

ANNUAL REPORT

THE ARTS
AND HUMANITIES
COUNCIL OF TUSCALOOSA COUNTY, INC.



2023-2024

JUNE 1 - MAY 20

THE ARTS
COUNCIL



FROM THE DIRECTOR...

After almost two years of preparation, the Americans for the Arts (AFTA) published the Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) study results in November 2023. The first study of its kind was published in 1994 and represented 33 communities. AEP6 provides detailed findings on 373 regions from across all 50 states and Puerto Rico. I am proud to say, that the Arts and Humanities Council partnered with Americans for the Arts so that Tuscaloosa County could be equipped with reliable data and actionable results. Tuscaloosa and Madison County (Huntsville) were the only Alabama counties to partner with AFTA on this research. I hope you will spend time looking at the impact of the arts on our region (See pgs. 9-10). According to Randy Cohen, Vice-President of Research, at Americans for the Arts (AFTA), Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 brings a welcome message: *When you invest in the arts and culture, you are investing in an industry that strengthens your economy and builds more livable communities.* The arts are business and contribute in ways that drive commerce. For every person attending an event whether local or visiting, they spend on average \$25.15 per person. This spending drives tax revenue and supports our community. Creating livable communities is economic development, and the arts play an essential role.

In February, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded the Arts Council a grant for \$100,000. This money will continue the work that the pARTners Project started several years ago. I am happy to say that we are providing valuable arts education integration and enrichment to the schools in West Alabama. "Good arts education is not about the product," says Jamie Kasper, director of the Arts Education Partnership and a former music teacher, "It is about the process of learning." These programs can be a crucial component of your child's school life. Children benefit by tapping into their creative side and honing skills that might not be the focus of other content areas, including communication, fine motor skills, and emotional intelligence.

We believe that through the arts we can create a better community.
Thank you for your support over the last year. We could not do this without you!



Sandra Wolfe, Executive Director
The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Established in 1970 by a group of citizens dedicated to the arts, the mission of The Arts Council is to promote and encourage the arts and humanities in Tuscaloosa County. The Arts Council serves as the umbrella organization for 50 Member Organizations, offers educational programs, and manages the historic Bama Theatre and the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center. The Arts Council is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

STAFF

Sandra Wolfe, *Executive Director* | Autumn Fuller, *Education Director* | Kevin Ledgewood, *Publicity*
Benji Stockton, *Bama Theatre Manager* | Reagan Fryer, *Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center Manager*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

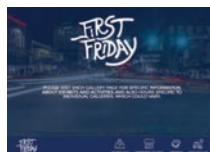
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Cover image: *Photo of Crestmont Elementary students by teaching artist Ruth O'Connor, introducing grades 1-4 art students to different forms of visual arts which focus on both critical thinking skills and technical art skills*



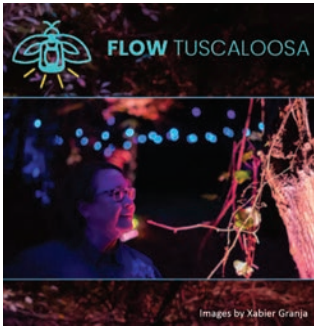
www.tuscarts.org



www.firstfridaytuscaloosa.com



www.monstertakeover.com



“FLOW TUSCALOOSA”

Flow Tuscaloosa draws from the successful restoration of Hurricane Creek, a Tuscaloosa natural resource, to inspire protection of the Black Warrior River and its tributaries and to bring attention to the unique history and ecology of our watershed.

- Environmental stewardship was encouraged through art-making and included a series of lantern-building workshops, community lantern parade, and a creekside gathering in 2024.
- The project was organized by Jamey Grimes (UA Department of Art and Art History) and Julia Brock (UA Department of History).

