



Performing Arts Research Coalition
Community Report

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Findings from a 2002 Household Survey in the Greater
Austin Metropolitan Area

Mary Kopczynski and Mark Hager of the Urban Institute

A collaborative project of the Association of Performing Arts
Presenters, American Symphony Orchestra League, Dance/USA,
OPERA America, and Theatre Communications Group, Supported
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ABOUT THE PARC PROJECT

The Performing Arts Research Coalition (PARC) brings together five major national service organizations (NSOs) in the performing arts—the American Symphony Orchestra League, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Dance/USA, OPERA America, and Theatre Communications Group—to improve and coordinate the ways performing arts organizations gather information on their sector.

This unprecedented collaborative effort is coordinated by OPERA America and supported by a three-year, \$2.7 million grant to OPERA America from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Working with the Urban Institute, a leading nonprofit research organization in Washington, D.C., the project is collecting data in 10 pilot communities: Alaska, Cincinnati, Denver, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Austin, Boston, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Sarasota (FL), and Washington, D.C.

Information is being gathered on administrative expenditures and revenues of performing arts organizations, the value of the performing arts as experienced by both attenders and nonattenders of arts events, and audience and subscriber satisfaction with performances and related activities.

The findings from these various research activities are expected to help performing arts organizations across the country improve their management capacity, strengthen their cross-disciplinary collaboration, increase their responsiveness to their communities, and strengthen local and national advocacy efforts on behalf of American arts and culture.

Research findings will be available each year of the initiative, and a summary analysis will be released in 2004. The national service organizations are regularly sharing findings with their members, policymakers, and the press, indicating how this information could be used to increase participation in and support for the arts, locally and nationally.

For further information, please contact OPERA America at (202) 293-4466.

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Foreword

Austin is known as the capital of Texas, the home of the nation's largest university, the epicenter of the Southwestern technology boom, and the live music capital of the world. It is a city that prides itself on providing its citizens with an exceptional quality of life. With the average age of an Austinite being less than 35 years old, Austin is a city characterized by youth, education, innovation, and creativity.

The PARC research effort benchmarks a challenging time for Austin and our nation, as arts organizations attempt to respond to the roller coaster ride in our industry. Selected as one of the five cities studied in the second year of this research project, Austinites were surveyed almost exactly one year following the tragedies of 9/11, within a year of the crisis at Houston-based Enron and a record fall of the stock market, and several months prior to the start of the war in Iraq. With that as a backdrop, the PARC project offers valuable information and encouragement as we move forward.

Some encouraging findings include

- Nearly three-quarters of Austinites attended a live performing arts event in the past year.
- The data show little relationship between age and attendance level, challenging the idea that people who attend the performing arts are older.
- Two out of three Austinites with young children at home still manage to attend live performances.
- Arts attenders are more engaged in Austin life than nonattenders. They are more likely to attend concerts, sporting events, museums, movies, live music venues, and more likely to vote and volunteer.

Some findings that provide us with challenges:

- While two of three Austinites believe the arts contribute to the education and development of children, the current economy and recent state and city budget issues prompted serious cut-backs in arts education in our schools.
- The data indicate that while most citizens believe that the arts improve the quality of life in Austin, fewer Austinites believe that the arts have a positive economic impact.
- With the greatest barrier to attendance being difficulty in making time to go out, arts organizations will continue to compete for audience members' most finite and precious commodity—their time.

Austin is currently in the middle of a two-year redesign of the funding process for the arts. The PARC project provides a framework for further research and collaboration. Armed with knowledge, it is now time for these conversations on awareness and activism to begin.

Cookie Ruiz, Executive Director, Ballet Austin
For the Austin PARC Group

Preface

The Performing Arts Research Coalition—PARC—provides a historic opportunity for five national service organizations to work together in an unprecedented three-year project to measure the level of participation in and support for the arts in 10 communities across the country.

A second set of findings from this project—the results of household surveys conducted in the metropolitan areas of Austin, Boston, Minneapolis–St. Paul, Sarasota, and Washington, D.C.—are now available. They enable us to draw a detailed picture of the value of the performing arts to individuals and their communities, and to offer a greater understanding of the perceived obstacles to greater attendance.

The findings are extremely encouraging. They reveal an arts audience far larger and more diverse than currently believed, comparable in size to audiences for sports. Support for the performing arts also appears to be broad, with far-reaching cultural, social, and educational implications. Attendance at arts events, for example, was perceived by attenders and nonattenders alike to be of significant value to communities, and especially important to the development and education of children. Several attendance barriers cited were primarily perceptual; for example, potential audiences did not fully appreciate the ease of attending performances and the accessibility of the arts experience.

Such information should be useful to a variety of stakeholders, including policymakers evaluating the role of government in supporting the arts; funders needing hard data on which to base and increase their financial support of the arts; media seeking a wider consumer base; and managers of arts organizations tackling the twin challenges of increasing and diversifying their audiences.

The size and breadth of the performing arts audience also suggest an appetite for expanded arts coverage in newspapers, radio, and television, and that arts coverage should perhaps be considered in broader terms than performance reviews. Grant makers may be interested in placing their arts support in the larger context of the range of civic benefits that derive from arts attendance.

Local initiatives that improve parking and reduce perceived and real obstacles to convenience and safety could have a significant impact on the size of the arts audience and frequency of attendance, particularly if such efforts are combined with communication strategies that introduce more people to the arts experience.

We invite you to review on the following pages these common threads and to reflect on the vibrant picture they paint of the high levels of participation in and appreciation for the performing arts in these five communities. In closing, PARC wishes to convey how indebted the coalition is to the generous support of The Pew Charitable Trusts and to the outstanding service of the Urban Institute in designing and administering this project.

Marc A. Scorca
OPERA America President and CEO
PARC Project Coordinator

Highlights from Five Communities

Following are the key findings from the five household surveys conducted in the metropolitan areas of Austin, Boston, Minneapolis–St. Paul, Sarasota, and Washington, D.C. The findings cover participation rates, characteristics of attenders, perceived value of the performing arts to individuals and to communities, and barriers to greater attendance.

PARTICIPATION RATES

The research indicates that attendance at live professional performing arts events, at least on an occasional basis, is an activity enjoyed by a significant majority of adults in the five communities studied. The notion that the performing arts only appeal to a narrow segment of the general public does not appear to be accurate.

- **Attendance Levels:** Approximately three-quarters of respondents reported attending a live professional performing arts event in the past 12 months. These numbers range from 78 percent (in the Boston metro area) to 71 percent (in Sarasota-Manatee). Frequent attenders, defined as those who attended at least 12 performances over the past year, range from 17 percent of respondents (in the Washington, D.C. metro area) to 11 percent (in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metro area).
- **Arts vs. Sporting Events:** In all five communities, more people have attended a live performing arts event at least once in the past year than have attended a professional sporting event. However, arts attenders are active citizens who participate in a wide range of activities and volunteer for organizations in their community.
- **Performing Arts and Leisure Activities:** The research confirms that frequent performing arts attenders are also the most frequent attenders of other leisure activities, including sporting events, movies, festivals, museums, and popular concerts. Attenders were generally more involved with these activities than nonattenders of performing arts events. Rather than

an “arts” versus “other activities” distinction, the findings suggest that people generally are either involved in community activities (be it attendance at performing arts activities or otherwise) or they are not.

- **Performing Arts and Volunteering:** In all five communities, arts attenders and frequent arts attenders are considerably more likely to volunteer than are nonattenders—not just for arts organizations, but generally in their communities. Although there is clear evidence to support this relationship, the data cannot be used to suggest that attendance at performing arts results in higher levels of volunteerism. Nonetheless, arts attenders display characteristics that are conducive to greater civic engagement and stronger communities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ATTENDERS

The arts audience is diverse. It includes people from all age groups and income levels, and is not limited, as is commonly believed, to older and affluent individuals.

- **Age and Attendance:** The most noteworthy finding from the surveys is the lack of a strong relationship between age and level of attendance.
- **Household Income and Attendance:** Nonattenders show a trend toward lower incomes and frequent attenders show a trend toward higher incomes. The finding is stronger in some communities than in others, and is weakest in Austin where respondents from the lowest income households are as likely to be frequent attenders as respondents from the highest income households.
- **Education and Attendance:** There is a strong relationship between education level and category of attendance. That is, as education level increases, so also does the percentage of respondents who are attenders or frequent attenders.

