



Buffalo Arts and Culture
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1. What arts and cultural organizations are located in the Buffalo?

Buffalo offers a variety of arts and cultural organizations, including

- The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra;
- Sheas Performing Arts Center; and
- The Buffalo Zoo

For a complete list, please visit:

<http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/OurCity/ArtsandCulture>

2. Is Buffalo's arts and cultural sector growing?

Yes. For example, Buffalo added to its arts tradition in the fall of 2008, as the Burchfield-Penney Art Center opened its new building on the Buffalo State College Campus. This is the first major museum built in Buffalo in over 100 years.¹ Physical improvements also continue at the Buffalo Zoo and the Darwin Martin House.²

3. Where does Buffalo' arts and culture tradition rank nationally?

In 2007, American Style Magazine ranked Buffalo as one of the top 25 art destinations for mid-sized cities (populations ranging from 100,000-499,999) in the country. Buffalo received a 14th place ranking, which placed the city ahead of Cleveland (16), St. Louis, (22), and Tampa Bay (23).³

4. How important are these organizations to the region?

Very important. These institutions not only have a positive impact on our region's economy, but they improve the region's quality of life. Mayor Brown emphasized the importance of these institutions when he declared 2008 the Year of the Arts.⁴

5. What economic impact do these organizations have on Buffalo?

Various studies have attempted to measure the impact these organizations have on the region.

- A 2003 study found that the combined spending of 700,000 tourists at 17 “sample” arts and cultural attractions and the organization’s own spending during the 2003 summer, had a \$75 million impact on the Buffalo Niagara region;⁵
- Another study found that Shea’s Performing Arts Center alone has a \$40 million impact on the region’s economy;⁶
- Another study estimates that Frank Lloyd Wright’s Darwin D. Martin House, after renovations, will have a \$20 million annual economic impact on the region;⁷ and
- Another study has stated that Buffalo’s arts and cultural organizations will have a combined \$264 million dollar impact on the region, including \$10 million dollars in sales tax.⁸

6. How many jobs do they create?

These cultural organizations currently employ 3,800 people in Buffalo⁹ and 4,740 people in the greater Buffalo region, which generates \$95.9 million in household income.¹⁰

7. How many people do they attract each year?

Collectively Buffalo’s arts and cultural organizations attract more people than the Buffalo Bills, Buffalo Sabres and Buffalo Bisons combined.¹¹

8. What is the Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County?

The Arts Council is a local organization, dedicated to advocating for and promoting the region’s arts and cultural industry.¹² Established in 1973, the Council is directed by a nine-person board. It provides artists with information, including the availability of arts classes, grants, access to health care, information on studio spacing, and provides advertising advice. The Council also re-grants funds it receives from the county and state.¹³ Last year it re-granted over \$130,000 to Buffalo’s arts and cultural organizations.¹⁴

For more information on these funds, please visit:

http://www.artscouncilbuffalo.org/what_we_do/funding/

9. What is the Buffalo Arts Commission?

The Commission is a 15 member organization, with 10 members appointed by the Mayor and 5 members appointed by the Common Council President.¹⁵ The Commission performs a variety of duties, which include:

- Advising the Mayor and the Common Council on new works of art that City plans to purchase;
- Submitting annual capital budget requests, which include plans for conservation of City owned art work, commissioning of new art work, and recommendations for ways to improve the general aesthetic appearance of the City’s property;
- Applying for and administering federal, state, and local loans, grants etc; and



- Holding public meetings for citizens to comment on the Commission’s progress¹⁶
For a complete list of all the Commission’s duties, please visit:
http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/public%20art%20website/web%20pages/arts%20commission%20home%20page.html

10. Is the Buffalo Arts Commission currently working on any projects?

Yes. The Commission is currently working on a plan to restore City Hall’s decorative limestone friezes, located in its east and west facades. Other future restoration plans include the McKinley Monument, and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument.¹⁷
The Commission is also working to update its cataloguing system and place the information online to improve public access.¹⁸

11. What role does the County government play in supporting Buffalo’s arts and cultural organizations?

Erie County created the Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism (ACT) in 2001. This office operates within the Erie County Planning division and oversees the distribution of an approximate \$9 million annual investment among Erie County’s cultural tourist attractions.¹⁹

