

New report compares municipal cultural investments in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Montréal



Municipal Cultural Investment in Five Large Canadian Cities

A study prepared for the City of Vancouver, the City of Calgary, the City of Toronto, the City of Ottawa and the Ville de Montréal

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A new report from Hill Strategies Research compares the cultural investment in five of Canada's largest cities: Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Montréal. Why conduct a study of municipal cultural investment? Municipalities are competing for talented individuals and leading-edge businesses, and a strong local cultural scene is an important element of attraction for residents and investors. Beyond economic factors, the cultural sector is also associated with citizens' social engagement, including connections to volunteering, donating, helping neighbours, and better health.

The report highlights previous research that showed that the five cities collectively have 209,500 cultural workers, representing 34% of all cultural workers in Canada. The overall concentration of cultural workers (i.e., percentage of the labour force in 48 cultural occupations) in the five cities is 5.6%, well above the Canadian average (3.3%). In fact, each of the five cities has a concentration of cultural workers that is greater than the Canadian average. Vancouver has the highest concentration of cultural workers (7.2%), compared with 6.4% in Montréal, 5.9% in Toronto, 4.7% in Ottawa and 3.6% in Calgary.

The municipal cultural investments included in this new study are operating, grant and capital expenditures related to the performing arts, visual and media arts, crafts, design, museums, heritage, special events, multidisciplinary activities, creative and cultural industries, city-owned cultural facilities, cultural districts, public art, and other art purchases. The net investment figures reported in this summary exclude funds transferred from other levels of government as well as other sources of revenue. The net investment figures therefore provide estimates of what was spent from the municipal tax base. The full report contains more information about gross investment figures.

In each city, the net cultural investment in 2009 was:

- \$27.4 million in Vancouver (population 578,000)
- \$22.4 million in Ottawa (population 812,100)
- \$41.9 million in Calgary (population 988,200)
- \$89.0 million in Montréal (population 1,620,700)
- \$47.5 million in Toronto (population 2,503,300)

Average of \$35 per capita invested in culture in the five cities

In the five cities combined, the average total net cultural investment amounted to \$35 per resident in 2009. In each of the five cities:

- Montréal's cultural investment of \$55 per capita ranked first in 2009.
- Vancouver ranked second, with a net amount of \$47 per person invested in the cultural sector in 2009.
- Calgary's net cultural investment was \$42 per capita in 2009, ranking the city third among the five cities.
- The City of Ottawa's net cultural investment of \$28 per capita in 2009 ranked fourth.
- Toronto's net cultural investment of \$19 per person in 2009 ranked last among the five cities.

The Ville de Montréal has some unique cultural elements that have led to this high ranking: 1) its more than 30-year history of cultural development agreements with the Quebec government, which have led to significant new investments by both parties; 2) its Municipal Cultural Presenting Network ("Réseau Accès culture"), which includes facilities and staff dedicated to cultural dissemination in Montréal's different geographic areas; 3) its four nature museums (Botanical Garden, Insectarium, Biodôme and Planetarium); and 4) an active cultural policy and plan, which is led by a high-level steering committee including the mayor, Quebec and federal government ministers, as well as local cultural workers.

Net cultural investment increased in all five cities between 2006 and 2009

The average net cultural investment of \$35 per resident in 2009 represents an increase from the levels in prior years (\$24 in 2006 and 2007, and \$29 in 2008). Net cultural investment increased in all five cities during this timeframe. Calgary's growth in net cultural investment (175%) was much larger than any other city. Ottawa's growth (90%) was also well above the five-city average (48%). The growth rates in Vancouver (44%) and Montréal (34%) fell somewhat below the five-city average. The growth in net cultural investment in Toronto (14%) was much lower than in the other cities. (These figures have not been adjusted for inflation or population growth.)

Report also includes brief information about library operating support

In four of the five cities (the exception being Montréal), public libraries are managed by a separate library board. In addition, library expenditures are much higher than all other cultural expenditures. For these reasons, library expenditures are included in the study but are reported separately from other cultural investments. The public library data was collected and compiled through the Canadian Urban Libraries Council. Because of data availability and comparability during the study years, only the municipal operating expenditures on libraries are included in the study.

On a per capita basis, \$53 was invested in library operating support in the five cities in 2009. Toronto's level of per capita investment in library operations was \$69, while Vancouver spent \$61 per capita. The other three cities are below the combined average of \$53: Montréal (\$43), Ottawa (\$41) and Calgary (\$36).

Full report also available

The full report examines in much greater detail the cultural investments by the five large cities and also provides a brief summary of each city's policies, plans and non-financial supports for the cultural sector. The report is available free of charge in the "Other publications" section of the Hill Strategies Research website (<http://www.hillstrategies.com>).

Media contact

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Hill Strategies Research is a Canadian company that specializes in applying social science research methods to the arts sector. Hill Strategies has extensive experience conducting, interpreting, and communicating quantitative and qualitative analysis in the arts.

Methodological notes

In September 2010, the cultural staff in each city came together to discuss how to examine their city's cultural spending in comparison with other very large cities in Canada. Per capita measurement of municipal cultural investments is a practical benchmarking tool that allows staff to:

- Quantify each city's current level of investment and track whether the investments are increasing or decreasing.
- Compare municipal cultural investment with peer cities in order to understand where each city ranks in a highly competitive field.
- Set targets of municipal cultural investment based on Council directives, culture plans or cultural resource development initiatives.

No data currently covers this territory, as Statistics Canada's *Government Expenditures on Culture* dataset provides an estimate of cultural spending in *all* Canadian municipalities, with no breakdowns by municipality and only limited breakdowns by type of spending. The municipal staff approached Hill Strategies Research to explore the feasibility of conducting a custom study for four fiscal years (2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009). The cities based their internal data collection on a common definition of cultural services, which was agreed upon by the five cities' staff members and Hill Strategies Research. Hill Strategies closely examined each city's data to ensure comparability across the cities.