VALUE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

The research indicates clearly that arts attenders place a very high value on the role of the arts in their lives in terms of enjoyment, their understanding of themselves and other cultures, creativity, and connection to their communities. This holds true across age groups, income levels, and the presence or absence of children at home.

- **Offers Enjoyment:** A strong majority of respondents have strong opinions about the level of enjoyment derived from live performing arts. More than 80 percent of respondents strongly agree or agree that the arts are enjoyable.
- **Factors Related to Enjoyment:** As level of education increases, so does the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with the statement that attending live performances is enjoyable. Enjoyment is unrelated to household income level, except in Sarasota where higher household incomes are associated with greater levels of arts enjoyment.

- **Factors Unrelated to Enjoyment:** Age and the presence of children at home are largely unrelated to the degree to which respondents find live performing arts to be enjoyable.
- **Stimulates Critical Thinking:** In all cities, more than three-quarters of respondents also strongly agree or agree that attending live performing arts is thought provoking.
- **Factors Related to Critical Thinking:** The strong belief that the performing arts are thought provoking does not differ substantially by household income level, age, or the presence of children in the home. However, consistent with expectations, this belief is held most commonly by frequent attenders and least commonly by nonattenders.
- **Increases Cultural Understanding:** Respondents in each of the five communities have similar views regarding the extent to which live performing arts help them better understand other cultures. Overall, between 70 percent (in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metro area) and 79 percent (in the Washington, D.C. metro area) of respondents strongly agree or agree with this statement. This strong level of agreement holds regardless of education, income, age, or whether or not there are children at home.
- **Encourages Creativity:** More than 60 percent of respondents in each community strongly agree or agree that attending live performing arts encourages them to be more creative. Education level and household income (except in greater Austin) play little role in whether one feels strongly that attending live performing arts encourages higher levels of creativity. However, younger respondents are more inclined to agree than are older respondents that attending live performing arts encourages them to be more creative.

VALUE OF PERFORMING ARTS TO COMMUNITIES

Attenders place an even greater value on the arts in their communities than they do in their own lives. They believe strongly that the arts *improve the quality of life and are a source of community pride, promote understanding of other people and different ways of life, help preserve and share cultural heritage, provide opportunities to socialize, and contribute to lifelong learning in adults*. Above all, they believe that the arts *contribute to the education and development of children*. Especially noteworthy is the fact that many nonattenders also share similar views.

- **Individual vs. Community Value:** The percentage of respondents with positive opinions about the value of the arts to their community is even higher than that reported in the preceding section. This suggests that people place a higher value on the arts in their communities than they place on the value of the performing arts in their own lives. Combining the percentages of respondents who strongly agree and agree with each of these statements, more than three-quarters are in agreement, in every community, with every statement in the survey about community values.

- **Value to Children:** At least 9 out of 10 respondents in each of the five communities either strongly agree or agree that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children. These opinions about the contributions made by the performing arts to the education and development of children are held consistently, regardless of education level, income, age, presence of children, or frequency of attendance.
- **Increased Quality of Life:** More than 8 out of 10 respondents strongly agree or agree that the performing arts improve the quality of life in their community.
- **Preserves Cultural Heritage:** At least 9 out of 10 respondents in each of the five communities strongly agree or agree with the statement that the arts help preserve and share cultural heritage. Among these respondents, the research finds no relationship between this belief and education level, income level, or the presence of children at home. Even nonattenders strongly agree or agree with this statement in relatively large numbers.
- **Strengthens Local Economy:** The percentage of respondents who strongly agree or agree that the performing arts contribute to the local economy is slightly lower than for other community values considered in this study. However, the percentage of respondents that strongly agree is considerably lower than for most of the other community values.

BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE

There are, of course, barriers to arts attendance among nonattenders and barriers to more frequent attendance among those who already attend arts performances. What is particularly interesting is that, despite what some might suspect, the cost of tickets is not the leading barrier.

- **Key Barriers:** Of the 11 barriers suggested in the survey, only *prefer to spend leisure time in other ways* and *hard to make time to go out* are cited by a majority of respondents in all five communities as a big or moderate reason. *Cost of tickets* is cited by a majority in all communities except Sarasota, and *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events* is a big or moderate issue for a majority of respondents in Austin and Boston. *Cost of tickets* ranks second or third across the sites, never first.
- **Prefer Spending Time Elsewhere:** Between one-quarter and one-third of respondents in each community indicate that their *preference to spend leisure time in other ways* is a big reason why they do not attend more performing arts events. The preference to spend leisure time in other ways is the factor that most clearly differentiates attenders from nonattenders in all five communities.

- **Difficulty Finding Time:** Interestingly, attenders and frequent attenders are almost as likely as nonattenders to say that *hard to make time to go out* is a substantial barrier. The main variable that makes this a big factor for more people is the presence or absence of children in the home.
- **Cost of Tickets:** The cost of tickets is the only “big” barrier that attenders cite more often than nonattenders or frequent attenders. Especially noteworthy is the fact that *cost of tickets* as a barrier to performing arts attendance is substantially unrelated to education level, age, or whether there are children in the home.

The research makes clear that attenders and frequent attenders share the same concerns about limited time and the cost of tickets with nonattenders. Yet the first two groups find attendance at the arts sufficiently rewarding to overcome these obstacles. Artists and arts organizations have the challenge of offering performances of sufficient quality, supported by strong customer service and community programs, to help potential attenders and frequent attenders overcome these barriers.

Other obstacles cited less often by attenders and nonattenders also offer arts organizations an opportunity to build audiences by overcoming barriers of perception.

- **Lack of Appeal:** The statement that the *performing arts do not appeal* is cited as a big barrier by between 6 and 12 percent of respondents in the five communities. This barrier clearly is tied to education level and, as might be expected, clearly differentiates attenders from nonattenders. Performing arts organizations might consider increasing community programs and adult education activities that could help build an interest in the arts among nonattenders.
- **Feel Out of Place:** A number of nonattenders said they *feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events*, although fewer people cite this as a big barrier, and the relationship with education is much weaker in all communities. Performing arts organizations might wish to examine the way audiences are greeted and made to feel welcome upon entering the theater and before performances, during intermissions, and at the conclusion of the event.

An additional barrier is the *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*, which varies in importance by community. This particular obstacle could be addressed by arts organizations if they are in a position to make special parking arrangements for their audiences. Similarly, the belief that *performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations* could be mitigated by improved lighting, more visible security, and general awareness of the needs of the audience beyond the final applause.

Austin Household Survey Findings

From October to December of 2002, 832 residents of the greater Austin area responded to a telephone household survey designed by the Urban Institute in collaboration with PARC to elicit information about the frequency and pattern of their attendance at live performing arts events. The survey also probed their attitudes toward the value of the performing arts to their personal lives and to their community. This report provides the key findings from that survey.

Findings from the greater Austin area survey should interest participating members of the performing arts collaborative, local businesses, government officials, and residents of the greater Austin area. By using this information, arts organizations will be better positioned to enhance their leadership role in the Austin community and nationally. They also may find the information helpful in efforts to improve their organizational management and identify opportunities for greater participation of individuals in performing arts activities.

HOW THE REPORT IS ORGANIZED

The report provides a snapshot of the level of attendance at and appreciation for the performing arts in the greater Austin community. It is organized around four key topics:

- **Attendance at Performing Arts Events:** How often do the residents of Austin attend live performing arts events? Does frequency differ by income, age, education, the presence of children in the household, or voting behavior?
- **Perceived Value of the Performing Arts to Individuals:** What do the residents think about the value of the performing arts in their own lives? Do attitudes vary by such characteristics as age and income?

- **Perceived Value of the Performing Arts to the Community:** What are residents' attitudes about the value of the performing arts to the community as a whole? Do attitudes reflect income, education, or age characteristics?
- **Barriers to Participation:** What do residents think are the biggest obstacles to greater attendance at performing arts events?

The information from the survey, which provides answers to these and other similar questions, is presented in tabular form with accompanying explanatory text. The tables provide the basic information from which the reader can make any number of inferences, depending on the interests of the organization or individual reviewing the information. The text notes the most striking findings in each table and is designed to enable a reader to review the survey results quickly and easily.

A statistic called Somer's d is used in a number of tables to show the relationship between two variables. Somer's d values of less than -0.15 or higher than $+0.15$ are worth your attention, while values closer to zero indicate a weak or even nonexistent relationship between variables. For a full discussion of Somer's d values, please see page 54 in the section on methodology.

