



*Pictured: Pax Ressler, Eli Lynn, Donovan Lockett, Lexi Thammavong and Dallas Jimmar in Mae West's "The Drag", Christ Church January 2025. Photo Cred: John Bradley*

# A LOOK AT THEATER-GOING HABITS IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA

**A REVIEW OF REGIONAL ARTS &  
CULTURE AUDIENCE HABITS**

**PUBLISHED AUGUST 2025**

greater  
philadelphia cultural  
**ALLIANCE**





# INTRODUCTION

The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance is pleased to share the results of “A Look at Theater-Going Habits in Greater Philadelphia,” a report generated at the behest of the Greater Philadelphia region’s theater community and as part of our commitment to research that illuminates the state of the region’s cultural sector. Our 2023 PA CultureCheck report, conducted in partnership with PA Humanities, revealed that while 32 percent of participating organizations reported their attendance had returned to 2019 pre-pandemic levels, these effects were unevenly distributed among organizational types. Performing arts organizations were more significantly affected, with only 15% reporting that they had fully regained attendance, compared to 41% for museums, historical organizations, and libraries. In addition, we’ve consistently heard from our members, particularly performing arts organizations and theaters, that attracting and retaining audiences remains a persistent challenge in the recovery process. Together, these factors prompted the Cultural Alliance to delve deeper into what motivates local audience members to engage in arts and culture experiences.



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*The cast of Arden Theatre Company's 2025 production of RENT. Photos by Ashley Smith, Wide Eyed Studios.*

# ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

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The primary goals of the “A Look at Theater-Going Habits in Greater Philadelphia” research were to identify:



Who is attending shows, how many, why, and their motivations for attending via the theater audience survey.



The general public’s current performing arts-going habits via a public opinion survey.



How performing arts and theaters continue to recover compared to other organizations in the sector.

## ABOUT THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA CULTURAL ALLIANCE

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The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance is dedicated to leading, strengthening, and amplifying the voices of Greater Philadelphia’s cultural community. Founded in 1972, we are the leading and trusted voice of the arts and culture sector in Greater Philadelphia, and harness the power of our creative coalition to deliver research, advocacy, and access to resources that drive meaningful impact for the sector and the region as a whole. The Cultural Alliance is dedicated to being a thought leader, trusted resource, and powerful advocate for the Greater Philadelphia creative sector. We are committed to driving positive change and supporting the collective vision of our community. The Cultural Alliance serves the entire cultural sector, encompassing performing arts, visual arts, history, science, horticulture, arts education, community art centers, and other cultural organizations. We operate in five counties surrounding Philadelphia with a membership of over 400 nonprofit and for-profit members.

## ABOUT THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA CULTURAL ALLIANCE’S RESEARCH

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The Cultural Alliance is dedicated to continuing to release research and reports that serve not only our 400+ members throughout the region but also civic and elected officials, funders, and beyond. Our nationally respected signature reports include Portfolio; Arts, Culture & Economic Prosperity; and PA CultureCheck. Our research remains one of the primary services we offer to our members, the sector, and the region. The Cultural Alliance also partners with PA Humanities and other allied organizations to produce regular reports on the industry, including its health and impact on our communities.





Teens at Arden Theatre Company's Summer Camp in 2024. Photos by Ashley Smith, Wide Eyed Studios.

# SCOPE AND METHODS

## PARTICIPATING THEATERS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In developing the methodology for “A Look at Theater-Going Habits in Greater Philadelphia,” the Cultural Alliance sought to ensure input from a sample of theaters that reflect the region’s larger theater community. Ten theaters across the Southeastern Pennsylvania region participated as audience surveying sites (see below). Each participating theater had one or more advisory members who contributed to the project, advising on the primary goals of the research project, serving as a site for audience surveys, and providing input on survey questions in both the audience member survey and the public opinion survey. Additionally, they shared reflections on the research findings and offered guidance on the recommendations.

### Theater Participants:

- Arden Theatre Company
- Bristol Riverside Theatre
- EgoPo Classic Theater
- InterAct Theatre Company
- Lantern Theater Company

- People's Light
- Philadelphia Theatre Company
- The Players Club of Swarthmore
- Quintessence Theatre
- Wilma Theater





**117** ORGANIZATIONS FROM  
SOUTHEASTERN PA COMPLETED  
A SURVEY IN 2024

August 2024 - October 2024

## PA CULTURECHECK ANALYSIS

The Cultural Alliance collaborates with PA Humanities and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council on its PA CultureCheck survey each year.

PA CultureCheck is a research and advocacy initiative that documents and amplifies the experiences, strengths, and concerns of Pennsylvania's cultural sector. With nearly **1,000 survey responses over the past three years**, the 2025 release continues to track the statewide post-pandemic recovery and community impact, while also addressing federal disruptions that threaten the health of our sector. The data in this year's report was gathered and compiled before the new federal administration began cutting vital funding for the arts and humanities across Pennsylvania. In response, our research was expanded to accommodate supplemental questions focused on these emerging disruptions, thereby creating a more comprehensive and urgent picture of the challenges ahead.

The Cultural Alliance has **incorporated the data from the 2025 PA CultureCheck into this report to analyze how the performing arts continue to be negatively affected by post-pandemic arts-going habits in the Greater Philadelphia area**. It was requested that each advisory committee member ensure their organization's data was included in PA CultureCheck.

**385** VALID SURVEY  
RESPONSES FROM  
THEATER GUESTS

December 2024 - May 2025

## THEATER AUDIENCE SURVEY

From **December 2024 to May 2025**, the Cultural Alliance deployed trained surveyors to collect responses to a **23-question survey before performances at 10 participating theaters** across the five-county region in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The surveyors collected responses via iPads and QR Codes handed out to audience members and placed on audience member seats. We collected a **total of 409 responses** from audience members, with **385 responses deemed valid for analysis** (having completed up to at least question #6). Those who did not answer questions beyond question #6 were excluded from the analysis. Additionally, throughout this report, both the audience survey and public opinion poll excluded "prefer not to state" responses (primarily on demographic questions) and those who didn't answer a specific question from the analysis.

**491** VALID SURVEY  
RESPONSES FROM  
ONLINE POLL

April 2025 - May 2025

## PUBLIC OPINION POLL

In addition, the Cultural Alliance collected responses to a **17-question survey about the general public's current arts consumption habits in April and May 2025**. The goal of the survey was to survey the general public in the region. Only the **491 responses from the Philadelphia Metro Area (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware) were included in the analysis**. They had a high concentration of responses (318 responses) from the five-county Southeastern Pennsylvania region.

MORENO, National Anthem, Gabriel  
Elmore, Charvez Grant, Frank  
Jimenez, Abdul Sesay, Season 37.  
Photo Cred: Christopher Colucci





## COMPENSATION

The Cultural Alliance believes in compensating participants, whenever possible, for their labor and involvement. This practice is based on our organizational values as well as current research “best practice” standards. The following participants in this research study received compensation:

- Advisory committee members were paid \$500 (limit one per organization – several participating theaters voluntarily had more than one participant)
- Fifty participants from the audience survey were randomly selected to receive gift cards.
- Public Opinion survey participants were recruited through the SurveyMonkey Audience tool and donated their time. SurveyMonkey donates 50 cents per survey to a charity of their choice.
- Surveyors at theaters were paid \$60 per performance for working approximately an hour to survey before theater performances and had transportation paid for with pre-paid SEPTA Key Cards.

Pictured: Alec Lacher, Christopher Marlow Roche, Adam Howard and George McGriff in Charles Ludlam's "Turds in Hell", at Theatre Exile April 2025. Photo Cred: Devon Roberts

## LIMITATIONS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USAGE

Both surveys and all meetings around this research were conducted in English only.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE AUDIENCE INTERCEPT SURVEY

The Cultural Alliance research team has employed an audience intercept method to collect surveys from audiences on multiple occasions in the past, and all surveyors on this project were trained in best practices for surveying. However, the Cultural Alliance acknowledges that we are all human, and that there may be some bias in who surveyors choose to approach for a survey. The sample size for the audience survey was calculated using theater audience numbers from *Arts, Culture, and Economic Prosperity: Greater Philadelphia (Prosperity)*, which was conducted in 2022; however, we acknowledge that Prosperity does not encompass all attendees and was based on self-reported attendance numbers from organizations.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

The Public Opinion poll, conducted using the online SurveyMonkey Audience tool, had to be undertaken across the Philadelphia/Camden/Wilmington, PA/NJ/DE/MD Metro Area, not just the five-county Southeastern Pennsylvania region that the Cultural Alliance usually focuses on in its research. SurveyMonkey was responsible for collecting responses; a complete description of their process can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/survey-methodology/>.

