

DOORS OPEN

Culture & Communities Study

Higher Than Average Cultural
Participants

WINTER 2026



DOORS
OPEN

4 CULTURE


Wilkening Consulting
audience research | knowledge curation

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RESULTS BY PARTICIPATION PATTERNS

This study examined participation patterns through three lenses: museum visitation, live performance attendance, and participation in an assortment of other cultural and creative activities.

There are two ways to assess participation:

INCIDENCE: A binary yes/no. Does someone participate in cultural activities? In King County, nearly all King County residents (93%) participated in cultural activities in the past year, and 7% did not. This is a measure of *incidence*.

FREQUENCY: A measure of *how often* someone participates in cultural activities in a defined period.

Since 93% of King County residents participate in cultural activities, determining rates of *frequency* is important to understand participation patterns.

ASSESSING CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT:

FREQUENCY RATES

A scoring system was developed to assess overall cultural engagement among King County residents using *frequency measures*.

A number of different scoring systems were tested, and the simplest produced the clearest results. Each respondent was assigned a score between 0 and 30, with a maximum 10 points scored each based on their reported visitation at museums, attendance at live performances, and participation in a set of six other cultural activities.

Maximum 10 points possible:

Museum visitation
based on frequency

Maximum 10 points possible:

Live performance
attendance based
on frequency

Maximum 10 points possible (1.67 pts each):

Explored history or heritage
Attended a cultural festival
STEM events
Literary arts events
Participated in customs or practices of a specific
cultural community
Participated in Indigenous, Native, and traditional
cultural activities

HIGHER THAN AVERAGE CULTURAL PARTICIPANTS

Percent of King
County Residents: **30%**

Participation Score: **18 to 30**
(out of 30)



Leisure Time Patterns

- Most engaged in general leisure activities
- Priorities for leisure time: fun, relaxing, time with family/friends
- But the majority also prioritize learning and curiosity *as well*

How They Hear About Community Events

- Word-of-mouth, Facebook, email, and Instagram
- Much more tuned in

Barriers to Cultural Participation

- Time
- Distance

Cultural Activities Most Likely to Visit/Participate in

- Everything! They are participating at relatively high frequency across all activities.

Expectations of Cultural Organizations

- A sense of welcome and belonging
- Promotes engagement in community life
- Provides educational opportunities
- Highest rate of inclusive values

Demographic Characteristics

- More likely to be parents or guardians of minor children
- More likely to have a college degree, generally higher incomes
- No significant differences by accessibility needs, race or ethnicity

Summary Statement

Omnivorous! They have much broader and frequent engagement with culture. 99% believe cultural organizations positively impact communities.