PARC PARTNERS IN AUSTIN

- Austin Lyric Opera
- Austin Symphony Orchestra
- Austin Theatre Alliance
- Ballet Austin
- Progressive Arts (ProArts) Collective
- Salvage Vanguard Theatre
- University of Texas at Austin, Department of Theatre and Dance
- University of Texas at Austin, Performing Arts Center
- Zachary Scott Theatre Center

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS IN THE GREATER AUSTIN AREA

Austin residents who responded to the survey reflect the diverse education levels, household incomes, ages, household compositions of the community, and its voting behavior. This diversity enables us to compare reported attitudes and behaviors of respondents by these characteristics. The result is a complex and nuanced picture of who attends live performing arts events, who does not, the value they place on such performances, and the barriers they perceive to greater attendance. The following five tables show how these major characteristics are distributed among survey respondents.

Two cautions: First, a substantial number of respondents (15 percent) chose not to report their household income level. In the tables where we look at breakdowns by income, we include only those respondents who reported their income. Second, because of the relatively small numbers of respondents in the sample who completed only elementary school, who are aged 65 and over, and those who say they vote “about half the time,” readers should be careful not to draw major conclusions about these groups of respondents.

The respondents are 68 percent white, 4 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 19 percent Hispanic/Latino, 5 percent black, 1 percent other or mixed race, and 1 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native. Two percent of respondents did not report their race/ethnicity.



HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Elementary school	65	8%
High School or GED	136	16%
Junior college or tech school	221	27%
Four-year college or university	248	30%
Post-graduate degree	156	19%
Did not report	6	1%
Total	832	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than \$25,000	130	16%
\$25,000 to under \$50,000	179	22%
\$50,000 to under \$100,000	234	28%
\$100,000 or more	161	19%
Did not report	128	15%
Total	832	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.



AGE

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Under 25	115	14%
25-34	210	25%
35-44	202	24%
45-54	146	10%
55-64	85	10%
65 and over	64	8%
Did not report	10	1%
Total	832	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU SAY YOU VOTE?

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Never	123	15%
Once in awhile	89	11%
About half the time	67	8%
Most of the time	206	25%
Always	338	41%
Did not report	9	1%
Total	832	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD

	Number of Respondents	Percentage
No children at home	503	61%
Children under 13 years of age	248	30%
Children 13 years and older	118	14%
Did not report	12	1%

Total does not equal 100% because some families have children both under and over the age of 13.

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Percentage totals in this report may not always add to 100 percent because of rounding.

Attendance

Attendance is the most common measure of how much people value the performing arts. This section focuses on attendance, but also considers related behaviors such as listening to recorded media, watching performances on public television, and participating personally in performing arts activities.

To gauge respondents' attendance levels, we asked them about their attendance at a variety of live, professional performing arts events in the past year. Respondents were instructed to exclude attendance at elementary, middle, or high school productions. For example, we asked people how many times they had attended a live professional dance performance such as ballet, modern/contemporary or a culturally specific dance performance in the past 12 months. We asked similar questions about attendance at opera, theatre, and symphony performances.

We also included a catchall "other discipline" category. The examples given to respondents for this category were chamber music, jazz, folk or traditional arts, and festivals. This category is meant to include the full range of performing arts activities that respondents could not group under dance, opera, theatre, or symphony.

HIGHLIGHTS

Attendance Levels Vary: About three in four Austinites went to a live, professional performing arts presentation last year. Of those, one in five were frequent attenders, meaning they attended 12 or more performances.

Education Matters: People with higher levels of education are more likely to attend performing arts events.

Income and Age Are Unrelated to Attendance: In most communities, higher incomes are associated with greater attendance at performing arts events. In Austin this relationship does not hold. Likewise, attendance levels do not vary substantially by age category.

Participation Takes Several Forms: Frequent attenders are more likely to enjoy recorded presentations and to be personally involved in the performing arts by playing music, singing, or otherwise performing their own art. However, a substantial number of nonattenders also participate in these ways.

Frequent Attenders Do More Than Just Attend Live Arts Events: Frequent performing arts attenders are also more frequent attenders of such activities as the movies, sporting events, and pop/rock concerts. This suggests that attenders are better characterized as “generally involved” rather than “arts lovers.”



About half of respondents said they had been to a live professional play or musical in the past 12 months.

TABLE 2.1

ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, BY DISCIPLINE

Discipline	Percent Attending At Least One Performance	Average Number of Performances (nonattenders included)	Average Number of Performances (discipline attenders only)*
Dance	39%	1.4	3.6
Opera	13%	0.3	2.1
Theatre	49%	1.6	3.2
Symphony	24%	0.7	2.7
Other	51%	3.2	6.3
Any Discipline	73%	7.1	9.8

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

The discipline that captures the smallest percentage of the general population is opera, with 13 percent of respondents attending in the past year. While this percentage is low in comparison to other disciplines, it is well above the national average for opera attendance.

Including the 51 percent of respondents who did not go to a play or musical in the past year, respondents went an average of 1.6 times. In contrast the average respondent attended less than one (0.3) opera performance last year. While comparatively few people in Austin attend opera, those who do attend say that they saw on average about two operas (2.1) last year.

Seventy-three percent of respondents reported attending at least one performing arts event in the past 12 months. This leaves 27 percent of respondents that we refer to as “nonattenders.”

* This column shows average attendance for respondents who say they have attended a particular type of performance (for example, dance), while the middle column shows averages that also include respondents who have not attended.

Nearly three-quarters of Austinites attended a live performing arts event in the past year.

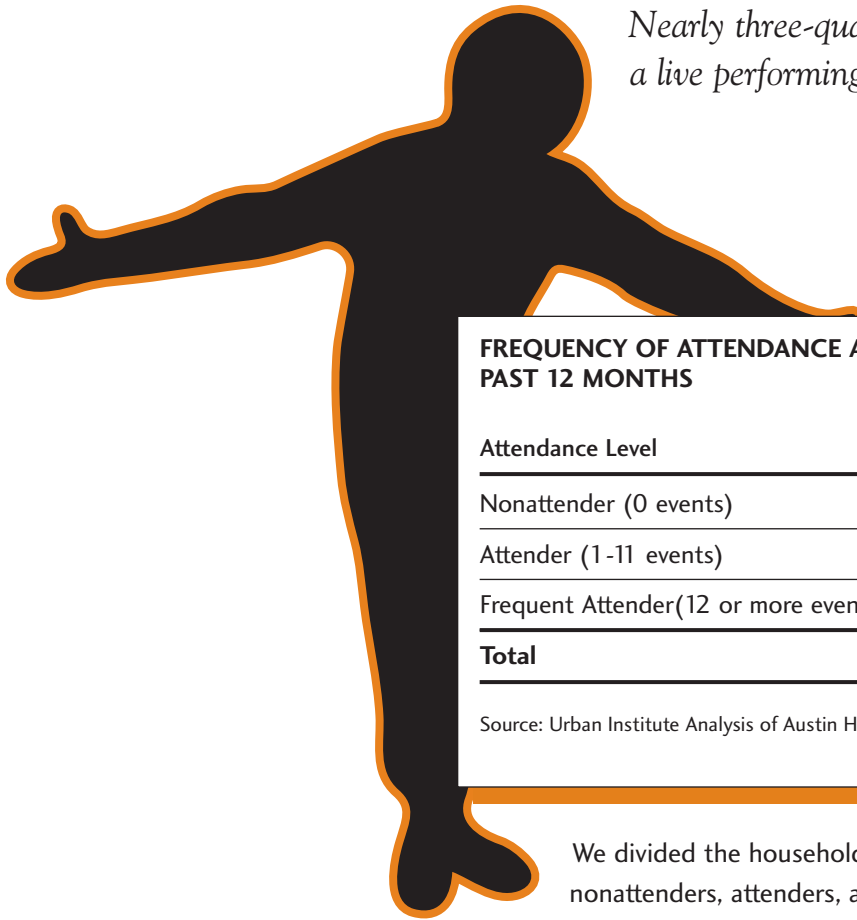


TABLE 2.2

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS

Attendance Level	Number	Percentage
Nonattender (0 events)	226	27%
Attender (1-11 events)	472	57%
Frequent Attender(12 or more events)	134	16%
Total	832	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

We divided the household survey respondents into three groups: nonattenders, attenders, and frequent attenders. These distinctions are important, because we expect that the way people feel about the performing arts and about the factors that keep them from attending performances more often will be related to their frequency of attendance. Thus, in the remainder of this section and in the sections to come, we report differences among these three categories of performing arts attenders.