### AI USAGE

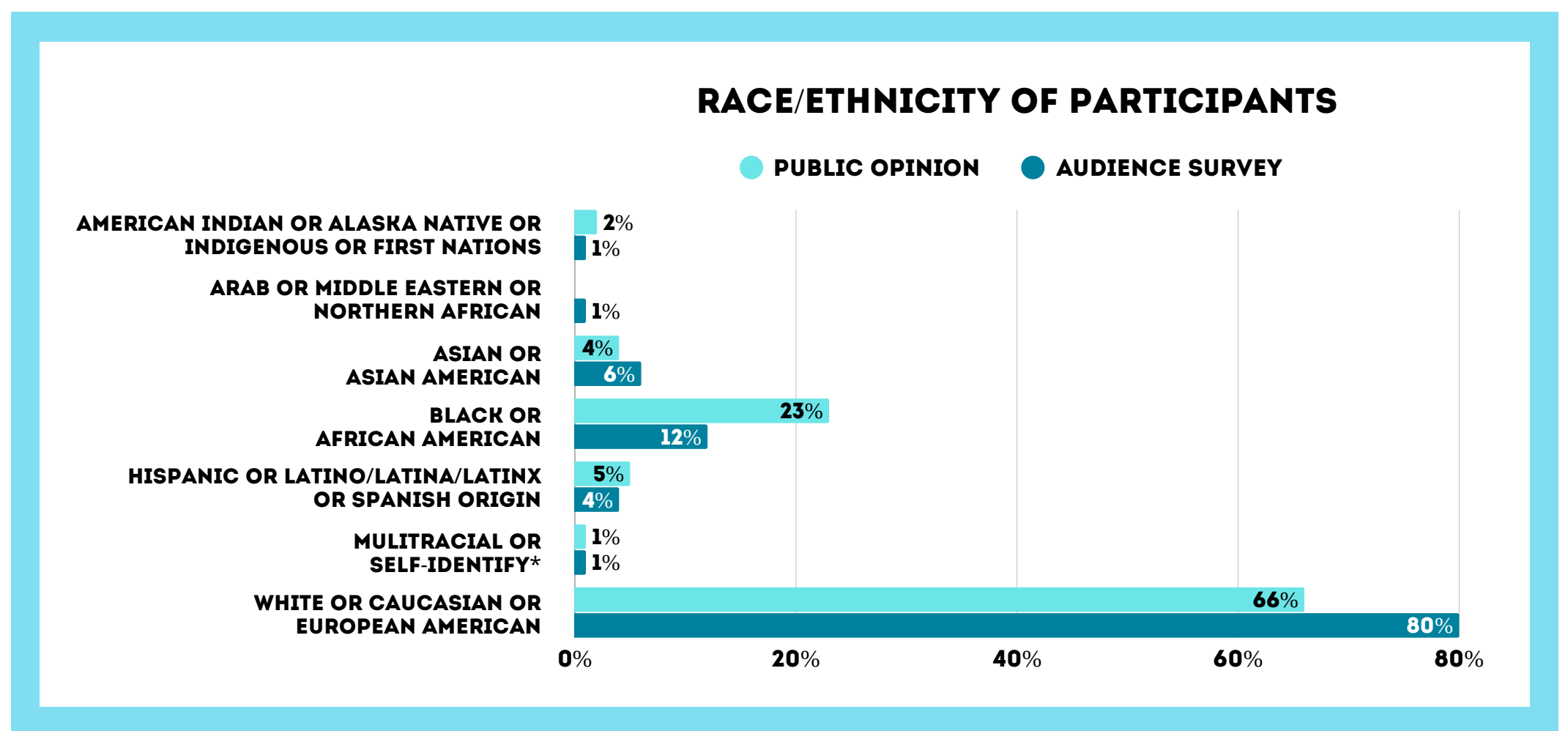
Gemini, a generative artificial intelligence chatbot by Google, was occasionally used to draft pandas code, an open-source data analysis and manipulation tool built on top of the Python programming language, to generate preliminary analysis and charts. Final analysis and charts were a) re-analyzed in Excel and b) confirmed to be correct usage by the analysis team. All personal/identifying data (i.e., email addresses) were stripped from any data uploaded to Gemini.



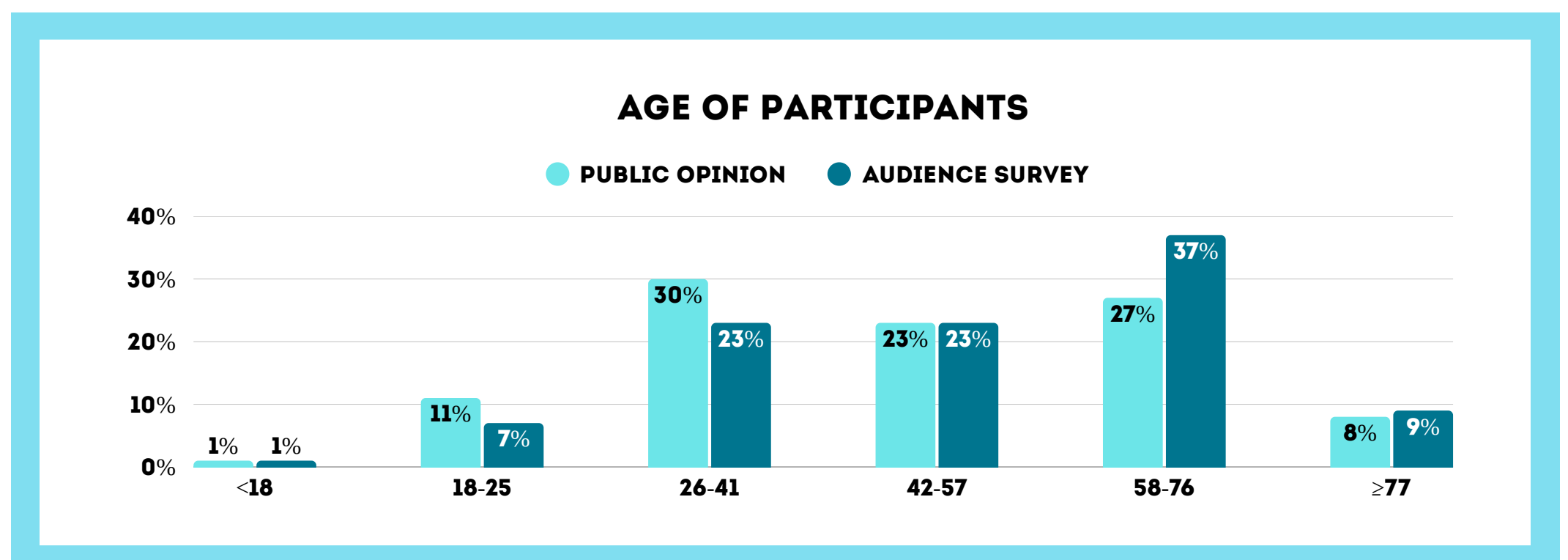
# RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

## AUDIENCE AND PUBLIC OPINION PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Below are the demographics of the participants in this research study, both the audience survey and the public opinion poll. Compared to the demographics of the population of the Greater Philadelphia region, the theater audience, as measured in our survey, is less diverse in terms of race/ ethnicity, somewhat older, has higher levels of household income, and possesses higher education levels. Demographics from the public opinion poll roughly match those of the Greater Philadelphia region.



The race and ethnicity question was asked in slightly different ways in each survey due to limitations in the SurveyMonkey Audience tool. In the Public Opinion poll, only one answer was allowed, and the Theater Audience Survey allowed for multiple selections. Therefore, percentages add up to more than 100% for the audience survey because respondents could select more than one race or ethnicity.

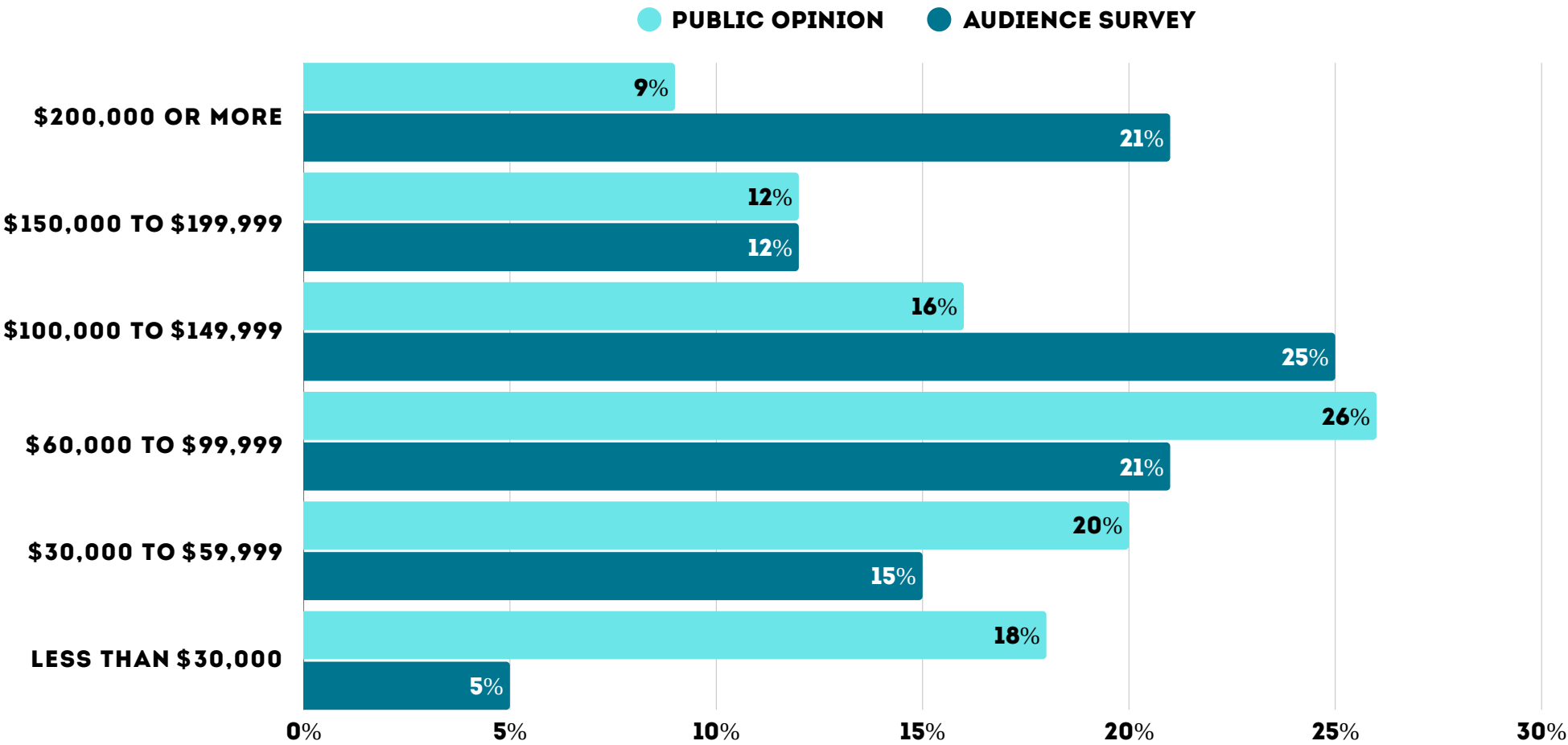


Age breakdowns were set to match those use in Americans for the Arts' Arts and Economic Prosperity study to allow for comparison, and generally align with generational age breakdowns, aka "Millennials" and "Gen Z."

