Colorado employers want creative thinking and students benefit from arts learning.

BONFILS STANTON FOUNDATION

Arts and cultural production is a $19.7 billion part of Colorado's economy. Yet no one collects data on which schools offer arts courses or how many students take them, so no one can say which children go through school without them.

What the research shows arts learning does

4th

of the core skills employers say they need most, in a 2025 survey of more than 1,000 employers worldwide.

$19.7 billion

added to Colorado's economy by arts and cultural production, 3.7% of the state total.

121,228

Coloradans working in arts and cultural industries.

10+ Years

of Boston school data show that students taking arts classes come to school more often, and that the gain is largest for the children who miss the most.

10,912

students were picked by lottery for a single art museum visit. Afterward they thought more critically, were more tolerant of difference, and better understood how people lived in the past.

22% of 4%

of low-income teenagers left high school without finishing, depending on whether they took few arts courses or many.

What Colorado does not track

2.1 million U.S students have no arts education

An estimate for 2018-19, projected from the 17 states that measure it directly. Colorado is not one of them.

Invitation to Talk

We invite you to join our conversation in March 2027 where students, educators, funders, community leaders and politicians will all discuss solutions to arts learning.

Find out more: www.bonfils-stanton.org/artsbelongs

Sources. Creative thinking ranking: World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report, 2025. Economic contribution and employment: Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis with the National Endowment for the Arts. No-access estimate: Arts Education Data Project, 2022, for 2018-19. Colorado districts, teacher ratio and decline: The State of Arts Education in Colorado Public Schools, Think 360 Arts for Learning and Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, December 2025. Attendance: Bowen and Kisida, Educational Policy, 2024. Completion and degree attainment: Catterall, Dumais and Hampden-Thompson, National Endowment for the Arts, 2012. Museum visit: Greene, Kisida and Bowen, 2014.