One in five Austinites who attend performing arts events went to 12 or more events in the past year. Almost three in five of all respondents say they attend arts events, but less frequently than once a month. Our meetings with community working groups indicate that breaking out the middle (attender) category would provide useful distinctions for performing arts managers. Future research should take a closer look at differences between people who attend one to three times a year and those who attend more frequently.

Several contemporary studies of arts attendance have discussed differences among nonattenders, infrequent or moderate attenders, and frequent attenders. However, these discussions are usually not faced with the difficulty of defining what number of performances differentiates one category of attender from another. In this study, we place the break between attenders and frequent attenders at 12 performances.



Austinites with more education attend live performing arts events more often.

TABLE 2.3

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS, BY EDUCATION

Attendance Level	All	Elementary School	High School or GED	Junior College or Tech School	Four-year College or University	Post-graduate
Nonattender	27%	66%	40%	28%	16%	15%
Attender	57%	25%	49%	58%	65%	62%
Frequent Attender	16%	9%	10%	15%	19%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Education level is positively related to attendance level. Among respondents whose highest level of completed education is high school or less, a substantial portion did not attend a performing arts event in the past 12 months. The percentage of nonattenders decreases steadily as level of education increases. Among the most educated, only 15 percent are nonattenders. The opposite trend is evident when looking at frequent attenders. Most educated respondents are about twice as likely as their less educated counterparts to be frequent attenders.

As described in the methodology section at the end of the report, a measure of association called Somer's d can give us an indication of the strength of the relationship between two variables. The value of Somer's d for education level and the three categories of attendance is +0.21. The positive sign tells us that there is an overall association between higher education level and higher level of attendance in the performing arts. The magnitude of the statistic (0.21) is worth paying attention to because it exceeds our guideline of 0.15 and above for noting the presence of a relationship between two variables. Thus, we conclude that education level is positively associated with attendance level.



Nonattenders are concentrated in lower income households.

TABLE 2.4

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Attendance Level	All	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to under \$50,000	\$50,000 to under \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Nonattender	27%	37%	28%	26%	17%
Attender	57%	45%	54%	63%	65%
Frequent Attender	16%	18%	18%	12%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

While nonattenders are more likely to come from the lowest income households, frequent attendance is not reserved for respondents from the highest income households. Austinites from lower income households are equally as likely to be frequent attenders as those from the highest income households. The relationship between household income and attendance is weaker in Austin than in any other community in this study.

The Somer's d value for the overall relationship between income and attendance is +0.07, leading us to question the relationship between income and attendance in Austin.



Contrary to common notions, there is very little relationship between age and attendance level.

TABLE 2.5

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS, BY AGE

Attendance Level	All	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and Over
Nonattender	27%	21%	23%	29%	26%	28%	47%
Attender	57%	58%	59%	55%	62%	55%	39%
Frequent Attender	16%	21%	18%	15%	12%	17%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Respondents over the age of 65 have the highest proportion of nonattenders of any age cohort. Respondents under the age of 25 represent the highest percentages of those who have been to 12 or more performances in the past 12 months. These findings call into question the commonly held assumption that there is a “graying” of the audience for the performing arts, at least in Austin.

A Somer’s d value of -0.08 supports the conclusion that there is little relationship between age and attendance level. However, the negative sign indicates that attendance is associated with youth, albeit weakly.



Two out of three Austinites with children at home still manage to attend live performances.

TABLE 2.6

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS, BY CHILDREN IN HOME

Attendance Level	All	No Children at Home	Children Under 13 Years of Age	Children 13 Years and Older
Nonattender	27%	23%	35%	31%
Attender	57%	57%	55%	57%
Frequent Attender	16%	20%	11%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Respondents with children at home attend performing arts events less often than those without children. However, more than two in three respondents with children at home are attenders or frequent attenders of the performing arts.



Austinites also experience the performing arts by listening to recordings and engaging personally in artistic endeavors.

TABLE 2.7

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN ARTS-RELATED ACTIVITIES, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

Activity	Percent Yes	Attendance Level		
		Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
Listen to classical music on radio, CD	62%	39%	67%	80%
Watch performing arts on television	63%	37%	70%	84%
Play musical instrument	25%	10%	25%	51%
Sing in a choir or singing group	15%	11%	15%	20%
Perform or produce performing arts	21%	6%	22%	44%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

The majority of people in greater Austin report listening to recordings of classical music at least a few times a year (62 percent) and watching the performing arts on television (63 percent). Not surprisingly, frequent performing arts attenders are more likely to extend their participation to these activities than are attenders. In turn, attenders are more likely to engage in such activities than are nonattenders. Even among nonattenders, recordings and television are substantial means by which Austinites enjoy the performing arts. Nearly two in five nonattenders listened to recorded classical music or watched a performing arts event on television in the past year.

Personal involvement in the arts, through playing musical instruments, singing, or performing or producing an arts event, is much more rare than is listening to recordings or watching television. However, these activities are also related to attendance and point to an alternate means by which nonattenders and attenders express their appreciation for the performing arts.

For each activity in this table, respondents were asked, “In general, over the last year, how often, on average, did you [insert activity]?” Response options were every day, at least once a week, at least once a month, occasionally, or never. Occasionally was defined to mean a few times a year. Percent “Yes” reflects the percentage of respondents who reported that they participated in each activity either occasionally, monthly, weekly, or daily.



Austinites who attend performing arts events also go frequently to other leisure events.

TABLE 2.8

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER LEISURE ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

Activity	Percent Yes	Average Annual Attendance	Average Annual Attendance at Each Leisure Activity by Attendance Level		
			Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
Go to movies	85%	9.5	4.9	9.6	16.9
Attend professional sporting event	48%	2.7	1.7	2.7	4.5
Attend amateur sporting event	50%	3.6	3.0	3.8	3.9
Attend live pop/rock concert	46%	3.2	0.5	2.9	9.0
Attend live comedy show	30%	0.7	0.2	0.5	1.8
Go to club to hear live music or dance	63%	7.7	3.1	7.8	15.1
Go to museum or art gallery	70%	2.9	1.0	2.7	6.8
Attend a community festival, parade, etc.	80%	3.0	1.7	2.9	5.2

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Performing arts attenders go to nonperforming arts events more often than nonattenders, and frequent performing arts attenders go more often than attenders. These findings call into question the commonly held assumption that there is an arts/non-arts dichotomy, one that assumes a separation between those who attend the performing arts and those who attend sports, go to bars, or attend other social activities. The findings suggest that performing arts attenders are simply part of a more active segment of the greater Austin community.

Arts attenders get to the polls more often.



TABLE 2.9

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, BY VOTING BEHAVIOR

Attendance Level	Vote half the time or less	Vote always or most of the time	Total
Nonattender (0)	45%	55%	100%
Attender (1-11)	29%	71%	100%
Frequent Attender (12 or more)	31%	69%	100%
All survey respondents	34%	66%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

The idea that performing arts attenders are part of a more active segment of the community extends to voting behavior. Roughly 70 percent of attenders and frequent attenders vote regularly, compared with only 55 percent of nonattenders. This finding provides another piece of evidence that arts participation is part of a larger dimension of engagement with the community.

Value to the Individual

This section reports survey answers to a series of questions designed to capture information about the respondents' *perceptions* of the value of the performing arts. These personal attitudes provide some clues about what motivates people to attend performing arts activities, including how these motivations might differ depending on education, income, age, and frequency of attendance at performing arts events.

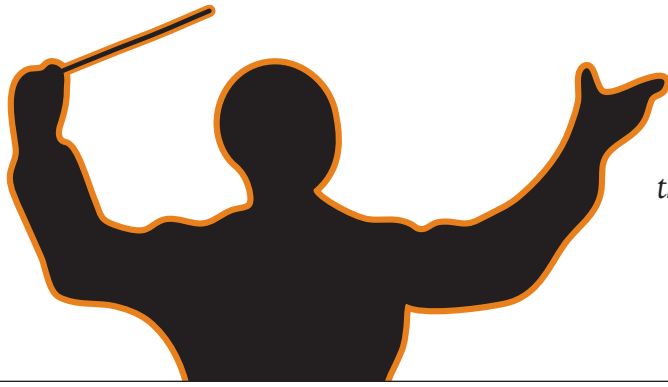


HIGHLIGHTS

Positive Attitudes Toward the Arts Predominate: The majority of Austinites agree with positive statements in the survey about the role that the performing arts play in their lives. The statement that generated the most agreement is that the performing arts are *personally enjoyable* (83 percent). Somewhat fewer (57 percent) agree that the performing arts make them *feel more connected to the community*.

