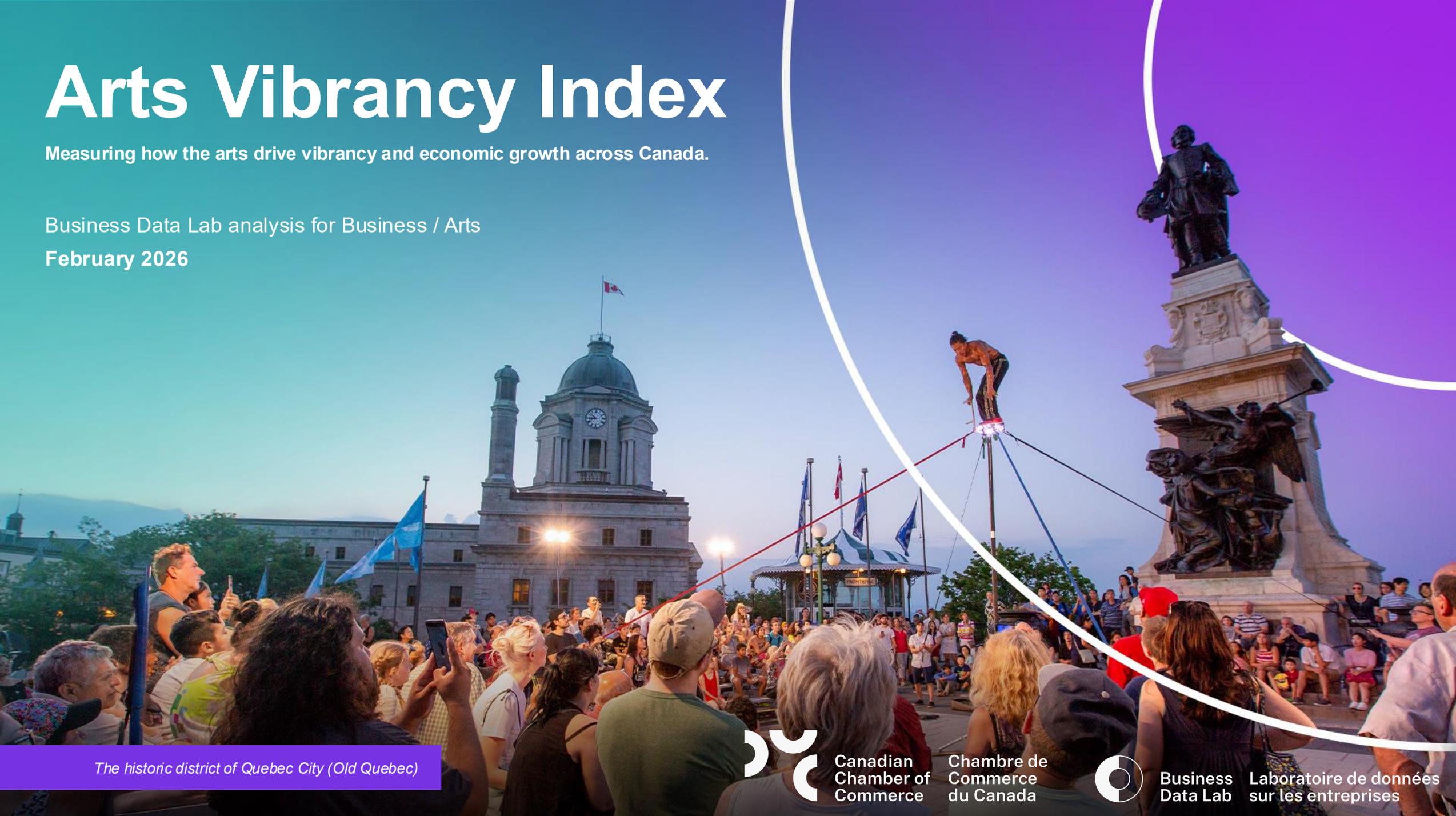


Arts Vibrancy Index

Measuring how the arts drive vibrancy and economic growth across Canada.

