ROOT ECONOMY

calgaryarts development

CALGARY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

POWERING GROWTH

IMPACT PAPER
October 2025

IMAGE: GREEN87, FROM ISTOCK; ZENOBILLIS, FROM ISTOCK; VERONICA COWAN COURTESY OF CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT.

ABOUT ROOT ECONOMY

Root Economy, founded by Hubba Khatoon, is an independent economic consulting firm based in Calgary, Alberta.

With over 10 years of experience in economic impact analysis and strategic consultation, we provide data-driven insights to support economic development both locally and globally. Root Economy specializes in conducting economic impact assessments and offering strategic advice to businesses, governments, and organizations looking to foster sustainable growth.

Our commitment to evidence-based research helps clients make informed decisions that drive positive economic change.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity, and truth, we honour and acknowledge Moh'kinsstis and the traditional Treaty 7 territory and oral practices of the Blackfoot Confederacy: Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, as well as the Îyâxe Nakoda and Tsuut'ina Nations.

We acknowledge that this territory is home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 within the historical Northwest Métis homeland. We acknowledge all Nations, Indigenous and non, who live, work and play on this land and who honour and celebrate this territory.

PARTNERS IN POSSIBLITY

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The data presented in this report were independently gathered and analyzed by Root Economy. While this study was developed in close collaboration with sector stakeholders, the findings and perspectives expressed reflect Root Economy's own analysis and interpretation. They do not necessarily represent the views of Calgary Arts Development or other affiliated organizations.

We are especially grateful to the following members of the Calgary Arts Development team, whose thoughtful engagement and ongoing support helped bring this report to life: Greg Burbidge, Melissa Tuplin, and Patti Pon.

As we continue to work on strengthening Calgary's creative economy, we hope this report serves as a valuable benchmark and inspiration for future strategies, investments, and partnerships in the sector.

CALGARY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY: POWERING GROWTH

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PHOTO: MITRA SAMAVAKI AND CALGARY FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL. COURTESY OF CALGARY ARTS DEVELOPMENT.

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A STRONG AND ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS BASE

Calgary's creative sector consisted of 19,440 establishments in 2022, accounting for 9.8% of all businesses in the city. More than 99% were non-payroll or small firms, underscoring the sector's highly entrepreneurial character. The visual and applied arts domain alone accounted for 12,487 establishments, highlighting a thriving community of artists, designers, and craftspeople. This structure reflects a bottom-up creative economy, driven by independent creators and micro-enterprises, alongside education and governance organizations, that plays a foundational role in shaping Calgary's cultural identity and economic resilience.

MAJOR EMPLOYMENT CONTRIBUTOR

The sector supported an estimated 16,907 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, representing 41% of Alberta's total creative employment. Employment was especially concentrated in visual and applied arts (58%), sound recording (70%), and heritage and libraries (62%), underscoring Calgary's leadership across key cultural domains.

ROBUST ECONOMIC OUTPUT, BUT EMERGING PRESSURES

Calgary's creative industries generated $2.63 billion in direct revenue and $1.33 billion in GDP, accounting for 37% and 34% of Alberta's sector totals, respectively. However, a decline in GDP per job suggests that while the sector is recovering from the pandemic, rising costs and inflation may be eroding value-added productivity, especially in labour-intensive domains.

CONCENTRATION OF LABOUR INCOME IN HIGH-VALUE FIELDS

Calgary's creative sector generated approximately $1.13 billion in direct labour income, or 36% of the provincial total. Leading contributors included audio-visual and interactive media ($295.4M) as well as visual and applied arts ($271.2M).

STEADY POST-PANDEMIC GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT SHARE

Despite pandemic-related volatility, Calgary's share of Alberta's creative jobs grew from 39.8% in 2020 to 41% in 2022. That's higher than the city's share of overall jobs in the province, which was 36.7%. This upward trend signals resilience and growing prominence within Alberta's cultural economy.

THE CASE FOR STRONGER SECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE

While Calgary leads in creative output and employment, it falls behind in key areas that support the sector's growth. The city made up just 19% of jobs in creative education and training, and only 23% in governance, funding, and support services. These gaps point to an underdeveloped institutional infrastructure and point to the need for targeted investment in talent development, coordination, and sector-wide support to ensure long-term sustainability.

DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT
OF CULTURAL SECTOR IN CALGARY AND ALBERTA (2022)

2022	Employment (FTEs)		Revenues ($ million)		GDP ($ million)		Labour Income ($ million)	
Domains	**Calgary**	**Alberta**	**Calgary**	**Alberta**	**Calgary**	**Alberta**	**Calgary**	**Alberta**
Heritage and libraries	1,239	2,009	$113.10	$171.20	$53.80	$92.90	$54.70	$77.10
Live performance	2,290	4,637	$206.40	$317.10	$98.30	$167.80	$95.80	$147.20
Visual and applied arts	4,872	8,386	$647.60	$1,396.30	$315.90	$721.50	$271.20	$585.40
Written and published works	2,261	4,363	$489.50	$776.20	$232.90	$406.20	$168.90	$261.20
Audio-visual and interactive media	2,631	6,444	$713.80	$1,783.50	$351.30	$1,001.20	$295.40	$731.60
Sound recording	321	460	$24.40	$39.30	$11.30	$21.00	$12.20	$19.60
Education and training	1,152	5,943	$167.60	$617.30	$118.10	$468.20	$105.40	$388.30
Governance, funding, and professional support	2,000	8,745	$239.30	$1,837.20	$134.90	$952.30	$121.30	$931.50
Multidomain	142	351	$31.50	$110.30	$14.60	$54.60	$8.60	$30.10
Total creative sector	**16,907**	**41,338**	**$2,633.20**	**$7,048.50**	**$1,331.20**	**$3,885.80**	**$1,133.50**	**$3,072.60**

SOURCES: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), PROVINCIAL INPUT-OUTPUT MULTIPLIERS (2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY

THE RIPPLE EFFECT:
CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT
(INCLUDING DIRECT, INDIRECT, AND INDUCED EFFECTS)

In 2022, Calgary's creative industries made a significant contribution to both the provincial and national economies through job creation, income generation, and economic output.

ALBERTA-LEVEL IMPACT (2022):

- $4.43 billion in total industry output
- $2.36 billion in GDP contribution
- $1.70 billion in labour income
- 26,573 full-year jobs supported

CANADA-LEVEL IMPACT (2022):

- $5.72 billion in total industry output
- $3.02 billion in GDP contribution
- $2.11 billion in labour income
- 34,815 full-year jobs supported
- $458.2 million in tax revenues

INTERNATIONAL IMPORTS (2022):

Calgary's creative industries drove an estimated $737.1 million in international imports through three main channels: direct purchases by creative businesses, imported goods and services used within their supply chains, and household spending by people employed in the sector.

TOURISM AND CULTURE: CALGARY'S ECONOMIC CONNECTION

Cultural tourism is a key driver of Calgary's visitor economy, contributing meaningfully to both the city's economic output and its reputation as a vibrant cultural destination. In 2022, visitors spent an estimated $62.0 million on creative goods and services—representing 3.9% of Calgary's total tourism spending of $1.6 billion[1]. Live performance and visual arts emerged as major attractors, accounting for over $41 million of this tourism-related cultural spending combined.

VOLUNTEERING IN CALGARY'S ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

Volunteers play a vital yet often unmeasured role in the sustainability of Calgary's creative economy. In 2022, it is estimated that over 50,700 Calgarians contributed their time and energy to support the city's arts and culture sector. Together, they donated more than 2.25 million hours, an amount equivalent to 1,052 full-time jobs. The imputed economic value of this contribution is approximately $72.3 million.

Older adults (65+) contributed over 1.15 million volunteer hours in Calgary's cultural sector in 2022—despite being only 26% of volunteers, they provided 51% of total hours, averaging 87.2 hours each. Adults aged 45–64 gave more than 860,000 hours, while youth 15–24 showed strong participation but fewer hours, suggesting room to boost involvement through flexible programs and mentorship.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BRANDON BROWN.

CALGARY FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL | PHOTO: MITRA SAMAVAKI

1) TOURISM CALGARY, TOURISM CALGARY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT (CALGARY: TOURISM CALGARY, MAY 2023).

BENCHMARKING CALGARY'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (2022)

Calgary's creative industries span diverse sectors such as visual arts, live performance, and audio-visual media, giving the city a strong cultural presence within its economy. Yet Calgary trails larger centres in creative employment and density, suggesting room for targeted investments to grow the workforce and expand the city's overall creative capacity.

CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR: A PRAIRIE LEADER

In 2022, creative businesses accounted for 9.8% of all enterprises in Calgary, outpacing Edmonton (8.1%) and Winnipeg (9.0%) and positioning Calgary as the creative capital of the Prairies. Although Calgary's share remains below Montreal (12.7%), Toronto (12.1%), and Vancouver (10.5%), its diverse entrepreneurial base reflects strong growth potential and competitiveness within Canada's creative economy.

CREATIVE EMPLOYMENT: UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Calgary's creative sector supported nearly 17,000 jobs in 2022, making it the largest cultural employer in the Prairies with a 1.9% share of total employment. Although this trails Vancouver (4.5%) and Montreal (3.7%), Calgary's strong talent base and entrepreneurial ecosystem position it well to grow its creative workforce through targeted investment and collaboration.

CREATIVE DENSITY: ROOM TO SCALE

Calgary recorded a creative density of 12.9 creative workers per 1,000 residents in 2022, showing a healthy presence of creative talent in the region. Though this figure is lower than Vancouver (30.4) and Montreal (23.5), it highlights substantial headroom for expansion, especially if supported by policies that attract and retain creative professionals.

DIVERSE CREATIVE DOMAINS

Calgary's creative economy is broad and balanced, with contributions from media and applied arts (29%), audio-visual (16%), and live performance (14%). This even distribution across disciplines—from visual arts to digital industries—makes the sector resilient and adaptable, able to evolve with shifting technologies and market demands.

CREATIVE EMPLOYMENT AT A CROSSROADS

Between 2014 and 2022, Calgary's creative workforce grew rapidly—from 17,190 to 32,000 jobs, the fastest growth rate among major Canadian cities (5.3% annually). However, this growth now faces pressures from digital transformation, rising costs, and platform-based economies. Strategic investment in skills, cross-sector collaboration, and infrastructure will be key to ensuring sustainable growth and global competitiveness.

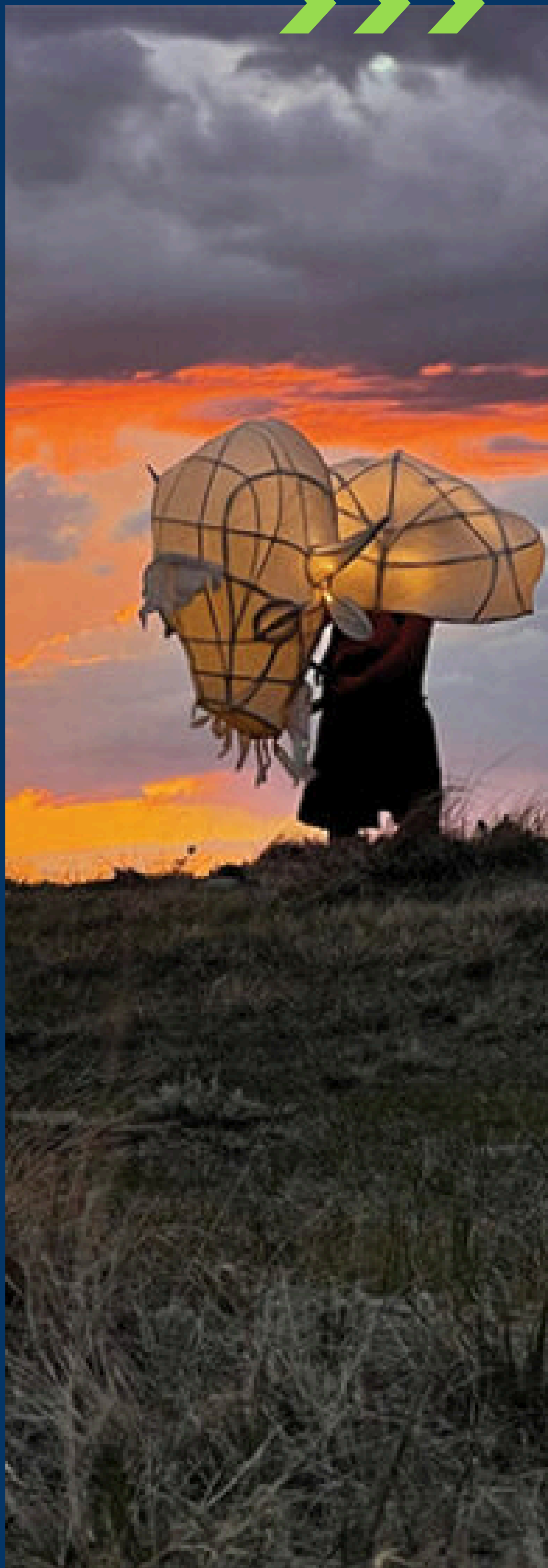
INTRODUCTION

In 2025, Calgary Arts Development (CADA) commissioned Root Economy to conduct a comprehensive economic impact analysis of Calgary's creative industries, capturing their annual economic and broader societal contributions. This analysis provides a detailed look at the sector's direct, indirect, and induced contributions to the economies of Calgary, Alberta, and Canada, using the most recent data available from 2022.

In Canada, culture is defined by the Canadian Framework for Culture Statistics (CFCS 2011) as "creative, artistic activity and the goods and services produced by it, and the preservation of heritage." Reflecting this definition, the study evaluates the scope and scale of Calgary's creative sector, examining economic outputs, employment, wage impacts, and wider community contributions.

The analysis builds on previous studies from 2016 and 2019/20, providing updated and actionable insights to inform strategic investments, policy development, and future planning by CADA and relevant stakeholders.

The impact of COVID-19 on the sector was significant, with widespread disruptions in live performances, cultural events, and arts-based businesses, leading to revenue losses, job cuts, and operational challenges. Many organizations experienced prolonged closures, while others had to rapidly adapt to digital platforms or alternative business models to remain viable. Despite these challenges, the sector showed resilience, with gradual recovery driven by government support programs, digital innovation, and the return of in-person events. However, some subsectors, particularly live performance and heritage institutions, continued to experience lasting effects, impacting their full recovery to pre-pandemic levels.



INSIKIM RETURN OF THE BUFFALO BY CANADIAN ACADEMY OF MASK AND PUPPETRY | PHOTO: PETER BALKWILL


UNGANISHA 2017 | PHOTO: MOTIF PHOTOGRAPHY

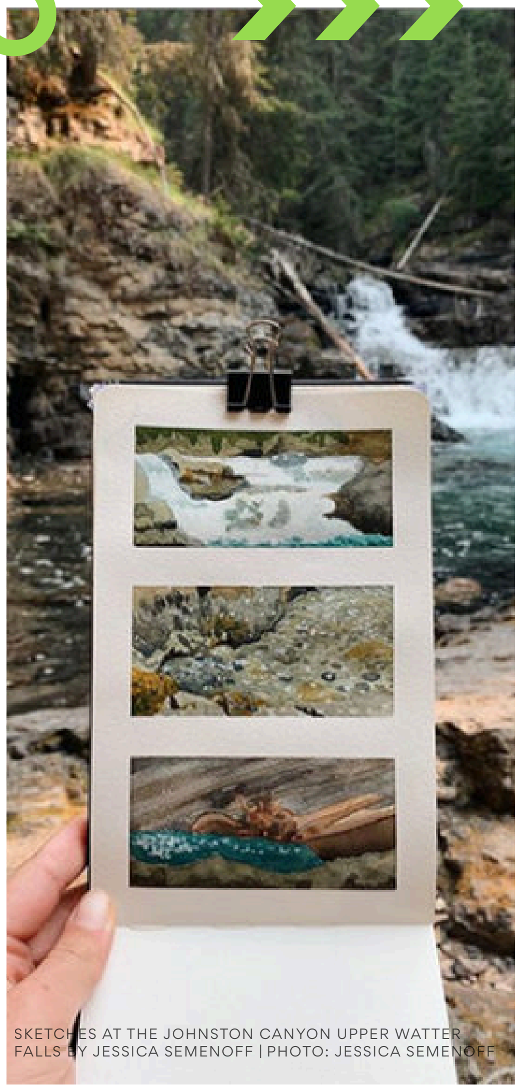
This report quantifies the sector's post-pandemic rebound but also highlights areas that may require further support to ensure long-term sustainability and growth.

It identifies areas of strength and pinpoints opportunities for growth, guiding efforts to foster a dynamic, sustainable, and thriving creative economy in Calgary.

This report develops credible and nationally comparable estimates for Calgary's creative sector by leveraging the rigorous approach used by Statistics Canada.

Understanding tourism spending related to Calgary's creative industries is especially valuable since attracting and enriching high-quality cultural experiences aligns closely with Tourism Calgary's recent destination strategy. The report also explores volunteer contributions, based on data from Statistics Canada, Calgary Arts Development, and other cultural organizations.

Lastly, this report benchmarks Calgary's creative sector against other major Canadian cities. This benchmarking provides a clear perspective on Calgary's relative strengths and reveals specific opportunities where additional support and strategic investment can further bolster the city's cultural vibrancy and economic resilience.


SKETCHES AT THE JOHNSTON CANYON UPPER WATTER FALLS BY JESSICA SEMENOFF | PHOTO: JESSICA SEMENOFF

MAPPING CALGARY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Cultural activity plays a vital role in Calgary's economic prosperity, contributing not only to quality of life but also to innovation, job creation, and business development. To understand the scale and structure of Calgary's creative economy, it is important to define its scope using a consistent and measurable framework.

This analysis applies the Conceptual Framework for Culture Statistics (2011) developed by Statistics Canada. The framework organizes culture into clearly defined domains and sub-domains, enabling accurate classification, comparison, and analysis of cultural activity across regions.

NATASHA KORNEY | PHOTO: JASON STANG

DOMAINS IN THE CANADIAN FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURE STATISTICS

The framework groups cultural activity into three broad categories: Core Culture Domains, Ancillary Culture Domains, and Transversal Domains.

CULTURE DOMAINS					
A. Heritage and Libraries	B. Live Performance	C. Visual and Applied Arts	D. Written and Published Works	E. Audio-Visual and Interactive Media	F. Sound Recording
CORE CULTURE SUB-DOMAINS					
Archives Libraries Cultural heritage Natural heritage	Performing arts Festivals and celebrations	Original visual art Art reproductions Photography Crafts	Books Periodicals Newspapers Other published works	Film and video Broadcasting Interactive media	Sound recording Music publishing
ANCILLARY CULTURE SUB-DOMAINS					
		Advertising Architecture Design	Collected information		
TRANSVERSAL DOMAINS					
G. Education and Training					
H. Governance, Funding, and Professional Support					

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURE STATISTICS 2011.

CREATIVE ESTABLISHMENTS

Calgary's creative economy is a highly entrepreneurial and independent ecosystem, with over 19,000 predominantly small cultural businesses driving a vibrant and growing sector.

CREATIVE SECTOR BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS BY SIZE AND DOMAIN, CALGARY (2022)

BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS					
CULTURAL DOMAIN	NON-PAYROLL*	SMALL (1-99 EMPLOYEES)	MEDIUM (100-499 EMPLOYEES)	LARGE (500+ EMPLOYEES)	TOTAL
Heritage and libraries	17	34	2	2	**55**
Live performance	517	73	3	-	**593**
Visual and applied arts	8,119	4,310	57	1	**12,487**
Written and published works	758	344	9	-	**1,111**
Audio-visual and interactive media	627	271	13	1	**912**
Sound recording	71	94	-	-	**165**
Education and training (culture)	310	218	20	8	**556**
Governance, funding, and professional support (culture)	2360	804	15	2	**3181**
Multidomain	314	63	3	-	**380**
TOTAL CULTURE	13,093	6,211	122	14	**19,440**
TOTAL CALGARY ECONOMY	136,419	59,871	1,163	129	**197,582**
CULTURE SHARE OF TOTAL ECONOMY	10%	10%	10%	11%	**9.8%**

*INCLUDES SOLE PROPRIETORSHIPS, FAMILY-RUN OPERATIONS, OR BUSINESSES THAT WORK ONLY WITH CONTRACTORS INSTEAD OF EMPLOYEES. FIGURES COVER BOTH CORE AND TRANSVERSAL DOMAINS.

SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA, BUSINESS REGISTER**, DECEMBER 2022, ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY, 2025.

**INDUSTRY MISCLASSIFICATION CAN OCCUR, ESPECIALLY WITH LARGE COMPANIES THAT OPERATE IN MULTIPLE AREAS. FOR EXAMPLE, CBC/RADIO-CANADA IS CLASSIFIED UNDER TV AND RADIO BROADCASTING (NAICS CODE 515120), BUT IT ALSO PRODUCES FILMS AND DIGITAL CONTENT THAT FIT OTHER CATEGORIES. SIMILARLY, A BOOK PUBLISHER THAT CREATES EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE MAY BE GROUPED UNDER PUBLISHING (NAICS CODE 511130), EVEN THOUGH PART OF ITS BUSINESS ALIGNS MORE WITH SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT.

In 2022, Calgary was home to approximately 19,440 cultural establishments, representing 9.8% of all businesses in the city. This reflects a significant presence of cultural activity embedded within the broader economy.

A defining characteristic of Calgary's cultural sector is its scale and structure. Over 99% of cultural establishments are non-payroll or small firms, underscoring a decentralized and highly independent ecosystem. Of these, 10,423 are non-payroll businesses, largely made up of solo entrepreneurs, freelancers, and family-run operations. This reveals a creative economy built from the ground up, driven more by individuals and micro-enterprises than large institutions.

Calgary's creative sector spans a broad range of domains, including performing arts, visual and applied arts, heritage institutions, publishing, sound recording, and audio-visual production. The visual and applied arts domain alone accounts for 12,487 establishments, or about 80% of the city's cultural footprint. This signals a thriving ecosystem for independent artists, designers, photographers, and craftspeople who contribute significantly to Calgary's cultural identity.

Entrepreneurial, resilient, and talent-driven, Calgary's creative economy is built on the contributions of countless independent creators and small firms. While large cultural organizations exist, it is this broad base of creatives that fuels the sector's vibrancy and evolution.

Note: This analysis includes educational and governance-related cultural establishments—such as arts schools, training institutions, funders, and professional support organizations—covering both core and transversal domains. Bringing these into scope provides a fuller picture of Calgary's cultural ecosystem and the infrastructure that sustains creative work.

CSPACE PROJECTS | PHOTO: KIMBERLY JEV

DIRECT EMPLOYMENT

To estimate employment in Calgary's creative sector, we used a hybrid approach that combines Statistics Canada's Business Register data with Provincial and Territorial Culture Indicators, applying industry-specific ratios to align estimates with reported employment levels across cultural domains. This method enabled us to produce reliable projections for direct employment within the Calgary Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).

DIRECT EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTED BY CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR (2022)

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES (FTEs)			
Cultural Domain	**Calgary**	**Alberta**	**Calgary Share**
Heritage and libraries	1,239	2,009	62%
Live performance	2,290	4,637	49%
Visual and applied arts	4,872	8,386	58%
Written and published works	2,261	4,363	52%
Audio-visual and interactive media	2,631	6,444	41%
Sound recording	321	460	70%
Education and training	1,152	5,943	19%
Governance, funding, and professional support	2,000	8,745	23%
Multidomain	142	351	40%
Total creative sector	**16,907**	**41,338**	**41%**

MULTIDOMAIN: THIS CATEGORY INCLUDES CULTURAL INDUSTRIES THAT SPAN MULTIPLE CREATIVE DOMAINS, REFLECTING CROSS-SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CREATIVE ECONOMY.

SOURCES: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S BUSINESS COUNTS (DEC 2022) AND PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

In 2022, Calgary's creative sector directly supported approximately 16,907 jobs, accounting for 41% of Alberta's total cultural employment. This substantial share highlights the city's role as a leading cultural hub in the province.

Employment was particularly concentrated in visual and applied arts (4,872 jobs, or 58% of Alberta's total in this area), reflecting a strong local presence of artists, designers, and music professionals. In contrast, Calgary's lower employment shares in education and training (19%) and in governance, funding, and professional support (23%) point to potential gaps in institutional infrastructure and capacity-building within the sector.

Economic Conditions Influencing Creative Employment

In 2022, Canada's economy experienced elevated inflation and global uncertainty, even as the country saw record demographic growth driven by immigration.

Nationally, employment in the information, culture, and recreation sector grew by 9.3%, signaling a strong post-pandemic rebound in many creative industries. Calgary's creative sector reflected these national trends, directly supporting nearly 17,000 jobs, or 41% of Alberta's total creative employment.

These figures suggest a creative economy anchored in production and expression, but one that may benefit from stronger integration with sector enablers such as training institutions and support organizations to ensure long-term resilience and talent development.

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS BY VERTIGO THEATRE| PHOTO: TIM NGUYEN

DIRECT REVENUE

Alberta's creative sector required $7.05 billion in revenue to sustain employment, with Calgary contributing over $2.6 billion. This was driven largely by audio-visual and interactive media, as well as visual and applied arts.

A data-driven approach was used to estimate the revenue required to sustain employment in Alberta's cultural sector by applying national benchmarks and adjusting for provincial economic conditions. This included calculating a jobs-to-revenue ratio, which measures how many jobs are supported per one million dollars in revenue, to determine the overall output needed to maintain sector employment.

DIRECT REVENUE SUPPORTED BY CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR (2022)

REVENUES ($ MILLION)		
Cultural Domain	**Calgary**	**Alberta**
Heritage and libraries	$113.10	$171.20
Live performance	$206.40	$317.10
Visual and applied arts	$647.60	$1,396.30
Written and published works	$489.50	$776.20
Audio-visual and interactive media	$713.80	$1,783.50
Sound recording	$24.40	$39.30
Education and training	$167.60	$617.30
Governance, funding, and professional support	$239.30	$1,837.20
Multidomain	$31.50	$110.30
Total creative sector	**$2,633.20**	**$7,048.50**

SOURCES: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), PROVINCIAL INPUT-OUTPUT MULTIPLIERS (2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

In 2022, Alberta's creative sector required approximately $7.05 billion in total revenue to support existing jobs. Of this, Calgary accounted for $2.63 billion, or 37% of the provincial total. Calgary's economic role in the sector is especially pronounced in high-performing domains such as: Audio-visual and interactive media ($713.8 million), and Visual and applied arts ($647.6 million), reflecting the city's strengths in digital content production, design, and visual creativity.

DIRECT GDP

Alberta's creative industries contributed approximately $3.89 billion in direct GDP, with Calgary accounting for $1.33 billion, or nearly 34% of the provincial total.

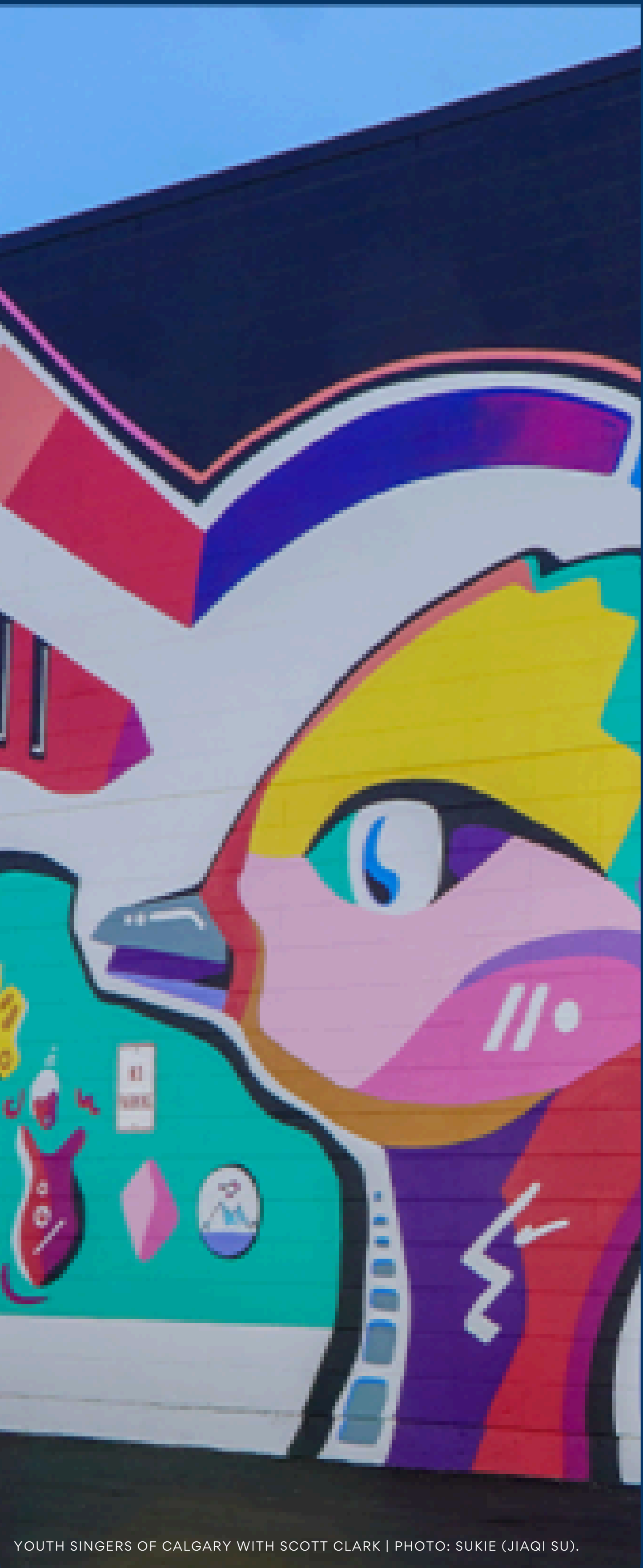
Calgary's economic contribution is especially strong in high-output domains such as:

- Audio-visual and interactive media ($351.3 million),
- Visual and applied arts ($315.9 million), and
- Written and published works ($232.9 million).

DIRECT GDP CONTRIBUTION OF CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR (2022)

GDP AT MARKET PRICES ($ MILLION)		
Cultural Domain	**Calgary**	**Alberta**
Heritage and libraries	$53.80	$92.90
Live performance	$98.30	$167.80
Visual and applied arts	$315.90	$721.50
Written and published works	$232.90	$406.20
Audio-visual and interactive media	$351.30	$1,001.20
Sound recording	$11.30	$21.00
Education and training	$118.10	$468.20
Governance, funding, and professional support	$134.90	$952.30
Multidomain	$14.60	$54.60
Total creative sector	**$1,331.20**	**$3,885.80**

SOURCES: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), PROVINCIAL INPUT-OUTPUT MULTIPLIERS (2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.



YOUTH SINGERS OF CALGARY WITH SCOTT CLARK | PHOTO: SUKIE (JIAQI SU).

SHIFTING DYNAMICS IN CALGARY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY (2020–2022)

Between 2020 and 2022, Calgary's creative sector experienced a rise in employment, increasing from 15,656 to 16,907 jobs, signaling renewed activity and engagement following the pandemic. However, during the same period, total revenue declined from $2.88 billion to $2.63 billion, and direct GDP fell sharply from $1.60 billion to $1.33 billion—a decrease of nearly 17%. This decline in economic output occurred with historically high inflation in 2022, indicating that each job and each dollar earned contributed less to the local economy than in prior years.

This divergence suggests that while more people are working and more transactions are taking place, the economic value generated per job and per dollar of revenue has declined. Several factors may explain the decline: more jobs are in lower-wage or part-time positions, and rising costs for materials and services are making it harder for the sector to generate as much economic value from its work.

In effect, Calgary's creative economy appears to be growing in breadth but contracting in depth. The sector is becoming more active, but each unit of activity is delivering less economic return than before. This trend highlights the need for targeted investments in skills development, innovation capacity, and support infrastructure to improve productivity, elevate value creation, and ensure the long-term sustainability of Calgary's creative industries.

LABOUR INCOME

Labour income in Alberta's creative sector was estimated using direct input-output multipliers and adjusted wage benchmarks from the 2021 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey[2]. To reflect the full scope of income, including wages, supplementary benefits, and self-employment earnings, a standard upward adjustment was applied to the base wage figures.

In 2022, total direct labour income generated by Alberta's creative sector was approximately $3.17 billion, with $1.13 billion earned in Calgary, accounting for 36% of the provincial total. This represents earnings across diverse domains, with the largest contributions coming from audio-visual and interactive media ($295.4 million) and visual and applied arts ($271.2 million).

To reflect Calgary's relatively higher wage environment, local estimates were further adjusted upward by 8.9%, based on the city's higher average hourly earnings in the Information, Culture, and Recreation sector compared to the provincial average. This adjustment ensures that Calgary's labour income figures accurately reflect the city's wage premium within Alberta's creative economy.

DIRECT LABOUR INCOME OF CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR (2022)

Labour Income ($ million)		
Domains	**Calgary**	**Alberta**
Heritage and libraries	$54.70	$77.10
Live performance	$95.80	$147.20
Visual and applied arts	$271.20	$585.40
Written and published works	$168.90	$261.20
Audio-visual and interactive media	$295.40	$731.60
Sound recording	$12.20	$19.60
Education and training	$105.40	$388.30
Governance, funding, and professional support	$121.30	$931.50
Multidomain	$8.60	$30.10
Total creative sector	**$1,133.50**	**$3,171.90**

SOURCES: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), PROVINCIAL INPUT-OUTPUT MULTIPLIERS (2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY

2) SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA, *ALBERTA WAGE AND SALARY SURVEY: SURVEY OVERVIEW* (EDMONTON: GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA, 2021).

IMPACT OF INFLATION ON WAGES IN CALGARY AND ALBERTA'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES (2022)

In 2022, record-high inflation significantly impacted workers in Calgary and Alberta's creative industries, reducing their purchasing power despite nominal wage increases. National inflation surged to 6.8%, the highest in 40 years, while real wages declined by 1.6%, meaning that earnings did not keep pace with rising costs. This put additional financial strain on workers in arts, entertainment, and cultural sectors, many of whom were still recovering from the economic setbacks of COVID-19.

Although employment in creative industries saw modest growth, many of the returning jobs were lower-paying or part-time (e.g., freelancers, gig workers), offering less financial stability. At the same time, creative businesses faced rising operational costs, including higher rents, material expenses, and energy prices. This means that while more firms were operating than in 2019-2020, they were generating less value-added per dollar of revenue.

Consumer purchasing power was also diminished, leaving households with less disposable income to spend on tickets, events, and cultural experiences, further dampening revenues for the sector.

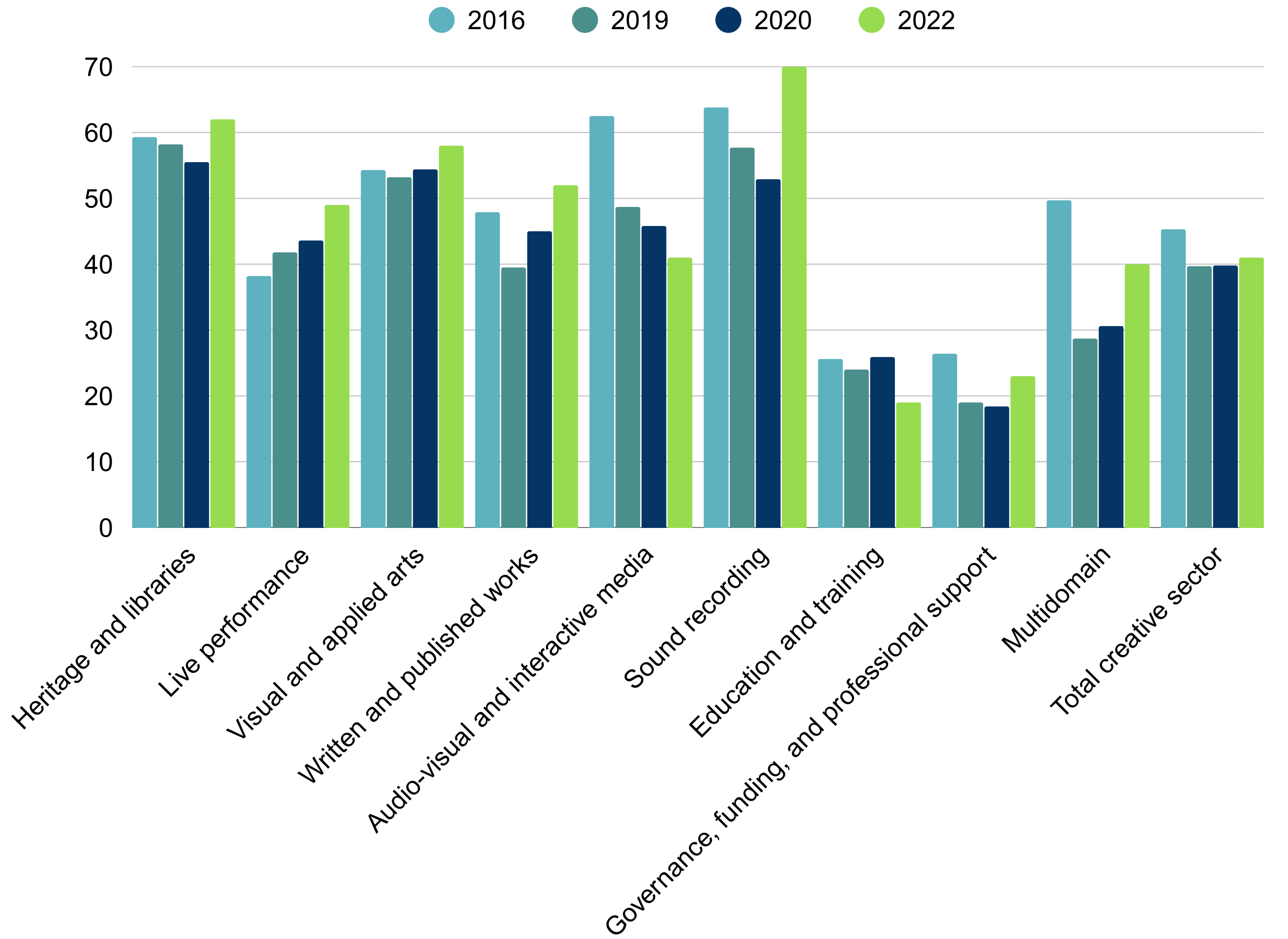
As a result, while the sector made progress toward recovery, inflation and stagnant real wages constrained its growth, making it harder for businesses and workers to fully regain pre-pandemic momentum in that year.

MALCOM LIM | PHOTO: COURTESY OF MALCOM LIM

CALGARY'S CULTURAL WORKFORCE IS GROWING— BUT SUPPORT SYSTEMS MUST CATCH UP

Calgary's cultural sector has emerged as a provincial leader, accounting for 41% of Alberta's cultural employment in 2022. This growth, fueled by strengths in digital and production-focused fields, is tempered by structural gaps in education and training that may hinder the sector's long-term sustainability.

CALGARY'S SHARE OF CULTURAL EMPLOYMENT IN ALBERTA (%)



NOTE: MULTIDOMAIN REFERS TO CULTURAL INDUSTRIES WHOSE ACTIVITIES SPAN MULTIPLE CREATIVE DOMAINS AND CANNOT BE CLEARLY ASSIGNED TO JUST ONE CATEGORY DUE TO THEIR CROSS-SECTOR NATURE.

SOURCE: DATA: HISTORICAL DATA FOR 2016, 2019, AND 2020 IS SOURCED FROM *CALGARY'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: UPDATE ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT AND PROJECTIONS GOING FORWARD*, CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA, FEBRUARY 2024. ANALYSIS: 2022 BY ROOT ECONOMY.

In 2022, Calgary accounted for 41% of Alberta's cultural employment, up from 39.8% in 2020 and 39.7% in 2019. While the growth may appear modest, the upward trend is steady and meaningful, particularly in light of the broader economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Calgary's cultural employment share remains well above its 36.7% share[3] of total provincial employment, reinforcing the city's position as Alberta's leading cultural and creative hub.

This concentration is especially evident in production-oriented, high-growth domains:

- **Visual and applied arts: 58%**
- **Sound recording: 70%**
- **Written and published works: 52%**
- **Live performance: 49%**
- **Heritage and libraries: 62%**

These areas represent Calgary's strengths in media, design, publishing, and performance-based sectors, many of which are deeply connected to digital innovation and content creation. Despite economic uncertainty, these fields have not only remained resilient—they have also expanded their provincial footprint since 2020.

However, growth across domains has been uneven. While several categories have gained ground, others have lost share or remained stagnant. Notably:

- **Education and training fell to 19%, down from 25.9% in 2020 and 24% in 2019**
- **Governance, funding, and professional support sits at 23%, up slightly from 18.4% in 2020, but still well below 2016 levels**

These persistently low shares in infrastructure-related domains point to a structural weakness in the ecosystem. Areas like education, training, and governance are foundational to talent development, leadership renewal, and long-term sector health.

INDI CITY | PHOTO: COURTESY OF INDI CITY

3) CITY OF CALGARY. *LABOUR MARKET REVIEW DECEMBER 2022.* CALGARY, AB: CITY OF CALGARY, 2022. HTTPS://WWW.CALGARY.CA/RESEARCH/LABOUR-MARKET.HTML.

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA. *LABOUR MARKET TRENDS DECEMBER 2022.* EDMONTON, AB: GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA, 2022. HTTPS://OPEN.ALBERTA.CA/PUBLICATIONS/2727158-2022.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT:
ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT OF CALGARY'S CULTURAL SECTOR ON ALBERTA AND CANADA

To estimate the full economic footprint of Calgary's creative industries, this study employed an integrated input-output (I-O) modeling approach. The model captures direct, indirect, and induced impacts across both Alberta and Canada, with results reported as employment, labour income, GDP, industry output, and tax contributions.

The analysis draws on two primary data sources:

- Provincial input-output multipliers, reflecting Alberta's unique industry structure and supply chain relationships.
- National input-output multipliers, which account for broader interprovincial and international economic flows.

ADRIAN STIMSON | PHOTO: BARBARA AMOS


A FRAGMENTED VIEW OF TREES | PHOTO: COURTESY OF ADRIAN STIMSON

Together, these sources provide a layered and comprehensive view of the sector's economic contribution, connecting local creative activity to ripple effects across the broader economy.

The footprint calculated is intentionally conservative. It includes only the economic activity directly tied to the production of creative goods and services, excluding non-core revenues such as food and beverage sales at cultural venues.

The model captures not only the direct impact of creative industries themselves but also the indirect and induced effects generated through supply chains and household spending. These ripple effects include architectural firms designing cultural spaces, audiovisual companies supporting live and digital performances, marketing agencies promoting creative events, and logistics providers managing the movement of equipment and installations.

This approach ensures that the resulting analysis reflects both the depth and breadth of Calgary's creative economy, anchored in cultural production but interwoven with the city's broader economic fabric.

The data presented combines historical estimates from previous studies with new analysis for 2022. Figures for 2016, 2019, and 2020 are sourced from the *Conference Board of Canada's 2024 study, Calgary's Creative Industries: Update on the Economic Impact and Projections Going Forward*. The 2022 estimates are based on updated modeling conducted by Root Economy.

The following results capture the total economic impact of Calgary's creative industries in 2022, including direct, indirect, and induced effects across Calgary, Alberta, and Canada.

ALBERTA IMPACT:

TOTAL ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT OF CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR (2022)

ALBERTA	2016	2019	2020	2022
Revenue ($ millions)	6,292.30	5,391.10	4,637.00	4,431.00
GDP ($ millions)	3,506.60	3,021.80	2,597.80	2,363.60
Labour Income ($ millions)	2,277.40	1,975.00	1,696.80	1,704.90
Employment (Full-Year Jobs)	31,927.00	27,312.00	23,486.00	26,573.10

SOURCE: DATA: HISTORICAL DATA FOR 2016, 2019, AND 2020 IS SOURCED FROM CALGARY'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: UPDATE ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT AND PROJECTIONS GOING FORWARD, CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA, FEBRUARY 2024. ANALYSIS: 2022 BY ROOT ECONOMY.

In 2022, Calgary's creative industries generated a significant economic footprint across Alberta, contributing to the province's economy well beyond city limits. The sector supported a broad network of businesses, workers, and suppliers, reinforcing its role as a vital economic engine.

Key provincial-level impacts included:

- **$4.43 billion in total industry output (revenue)**
- **$2.36 billion in direct GDP contribution**
- **$1.70 billion in labour income**
- **26,573 full-year equivalent jobs**

These figures highlight the creative sector's far-reaching influence – fueling employment, supporting livelihoods, and driving value creation across Alberta's supply chains and service industries.

CANADA IMPACT: TOTAL ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT OF CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR (2022)

Canada	2016	2019	2020	2022
Revenue ($ millions)	7,878.50	6,723.80	5,756.30	5,722.60
GDP ($ millions)	4,319.80	3,706.40	3,173.90	3,015.00
Labour Income ($ millions)	2,753.40	2,376.50	2,035.10	2,114.70
Employment (Full-Year Jobs)	41,469.00	34,895.00	29,829.00	34,814.70
Taxes ($ millions)	746.3	636.5	548.3	458.2

SOURCE: DATA: HISTORICAL DATA FOR 2016, 2019, AND 2020 IS SOURCED FROM *CALGARY'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: UPDATE ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT AND PROJECTIONS GOING FORWARD*, CONFERENCE BOARD OF CANADA, FEBRUARY 2024. ANALYSIS: 2022 BY ROOT ECONOMY.

In 2022, Calgary's creative industries generated a substantial economic footprint across Canada, demonstrating the sector's national significance through interprovincial trade, supply chain activity, and consumer spending.

Key national-level impacts included:

- **$5.72 billion in total industry output (revenue)**
- **$3.02 billion in GDP contribution**
- **$2.11 billion in labour income**
- **34,815 full-year equivalent jobs**
- **$458.2 million in tax revenues across all levels of government**

These results affirm that Calgary's creative sector is not just a local or provincial asset, but a meaningful contributor to Canada's cultural and economic fabric. Its reach extends nationwide, supporting jobs, generating tax revenue, and driving growth through national supply chains and interprovincial economic activity.

INTERNATIONAL IMPORTS

In 2022, Calgary's creative industries generated an estimated $737.1 million in international imports, capturing the direct, indirect, and induced effects of global trade tied to the sector.

This includes direct purchases of goods and services by creative businesses, such as software, equipment, and artistic content, as well as imports by suppliers supporting the sector, and household spending by workers employed in creative-related jobs. Together, these flows demonstrate Calgary's active participation in the global exchange of ideas, content, and technology.

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN CALGARY

Tourism plays a vital role in supporting Calgary's creative sector. As outlined in *Tourism Calgary's 2025–2027 Business Plan*[4], the city aims to bring the Calgary brand to life by telling authentic stories that reflect its diverse culture and heritage. Cultural experiences are central to this strategy and are increasingly recognized as key drivers for attracting and engaging visitors.

DEVERY GOWN BY LESLEY HAMPTON, EARRINGS BY INDI CITY | PHOTO: JENNA PULLEN

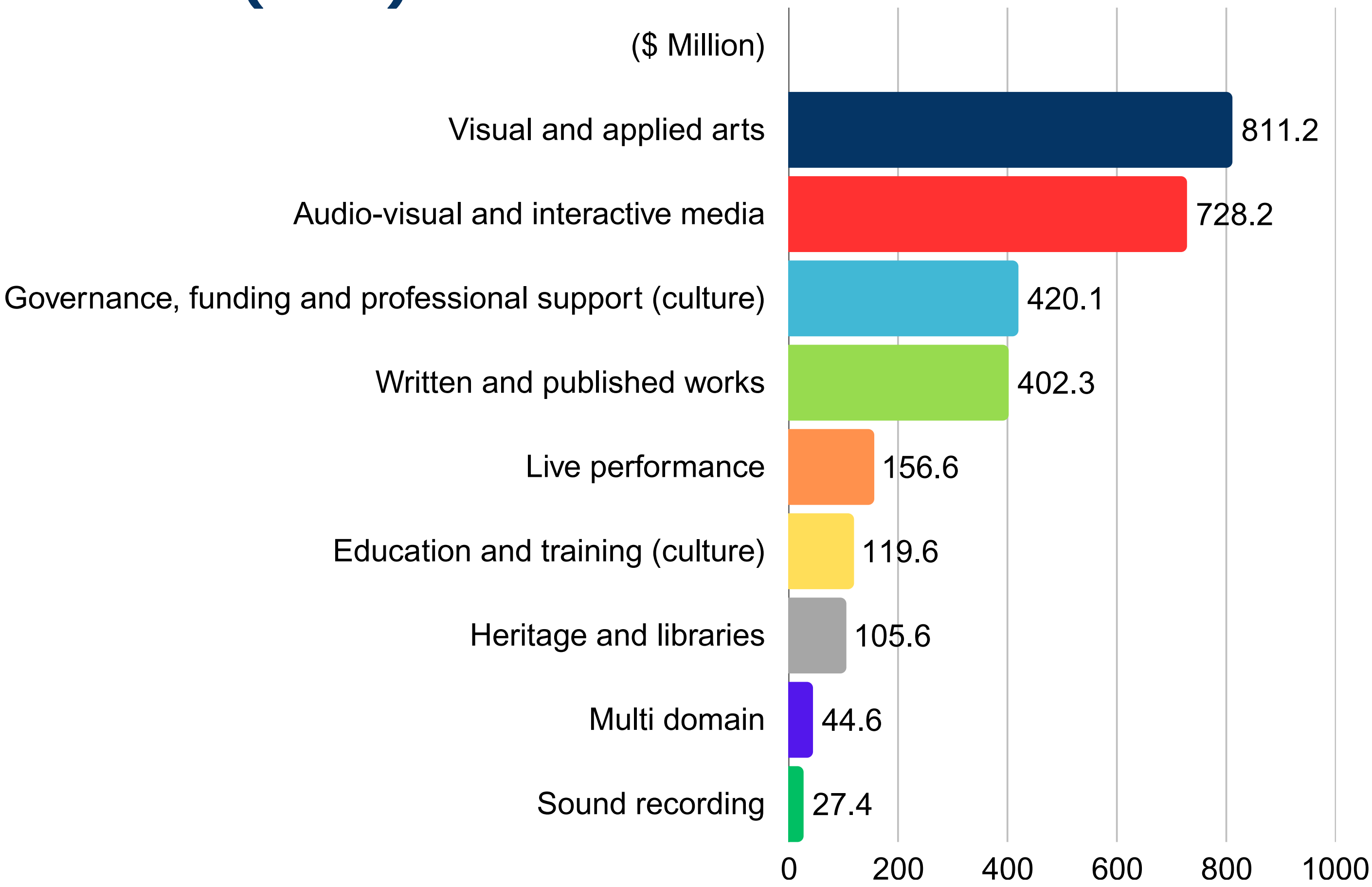
4) TOURISM CALGARY. *BUSINESS PLAN 2025–2027: DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING STRATEGY*. CALGARY: TOURISM CALGARY, 2024. HTTPS://WWW.VISITCALGARY.COM/INDUSTRY-PARTNERS/DESTINATION-DEVELOPMENT/BUSINESS-PLAN-2025.

MEASURING CULTURAL TOURISM

To measure the economic contribution of tourism to Calgary's creative industries, we first establish a baseline for the total output of creative goods and services in the city. This baseline is derived using an employment-based proportional estimation, drawing on *Statistics Canada's Provincial and Territorial Culture Indicators (2022)*. Specifically, we estimate Calgary's share of Alberta's cultural output based on its proportion of cultural sector employment within the province.

Based on this approach, the estimated total value of creative goods and services produced in Calgary in 2022 is approximately $2.8 billion. This output spans a range of subdomains, with particularly strong contributions from visual and applied arts ($811.2 million), audio-visual and interactive media ($728.2 million), and governance, funding, and professional support for culture ($420.1 million).

TOTAL OUTPUT OF CREATIVE GOODS AND SERVICES IN CALGARY (2022)



SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

***NOTE:** It is important to note that this analysis captures only the total output of creative goods and services produced by businesses officially classified within Calgary's cultural sector. However, cultural production also occurs in firms outside the sector, such as marketing agencies, tech startups, and event companies that deliver cultural experiences like museum interactives or festivals. Due to the narrow scope of industry classifications used to define the creative sector, this estimate should be considered conservative. The broader economic contribution of culture-related activities across other sectors is higher.*

TOURISM SPENDING ON CREATIVE GOODS AND SERVICES BY CULTURAL DOMAIN (CALGARY, 2022)

Cultural Domain	Tourism Spending as % of Total Output	Tourism Spending in Calgary CMA (in $1,000s)
Heritage and Libraries	0.85%	$901.70
Live Performance	13.20%	$20,671.70
Visual and Applied Arts	2.55%	$20,689.80
Written and Published Works	3.01%	$12,113.50
Audio-Visual and Interactive Media	1.01%	$7,334.10
Sound Recording	0.00%	-
Education and Training (Culture)	0.00%	-
Governance, Funding, and Professional Support	0.07%	$279.80
Multi-Domain	0.00%	-
Total – Cultural Sector	**1.39%**	**$61,990.60**

SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), TOURISM SPENDING ON CULTURE AND SPORT PRODUCTS (2010-2016), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

Based on the estimated output of creative goods and services in Calgary's local economy, national-level ratios from Statistics Canada were applied to estimate the share attributable to tourism spending. Although these ratios reflect averages for Canada overall, and may understate the actual share in a major urban centre like Calgary, they provide a useful benchmark. Using this approach, it is estimated that in 2022, tourists to Calgary spent approximately $62.0 million on creative goods and services.

This estimate represents 3.9% of the city's total tourism expenditure of $1.6 billion, as reported in Tourism Calgary's 2022 Annual Report. While 2016 estimates showed a slightly lower creative tourism share (3.3%), the consistent methodology allows for a meaningful comparison over time.

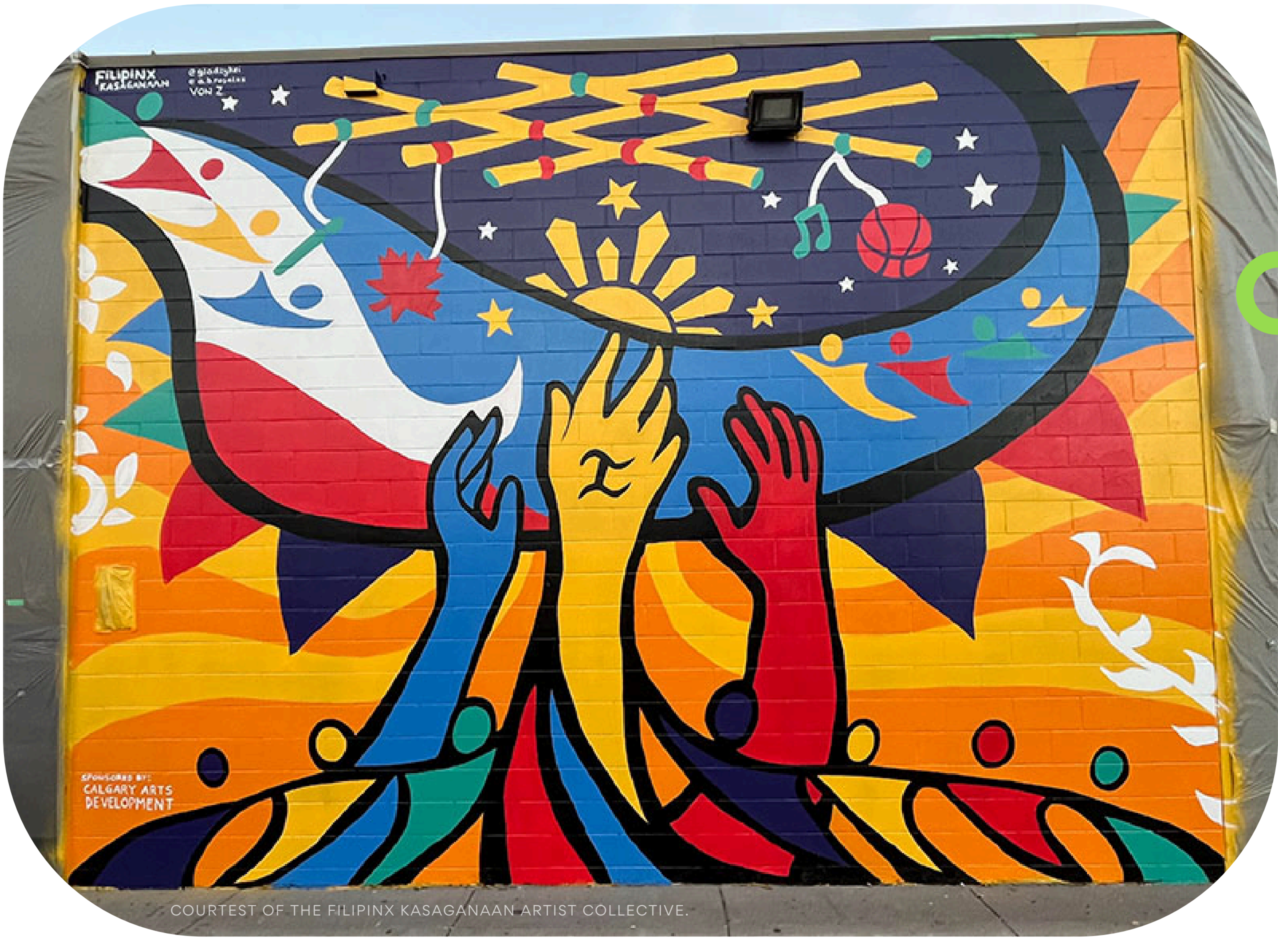
In 2022, tourists spent an estimated $62 million on creative goods and services in Calgary, highlighting the vital role that arts and culture play in shaping the city's visitor experience.

This is not a peripheral piece of the tourism economy, it's a key attraction.

A key insight is that live performance and visual and applied arts account for more than 66% of all cultural tourism spending, highlighting the significant economic impact of Calgary's festivals, venues, galleries, and design sectors.

These figures support a strong case for further investment in cultural infrastructure. Enhancements such as upgrading performance spaces, expanding public art programs, and developing visitor-focused cultural experiences can deepen Calgary's cultural identity while generating measurable economic benefits.

Given the existing baseline of tourism spending, even modest increases in capacity or programming could yield substantial returns.



COURTEST OF THE FILIPINX KASAGANAAN ARTIST COLLECTIVE.

VOLUNTEERING: CALGARY'S INVISIBLE CULTURAL WORKFORCE

In 2022, an estimated 50,702 Calgarians volunteered in arts and culture, contributing over 2.25 million hours of unpaid labour. This is equivalent to approximately 1,052 full-time jobs. The total economic value of this volunteer time in Calgary's arts and culture sector was estimated at over $72 million.

Volunteers make a critical yet often invisible contribution to Calgary's creative industries, dedicating millions of unpaid hours each year to support cultural events, organizations, and programs across the city. While this labour is not captured in GDP, its value can be estimated using wage-based proxies to better understand its economic and social significance.

For this analysis, we used data from Statistics Canada's 2018 General Social Survey – Giving, Volunteering and Participating[5], paired with Alberta-specific population and wage data[6], to estimate the scale and value of volunteerism in Calgary's arts and culture sector. The number of volunteers was projected by applying Calgary's age-specific population share to Alberta-wide estimates of volunteer participation in arts and culture. We assumed that the average volunteer rates and hours by age cohort remained constant between 2018 and 2022, and applied these to Calgary's 2022 demographic composition.


ALYCIA TWO BEARS | PHOTO: COURTESY OF BAMBOO SHOOTS

5) THE 2018 GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY (GSS) ON GIVING, VOLUNTEERING AND PARTICIPATING (GVP) INTERVIEWED INDIVIDUALS 15 YEARS AND OVER IN CANADA'S TEN PROVINCES AND WAS CONDUCTED FROM SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2018.

6) STATISTICS CANADA. ESTIMATES OF POPULATION, BY AGE GROUP AND SEX FOR JULY 1, TABLE 17-10-0005-01. OTTAWA: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, 2022. HTTPS://WWW150.STATCAN.GC.CA/T1/TBL1/EN/TV.ACTION?PID=1710000501.

Based on this methodology, an estimated 50,702 Calgarians volunteered in arts and culture in 2022, collectively contributing over 2.25 million hours of service. To quantify this, we used the replacement cost method, as proposed by Ross[7] and endorsed by Propellus Calgary[8] and TD Economics[9], which values volunteer time at the average hourly wage in Alberta's non-profit institutions: $31.77[10]. This is considered a more accurate and conservative reflection of volunteer value than using minimum wage or general industry averages.

The result is a total imputed economic value of approximately $72.3 million in volunteer labour for Calgary's arts and culture sector in 2022. Although this figure is not formally included in the GDP-based economic impact model, it reflects a significant contribution to the city's cultural infrastructure – particularly in enabling access to public programming, exhibitions, performances, and festivals that may not otherwise be financially viable.

ALEX KWONG| PHOTO: CURTIS (DEZ) DESIATNYK

7) ROSS, DAVID P. *MEASURING THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF VOLUNTEER WORK: CONCEPTS AND METHODS*. OTTAWA: CANADIAN POLICY RESEARCH NETWORKS, 1997.

8) PROPELLUS. *VALUING VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS: A GUIDE TO ESTIMATING THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF VOLUNTEER TIME*. CALGARY: PROPELLUS CALGARY, 2015.

9) DEPRATTO, BRIAN. 2014. *THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERISM AND CHARITABLE GIVING*. TD ECONOMICS SPECIAL REPORT. TORONTO: TD BANK GROUP. **HTTPS://WWW.TD.COM/DOCUMENT/PDF/ECONOMICS/SPECIAL/CHARITYVOLUNTEERING.PDF**.

10) STATISTICS CANADA. *LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY AND RELATED MEASURES BY BUSINESS SECTOR INDUSTRY AND BY NON-COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY CONSISTENT WITH THE INDUSTRY ACCOUNTS*. TABLE 36-10-0480-01. RELEASED MAY 20, 2025. **HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.25318/3610048001-ENG.**

From a labour force perspective, this volunteer contribution is equivalent to approximately 1,052 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, based on the 2022 Alberta average of 41.2 hours worked per week[11] (2,142 hours annually). This underscores the structural role of volunteerism in sustaining Calgary's creative sector.

It's important to note that this estimate is conservative. It accounts only for those who formally volunteer within arts and culture, not those who work in other sectors but contribute their time to creative activities. Capturing these additional contributions would further reinforce the indispensable role that volunteers play in enriching Calgary's cultural life and strengthening its creative economy.

A Note on Methodological Changes in the 2018 General Social Survey

For this report, data from the 2018 survey has been used to generate updated estimates of volunteer activity in Alberta and Calgary. It is important to acknowledge that Statistics Canada introduced methodological changes in the 2018 cycle of the *General Social Survey – Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (GVP)*, which affect comparability with earlier survey years such as 2013.

The 2018 GSS marked a shift toward a mixed-mode data collection approach, incorporating both telephone interviews and electronic questionnaires. Additionally, changes were made to the wording, structure, and ordering of several questions, particularly those related to volunteer activity. These revisions were intended to modernize the survey and reduce respondent burden, but they may also have influenced how individuals interpreted and reported their volunteer experiences.

Statistics Canada also implemented updates to sampling and weighting methodologies, which impacts population-level estimates. As a result, Statistics Canada explicitly advises caution when making direct comparisons between the 2018 GVP and previous iterations of the survey.

11) STATISTICS CANADA. *LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES OF AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS WORKED, TABLE 14-10-0043-01*. OTTAWA: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, 2022. **HTTPS://WWW150.STATCAN.GC.CA/T1/TBL1/EN/TV.ACTION?PID=1410004301**.

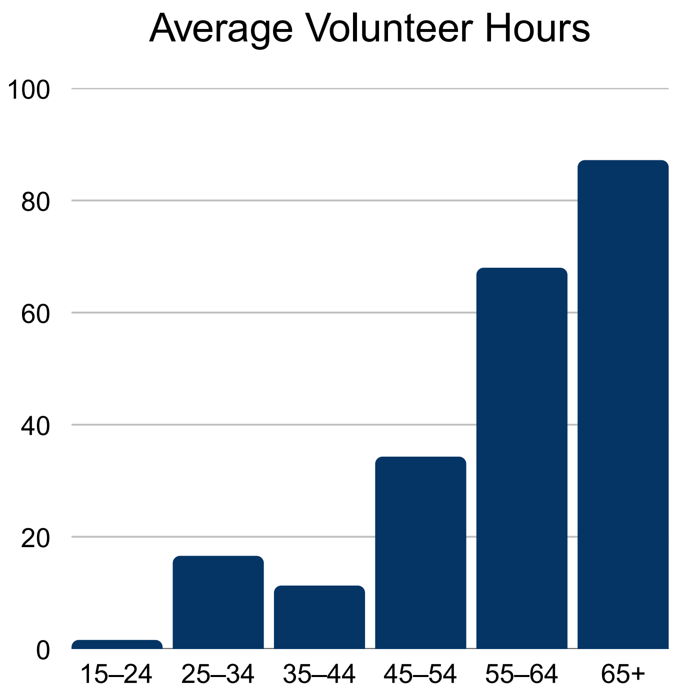
ESTIMATED VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS TO CALGARY'S ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR BY AGE GROUP (2022)

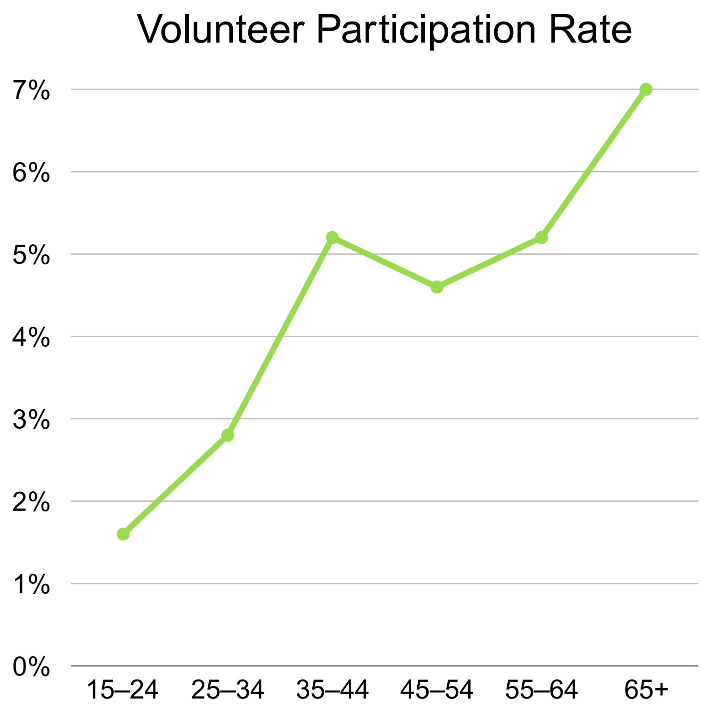
Age Group	Calgary Volunteers	Avg Hours	Total Hours	Volunteer Rate	Economic Value
15–24	2,666	1.6	4,366	1.60%	$138,715
25–34	6,072	16.6	100,731	2.80%	$3.2 million
35–44	11,848	11.3	133,396	5.20%	$4.24 million
45–54	8,450	34.3	290,117	4.60%	$9.22 million
55–64	8,455	68	574,743	5.20%	$18.26 million
65+	13,211	87.2	1,151,449	7.00%	$36.58 million

SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY - GIVING, VOLUNTEERING AND PARTICIPATING (2018), STATISTICS CANADA'S ESTIMATES OF POPULATION (2022), STATISTICS CANADA, LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY (2022), STATISTICS CANADA'S LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

MAEZY REIGN| PHOTO: SEAN DENNIE

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT AND PARTICIPATION VARY BY AGE





SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY – GIVING, VOLUNTEERING AND PARTICIPATING (2018), STATISTICS CANADA'S ESTIMATES OF POPULATION (2022), STATISTICS CANADA, LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY (2022), STATISTICS CANADA'S LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

The charts above illustrate two key aspects of volunteerism within Calgary's arts and culture sector:

- Average hours volunteered per person – indicating the intensity of engagement among those who do volunteer.
- Volunteer rate – representing the proportion of the population in each age group that chooses to volunteer in arts and culture.

DATA: KEY INSIGHTS

- Youth aged 15–24 show relatively high participation (1.6%) but contribute very few hours (1.6 hours on average). This suggests strong initial interest but limited capacity to commit time, likely due to school, work, or lack of structured opportunities.
- Adults aged 25–44 have moderate participation rates and modest average hours, showing broad but time-limited engagement, perhaps reflecting competing family and career responsibilities.
- Volunteers aged 55 and older (especially the 65+ group) exhibit the highest average hours (up to 87.2 hours) and also strong participation rates (up to 7%). This indicates a deep, sustained contribution from older adults, who bring both time and dedication to the sector.

Data highlights that higher volunteer rates don't always translate into more hours, and vice versa. For example, while younger adults are engaged, their time commitment is limited, whereas older adults not only volunteer more often but also invest significantly more time per person.

CALGARY FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL| PHOTO: CALGARY FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL

KEY TAKEAWAYS –
CALGARY 2022 VOLUNTEERISM IN ARTS & CULTURE

CALGARY PUNCHES ABOVE ITS WEIGHT PROVINCIALLY

Calgary accounted for an estimated 38% of Alberta's total cultural volunteer hours in 2022, demonstrating the city's leadership in fostering civic participation and creative engagement.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT EXISTS, BUT WITH ROOM TO GROW

Young Calgarians aged 15–24 show clear interest in participating in the city's creative sector, yet their overall contribution accounts for just 0.2% of total volunteer hours. This suggests that while young adults are stepping forward, they may be constrained by limited time, lack of structured opportunities, or competing commitments.

Targeted volunteer programs that offer flexible scheduling, mentorship opportunities, and skill-building experiences can deepen long-term engagement and strengthen connections to the sector.

STRONG CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FROM MIDDLE-AGED CALGARIANS

The 45–64 age group provided more than 860,000 hours of volunteer labour, reinforcing the active involvement of mid-career and pre-retirement Calgarians. This demographic plays a key stabilizing role in the sector, contributing experience, reliability, and leadership to a wide range of cultural organizations and initiatives.

SENIORS DRIVE THE SECTOR BEHIND THE SCENES

Calgarians aged 65 and older contributed an extraordinary 1.15 million hours, representing over half of all volunteer hours in the sector. Although they make up only a quarter of all volunteers, their time commitment is unmatched – averaging 87.2 hours per person annually in 2022. This reflects the deep, sustained engagement of older adults in Calgary's cultural life, and points to their critical role in maintaining the sector's continuity and capacity.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN VOLUNTEER STRATEGIES

Given the sector's reliance on older adults and time-limited participation from youth, there is an opportunity to develop age-specific volunteer strategies. Initiatives might include:

- Leadership pathways for older volunteers
- Mentorship and micro-volunteering for young people
- Recognition programs that celebrate intergenerational contributions

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Volunteerism in Calgary's creative sector is about more than just hours logged, it's about the human energy that powers the city's cultural life. These contributions make public programming, festivals, exhibitions, educational workshops, and performances possible – many of which would not be financially viable without volunteer support.

Beyond operational support, volunteers bring a spirit of community, creativity, and generosity that enriches the entire cultural experience. Their presence elevates the atmosphere of events and organizations, strengthens community connections, and helps shape Calgary's identity as a vibrant, welcoming city.

Importantly, volunteerism also plays a strategic role in advancing Calgary's economic development goals. A vibrant cultural sector, supported by dedicated volunteers, improves quality of life and helps attract and retain talent. By supporting cultural organizations, volunteers also contribute to the city's long-term economic and social strength.

DJ STAGEZ| PHOTO:
COURTESY OF DJ STAGEZ

BENCHMARKING CALGARY'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES – COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

Calgary's creative industries are a dynamic and evolving pillar of the city's cultural and economic fabric. To contextualize Calgary's strengths and growth opportunities, this assessment compares the city's creative sector to those in five other major Canadian cities: Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, and Winnipeg. Using a framework of key cultural and economic indicators, the analysis identifies where Calgary stands out, where gaps exist, and how the city can better leverage its creative assets to improve quality of life and cultural vibrancy.

CORE INDICATORS FOR COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

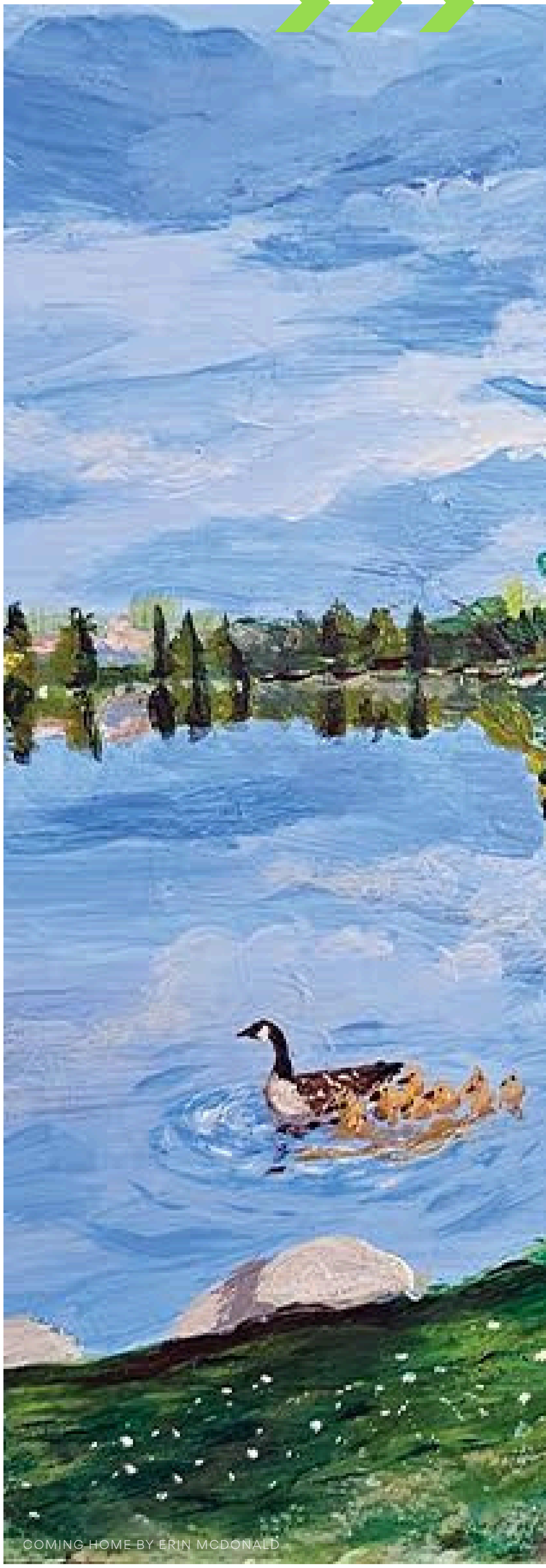
To evaluate and benchmark the creative sector across major Canadian cities, four core indicators were selected. These indicators provide a balanced view of both the scale and significance of the sector within each local economy:

Relative Prominence of the Creative Sector
Assesses the concentration of creative activity within the local economy, using the share of creative businesses as a proxy. This highlights how central the creative sector is relative to the broader business landscape.

Creative Employment
Represents the total number of individuals working in creative occupations. This metric reflects the sector's overall workforce engagement.

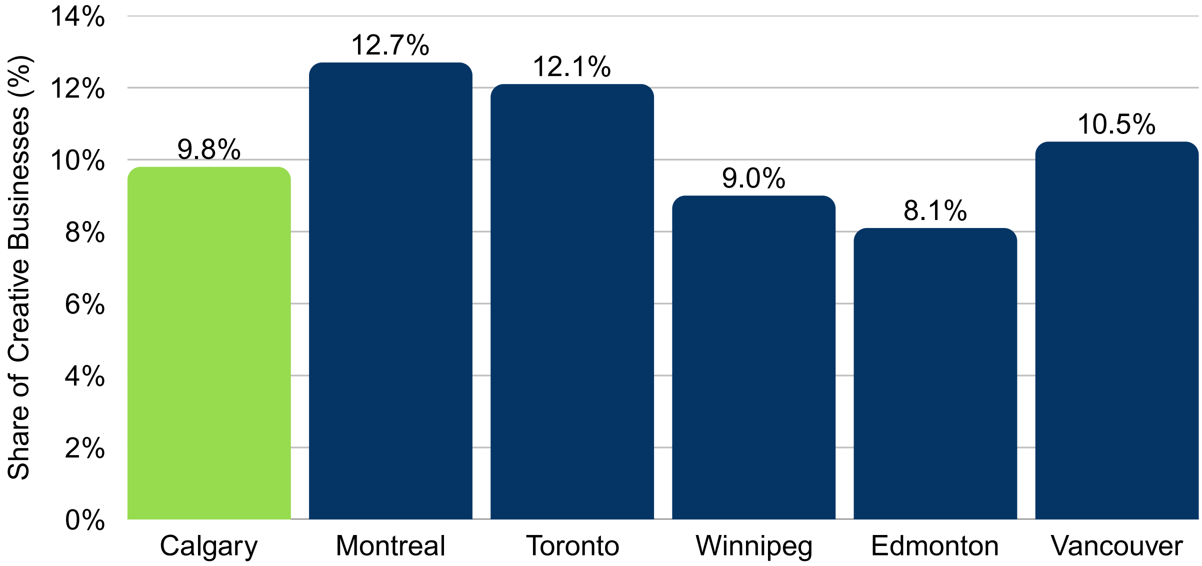
Creative Density
Measures the number of creative roles per 1,000 residents. By normalizing employment data against population size, this indicator allows for meaningful comparisons between cities of different scales.

Diversity of Creative Domains
Measures how creative activity is distributed across different domains—to reveal whether a city's creative economy is broad-based or concentrated in a few areas.


COMING HOME BY ERIN MCDONALD

RELATIVE PROMINENCE OF THE CREATIVE SECTOR

In 2022, Calgary was home to 19,424 creative businesses—representing 9.8% of all businesses in the city.



SOURCE: DATA: BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

To estimate the number of creative businesses, we used Statistics Canada's 2022 Business Counts and mapped NAICS codes to the Canadian Framework for Culture Statistics. The analysis included both employer and non-employer businesses across domains. To assess the sector's economic footprint, we examined not only the total number of creative businesses, but also their relative prominence, measured as the percentage of all businesses in a city that belong to the creative sector. This dual approach captures both the scale of creative enterprise and its integration within the broader urban economy.

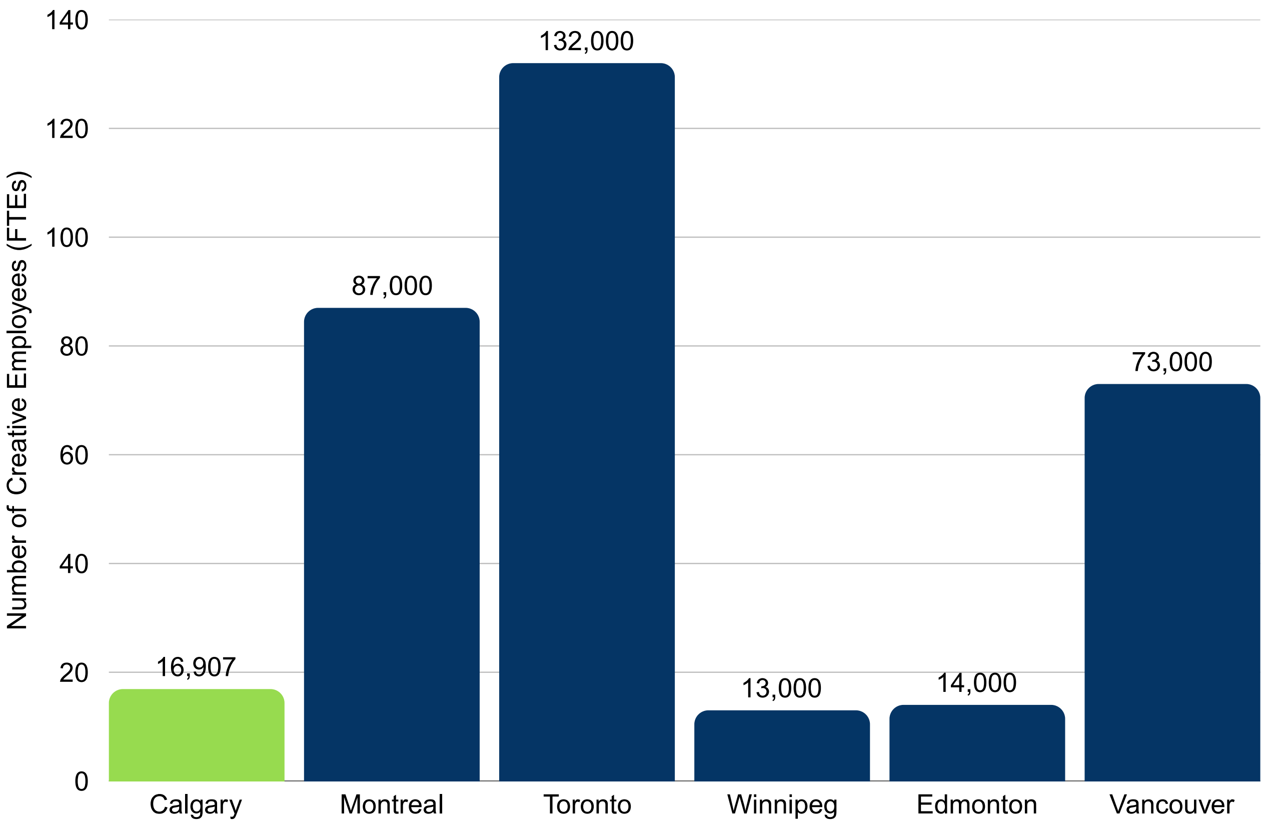
In 2022, Calgary was home to approximately 19,424 creative businesses, representing 9.8% of all businesses in the city. While this prominence level places Calgary ahead of Edmonton (8.1%) and Winnipeg (9.0%), it remains below leading creative centres like Montreal (12.7%), Toronto (12.1%), and Vancouver (10.5%). Montreal and Toronto stand out for their sheer scale, with over 63,000 and 110,000 creative businesses, respectively, reflecting their national roles in media, publishing, and cultural production.

Calgary's profile reflects a broad and diverse creative base, larger in absolute count than Edmonton (12,606) and Winnipeg (6,714), and highly competitive within the Prairie region.

CREATIVE EMPLOYMENT

In 2022, Calgary's creative sector employed nearly 17,000 individuals, reflecting a strong and stable base of creative talent in the city. While Toronto and Montreal report higher absolute employment numbers, Calgary stands out as a leading creative centre in Western Canada. Its creative workforce is larger than Edmonton and Winnipeg, reinforcing Calgary's role as a key anchor of the Prairie region's cultural economy. This level of employment signals the increasing importance of creative professionals in shaping the city's identity, economy, and future growth.

CREATIVE EMPLOYMENT ACROSS MAJOR CANADIAN CITIES (2022)

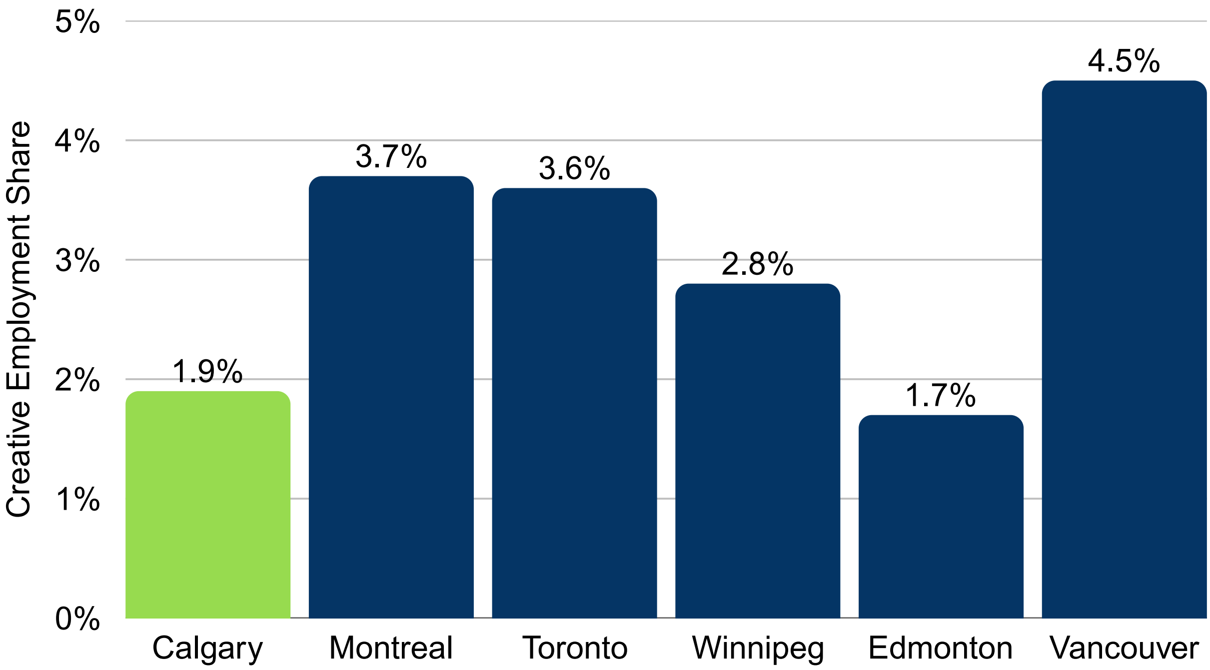


SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

Unlike cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, where creative activity is deeply woven into the economic fabric, Calgary's sector is still in a stage of growth and development. However, its current standing provides a solid foundation for expansion. The city is well-positioned to diversify its creative industries, attract and retain talent, and strengthen its ecosystem through targeted public and private investment, strategic partnerships, and infrastructure support.

The chart shows the proportion of total employment made up by creative industries across six major Canadian cities, highlighting the share of each city's workforce engaged in creative sectors:

SHARE OF CREATIVE EMPLOYMENT BY CITY (2022)



SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS BY CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA (DEC 2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.


MARIYA STOKES | PHOTO: COURTESY OF MARIYA STOKES

Calgary's 1.9% creative employment share highlights a significant opportunity for growth. Leading creative hubs like Vancouver (4.5%), Montreal (3.7%), and Toronto (3.6%) demonstrate what's possible when creative industries are deeply integrated into broader economic strategies.

These figures were derived using a consistent, data-driven methodology that integrates Statistics Canada's Business Register data with the Provincial and Territorial Culture Indicators (PTCI). By applying industry-specific ratios to align business and population data with national cultural employment benchmarks, we were able to estimate municipal-level creative employment levels across cities. This approach ensures reliable and comparable results, offering a clear picture of Calgary's creative workforce within the national landscape.

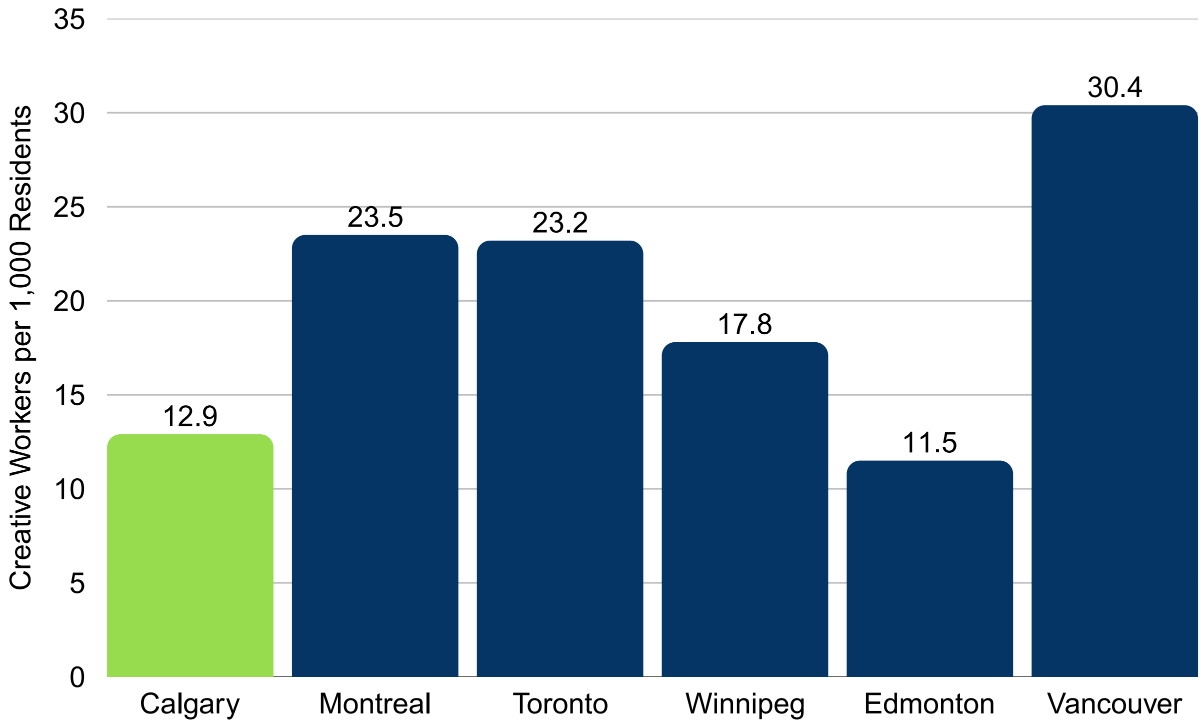
CREATIVE DENSITY

In 2022, Calgary had 12.9 creative workers per 1,000 residents — a presence that, while notable, lags behind other major Canadian cities.


SIMONE ELIZABETH SAUNDERS | PHOTO: COURTESY OF BAMBOO SHOOTS

Because creative industries revolve around the interactions between creators and consumers, we also scaled the number of creative businesses by the population. A higher number of creative businesses per capita suggests that people have a relatively greater opportunity to participate in or to consume creative products and services, while a lower number means there is less access. The chart illustrates Creative Density, defined as the number of creative workers per 1,000 residents, for major Canadian cities in 2022. Calgary's creative density is 12.9 per 1,000 residents, which aligns closely with Edmonton (11.5) and reflects a strong concentration of creative professionals relative to population size in the Prairies. However, it falls below cities like Winnipeg (17.8), Toronto (23.2), Montreal (23.5), and especially Vancouver, which leads the country at 30.4 creative workers per 1,000 residents.

CREATIVE DENSITY ACROSS MAJOR CANADIAN CITIES (2022)



SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

While Calgary may not match the density levels of Canada's largest cultural centres, this metric highlights a key opportunity for growth. A creative density of 12.9 signals a robust foundation, and a significant upside potential.

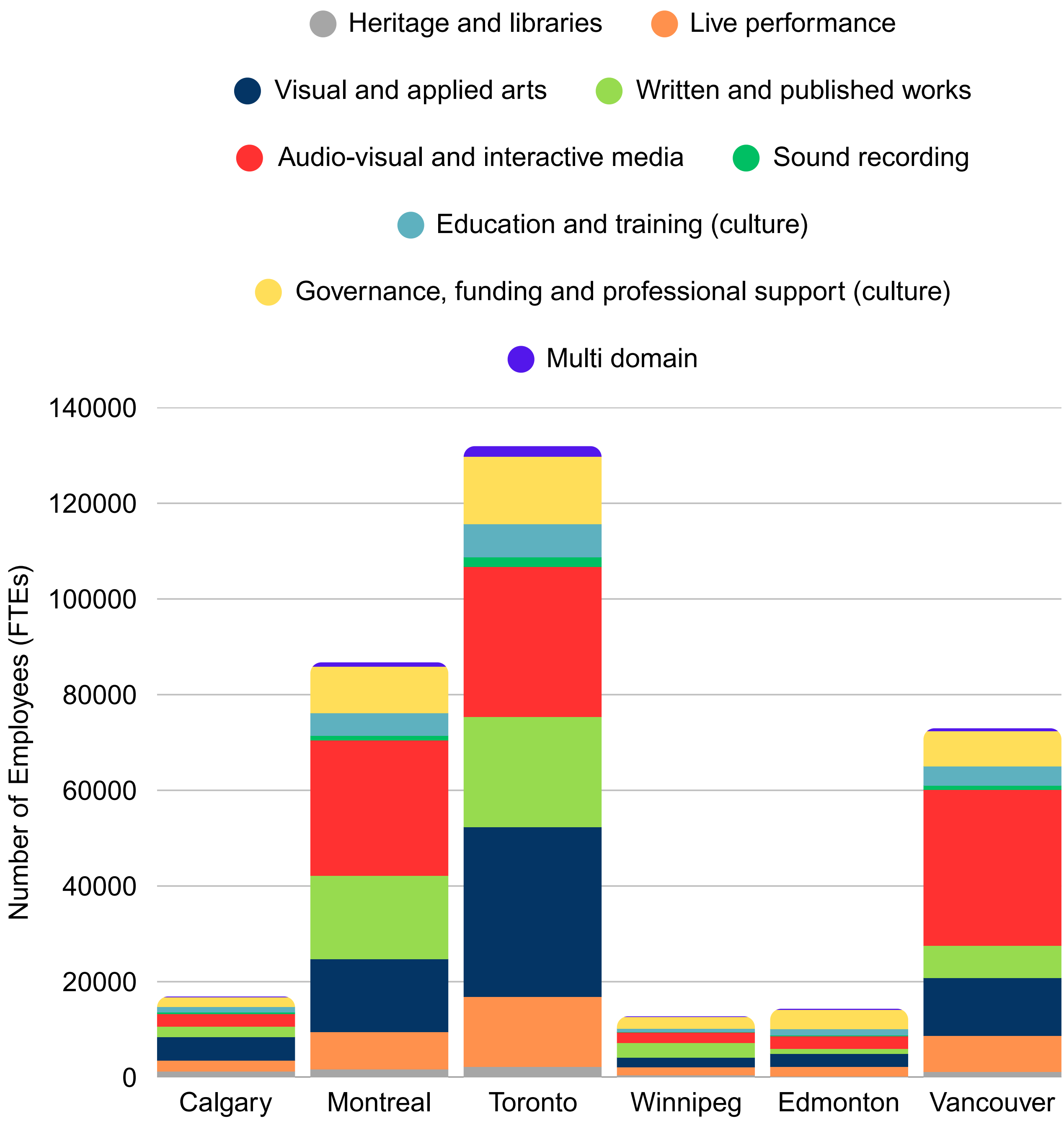
WASTELANDS BY SAVANNA HARVEY | PHOTO: TIM NGUYEN

DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL DOMAINS

Calgary's creative workforce in 2022 was relatively well distributed across sub-sectors, pointing to a balanced and resilient creative economy. While it does not match the total employment levels of Canada's largest cultural centres, Calgary demonstrates sectoral diversity, with strengths rooted in visual expression and performance.

ART BUS ARTWORK BY PRESLEY MILLS| PHOTO: CHELSEA YANG SMITH

CREATIVE EMPLOYMENT BY DOMAIN AND CITY (2022)

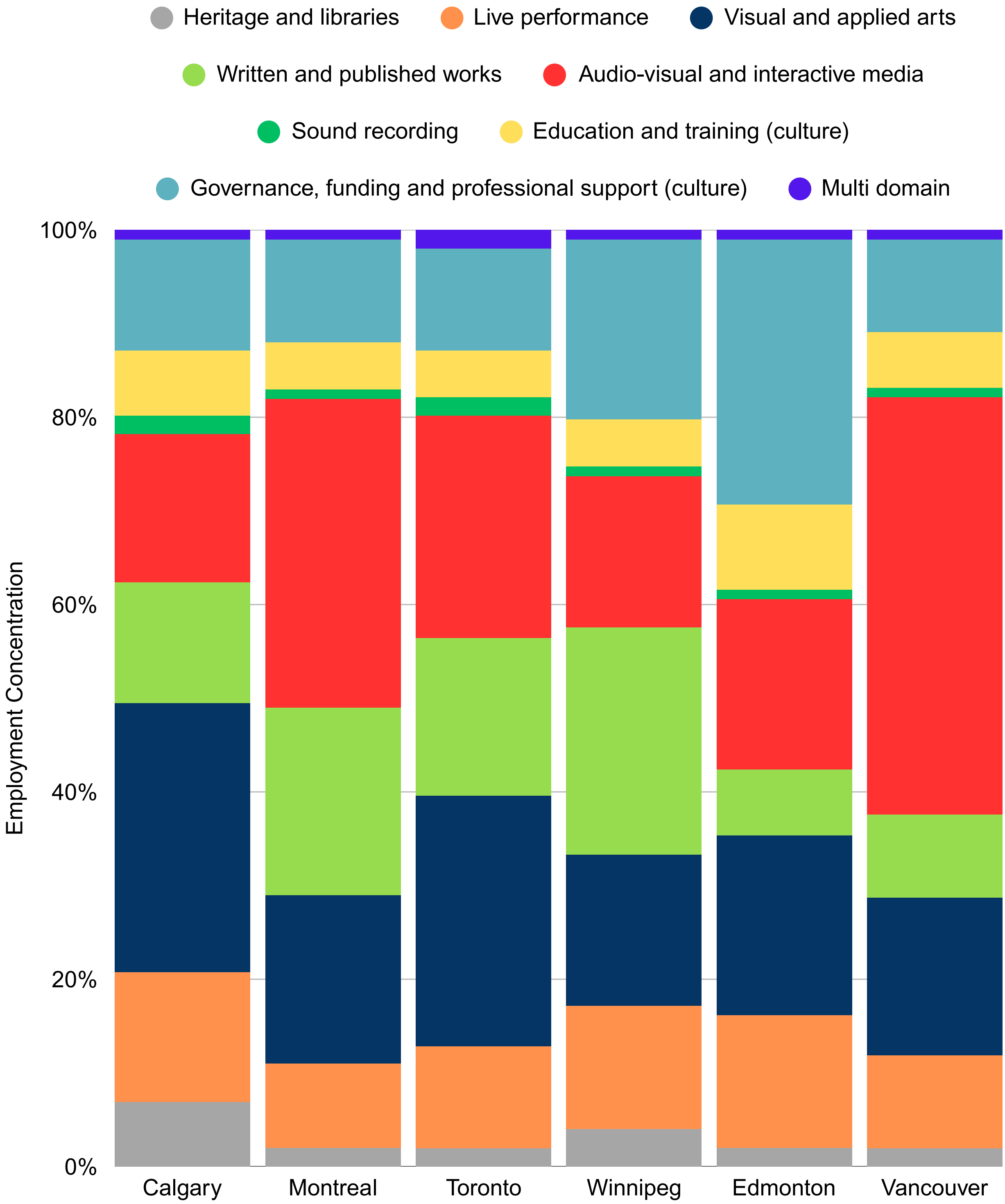


SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

This stacked bar chart illustrates the total size of creative employment across major Canadian cities. As expected, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver dominate in overall numbers, reflecting their established infrastructure, population size, and media capital roles.

- Toronto leads the country, driven heavily by employment in visual and applied arts, written works, and audio-visual media.
- Vancouver has a disproportionately high number of workers in audio-visual and interactive media, aligned with its global standing in film and digital production.
- Calgary, while much smaller in scale, shows a strong base in visual and applied arts as well as live performance, and a healthy distribution across other domains, suggesting an opportunity for sectoral growth.

CREATIVE WORKFORCE BALANCE ACROSS CANADIAN CITIES (2022)



SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL CULTURE INDICATORS (2022), BUSINESS REGISTER (DEC 2022), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

This 100% stacked bar chart shifts the focus from total employment to the internal structure of each city's creative workforce. It reveals how diversified or concentrated each city is in terms of sectoral makeup.

- Calgary exhibits a more balanced creative economy, with no single domain exceeding 30%. Visual and applied arts account for the largest share (29%), followed by audio-visual and live performance (16% and 14%, respectively). This suggests Calgary's ecosystem supports a wide range of creative professionals, not overly reliant on one sector.
- Toronto and Montreal, Canada’s largest cultural centres, show higher concentrations in specific domains, particularly audio-visual and interactive media, written works, and visual arts, which reflect their national roles in publishing, film, and broadcasting.
- Vancouver stands out with a 45% concentration in audio-visual and interactive media, the highest among all cities and more than double Calgary’s share. This aligns with Vancouver's established reputation as a hub for film production, animation, and digital media.
- Edmonton demonstrates a more unique structure with a high share in governance, funding, and professional support (28%), indicating institutional strength rather than creative production dominance.

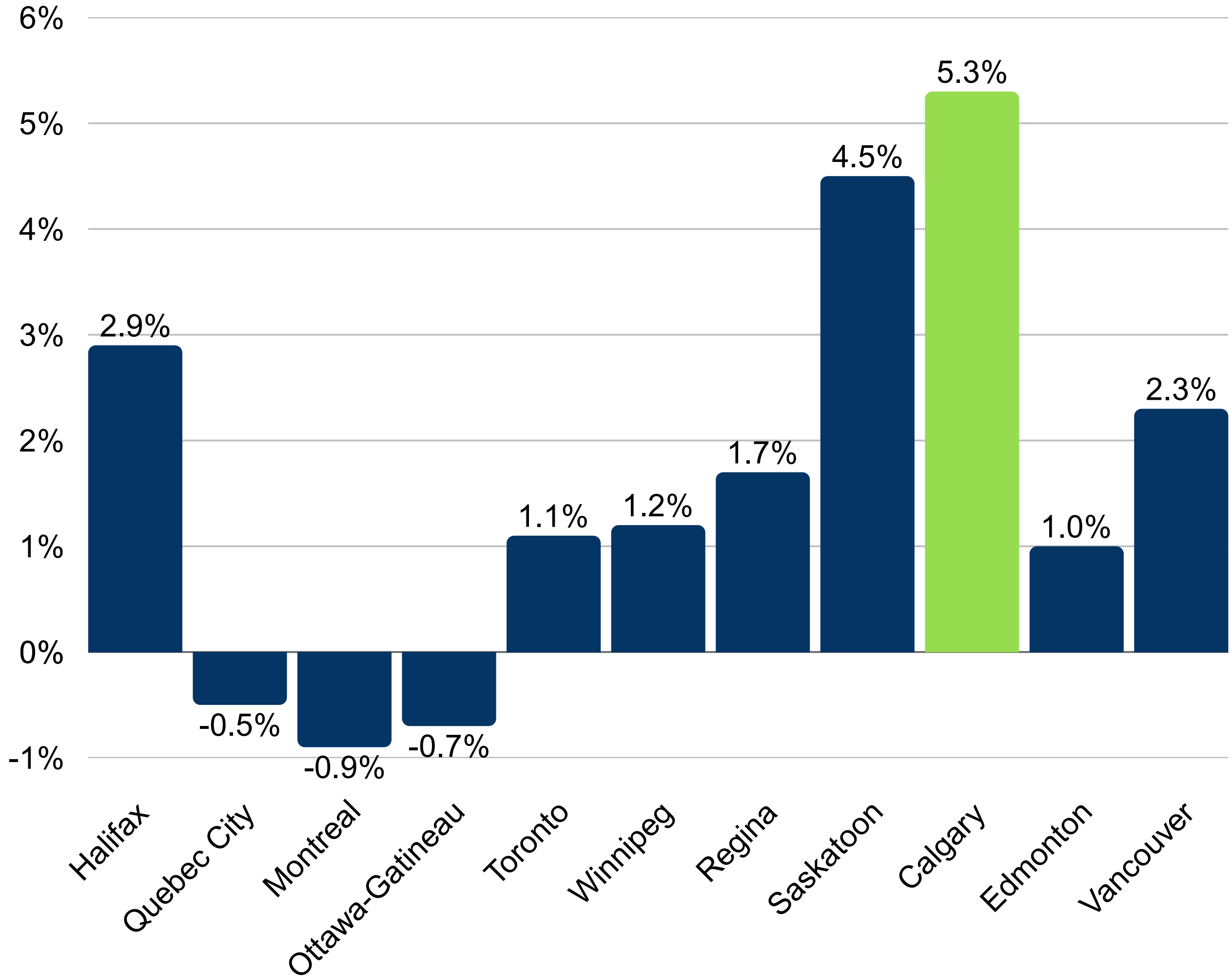
While Calgary lags behind in absolute employment numbers, it presents a more evenly distributed and diverse creative economy. This distribution reflects a resilient foundation — less prone to sectoral shocks and well-suited for targeted public and private investment.

CALGARY'S CREATIVE SECTOR AT A CROSSROADS OF GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Occupational data from the National Occupational Classification (NOC) system offers another way to understand the creative sector in Canadian cities by focusing on the people engaged in creative work. This lens highlights what individuals do, rather than what businesses produce, providing a complementary view of the sector.

These two perspectives don't always align. A creative business, such as a theatre company, may include staff in non-creative roles like accounting or operations. Meanwhile, creative professionals—such as designers, writers, or translators—often work within industries not traditionally considered part of the creative sector, including energy or public services. Looking at the workforce directly helps capture the wider economic contribution of creative talent.

CREATIVE EMPLOYMENT: COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (2014–2024)



SOURCE: DATA: STATISTICS CANADA'S EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS BY CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA (2025), ANALYSIS: ROOT ECONOMY.

NOTE: *PUBLICLY AVAILABLE OCCUPATIONAL DATA DO NOT ALLOW US TO SEPARATE SPORT AND RECREATION EMPLOYMENT FROM THE BROADER ARTS AND CULTURAL FIGURES. AS A RESULT, THE FIGURES CITED HERE INCLUDE ALL OCCUPATIONS CLASSIFIED UNDER ARTS, CULTURE, RECREATION, AND SPORT.*

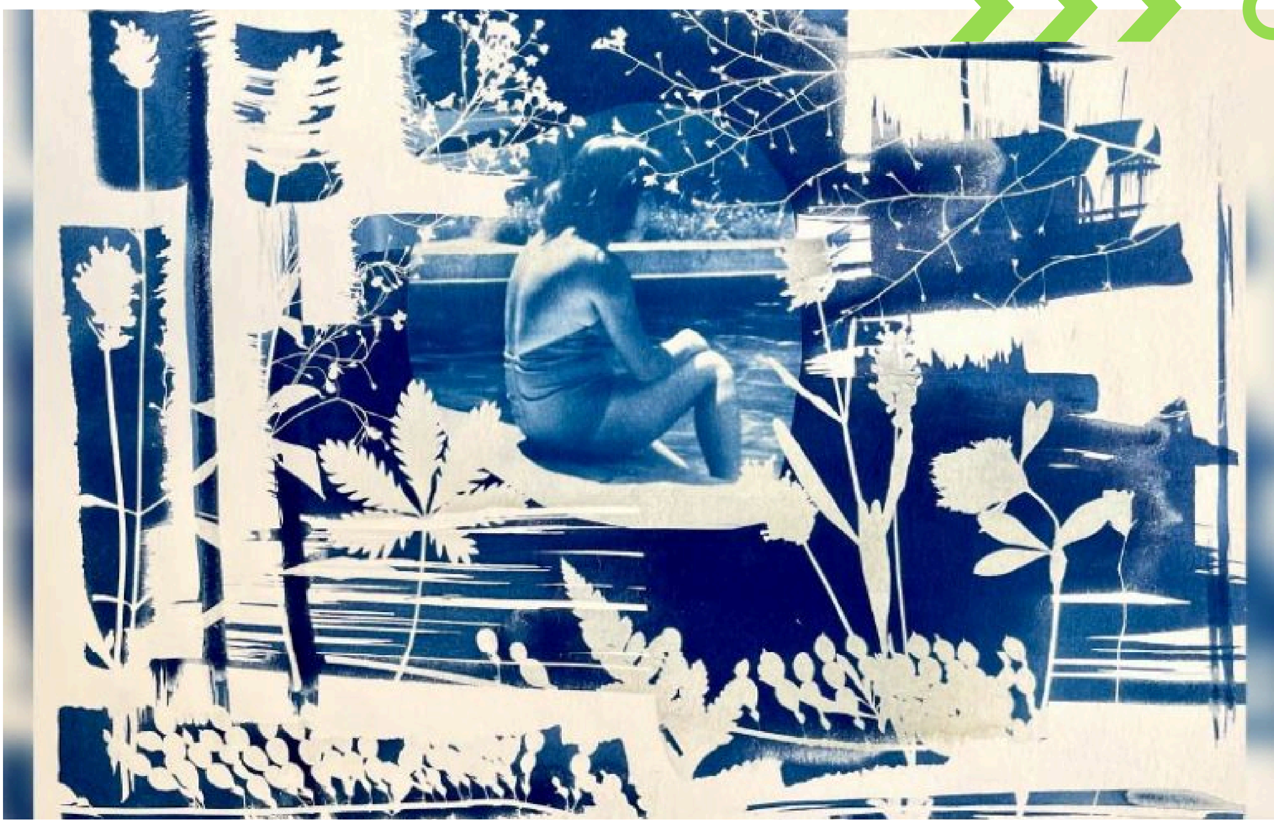
In 2024, Calgary's creative economy reached a milestone, with 32,000 people employed in arts, culture, recreation, and sport occupations, up from 19,100 in 2014. This growth represents a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.3%, the highest among the 11 Canadian metropolitan areas analyzed. It reflects both the resilience and momentum of a sector that is increasingly central to Calgary's economic identity.

While Calgary may still trail major cultural centres like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal in terms of overall workforce share, the trajectory is clear: the city is rapidly emerging as a Prairie hub for creative talent. Over the past decade, more than 12,000 new creative roles have been created, not only in traditional domains but across a diverse range of industries.

Creative professionals are now embedded in every corner of Calgary's economy. In energy and environment, they help translate complex data into compelling user experiences. In film and media, a thriving production ecosystem supports a wide range of artistic and technical talent. Non-profit and cultural organizations rely on curators, administrators, and community outreach leads to deliver inclusive programming, while professional services and tech firms increasingly depend on designers, developers, and content strategists to drive innovation and engagement.

These roles highlight how deeply creativity is woven into Calgary's broader industrial fabric. As the sector evolves, it is also being reshaped by global forces. From artificial intelligence and digital transformation to shifting immigration patterns and new workforce expectations, Calgary's creative economy sits at the intersection of technological disruption and cultural change.

Immigration is transforming Calgary's creative landscape, particularly in broadcasting and media. The growth of ethnic media outlets and multilingual content reflects the city's increasing cultural diversity. This shift is also influencing live performance (e.g., culturally specific festivals and multilingual theatre), publishing (diaspora-driven literature and storytelling), and visual and applied arts (art forms inspired by global traditions).



MARIPOSITA | PHOTO: MILENA VASQUEZ

Meanwhile, digital disruption is reshaping Calgary's creative economy. The rise of on-demand content platforms, virtual production studios, and AI-powered design tools is fundamentally changing how creative work is produced, distributed, and monetized. Local creators, whether in film, gaming, music, or marketing, are increasingly required to tell stories that travel across platforms, adopt immersive formats like AR and VR, and respond to new audience expectations shaped by global digital culture. Calgary's growing screen industries, tech ecosystem, and entrepreneurial culture create fertile ground for this transformation but also demand new capabilities and cross-sector collaboration.

To succeed in this environment, Calgary's creative professionals must blend artistic skill with digital fluency and business acumen. Storytelling and design remain core, but creators must also navigate evolving digital ecosystems, adopt AI and automation tools, and understand how to bring products to market, whether through licensing, crowdfunding, branded partnerships, or platform monetization. This is especially vital in a city like Calgary, where many creatives operate independently or within emerging enterprises rather than large institutions.

Calgary stands at a pivotal moment, with the infrastructure, talent, and momentum to become a national leader in next-generation creative industries. With the right investment in skills development, digital infrastructure, and cross-sector partnerships, the city can unlock the full economic and cultural potential of its creative workforce, fueling innovation, attracting talent, and reinforcing its reputation as a place where culture, commerce, and creativity intersect.


CALGARY CENTRAL LIBRARY | PHOTO: MICHAEL GRIMM

APPENDIX A
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DIRECT IMPACT
The immediate economic benefits generated by Calgary's creative industries, including employment, wages, and spending within the local economy (Calgary, Alberta, and Canada).

INDIRECT IMPACT
The economic activity generated by businesses supplying goods and services to Calgary's creative industries. For example, jobs and revenues at suppliers providing materials or services to creative enterprises.

INDUCED IMPACT
The additional economic activity resulting from the spending by employees working directly or indirectly in Calgary's creative industries. This includes everyday expenditures such as groceries, transportation, housing, and personal services.

TOTAL IMPACT
The comprehensive sum of direct, indirect, and induced economic contributions. This holistic measurement captures the full scale of economic influence generated by Calgary's creative sector.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)
The total market value of all goods and services produced by the creative industries within Calgary during a specified period (valued at market prices).

WAGES AND SALARIES
The total remuneration paid to employees working directly in the creative industries and to those in associated indirect and induced roles.

EMPLOYMENT (FTES)
The number of jobs measured in full-time equivalents, capturing all employment directly or indirectly supported by Calgary's creative industries. Partial-year employment is represented as a proportionate share of a full-year job.

TAXES
Revenues generated for municipal, provincial, and federal governments through direct, indirect, and induced economic activities associated with Calgary's creative industries —such as property taxes, payroll contributions, and licensing fees.

APPENDIX B
DATA SOURCES

This study utilized a robust combination of secondary data sources and primary research methods to comprehensively assess the economic, social, and cultural impact of Calgary's creative industries.

Secondary data sources were foundational to the analysis. Labour market and economic data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey and Culture Satellite Account provided detailed insights into employment trends, income levels, and sector-specific contributions. To measure long-term workforce dynamics, Employment Characteristics by Census Metropolitan Area (2025) was used to calculate the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of creative occupations across major Canadian cities.

To assess community engagement and the social dimension of the sector, the 2024 Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (SGVP) was used to estimate volunteer hours and participation in cultural activities. Business registries and tax data from Statistics Canada and the City of Calgary offered additional granularity on the number of creative businesses, revenues, and municipal tax contributions.

Industry-specific data included subsector employment and revenue distributions, and tourism and visitor expenditure data from Tourism Calgary and Alberta Culture & Tourism. These inputs allowed for a more nuanced understanding of demand-side dynamics and the sector's broader economic reach.

In addition, Calgary Arts Development contributed vital data on employment across creative domains. Previously commissioned studies on Calgary's creative economy were reviewed to validate current findings and provide historical context for observed trends.

Drawing from this extensive data foundation, customized economic impact models were applied to estimate employment, revenue generation, volunteer contributions, and the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts of Calgary's creative sector.

All data used in the study was retrieved during March - May 2025. The resulting analysis offers evidence-based insights to guide strategic planning, investment, and policy development in support of a thriving cultural economy.

APPENDIX C
METHODOLOGY

EMPLOYMENT

To ensure accuracy, employment multipliers were adjusted using the average wage growth rate between 2021 (the year of the multiplier tables) and 2022 (the reporting year). According to the analysis by Root Economy using data from the Labour Force Survey and the Consumer Price Index for 2021 and 2022, real wages in Canada declined, while Alberta saw a slight increase. This means that across Canada, wages didn't keep up with inflation, so people could buy less with their income. In Alberta, however, wages just barely outpaced inflation, helping people maintain or slightly improve their purchasing power.

LIMITATIONS OF INPUT-OUTPUT (I/O) MODELS IN ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Input-Output (I/O) models are valuable tools for understanding economic interactions among industries. However, they come with certain limitations:

1. **Fixed Relationships:** I/O models assume that the relationships between industry inputs and outputs are linear and unchanging. This means they don't account for economies of scale or technological advancements that can alter production processes.
2. **Static Prices:** These models operate under the assumption that prices remain constant, ignoring real-world fluctuations due to supply and demand changes or inflation.
3. **Industry Averages:** I/O models use average data for technology usage and input costs across industries, which might not capture unique characteristics or innovations within specific sectors.
4. **Lack of Temporal Dynamics:** Being static, I/O models don't consider the time required for economic changes to occur, providing a snapshot based on existing data without predicting future dynamics.
5. **No Capacity Constraints:** The models assume that industries can adjust output levels without limitations, overlooking real-world scenarios like capacity constraints or supply chain disruptions, which can lead to overestimated economic impacts.
6. **Neglect of Supply-Side Constraints:** I/O models assume that industries can indefinitely increase output to meet demand without encountering resource limitations, overlooking potential shortages in labor, materials, or other inputs.
7. **No Consideration of Displacement Effects:** These models don't account for the possibility that new projects or industries might displace existing ones, assuming additive economic activity, which can result in overestimating the net positive impact of new initiatives.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ANALYZING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

When applying I/O models to assess the economic impact of creative industries, it's crucial to recognize these limitations. The unique and dynamic nature of creative sectors may not align perfectly with the static assumptions of I/O models. Therefore, while I/O analysis can provide valuable insights, its results should be interpreted with caution and supplemented with other analytical approaches to capture the full spectrum of economic interactions and impacts.

- No Capacity Constraints: The models assume that industries can adjust output levels without limitations, overlooking real-world scenarios like capacity constraints or supply chain disruptions, which can lead to overestimated economic impacts.

- Neglect of Supply-Side Constraints: I/O models assume that industries can indefinitely increase output to meet demand without encountering resource limitations, overlooking potential shortages in labor, materials, or other inputs.

- No Consideration of Displacement Effects: These models don't account for the possibility that new projects or industries might displace existing ones, assuming additive economic activity, which can result in overestimating the net positive impact of new initiatives.