. Cultural activities and offerings in Tucson are often grassroots-led and achieved due to the dedication and creative spirit of its community, but more cohesive efforts are needed to strengthen collaboration, support and advocacy for cultural heritage.

*"There is a bootstrap mentality around creativity where people get organized and get things done and while this is to be highly commended it is also because there is a lack of funding and other investment in arts and culture. These things happen because people care about them." - interview participant*

*"For the size of the community, there is an astounding amount of cultural offerings." - survey participant*



There is broad public support and a stated need for more public funding and new revenue streams to support cultural heritage organizations and programming.

Eighty-five percent of all survey participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that “The City of Tucson should invest more public funding in heritage, history, arts and/or cultural sites, programs or activities.” Limited resources were consistently highlighted in interviews and sector workshops as a major challenge for history, heritage, arts and culture organizations that struggle with a lack of sustainable funding, particularly for critical needs such as operating budgets. Reliable funding is essential for sustaining the longevity and growing the impact of cultural heritage programs, offerings, and services that help to preserve Tucson’s unique identity.

*“Feels like we’re all begging for the same dollars from the city to ensure our cultural programming that’s so near and dear to the city still happens.” - interview participant*

*“Tucson has awesome history, culture and traditions, however, many local historic/cultural organizations operate without coordination or sharing resources with other similar organizations. Additional resources and funding would be worthwhile public investment.” - survey participant*



There is a desire for more initiatives, activities and centers or spaces that bring people together, highlight the city’s diverse cultural heritage and increase feelings of connection and belonging.

Tucson Meet Yourself is a treasured cultural asset among residents and was often cited in the survey and interviews for the way that it builds community, uplifts diverse cultures and demonstrates the uniqueness of Tucson’s history and residents in an inclusive and accessible way. It exists as an aspirational public offering that fills the gap identified by residents — more support, opportunities and spaces for often overlooked cultures and groups to share their histories, stories and initiatives.

*“The City of Tucson should invest in cultural infrastructure that reflects its diverse communities. There should be cultural spaces available for the Chicano/Mexican/Latino, Black, Native/Indigenous, and pan-Asian communities to gather and organize, such as museums or community centers. Currently there are so many different organizations sustaining and keeping culture and the arts alive, yet there is a tremendous amount of duplicated effort to claim and secure spaces for showcasing and sharing their work.” - survey participant*

*“Public celebrations of many different types of cultures are important.” - survey participant*

*“The mariachi and Chicano culture runs so deep in this city. I would love to see more cultural events centered around both mariachi and Chicano history/culture, especially in our public parks/venues!” - survey participant*

*“More cultural diversity, not just emphasizing English or Spanish-speaking residents. This is only seen annually at Tucson Meet Yourself.”*





Tucson residents and visitors are excited and invested in the city's cultural heritage offerings, but the gap in centralized communication and information about events hinders public awareness and participation.

Community members and cultural leaders expressed a need for more coordination and communication around events and activities. There is a large interest in collaboration among organizations and participation among the public, yet there is a lack of awareness of all the cultural programs that are offered in Tucson and how to get involved.

*"I feel that we've only touched the tip of the iceberg. We don't know how to find schedules of events — they tend to be scattered and not streamlined. Advertising and marketing should be a major goal." - survey participant*

*"We have such a wonderful and distinctive mix of cultures in our community, we need to publicize more the opportunities to experience it." - survey participant*



History, heritage, arts, and culture offerings can be made more accessible by supporting those in diverse neighborhoods across the city and increasing affordable transit and parking options.

Residents would like to see the ongoing cultural activities in neighborhoods around Tucson highlighted and supported, as well as more offerings distributed throughout the city in locations beyond downtown and other already activated corridors. In addition, many survey participants listed the lack of affordable transit or parking options as a barrier to participation.

*"I would love more free cultural events to be held at the rec centers/public schools around town. These locations typically are closer to people who do not have reliable transportation. We want important things to happen in our neighborhoods too! Note: Freedom Park would be a great place to have more cultural events!" - survey participant*

*"There are minimal efforts beyond downtown and existing arts venues. The investment needs to happen throughout the city to keep it robust. The public arts budget is spent on inconsequential things and could be more impactful. There are few nods to the real history of Tucson. For instance, the history of Native American residents is not coherently told" - survey participant*

*"The city focuses all its efforts on downtown. Tucson is a vast metro. It would be nice for events to be held on the east side." - survey participant*



*Ciolim Harvest, San Xavier Co-Op Farm. Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*

## **Chapter 3**

# **CITY OF TUCSON'S CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE**



## 3. CITY OF TUCSON'S CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

### Overview of core municipal resources

This section of the State of Culture report casts a closer look at the core organizations or entities that are responsible for administering cultural heritage programs on behalf of the City of Tucson through formal agreements or partnerships. It is important to note that it is an *intentionally narrow focus* to understand the primary mechanisms, operating procedures, and relationships in place at the municipal level; thus, there are many major organizations, events and initiatives that have received funding from the city in the past that are not included.

The planning team, in consultation with the Office of Mayor Regina Romero and the Office of the City Manager, examined the following five pillars:

 <p><b>Arts Foundation for Tucson &amp; Southern Arizona</b> 501c3</p> <p>Artist and arts organization grants</p> <p>Public art commissions, management and maintenance</p> <p>Arts advocacy and arts directory</p> <p>Convenings and professional development workshops</p>	 <p><b>Rio Nuevo TIF</b> <i>Tax Increment Finance District</i></p> <p>Various projects, e.g. Children's Museum Expansion, Fox Tucson Theater</p>	 <p><b>Tucson City of Gastronomy</b> 501c3</p> <p>Restaurant and food service certifications</p> <p>Chef Ambassadors</p> <p>Food Heroes Awards</p> <p>Heritage Food Start-Up Labs</p> <p>Food and drink festivals</p> <p>Classes and tours</p> <p>Media sponsorship with Tucson Foodie</p>	 <p><b>Visit Tucson</b> 501c6</p> <p>Events calendar</p> <p>Film Tucson (Scouting, liaison, production and permits)</p> <p>Cultural tourism</p>	 <p><b>Office of Historic Preservation</b> <i>City office</i></p> <p>Historic districts design review</p> <p>City historic landmarks</p> <p>Archeology</p>
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## Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona (formerly Tucson Pima Arts Council)

### THE ARTS FOUNDATION'S HISTORY

The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona (Arts Foundation) is the designated local arts agency for the region and plays a central role within Tucson's arts and culture ecosystem, often serving as a connecting bridge between residents, visitors, artists, culture bearers, arts collectives and organizations, the city municipality and Tucson's neighboring communities.

Through its myriad activities, the Arts Foundation provides the following core services:

Direct funding in the form of grants to individual artists and cultural producers, collectives, and arts organizations throughout Southern Arizona

Professional development opportunities and technical assistance to artists and organizations

Arts advocacy and directory services for the public

Management of the co-program and public art process for the City of Tucson and Pima County

The origins of the Arts Foundation date back to 1971, when a group of citizens came together to form the Tucson Council on Arts as an organization to support cultural development, mobilize and serve as a resource for information for cultural development and support resource sharing. In 1984, it evolved into the Tucson Pima Arts Council, which was established as the local arts agency that planned and carried out arts and cultural initiatives throughout Tucson and Pima County.

It is in this capacity that the city of Tucson negotiates an annual, renewable contract with the Arts Foundation to provide these services in exchange for funding, which comes from a combination of revenue from the city's Transient Occupancy Tax, General Funds, and Percent for Art allocations from the capital projects budget (for more information on Arts Foundation funding, please see Chapter 4 of this report). Though this longstanding relationship has greatly fluctuated in terms of the amount of funding, including a stark reduction during and following the 2008 economic downturn, it is a testament to its resilience. Today it remains the main local arts agency through which city funding is redistributed to artists and cultural heritage organizations.

In 2016, the Council's Board of Directors voted to change the name of the organization to the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona to better reflect the vision of the agency and community it serves. Since then, the Arts Foundation has doubled down on its support for bilingual, multidisciplinary artists and arts





organizations across the Sonora Desert, including all counties south of the Gila River and border communities along the Mexico-U.S. border.

