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New City of San Diego Report Shows Creative Industries Had More Than \$10 Billion Impact

REPORT ALSO PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAN DIEGO REGION TO REMAIN CREATIVE LEADER

SAN DIEGO – A new report released today by the City of San Diego and the [San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center](#) shows that in 2022, the most recent year surveyed, San Diego's creative industries created nearly 170,000 jobs and had a total economic impact of \$10.8 billion.

The report titled [Creative Economy in the San Diego Region](#) analyzes the intersection between San Diego's creative industries, its workforce and the local economy. It looks at the creative economy spanning 71 industries and 76 unique occupations. This includes nonprofit organizations and for-profit businesses, individuals involved in producing cultural, artistic and design goods or services, and intellectual property throughout the county of San Diego.

"The creative industries are a future-facing component of our region's workforce and economy. Creative workers are critical to the competitive success of many aspects of our economy, from the innovation sector to major events, conventions and media to the arts and culture sector," said Jonathon Glus, executive director of Arts and Culture. **"This second report iteration tracks how well the creative economy has recovered from the pandemic and, for the first time, the demographics of the workforce."**

The report, which was completed in late 2023, includes data from 2012 to 2022 and measures the change over that time. It details impacts the COVID-19 pandemic had on the creative industries in San Diego County, their recovery since that time, data on the diversity and demographics of the creative workforce, and key recommendations to strengthen and promote the overall growth of the creative economy.

"The creative economy contributes over \$10 billion to the regional economy, and employers told us they love San Diego's skilled workforce," said Daniel Enemark, San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center's Chief Economist. **"Creative workers find great satisfaction in their work, but both business owners and employees struggle with the high cost of living. Higher wages and more affordable workspaces are two of the community's greatest needs. Workers of color continue to**

be underrepresented in the creative economy, but we were encouraged to see the portion of Black, Hispanic and Asian workers growing. We hope this trend continues and believe it can if workers, businesses and government come together to build a more accessible, sustainable and inclusive, creative economy.”

Key findings in the report include:

- At \$10.8 billion, the creative industries supported economic activity equivalent to 3.7% of the county's gross regional product (GRP) in 2022. It supported almost 170,000 total jobs across the county's economy, including 82,467 direct creative economy jobs and nearly 87,000 indirect jobs.
- The creative economy, as a portion of San Diego's regional economy, has been steadily shrinking over the past 10 years. It hit its lowest point in 2021 before bouncing back to 2019 levels in 2022.
- Of the 13 industry groups studied, digital media contributed the most to San Diego's total GRP, while the printing and publishing sector suffered job losses. The number of creative firms in the region has not bounced back after the pandemic. There were 6,179 firms in 2022 compared to 7,386 firms in 2019.

The report also presents recommendations that public, private and nonprofit sectors should make to improve conditions for the local and regional creative economy. The report recommends integrating the creative economy into regional growth strategies, such as expanding job opportunities and supporting small businesses. It also recommends encouraging leadership and hiring initiatives that will foster equitable representation.

“As the creative industries here continue to evolve, this report could not be more timely. It is critical that we focus on building a strong, sustainable creative sector, one which not only contributes to our local economy and wider society but one that encourages the system-wide changes needed to ensure that these economic benefits are felt by all parts of the creative workforce,” said Christine E. Jones, Chief of Civic Arts Strategies. **“The recommendations contained within this report offer new insights for stakeholders -- policymakers, strategists, creatives, industry partners and businesses operating in the creative sector -- across the region.”**

This report is funded in part by the California Arts Council, a state agency. This year, San Diego's creative industries will draw global attention thanks to its [World Design Capital 2024](#) designation. According to the report, with strategic investments and collective mobilization, San Diego is well-positioned to grow its cultural and creative influence as a hub for the creative economy.

The City of San Diego advances and drives an equitable and inclusive creative economy and cultural ecosystem by investing in the work of artists and creatives and the institutions and systems that amplify creative work and experiences. To learn more, visit sandiego.gov/arts-culture.

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