Business Data Lab analysis for Business / Arts

February 2026



The historic district of Quebec City (Old Quebec)



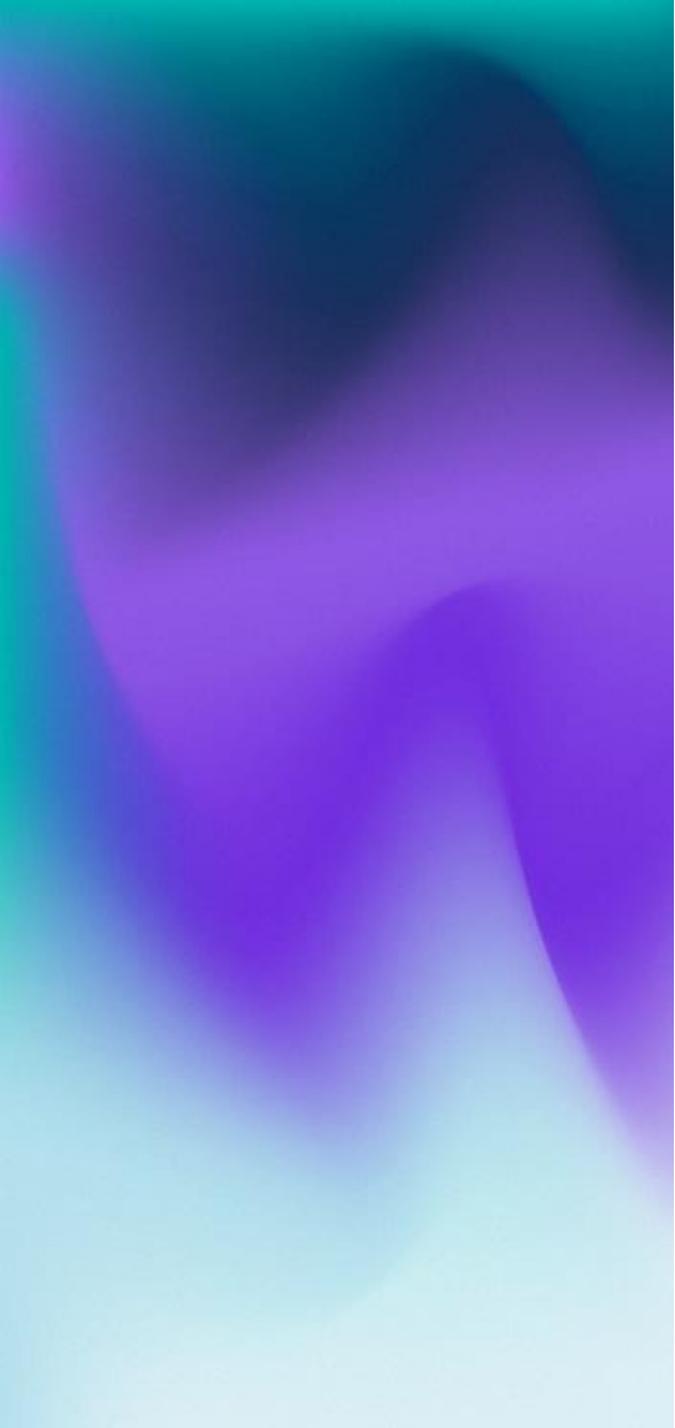
Canadian
Chamber of
Commerce

Chambre de
Commerce
du Canada



Business
Data Lab

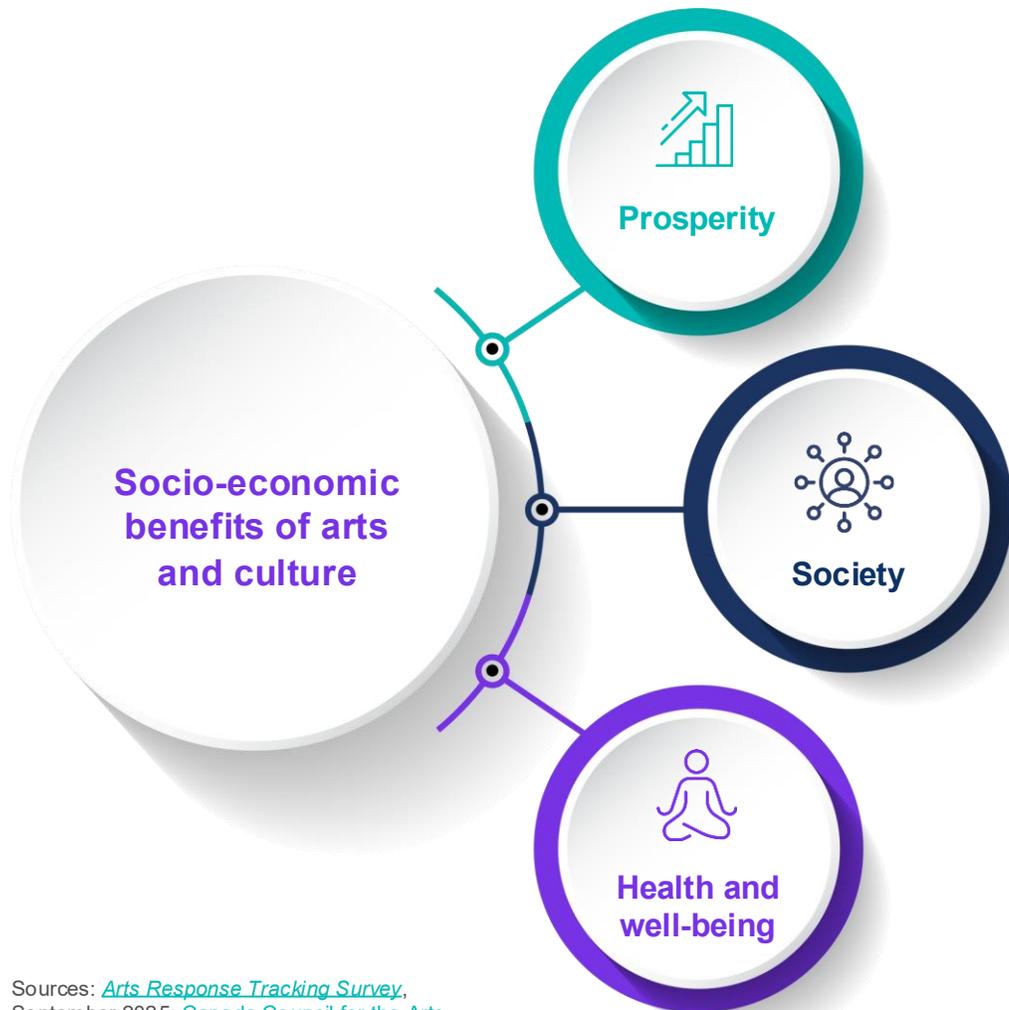
Laboratoire de données
sur les entreprises



There is currently no timely, comprehensive data on the arts community's impact on local economies in Canada.

The Arts Vibrancy Index seeks to bridge this data gap by measuring the relationship between arts & culture and economic growth across 22 Canadian communities.

Arts and culture are central to higher quality of life.



75% ↑ 12 percentage point increase from August 2024.

of Canadians believe that attending arts and culture events positively impacts their sense of belonging in Canada.

Business / Arts, through their quarterly *Arts Response Tracking Survey (ARTS)*, examine Canadian “culture-goers” attitudes and behaviours, finding that people are drawn to participate in arts and culture for several key reasons. These include fostering connections with others, gaining new perspectives, and building a sense of belonging within their communities. Previous releases have pointed to arts’ ability to help reduce stress and enhance well-being.

These findings are consistent with central indicators in the [Quality of Life Framework for Canada](#).

Arts improve other aspects of the economy and society.



Knowledge

- Stimulates the creative economy.
- Increases understanding of diverse communities.
- Changes attitudes towards community participation.
- Increases employability and improves skills associated with development in society.



Society

- Improves business and entrepreneurial culture.
- Positive impact on the residential and property sectors.
- Improves productivity and competitiveness.
- Boosts innovation and digital technology.



Networks

- Builds social cohesion, community, and integration of newcomers.
- Improves health and well-being.
- Creates attractive ecosystems and cities for top talent.
- Stimulates urban development and economic impact of clusters.



The art of the city: talent, inclusion, and community.

Arts communities drive socio-economic outcomes in cities.