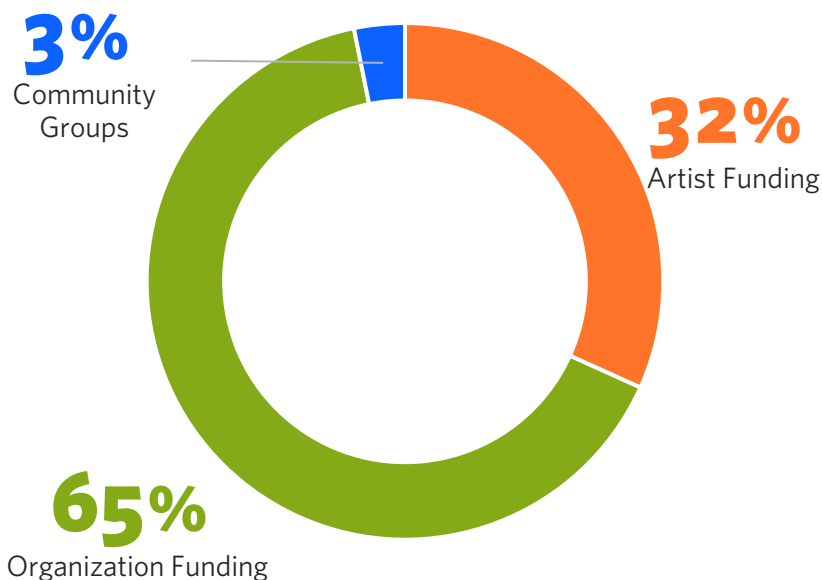
In 2020, the Arts Foundation appointed Adriana Gallego as its new executive director, who led the organization to meet a surge in demand for grants from artists and organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, testing the capacity of the organization's three full-time staff. Since then, the organization has grown into a team of 11, who are also artists, and expanded their communications and outreach, focusing on an equitable distribution of funds and services and increasing engagement with rural creatives throughout Southern Arizona. In 2021, the Arts Foundation provided resources to constituents in their entire service area, including Tucson, Pima County, border communities, rural communities and Tribal Nations. At a national scale, the Arts Foundation is participating in a study on Local Arts Agencies (LAA) conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), as a member of the Technical Working Group and supporting the increased comprehensive understanding of the field of LAAs.

## THE ARTS FOUNDATION'S ROLE IN TUCSON'S CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM

### Grants and funding

The Arts Foundation's most important service is the redistribution of funding in the form of grants to artists and cultural heritage organizations. In this capacity, it provides grants, resources, training, and consultation yearly support to 1,000 artists and organizations. From April 2020 to June 2024, the Arts Foundation has re-granted over \$1 million to 463 individual artists and over \$2.3 million to 221 arts organizations. Ninety-three percent of these grantees were within the City of Tucson. This financial and professional support is critical to strengthening the entire creative ecosystem in Tucson. Even small amounts of funding for grassroots organizations can be transformative, and a robust grant program for independent artists expands the pool of extremely limited and competitive resources.

The projections for grant funding in FY24 show the breakdown of this support across individual artists, organizations and community groups:





## Strategic communication, promotion and programming

The Arts Foundation services include in-person and public-facing programming as well as marketing and promotional efforts through digital and web-based platforms:

- The Open Studio Tours (OST) is one of the largest self-guided showcases of artist studios and creative workspaces in the region, running for more than 10 years. Throughout its history, OST has allowed Tucson and Pima County's artists to invite visitors into their studios/workspaces, free of charge, giving the Southern Arizona community the opportunity to directly engage with working artists, see where art is created and learn more about each artist's artistic processes.
- In addition to radio broadcasts, monthly newsletters, and social media posts connecting the creative community and general residents, the Arts Foundation also produces "ArtiStories Radio Podcast" that highlights artists and creators working in the region.
- The Arts Directory is a key attraction of the Arts Foundation website, designed to showcase individuals and organizations who power the Southern Arizona arts ecosystem. This feature compliments the Open Studio Tours and the Artist Roster, allowing participants an extended profile where they can provide information related to their respective program affiliations.

With an increased focus on independent artists, the Arts Foundation is supporting artists' abilities to continue living, working and making art in their communities through holistic programming that in turn bolsters the entire arts and culture ecosystem and creative economy in Tucson.

## Public art management

The Arts Foundation manages the Percent for Art programs in Tucson and Pima County, including some maintenance for Tucson's public art collection of over 300 artworks. Under Gallego's leadership, the organization has dramatically transformed its services for public art management, including:

### *Workforce development program*

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- The recent Transportation Art By Youth (TABY) Public Art Youth Summer Program hired nine youths to work with public artists across 12 unique paintings on planters along commercial corridor, La Doce.
- The new Public Art Corp is a curriculum designed for emerging artists that helps them navigate producing art outside of their studios. The professional development program is geared towards women and BIPOC artists from Southern Arizona seeking advancement in the field of public art and structured as a 10-module program with interactive sessions, site visits and hands-on experience. Artists learn from established public artists, arts administrators, government departments, community members and fabricators. The curriculum is intended to be replicable, with a future goal of transitioning it into a self-paced tool.

### *Collection management*

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- Created an accessible consolidated inventory.
- Facilitation of maintenance of existing artworks in public art collection.
- Created an ongoing maintenance calendar for preventative public art maintenance.
- Drafted handbook of maintenance best practices to share with city departments.



### *Building community through art*

THRIVE in the 05 engages residents in the placement, selection and design of art that narrates the history and culture of Tucson's Oracle Road and Miracle Mile neighborhoods. By involving the community in the artistic process, the project fosters a sense of pride and belonging, encouraging residential and commercial investment, social cohesion and confidence in neighborhood planning. The THRIVE in the 05 Storytelling Public Art Projects are installed with artworks by artists Daniel Hornung, Sal Sahuahui, and Peniel Macias, who were chosen for their regional connections and experience with community engagement. This initiative adds to Tucson's vibrant public art collection, reflecting the city's enthusiasm for murals and cultural expression. With a focus on community identity through art, the project aims to build a coalition of arts-focused stakeholders, guiding the implementation of the Transformation Plan and bringing new assets to the city's public art landscape.



*Transportation Art By Youth program participants, Arts Foundation staff and City of Tucson Department of Transportation and Mobility staff. Photo courtesy of Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona.*



## Tucson City of Gastronomy

### UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES DESIGNATION

Tucson's food culture is a large part of the city's cultural identity and can even be viewed as a microcosm of Tucson's cultural landscape as a whole — it is multinational, multicultural, unique to the Sonoran and borderlands location and stems from long histories and traditions, from agriculture to ingredients. In 2015, Tucson was incorporated into UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, as the first City of Gastronomy in the U.S. Following the designation, the nonprofit Tucson City of Gastronomy (TCoG) was formed in 2016 to support Tucson's local creative food culture and heritage and manage the designation, which requires a report every four years that illustrates how the city is continuing to meet the requirements and goals of the designation. The designation has catalyzed and inspired new culinary networks and collaborations, both internationally and locally, including the recent creation of the Gastronomic Union of Tucson (GUT), a collaborative of over 30 local chefs and food professionals. The formation of such a group exemplifies a collaborative and creative culture in a sector that typically breeds competition.

### FOOD HERITAGE AND PROGRAMS

With only one full-time staff (Executive Director Jonathan Mabry), Tucson City of Gastronomy supports the growth and preservation of Tucson's food heritage both locally and internationally by producing an array of bilingual programs and events and engaging in cross-sector partnerships. TCoG provides free educational workshops and resources for local entrepreneurs and businesses. The Heritage Food Entrepreneurship workshop supports businesses that focus on heritage ingredients and Putting Sustainability on the Menu teaches affordable ways business can integrate sustainability practices. In addition to educational resources, TCoG supports local businesses through their certification program which recognizes and promotes restaurants and artisans, caterers and retailers who are committed to localism, heritage ingredients, sustainability, responsible business practices and giving back to the community.

TCoG also works to strengthen local food systems through bilingual connections, like Pueblos del Maiz, a month-long, bilingual and multinational festival that celebrates the histories and food cultures of maize in Tucson and other UNESCO cities. The organization's Chef Ambassadors program supports a cohort of selected chefs to travel to sister cities around the world and share Tucson's food heritage in a chef exchange. Tucson City of Gastronomy honors and supports preserving food traditions through their annual Food Heroes Awards program, which recognizes local food heritage leaders, including home cooks and food artisans who have led the preservation of the region's culinary traditions and community members in the region who help to reimagine relationships with food and a positive food future.





## Rio Nuevo TIF

Rio Nuevo TIF (Tax Increment Finance District) helps “drive investment and growth by helping to defray the cost of major projects.” Rio Nuevo funds are generated by a portion of state sales tax from businesses in the TIF District and currently set to be collected through 2035. It has supported a variety of projects downtown, including some cultural projects such as the Children’s Museum and Fox Tucson Theatre expansions. Rio Nuevo is beginning to specifically increase their investment in cultural projects.

## Visit Tucson

Visit Tucson is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization that serves as the official destination marketing agency for the City of Tucson, Pima County and the Town of Oro Valley, in addition to partnering with the Tohono O’odham Nation, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and over 500 businesses. Visit Tucson works to attract visitors, media, tours, meetings and film to Tucson and generate spending and tax revenue for the city. Visit Tucson has 40 staff and nine departments, including Gem Show & Convention Services, which produces a microsite, content and guides for the gem, mineral and fossil community, and Film Tucson, which supports the local film industry (including film festivals) and markets Tucson production locations for film, television and advertising projects.

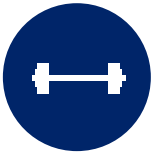
Visit Tucson promotes cultural tourism through sharing arts organizations and events throughout Tucson, manages a comprehensive calendar of events in the city, including cultural events and gives grants that support community events.