12. How does the ACT distribute the money?

ACT disperses the available County funds through two grant programs. The first is the Public Benefit funding, which awards money to not-for-profits that focus on the region’s economic development and participate in community improvement activities.²⁰
The Erie County Cultural Resource Advisory Board (EECRAB) distributes the second grant program.²¹ The Board consists of 25 members who hold their positions for six-year terms. The County Executive may extend these terms, however, at his/her discretion.²² The Board’s three objectives are to:

- Review application for grant based on specific criteria;
- Make recommendations to the County Executive and Legislature about the grant’s distribution; and
- Consult with the County Executive and Legislature on the regions’ cultural matters



There are two types of funds in the second grant program; operating funds, which averages about \$5-\$7million per year and non-operation/capital funds, which vary from year to year.²³ On average, 50-60 organizations apply for these funds.²⁴
Please see the County’s “2009 Proposed Budget: Book A-Operating Funds” for the projected allocation of ACT grants: http://www.erie.gov/exec/budget_info.asp

13. Can I apply for these funds?

Possibly. To find an application and review the specific requirements for the ACT grants, please visit ACT’s website at:
http://www.erie.gov/environment/planning_ecdev/arts_culture_tourism.asp

14. What role do sales and property taxes play in funding arts and cultural organizations?

In 1977, Buffalo and Erie County came to an agreement, where the County would receive a greater percentage of Buffalo's sales tax and use 11.4% of this revenue to fund libraries and cultural organizations.²⁵ Critics argue that this agreement is legally binding and the County has not lived up to its responsibilities to fund these organizations.²⁶

Arts and cultural leaders have also asked that the Erie County Legislature put 3% of the annual property tax revenues towards local arts organizations.²⁷

15. What are Cultural Development Districts?

The Erie County Legislature is currently examining proposed legislation that calls for the establishment of Cultural Development Districts (CDD) throughout New York.²⁸ Arts and cultural organizations that are located in these districts would receive tax credits and exemptions.²⁹

16. What role does New York State government play in supporting Buffalo's arts and cultural organizations?

The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) makes over 2500 grants each year to a variety of arts organizations throughout the state.³⁰ The Council's mission is to expand the states' rich arts resources, allow all New Yorkers to have equal access to these resources, encourage artistic advancement, and increase participation in the arts.³¹ The Council consists of 20 members, appointed by the Governor and approved by the State Senate.³² These members serve five-year terms.³³

In 2009 a number of Buffalo's arts and cultural organizations will receive NYSCA grants. These organizations include:

- Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Soc: \$226,400;
- Alleyway Theatre Inc: \$22,600;
- Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society: \$30,800;
- Burchfield-Penney Art Center: \$26,000;
- Shakespeare in Delaware Park: \$12,700; and
- Ujima Company Inc: \$21,000.

In total Buffalo's arts and cultural organizations will receive \$1, 519, 600 in 2009. For a complete list of Buffalo organizations receiving NYSCA's 2009 grants, please visit:

http://www.nysca.org/grant_app/org_search.cfm

17. Can I apply for these grants?

Possibly. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.nysca.org/public/grants/index.htm>.

18. Are there any private grants available for these organizations?

Yes. The Oishei Foundation is an example of a private organization that provides grants to these organizations. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.oisheifdt.org/Home/Fund/RegionalAssets>

19. Are Buffalo's arts and cultural organizations confronted with any problems?

Yes. Due to the City of Buffalo's financial crisis, the city stopped funding arts and cultural organizations in 2002-2003.³⁴ While funding is available from the County and State governments, arts leaders do not expect the available funds to return to their previous level.³⁵ These cuts have forced organizations to limit operational hours, let go staff members, and rethink future attractions.³⁶ Many of these organizations now look to the private sector for greater support.³⁷ In his 2009 proposed budget, the County Executive cut funding for arts and cultural organizations by 5%.³⁸ These cuts will require the arts and cultural organizations to continue to be efficient with their limited resources.³⁹

20. What effect does Buffalo's decreasing population have on arts and cultural organizations?

A 2007 study found that 3.3 million people visited 61 arts and cultural organizations in the Greater Buffalo Region in 2005.⁴⁰ 87% of these visitors however, lived locally. As Buffalo's population continues to decrease (328,123 in 1990; 292,648 in 2000 in the City of Buffalo)⁴¹ organizations must attract more non-local visitors, who spend 94% more than local attendees per visit (\$33.00 vs. \$16.99).⁴² To increase Buffalo's cultural tourism industry, local tourist institutions attempt to persuade individuals to stay longer by financing physical improvements in their cities, calling for a greater communication between current cultural organizations, increase data and service sharing, and forming experience clusters, which combine a variety of local attractions into specific tourist packages.⁴³

¹http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/Mayor/Leadership/Public_Statements_Speeches/StateOfTheCityAddress2008

² Tom Buckham, *Rightsizing the Art*, The Buffalo News, February 26, 2004.

