

OVERVIEW & APPROACH

HouArts in Action is a sector-wide effort to champion arts & culture in the Greater Houston Area.

What is HouArts in Action Championing?



PUBLIC FUNDING

Protect and Grow Public Funding for Arts & Culture



VIBRANT SPACES

Create and Preserve Vibrant Cultural Spaces



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Build Pathways to Prosperity for Artists & Creatives



EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING

Communicate the Richness of Houston's Culture

What is the approach?

PUT ARTS ON THE AGENDA

HouArts in Action will coordinate research on the impact of arts and culture, define talking points, and host an annual "State of the Arts" event to establish and share key messages.

This initiative will also train and mobilize arts and culture champions to advocate for the arts with key decision-makers, in 1:1 meetings and public forums. We will train and recruit this network and mobilize it in ways that put arts on the agenda in spaces historically focused on tourism, economic development, and general quality of life.

ESTABLISH & DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS

Nothing happens without strong relationships. HouArts in Action will facilitate relationship-building among arts and culture champions and key constituencies, including philanthropists, educational institutions and the business community.

There is an incredible network of existing supporters and partners for arts and culture, and formalizing and maintaining those relationships is essential. In addition, there is an opportunity to establish new partnerships with developers and neighborhood groups around our focus on vibrant spaces.



How can I get involved

SIGN UP for newsletter and events at HouArts.org
& to be an Arts and Culture Champion

Executive Summary

HouArts in Action is a collaborative, region-wide initiative designed to strengthen Greater Houston's arts and culture sector through strategic advocacy, expanded partnerships, and unified messaging. Building on work by Houston's seven state-designated Cultural Districts and a sector-wide Task Force, this effort aims to put arts on the agenda. We are mobilizing champions from across the ecosystem to communicate arts and culture as an essential driver of the region's economic growth, community vitality, and civic identity.

Strategic Platform

PUBLIC FUNDING

Protecting and expanding sustainable funding streams through city and county HOT allocations, civic art ordinances, and innovative public funding mechanisms that ensure long-term stability for the creative sector.

VIBRANT SPACES

Encouraging activation and preservation of the cultural spaces that make our neighborhoods distinctive through public sector initiatives that integrate local artists, musicians, creatives, and arts organizations into the region's urban fabric.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Facilitating pathways to prosperity for artists and creatives by improving funding and connectivity to resources, training, and spaces that enable sustainable creative careers right here in the Houston area.

EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING

Amplifying Greater Houston's cultural narrative locally and globally, transforming how residents, visitors, and businesses perceive our creative landscape.

Initiative Sequencing

HouArts in Action recognizes that meaningful change requires sustained commitment. Our five-year implementation plan begins with safeguarding existing resources and relationships, then strategically expanding partnerships and advocacy capacity, and ultimately building toward permanent infrastructure that secures the region's place as a cultural powerhouse.

YEAR 1 (2025-2026)

Protect existing resources, launch messaging campaign, identify opportunities for vibrant spaces and workforce development.

YEAR 2 (2026-2027)

Secure City of Houston HOT funding renewal, advance promising space initiatives, expand county funding eligibility, deepen tourism partnerships.

YEAR 3 (2027-2028)

Prepare for permanent arts allocation, advance policy and funding opportunities to improve public space activation and integration of local artists into major events.

YEARS 4-5 (2028+)

Execute plan for permanent arts funding, analyze successful strategies for replication, deepen partnerships.

BY 2030, WE ENVISION A HOUSTON WHERE:

- Arts and culture have multiple permanent, dedicated funding streams that weather economic trends and political shifts.
- Every neighborhood has accessible, vibrant cultural spaces that reflect community identity.
- Artists and creatives can build sustainable careers in our city.
- Houston's cultural richness is widely recognized, driving tourism and talent attraction.
- Arts and culture have a seat at the table in decisions about our city's future.



Perservons la Creation by Sébastien “MrD1987” Boileau

Economic and Community Impact

Research demonstrates the significant impact of arts and culture investments. When we invest in creativity, we're investing in Greater Houston's future:

ECONOMIC VITALITY

\$1.3 billion in economic activity generated by arts organizations in 2022, with every dollar of HOT funds invested generating \$2.16 in local tax revenue.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Neighborhoods with strong cultural resources see up to 40% reduction in serious crime.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

81% of youth in arts programs report improved self-esteem, and arts engagement makes students 46% more likely to meet college readiness benchmarks.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Cultural participation reduces dementia risk by 47% and depression risk by 48%.

COMMUNITY PRIDE

86% of Harris County arts attendees agree that arts venues inspire pride in their communities.

Key Audiences and Messaging

The advocacy strategy tailors messages to four critical stakeholder groups:

ELECTED OFFICIALS

"Great cities invest in the arts."

BUSINESS LEADERS

"Everything is bigger in Texas, including our arts business."

RESIDENTS

"Arts and culture are what makes Houston feel like home."

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

"The arts light up Houston."

Get Involved

HouArts in Action invites stakeholders across Greater Houston to join this collective movement by signing up for the newsletter, attending events, and becoming Arts and Culture Champions. Together, we can center arts and culture in Greater Houston's civic and policy landscape, ensuring a well-funded, connected, and civically engaged creative sector that shapes the future of our city.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO GET INVOLVED, VISIT WWW.HOUARTS.ORG



ELECTED OFFICIALS

Great Cities Invest in the Arts

The arts are not a luxury—they are an economic driver, a community necessity, and a powerful tool for education, public safety, and civic pride.

Supporting the arts strengthens Houston's future.

Every \$1 of HOT funds invested in arts and culture generates \$2.16 in local tax revenue.

When making a decision to stay in or relocate to a new city, arts and culture offerings influence people's decision making about as much as the quality of schools.



BUSINESS LEADERS

Everything Is Bigger in Texas, Including Our Arts Business

Investing in the arts isn't just good for culture, it's smart for business.

A thriving arts sector boosts economic growth, attracts top talent, and makes Houston a more vibrant place to live and work.

Arts and culture organizations generated \$1.3b in total economic activity in 2022.

Locals and non locals alike spend an average of \$38.50 in the local economy when they attend an arts and culture event.



TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

The Arts Light Up Houston

A vibrant arts scene means more hotel stays, dining, and retail spending.

By thoughtfully investing in promoting cultural tourism, we attract more visitors, strengthen our global reputation, and grow the hospitality industry.

The Houston Museum District has more annual visitors than all major sporting events and the rodeo, combined.

43% of Americans strongly consider whether the destination is rich in arts when deciding where to vacation.

Nonlocal visitors spend an average of \$60 in the local economy each time they visit and arts and culture event in Houston.



RESIDENTS

Arts & Culture Are What Makes Houston Feel like Home

In H-Town, our arts & culture offerings are an expression of our diversity.

A stronger cultural sector means better neighborhoods, more local events, and a more connected community.

Lower income neighborhoods with cultural resources, public art, and community engagement can see a 18-40% reduction in serious crime.

81% of youth who engage in arts programs report improved self-esteem and confidence.

Arts participants are more than twice as likely to volunteer in their communities, independent of education, age, gender, or race.

Arts in Greater Houston: Three Futures

FUNDING IS REDUCED:

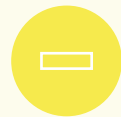
Greater Houston loses jobs, joy, and well-being as arts access shrinks.



- Jobs and economic activity suffer: \$1.3B+ in annual arts-driven economic activity and 19,600+ jobs are put at risk.
- Talent leaves the region: Houston risks losing artists to cities with more stable funding—threatening a sector that contributes \$875M+ in local personal income.
- Access shrinks: Arts venues may shutter or reduce programming, limiting access for the 15 million annual visitors to local arts and culture nonprofits.
- Neighborhood connection fades: Community pride declines—currently, 86% of local arts attendees say venues foster pride.
- Youth opportunity narrows: Reduced arts access could lower college attendance—now at 94% among arts-engaged students.
- Mental health worsens: Arts engagement reduces depression risk by 48%—loss of programs worsens outcomes.

FUNDING IS MAINTAINED

Greater Houston treads water while other cities surge ahead



- Sector growth stalls: 4,100 full-time jobs are sustained by \$503M in nonprofit arts spending, but other counties are gaining ground.
- Local revenue plateaus: Harris County's nonprofit arts sector continues to generate \$30M+ in tax revenue—but lacks room to grow.
- Demand goes unmet: The 43% of Americans who consider arts access a key factor in travel decisions overlook Houston and Harris County.
- Education gaps widen: Students in under-resourced schools miss out on the 46% college readiness boost arts can provide.

FUNDING IS INCREASED

Greater Houston boosts its economy, energizes its cultural scene, and strengthens public health for all residents.



- Jobs grow locally: Harris County captures a major share of the 225,000 new creative sector jobs projected statewide by 2032.
- Visitor spending rises: Boosted arts investment attracts more nonlocal visitors—already 30% of Houston's arts audiences—who spend about \$60 per event, amplifying local business revenues.
- Talent attraction strengthens: The 52% of Millennials who rank arts and culture alongside school quality as a key factor in where they choose to live are more likely to choose Harris County, strengthening the workforce.
- Local economies benefit: More arts programming unlocks up to \$300,000 in additional local spending for every 1,000 event attendees.
- Community safety improves: Neighborhoods with stronger cultural resources see up to a 40% reduction in serious crime, creating safer, more vibrant communities.
- Public health outcomes improve: Expanding community arts participation reduces dementia risk by 47%, PTSD by 30%, and obesity by 5% in low-income areas, improving quality of life.
- Students thrive: Increased access to arts engagement boosts self-esteem for 81% of youth and dramatically raises college attendance rates.

Join the Movement

While this initiative builds on work from a sector-wide Task Force, its success depends on participation from across the region's diverse arts ecosystem. The vision is for a movement that transcends organizational boundaries and unites the region around the essential value of arts and culture.

The creative spirit that defines Houston—innovative, diverse, resilient—must be nurtured and amplified. By uniting our voices, aligning our resources, and committing to collective action, we can ensure that arts and culture aren't treated as amenities but recognized as essential elements of a thriving Houston.

This moment calls for bold action from every corner of our community. Whether you're an artist, business leader, elected official, educator, or engaged resident, HouArts in Action invites you to be part of this effort. Together, we can ensure that our cultural assets become recognized as the vibrant, beating heart of our city's identity.

Join us at www.HouArts.org to become an Arts and Culture Champion, attend our events, and help shape the creative future of Houston.

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