



watauga arts council



Annual Impact Report

2023/24

Nurturing the Arts for Watauga County

Advocate. Educate. Support. Inspire.

The Watauga Arts Council (WAC) fosters a thriving, diverse, and vibrant creative community through arts advocacy, education, support, and inspiration.

Serving professional and emerging artists, WAC facilitates and provides a structure for arts initiatives that enrich the lives of artists, residents, and visitors alike.

Watauga Arts Economic Impact Snapshot

Creative Industries data comes from Riverbed Research commissioned by the Western NC Arts Agencies. Arts nonprofit data comes from the Arts & Economic Impact Survey that included 20 Watauga arts nonprofits. The numbers listed here are specific to Watauga County.

\$16.8m

Watauga County arts and culture nonprofits generated \$16.8 million in revenue in 2022.

\$30.7m

Sales generated by creative industries Watauga County based on research from 2021 tax records

\$7.4m

Direct economic impact by Watauga County arts nonprofits.

\$1.1m

Volunteer impact of Watauga County arts nonprofits.

\$2.6m

In total tax revenue by Watauga County arts nonprofits.

\$9.3m

Indirect impact from Watauga County arts nonprofit audiences.

Watauga Arts Council provides crucial support for the arts sector, ensuring significant **economic and social impact** for our community.



Projects & Programs

Art for All Abilities
Providing quality arts education and experiences to disadvantaged populations

Arts Education for All
Providing quality arts education and experiences to disadvantaged populations

Youth Makers Market
Providing opportunities for youth ages 6-18 to sell their handmade items at the Watauga County Farmers Market. This year we plan to incorporate makers days and training.

Community Center
Offering space and hospitality to community groups and arts-based nonprofits that need a place to gather.

Monthly Art Exhibitions
Providing opportunities for a variety of artists and mediums to be exhibited in our gallery at the WAC Art Center.

Art in the Outdoors
Launched the Art in the Outdoors initiative, which aims to increase Public Art in Watauga County through murals, sculptures, and temporary community exhibitions.

Grant Administration
Act as the NC Designated County Partner, we administer legislative funds that have been allocated for Watauga County.

Events
Organized and supported countless arts related events, including Buskers Fest and Boonerang Music and Arts Festival.

HighCountryArts.org
Launched the area's first online Arts Directory - a hub for finding the arts in the High Country. We also produced the area's first paper Arts Map.

Advocacy
Work with local agencies and leaders to ensure the arts are being included in community planning and projects.

Grass Roots Grants to Nonprofit Agencies

- Appalachian Theatre
- Blowing Rock Art and History Museum
- Blowing Rock Historical Society - Artist in Residence
- Project Dance
- Mountain Home Music
- Mountain Mermaid Art Collective
- Southern Appalachian Historical Society
- Daniel Boone Gardens
- Watauga Farmers Market

\$30,000

administered to artists and local arts organizations

Multicultural Sustainability Grants

- Junaluska Community Art Group
- Roots, Branches, and Fruit
- Los Viejitos Dance Group
- Capoeira Arte Antiga Inc.
- Multicultural Arts Collective
- Boonerang International
- Las Rosas y El Clavel

Artist Project & Support Grants

- Gary Medley
- Erin Peters
- Alex Derrick
- Douglas Boyce
- Mark Edwards
- Tammy Desiderio
- Kilby Spencer
- Hilda Downer
- Hanna Traynham

BIG ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023...



26,000 + impacted by our events and community center

We average 250 people per week, 7 days a week, at the Watauga Arts Council on Shadowline Drive, between classes and community groups, and nonprofit support. Direct events we helped facilitate drew more than 14,000 people.

500+ Artists participated in opportunities to sell and showcase

Between art exhibitions and events like Boonerang and Buskers Fest, we offered more than 500 artists opportunities to showcase or sell their work.

3 Sculptures and 1 Mural Installed

3 Sculptures were installed on the Greenway by the end of 2023. We also helped to facilitate the installation of the Doc Watson Mural. More are on the way!

\$11,000 Received to Plan Art in the Outdoors

We applied for and won an \$11k grant to develop our Art in the Outdoors initiative to create a public arts strategic plan for Watauga County.

Hosted NC Arts Council

We had the privilege of hosting 16 North Carolina Arts Council Board of Directors for an annual board meeting. This made a great impression!

Launched an online arts directory and paper arts map

We successfully launched HighCountryArts.org and the Explore the Arts Map to help draw attention to the Arts Sector in Watauga County. Arts tourists consistently twice as much as tourists for other industries.

PARTNERSHIPS

We couldn't have done it without our strong partnerships & funders...

- Blue Ridge Conservancy - Sculptures on the Greenway
- Watauga Opportunities - Art for All Abilities
- Watauga County Schools - Support for county art teachers & Art for Abilities
- Watauga Farmers Market - Youth Makers Market & Community Pumpkin Carving
- Downtown Boone Development Association - Public arts and artist engagement
- Boone Department of Cultural Resources (Jones House) - artist outreach for galleries and events, Boonerang support, & more!
- Watauga Economic Development Association - Gateway Community Planning and Grant Support & Stake Our Claim Planning, and more
- Boone Chamber of Commerce - Stake our Claim planning and arts placement
- Watauga Tourism and Development- Map support
- Made x Mountains - Funding for Art in the Outdoors Initiative
- Count Commissioners - Use of Building & Support for Operations
- Watauga Community Foundation - Support for Art for All Abilities
- High Country Watermedia Society - Support for Arts Ed
- NC Arts Council - Support for operations



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING US!