³<http://americanstyle.com/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=&nm=&type=Publishing&mod=Publications%3A%3AArticle&mid=8F3A7027421841978F18BE895F87F791&tier=4&id=93EC7B257A1D4C1E845C2DE114820B50>

⁴http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/Mayor/Leadership/Public_Statements_Speeches/StateOfTheCityAddress2008

⁵ January 2005 Report from the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative

⁶ January 2005 Report from the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative

⁷ January 2005 Report from the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative

⁸http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/stories/2007/05/21/daily24.html?f=et55&hbx=e_du; see also Tom Buckham, *Cultural voices again woo county earmark*, The Buffalo News, July 23, 2007.

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- ⁹ http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/stories/2007/05/21/daily24.html?f=et55&hbx=e_du; see also Tom Buckham, Cultural voices again woo county earmark, The Buffalo News, July 23, 2007.
- ¹⁰ Arts & Economic Prosperity III: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and their Audiences in Greater Buffalo, NY
- ¹¹ http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/stories/2007/05/21/daily24.html?f=et55&hbx=e_du
- ¹² http://www.artscouncilbuffalo.org/who_we_are/
- ¹³ http://www.artscouncilbuffalo.org/who_we_are/board.asp
- ¹⁴ Id.
- ¹⁵ http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/public%20art%20website/web%20pages/arts%20commission%20home%20page.html
- ¹⁶ http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/public%20art%20website/web%20pages/arts%20commission%20home%20page.html
- ¹⁷ http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/public%20art%20website/web%20pages/arts%20commission%20home%20page.html
- ¹⁸ Id.
- ¹⁹ http://www.erie.gov/environment/planning_ecdev/arts_culture_tourism.asp
- ²⁰ http://www.erie.gov/environment/planning_ecdev/arts_culture_tourism.asp
- ²¹ http://www.erie.gov/environment/planning_ecdev/arts_culture_tourism.asp
- ²² Information provided by Bob Skerker, former chair of ECCRAB
- ²³ Id.
- ²⁴ Id.
- ²⁵ Mary B. Pasciak, Library Funding Vow Made in '77 Forgotten, The Buffalo News, December 3, 2004;
- ²⁶ Id.
- ²⁷ Tom Buckham, Cultural voices again woo county earmark, The Buffalo News, July 23, 2007.
- ²⁸ http://www.erie.gov/legislature/district11/district11_news060704.asp
- ²⁹ Id.
- ³⁰ http://www.nysca.org/public/resources/d_link.html
- ³¹ http://www.nysca.org/public/about/mission_values.htm
- ³² http://www.nysca.org/public/about/council_members.htm
- ³³ Id.
- ³⁴ http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/Mayor/COB_Comprehensive_Plan/section_2459_156390.html#section_24591915156; see also Tom Buckham, Rightsizing the Art, The Buffalo News, February 26, 2004.
- ³⁵ Id.
- ³⁶ Tom Buckham, Rightsizing the Art, The Buffalo News, February 26, 2004; Tom Buckham, Budget Mess Hits Cultural Groups, The Buffalo News, February 7, 2005; Tom Buckham, Zoo Cuts 20 jobs, Raises Admission; Budget Crisis Also Forces Closing Two Days a Week, The Buffalo News, February 12, 2005
- ³⁷ http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/Mayor/COB_Comprehensive_Plan/section_2459_156390.html#section_24591915156.

³⁸http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/Mayor/COB_Comprehensive_Plan/section_2459156390.html#section_24591915156

³⁹ Tom Buckham, Rightsizing the Art, The Buffalo News, February 26, 2004.

⁴⁰ Arts & Economic Prosperity III: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and their Audiences in Greater Buffalo, NY

⁴¹ http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/Mayor/COB_Comprehensive_Plan/section_2459139390.html

⁴² Arts & Economic Prosperity III: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and their Audiences in Greater Buffalo, NY

⁴³ January 2005 Report from the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative