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Culture: Reductions in Legislative Appropriations for the Arts Threaten Arizona's Cultural Vitality



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Q: What were the most interesting and important trends in Arizona art and culture that occurred in the previous decade? What is the significance of these trends and what insights can we apply to the new decade?

A: One of the greatest threats to cultural vitality in Arizona is the staggering reduction of legislative appropriations for the arts. Legislative appropriations provide core support for Arizona art organizations, enhancing quality of life for residents, supporting tourism, attracting knowledge workers, and bolstering Arizona's creative economy. Unfortunately, the previous decade has been brutal for arts funding. According to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, Arizona's ranking slipped from 28th in 2000 to 48th in 2009 for arts appropriations per capita. In 2009, Arizona's legislative appropriations for the arts totaled a meager 30 cents per person.

Given the scale of the current economic recession and the repercussions that will affect the state budget for years to come, I don't see this trend correcting itself any time soon. Foundations and other funders will have to step up to help arts organizations stay afloat and voters will have to exert considerable pressure on state law makers in order to see legislative appropriations for the arts restored to a respectable level, or better yet, increased to a level that is competitive with other states.

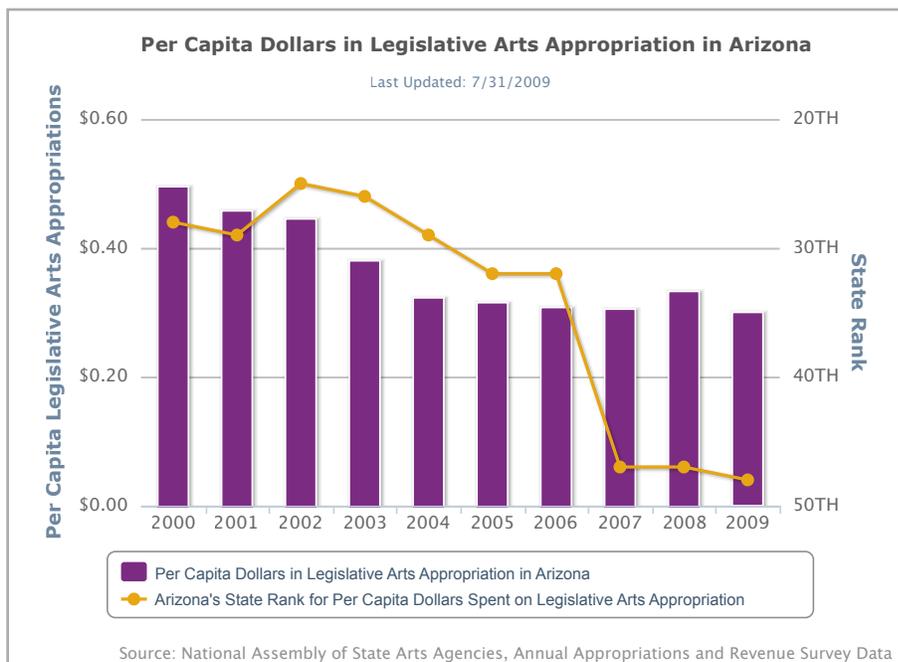


Figure 1: Due to decreasing legislative appropriations, Arizona ranks 48th in arts appropriations per capita.



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Arizona Indicators is an online information resource and analysis tool that centralizes data about the state and its communities. Arizona Indicators presents interactive visualizations, clear data descriptions, and public opinion data in a broad range of content areas.

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