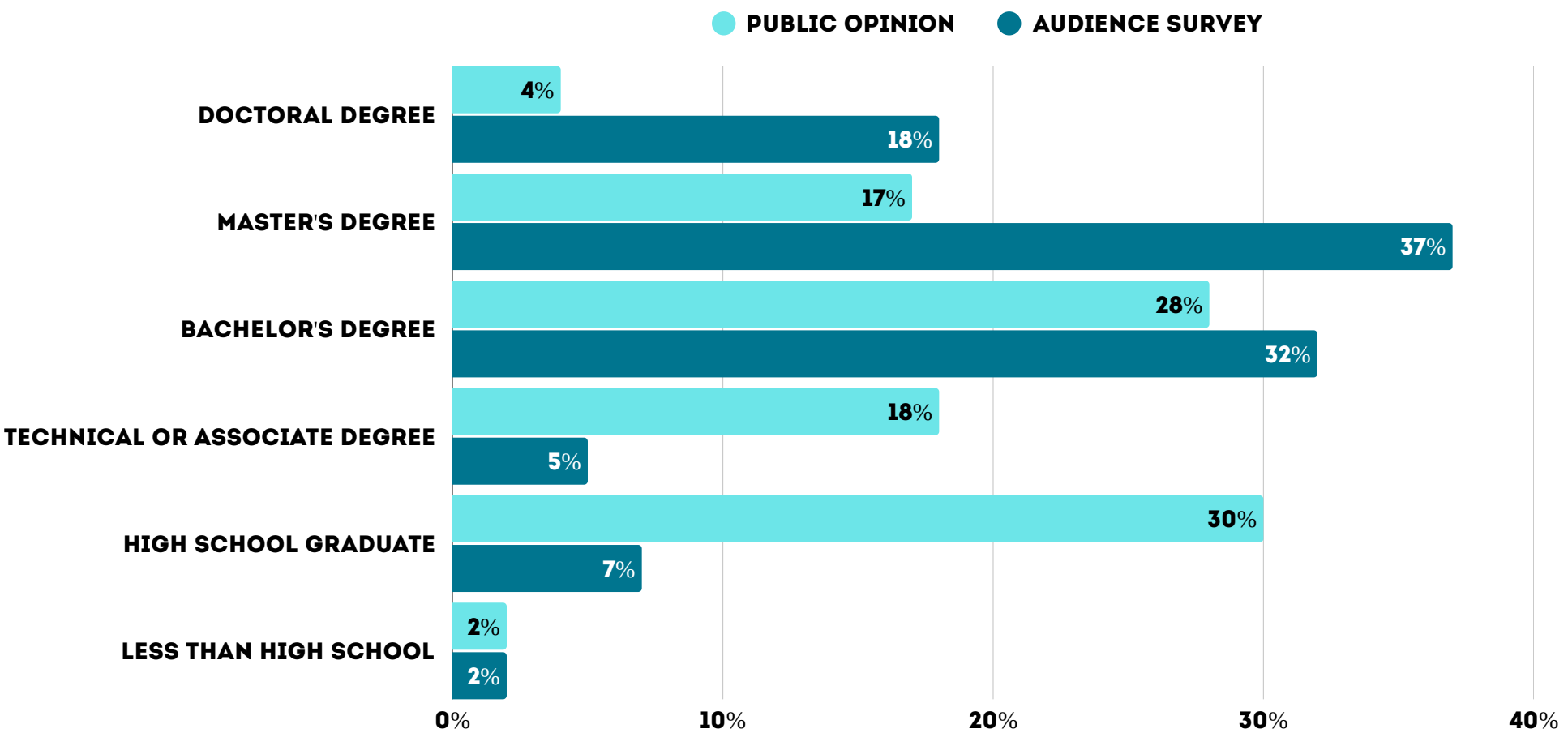


# INCOME AND EDUCATION LEVELS

## ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVEL OF PARTICIPANTS



## EDUCATION LEVEL OF PARTICIPANTS





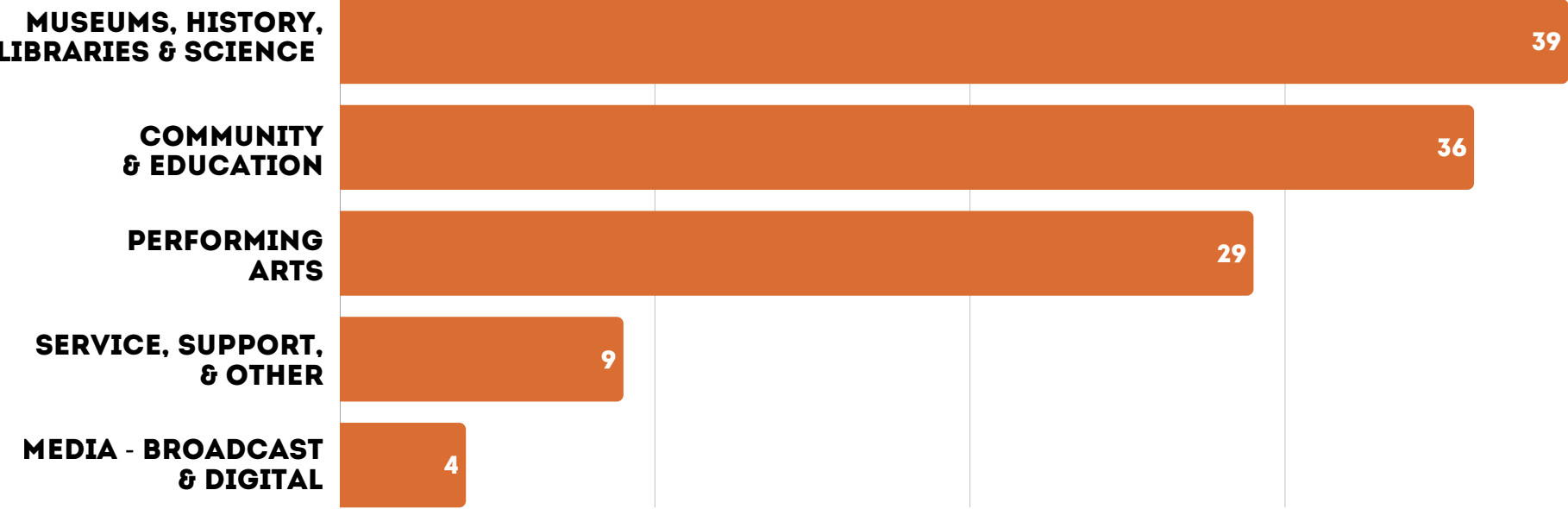


Members of the cast of Disney's Newsies. (May, 2024 - Credit Jeff Martin)

# 2025 PA CULTURECHECK ORGANIZATIONS

117 arts, culture, and humanities organizations across the Southeastern Pennsylvania region participated in PA CultureCheck this year, with 401 participating across the state. 29 of the organizations from the Southeast region were performing arts organizations.

## BY ORGANIZATION TYPE



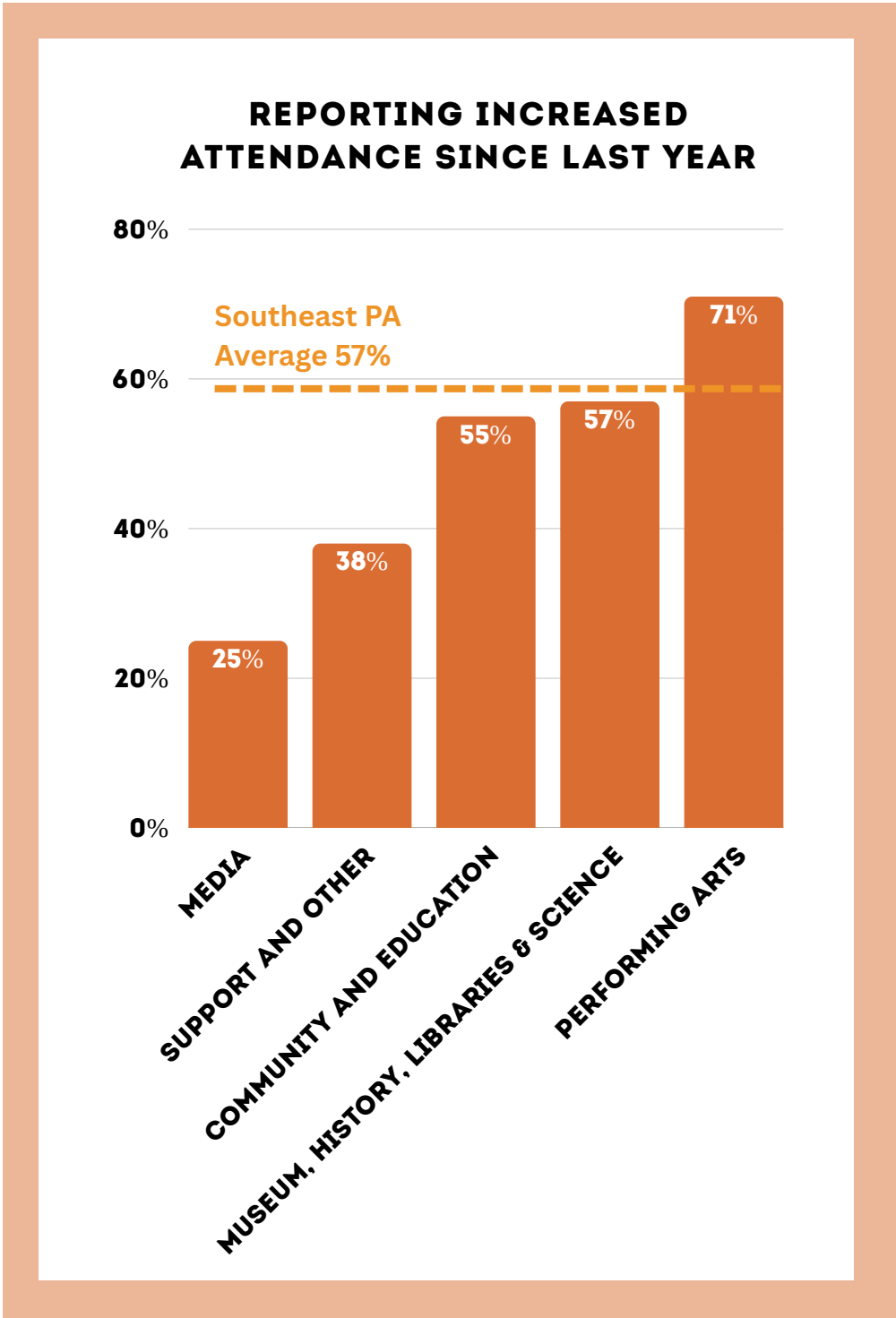
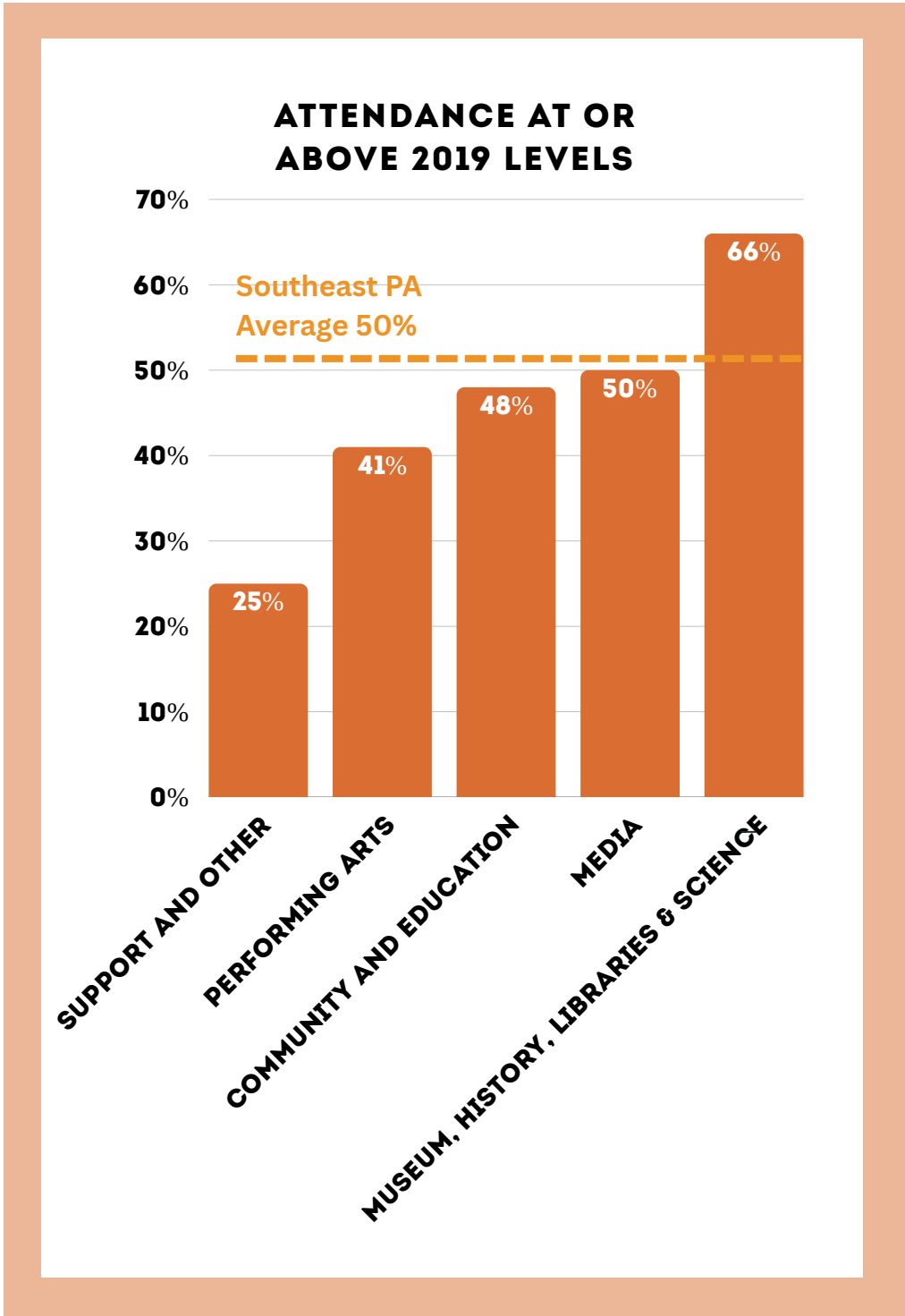


# PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATION OUTLOOK

As a first step in “A Look at Theater Going Habits,” the Cultural Alliance sought to assess the general health of theaters and other performing arts organizations through the annual PA CultureCheck survey, done in partnership with PA Humanities and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council.

Our 2025 PA CultureCheck report indicates attendance is rising, but half of arts and culture organizations have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, the performing arts have consistently lagged behind many other arts and culture organizations. Compared to the average of 50% of organizations that had recovered to pre-pandemic attendance levels, only 41% of performing arts organizations had returned to pre-pandemic attendance levels.

However, performing arts organizations have seen a significant increase in attendance recently, with 71% of them reporting a rise in attendance over the past year.







Bristol Riverside Theatre's 2024/25 season production of *Alibi: An Agatha Christie Story*, photo featuring Danny Vaccaro & Carl Wallnau. Bristol Riverside Theatre (120 Radcliffe Street, Bristol, PA 19007) Photo credit: Mark Carvin

## CURRENT THEATERGOER HABITS

Next, the Cultural Alliance's analysis examined the survey responses of individuals who currently attend theater productions, specifically those who either completed our audience intercept survey or reported attending a theater in the past year in the public opinion survey.

### ABOUT THOSE SURVEYED AT THEATERS

More than two-thirds (71%) of those surveyed at theaters had seen a previous production by the company they were attending on the day they completed the survey. In addition, 78% of respondents said that the ticket was a good or excellent value for their entertainment dollar.

Survey respondents were excited about attending, citing: "reputation of the theater," "good plays in the past," and "enjoy[ing] other plays at the theater." First-timers looked for "something different and new" and "getting out of the house and off my screen (and having my teenage son with me off his screen!)". These findings confirm that there is a "flock" of consistent supporters and highlight an opportunity to engage curious art lovers by leveraging the cultural desire for connection.

### SUBSCRIBER HABITS

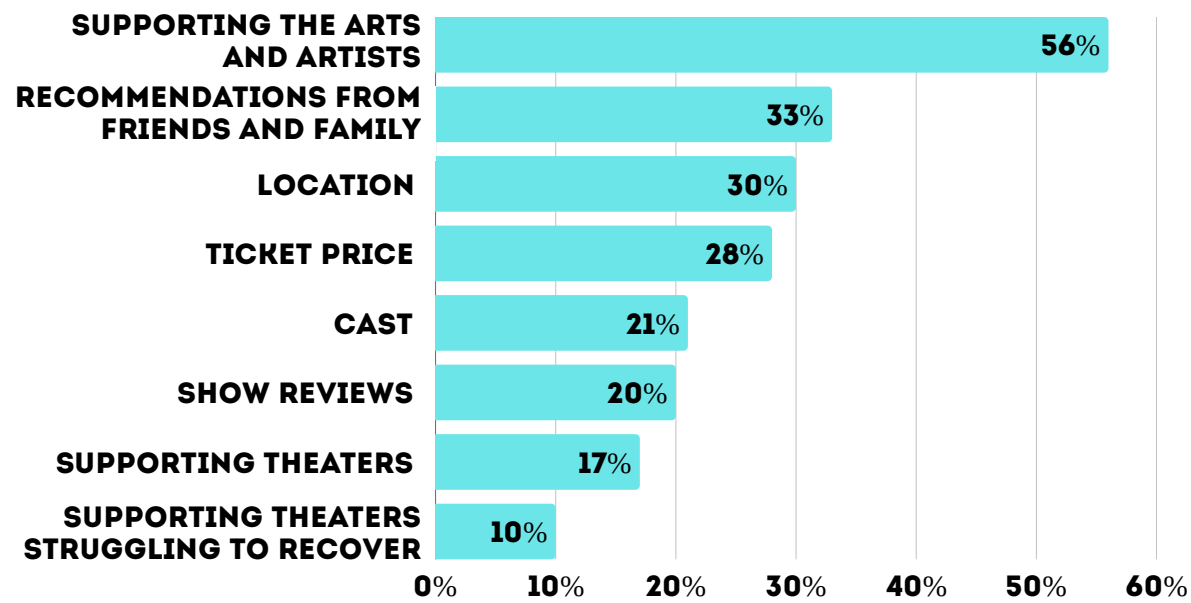
More than a third (35%) of the theatergoers surveyed subscribed to at least one theater company, and those who were subscribers cared deeply about supporting the arts and artists – 72% said that support for artists and art was a motivation for their subscriptions. Other key motivations for subscriptions were location, subscription cost, supporting struggling theaters, and show reviews.