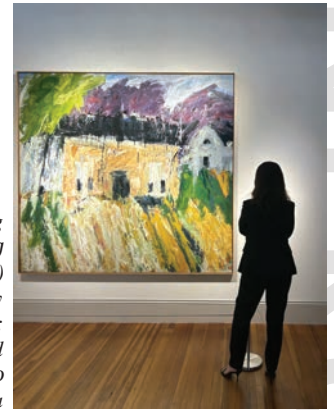
The Collaboration included The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa with funding from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the Alabama Humanities Alliance.

SUSAN N. MCCOLLOUGH FINE ARTS INITIATIVE BIENNIAL

The University of Alabama Department of Art and Art History presented the inaugural exhibition of this initiative October 6-December 1, 2023, at The University of Alabama Gallery and The Arts Council Gallery in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center in Tuscaloosa. This new juried exhibition featured the artwork of current UA studio art majors alongside the work of UA art alumni exhibitors and juried in applicants from current majors in studio art.

The Collaboration included The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa with funding from the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the Alabama Humanities Alliance.

*Susan Nomberg
McCollough viewing
“Tenant House I” (1960)
by William Christenberry
(1936-2016); Oil on linen;
Gift of Maggie and
Will Brooke to
The University of Alabama*



TUSCALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOLS FINE ARTS SHOWCASE

The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa hosted the Tuscaloosa County School System Visual Arts Showcase March 1-28, 2024 in The Arts Council Gallery at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center.

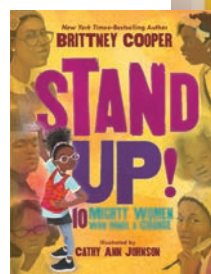
- The Showcase opened during the First Friday Art Walk and was comprised of works by both middle and high school students. Each art teacher selected seven to ten pieces with the display including a variety of media.
- The Brookwood Elementary Chorus and Tuscaloosa County High School Jazz Band performed during the event.

This is an annual event at the DWCAC and provides the students the opportunity to display their work in a public setting.

“STAND UP”

The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa hosted “Stand Up!: Ten Mighty Women Who Made a Change” at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center. A project of The Holle Center for Communication Arts at The University of Alabama, the exhibit was on display April 5-May 24, 2024 including student field trips, round table discussions, and presentations.

- The exhibit celebrated the debut picture book of the same title by Dr. Brittney Cooper with illustrations by Cathy Ann Johnson. ***Inspiring text and dynamic illustrations bring to life both famous and unsung Black women who took a stand and made the world a better place for future generations.***



“Stand Up” book cover and view of exhibit

THE ARTS COUNCIL

All figures on these pages reflect those from June 1, 2023-May 20, 2024

Income: \$650,262

Expenses: \$787,384 (includes the cost of a new Chilling Tower and a final bill for the seat renovations in the theatre.)

BAMA THEATRE

Established in 1938 through funds from the Public Works Administration (PWA), the historic Bama Theatre continues to captivate audiences with its twinkling lights and exciting year-round performance calendar.

- Managed by The Arts Council and occupied almost 300 days per year.
- Rental location for productions presented by non-profit member organizations and community groups as well as concerts/performances presented by outside promoters.
- Programming presented by The Arts Council includes the Bama Art House Film Series, educational programs, and local and student art exhibits.

Rental Income: \$151, 210

Restoration Fund: \$25,424

Subsidy to Member Organizations: \$56,000 (as a result of discounted rental rates)



The Bama Art House film series went “nostalgic” in the Summer of 2023 and featured some of the great movies of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. A DeLorean stylized to match the one from *Back to the Future* was on site during the film. The holiday films featured visits from the Grinch and Mr. & Mrs. Claus with Letters to Santa that encouraged interaction between the kids and their parents. The established Bama Art House lineup returned in January and will continue to do so periodically featuring “art house” films.

PUBLIC ART

The introduction of public art to local citizens is a result of the efforts of the Tuscaloosa Public Art Committee, The Arts Council, and the City of Tuscaloosa.