Talent attraction and retention

Vibrant arts communities are magnets for skilled workers. Cities that invest in culture attract and keep “creative-class” talent (people in tech, science, design, media, and professional services), driving higher innovation and growth.

Enhanced social cohesion

Cultural participation builds belonging and attachment, especially for equity-seeking groups. Cohesive, engaged communities are more resilient and better able to collaborate, which supports business growth and investment attraction.

Immigrant integration

Participation in arts and cultural life accelerates newcomers' sense of belonging and civic connection. Programs like the Institute for Canadian Citizenship's [Canoo](#) provides newcomers with free access to cultural institutions, strengthening settlement outcomes.

Canadian global cities like Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver exemplify urban arts vibrancy. Research suggests that culture is central to why people stay in a particular city.

Gensler's *City Pulse 2025* finds that the strongest predictors of staying include emotional connection and a sense of belonging, both powerfully shaped by arts and cultural life. Cities that create engaging cultural experiences, nurture an authentic local identity, and foster urban vibrancy are more likely to retain people over time.

Tourism is also a force multiplier when it comes to culture, sustaining downtowns, venues and small businesses. Ontario cultural tourists generate a disproportionate share of total tourism spending, according to a 2023 Ontario Arts Council report. Culture visitors also stay longer: 40% of Canadian cultural tourists taking trips of three days or more; nearly one in three international visitors engage in cultural activities while in Ontario.

It's not all about cities — rural communities play an important role in providing cultural programming for residents. Distance is the main barrier to increased arts participation by culture-goers reported in the *Arts Response Tracking Survey*.

Overview

The Arts Vibrancy Index is Canada's first measure to track vibrant Canadian arts communities and their impact on local economic activity. The index factors-in the arts presence in a particular community and the health of the local economy. A high index score indicates that the local economy has both a thriving arts community and broader economic activity.

The Index sets out to highlight linkages between economic growth and vibrancy of local arts communities through regional data. Covering 22 census metropolitan areas (CMAs)*, this first-of-a-kind indicator can help track which Canadian CMAs are driving growth through arts and culture.

Objectives:

- Identify communities where strong arts presence correlates with economic strength.
- Create a consistent, comparable measure of arts vibrancy using unique datasets.

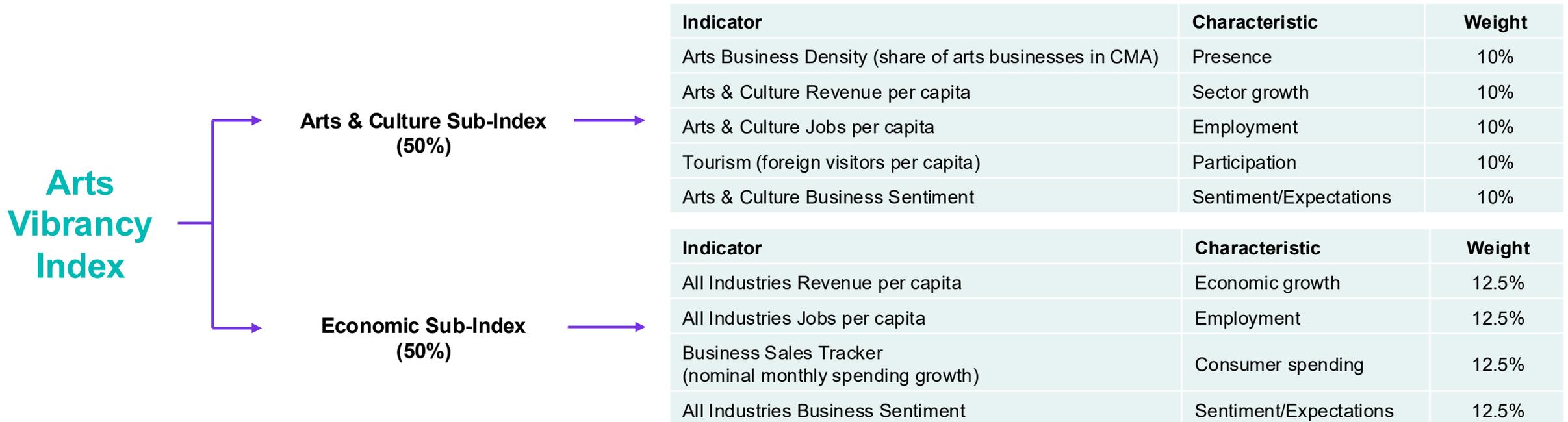
**Canada has 41 CMAs, but the index is limited to 22 due to data availability across all categories.*