Attitudes Are Strong Regardless of Demographics: As education level increases, respondents were more likely to agree that the performing arts are *enjoyable*. However, on the whole, education, income, age, presence of children at home, and voting behavior are largely unrelated to personal attitudes about the role of performing arts in respondents' lives.

Attendance Is Linked to Positive Attitudes: Overall, as attendance increases, so do positive attitudes toward the personal value of performing arts. Frequent attenders of the arts are most likely to strongly agree with all but one of the personal attitudes they were asked to consider.



Most Austinites have positive attitudes about the value of performing arts in their lives.

TABLE 3.1

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PERSONAL VALUE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

Attending Live Performing Arts...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
...is enjoyable to me	58%	25%	6%	4%	4%	2%	100%
...is thought provoking	44%	35%	7%	7%	4%	3%	100%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	36%	38%	11%	8%	4%	3%	100%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	27%	36%	13%	12%	9%	3%	100%
...encourages me to be more creative	37%	33%	13%	9%	6%	2%	100%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	25%	32%	17%	15%	9%	2%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

On all measures of personal value, a majority of respondents registered positive sentiments about the performing arts. However, the level of agreement with positive statements differs across the six items. Roughly three-quarters or more of respondents strongly agree or agree that attending live performing arts is *enjoyable*, *thought provoking*, and helps them to *understand other cultures better*. Respondents were more ambivalent toward the role of the performing arts in making them *feel more connected to community*.

The table on this page shows the distribution of responses for all survey respondents. For ease of presentation, the remaining tables in this section present data based on the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with each personal attitude.



Education level is largely unrelated to most personal attitudes about the performing arts.

TABLE 3.2

PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY EDUCATION

Attending Live Performing Arts...	All	Elementary School	High School or GED	Junior College or Tech School	Four-year College or University	Post-graduate
...is enjoyable to me	58%	37%	46%	61%	63%	67%
...is thought provoking	44%	32%	39%	47%	48%	45%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	36%	43%	38%	40%	32%	34%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	27%	28%	30%	28%	28%	21%
...encourages me to be more creative	37%	40%	38%	42%	35%	31%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	25%	32%	29%	25%	22%	23%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

As education level increases, so does the percentage of respondents in each category who strongly agree with the statement that attending live performing arts events is *enjoyable*. For the other five statements, however, respondents do not differ substantially by education level. On several issues, respondents without a high school education are more likely to strongly agree than respondents in other categories. However, the small number of respondents in the elementary school category causes us to temper our claims about them.

The relationship between education level and *attending live performing arts is enjoyable to me* results in a Somer's d of +0.15.



Austinites from households with lower incomes are more likely to feel that performing arts encourage them to be more creative.

TABLE 3.3

PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

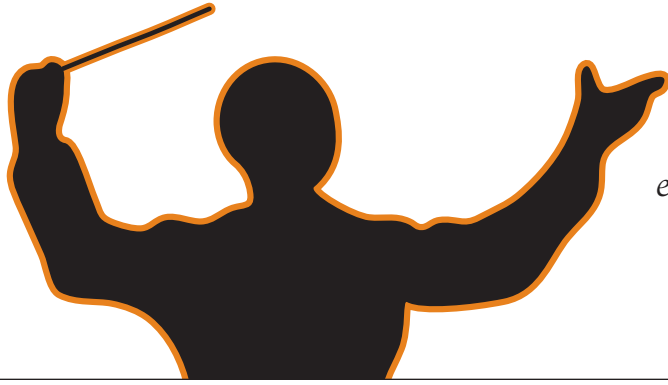
Attending Live Performing Arts...	All	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to under \$50,000	\$50,000 to under \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
...is enjoyable to me	58%*	59%	59%	59%	63%
...is thought provoking	44%	45%	48%	44%	44%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	36%	43%	43%	38%	26%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	27%	24%	31%	28%	25%
...encourages me to be more creative	37%	55%	47%	35%	26%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	25%	33%	31%	21%	19%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Respondents with incomes less than \$25,000 were twice as likely as those with incomes over \$100,000 to feel that attending live performing arts *encourages them to be more creative*. Austinites from lower income households were also more likely to strongly agree that performing arts *make them feel more connected to their community*.

The Somer's d for the relationship between *performing arts encourages me to be more creative* and income level is -0.15.

*Respondents who did not report their income were less likely to strongly agree that attending live performing arts is enjoyable, as well as other statements. Consequently, the average among income categories does not always reflect the overall average for a particular question.



Younger Austinites are more likely to feel that attending live performing arts encourages them to be more creative.

TABLE 3.4

PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY AGE

Attending Live Performing Arts...	All	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and Over
...is enjoyable to me	58%	60%	63%	58%	60%	59%	39%
...is thought provoking	44%	50%	48%	42%	52%	39%	22%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	36%	37%	43%	36%	38%	33%	16%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	27%	22%	25%	26%	35%	28%	23%
...encourages me to be more creative	37%	50%	43%	33%	38%	32%	14%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	25%	21%	28%	21%	29%	26%	22%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Young people are most likely to identify with the creative power of the arts. However, few other strong patterns emerge between personal attitudes and age. Austinites 65 and over are somewhat less likely to strongly agree with several of these statements. However, the small number of respondents in this category causes us to temper our claims about them.

A Somer's d of -0.15 for the relationship between *attending live performing arts encourages me to be more creative* and age is the strongest relationship in this table.



While arts attenders have more positive attitudes than nonattenders, many of those who do not attend strongly agree that the performing arts play a positive role in their personal lives.

TABLE 3.5

PERSONAL ATTITUDES BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMANCES

Attending Live Performing Arts...	All	Attendance Level		
		Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
...is enjoyable to me	58%	29%	63%	91%
...is thought provoking	44%	24%	47%	69%
...helps me to understand other cultures better	36%	26%	36%	56%
...is primarily a social occasion for me	27%	23%	27%	31%
...encourages me to be more creative	37%	21%	37%	62%
...makes me feel more connected to my community	25%	14%	25%	43%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Agreement with each personal value statement increases with frequency of attendance. However, fewer than half of frequent attenders strongly agree that attending live performing arts *makes them feel more connected to their community*. Less than a third strongly agree that attendance is *primarily a social occasion*, which suggests that most people attend live performing arts for other than social reasons.

Value to the Community

This section focuses on public perceptions of the value of the performing arts to the greater Austin community. It considers relationships between perceptions about the value of performing arts to the community and various respondent characteristics. We also briefly look at the two activities of volunteering for community organizations and making financial contributions to arts organizations to see if these behaviors vary by frequency of arts attendance.



HIGHLIGHTS

Value to the Community Is More Important than Value to the Individual: Austinites register noticeably more positive opinions about the value of the performing arts to their community than they do about the contribution of the arts to their own lives.

People Believe Arts Matter for Children: About two out of three Austinites strongly agree that performing arts *contribute to the education and development of children*. This very high agreement is consistent regardless of education, age, income, presence of children in the household, or voting behavior.

Community Engagement Patterns Vary: Volunteer patterns differ among nonattenders and frequent attenders. Only about half of nonattenders volunteered at least once during the past year, compared with more than three-quarters of attenders or frequent attenders.

Giving Levels Are Low to Moderate: Overall, only 23 percent of Austinites made a financial contribution to a performing arts organization in 2001. However, more than half of frequent attenders (64 percent) made a financial contribution.



Austinites agree more strongly about the contributions of the performing arts to their community than about the value of performing arts to themselves.

TABLE 4.1

ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY

Performing Arts...	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	Total
...improve the quality of life in the greater Austin area	50%	34%	8%	2%	2%	4%	100%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	45%	37%	8%	4%	3%	3%	100%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	50%	39%	5%	3%	1%	2%	100%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Austin area	47%	35%	8%	4%	1%	5%	100%
...contribute to the education and development of children	67%	23%	3%	3%	2%	2%	100%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	52%	34%	7%	2%	2%	3%	100%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	57%	33%	5%	2%	1%	2%	100%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Austin area	38%	40%	8%	6%	3%	5%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

A very high percentage of respondents (between 78 and 90 percent) say they strongly agree or somewhat agree with each of the eight statements they were asked to evaluate. In contrast, agreement on the personal value items in the preceding section ranged between 57 and 83 percent.