A few testimonials from those who have benefited...

"Thank you so much to the Watauga Arts Council for giving the Mountain Dulcimer Gathering group a home! We meet on the second Saturday of each month at the Blue Ridge ArtSpace building. The regulars and guests really appreciate the friendly and comfortable space, as well as the recent gift of music stands from the Kudzu Music store to the Arts Council." **Mary Greene**

Sharing is a really good part of WAC Open Studio Art. Recently, another artist in our group asked how to remove the 'bumps' from paper in watercolor paintings. I responded with my method, which the artist appreciated. This works both ways—artists have helped with my questions and given notice of upcoming exhibitions; we hear about classes and exhibits from Amber as well, and we have fun as we work on art!
Community Participant

"The recent sculpture installation by the Watauga County Arts Council has truly elevated the user experience on the Middle Fork Greenway. We are immensely grateful for the tireless effort that the WCAC is putting toward creating outdoor public art in Watauga County. Their commitment to highlighting our natural resources through such unique and creative pieces is commendable. I am confident that as more installations are added, they will continue to inspire a sense of wonder and awe in all who visit the trail." - **Wendy Patoprsty, Middle Fork Greenway Director Blue Ridge Conservancy**

"We are so extremely fortunate to have WAC as a 'base' for BRCT. From a place to have our monthly meetings, a space for auditions and even rehearsals, this organization is truly a force in our community! Amber and staff are amazingly organized and accommodating. It makes me so happy to go there and see what they are doing in making sure all forms of art have a home in the High Country!"
Tommy Light, President/Blue Ridge Community Theatre

WAC provides us with a home away from home. Buskers Fest makes all the work that goes into the art worth doing. It allows artists to connect with residents and tourists in a real and personable way. **Theresa McGrath - Bead Artist**

The Watauga Arts Council plays a crucial role in helping the arts thrive in Watauga County. WAC has helped encourage many more artists and volunteers to participate in community events, and the organization is forging conversations between local arts leaders and ensuring the arts are front and center in discussions about regional tourism and economic development planning. **Mark Freed Town of Boone Director of Cultural Resources**

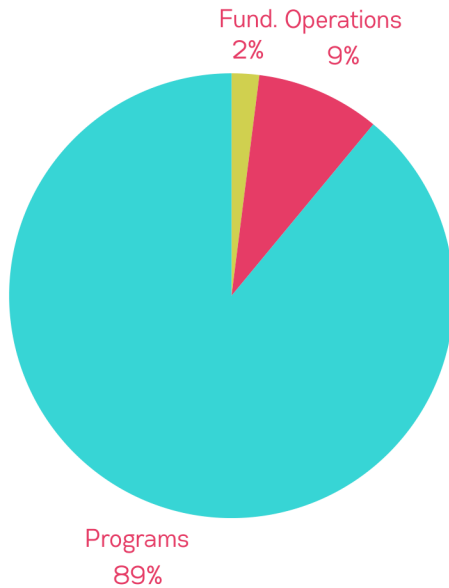
"WAC has offered art classes and the opportunity to gather with friends to create, laugh, and enjoy community in Open Studio. Wednesdays are a high point in my week when my creativity soars." - **Sondra Edwards - open studio participant**

Our partnership with the Watauga Arts Council has been instrumental in creating meaningful experiences for both our young artists and the community at large. One of the most significant collaborations has been the Youth Makers Market, which takes place in the Kid's Corner area of our farmers' market every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month. **Michelle Dineen - Market Director Watauga Farmers Market**



WATAUGA ARTS WHERE'S THE \$?

Watauga Arts Council operates on a lean budget spending only \$205,209 for 2022/2023. Here's where the \$ goes...

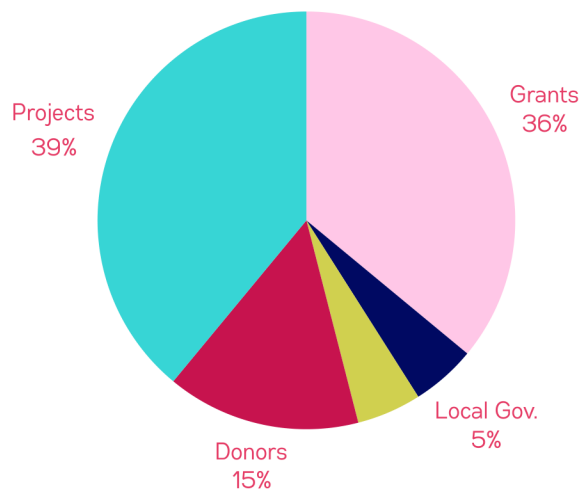


WAC Spending Percentages

Programs	\$183,843
Operations	\$16,282
Fundraising & Events	\$5,087

22/23 Income Sources

- Grants - \$74,000
- Local Government \$10,000
- Business Partners \$10,000
- Private Donors \$30,000
- Project Revenue \$81,209



Other Info

