

2023 UPDATE

ARTS & CULTURE

BLUE RIBBONS Strong audience engagement and virtual delivery · Strong forward momentum · Collaboration

RED FLAGS Prolonged shutdown and capacity limitations · Diversity and inclusion · Chronic funding concerns



IMAGE COURTESY OF SPRINGFIELD REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

Attendance at arts productions and events, like ArtsFest on Walnut Street, peaked in 2021–22.

Arts boost local economy by \$89M, but facility capacity limits growth

Since the 2021 Community Focus Report, the recovery for the Springfield arts community has been uneven, although attendance is rebounding from the depths of 2020.

Loyal audiences continue to bolster **strong audience engagement** and **maintain forward momentum**, two Blue Ribbons from the 2021 report. The recovery has been uneven, and not all organizations saw a fast return to record-breaking attendance. Fiscal year 2022 results showed the highest attendance across nine arts organizations since 2017. But the 2023 fiscal year saw a 19% attendance drop to 180,831 across nine major arts organizations from that 2022 peak.

With numerous sold-out shows in the community, though, revenues were strong across the organizations, hitting the second-highest level in eight years. After the 2022 spike from pent-up pandemic demand, arts organizations are focused on growing

momentum sustainably.

The arts community is continuing to see investment through donations and grants. Since kicking off its 2028 Campaign in October 2021, the Springfield Art Museum has raised nearly \$16 million toward capital improvements that include upgrades to the museum's grounds and parking.

Collaboration remains strong. Organizations have rekindled longstanding relationships and developed new ones. From sharing artistically to using space efficiently, these collaborations are designed to support sustainable growth. The Arts & Economic Prosperity Study 6, released in October 2023, showed the arts having a direct economic impact of \$89.2 million on Springfield with support for 1,610 jobs. The arts also generate \$2 million in local tax revenue.

While shutdowns are history, **capacity limitations on facilities** have emerged. The area lacks

RECENT SUCCESS STORY

Collaboration has been a hallmark of the arts community for decades, and the pandemic solidified these budding and established relationships.

Along with partnering for programs and performances, arts organizations have formed the Cultural Coalition, a collaborative group advocating for all arts and culture in Springfield.

Together, the group successfully advocated for the reallocation of hotel/motel funds for arts and sports.

Future goals of the group include:

- Collecting and synthesizing more data.
- Creating a cultural plan for both Springfield and the southwest Missouri region.
- Establishing a united brand and identity for the arts community.
- Building newer, bigger facilities plus funding to maintain current historic arts facilities.
- Shared administrative support for efficient operations.

large rehearsal spaces for organizations to prepare for performance venues, and most producers have mere days to get it right before opening. Studio spaces are needed to practice and create. Even school buildings are so strapped for space that arts classrooms are being repurposed and put onto carts to travel from room to room. The arts community will be out of room for future growth if adjustments aren't made.

Inclusivity and community building have become rallying cries for improving accessibility. The Mosaic Arts Collective provides individuals of marginalized groups and races the opportunity for arts education, preparation and performance. The organization sold out numerous performances of "The Color Purple" and "Moana Jr.," in 2023, propelling the group forward quickly. But overall, diversity and inclusion remain a challenge, as board rooms still don't reflect the community at large.

Chronic **funding challenges** persist, although organizations have had recent

wins. In April 2023, voters approved reallocating hotel/motel funds to support arts and sports. This vote is expected to generate \$200,000 for the arts in Springfield.

The Missouri Legislature also allocated an increase of \$3.1 million for the Missouri Arts Council. These increases mark the second year of funding growth in the state's budget for the arts. Film tax credits have also been renewed, making Missouri a competitive film hub.

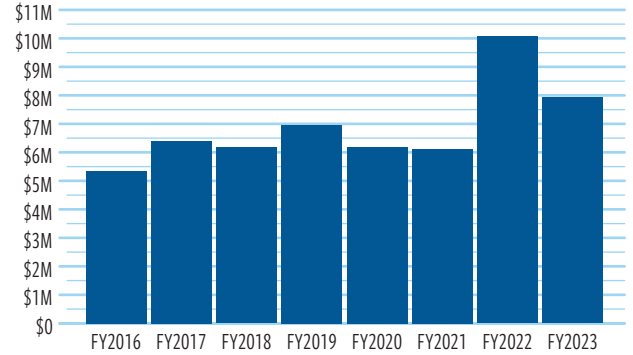
The Arts & Culture 2023 update was produced by Leslie Forrester of Springfield Regional Arts Council with input from Sarah Abele, Joshua Best, Nicole Chilton, Jennifer Cotner-Jones, Rick Dines, Beth Domann, Winter Kinne, Linda Kirchner, Louise Knauer, Mary Kromrey, Abigail Lind, Jamie McGranahan, Keisha McMillen, Rebecca Miller, Nick Nelson, Linda Passeri, Randy Russell, Susan Scott, Sean Spyres, Geoff Steele, Mike Stevens, Claire Utley, Meg Wagler, and Vonda Yarberry.

ABOUT THE 2023 UPDATE

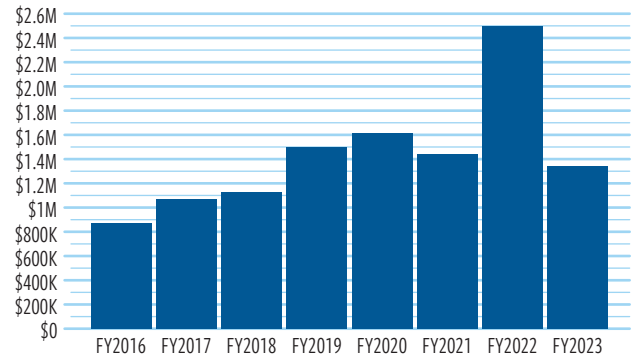
This interim update reviews current data for the Blue Ribbons and Red Flags from the 2021 report. The 20th anniversary report, to be released in 2024, will develop an updated list of Blue Ribbons and Red Flags.

KEY METRICS

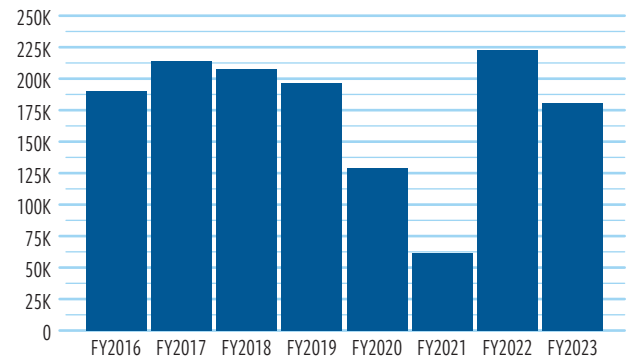
Revenue of Local Arts Agencies



Donations to Local Arts Agencies



Attendance of Local Arts Agencies



These figures track nine major arts organizations in Springfield following a July–June fiscal year.

SOURCE: SPRINGFIELD REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL