

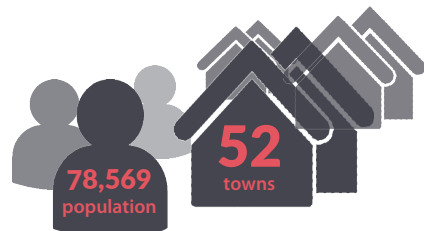
Southern Vermont

Bennington and Windham Counties

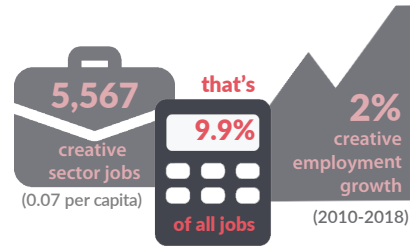
Brattleboro Farmers' Market. Photo: VTrans, Flickr Creative Commons

CREATIVE ZONE SNAPSHOT

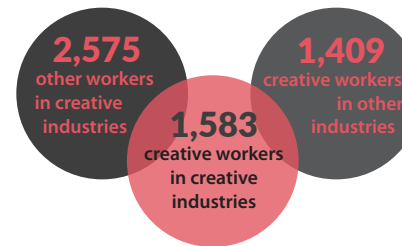
About the Zone



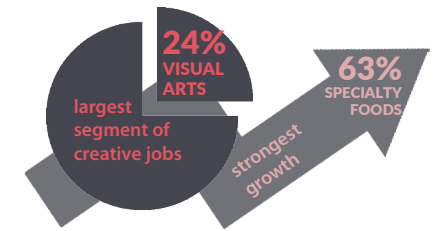
Creative Sector



Creative Jobs



Creative Segments



CREATIVE ZONE IN DEPTH

Claims to Fame



Highest percentage of independent creative workers (self-employed and extended proprietorships)—56%

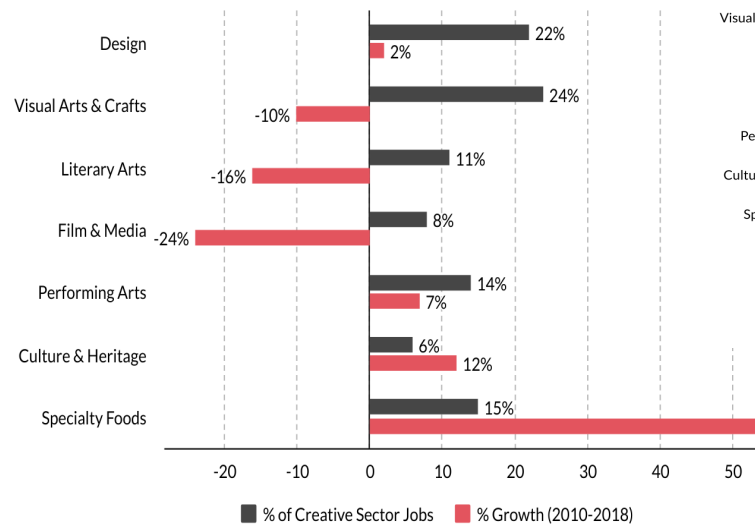


Highest percentage of Visual Arts & Fine Crafts (24%), Literary Arts (11%), and Culture & Heritage (tie at 6%) jobs; only zone where Design is not the top segment

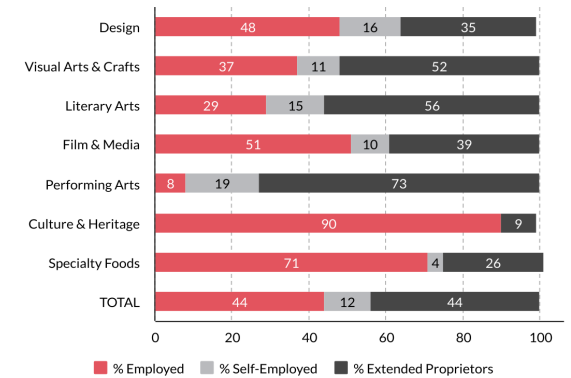


Second highest growth in Culture & Heritage (12%)

Segment Size & Growth



Employment Types



CREATIVE ZONE ASSESSMENT

Strengths

- Strong collaborative spaces, culture and environment
- Strong creative education, theater and music organizations
- Location and access to markets and travelers in NY, MA and CT
- Large number and size of well-established arts and culture businesses and institutions
- Strong creative community development and placemaking
- High concentration of performing arts venues, activities and jobs
- Strong community assets and institutions
- Culture and history of appreciation for the arts and creativity
- Strong tourist and outdoor recreation economies and festivals
- Major community development and revitalization initiatives in Brattleboro and Bennington
- Extensive and free MOOVER transportation network

Challenges

- Slowest rate of growth in the creative economy of all zones (2010-2018)
- Visual Arts & Fine Crafts segment lost about 10% of jobs and Literary Arts 16% of jobs
- Lower % of Design jobs than other zones (Design can be large economic /employment force)
- Region can feel isolated from the rest of Vermont
- Multiple recent college closures: Marlboro College, Green Mountain College, and Southern Vermont College
- Distinct regional identities (Windham County orients toward Connecticut River and NH; Bennington County orients toward NY and MA)
- More VCN zone participation in Windham County than Bennington County

Needs

- Access to funding, social media, business development and marketing assistance
- Affordable housing, living, health care and livable wages
- Creative economy data to share with legislators and local officials
- More local creative sector advocacy and planning (local arts teams or committees)
- More networking, sharing and collaboration opportunities and events
- Increased zone participation from Bennington County

Plans, Programs & Studies

- Bennington County Cultural Plan (2019)
- Creative Communities Programs Final Report and Action Plan, Manchester, VT (2007)

CREATIVE ZONE FUTURE

Key Support Organizations

- Arts Council of Windham County
- Bennington College
- Bennington County Industrial Corporation
- Bennington County Regional Commission
- Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Community College of Vermont
- Landmark College
- Windham Regional Commission

Current Priorities

From CreateVT ZoneJam notes

- Regular Zoom networking and meeting opportunities (weekly or monthly)

Key Activities

Communication channels:
Email newsletter



Events: Town Hall Forums