Index Framework

The Arts & Culture Vibrancy Index measures the performance of Canadian CMAs in fostering vibrant and economically strong arts communities. To achieve this, the index is composed of two equally weighted sub-indices:

- Arts & Culture Sub-Index (50%) - captures local arts presence and participation.
- Economic Sub-Index (50%) - assesses broader economic performance of the community.

Each sub-index draws on five and four indicators respectively, using publicly available data and Statistics Canada Custom Dataset.



Note: Sector data is available at the two-digit North American Industry Classification (NAICS) level. Arts and culture are represented by NAICS 51 and 71 (71 – Arts, entertainment and recreation; 51 – Information and culture). The index uses NAICS 71 as it relates more closely to regional arts participation and in-person arts and culture events.

Overall Rankings

Arts Vibrancy Index

Ranking	Census Metropolitan Area
1	Victoria, British Columbia
2	Kelowna, British Columbia
3	Québec, Quebec
4	Halifax, Nova Scotia
5	Vancouver, British Columbia
6	Regina, Saskatchewan
6	Moncton, New Brunswick
8	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
9	Calgary, Alberta
10	Toronto, Ontario
11	Montréal, Quebec
12	Winnipeg, Manitoba
13	Sherbrooke, Quebec
14	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
14	Ottawa, Ontario - Gatineau, Quebec
16	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
17	Windsor, Ontario
18	St. Catharines - Niagara, Ontario
18	Edmonton, Alberta
20	Oshawa, Ontario
21	London, Ontario
22	Hamilton, Ontario

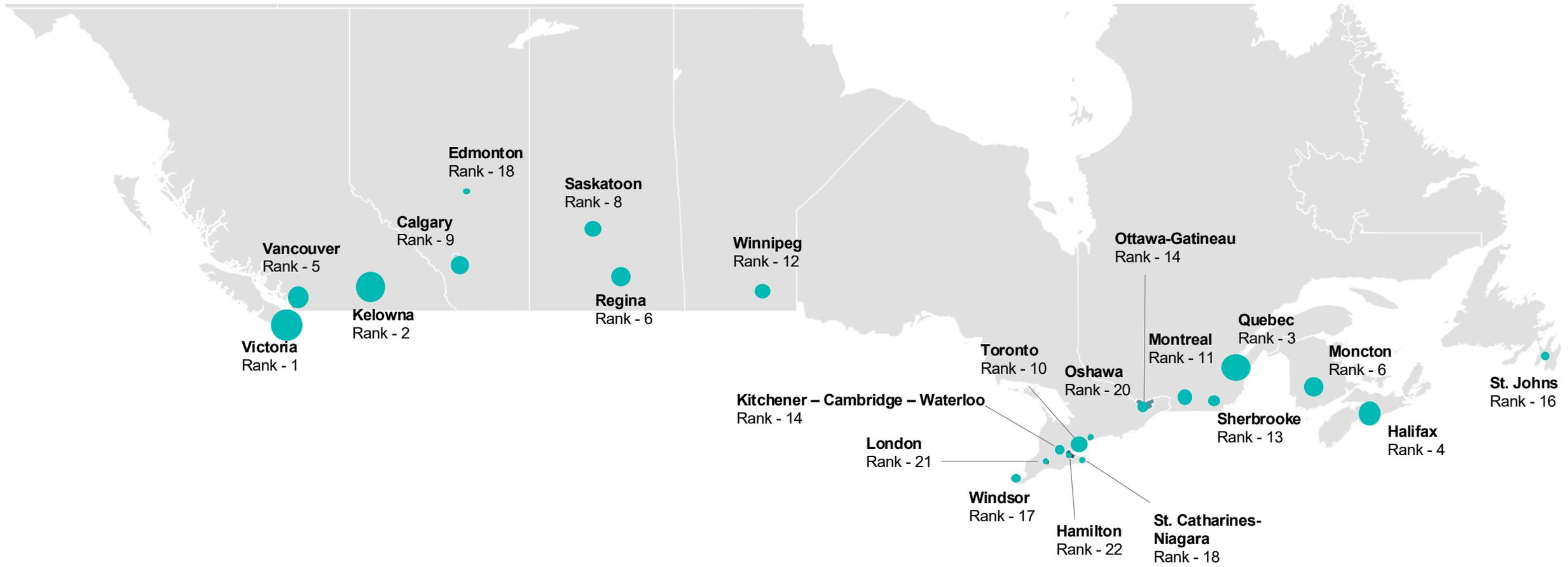
Note: Index scores are scaled from 0 to 100 using min-max normalization, where the top CMA is set to 100 and the lowest to 0. CMAs are ranked directly from these scores, with Rank 1 indicating the highest-performing community in the comparison set.