Subscribers' other self-reported motivations include "createness and quality productions," likelihood of going "if the event is scheduled and on my calendar," and "I love live theater!"



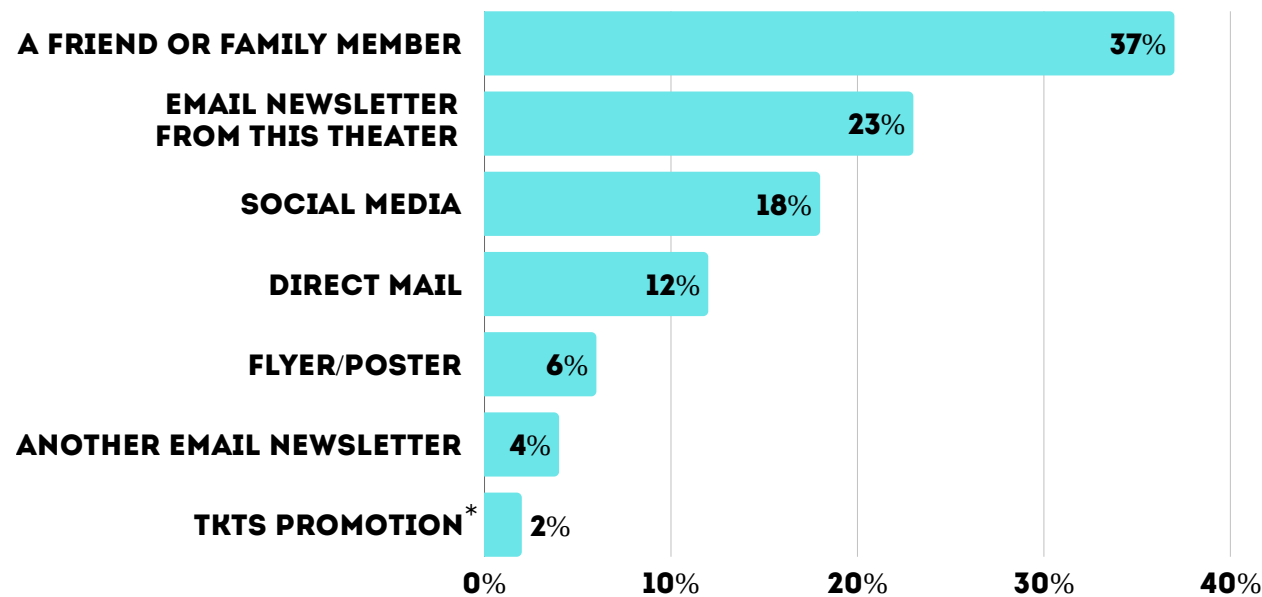
# ALL THEATERGOER HABITS

## WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO ATTEND A THEATER PERFORMANCE TODAY?



When we examine the responses of all theatergoer respondents who were asked about factors influencing their decision to attend a theater show that day, more than half stated that they were supporting the arts and artists, while a third cited recommendations from friends and family, location, or ticket price as the primary factors.

## HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT TODAY'S PERFORMANCE?



Audiences also primarily heard about the performance they attended from friends and family, as well as email newsletters from the theater itself.

Audience survey respondents see "clips from the show on TikTok," conduct their "own online search of local theaters," look for "an email sent out to attendees of prior productions," and more.

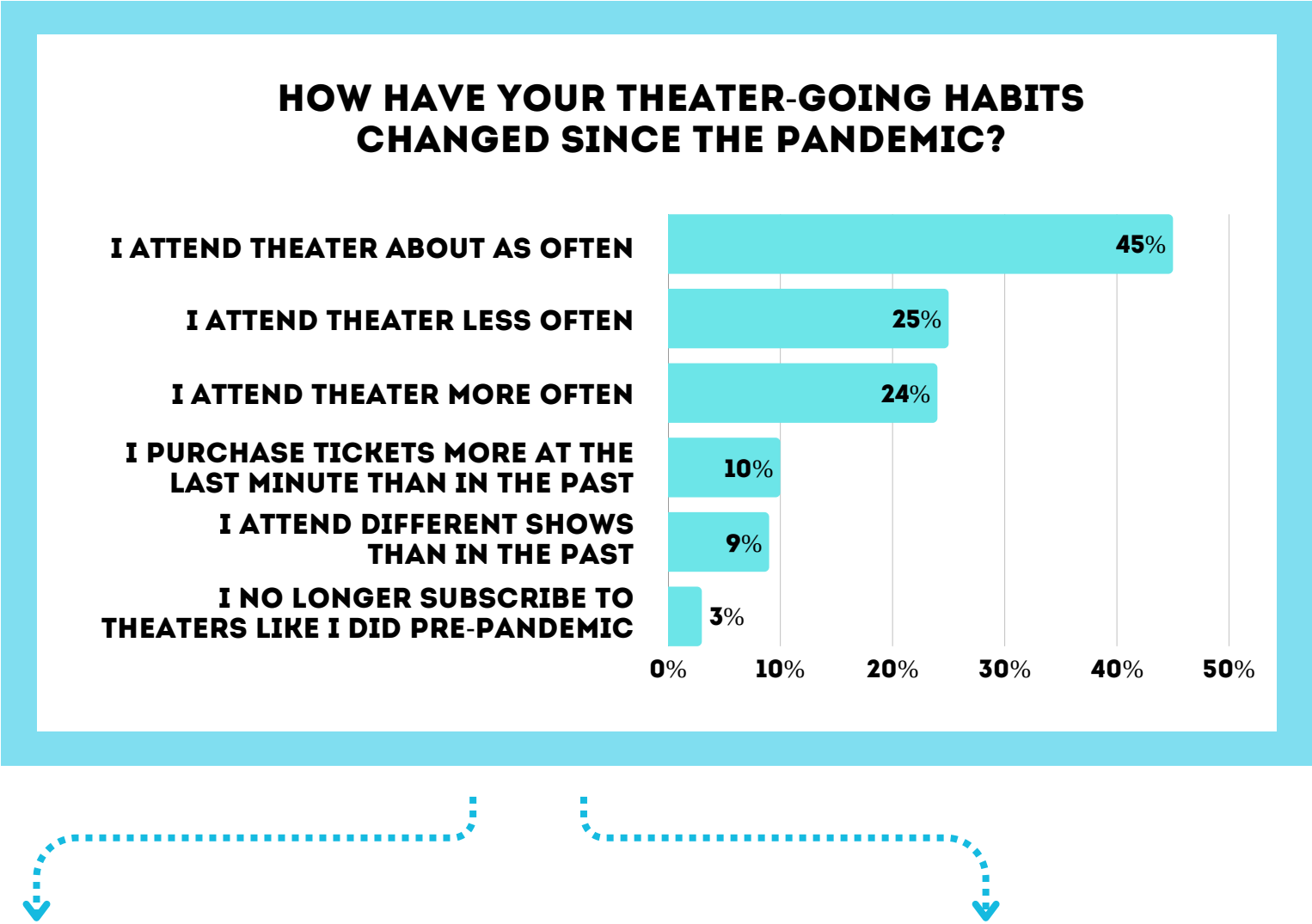
\*TKTS was launched in November 2024 and was therefore a relatively new program when this survey was conducted from December 2024 to May 2025.

Bristol Riverside Theatre's 2024/25 season production of *Venus in Fur*, photo featuring Lea DiMarchi & Atticus Shaindlin. Bristol Riverside Theatre (120 Radcliffe Street, Bristol, PA 19007) Photo credit: BRT Staff



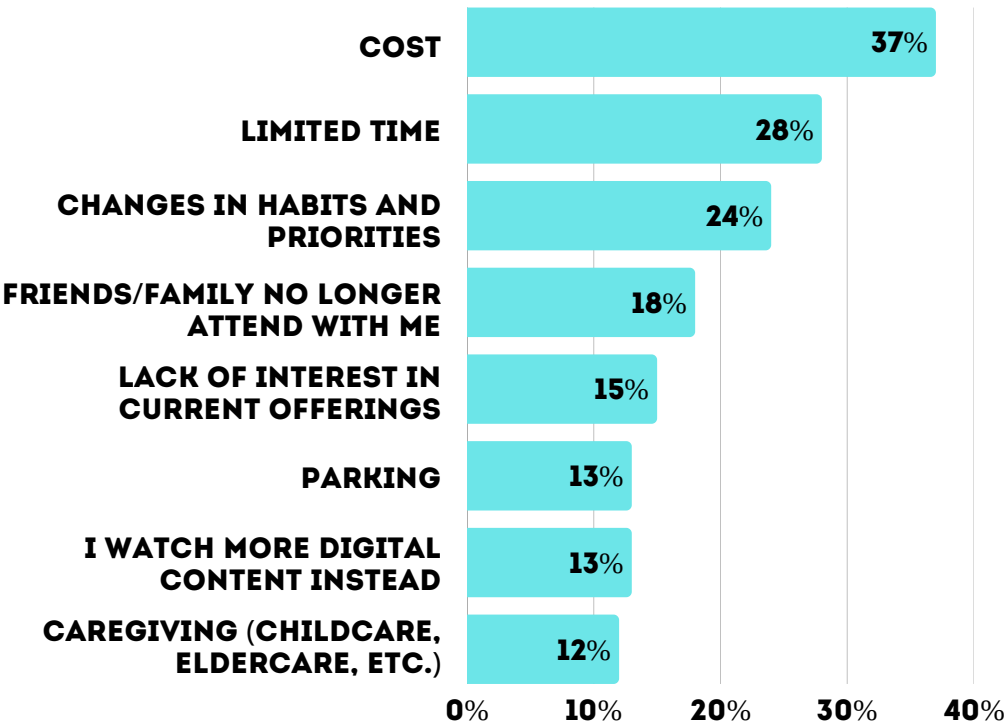
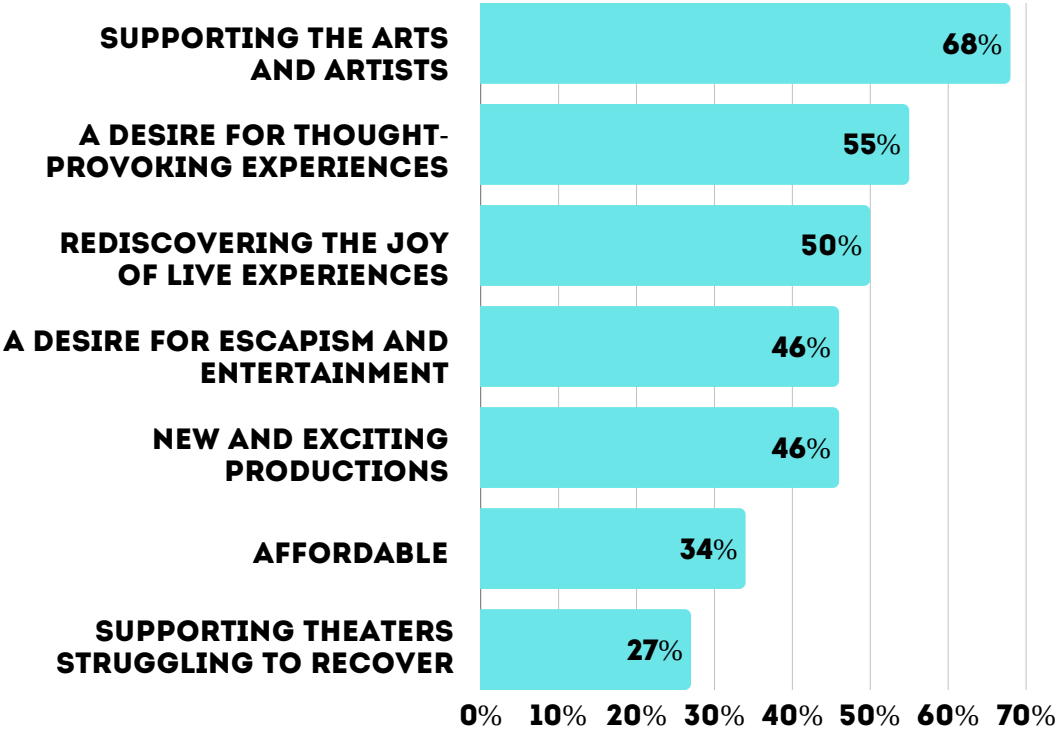
# ATTENDANCE SHIFTS SINCE COVID-19

Most of those identified as theatergoers (either by taking the audience intercept survey or stating they attended a theater in the last year in the public opinion poll) reported that they were still attending the theater more often or as often as they did before the pandemic (69%). However, a quarter said they attend less often than pre-pandemic.



## WHAT FACTORS LEAD YOU TO ATTEND THE SAME AMOUNT OR MORE SHOWS THAN IN THE PAST?

## WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO YOU ATTENDING MORE THEATER PERFORMANCES?



The primary motivations for people who attended the theater more often or at the same rate as before the pandemic were a desire to support the arts and artists. They also attended more frequently (or the same amount) for the experience, with 81% selecting that they wished to have a thought-provoking experience, the joy of live experiences, and/or to experience escapism and entertainment.

However, affordability is relative. Cost was the highest barrier for those attending the theater less frequently than in the past, with 37% of respondents citing cost as a barrier. Limited time was also a concern, as well as a change in habits and priorities.





Bristol Riverside Theatre's 2024/25 season production of *In the Heights*, photo featuring Daniel L. Melo & Sonya Hernández with Facundo Agustin & Shannon Sharpe. Bristol Riverside Theatre (120 Radcliffe Street, Bristol, PA 19007) Photo credit: Mark Garvin

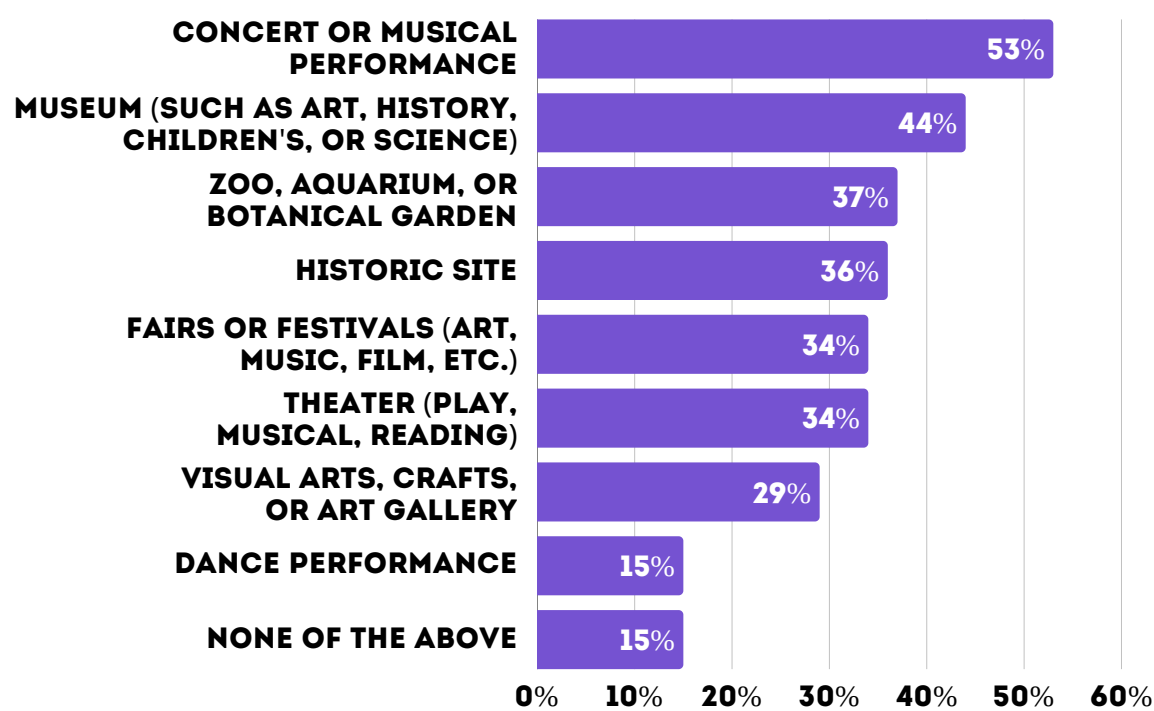


# GENERAL PUBLIC ARTS AND CULTURE HABITS

## PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS

For the last part of this research, we looked at the general public's participation in arts and culture across the Greater Philadelphia region through a public opinion poll.

**IN THE PAST YEAR, HAVE YOU VISITED, ATTENDED, OR WATCHED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ARTS & CULTURE ACTIVITIES IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY?**



**83%** OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA RESIDENTS AGREED THAT ARTS AND CULTURE WERE PERSONALLY IMPORTANT TO THEM.

Eighty-five percent of Greater Philadelphians visited, attended, or watched an arts or culture event in person during the previous year.

Additionally, 65% reported that they or their children had participated in some form of educational programming at an arts and culture organization within the past year.