The table on this page shows the distribution of responses for all survey respondents. For ease of presentation, the remaining tables in this section present data based on the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with each attitude.



As people acquire more education, they are more likely to believe that the performing arts improve the quality of life in greater Austin.

TABLE 4.2

ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY EDUCATION

Performing Arts...	All	Elementary School	High School or GED	Junior College or Tech School	Four-year College or University	Post-graduate
...improve the quality of life in the greater Austin area	50%	26%	38%	49%	57%	63%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	45%	35%	43%	49%	46%	47%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	50%	57%	56%	50%	47%	47%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Austin area	47%	48%	52%	48%	44%	48%
...contribute to the education and development of children	67%	62%	63%	69%	68%	70%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	52%	54%	54%	54%	51%	52%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	57%	60%	57%	60%	57%	55%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Austin area	38%	51%	44%	41%	34%	31%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

The trends in the table suggest a relationship between several attitudes and education level. The strongest of these relationships supports the claim that Austinites with higher levels of education are more likely to agree that *performing arts improve the quality of life* in greater Austin. In contrast, the data also suggest that Austinites with lower education levels are more likely to feel that the performing arts *contribute to the economy of the greater Austin area*.

The Somer's d value for the relationship between education level and the belief that performing arts *improve the quality of life* is +0.17; the relationship with *contribution of the arts toward the local economy* has a Somer's d of -0.10.



Household income level has little influence on the attitudes of Austinites toward the role of the performing arts in their community.

TABLE 4.3

ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Performing Arts...	All	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to under \$50,000	\$50,000 to under \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
...improve the quality of life in the greater Austin area	50%	50%	48%	51%	53%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	45%	52%	51%	46%	41%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	50%	52%	54%	52%	45%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Austin area	47%	53%	52%	47%	42%
...contribute to the education and development of children	67%	72%	68%	69%	70%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	52%	59%	56%	53%	50%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	57%	62%	63%	58%	53%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Austin area	38%	37%	42%	41%	36%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Household income level has little or no association with respondent perceptions of the value of the performing arts to community life in greater Austin. People from the highest income households exhibit attitudes that are substantially similar to respondents from households with lower annual incomes.



People of different ages have notably similar attitudes about the role of the performing arts in their community.

TABLE 4.4

ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY AGE

Performing Arts...	All	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and Over
...improve the quality of life in the greater Austin area	50%	49%	50%	50%	53%	52%	47%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	45%	51%	45%	40%	51%	49%	36%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	50%	50%	53%	45%	54%	55%	38%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Austin area	47%	50%	48%	41%	52%	54%	41%
...contribute to the education and development of children	67%	70%	69%	69%	72%	61%	47%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	52%	59%	53%	47%	58%	55%	41%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	57%	68%	60%	55%	58%	58%	39%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Austin area	38%	44%	34%	37%	43%	46%	22%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Although the overall relationships are weak, respondents 65 and over are considerably less likely to strongly agree with most of these statements. As noted in the preceding sections, the relatively small number of respondents in this category causes us to temper our claims about them. On the whole, we conclude that age does not explain variation in attitudes.



Two-thirds of all Austinites strongly agree that the performing arts contribute to the education and development of children.

TABLE 4.5

ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY CHILDREN AT HOME

Performing Arts...	All	No Children At Home	Children Under 13 Years of Age	Children 13 Years and Older
...improve the quality of life in the greater Austin area	50%	55%	44%	44%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	45%	50%	40%	42%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	50%	52%	47%	47%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Austin area	47%	51%	42%	43%
...contribute to the education and development of children	67%	69%	66%	66%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	52%	57%	48%	43%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	57%	58%	60%	58%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Austin area	38%	39%	38%	37%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

There is strong agreement about the contribution of performing arts to the education and development of children, regardless of education, income, age, or presence of children in the household. In general, little difference is observed between respondents from households with or without children.



A substantial minority of Austinites who do not attend performing arts events feel positive about the role of the arts in their community.

TABLE 4.6

ATTITUDES TOWARD PERFORMING ARTS IN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPONDENTS WHO STRONGLY AGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE

Performing Arts...	All	Attendance Level		
		Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
...improve the quality of life in the greater Austin area	50%	20%	56%	79%
...promote understanding of other people and different ways of life	45%	24%	50%	66%
...provide opportunities to socialize with other people	50%	37%	52%	66%
...are a source of pride for those in the greater Austin area	47%	27%	53%	64%
...contribute to the education and development of children	67%	48%	71%	84%
...contribute to lifelong learning for adults	52%	31%	57%	71%
...help preserve and share cultural heritage	57%	41%	62%	69%
...contribute to the economy of the greater Austin area	38%	28%	38%	55%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

As we found in Table 3.5, attenders have more favorable opinions about the performing arts than nonattenders, and frequent attenders have more favorable opinions than attenders. Though these relationships may be intuitive, the data offer strong evidence in support of these claims. The frequent attenders feel most strongly about the *contribution of the arts to the education and development of children* and the role of the performing arts in *improving the quality of life* in greater Austin.



Austinites who volunteer for community organizations are more likely to attend performing arts events.

TABLE 4.7

RESPONDENTS WHO VOLUNTEER IN THEIR COMMUNITY, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

Attendance Level	Never Volunteer	Volunteer	Total
Nonattender	47%	53%	100%
Attender	24%	76%	100%
Frequent Attender	16%	84%	100%
All Respondents	29%	71%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Is the level of civic engagement of arts attenders similar to or different from that of nonattenders? The survey asked respondents how often they volunteer for charity, school, religious congregation, or community activities and whether they made a financial contribution to a performing arts organization.

There is a strong relationship between frequency of attendance at live performing arts events and volunteering in community organizations. A little more than half of nonattenders reported that they volunteer at least once in a while. This contrasts with more than three-quarters of attenders or frequent attenders. These findings are consistent with our earlier observation (Table 2.8) that people who attend performing arts events are also active in a range of other activities outside their homes.

We make no causal inferences as to whether an individual is inclined toward volunteerism because of his or her attendance at performing arts events or whether volunteering inclines one to more frequent attendance at performing arts events.



Nearly two-thirds of frequent attenders made a donation to an arts organization in 2001.

TABLE 4.8

RESPONDENTS WHO MADE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO AN ARTS ORGANIZATION IN 2001, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

Attendance Level	No Contribution in 2001	Contribution in 2001	Total
Nonattender	96%	4%	100%
Attender	80%	20%	100%
Frequent Attender	36%	64%	100%
All Respondents	77%	23%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

Roughly a quarter (27 percent) of Austinites reported that they made a financial contribution to an arts organization in 2001. However, the likelihood that someone made a contribution is strongly influenced by whether the individual is an attender or not. Frequent attenders are substantially more likely to make a donation than nonattenders. However, even about one-third of frequent attenders chose not to contribute.

Barriers to Attendance

This section focuses on factors that keep people from attending live performing arts events more frequently. For nonattenders, the questions can be taken to mean “Why don’t you attend?” For attenders, the questions can be taken to mean “What keeps you from attending even more?”

We consider a range of practical, personal, and perceptual obstacles to attendance. Some of these vary by respondent characteristics, such as education and income, and some help us understand the differences among nonattenders, attenders, and frequent attenders.



HIGHLIGHTS

Time, Preference, and Cost Are Key Obstacles: The biggest barriers to more frequent attendance at performing arts events, cited by about one in three respondents as a “big problem,” are *difficulty making time to go out*, preference to *spend leisure time in other ways*, and *cost of tickets*.

Demographic Characteristics Matter: People with lower levels of education are more likely to say that the *performing arts do not appeal* to them. People from lower-income households are more likely to say that *cost of tickets* is the major barrier to attendance. Younger people are more likely to cite the problem of *not enough information about performances and times*.

Nonattenders Prefer Doing Other Things: Nonattenders are more likely than attenders to say that they *prefer to spend leisure time in other ways* or that the *performing arts do not appeal* to them. They also report that they have *no one to attend with*, that they *feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events*, that they have concerns about the *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*, and that *performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations*.



Austinites say making time to go out is the most frequently cited “big” barrier to attendance.

TABLE 5.1

BARRIERS TO MORE FREQUENT ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS						
Barrier	Big Reason	Moderate Reason	Small Reason	Not a Reason	No Response	Total
PRACTICAL						
Cost of tickets	27%	26%	11%	33%	3%	100%
Family obligations	22%	9%	6%	62%	1%	100%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	17%	18%	15%	48%	2%	100%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	6%	9%	10%	73%	2%	100%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	23%	15%	46%	2%	100%
PERSONAL						
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	28%	15%	23%	2%	100%
Hard to make time to go out	42%	23%	11%	23%	2%	100%
No one to attend with	8%	11%	10%	70%	1%	100%
PERCEPTUAL						
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	10%	11%	67%	2%	100%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	6%	8%	82%	1%	100%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	8%	9%	77%	3%	100%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

The three most frequently cited “big reasons” why people do not attend more performing arts events than they currently do are that it is *hard to make time to go out*, a preference to *spend leisure time in other ways*, and the *cost of tickets*. However, as we report throughout this section, different people are affected by different barriers.

Researchers at the RAND Corporation reported conceptual work on barriers to greater arts attendance in a book entitled *A New Framework for Building Participation in the Arts*. They suggest that there are four distinct types of barriers, which they label *practical barriers*, *personal circumstances*, *perceptual barriers*, and *prior experiences*. We used the RAND framework to help in the development of our survey, but we depart from it in two ways. First, we put our single question about prior experiences in with the perceptual barriers questions. Second, we add and subtract from the barriers developed in the RAND work.



Respondents with less education are more likely to find the performing arts unappealing.

TABLE 5.2

RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT AN ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY EDUCATION

Barrier	All	Elementary School	High School or GED	Junior College or Tech School	Four-year College or University	Post-graduate
PRACTICAL						
Cost of tickets	27%	28%	24%	35%	23%	26%
Family obligations	22%	34%	21%	19%	23%	21%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	17%	25%	21%	20%	14%	12%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	6%	22%	10%	2%	3%	6%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	23%	16%	18%	13%	11%
PERSONAL						
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	34%	42%	34%	27%	27%
Hard to make time to go out	42%	48%	42%	37%	44%	42%
No one to attend with	8%	23%	10%	7%	4%	6%
PERCEPTUAL						
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	29%	20%	8%	6%	4%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	19%	9%	1%	0%	1%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	11%	4%	3%	1%	3%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

While the percentage trends are suggestive of important relationships, none of these barriers feature a Somer’s d value equal to or greater than plus or minus 0.15. The value of Somer’s d for the relationship between education level and *performing arts do not appeal* is -0.13.

About 3 in 10 respondents who have not completed high school say that a big reason why they do not attend more performing arts events is that the *performing arts do not appeal to them*. This proportion decreases as education increases. In fact, only four percent of respondents with a postgraduate degree say that the lack of appeal is a big reason why they do not attend more. Substantially higher percentages of respondents who have not completed a four-year college degree were more likely to say that the performances are in *unsafe or unfamiliar locations* or that they *feel uncomfortable or out of place*. Reactions to most of the barriers, however, do not vary much by education level.



Respondents from the poorest Austin households are most likely to say they have no one to attend with.

TABLE 5.3

RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT AN ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Barrier	All	Less than \$25,000	\$25,000 to under \$50,000	\$50,000 to under \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
PRACTICAL					
Cost of tickets	27%	42%	26%	24%	18%
Family obligations	22%	19%	19%	25%	23%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	17%	24%	20%	16%	12%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	6%	14%	3%	3%	3%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	20%	19%	15%	12%
PERSONAL					
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	20%	32%	38%	34%
Hard to make time to go out	42%	37%	35%	46%	51%
No one to attend with	8%	22%	5%	5%	2%
PERCEPTUAL					
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	11%	12%	9%	8%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	9%	4%	2%	1%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	5%	2%	4%	2%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

While the percentage trends are suggestive of important relationships, only one barrier features a Somer’s d value equal to or greater than 0.15. The value of Somer’s d for the relationship between *no one to attend with* and household income is –0.17.

As expected, *cost of tickets* is more of a barrier for the poorest households and less of a barrier for higher income households. Respondents from families with lower total incomes are also a bit more likely to note the *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*. The trends suggest that the *safety and familiarity of location* is a concern for these families as well. The strongest relationship in the table is that respondents from lower income households are more likely to report that having *no one to attend with* is a big reason why they do not go to more performing arts events. Education and income categories both provide some clues as to which barriers are most influential for different subgroups.



Younger Austinites want more information about performances.

TABLE 5.4

RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY AGE

Barrier	All	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and Over
PRACTICAL							
Cost of tickets	27%	32%	25%	25%	32%	25%	22%
Family obligations	22%	10%	29%	37%	16%	9%	5%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	17%	11%	14%	14%	21%	19%	31%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	6%	5%	4%	5%	8%	4%	11%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	20%	21%	12%	14%	11%	6%
PERSONAL							
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	30%	25%	37%	40%	28%	28%
Hard to make time to go out	42%	28%	47%	48%	52%	33%	20%
No one to attend with	8%	7%	7%	7%	5%	11%	16%
PERCEPTUAL							
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	8%	8%	8%	11%	14%	23%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%	3%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	1%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

The Somer’s d value between *not enough publicity or information about performances and times* and age is -0.23 , a strong relationship

Younger respondents, particularly those under the age of 35, are considerably more likely to feel that there is *not enough publicity or information about performances and times*. Respondents aged 25 to 44 are somewhat more likely to cite *family obligations* as a barrier, while older people are a bit more likely to cite *difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events*, or that *performing arts do not appeal*.



Having children at home keeps Austinites from getting out to performing arts events.

TABLE 5.5

RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT AN ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY CHILDREN AT HOME

Barrier	All	No Children At Home	Children Under 13 Years of Age	Children 13 Years and Older
Family obligations	22%	7%	55%	29%
Hard to make time to go out	42%	33%	62%	45%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

This abbreviated table includes only the two items where we observe differences by presence of children in the household. People with children at home are more likely to cite *family obligations* and *hard to make time to go out* as important reasons why they do not attend performing arts events more often. Respondents with young children are most likely to say that *family obligations* are a substantial obstacle. Respondents with young children and those with teenage children are equally likely to say that it is *hard to make time to go out*.



Austinites who do not attend the performing arts offer many reasons for not attending. Attenders give fewer clues for why they do not go more often.

TABLE 5.6

RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT AN ITEM IS A “BIG REASON” WHY THEY DO NOT ATTEND PERFORMING ARTS MORE, BY FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE AT LIVE PERFORMING ARTS EVENTS

Barrier	All	Attendance Level		
		Nonattender	Attender	Frequent Attender
PRACTICAL				
Cost of tickets	27%	21%	29%	28%
Family obligations	22%	27%	22%	13%
Difficulty or cost of getting to or parking at events	17%	19%	16%	17%
Performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations	6%	10%	5%	2%
Not enough publicity or information about performances and times	15%	16%	14%	18%
PERSONAL				
Prefer to spend leisure time in other ways	32%	50%	29%	15%
Hard to make time to go out	42%	47%	43%	28%
No one to attend with	8%	15%	6%	2%
PERCEPTUAL				
Performing arts do not appeal	10%	22%	7%	3%
Feel uncomfortable or out of place at performing arts events	3%	8%	2%	0%
Have not enjoyed past performances	3%	5%	3%	2%

Source: Urban Institute Analysis of Austin Household Data, 2002.

NONATTENDERS: Nonattenders and attenders alike point to *lack of time* as a barrier to attendance. However, several barriers were cited as a big reason by a disproportionate number of nonattenders. Not surprisingly, nonattenders are more likely to say that they *prefer to spend leisure time in other ways* and that the *performing arts do not appeal* to them. In addition, nonattenders are more likely to say that they have *no one to attend with*, that they *feel uncomfortable or out of place* at performing arts events, or that *performances are in unsafe or unfamiliar locations*.

ATTENDERS: While 29 percent of attenders say that they *prefer to spend leisure time in other ways*, this factor does not differentiate them from respondents in other attender categories. The one item that attenders rate notably higher as a barrier is *cost of tickets*. That is, *cost of tickets* appears to be a greater inhibitor to attenders of the arts than it is for those who do not attend at all.

FREQUENT ATTENDERS: People who frequently go to arts performances are less likely to label various potential barriers as a big reason why they do not get out more. Consistent with conventional wisdom, the two biggest barriers are *time* and *money*—two factors that are not unique to frequent attenders.