Credit: Open House at the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Toronto, ON. Photo by Allan Cabral

Arts Vibrancy Index Results

Rankings by census metropolitan area



Note: Index scores are scaled from 0 to 100 using min-max normalization, where the top CMA is set to 100 and the lowest to 0. CMAs are ranked directly from these scores, with Rank 1 indicating the highest-performing community in the comparison set. Bubble size corresponds to the overall score, with larger bubbles reflecting higher relative vibrancy.

Rankings by Arts & Culture Indicators

Arts and Culture Business Density (share of overall businesses)

1	Sherbrooke, Quebec
2	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
3	Ottawa - Gatineau
4	Kelowna, British Columbia
5	Québec, Quebec
6	Montréal, Quebec
7	Halifax, Nova Scotia
8	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
9	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
10	Winnipeg, Manitoba
11	Moncton, New Brunswick
12	Victoria, British Columbia
13	Hamilton, Ontario
14	Vancouver, British Columbia
15	Regina, Saskatchewan
15	Oshawa, Ontario
17	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
18	London, Ontario
19	Windsor, Ontario
20	Toronto, Ontario
21	Calgary, Alberta
22	Edmonton, Alberta

Arts and Culture Revenue per capita (output)

1	Kelowna, British Columbia
2	Moncton, New Brunswick
3	Vancouver, British Columbia
4	Calgary, Alberta
5	Québec, Quebec
6	Regina, Saskatchewan
7	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
8	Toronto, Ontario
9	Victoria, British Columbia
10	Winnipeg, Manitoba
11	Montréal, Quebec
12	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
13	Ottawa - Gatineau
14	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
15	Hamilton, Ontario
15	Halifax, Nova Scotia
17	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
18	Edmonton, Alberta
19	London, Ontario
20	Sherbrooke, Quebec
21	Windsor, Ontario
22	Oshawa, Ontario

Arts and Culture Jobs per capita

1	Victoria, British Columbia
2	Kelowna, British Columbia
3	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
4	Calgary, Alberta
5	Vancouver, British Columbia
6	Oshawa, Ontario
7	Edmonton, Alberta
8	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
9	Regina, Saskatchewan
10	Winnipeg, Manitoba
11	Windsor, Ontario
12	Montréal, Quebec
13	Sherbrooke, Quebec
14	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
15	Halifax, Nova Scotia
15	Toronto, Ontario
17	Hamilton, Ontario
18	London, Ontario
19	Moncton, NB
20	Ottawa - Gatineau
21	Québec, Quebec
22	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador

Note: CMAs are ranked from highest to lowest score; Rank 1 indicates the best-performing CMA for each indicator.

Rankings by Arts & Culture Indicators

Non-residents entering Canada per capita

1	Victoria, British Columbia
2	Windsor, Ontario
3	Vancouver, British Columbia
4	Calgary, Alberta
5	Halifax, Nova Scotia
6	Toronto, Ontario
7	Montréal, Quebec
8	Québec, Quebec
9	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
10	Winnipeg, Manitoba
11	Edmonton, Alberta
12	Ottawa - Gatineau
13	Regina, Saskatchewan
14	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
15	Kelowna, British Columbia
15	Hamilton, Ontario
17	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
18	London, Ontario
19	Moncton, New Brunswick
20	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
21	Sherbrooke, Quebec
22	Oshawa, Ontario

Arts and Culture Business Sentiment

1	Oshawa, Ontario
2	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
3	Québec, Quebec
4	Calgary, Alberta
5	Kelowna, British Columbia
6	Vancouver, British Columbia
7	Ottawa - Gatineau
8	Moncton, New Brunswick
9	Victoria, British Columbia
10	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
11	Winnipeg, Manitoba
12	Toronto, Ontario
13	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
14	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
15	Windsor, Ontario
15	Sherbrooke, Quebec
17	Regina, Saskatchewan
18	Hamilton, Ontario
19	Montréal, Quebec
20	Halifax, Nova Scotia
21	Edmonton, Alberta
22	London, Ontario

Note: CMAs are ranked from highest to lowest score; Rank 1 indicates the best-performing CMA for each indicator.

Rankings by Economic Indicators

All Industries Revenue per capita (output)

1	Toronto, Ontario
2	Vancouver, British Columbia
3	Calgary, Alberta
4	Kelowna, British Columbia
5	Edmonton, Alberta
6	Regina, Saskatchewan
7	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
8	Montréal, Quebec
9	Québec, Quebec
10	Halifax, Nova Scotia
11	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
12	Victoria, British Columbia
13	Moncton, New Brunswick
14	Winnipeg, Manitoba
15	Hamilton, Ontario
15	Sherbrooke, Quebec
17	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
18	London, Ontario
19	Windsor, Ontario
20	Ottawa - Gatineau
21	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
22	Oshawa, Ontario

All Industries Jobs per capita

1	Victoria, British Columbia
2	Halifax, Nova Scotia
3	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
4	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
5	Calgary, Alberta
6	Vancouver, British Columbia
7	Ottawa - Gatineau
8	Québec, Quebec
9	Winnipeg, Manitoba
10	Moncton, New Brunswick
11	Toronto, Ontario
12	London, Ontario
13	Edmonton, Alberta
14	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
15	Regina, Saskatchewan
15	Montréal, Quebec
17	Hamilton, Ontario
18	Oshawa, Ontario
19	Sherbrooke, Quebec
20	Windsor, Ontario
21	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
22	Kelowna, British Columbia

Note: CMAs are ranked from highest to lowest score; Rank 1 indicates the best-performing CMA for each indicator.

Rankings by Economic Indicators

Nominal Monthly Spending Growth

1	Québec, Quebec
2	Halifax, Nova Scotia
3	London, Ontario
4	Kelowna, British Columbia
5	Regina, Saskatchewan
6	Toronto, Ontario
7	Victoria, British Columbia
8	Calgary, Alberta
9	Sherbrooke, Quebec
10	Windsor, Ontario
11	Moncton, New Brunswick
12	Vancouver, British Columbia
13	Oshawa, Ontario
14	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
15	Ottawa - Gatineau
15	Montréal, Quebec
17	Edmonton, Alberta
18	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
19	Winnipeg, Manitoba
20	Hamilton, Ontario
21	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
22	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario

All Industries Business Sentiment

1	St. Johns, Newfoundland and Labrador
2	Halifax, Nova Scotia
3	Regina, Saskatchewan
4	Kelowna, British Columbia
5	Sherbrooke, Quebec
6	Moncton, New Brunswick
7	Victoria, British Columbia
8	Québec, Quebec
9	Winnipeg, Manitoba
10	Montréal, Quebec
11	Kitchener – Cambridge – Waterloo, Ontario
12	Edmonton, Alberta
13	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
14	Toronto, Ontario
15	St. Catharines – Niagara, Ontario
15	Windsor, Ontario
17	Vancouver, British Columbia
18	Oshawa, Ontario
19	Calgary, Alberta
20	London, Ontario
21	Ottawa - Gatineau
22	Hamilton, Ontario

Note: CMAs are ranked from highest to lowest score; Rank 1 indicates the best-performing CMA for each indicator.

Key finding: Creative Intensity Outperforms Scale

The Arts Vibrancy Index shows that creative intensity - not population size drives arts vibrancy. Communities that perform well share three traits: high participation, strong presence in the business ecosystem, and ripe economic conditions.



