Like the people of North Carolina, the arts and culture of the state are spread to every city, town, and hamlet throughout its vast geography, from mountains, to piedmont, from coastal plains, to coast. From the progressive town of Asheville with the Asheville Art Museum, the Fine Art Theatre, Asheville Community Theatre, the Thomas Wolfe Historic Home, the Southern Highland Craft Guild, and the North Carolina Arboretum, to some of the world’s best instruction in the arts at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, the Penland School of Crafts, and the North Carolina School of the Arts in Winston-Salem; from the creative coastal city of Wilmington with the Cucalorus Film Festival, Alban Elved Dance Company, and Cameron Art Museum, to the Queen City of Charlotte with the Mint Museum of Art, the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, and the Blumenthal Center for the Performing Arts; from the capital city of Raleigh with the North Carolina Museum of Art, the North Carolina Symphony, the Opera Company of North Carolina, Carolina Ballet, and the J.C. Raulston Arboretum, to the diverse cultures of the university towns of Chapel Hill, Durham, Winston-Salem, and Greensboro – North Carolina is rich with the arts and culture.

Creative industries in North Carolina represent 11,529 establishments, employing a total of 164,000 people, who earn annual wages totaling more than $5.5 billion, and generate almost $17.7 billion in annual revenue. These figures represent 5.4% of the state’s businesses, 4.1% of the state’s employment, 3.6% of all wages earned, and at least 2.5% of all business revenue.

The nonprofit arts, culture, and humanities organizations in North Carolina are at the core of the state’s creative industries.

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Of the 2,737 registered arts and culture nonprofits in the state, 1,161 of those filed form 990, reporting more than $733 million in annual revenue and almost $1.6 billion in assets.

The creative industries that fall within the film and media sector and the literary and publishing sector make up the largest percentage of the state’s creative economy. The film and media sector is led by software publishers, cable and other program distribution, advertising agencies, television broadcasting, video tape and disc rental, and radio, television, and other electronics stores.

Meanwhile, the leading industries within the literary and publishing sector include commercial lithographic printing, newspaper publishers, periodical publishers, and independent writers.

Other leading sectors include jewelry stores, architectural services, graphic design services, florists, photography studios, interior design, other specialized design services, and other pressed and blown glass and glassware manufacturing.

The creative industries in North Carolina number 11,529 establishments, making them the fourth largest industry cluster in the state, larger than information technology and telecommunications, forest and wood products, defense and security, education, transportation and logistics, and advanced materials. This total number of establishments for the creative industries does not include the self-employed.

The creative industries in North Carolina employ 164,309 people. That means the industry cluster is the seventh largest in the state by total employment, larger than advanced materials, defense and security, and forest and wood products.

Alternate formats of this publication may be obtained by contacting South Arts at 404-874-7244.