Methodology

COMMUNITY SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

The greater Austin survey is one in a series of 10 telephone surveys that each focus on a single metropolitan area. The communities were carefully selected, looking for the following characteristics that were deemed important to the success of the project:

- Representation of three or more of the five disciplines encompassed by the participating national service organizations.
- Financially and managerially strong local arts organizations.
- Established and strong working relationships between local arts organizations and their national service organizations.
- Willingness and ability of local arts organizations to be part of a working group.
- Established capacity for collecting data on the part of local arts organizations.
- Willingness on the part of local arts organizations to administer the surveys developed by the Performing Arts Research Coalition.
- Presence of supplemental funding sources in the community to help sustain this research in the future.
- Geographic diversity and a variety of community sizes.

LOCAL WORKING GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES

The working group of performing arts organizations in each of the communities chosen had six primary project responsibilities: (1) To participate in the design of survey instruments; (2) To collect data from its audiences and subscribers; (3) To use the audience, subscriber, and household data to design concrete strategies for improving the management of its organizations; (4) To use the audience, subscriber, and household data to make an impact on the role the arts play in the community; (5) To provide feedback on or write sections of project reports; and (6) To consider ways to maintain local data collection efforts after the completion of the PARC project.

PROJECT DATA SOURCES

The PARC research framework relies on four data sources to contribute information toward a more comprehensive understanding of the performing arts. Following is a description of the four sources and the type of information they provide.

Administrative Surveys: Each of the participating national service organizations conducted annual surveys of its members, collecting extensive administrative data. Most provided information on the number and types of performances, attendance, and a range of financial information, including on sources of revenue and types of expenses. Selected items (or their definitions) from the existing surveys have been reviewed, and some new items have been added so that key data elements can be captured consistently across all the disciplines.

Audience Surveys: Audience surveys provided information on audience demographics, feedback on customer satisfaction and perceived performance quality, and some feedback on audience perceptions of the value of the performing arts. Audience surveys were administered by each of the participating arts organizations in each of the study sites. Two-page surveys were placed on seats in performance venues or handed to audience members in conjunction with performances according to specific procedures established by the Urban Institute.

Subscriber Surveys: As with the audience surveys, the subscriber surveys provided information on demographics and feedback on customer satisfaction and perceived performance quality. The subscriber survey contained expanded questions about the perceptions of the value of the performing arts to respondents, their families, and their communities. Participating arts organizations in each study site mailed the six-page survey to a randomly selected group of subscribers according to procedures established by the Urban Institute.

Household Telephone Surveys: Household telephone surveys collected information to help understand the attitudes of people who attend or do not attend the performing arts regularly, and to further understand why and how individuals can be motivated to become participants. The surveys of random households in each participating community were conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International according to procedures developed by the Urban Institute.

A Note about This Report

This report is based on an analysis of the responses from the Austin community/household telephone survey only. Findings from the administrative surveys will be issued in a separate report. Data from the audience and subscriber surveys have been provided to the participating local arts organizations. Further analysis of these data is in the hands of local arts organizations and/or working groups.

HOW THE GREATER AUSTIN HOUSEHOLD TELEPHONE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

Survey respondents were selected using random digit dialing. Every active block of telephone numbers (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) were included for blocks with zip codes starting with 786 or 787. After random selection of a number within a block, two more digits were randomly added to complete the number. Numbers that matched listings in business directories were purged from the list. This method guaranteed coverage of every assigned phone number and did not require a preexisting list of active numbers.

Between October and December 2002, calls were made by Princeton Data Source, a subsidiary of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. Calls lasted approximately 20 minutes each. They were staggered over times of the day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Over a quarter of the interviews were completed on the first call, but one took as many as 36 calls to secure an interview. Table A-1 documents the numbers of individuals who were contacted, cooperated, and completed the interview.

While a response rate of 41.5 percent is not inconsistent with other studies of this type, it raises questions of nonresponse bias. That is, one might suspect that people who could not be contacted, would not cooperate with the interview, or did not complete it might have responded differently, on average, from people who completed the interview. If so, and if the differences are relevant to issues under investigation in the study, then one cannot make reliable inferences from the study sample to the population of the Austin metropolitan area.

To investigate the potential for such bias, we compared the characteristics of the 832 respondents with known characteristics of the population (see Table A-2). Population estimates are based on the 2000 Census of Population and Housing. The summaries in this table indicate that individuals aged 35–44 are overrepresented among the survey respondents, while blacks, Hispanic/Latinos, and individuals age 18–24 and 65 and over are underrepresented. Overall, however, there is considerable similarity between survey respondents and the population estimate on race, sex, and age characteristics. This similarity supports an assertion that the survey respondents are not substantially different from the nonrespondents. Nonetheless, the results reflect the attitudes of people who were willing to complete the survey.

A disproportional sample design and systematic nonresponse result in a measurable “design effect.” The design effect for the Austin household telephone survey results in a margin of error of ± 3.8 percent. This means that in 95 of every 100 samples using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 3.8 percentage points away from their true values in the population. However, design effects are only one source of error. For example, those people who chose to answer the survey questions may be different in some ways from people who chose not to respond, resulting in an unknown quantity of response bias on various survey questions.

SOMER’S D: LOOKING AT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUESTIONS

In reviewing the survey results, we are frequently interested in knowing whether people who answer a particular way on one question also tend to answer a particular way on a different question. For example, past research has shown that people who have acquired more education are more likely to attend arts events than people with less education. This finding comes from looking at the relationship between two different variables—*education level* and *frequency of attendance*.



TABLE A.1

DISPOSITION OF CALLS, AUSTIN HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

4641	dialed numbers
-2104	non-working numbers
<hr/>	
2537	working numbers
-552	“non-contact”—language/health barrier, incomplete callbacks
<hr/>	
1985	contacted numbers (78.2%)
-859	refusals
<hr/>	
1126	cooperating (56.7%)
-236	ineligible
<hr/>	
890	eligible
-58	interrupted, incomplete
<hr/>	
832	completions (93.5%)

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Response rate} &= \text{contacts} \times \text{cooperations} \times \text{completions} \\
 &= 78.2\% \times 56.7\% \times 93.5\% \\
 &= 41.5\%
 \end{aligned}$$

Somer’s *d* is a statistic that shows the strength of the relationship between two variables with a small number of ordered categories. By “ordered,” we mean that the question has categories that run in a meaningful way from low to high. Somer’s *d* indicates the extent to which respondents who report high or low values on one variable also report high or low levels on another variable. For example, if we observe that tall people are very talkative and short people say very little at all, we would expect a high value of Somer’s *d* for the variables *height* and *verbosity*. On the other hand, if tall and short people have roughly the same number of talkative and nontalkative types, we would get a low Somer’s *d*, and we would conclude that there is no relationship between the two variables.

Throughout this report, we assume respondent education level, household income level, and age to be independent variables that predispose respondents toward certain behaviors or values (dependent variables). For these relationships, we report an *asymmetric* Somer’s *d* value that assumes a causal relationship between variables. However, for voting behavior and volunteerism, we make no such causal references. For associations involving these variables, we report a *symmetric* Somer’s *d* value that makes no presumptions about which variable is independent and which is dependent.



TABLE A.2

CHARACTERISTICS OF GREATER AUSTIN HOUSEHOLD RESPONDENTS (N=832)		
	Population Estimate	Survey Respondents
RACE		
White	527	563
Black	53	42
Asian/Pacific Islander	31	30
Hispanic/Latino	209	160
Other/Mixed	2	8
American Indian/Alaskan Native	10	11
Missing (did not report)	0	18
SEX		
Men	418	429
Women	414	403
AGE		
18-24	146	115
25-34	192	210
35-44	181	202
45-54	145	146
55-64	79	85
65+	89	64
Missing (did not report)	0	10

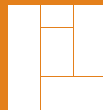
Somer's d runs from a value of 0.0 (no relationship) to 1.0 (perfect relationship), although it is usually quite low because of the conservative way in which it is calculated. A positive sign (+) in front of the number means that there is a *positive relationship* between the variables; that is, high values on one variable are associated with high values on the other. A negative sign (-) indicates a *negative relationship*; that is, high values on one variable go with lower values on the other variable, and vice versa.

A Somer's d value of less than -0.15 or more than +0.15 is worth paying attention to. For values closer to 0.0, the relationship is probably best thought of as weak or nonexistent. In footnotes throughout the report, we note relationships that meet or exceed this 0.15 threshold.

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Dance/USA • OPERA America • Theatre Communications Group



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