



The Creative Economy in Greater Boston

Arts and culture are essential to expressing the vibrancy, history, and creativity of Massachusetts. Many municipalities are looking to strengthen arts and culture to promote civic engagement, celebrate a diverse local identity, and create a more robust local economy. Creative workers help anchor local economic activity and civic vitality. In many places, like museums, performance venues, book publishers and graphic design studios, art retail stores, and more, working artists attract those looking to live, work, and raise families near creative spaces.

MAPC found that 7% of all businesses in the region are “creative enterprises” as defined by the

New England Foundation for the Arts (excludes electronics stores). Nearly a quarter of the region’s creative businesses are found in Boston, highlighting the capital’s role as a creative engine. However, the MAPC cities and towns with the greatest share of creative businesses are generally outside of the inner core: Nearly one in five businesses in Rockport are in the creative economy (18%), followed by Hamilton (15%), Bolton (13%), and Wenham (12%).

As more cultural data are collected and analyzed, policy tools can be targeted in more efficient and effective ways to help municipalities grow their creative assets.