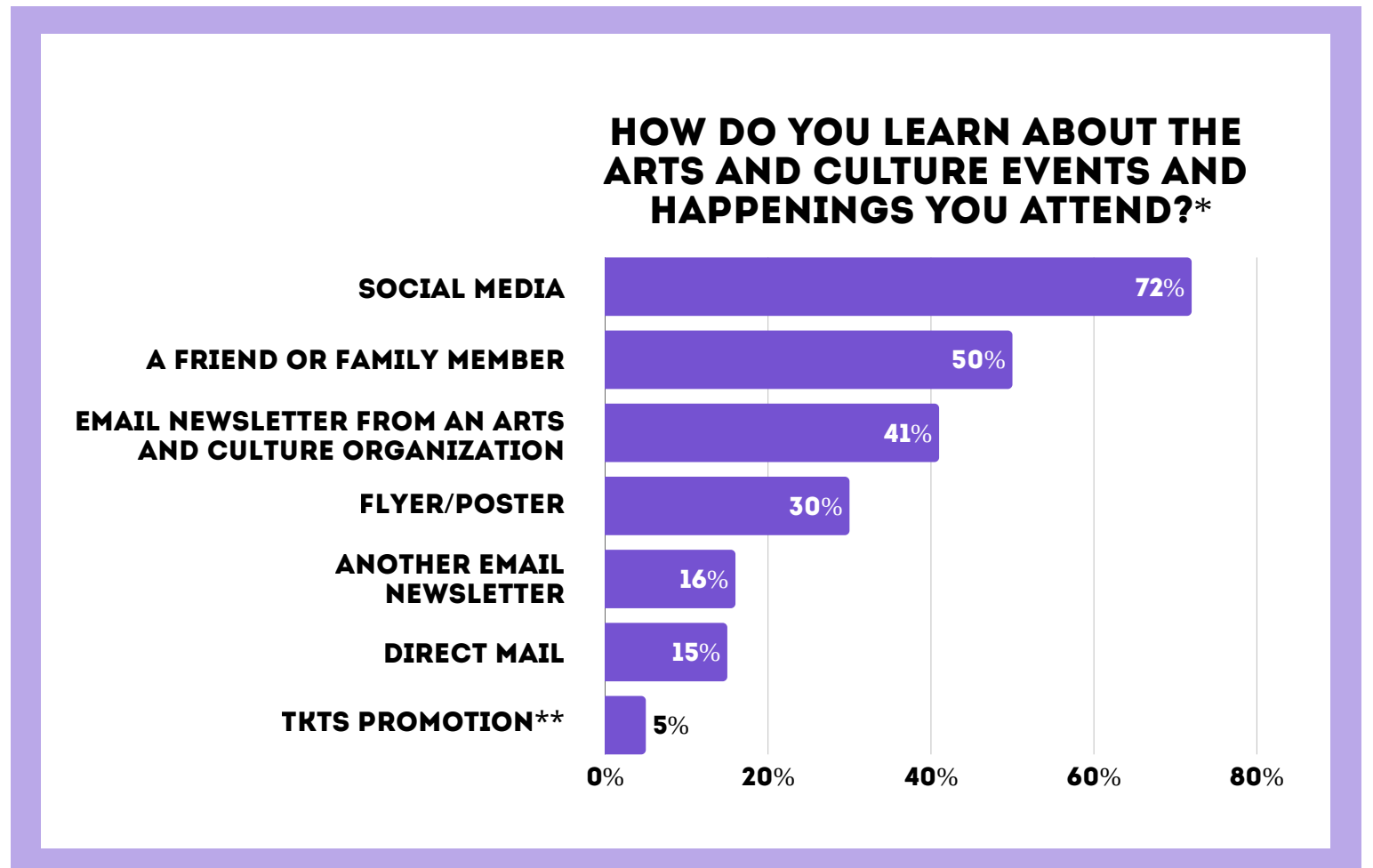
Outside of arts and culture venues, 85% of participants reported participating in arts and culture activities in a park, public space, on the street, in a restaurant, online, or at another location.





# HOW PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT EVENTS

72% of those who responded to the public opinion poll and had participated in arts and culture activities in the past year said they learned about such events through social media\*. They also relied upon friends and family members (50%) and newsletters from an arts and culture organization (41%). Those who were Gen Z or Millennials tended to rely on social media more (85%) than the average person to find events.



\*The research team recognizes that this poll was conducted online and that this may have skewed the results towards online methods of communication.

\*\*TKTS was launched in November 2024 and was therefore a relatively new program when this survey was conducted from April to May 2025.

ON MY DEEN, Hospital  
Scene, Satchel Williams,  
Newton Buchanan,  
Kimmika L. H. Williams-  
Witherspoon, Season 37.  
Photo Cred: Christopher  
Colucci

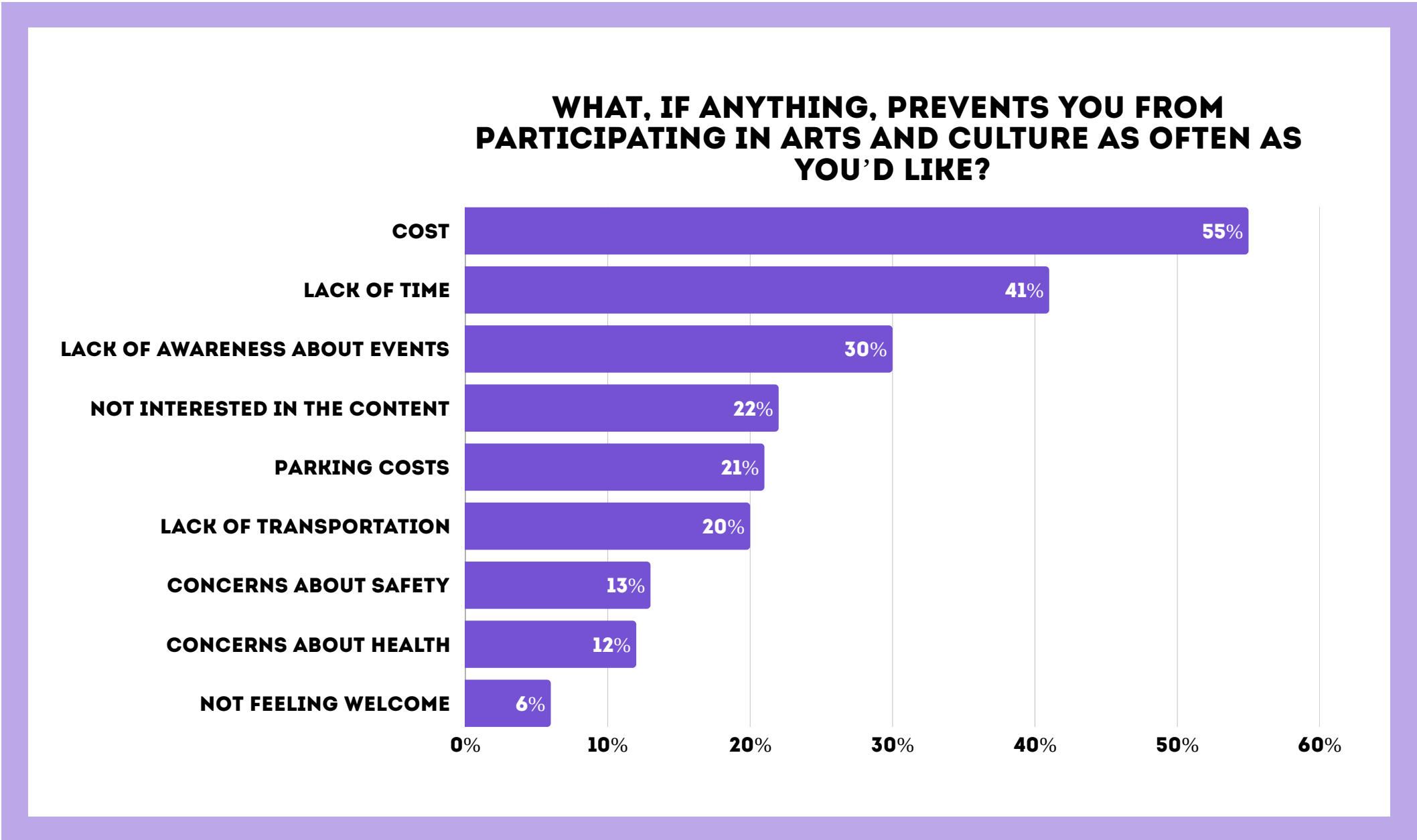


# BARRIERS TO ARTS PARTICIPATION

According to the general public opinion poll, cost (55%) and lack of time (41%) were the primary barriers for the general public to participate in more arts and culture. Thirty-seven percent said getting there (parking costs or lack of transportation) was also a factor. Many also noted that they didn't know about events (30%), and were not interested in the content (22%). For those with zip codes located in Philadelphia, nearly half (45%) reported that getting there, whether due to a lack of transportation or parking, was a barrier to increased arts participation.

When broken down by age, Millennials and Generation X members identified cost (61%) and lack of time (49%) as barriers at a higher rate than other participants. And while the sample size was small, with only 55 participants, Gen Z reported higher rates of lack of awareness (36%), lack of transportation (40%), and not feeling welcome (16%).

Most theatergoers used their personal vehicle to travel to a show (58%), while 22% used public transportation, and 20% walked. Those based in Philadelphia were more likely to take public transportation (30%) or walk (32%), whereas those based in one of the four suburban counties were more likely to drive (80%). It is worth noting that 13% of households in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Statistical Area have no vehicle available<sup>1</sup>, and in the City of Philadelphia, the number rises to 29%<sup>2</sup>.