## City Historic Preservation

Tucson’s long history as the oldest continuously inhabited place in the U.S. lends itself to a rich built environment, including historical sites and archaeological resources. Tucson has six designated Historic Preservation Zones (HPZs) in the city (most of which are also nationally designated Historic Districts), which have specific development requirements and design guidelines. There are also about 40 nationally registered historical properties in Tucson, as well as individually designated historic properties and archeological “sensitivity zones,” where there is a known concentration of significant archaeological sites. Residents can explore each of these sites and buildings through city’s online interactive “Historic Preservation Map.”

City of Tucson Historic Preservation staff consists of one Historic Preservation Officer, Jodie Brown, who leads the processes for review, documentation, and treatment of historic buildings and archeological sites in collaboration with other city departments like water and power, parks and recreation and police and fire departments. The officer also works with the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission, a 23-member board (that includes 12 seats for the City of Tucson), which advises the county and city on historical activities and sites, including National Register nominations for neighborhoods and properties, managing repairs and rehabilitation of city-owned properties, and reviewing proposed alterations. Neighborhood Historic Preservation Zone (HPZ) Advisory Boards, seats appointed by the Mayor and Council, also meet monthly to review the historic design review process within historic districts, which often involve lengthy timelines to complete. Despite having many historical designations, there are only two full-time staff members in Tucson, compared to four staff in Pima County, which has less sites to regulate and review.

# Key findings of municipal infrastructure assessment:



## Strengths

- Community-driven and grass-roots initiatives plus deep history have cultivated a robust ecosystem.
- Tucson earned a City of Gastronomy UNESCO designation in 2015 in recognition of its rich food heritage and history.
- There is strong mayoral leadership and support for cultural advancement.



## Challenging issues

- Historic Preservation Office is understaffed for the number of projects and properties.
- Prop 207 has led to a reduction of new designations — only two new local districts have been designated in the state since 2006.
- There are mixed opinions on the future role of municipal government to advance and fund history, heritage, arts and cultural services.



## Opportunities

- Arts Foundation and Tucson City of Gastronomy are successful platforms and existing partnerships that offer a major opportunity for deepened collaboration to expand services and impact.



## Comparing peer cities

### What can we learn from peer cities?

Several comparable or peer cities across the country are investing in improving and uplifting arts and culture, and finding new ways to support independent artists, culture bearers, and cultural producers. In the Research and Discovery Phase, the planning team studied the overall operational framework, governance, policies, funding mechanisms and general cultural heritage and arts infrastructure makeup of seven U.S. cities: Albuquerque, NM; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Denver, CO; Oakland, CA; Santa Fe, NM; and San Antonio, TX.

Some of the preliminary findings of those cities were:



All seven U.S. cities have a dedicated municipal department/division for arts and culture in addition to a Local Arts Agency (LAA).



In some cases, municipal arts and culture programs heavily prioritize tourism and marketing of cultural facilities or events, often evident in the department titles such as Denver's Arts & Venue Department or Chicago's Office of Cultural Affairs & Special Events.

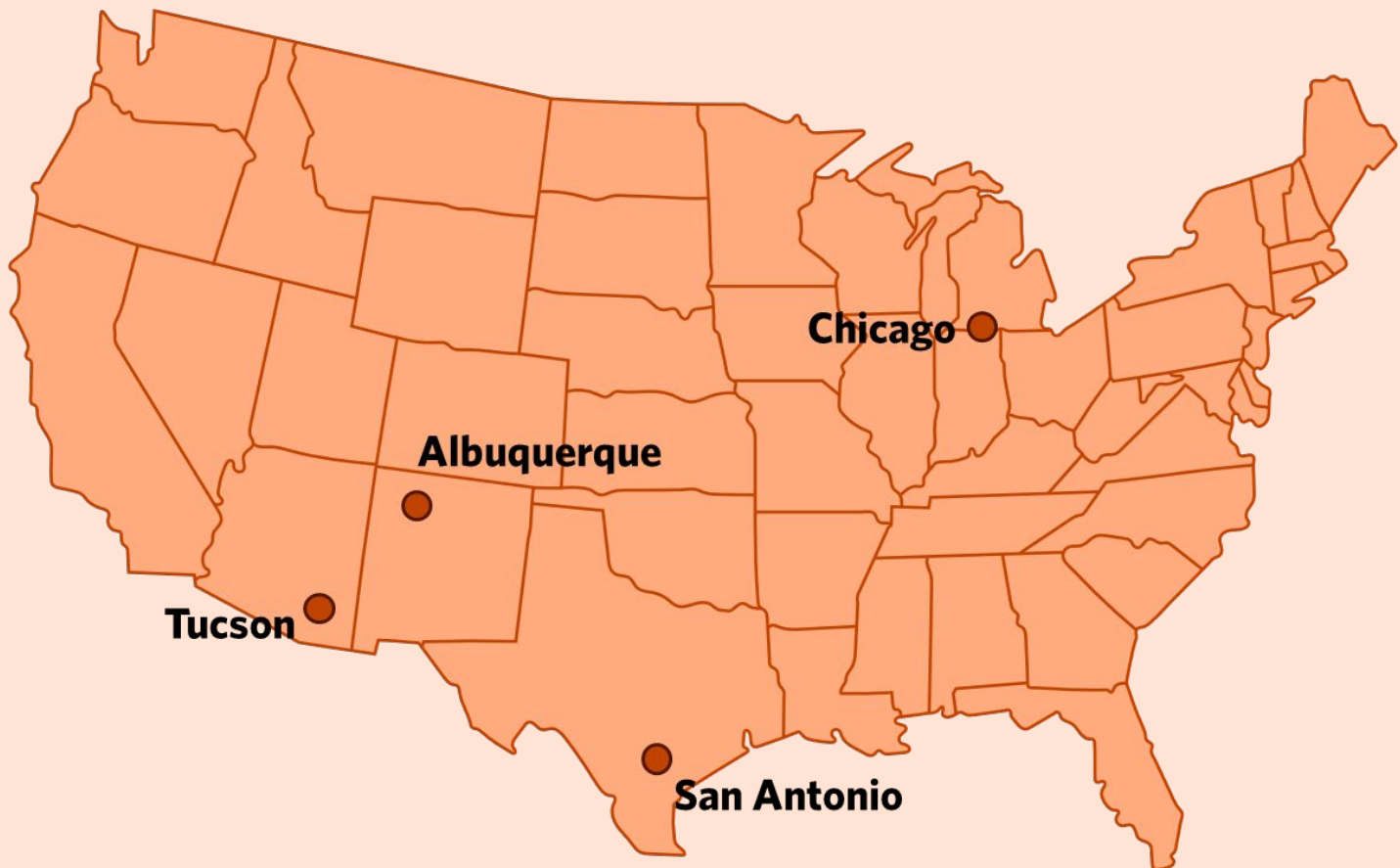


Some municipal arts and culture programs are housed within economic development divisions to enhance strategies for growth, like in Oakland.



To provide important context related to Tucson’s unique UNESCO City of Gastronomy distinction, nine U.S. cities with a UNESCO Creative Cities designation were also studied.

Three of nine cities with the UNESCO Creative Cities designation manage their program through a municipal focal point; five (including Tucson) manage through a private non-profit; and one (Paducah, KY) uses a public-private partnership model.



Out of these cities, three were ultimately selected as aspirational models for supporting arts and culture ecosystems. **Chicago, San Antonio and Albuquerque** were identified for a deeper-dive analysis to gain a better understanding of best practices and lessons learned that might be applied in **Tucson**. San Antonio is a particularly useful model because it received the same UNESCO Creative Cities designation — City of Gastronomy — just two years after Tucson.





## SAN ANTONIO

### Overview:

San Antonio's Department of Arts & Culture grew out of the former Public Art Department and was established in 2001. It supports and enhances the city's cultural landscape through cultural and artistic programming, providing grants to nonprofit organizations and individual artists, producing events, supporting artists through professional development opportunities and managing two free art galleries: Centro de Artes and Culture Commons. The department has a close relationship with the city's tourism agency, Visit San Antonio, and the director of the World Heritage Office, which manages the City of Gastronomy designation.

### Staff:

A team of 24 full-time staff across six divisions: Grants Management, Public Art, Cultural Events & Exhibits, and Film, Television, & Music, Marketing & Communications and Fiscal.

### Funding:

- The department's main source of funding comes from a designation of 15% of the city's annual net hotel occupancy tax, which was implemented in 2001 and grows at about 3% annually.
- Public art is funded by a percent-for-art ordinance that allocates 1.5% of the Capital Improvement Program budget, as well as Bond Funds and General Funds. This was just increased from 1 to 1.5% in 2022. In addition, San Antonio's City Council approved dedicated funds for maintenance on existing public art for the first time in 2023.
- In 2023, the Department of Arts & Culture had an \$11.8 million budget, up from \$11.2 million in 2022.

### Programs and Key Initiatives:

- The department spearheads programs like Poet Laureate and National Poetry Month San Antonio, Public Art, Local Music Spotlight Program, and provides resources like the San Antonio Artist Registry, Public Artworks Map, Events Calendar and Organizations Listing, all online.
- The department's grant program is its largest, providing roughly \$9 million (around 75% of its totally budget) in operational and events grants to nonprofits, performing arts grants to individuals and organizations, cultural district grants, and artists grants to support the creation of new work.
- San Antonio currently has three cultural districts: King William Cultural Arts District, the Old Spanish Trail and Zona Cultural. The San Antonio Film Commission also coordinates permitting.

### Governance:

San Antonio Arts Commission was created in 2015 by combining the former Cultural Arts Board and former Public Art Board. The commission consists of 15 members, all appointed by mayor and council, who make recommendations related to arts funding and public art for the city and directly work with the Department of Arts & Culture. The commission also includes various volunteer citizen subcommittees in public art, arts funding, performing arts, film and music and Centro de Artes.



## Plans & Reports:

- San Antonio Creative Industry Economic Impact Assessment Study (2020) analyzed the economic impact of the creative economy and provided an update from the last economic impact study released in 2017.
- Cul-TÚ-Art Cultural Plan, developed in 2017 and annually reviewed, is a living document that identifies strategies for each of the city's arts initiatives.
- Public Art Strategy and Plan adopted by council in 2017, includes strategies for Riverwalk Public Art Garden and Neighborhood Art in all 10 city council districts.

## Highlights

- San Antonio is the most visited city in Texas and is internationally known for its culture.
- It is the second city in the U.S. to receive UNESCO City of Gastronomy designation, which is managed by the city's World Heritage Office.
- Grant funding provides operational grants to nonprofits designed to build capacity and support for the operational production of cultural programming.
- Centro de Artes showcases emerging and established Latinx artists, curators, organizations and groups working in all artistic disciplines. The two-story gallery hosts programming and solo and group exhibitions that tell the story of the Latinx experience in the U.S. with a focus on South Texas. All open calls are reviewed by the Centro de Artes Curatorial subcommittee of the San Antonio Arts Commission.
- Culture Commons Gallery is a city-run gallery space managed and programmed by the Department's Cultural Events and Exhibits division. The space integrates arts into civic conversation by fostering creativity and engaging community:
  - *Resilient and Responsive: Artists and the Environment (2024)* is an exhibition that produced by the Department of Arts & Culture in collaboration with the Office of Sustainability<sup>18</sup>. The exhibition displays commissioned works by local artists that are in conversation with the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
  - In 2020, the department presented the exhibition, *The Status of Women in San Antonio: Reflections on the Pursuit of Gender Equality*<sup>19</sup>, which was inspired by a 2019 report, "The Status of Women in San Antonio." The exhibition displayed works by 18 artists and was accompanied by a published catalogue.

<sup>18</sup> [visitsanantonio.com/event/resilient-and-responsive%3A-artists-and-the-environment-exhibit/1809/](https://visitsanantonio.com/event/resilient-and-responsive%3A-artists-and-the-environment-exhibit/1809/)

<sup>19</sup> [getcreativesanantonio.com/portals/3/files/StatusOfWomen-Catalog.pdf](https://getcreativesanantonio.com/portals/3/files/StatusOfWomen-Catalog.pdf)



## ALBUQUERQUE, NM

### Overview:

Albuquerque's Department of Arts & Culture is one of the largest city cultural departments nationwide. This department provides cultural programming across 30 sites, manages one of the longest running public art programs in the country (established in 1978), supports arts organizations through funds from the Urban Enhancement Trust Fund and manages an impressive array of spaces and facilities, including 19 libraries, two museums, two performance theaters, a zoo, aquarium, botanical garden, fishing ponds, Historic Plaza at Old Town ABQ, South Broadway Cultural Center and the iconic KiMo Historic Theatre.

### Department structure:

The Arts & Culture Department includes a team of 15 administrators across seven divisions, but the total number of department staff reaches upwards of 435 staff when including facilities staff, which manages the department's 170 structures. The seven department divisions include Public Art and Urban Enhancement, One Albuquerque Media, Public Library Albuquerque Bernalillo County, ABQ BioPark, Albuquerque Museum, Anderson Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum and Community Events.

### Funding:

- In 2023, the department received \$52 million from the city's general fund operating budget.
- The Art and Municipal Places Ordinance established the 1% for Art Program in 1978, funding public art with 1% of city construction funds from the General Obligation Bond and some revenue bonds. Like San Antonio, in 2022, Albuquerque City Council approved an ordinance change from 1 to 1.5% for art and updated the definition of public art to include temporary and digital media<sup>20</sup>. The additional 0.5% goes toward conservation and maintenance of the public artworks.
- There is a 15-year gross receipts tax at 1/8 cent that supports capital projects at BioPark.

### Programs and key initiatives:

From the Poet Laureate Program to Explora Children's Museum and One ABQ Media TV, Albuquerque offers a diverse range of cultural programs and initiatives.

- Creative Bravos Awards: Recognize work that contributes to the city's cultural tapestry for established and emerging artists of any age, as well as organizations, teams, programs, and businesses.
- The Urban Enhancement Trust Fund (UETF): A public endowment that supports arts-related projects by nonprofit organizations, including educational workshops in public spaces, free performances and exhibits or festivals, media productions, cultural research and historical publications.

<sup>20</sup> Learn more about the process undertaken to change an ordinance by the Arts Board and Public Art Program staff by listening to this episode of the City of Albuquerque - Public Art podcast "Take Another Look."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6TgMNjNj3s&list=PLJg4E--tw-E6FmFB72kEG8wx4Txwxip9o&index=8>



- A robust public art program and collection.
- Mayor's Creative Youth Corps: A paid, professional development and mentorship opportunity for high school students interested in the creative sector. Youth are paired with a community partner or host-site to work on an arts-based project.
- Cultural events and workshops at the South Broadway Cultural Center and art exhibitions that showcase local Gallery One, a new city-hall art gallery.
- CityMakers program bringing artists into the public sector through partnering with city departments.

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### **Governance:**

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There are seven boards that correspond with each of the department's seven divisions: Arts Board (an 11-member board that serves as a liaison to Artwork Planning Committees and advises the mayor on acquiring artworks), Albuquerque Museum Board of Trustees, UETF Board (an 11-member board responsible for establishing guidelines and criteria for selecting funded projects and providing oversight for projects), Balloon Museum Board of Trustees, Biological Park Board, Library Advisory Board and Old Town Portal Market Advisory Board.

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### **Plans & Reports:**

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The 2001 Albuquerque Cultural Plan grew out of the Public Art Program and advocated for arts education, sustainable funding for arts and culture services and initiatives, the Urban Enhancement Trust Fund and the Collection Conservation Program that ensures public artworks are cared for and maintained.

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### **Highlights**

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- Comparable to Tucson in size and cultural assets
- One of the largest city arts and cultural service departments with ties to state tourism
- Changed an ordinance in October 2022 to increase 1% to 1.5% for public art with temporary and digital media art added.
- Gallery One is a new city-run gallery space in city hall that aims to connect city government with community members and local artists through exhibitions and programming





## CHICAGO, IL

### Overview:

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The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) supports the arts and culture ecosystem in Chicago by granting funds to individual artists and arts organizations, producing festivals and events, supporting major industries (like film and music) and live events, as well as smaller, place-based activities and local farmers markets. Additionally, DCASE oversees cultural spaces like the Chicago Cultural Center in Millennium Park. The department was originally two separate departments that merged in 2011 at the end of Mayor Richard Daley's tenure.

### Department Structure:

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DCASE has a team of 66 professionals across seven departments, including Executive Administration, Finance & Administration, Programming, Operations, Cultural Grants and Resources, Marketing and Development and the Chicago Film Office.

### Funding:

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DCASE's largest source of funding is the Hotel Operators' Occupation Tax Fund (hotel/motel tax). The department also has ordinance authority to solicit private funding. In 2023, the funding for arts and culture was \$23.5 million.

### Programs and Key Initiatives:

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Public Art Program, special events, farmers markets, Poet Laureate Program, festivals, film programming, Chicago Monuments Project and the Chicago Cultural Center Visual Arts Program

- Neighborhood Access Program (NAP) supports cultural vitality within every Chicago neighborhood through grants for place-based arts and culture activities.
- Public Art Program includes the Chicago Monuments Project, a mural registry, Public Art Projects and an artists-in-residence program.
- Chicago Monuments Project (CMP) initiated in 2020, guides discussions and recommendations regarding monuments across Chicago through a 30-member advisory committee.

### Governance:

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The Cultural Advisory Council, comprising of 25 members, guides and advises DCASE on the development of programs and policies that support arts and culture throughout the city.

### Plans & Reports:

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The 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan provided insights and recommendations to strengthen and expand the city's cultural assets and created a framework for cultural and economic growth.

Navigating Recovery: Arts and Culture Financial and Operating Trends in Chicago (2023) evaluated the health of Chicago's arts organizations before, during and after the pandemic through an analysis of organizations' financial and operating trends.

### Highlights

- Chicago's arts and culture department historically focused their efforts and initiative in and around downtown. They began to intentionally expand their funding and support throughout the city's neighborhoods through the Neighborhood Access Program (NAP) that offers grants for place-based arts and culture activities in each of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods, prioritizing historically disinvested areas.<sup>21</sup>
- Chicago Film Office manages permits and programming for screen entertainment productions within the city.
- The department's operations team oversees permitting in the City of Chicago and has liaisons who help get events approved. Because permitting has to get approved from many different departments, this gives staff a connection to every agency and a high-level awareness of happenings across the city.

<sup>21</sup> [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/culgrants/programs/ngh\\_access\\_prog.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/culgrants/programs/ngh_access_prog.html)

# Key findings from comparing Albuquerque, Chicago and San Antonio



## OPERATIONS

All three cities feature a fully staffed municipal office to manage cultural heritage and arts programming.

While the exact configuration looks different in each, all three offices: distribute grant funding to individual artists and arts and cultural heritage organizations, operate a public, cultural heritage gallery or space and manage a public art program.

All three cities have municipal arts and culture offices, that house permitting.

Notably, all three municipal staff interviewed spoke to the benefits of housing event permitting in their respective offices, which allows the department to stay up to date about city-wide initiatives and events, build and strengthen relationships with staff in other departments and take advantage of the unique ability to spot opportunities for collaboration.



## FACILITIES

All three cities have city-run and programmed galleries and facilities.

These exhibition and programming spaces are managed by the cultural offices' events and exhibition teams and foster connections between city government, local artists, and the surrounding community, while providing opportunities for emerging and established artists to showcase their work. In San Antonio, the Department of Arts & Culture has collaborated with other city offices to exhibit commissioned artist works that interpret and respond to city-published reports. Audiences then can engage with the content of the report in a creative, engaging and different way.



## TOURISM

All three cities have a close and collaborative relationship with the city's tourism agency.

The cultural departments in each city work closely with the city's tourism agency and often collaborate on initiatives and events.



## FUNDING

Like Tucson, two out of three of the cities (San Antonio and Chicago) studied utilize a transient occupancy or hotel-motel tax to fund arts and culture. However, unlike Tucson, a much larger percentage is earmarked:

San Antonio: 15% of city's hotel occupancy tax is allocated for arts and culture. The revenue from this tax usually grows at about 3% per year and was implemented in 2001. This amounted to \$11.2 million in FY2022 and \$11.8 million in FY23.

Chicago: In FY23, the department's budget was \$23.5 million with the Hotel Operators' Occupation Tax Fund (hotel/motel tax) as the largest source. In Chicago, a special ordinance enables the city to apply for private grant funding for specific projects.

Albuquerque has an unusually large budget (over \$50 million) because it directly manages and staffs several major cultural facilities as well as a system of 19 libraries for the county.

Separate 501(c)(3)'s supplement the income for the cultural organizations.

A 15-year gross receipts tax at 1/8 cent supports capital projects at BioPark Zoo, which is a similar mechanism that Tucson has leveraged in the past to fund capital improvements at Reid Park Zoo and other initiatives.





*THRIVE in the 05 Community Event. Image credit: Tarik Meziab.  
Photo courtesy of Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona.*

## **Chapter 4**

# **EVALUATION OF MUNICIPAL FUNDING FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN TUCSON**



## 4. EVALUATION OF MUNICIPAL FUNDING FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN TUCSON

### Context and purpose

A key objective of this planning effort is to identify and gain consensus for increased funding for history, heritage, arts and culture programs, from both the public and private sectors. To build a viable case for such support requires an analysis of the overall system of funding to assess how well it is serving current and future needs.

Despite tremendous cultural heritage and arts programs and a sizeable concentration of creatives and artists, the City of Tucson lacks any formal infrastructure to directly manage its history, heritage, arts and culture assets. However, this does not mean that the city has not consistently funded cultural heritage and arts programs, nor does it indicate a lack of cultural policy. On the contrary, there is a notable track record of monetary and capital support from the city to several marquee initiatives. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona (formerly the Tucson Pima Arts Council or TPAC) — as the primary arts service administrator for the City of Tucson — receives most of its revenue from the city, as it has since its founding in 1984. Tucson was also one of the first cities in the state of Arizona to adopt a so-called “Percent for Art” ordinance, which assigns one percent of the city’s Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) portfolio over \$100,000 toward the commissioning of new public art. Since 1986, more than 300 public art projects have been completed in metropolitan Tucson and Pima County.

*Mobile mural celebrating the appointment of Deb Haaland as the first Native American person to serve as Secretary of the Interior, Ruben Urrea Moreno, Avenidas Arts & Culture Collective.  
Image credit: Avenidas Arts & Culture Collective.  
Photo courtesy of Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona.*





In addition to funding to the Arts Foundation and the City's Percent for Art program, there are other city sources that support cultural heritage, which are funneled through various departments and mechanisms, including in-kind sponsorship of facilities. But due to the ad-hoc nature of such support, it is difficult to obtain concrete information on their amounts and sources. Therefore, to conduct this evaluation, the planning team primarily relied upon the following:

One-on-one or group interviews with city representatives from the offices of the City Manager, Mayor Regina Romero, Historic Preservation and Economic Initiatives.

One-on-one interviews with the executive directors of the nonprofits Arts Foundation, Visit Tucson, and Tucson City of Gastronomy (Adriana Gallego, Felipe Garcia and Jonathan Mabry, respectively) including supplemental budget information.

Publicly available 990 Forms for the Arts Foundation, Visit Tucson and Tucson City of Gastronomy.



## Funding analysis by entity

### Arts Foundation for Tucson & Southern Arizona

*The City of Tucson most consistently and formally funds arts and cultural heritage through its contractual relationship with the Arts Foundation, which serves artists and arts organizations through re-granting, programming and advocacy.*

- The Arts Foundation has historically received between \$350,000-\$812,000 annually as a base amount of funding from the city's general funds. In the last 25 years, \$812,500 was the highest amount received, which was in 2001. The economic downturn of 2008 impacted this funding and in a 10-year period from 2004-2014, the organization saw a 50% cut from the city, reaching its lowest amount of \$350,000 in 2015.
- From 2015-2022, the Arts Foundation annually received \$350,000 from the city's general funds. In FY23 and FY24, the Arts Foundation received a slight increase to \$430,000 in general funds.
- General funds support is supplemented by the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) equaling 10% of total revenue when revenue surpasses \$9.4 million. Fifteen percent of this TOT funding is specifically earmarked for public art maintenance. The TOT has resulted in an additional \$100,000-\$600,000 per year for the Arts Foundation since 2017.
- In FY23, the TOT revenue to Arts Foundation was \$616,436, resulting in a total award of just over \$1 million. In FY24 the TOT revenue share dipped to \$421,020 for a total of just over \$850,000.
- The chart below shows the amount of funding to the Arts Foundation from the city's general funds and the TOT over the last eight years.



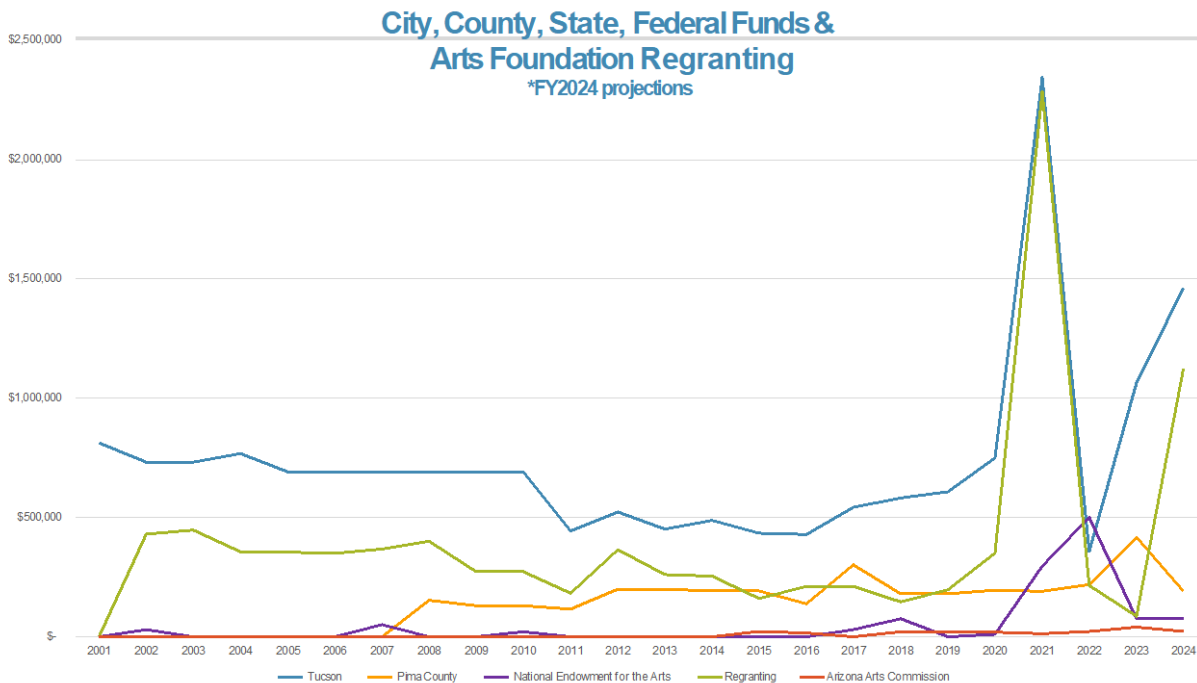

**Arts Foundation Funding 2017-2024** (does not include CARES or ARPA funds)<sup>22</sup>

Arts Foundation Fiscal Year	GOS (Base) Tucson Annual Allocation	TOT Allocation	TOT Restricted Maintenance (15%)	TOT General (85%)
2017	\$350,000	\$109,877	\$16,482	\$93,396
2018	\$350,000	\$168,609	\$25,291	\$143,318
2019	\$342,050	\$255,767	\$38,365	\$217,402
2020	\$385,700	\$297,272	\$44,591	\$252,681
2021	\$350,000	\$127,962	\$19,194	\$108,768
2022	\$350,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
2023	\$430,000	\$616,436	\$92,465	\$523,971
2024	\$430,000	\$421,020	\$63,153	\$357,867

*The Arts Foundation's annual operating budget averages around \$800,000 over the last five years, except for FY21, when the organization was tapped to distribute over \$2 million in CARES and COVID relief funding. Most expenses are pass-through or regranting funds, paying professionals for services in the field, and the provision of direct services through programming. It is an operationally lean nonprofit with outsized impact given its resources.*

- Artists represent the largest number of grantees. From April 2020 to June 2024, 463 artists received 31% of funding and 221 organizations received 69% of funding.
- Organizations represent the largest sum of dollars, receiving 74% of the funds.
- Since April 2020, Ward 6 residents and businesses represent the largest regranting investments, which appears to correlate with the density of arts and culture businesses and households in the City of Tucson.
- The graph below shows the correlation of funding sources and regranting at the Arts Foundation, which also illustrates the general level of support over time provided by the city.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, June 2024



*Supplementing revenue from the city and county, the Arts Foundation solicits additional state and national funding, most recently evidenced through new and growing investments from the NEA and Arizona State Commission on the Arts.*

- Since fiscal year 2021, investments from the National Endowment for Arts and contracts through Pima County (Health Department and Workforce Development) have been added, as shown in the table below.
- Funding from the State of Arizona remains low in direct correlation to the state legislature's lean appropriations to the Arts Commissions. Arizona ranks 38 in arts funding, at 67 cents per capita.

Arts Foundation Fund Source	2021 Income Actual	2022 Income Actual	2023 In-come Actual	2024 Income Projection
Arizona Commission on the Arts	0.46%	2.88%	5.45%	1.06%
City of Tucson Contracts	85.56%	50.77%	71.29%	63.83%
Corporate Contributions	0.08%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Foundation Contributions	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Individual Contributions	0.89%	0.20%	0.31%	0.04%
National Endowment for the Arts	6.20%	17.75%	0.00%	14.53%
Pima County	6.78%	28.39%	22.94%	20.54%

Source: Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona, March 2024.



## Visit Tucson

*Visit Tucson, the city's official tourism partner, is a large 501(c)(6) membership-based nonprofit that also receives a portion of revenue from the Transient Occupancy Tax, and the organization sponsors and supports several cultural heritage events and initiatives.*

- FY24 projections indicate around \$7.2 million in funding to Visit Tucson (allocated in the following fiscal year). The organization's overall operating budget is around \$20 million.
- Visit Tucson provides the following support for two key cultural heritage programs:
  - \$20,000 annually for Tucson Meet Yourself
  - \$48,000 annually for Tucson City of Gastronomy

## Tucson City of Gastronomy

*Tucson City of Gastronomy is a very small 501(c)(3) nonprofit active since 2015 with an annual operating budget of below \$100,000 and one full-time staff. It provides an incredible amount of programming and receives nominal funding from the city.*

- Annually, the city provides \$15,000 in funding to Tucson City of Gastronomy.

## Other ad-hoc funding

*The city annually provides \$5,000 for Tucson Meet Yourself*

- The Office of Economic Initiatives offers an Economic & Workforce Development and Special Events grants, with pools of \$500,000 and \$100,000, respectively. In FY23, most grantees for the Special Events grant were cultural heritage events of organizations, including Tucson Meet Yourself, Tucson Jazz Festival, Tucson Rodeo Parade, Tucson Folk Festival and Dusk Music Festival.
- The city also owns the property or facilities of several cultural heritage organizations, providing these sites or buildings to operators at a nominal cost. This includes the Reid Park Zoo and Tucson Museum of Art.

## Key findings of funding analysis



Cultural heritage funding in Tucson comes from multiple revenue sources.

- Like other cities, Tucson leverages a transient occupancy tax to fund tourism and arts and culture.
- Additionally, like other cities, Tucson has utilized a gross sales tax to fund capital improvements at cultural institutions.
- Historic preservation is primarily supported through federal funds.



Funding for cultural heritage in Tucson is unstable and de-centralized.

- Funding to the primary cultural heritage and arts service organization, Arts Foundation, is not guaranteed, making long-term planning a challenge.
- Municipal arts and culture funding is also decentralized in Tucson. While a significant amount of support goes through the Arts Foundation, there are several other ad-hoc sources including indirect support via Visit Tucson and one-time amounts to Tucson Meet Yourself and Tucson City of Gastronomy.



The limited sources of revenue and grants have fostered a scarcity mentality and created major challenges for cultural heritage organizations and independent artists.

- Many small and grassroots organizations and independent artists self-finance their practices, while mid-size and large organizations face vulnerability as they compete for the same limited sources of revenue and grants. Many stakeholders noted that there is intense competition for the same limited dollars and that while funding sources (municipal and private) may change hands, they do not increase or diversify overall.
- The state's new tax laws significantly impacted the city's budget, creating a large shortfall and increased difficulty in identifying sources of revenue for arts and culture.



Despite the current challenges, there are several promising opportunities to increase sustainable funding for cultural heritage through existing and new mechanisms.

- Tucson utilizes many of the same mechanisms that other cities have successfully leveraged to provide increasing funding for arts and cultural heritage.
- There is an opportunity to potentially access more revenue from TOT especially as cultural tourism grows.
- One-time initiatives such as a time-bound gross sales tax may also be explored to shore up arts and cultural heritage funding.





*Ricardo Soltero, La Calavera Catrina, 2020, Tucson Botanical Garden.  
Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*

## **Chapter 5**

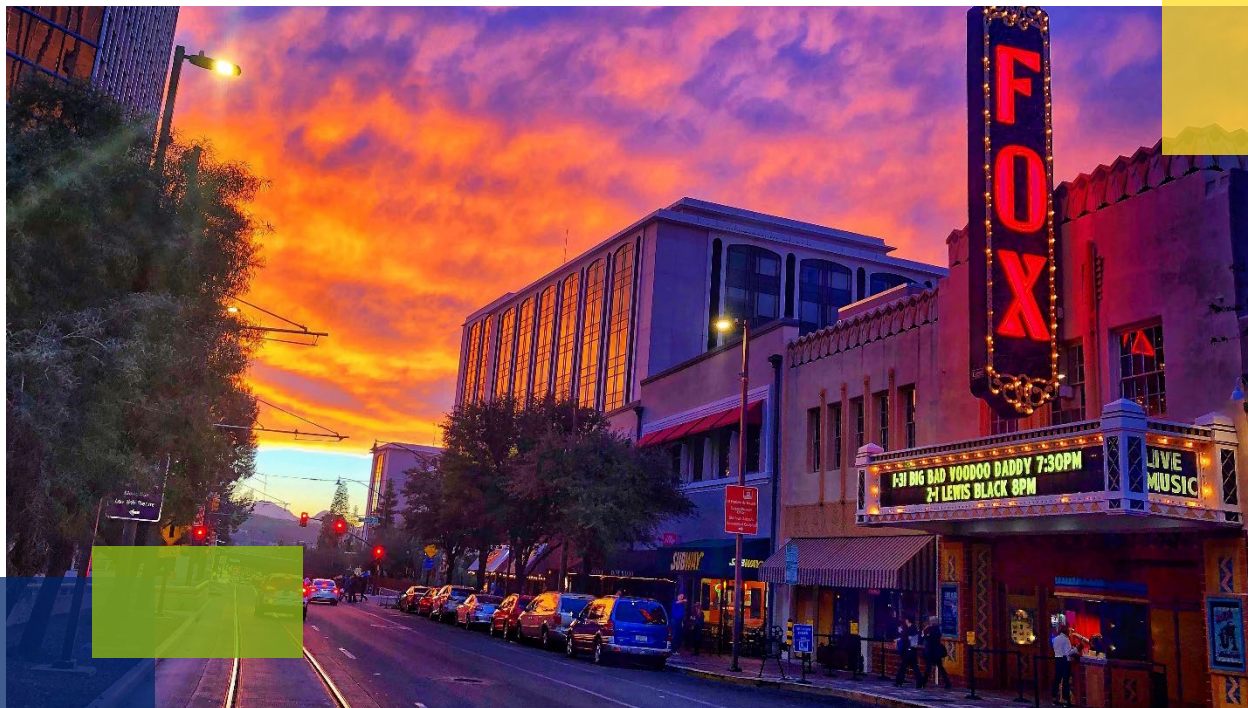
# **Tucson's Cultural Ecosystem and Economic and Fiscal Impact**



## 5. TUCSON'S CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM & ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT

### Economic study context

To enhance understanding of the relationship between Tucson's cultural heritage sector and its larger economy, Jon Stover & Associates, an economic development consulting firm, was enlisted to conduct a comprehensive economic and fiscal impact analysis of the city's creative sector, including its direct and indirect impact on jobs, salaries, tax revenue and cultural tourism. This research also includes a cultural asset inventory and map of the arts and culture industry, including businesses and nonprofits within Tucson's arts, culture and creative sector.



*Fox Tucson Theatre.  
Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*





# Cultural asset inventory and map

## What is cultural asset mapping?

Cultural asset mapping is a best practice and standard operating procedure of cultural planning efforts. It rests in the belief that there are valuable assets — in the form of people, places, associations and organizations — and that recognizing, counting and tracking those components can help move communities to plan and implement their vision. The process entails collecting, recording, analyzing and synthesizing information to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community or group. It identifies a community's strengths and resources through the process of inventorying both tangible and intangible cultural assets.

Given its strong relationship to community development efforts, cultural asset mapping is sometimes referred to by the acronym ABCD, standing for Asset-Based Community Development. Put simply, the process of identifying and quantifying the existing assets and cultural strengths of a specific place can be a powerful tool in community development.

## Tucson's cultural asset inventory

The methodology for conducting an inventory of Tucson's cultural assets required a definition of a "cultural asset," which was informed by two key factors:

- The related need to analyze the fiscal and economic impact of this sector, thus necessitating the use of categories that correlate to classifications based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.
- Extensive stakeholder engagement conducted by Lord Cultural Resources as part of the *iSomos Uno!* cultural heritage strategy.

This study defines a cultural asset as a private business or non-profit that falls into one or more of the following categories: Creative Arts; Museums, Libraries, Historic Sites; Entertainment & Recreation; Local Food & Beverage; Cultural Goods Production & Distribution; Creative Services; Local Retail Stores; and Civic & Cultural Organizations.

It is important to note that there are countless cultural assets in Tucson that exist in less tangible and quantifiable forms or do not fall into one of the above categories, but still play an important role in the overall cultural ecosystem. For the purposes of this cultural asset map and inventory, the study aimed to quantify the economic and fiscal impacts of the arts and culture industry in Tucson by specifically looking at businesses and nonprofits.



## Inclusion of Local Food & Beverage Industry as Core Industry Sector

Local food and beverage establishments are included as a “Core Arts & Cultural industry,” based on the deep role of the culinary arts in Tucson’s heritage and brand – a major theme of the stakeholder engagement process conducted by Lord Cultural Resources as *part iSomos Uno! - A Cultural Heritage Strategy for Tucson*. This inclusion of local eating and drinking establishments stands in contrast with many other “Arts and Culture” plans and impact analyses in other cities, where the culinary arts are a relatively smaller piece of the arts and cultural ecosystem.



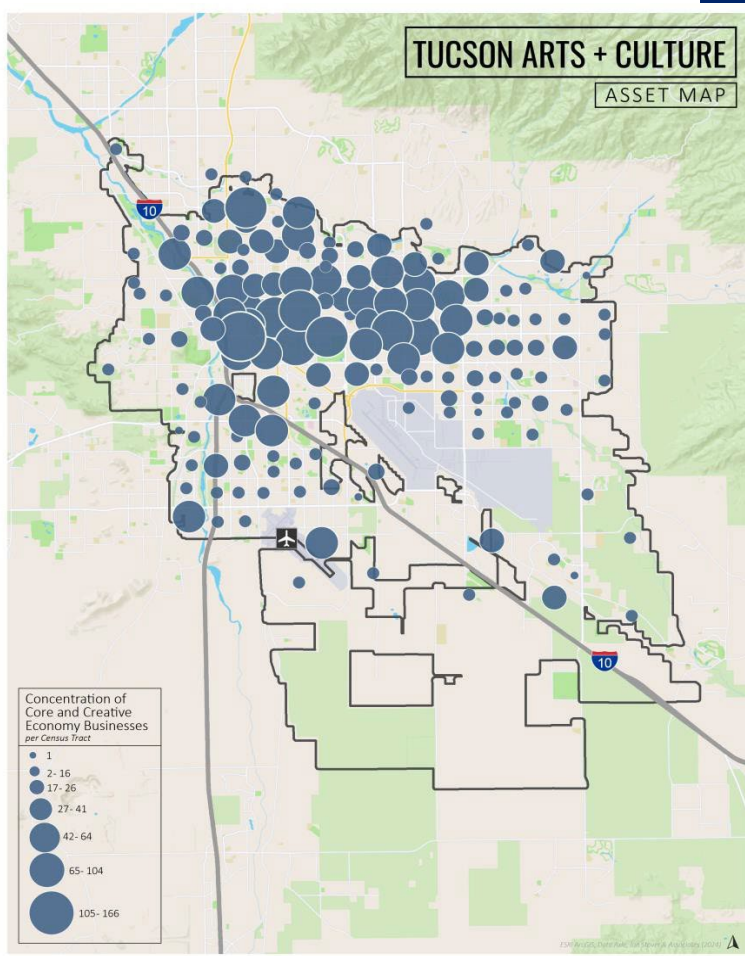
Jackie Tran, Tran's Fats Food Truck.  
Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.





These establishments are categorized into two sub-groups: “Core Arts & Culture Industries” and “Creative Economy,” to distinguish between industries traditionally tied to arts and culture (such as the creative arts or culinary arts), and industries more broadly supported by the city’s cultural capital and creative workforce.





**3,177**  
establishments

Both the core industries and creative economy are included in the cultural asset inventory.

The City of Tucson's cultural assets span from establishments within "Core Arts & Cultural Industries," such as the performing arts or culinary arts, to "Creative Economy" industries that are supported by the city's creative workforce, such as professional design services and clothing stores. In total, the city's cultural assets support 3,177 establishments and 32,046 jobs.

These collective establishments represent 17% of the overall businesses in the City of Tucson and 11% of the city's overall employment base. The discrepancy between these two shares is reflective of the small size of many of these businesses and organizations, with many employing 10 or fewer employees.



# Presidio San Agustín del Tucson MUSEUM

Industry	Establish- ments	Employees
<b>Core Arts &amp; Cultural Industries</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>19,178</b>
Creative Arts	156	1,269
Museum, Library, Historic Site	106	1,365
Civic & Cultural Organizations	588	4,105
Local Food & Beverage	974	12,439
<b>Creative Economy Industries</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>12,868</b>
Cultural Goods Production & Distribution	132	2,397
Creative Services	668	5,353
Local Retail Stores	315	2,040
Entertainment and Recreation	238	3,078
<b>Total Arts &amp; Cultural Economy</b>	<b>3,177</b>	<b>32,046</b>
<b>Citywide Total</b>	<b>18,655</b>	<b>297,710</b>
<b>Arts &amp; Cultural Economy's Citywide Share</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>11%</b>



## Economic and fiscal impact

Tucson's core arts and cultural establishments play a significant role in the city's economy, directly supporting 19,178 jobs and \$832 million in salaries and wages, which in turn generate \$2.4 billion in sales revenue. This accounts for 6% of jobs in the city. Among these industries, the food and beverage sectors stand out as the largest contributor, generating nearly \$1.2 billion in sales and annually over 12,400 jobs.

Similarly, the creative economy in Tucson boasts 1,353 establishments that serve as key players, directly fostering 12,868 jobs and facilitating \$893 million in salaries and wages. This activity significantly fuels \$2.5 billion in sales revenue, representing 4.3% of all jobs in the city.

Tucson's overall arts and cultural economy, including "Core Arts and Cultural" and "Creative Economy" industries, supports over 52,000 jobs, \$2.8 billion in salaries and wages, and \$8.4 billion in business revenue in Tucson.

Cultural assets in Tucson tend to mirror the city's commercial and residential density patterns, with notable concentrations in and around the downtown area, as visualized on the map on page 74. Specifically, museums, libraries, historic sites, creative services, creative arts, and civic and cultural organizations are more prevalent within and adjacent to downtown. Additionally, the production and distribution of cultural goods exhibit high density in downtown, with significant clusters also found in industrial areas just north of downtown and around the University of Arizona campus.

In the culinary and restaurant industry, yearly data from Pima County indicates an overall upward growth trend in industry sales and visitor spending in restaurants and bars from 2015-2022. The county quickly rebounded with increased sales and spending in 2022 after a temporary decline from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While some of this activity is accounted for within the economic impact analysis conduct by Jon Stover &

Associates, supplemental data provided by the City of Gastronomy via the Arizona Office of Economic Tourism indicates the broader long-term potential of the culinary industry in Tucson.

