

# ARTS

## Advocacy Toolkit

## **About ArtsKC**

ArtsKC is a leading arts support organization in the bi-state Kansas City region. We provide support for the regional art and culture community through programs, advocacy, and investment.

Since 1999, ArtsKC has served as the regional arts council for Jackson, Clay, and Platte counties in Missouri and Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas. Join us as we continue advancing lives through the arts.

## **What we do**

ArtsKC has a dedicated strategic focus to promote, support and advocate for the arts in the metropolitan region. Specifically:

We promote to ensure inclusive access to and engagement in the arts & culture for all.  
We support to elevate the capacity of the arts sector professionals to drive lasting and transformative impact.

We advocate to advance arts leadership in business, civic, and government priorities.

## How to Advocate for the Arts

Advocating for the arts is important in ensuring it remains an essential and valued part of our communities and society. Here are some ideas you can effectively advocate for the arts:

- Educate yourself: stay informed about the impact of the arts on the economy, education, and society. You can learn more about this by checking the newest [Art & Economic prosperity \(AEP 6\)](#) impact study
- Engage with local arts organizations like ArtsKC: Attend events, volunteer, and become a donor to show your support for the arts
- Communicate with policymakers: Write letters, send emails, or call your local, state, and federal representatives to express your support for the arts and encourage them to prioritize funding and policies that benefit the arts.
- Share your story: Tell personal stories about how the arts have impacted your life or the lives of those in your community. This helps to humanize the importance of the arts.
- Use social media: Follow and engage with arts organizations and artists on social media. Share their posts, and use relevant hashtags to increase visibility for arts-related issues.
- Participate in advocacy events: Attend town halls, and other events that focus on supporting the arts.
- Mobilize your network: Encourage friends, family, and colleagues to join you in advocating for the arts. Provide them with resources and information to help them get involved.
- Promote arts education: Advocate for strong arts education programs in schools, as this helps to create future generations of artists and art supporters

# 10 Reasons to Support the Arts in Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area in 2024

## By American for the Arts

The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They enable and inspire us by fostering creativity, empathy, and beauty. The arts also strengthen our communities socially, educationally, and economically—benefits that persist even during a pandemic that has been devastating to the arts. The following 10 reasons show why an investment in artists, creative workers, and arts organizations is vital to the nation’s post-pandemic healing and recovery.

1. [Arts unify communities](#). 72% of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 73% agree that the arts “helps me understand other cultures better”—a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories.
2. [Arts improve individual well-being](#). 81% of the population says the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world,” 69% of the population believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences,” and 73% feel the arts give them “pure pleasure to experience and participate in.”
3. [Arts strengthen the economy](#). The nation’s arts and culture sector—nonprofit, commercial, education—is a \$1.02 trillion industry that supports 4.9 million jobs (2021). That is 4.4% of the nation’s economy. In [Missouri](#), arts and culture is a \$11 billion industry—3.1% of the state economy—and supports 89,146 jobs (bigger than utilities, education, and agriculture). The arts [accelerate economic recovery](#): a growth in arts employment has a positive and causal effect on overall employment. (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). [Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area’s nonprofit arts industry](#) alone generates \$615.2 million in economic activity—spending by organizations *and their audiences*—which supports 8,977 jobs and generates \$97.5 million in local, state, and federal government revenue ([2022](#)).
4. [Arts drive tourism and revenue to local businesses](#). The 4.5 million attendees at Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area’s nonprofit arts and culture events spend an average of \$37.06 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and lodging—vital income for local businesses. 13% of attendees live outside of the 5-county region (Clay, Jackson, and Platte Counties in Missouri; Johnson and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas counties); they average \$60.37 in event-related spending. Arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more to seek out authentic cultural experiences.
5. [Arts improve academic performance](#). Students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and college-going rates as well as lower drop-out

rates. These academic benefits are reaped by students across all socio-economic strata. Yet the Department of Education reports that access to arts education for students of color is significantly lower than for their white peers. 91% of Americans believe that arts are part of a well-rounded K-12 education.

6. [Arts spark creativity and innovation](#). *Creativity* is among the top five applied skills sought by business leaders—per the Conference Board’s *Ready to Innovate* report—with 72% saying creativity is of “high importance” when hiring. Research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are 17 times more likely to be actively engaged as an *arts maker* than other scientists.
7. [Arts have social impact](#). University of Pennsylvania researchers have demonstrated that a high concentration of the arts in a city leads to higher civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates.
8. [Arts improve healthcare](#). Nearly one-half of the nation’s healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff. 78% deliver these programs because of their healing benefits to patients—shorter hospital stays, better pain management, and less medication.
9. [Arts for the health and well-being of our military](#). The arts heal the mental, physical, and moral injuries of war for military servicemembers and Veterans, who rank the creative arts therapies in the top four (out of 40) interventions and treatments. Across the military continuum, the arts promote resilience during pre-deployment, deployment, and the reintegration of military servicemembers, Veterans, their families, and caregivers into communities.
10. [Arts Strengthen Mental Health](#). The arts are an effective resource in reducing depression and anxiety and increasing life satisfaction. Just 30 minutes of active arts activities daily can combat the ill effects of isolation and loneliness associated with COVID-19.

## How to Find a Legislator

Finding your local, state, and federal legislators is an essential step in advocating for issues that matter to you. Follow these simple steps to identify and contact your representatives:

### Step 1: Determine your district

Visit <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map> to find out which congressional district you live in based on your zip code. You can also check your state's government website for information on state legislative districts.

### Step 2: Find your representatives

For federal legislators: Go to the United States Congress [website](#), which says “*Contact your Member,*” to find your representatives' names and contact information in the House and Senate.

For state legislators: Visit your state's government website and look for "Find your legislature." Here, you should find a list of representatives organized by district.

- For MO, please check this [website](#)
- For KS, please check this [website](#)

For local legislators: Check your city or county's website for information on local representatives, such as city council members or county commissioners.

### Step 3: Share your voice

Once you have identified your legislators and obtained their contact information, here are ways you can communicate and educate your representatives:

1. Send an email. This is the easiest and most effective way to contact your representatives. Make sure your email is respectful, specific, and short. Here is a sample email copy you can use for future communications

*Dear [Representative's Name],*

*I hope this email finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am a constituent from [Your Location]. I am writing to express my strong support for [Bill Number or Title], which addresses the critical issue of [Issue].*

*As someone directly affected by [Issue], I believe that [Bill Number or Title] will have a positive impact on our community by [briefly describe the potential benefits]. This bill is crucial in ensuring [briefly describe the positive outcomes].*

*I urge you to support [Bill Number or Title] and take action to ensure its passage. Your leadership on this issue is greatly appreciated and will make a significant difference in the lives of many individuals and families in our community.*

*Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to seeing your support for this important legislation.*

2. Call or meet them- Call your Representative or Senator's local office. Each representative has a staff working to answer the phone. If the legislator is unavailable, you may be able to schedule a call or in-person meeting for another day.

\*Tips if you can talk or meet a legislator:

- Write down key points you want to convey. Be clear, concise, and focused on the issue at hand.
- Begin the call or meet by stating your name and location so the legislator knows you are a constituent.
- Be polite: Maintain a respectful and professional tone throughout the conversation
- Explain the specific issue or legislation you're calling about and why it's important to you. (If relevant, share a personal story to illustrate the impact of the issue on your life or community).
- Have a good relationship with the staff. Be prepared for the fact that you may not meet directly with your legislator even when you do schedule a

meeting. They have busy schedules and don't always have time to meet with everyone. You may meet with one of the staff members. Do not think they are "just staff" —they are highly qualified and highly dedicated people who work hard to communicate information to their bosses. They are the gatekeepers—everything goes through them before the Representative or Senator sees it. If you have a good relationship with them, they are more likely to pass along what you give them as it comes from a familiar face. Treat them with the same respect and courtesy that you would treat the Representative or Senator.

- Support your position with data, statistics, or research to strengthen your argument.
- Make a specific request: Ask the policymaker to take a particular action, such as supporting or opposing a bill, introducing legislation, or raising awareness about the issue.
- Thank them for their time
- Send a follow-up email or letter to the legislator's office, reiterating your position and thanking them again for their time.



## Talking points

Here are some talking points and other resources:

General talking point structure

- Issue Overview: Arts and culture play a vital role in our communities by enriching our lives, promoting creativity and connections, and contributing to the economy.
- Problem Statement: Insufficient funding and resources for the arts limit access and opportunities for artists, arts organizations, and the public.
- Proposed Solution: Increase public investment in the arts by allocating additional funding for arts education in public schools, grants, and support to art nonprofit and public art initiatives.
- Benefits:
  - Here you can find some benefits of the arts. Choose the one that aligns best with the case: <https://ww2.americansforthearts.org/explorer>
- Counterarguments:\* Some may argue that other priorities deserve more funding. However, investing in the arts has yielded positive returns in education, economic development, and community well-being. Also, others might question the value of the arts in society. Numerous studies have shown the positive impact of the arts on mental health, cognitive development, and overall quality of life.

Other talking point resources:

[American for the Arts Rapid Response Kit](#)

[ArtsKC Policy Agenda 2025](#)

[Art and Economic Prosperity study toolkit](#)- data and facts when talking about the economic impact of the arts, so you have more confidence and credibility in interacting with elected officials while advocating.