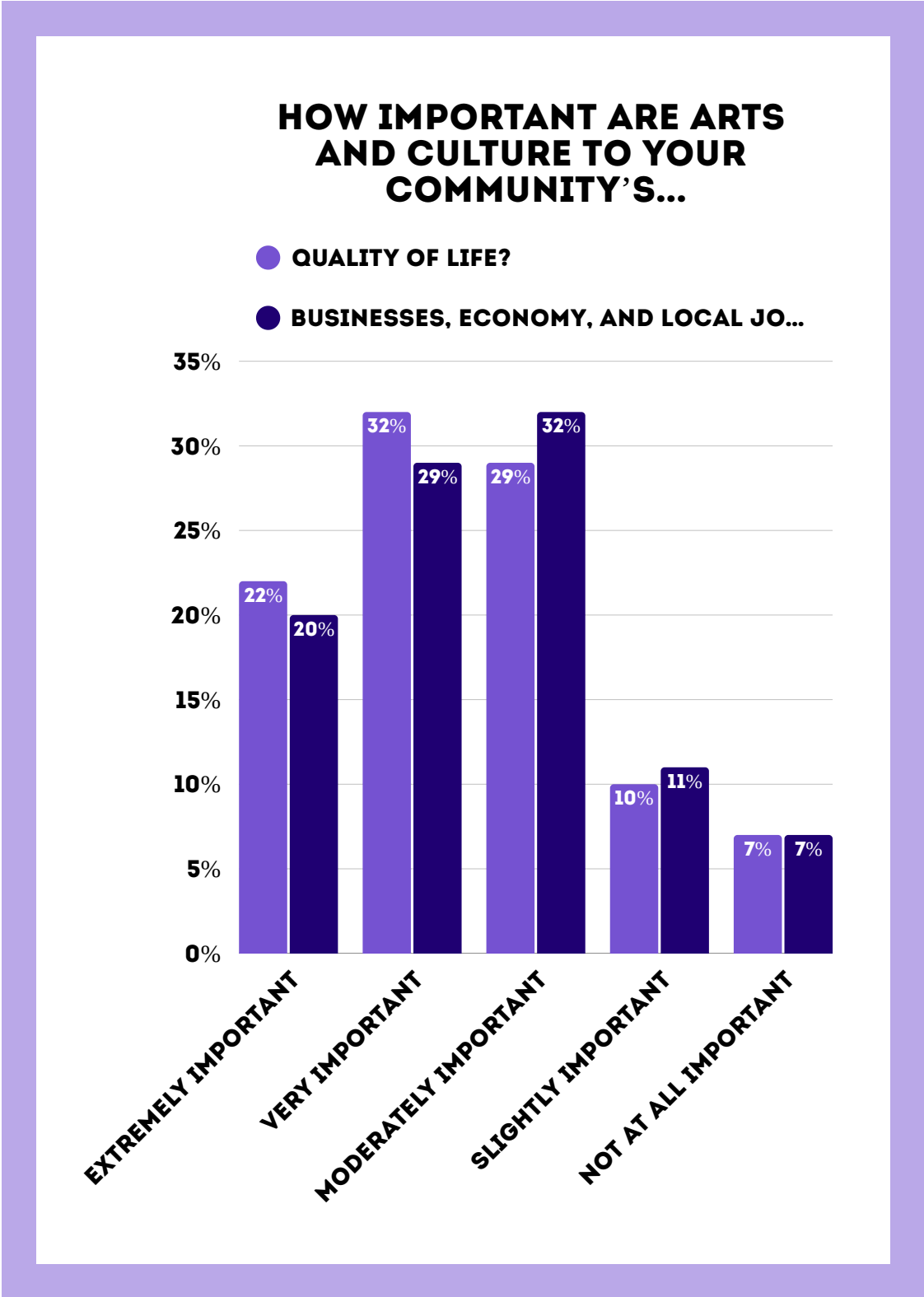


1. U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Selected Housing Characteristics." *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04*, 2023, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDPIY2023.DP04?q=vehicle+&g=310XX00US37980>. Accessed on May 30, 2025.  
2. U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units." *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2504*, 2023, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSSTIY2023.S2504?q=vehicle+&g=050XX00US42101\\_310XX00US37980](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSSTIY2023.S2504?q=vehicle+&g=050XX00US42101_310XX00US37980). Accessed on May 30, 2025.



# IMPORTANCE OF ARTS AND CULTURE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Those surveyed in the public opinion poll both believed that arts and culture were very or extremely important (54%) to their community's quality of life (with only 7% saying it was not important at all). 49% also thought it was very or extremely important to their community's business, economy, and local jobs.



*Pictured: Clockwise, from the top: Suli Holum, Krista Apple, Lindsay Smiling, Jered McLenigan, Campbell O'Hare in Shakespears "Twelfth Night" directed by Yury Urnov, June, 2024. Photo Credit: Johanna Austin, austinart.org*








*Pictured: Brandon J. Pierce, Sarah Gliko, and Suli Holum in Rajiv Joseph's "Archduke" directed by Blanka Zizka at the Wilma Theater, April 2025. Photo Credit: Johanna Austin, austinart.org*

# KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Greater Philadelphia residents value the arts and culture, but the cost and limited time make it difficult for them to participate.** Across the board, the number one motivation for attending a show, attending more or the same number of shows, or subscribing was to support the artists. Notably, Millennials and Generation X reported higher levels of cost and time constraints that prevented them from participating in more arts and culture. However, frequent theater attendees recognize the value and affordability of arts and culture, which is often underappreciated by the general public.
- **Theatergoers seek to be entertained on multiple levels.** Beyond supporting the arts, theatergoers who saw the same or more performances than before the pandemic did so because they sought entertainment: 81% percent said they wanted a thought-provoking experience, wanted to rediscover the joy of live theater, sought escapism and entertainment, and/or were looking for new and exciting productions. Most thought the theater was a good value for their entertainment dollar.
- **Getting to arts and culture is a significant barrier.** Philadelphians, in particular, noted that getting to arts and culture was a significant barrier, whether due to a lack of transportation or high parking costs.
- **There's a lack of awareness about arts and culture happenings.** Nearly a third of those who participated in the public opinion survey cited a lack of awareness about arts and culture events as a barrier to their participation in arts and culture. Gen Z, while a small sample size, also noted that they didn't feel welcome.
- **Performing arts organizations are still further behind in recovery post-pandemic.** While they've seen an increase in attendance over the past year, performing arts organizations remain behind other types of arts organizations, and federal funding cuts are likely to stall their growth.





*Amelia SanFilippo is smitten by the presence of Andrew Staub (as Stacey Jaxx) in a production of Rock of Ages (April, 2025 - credit Kevin Sanders)*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOR THEATERS

This research offers theaters multiple strategies for increasing attendance across all age groups. Here are a few of our recommendations.

- **Continue Cross-Theater Data Collection.** The Cultural Alliance recommends that theaters across the region continue to gather insights into what current theatergoers want from theater companies. This could be through collective data gathering and/or engaging in a post-audience survey to gather insights into what current theatergoers desire in productions.
- **Use Social Media to Reach Younger Audiences.** More than the general public, Gen Z and Millennials are using social media to find the events they attend. Theaters targeting younger audiences should invest dollars in promoting their work on social media platforms used by younger generations.
- **Make Theaters Welcoming Spaces.** Members of Gen Z noted that they felt unwelcome in theaters; theaters should consider ways to ensure diverse audiences can see themselves represented in their marketing and productions. Theaters should proactively seek input regarding perceived barriers and also employ other strategies to ensure they create inclusive spaces that are welcoming and accessible to all.
- **Continue Art in Public Spaces.** Meet people where they are at—the general public is attending the arts in parks, in the streets, etc. Introducing people to theater in public spaces may be a way to attract new audiences and continue to provide access to art with low barriers to entry. However, we acknowledge that this cannot be done without funding, and funders should support access to the arts.
- **Market the Arts as a Good Value for Your Dollar.** Campaigns can and should demonstrate that arts and culture are cost-effective and a good entertainment value for all ages. Nonprofit cultural performances are a great deal compared to many forms of entertainment: An Eagles game typically costs \$224 per person, and a show or sporting event at the Wells Fargo Center costs \$138 per ticket, on average.
- **Consider Pay-What-You-Wish (PWYW) and Discount Models.** With cost being the highest barrier to entry, PWYW pricing allows attendees to pay what they can afford. It has been shown to increase accessibility for performing arts and diversify audiences, as well as increase attendance, provide data about perceived ticket value, and sometimes increase profit. This can be a complex model, especially for large theaters, as earned revenue per PWYW show often only reaches 25-50% of regular levels. With strategic PWYW performance scheduling, institutional grants or philanthropic donations, or a subsidy initiative from the local government, this effect could be mitigated. Other discount models may also be helpful, including ticketing apps such as TodayTix, same-day tickets available at the TKTS booth, dynamic pricing, or age-based discounts.





Full company of "Ramayana" produced by EgoPo Classic Theater, with Papermoon Puppet Theatre & Kalanari Theater movement at the Navy Yard, June 2024. Photo Cred: Anna Seigel

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOR CIVIC LEADERS, FUNDERS, AND GOVERNMENT

Theaters, along with arts and culture organizations across the region, contribute both economic and social benefits to the Greater Philadelphia area. Performing arts organizations across the region generate \$581.9 million in economic impact and create jobs for workers throughout our region.

- **Invest in and Promote Discount and PWYW Ticket Programs.** Continue to invest in programs like TKTS for discount ticketing, but ensure they are accessible not only in Center City, but in neighborhoods across the city and region. Additionally, consider investing in Pay-What-You-Wish models at individual theaters to increase accessibility as well.
- **Elevate and Invest in the Visibility of Arts and Culture.** Funders, corporations, and the government should invest in promoting the benefits of arts and culture across the region. In PA CultureCheck, many leaders reported frustrations about visibility, and the challenges of effective public relations were raised repeatedly. In addition, many residents expressed that not being aware of happenings was a barrier to attending. Elevating the public value of arts and culture is crucial to securing the recognition and support necessary for sustained success.
- **Make Access to Public Transportation and Parking Accessible and Affordable.** Cuts to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) would be devastating to those who currently use public transit to access theater shows and educational programming. Additionally, not all theaters are accessible by public transit (especially outside Center City), so parking costs must be made accessible so all can experience the arts.
- **Create Dedicated Funding for Arts and Culture.** Between federal funding cuts and performing arts attendance continuing to lag behind other disciplines, the need for dedicated funding is greater than ever. Dedicated funding is crucial for maintaining programs, staff, and spaces, enabling them to provide accessible and affordable art. As demand grows and costs rise, organizations need flexible, reliable funding to stay responsive, innovative, and resilient.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

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Nicholas Crosson, Development and Research Manager, PA Humanities

## THEATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Amy Murphy - Arden Theatre Company  
Rayna Adams - Bristol Riverside Theatre  
Devon Roberts - EgoPo Classic Theater  
Ann Garner - InterAct Theatre Company  
Stacy Maria Dutton - Lantern Theater Company  
Brittany Woodard - People's Light  
Carolina Vargas - Philadelphia Theatre Company  
Donna Dougherty, Anthony SanFilippo - The Players Club of Swarthmore  
Erica Ezold - Quintessence Theatre  
Leigh Goldenberg, Jessica Betts - Wilma Theater

This Project was financed in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,  
Department of Community and Economic Development.

*(From L-R) Sean Weaver, Matt Stickel, Eric Crist and Chas Thomas try to remove Kevin McPeak (as Howard Beal) from the set of the nightly news during the regional premiere of Network by Lee Hall and Paddy Chayefsky (February, 2025 - credit Rose Azrael)*





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