Participation

Indicators

- ✓ Arts jobs per capita
- ✓ Arts revenue per capita
- ✓ Tourism per capita

Top CMA examples:

Victoria, BC: Ranked #1 in both arts jobs per capita and tourism per capita.

Kelowna, BC: Ranked #1 in arts and culture revenue per capita and ranked #2 in arts and culture jobs per capita.

Vancouver, BC: Ranked #3 in both arts revenue per capita and tourism per capita.



Presence

Indicators

- ✓ Arts business density
(share of arts businesses out of all businesses in the CMA)

Top CMA examples:

Sherbrooke, QC: Ranked #1

St. Catharines Niagara, ON: Ranked #2

Ottawa – Gatineau: Ranked #3



Alignment

Indicators

- ✓ All industries revenue per capita
- ✓ All industries jobs per capita
- ✓ Consumer spending growth
- ✓ Business sentiment

Top CMA examples:

Québec, QC: Ranked #1 in nominal growth spending and #3 for arts and culture business sentiment.

Halifax, NS: Ranked #2 in all industries jobs per capita, nominal growth spending and all industries' business sentiments.

Kelowna, BC: Ranked #4 in all industries revenue per capita, nominal growth spending and all industries' business sentiments.

Methodology

1. Data Collection: Data was compiled from multiple sources: ¹

- Arts Business Density is from Statistics Canada (Table 33-10-1016-01).
- Revenue and jobs were obtained from Statistics Canada Custom Industry Datasets.
- Tourism data (foreign visitors entering Canada) ² is from Statistics Canada (Table 24-10-0055-01).
- Business sentiment indicators³ were sourced from the Business Data Lab's Business Expectations Index (BEI; Q3 2025).
- Consumer spending nominal growth ² was measured using Moneris transaction data (August 2025 monthly % change).

2. Data Transformation for Comparability: Variables like revenue, jobs, and tourism visits were expressed in per capita terms to control for CMA size in comparison to smaller CMAs.

3. Standardization: Z-scores were calculated for each CMA and variable to standardize across different units.

4. Weighting: Indicator z-scores were multiplied by their respective weights (10% or 12.5%) and summed to form sub-indices.

5. Index Construction: Sub-indices were combined (Arts & Culture 50%, Economy 50%) to derive the Arts & Culture Vibrancy Score.

6. Rescaling: Final composite scores were rescaled using min - max scaling (0 -100), with the highest performing CMA = 100 and lowest performing CMA = 0. A score of 50 is the average.

7. Ranking: CMAs were ranked from 1-22 based on rescaled composite scores (Rank 1 being most vibrant and 22 being least vibrant CMA).

Notes:

1) *Industry Scope:* Arts & culture represented by NAICS 71 (Arts, Entertainment and Recreation), which more directly reflects community-level participation than NAICS 51.

2) *Ottawa–Gatineau CMA:* Ottawa–Gatineau is treated as a single CMA. International tourism data is available for Ottawa only - this variable carries a small (10%) weight, minimizing impact on the composite score. Nominal spending growth for Ottawa-Gatineau CMA was derived by averaging their respective growth numbers - Ottawa (2.56) and Gatineau (-2.02).

3) *CMAs in NB, NL used provincial BEI values as proxies for CMA-level BEI because of data availability constraints.*

Data Sources

Indicator	Source	Time period
Arts and culture business density (% of businesses in CMA)	Statistics Canada (Table: 33-10-1016-01)	June 2025
Arts and culture revenue (output)	Statistics Canada Custom Dataset	2024
Arts and culture jobs	Statistics Canada Custom Dataset	2024
Tourism (foreign visitors per capita)	Statistics Canada (Table: 24-10-0055-01) - July 2025	July 2025
Arts and culture business sentiment	Business Expectations Index, Business Data Lab	Q3 2025
All Industries revenue (output)	Statistics Canada Custom Dataset	2024
All industries jobs	Statistics Canada Custom Dataset	2024
Business Sales Tracker (nominal monthly growth spending)	BDL analysis of Moneris transaction data	August 2025
All industries business sentiment	Business Expectations Index, Business Data Lab	Q3 2025
Canadian Population	Statistics Canada (Table: 17-10-0148-01)	July 2024

