

# THE CULTURAL SECTOR IN CONNECTICUT: ONGOING CHALLENGES AND PRESSURES



Over the past 5 years, the Connecticut cultural sector has proven to be resilient, coping with the challenges of pandemic recovery while serving audiences in creative and engaging ways. **But recovery continues to be uneven. Let's explore the data.**

The overall good news is that audiences have returned to in-person visits at Connecticut cultural institutions.

## TOTAL IN-PERSON VISITATION:



The museum sector is seeing the strongest growth, with in-person audiences growing over **20%** since 2019.



+20%



**But the data also indicates two areas of concern.**



## PERFORMING ARTS

While performing arts saw attendance gains from 2023 to 2024, the sector is still seeing **44%** less attendance than in 2019.

### PERFORMING ARTS ATTENDANCE:



## FLATLINING AND DECREASING ATTENDANCE AT OTHER CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

While museum attendance has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, 2024 in-person museum attendance was essentially level with 2023.



Other cultural organizations (such as cinema, literacy, civics, festivals, etc.) saw attendance dip **11%** from 2023.



Connecticut's cultural organizations are also facing external pressures that may affect their ability to serve audiences effectively in the future.

Three out of five cultural organizations are facing pressures, including:

- Significant lost revenue due to decreased funding opportunities; or
- Decreased operational capacity due to staff cuts, costs to maintain physical spaces, and other rising costs; or
- Reduced organizational savings, having used reserves to meet expenses over the past 5 years



Additionally, nearly two-thirds of cultural organizations are operating without financial projections or business plans, making it even more difficult for them to cope with challenges or be responsive to opportunities.

**Operational support of the Connecticut cultural sector, however, would provide a foundation to address these challenges, build capacity, and help organizations weather external pressures while delivering more impact for all of Connecticut's residents!**



Source:  
Nonprofit Connecticut Cultural Data Collection, fielded January 2025 by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of CT Humanities, n = 421.  
Margin of error of +/- 4.2% at 99% confidence.