Additionally, projected visitor data from Tucson Foodie indicates that just 10 dedicated food and drink events alone in Tucson, such as Sonoran Restaurant Week or Vegan Night Market, leads to nearly \$5 million in economic impact.

*Ciolim Harvest, San Xavier Co-Op Farm.  
Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*



## Key findings from economic and fiscal impact analysis



Tucson's core arts and culture industries directly support 19,178 jobs and \$832 million in salaries and wages, generating \$2.4 billion in sales revenue. This impact accounts for 6.4% of jobs in the City of Tucson.



Industries within the broader creative economy support an additional 12,868 jobs and \$893 million in salaries and wages, generating \$2.5 billion in sales revenue. This impact accounts for 4.3% of jobs in the City of Tucson.



The collective impact of Tucson's arts and cultural economy generates 52,000 jobs, \$2.8 billion in salaries and wages, and \$8.4 billion in business revenue.



Tucson's arts and cultural economy directly generates \$49.5 million in annual tax revenue for the City of Tucson, \$29.5 million for Pima County and \$151.5 million for the State of Arizona.



Cultural tourism is a significant economic driver for Tucson, generating approximately \$432 million in annual out-of-town visitor spending across a variety of cultural and non-cultural businesses, including food and beverage, transportation, lodging and recreation. This spending supports over 6,600 jobs and \$186 million in annual wages and salaries within these industries. This spending also generates \$20 million in annual tax revenue for the City of Tucson, \$6 million for Pima County and \$28.3 million for the State of Arizona.



## Key implications and opportunities

Tucson's history and culture are a driving force behind a wide range of local industries, including retail and the food and beverage industry. This wide tapestry of establishments leverages the brand and identity of Tucson, creating products and services that reflect the city's aesthetic and heritage and boosting the attributable economic and fiscal impact of arts and culture in the city. The City of Tucson should explore the following opportunities to boost these impacts further:

**Strengthen the fundamental drivers behind cultural tourism – arts-based activities, placemaking initiatives, historic preservation and small business development support.** Various businesses, including some not always associated with arts and culture such as restaurants and retailers, all help contribute to attracting outside visitation. Notably, tourists require relatively low fiscal expenses, while driving significant spending and associated fiscal revenues — making cultural tourism a critical factor in developing a resilient local economy and healthy tax base.

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**Work with the Arizona Downtown Alliance to assess the feasibility of creating localized place-management entities such as Main Street programs within arts-oriented commercial districts** to provide technical assistance to small business owners, implement placemaking initiatives, and strengthen district branding and marketing.

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**Continue showcasing Tucson as the “City of Gastronomy” to further strengthen the city’s brand as a culinary arts hub and attract more out-of-town visitors.** The food and beverage industry is a major local economic driver and a key piece of Tucson’s identity and heritage.

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**Build upon the high concentration of cultural assets in Downtown Tucson by investing in master planning and historic preservation efforts in the area.** These efforts should identify opportunities to boost pedestrian traffic, grow its residential base (thereby boosting the long-term sustainability of cultural establishments) and preserve its historic character and assets.

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**Incorporate the Creative Economy into city, regional and state economic development and workforce development strategies** to ensure small businesses and workers (current and prospective) are served in future planning efforts.

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**Develop an Arts and Cultural Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan** to identify specific funding sources, implementation partners and action steps to execute the above strategies and strengthen the long-term economic resiliency and impact of the local arts and cultural economy.



*Folklorico Dancers.  
Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*

## Chapter 6

# STATE OF CULTURE: Emerging Insights



## 6. STATE OF CULTURE: EMERGING INSIGHTS

### Guiding Principles

These guiding principles are values that emerged through our research and engagement processes as essential principles to guide the approach, design and implementation for a successful cultural heritage strategy, now and in the future.

**Embrace belonging and cultural equity.** Foster a culture of equitable and inclusive co-creation that empowers those affected most by systems of oppression. Celebrate and value the multicultural, multifaceted identities that make up Tucson's cultural identity.

**Recognize, respect and honor** the history, deep connection to the land and cultural heritage of the Indigenous peoples who have stewarded the region for many generations, including the Tohono O'odham Nation and Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

**Prioritize and uphold building trust** as a key and foundational component of authentic engagement, partnership and co-creation. Seek to acknowledge and address the ways historically marginalized communities have been excluded or harmed in the past.



*Sonoran Circumvolution, Rebecca Carlton. Image credit: Julius Schlosburg.  
Photo Courtesy of Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona.*







## Emerging insights

The planning process uncovered eight emerging insights about the state of culture in Tucson. These are synthesized insights from each phase of the planning process and collectively, they provide a roadmap for the future Cultural Heritage Strategy for Tucson. In the coming months, additional input will be gathered to refine these challenges, strengths and opportunities into strategies, priorities and recommendations that will enable the implementation of a shared vision for cultural heritage in Tucson.

### Quality and Unrealized Potential of Sector

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Tucson boasts an incredibly rich and diverse array of cultural programs and organizations that have largely evolved as grassroots initiatives led by dedicated community collaboration. Though Tucson is a mid-sized city, its high-quality cultural offerings are comparable to those of major cities with more funding, and they have an outsized impact on the city's identity and sense of place. While this community dedication is a huge asset and strength to the sector and the city, the lack of funding hinders its sustainability, growth and potential for greater impact.

### Storytelling

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Tucson's deep history and rich cultural heritage deserves to be more widely shared and understood through an intentional and holistic narrative. The diverse culture and history of Tucson give it a distinct sense of place and would benefit from stronger storytelling that not only continues to build a sense of pride and appreciation among residents and visitors, but also broadens an authentic understanding of the area by new audiences and attracts tourism and business to the area.

### Funding

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The volume and type of municipal revenue sources for history, heritage, arts and culture are limited, making funding inconsistent and unpredictable for the organizations that provide cultural services, programs and activities in Tucson. While the Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona is an invaluable asset for its established network and community, the organization's work could be better supported and strengthened. Exploring new funding mechanisms and models to increase sustainable financial support will be critical to advancing Tucson's cultural ecosystem.

### Infrastructure and Cohesion

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The lack of a formal municipal infrastructure for the sector hinders public awareness about cultural events and limits growth and collaboration within the sector. There is a need for a municipal focal point that supports public, external-facing needs as well as the needs of the sector internally to increase cohesion. Internally, more coordinated support within the cultural heritage sector could build and support partnerships, form sector-wide networks, streamline event coordination and foster resource-sharing. Externally, centralized communication efforts could increase public awareness and participation in events and activities.





## Food Heritage

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There is an overlooked opportunity to amplify, support and collaborate with the culinary heritage sector through innovative initiatives and intentional cross-sector engagement. Tucson's rich food heritage plays an integral role in the cultural ecosystem and earned it the distinguished UNESCO City of Gastronomy designation, but the city could benefit greatly from more cohesively integrating Tucson's heritage food, agriculture and ingredients into the city's overall story, arts and cultural ecosystem and partnerships across other sectors. There is significant potential for increased collaboration, educational partnerships that benefit youth and initiatives for professional mentorship and training. Greater amplification through a partnership with municipal resources could open this untapped potential.

## Economic Prosperity

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There is large potential for growth and further investment in Tucson's thriving creative economy, which plays a direct role in preserving the city's unique cultural identity and contributes to its growing reputation. The *Tucson Arts, Culture, & Creative Sector Economic Impact Analysis* (2024), conducted as part of this planning process, distinguishes Tucson as a city with a thriving creative economy and makes a compelling case for future investment and greater appreciation. With an outstanding \$8.4 billion in business revenue, Tucson's creative sector has numerous opportunities to build its reputation into an internationally renowned city.

## Belonging

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There is a desire for more cultural and creative programs that bring people together to celebrate Tucson's diverse and multicultural population and their stories. Tucson's multifaceted culture and history is an undeniable asset and an essential part of its identity. Cultural events that do this well are widely cherished and there is an opportunity to strengthen existing offerings and create new initiatives such as night festivals like Nuit Blanche<sup>23</sup>, where diversity is valued and celebrated, and community-building and connection are fostered. There is an expressed desire for wider distribution of cultural programs and activities throughout Tucson's diverse neighborhoods and more support and recognition of activities that already take place beyond downtown.

## Venues and Spaces

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There is a need for more cultural venues and facilities that serve as gathering hubs, production and exhibition spaces, practice centers, storage areas and performance venues for multidisciplinary artists (including and especially youth), arts activities and cultural entities. This presents an opportunity to integrate outdoor resources and public spaces, such as parks, to increase the viable venues for cultural and artistic production.

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<sup>23</sup> [toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/festivals-events/nuitblanche](https://toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/festivals-events/nuitblanche)



*Tucson International Mariachi Conference.  
Photo courtesy of Visit Tucson.*

## **Chapter 7**

# **NEXT STEPS**



## 7. NEXT STEPS

### NEXT STEPS

#### **JULY - AUGUST:**

- Budget, Funding and Governance workshop



#### **SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER:**

- Action Planning
- Draft Plan



#### **OCTOBER - NOVEMBER:**

- Final Plan
- Presentation of Final Plan



