

Colorado: State-of-the-Art

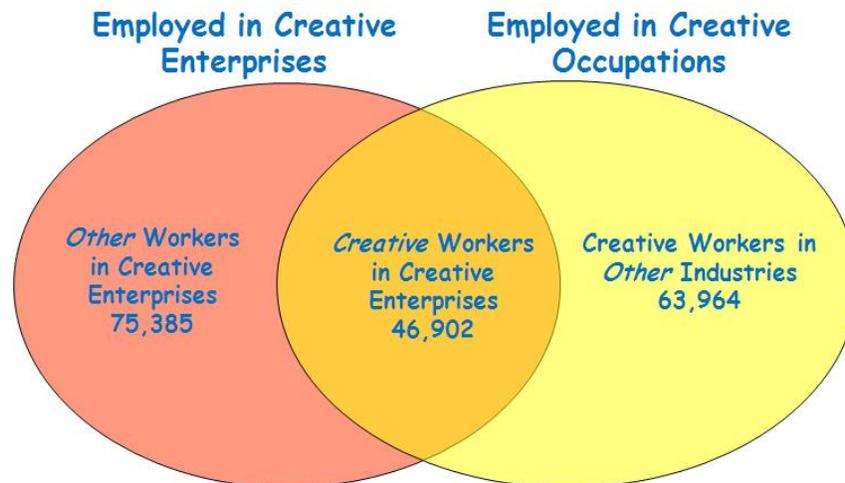


Highlights from *The State of Colorado's Creative Economy*, a 2008 report commissioned by the Colorado Council on the Arts, a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. The full report can be viewed at www.colorarts.org.

Colorado's Creative Economy

The description of the creative economy used for this study is specific to the talents, outputs, and inventive processes unique to Colorado. It combines two populations: creative enterprises and creative occupations.

- A **creative enterprise** is defined as any company for which the primary value of its products or services is rooted in its emotional and aesthetic appeal to the customer.
- A **creative occupation** is defined as a job in either a creative industry or non-creative industry in which the work itself is inherently creative or artistic.
- The **creative economy** encompasses both of these groups, which overlap.



The study shows **186,251 direct jobs** in the state are associated with creative enterprises and creative occupations. Colorado's **creative enterprises employed 122,287** individuals in 7,992 establishments in 2007 and another **63,964 worked in creative occupations** in other sectors.

Employment in creative enterprises alone is roughly **four percent of the state's estimated 3.2 million jobs***. Since 2002, **employment in the state's creative enterprises increased by more than 8,000 jobs**, or seven percent, compared to a six percent growth in creative enterprise employment in the U.S. Colorado's creative enterprise **earnings were about \$5 billion**.

* The 3.2 million jobs in Colorado figure includes self-employed workers, sole proprietors, farm and railroad workers, military, a more complete coverage of educational institutions, membership organizations, and nonprofit organizations that are not typically covered under civilian labor statistics.

Other Key Findings

- ◆ The number of jobs in creative enterprises ranks it as the **5th largest cluster of the Colorado economy**, almost as large as biotechnology/biomedical and IT & telecommunications, and larger than defense & security and agribusiness, food processing & technology.
- ◆ Creative economy enterprises are categorized within six sub-groups, **Design, Literary and Publishing, Film and Media, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Crafts, and Heritage**.
- ◆ Among all states in the U.S., Colorado ranks **5th in concentration of creative occupations** including architects, artists, writers, designers, directors, performers and photographers.
- ◆ Many creative occupations are expected to **grow 30-45% over the next 10 years**, far exceeding the projected state average growth rate of 25 percent.
- ◆ The creative economy is **well distributed in communities across the state**, in fact, we have **10 of the nation's top 25 non-metro counties** in concentration of creative occupations.
- ◆ There is a significant amount of **economic activity that is clearly creative but embedded in other industries** including over 100 Colorado "rustic style" home furnishings companies and over 40 game software developers.

Next Steps

Colorado has established itself nationally as a premier creative economy, which can be confirmed by its high national rankings and concentrations in numerous categories of creative enterprises and occupations.

But despite its national reputation, **the state has not yet realized its fullest potential** both in building on the growing convergence and synergies with other high growth sectors such as green products, outdoor products, tourism, and technology and its potential for stimulating new kinds of learning and improving educational outcomes.

To **identify and capitalize on areas of significant economic opportunity** we must:

- Understand what drives and what impedes the growth of the various segments of the creative economy
- Explore the linkages between the creative talent in the state and the other important clusters, such as manufacturing and renewable energy
- Further assess the strengths of the state's K-12 and higher education institutions to identify how these assets could be further harnessed to build the creative sector
- Develop strategies and policies that would take Colorado to the next level as a creative economy

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