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Culture & Communities Study

Lectures, Speakers, and Literary Events
Participants

WINTER 2026



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4 CULTURE


Wilkening Consulting
audience research | knowledge curation

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RESULTS BY SELECTED DISCIPLINES



While most people participate in more than one type of cultural consumption, audience traits by different disciplines do vary *to some degree*.

For example, people who participate in history-related content often have similar traits, as do people who are interested in literary events. Some activities, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities, are more closely tied to life stage, in this case the needs of parents and guardians of minor children.

To help individual cultural organizations better understand their specific audiences, this study examined the key traits of eleven cultural disciplines.



KEY TRAITS BY DISCIPLINE

Because most cultural consumers participate in a variety of cultural activities, audiences by discipline have far more in common than they differ.



For these results, overall points of agreement were set aside in order to identify more unique traits of individual audiences by discipline. What sets visitors to botanic gardens apart from concert audiences?



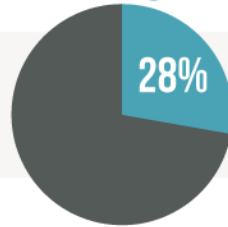
This is intended to enable cultural organizations to focus on emotional touchpoints and behaviors that are more meaningful to their audiences *in addition to those of the overall findings*, as well as to understand where greater concentrations of potential new audiences might be found.

LECTURES, SPEAKERS, AND LITERARY EVENTS PARTICIPANTS

KEY TRAITS



28% of King County Residents Participating*



How they Participate

By attending lectures or literary events (such as author talks, poetry readings, or writing workshops)

Leisure Time Patterns

- Participate in the widest variety of leisure-time activities, and significantly more likely to: participate in traditional culturally-specific activities, attend performing arts, participate in outdoor nature experiences, and visit museums
- Motivated by learning, curiosity, and connecting with their cultural traditions or heritage

How they hear about community events

Word-of-mouth, Facebook, Instagram, email

Barriers to participation

Time, cost, distance

Cultural Activities Most Likely to Visit/Participate in

More avid visitors/participants of:

Museums of all types, live performances and events of all types, history/heritage activities (family history, historic preservation activities, watching documentaries, historic sites), customs or practices of a specific cultural community, STEM activities

Desired Outcomes from Cultural Organizations

- Trusting the public can handle difficult content
- Feeling by having perspectives or history of people like them represented
- Cultivate connections to their history and cultural background
- Foster creativity

Demographic Characteristics

- Appears to be a segment of parents or guardians of elementary-age children engaged in this content ... *perhaps* for their children
- More likely to have a college degree
- More likely to work in arts, culture, heritage, or creative fields
- No significant differences by age, accessibility needs, race or ethnicity

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* Participation rates within this segment vary from frequent to sporadic, but all indicated previous participation