- The installation of large scale sculptures continues throughout the city, and now has extended to the Northern Riverwalk project.
- Public art can be found in downtown Tuscaloosa, parks, along the Rverwalk, and on the UA campus. The benchmarking trips established by the Chamber of Commerce introduced the participating citizens to cities that valued public art and the relationship the art had to overall economic impact of the arts.

Pictured, right: “Sunflower Bike Rack” by UA student Madison Grooters at Parker-Haun Park



DINAH WASHINGTON CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

The Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center (CAC) is a hub for the arts in Tuscaloosa, managed and maintained by The Arts Council.

- The CAC houses the Alabama Power Grand Hall, utilized for weddings and private event rentals, and The Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa Black Box Theatre which provides a location for performances in an intimate setting.
- The University of Alabama rents a gallery space and The Arts Council also maintains a gallery within the DWCAC. The facility also houses offices for the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra and the Alabama Blues Project.
- Some of the center’s newest programming includes fun-themed acrylic art classes for amateurs and also cookie decorating.



Above: Shannon Franklin Photography

Upgrades include:

- New Graphite quartz countertops in all restrooms (Synergy); Restrooms completely repainted (Fresh Coat Painters); New AV equipment (RTR Pro Entertainment); New projector; Two wireless microphones; Two new speakers; Flat-screen in the conference room for presentations; Floors were refurbished (Final Touch Cleaning); The Arts Council staff repainted the Arts Council Gallery

Rental Income: \$94,425

Subsidy to Member Organizations: \$8,668.30 (as a result of discounted rental rates)

COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Small Grants program was established to aid Tuscaloosa County non-profit organizations, educators, and artists in their pursuit of projects contributing to the greater good of local students and citizens through the arts.

- Local artists and organizations have received more than \$150,000 since 1986.
- The Arts in Education Grant was established to award funding from the Arts in Education Fund within the Community Foundation of West Alabama. Tuscaloosa City/County/Private School educators pursuing a project with an arts-based element are eligible for this grant.

Organizations:

- Kentuck Art Center & Festival: “2024 After School Programs at Kentuck Art Center”
- Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra: “Carnival of the Animals featuring Tuscaloosa City Schools 4th Grade Honor Musicians”

Individual Artists:

- Abigail Brewer
- Nathan Childers

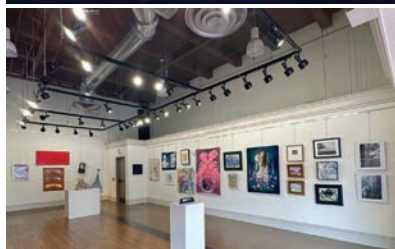
Arts in Education:

- Hillcrest High School/Jonny Davis: “Class Camera Set”
- Northridge High School/John Cain: “Northridge High School Performs at Alabama Music Education Association Conference”



EXHIBITS

The Arts Council provides local visual artists two venues to display their art as well as competitions that provide advancement and connection with other artists. (JLG=Bama Theatre’s Junior League Gallery; All other exhibits took place in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center.)



Left: Collaborations included The West Alabama Juried Show

(Top, left) Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama Purchase Award – \$1,000 awarded to Sarah Marshall for “Aggressive Reassurance” and Left, bottom: View of the entire exhibit featuring artists from the West Alabama region

- June/July 2023 Michael Hand
- Aug/Sept 2023 Joe MacGown
- Oct 2023 McCollough Biennale
- Nov 2023 McCollough Biennale
- Dec 2023 McCollough Biennale
- Jan 2024 West Alabama Juried Show
- Feb 2024 Alabama Blues Project
- March 2024 Tuscaloosa County Schools
- Feb/March 2024 Visual Art Achievement Awards (JLG)
- April/May 2024 Stand Up! Exhibit
- May 2024 Westwood Elementary (JLG)

The Arts Council, through the West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative as part of the statewide Amp Up Arts initiative, provides arts education opportunities to students at the Bama Theatre, Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center, and on site at schools throughout West Alabama. Students are exposed to a wide range of activities conducive to academic and social-emotional development through the disciplines of theatre, music, dance, visual art, and literary art. Fanfare Caravans and the Spectra Partners in the Arts guide serve Pre-K through High School students and teachers throughout West Alabama by bringing high-quality arts education programs into the schools.

POETRY OUT LOUD



POL participants after the District 3-4 competition took place at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center in Tuscaloosa. This portion of the competition is administered by The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa and Autumn Fuller, the Arts Council's Education Director.



POL winners at the state level at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival theatre in Montgomery. Egg McLure (center) from the Alabama School of Fine Arts, was among those representing District 3-4 (The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa).

The West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative serves as the regional coordinator for Districts 3-4 of Poetry Out Loud, which is sponsored by the Alabama State Council on the Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation.

- Poetry Out Loud encourages youth to learn about poetry through memorization, original composition, and recitation and also helps student master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.
- The Arts Council hosts the District 3-4 Regional Competition and student workshops at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center.

VISUAL ART ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

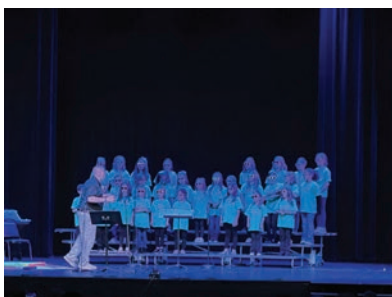
As district coordinator for the Alabama State Council on the Arts' Visual Arts Achievement Program, the West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative provides gallery space for local students who are accepted to the competition at the regional level.

- The Arts Council displayed 80 out of the 131 works entered into the competition in an exhibit in the Junior League Gallery.
- 15 winners from the district advanced to the statewide competition, where they were featured in an exhibit at the Alabama State Council on the Arts in Montgomery.

Top, left: A view of the VAA Awards Exhibit in the Bama Theatre's Junior League Gallery and Below, left: Best of Show by Tuscaloosa County HS student Alexandra Jones, "Suffocation."



ADOPT-A-SCHOOL



Above: Westwood Musical Extravaganza performance from "Night at the Movies" with the Westwood Singers

The West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative serves the students of Westwood Elementary in Coker through the Chamber of Commerce Adopt-A-School Program. The program gives local organizations the opportunity to make connections with local schools and contribute to their specific needs through an area of specialty. In this case, that area is the arts.

- Students participate in Spectrafest, Art Month at the Bama Theatre, and Job Shadowing.
- All students at Westwood participated in Spectrafest in November of 2023. Spectrafest is a day long arts education immersion festival held at the school and led by local artists and arts organizations. Students participated in activities with local arts groups and arts integration activities with teaching artists.
- The work of 20 Westwood students was on display in the Bama Theatre's Junior League Gallery in early May, and the Westwood Singers performed "Night at the Movies" as part of Westwood Art Month at the Bama.



SPECTRAFEST

The Arts Council sponsors and administers Spectrafest at Westwood featuring interactive arts presentations from all of the performing and visual arts. Far left: Teaching artist *Ruth O'Connor* working with students and immediate left: *TSO Exec. Director Natassia Perrine* and the *Tuscaloosa Symphony Education Quintet*

TEACHING ARTISTS & THEIR PROGRAMS

In 2023-2024, the West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative continued to work with schools to bring high-quality teaching artists and artist-in-residence programs to local schools.

- Two of these programs were an Art & Cursive Writing Program for third graders at Flatwoods Elementary School led by teaching artist Ruth Jatib O'Connor, and a collaborative artist-in-residence program with visual artist Karen Brummund and the school counselor at Faucett-Vestavia Elementary School.
- In 2022-2023, the Arts Council/West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative took over the administration of the City of Northport's Rose Arts Education Initiative funding. This project continued for its second year under The Arts Council in 2023-2024 and helped provide arts education to six schools in the Northport City Schools.



Right: *Art program at Crestmont Elementary, part of the Northport Rose Initiative*

THE PARTNERS PROJECT



Above: *The pARTners Project Regional Design Team at a workshop at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center*

In February of 2021, the Arts Council/West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative, along with the Greater Birmingham Arts Education Collaborative was awarded a \$100,000 Arts Education Collective Impact 2-year grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for the pARTners Project.

- The grant project, which ran through April of 2023, is a multi-phase initiative to create a plan to increase access to arts education in Hale, Jefferson, and Tuscaloosa Counties.
- In 2022-2023, the team completed the research in Hale, Jefferson, and Tuscaloosa Counties then completed the plan based on this research.

The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa was approved by the NEA to receive a Grants for Arts Projects award of \$100,000 in January 2024.

- This grant will allow the pARTners Project to utilize their findings gathered in the first portion of the project for implementation thus reaching their goal of quality arts education for students in the West-Central Alabama area.



REASONS TO SUPPORT THE ARTS IN 2024

The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They ennoble and inspire us—fostering creativity, empathy, and beauty. 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.

- **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.
- **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.”
- **Arts strengthen the economy and tourism.** Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) is an economic and social impact study of the nation’s nonprofit arts and culture industry. By every measure, the results are impressive. Nationally, the sector generated \$151.7 billion of economic activity in 2022- \$73.3 billion in spending by arts and culture organizations and an additional \$78.4 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences. What was the impact of this economic activity? It supported 2.6 million jobs, provided \$101 billion in personal income to residents, and generated \$29.1 billion in tax revenue to local, state, and federal governments.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Arts improve healthcare.** Nearly one-half of the nation’s healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff.
- **Arts for the health and well-being of our military.** The arts heal the mental, physical, and moral injuries of war for military service members and Veterans, who rank the creative arts therapies in the top four (out of 40) interventions and treatments.
- **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.



The Economic and Social Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in Tuscaloosa County, AL

Direct Economic Activity	Organizations	Audiences	Total Expenditures
Total Industry Expenditures (FY2022)	\$15,616,907	\$10,576,231	\$26,193,138

Economic Impact of Spending by Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences

Total Economic Impacts (includes direct, indirect, and induced impacts)	Organizations	Audiences	Total Impacts
Employment (Jobs)	487	180	667
Personal Income Paid to Residents	\$25,227,390	\$4,352,459	\$29,579,849
Local Tax Revenue (city and county)	\$671,972	\$278,071	\$950,043
State Tax Revenue	\$1,267,862	\$441,202	\$1,709,064
Federal Tax Revenue	\$4,613,829	\$720,168	\$5,333,997

Event-Related Spending by Arts and Culture Audiences Totaled \$10.6 million

Attendance to Arts and Culture Events	Local ¹ Attendees	Nonlocal ¹ Attendees	All Attendees
Total Attendance to In-Person Events	347,141	73,636	420,777
Percentage of Total Attendance	82.5%	17.5%	100.0%
Average Per Person, Per Event Expenditure	\$21.25	\$43.45	\$25.15
Total Event-Related Expenditures	\$7,376,746	\$3,199,485	\$10,576,231

Nonprofit Arts and Culture Audiences Spend an Average of \$25.15 Per Person, Per Event

Category of Event-Related Expenditure	Local ¹ Attendees	Nonlocal ¹ Attendees	All Attendees
Food and Drink	\$10.09	\$16.47	\$11.21
Retail Shopping	\$1.74	\$5.18	\$2.34
Overnight Lodging (one night only)	\$0.47	\$8.17	\$1.82
Local Transportation	\$2.07	\$4.80	\$2.55
Clothing and Accessories	\$4.54	\$4.35	\$4.51
Groceries and Supplies	\$1.30	\$2.66	\$1.54
Childcare	\$0.73	\$0.58	\$0.71
Other/Miscellaneous	\$0.31	\$1.24	\$0.47
Overall Average Per Person, Per Event	\$21.25	\$43.45	\$25.15

Source: *Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic and Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in Tuscaloosa County*. For more information about this study or about other cultural initiatives in Tuscaloosa County, contact The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa.

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Past studies have focused primarily on the financial, economic, and tourism contributions of the nonprofit arts and culture industry. AEP6 expands beyond those topics to include measures of social impact. Surveys completed by individual attendees in the Tuscaloosa County demonstrate an appreciation for how the arts and culture impacts the development and well-being of the community and its residents.

Audiences Demonstrate Appreciation for the Impact of Arts and Culture

Level of Agreement with Social Impact Statements	Audiences
“This venue or facility is an important pillar for me within my community.”	80.4%
“I would feel a great sense of loss if this activity or venue were no longer available.”	85.4%
“This activity or venue is inspiring a sense of pride in this neighborhood or community.”	90.3%
“My attendance is my way of ensuring that this activity or venue is preserved for future generations”	85.4%

About This Study

Americans for the Arts conducted AEP6 to document the economic and social benefits of the nation’s nonprofit arts and culture industry. The study was conducted in 373 diverse communities and regions across the country, representing all 50 states and Puerto Rico. **The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa joined the study on behalf of Tuscaloosa County.** For additional information including the national report, summaries for the 373 communities, an online calculator, and a description of the project methodology, visit www.AEP6.AmericansForTheArts.org.

Surveys of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations

Nationally, detailed information was collected from 16,399 nonprofit arts and culture organizations about their FY2022 expenditures (e.g., labor, local and non-local artists, operations, materials, facilities, and asset acquisition), as well as their event attendance, in-kind contributions, and volunteerism. Surveys were collected from February through July 2023. Some organizations only provided total expenditures and attendance (they are included in the study). Responding organizations had budgets ranging from a low of \$0 to a high of \$375 million. Response rates for the 373 communities averaged 43.9% and ranged from 5% to 100%. **In Tuscaloosa County, 35 of the 40 total eligible nonprofit arts and culture organizations identified by The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa provided the financial and attendance information required for the study analysis—an overall participation rate of 87.5%.** It is important to note that each study region’s results are based solely on the survey data collected. No estimates have been made to account for non-respondents. Therefore, the less-than-100 percent response rates suggest an understatement of the economic impact findings.

Surveys of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Audiences

Audience-intercept surveying, a common and accepted research method, was conducted to measure event-related spending by audiences. Attendees were asked to complete a short survey while attending an event. Nationally, a total of 224,677 attendees completed the survey. The randomly selected respondents provided itemized expenditure data on attendance-related activities such as meals, souvenirs, transportation, and lodging, as well as socioeconomic information, ZIP code of primary residence, and four social impact questions. Data was collected from May 2022 through June 2023 at a broad range of both paid and free events. **In Tuscaloosa County, a total of 492 valid audience-intercept surveys were collected from attendees to nonprofit arts and culture performances, events, exhibits, and special events during the period from May 2022 through June 2023.**

Studying Economic Impact Using Input-Output Analysis

Americans for the Arts uses the IMPLAN platform to create the customized models for each of the 373 study regions. Input-output models calculate the interdependencies between various sectors or industries within a region. This analysis traces how many times a dollar is spent within the local economy before it leaks out, and it quantifies the economic impact of each round of spending. This form of economic analysis is well suited for AEP studies because it can be customized specifically to each participating community, region, or state. **To complete this analysis for Tuscaloosa County, the researchers used the IMPLAN platform to build a customized input-output model based on the unique economic and industrial characteristics of Tuscaloosa County.**

Research Notes:

¹ For the purpose of this study, local attendees live within Tuscaloosa County; nonlocals live elsewhere.

