



Walton Arts Center

Walmart
amp



Community Impact Report 2025



Walton Arts Center



Community Impact Report 2025



It is our pleasure to share with you this year's Community Impact Report. It is an opportunity to reflect on the remarkable ways Walton Arts Center continues to enrich, inspire, serve and unite Northwest Arkansas.

Each season, our stages come alive with performances that spark curiosity, open doors to new perspectives and create moments of joy that linger long after the curtain falls or the last note fades. But the true impact of Walton Arts Center extends well beyond what happens on our stages. It lives in our classrooms, our neighborhoods, our partnerships with local organizations and in the countless connections made when people gather to experience the arts together.

One of the reasons we are able to serve this community so effectively is our unique business model. As a nonprofit performing arts center that operates a commercial amphitheater, we are at the intersection of community service and entrepreneurial innovation. This model empowers us to present world-class programming while reinvesting revenue directly into education, outreach and access initiatives. It allows us to take artistic risks, develop meaningful collaborations and keep our programs welcoming and accessible to all—regardless of age, background or income.

Because of our business model, every ticket purchased, every sponsorship secured, every contribution made and every event hosted strengthens our ability to expand our impact. It fuels arts education programs that reach students across the region. It helps us bring diverse artists and voices to our stages. It supports free and low-cost community performances that ensure the arts remain a shared resource for everyone who calls Northwest Arkansas home.

As you read this report, I hope you feel the same pride that we do. The accomplishments highlighted in these pages belong to our staff, donors, partners and most importantly, our community. Together, we are building a vibrant cultural ecosystem that enhances quality of life, fosters belonging and drives the creative energy that makes this region extraordinary.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in the power of the arts. We look forward to the year ahead and to all the ways we will continue serving Northwest Arkansas—on stage, in schools and throughout the community we are proud to call home.

Peter B. Lane
President & CEO
Walton Arts Center

Our Story

Walton Arts Center and the Walmart AMP operate under a business model that is unique in the live entertainment industry.

We lovingly call it

“Rock pays for Bach.”

Here’s **why**:

Operating surpluses from the Walmart AMP combined with support from individuals, corporations, foundations and fundraising events like AMP Up the Arts, Art of Wine and Masquerade Ball subsidize Walton Arts Center programming and expand arts education and access opportunities for our community.

Because of this model, Walton Arts Center is able to operate programs that are needed and beneficial to the community, like our arts education programming. It also allows the nonprofit to present works that are artistically valuable and meaningful but may not be major revenue drivers.



“ This is a unique blending of our two venues for the benefit of our community. It allows us to bring artistically important, accessible programming and create needed initiatives that positively impact students, teachers, local artists and other nonprofits serving our region and our state. ”

Peter B. Lane

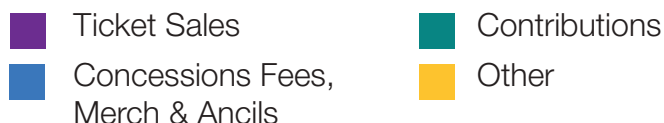
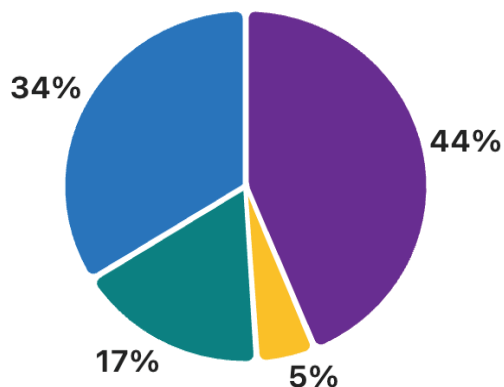
CEO of Walton Arts Center



Budget Overview

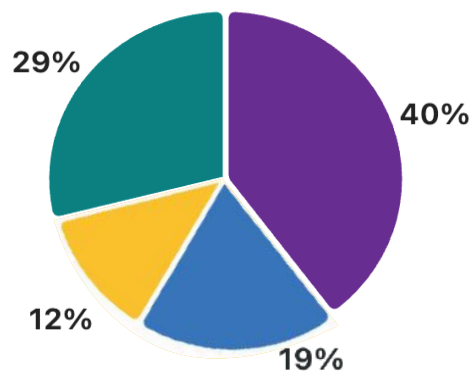
Income

Ticket sales represent only 44% of our revenue.



Expenses

While 59% of our budget (artist fees and production) is used to bring the greatest artists to NWA.



A **Resource** for Students, Teachers and Arts Organizations

Three years ago, Walton Arts Center launched artlook®, a platform that documents available arts education in the region and connects schools with teaching artists. The results show that arts education in Northwest Arkansas is thriving!

- + **86% of Northwest Arkansas schools** are excelling at arts staffing which creates a better student-to-teacher ratio and results in more personal attention and instruction for students.
- + **81% of elementary and middle schools** surveyed have every student enrolled in at least one arts course.
- + **71% of reporting schools** said they offer arts-specific teacher professional development. This includes both training for arts teachers and instruction on how teachers of any subject can incorporate the arts into their curriculum.
- + **64% of reporting schools** said they have at least one partnership with a local arts organization.

Our region values arts education opportunities, and we remain committed to providing creative, accessible programming for all. Here's a look at some of our new programs launched in 2025, and results from some of the most popular programs we've offered for decades.

Broadway Bridges on the Road



Walton Arts Center is one of 24 venues nationwide participating in Broadway Bridges on the Road, a Broadway League initiative that expands access to touring Broadway productions for high school students.

The program gives high school students access to discounted tickets to see touring Broadway shows. Last season, **226 students and teachers** attended performances of *Funny Girl* and *Back to the Future: The Musical* at a highly discounted price, thanks in part to support from *Friends of Walton Arts Center*.

This makes seeing Broadway shows a reality for many who would not be able to attend otherwise. It also enriches students' arts education and promotes cultural equity while cultivating a diverse future audience for live theater.

"I just wanted to thank you again for the incredible opportunity to expose my students to Broadway yesterday. I heard, 'This has been the best day of my life' from one of my students. I had several students who rarely go on field trips and they were so happy. It's all they can talk about today. They saw that their passion can someday be their job."

- Christine Selby, Lamar High School teacher



Diamond Awards

NEW PROGRAM

Walton Arts Center launched Arkansas' first high school musical theater award program, the Diamond Awards, to celebrate the power of the arts in education and motivate support for and interest in high school musicals. **10 high school theater programs** that produced full-length musicals participated in the inaugural program in 2025.

Best actress and actor Diamond Award winners go on to compete in New York City at the Broadway League Foundation's National High School Musical Theatre Awards®, "The Jimmy Awards®."

Cardon Sullivan from Bentonville West High School and Audrey Redwine from Fayetteville High School spent a week in New York City training with some of Broadway's top talent. They performed alongside 108 of their peers representing 55 regional award programs across the U.S. vying for best performance by an actor and actress awards as well as other top honors and scholarships.

In response to the success of the program, several awards have been added this year including the student-voted Spirit of the Diamonds award and outstanding performance recognition in vocals, acting or dance. There's also a new competition for student reporters enrolled in schools that are participating in the Diamond Awards this season.



Diamond Awards coverage on KNWA



Hip-Hop 101

NEW PROGRAM

Over 100 local students learned hip-hop basics last year through the first Hip-Hop 101, a free after-school program that introduces young creatives to the most popular genre of American music and its history.

Under the instruction of teaching artists who are professionals in their fields of break-dancing, fashion, audio engineering and more, the program provided **132 hours of free instruction** through after-school workshops. Students wrote and performed their own songs, created costumes and showcased what they learned at a performance in Walton Arts Center's Baum Walker Hall.

Some students took their learning outside the classroom. High schoolers at ALLPS School of Innovation performed at venues across the region and created a professional music video and EP with original music.

This year, these high schoolers will become teachers and mentors with Hip-Hop Knowledge Drop, one-day, in-school residencies for third grade students across Northwest Arkansas. The residencies bring professional teaching artists and students in the ALLPS Crew into English, music, physical education and visual arts classes to lead students through three dynamic sessions: writing and rapping lyrics, breaking and graffiti.

Hip-Hop 101 continues its work this year at two different schools, Asbell and Owl Creek elementary schools, helping local students build confidence and learn about this uniquely American genre and its connection to our history.



Students talk about their experience!



Classroom Series

Our most popular arts education program is still our Classroom Series. The field trip program gives students and teachers the opportunity to see a live performance for free. This is about more than just seeing a show. It's about providing live, curriculum-connected arts experiences that support classroom learning.

In 2025, the Classroom Series had its strongest year in a decade, reaching nearly **29,000 students and teachers across 24 productions**. Feedback gathered through surveys and listening sessions with participating educators reflected high student engagement and strong connections to classroom learning, underscoring the program's value across a wide range of grades and communities.

In-school performances were an important part of this success. **Five in-school performances** expanded access for students at upper grade levels and those who might otherwise miss out due to their school's location, resources or scheduling constraints. Teachers emphasized in-school programming not only brings the arts to students but also gives other educators the chance to see the program in action. This valuable feedback reinforces our plan to expand in-school performances.



Going Deeper

Stage to Studio gives classes the opportunity to stay after a Classroom Series performance, have lunch and visit **Community Creative Center**, a resident company of Walton Arts Center where they create art connected to the themes of the show they experienced. This deeper experience allows students to process the shows through tactile learning and offers a confidence boost by trying something new.

"Thank you so much for facilitating the Stage to Studio experience for us after the Trey McLaughlin and the Sounds of Zamar performance.

I asked students to write a couple of sentences telling me what they thought about today and what they learned. Some are a little choppy because they're English language learners, but I wanted to preserve the precious authenticity of it and show how they found language to convey what they experienced.

— Callie Day, George Junior High teacher

"Today I learned to be patient because when we were working with the clay, I felt like giving up, but the teacher kept telling me to not give up and be patient and I ended up liking the finished product!"—Alli

"Dear Ms. Day, one of my favorite part of the day was when they start to sing and it was

just one person and then more join but they sing the same and then they surprise you and it is like a flower opened with so many beautiful musics together in their voices. They sing very well and something that I learned is that most the songs today and in pop r&b and rock are inspired by the gospels of the African Americans even Justin Bieber and the Broadways. Thank you Ms. Day for this day that I will never forget. And thank your friends at the field trip for this day."

— Yensi



Impact that Resonates

In 2019, Jessica Fisher, theater director at Van Buren High School, brought a group of students to Walton Arts Center to see the Broadway tour of *The Play That Goes Wrong*. Staff arranged for the group to do a **stage combat workshop** with Michael Thatcher, a member of the Broadway and touring cast of the show.

“It was amazing!” Fisher said. “He used the play and his knowledge to teach my students a skill that they are not exposed to. They were so excited and engaged the entire workshop.”

The field trip inspired Fisher as much as it did her students.

“Ever since I saw this production and did the workshop with Michael, I wanted to direct this show,” Fisher said. “The high energy, fun and new skills that the cast could learn was so exciting. Seeing this show live and the workshop planted a seed.”

Five years later Van Buren High School produced *The Play That Goes Wrong*. Though these students weren’t part of the workshop, Michael still reached out to encourage and inspire them.

“When I was in the production process,” Fisher recalls, “I reached out to him, and he was so excited to send the cast a ‘Break a Leg’ video and gave them some

advice on acting! It was truly impactful to the cast and crew. They felt so heard and seen. They were motivated and thought that it was the coolest thing!”

But what about those students from the 2019 field trip?

“Some of my students had never seen a professional production and then having a workshop with Broadway actors was just a cherry on top,” Fisher said. “Those students are in college now doing theater, and they still talk about it being a key factor in them pursuing theater as a major.”

Fisher continues inspiring students to create great theater. Van Buren High School participated in the inaugural **Diamond Awards** in 2025 and again this year. She’s also bringing students to Broadway shows through **Broadway Bridges on the Road**.

“Opportunities like this are so meaningful to my students,” Fisher said. “Seeing shows and professional actors giving time to talk to students is amazing.”



Watch workshop highlights!

More Teacher & Classroom Support in FY25

- + **32,000 students and teachers** served through arts education initiatives
- + **22 teachers** trained in arts integration through SmART Residency. Those teachers impacted **270 students** during the school year.
- + **40 teachers** trained in arts integration through AWE Institute
- + Take A Seat provided **505 free tickets** to **14 nonprofits** in our region.
- + Artosphere produced **28 events (18 free)** and reached **33,547 people**.
- + VoiceJam programs impacted **480 students** through outreach and **160 people** attended the free workshops or One-Day Choir events.

More Support To Artmakers in FY25

- + Walton Arts Center provides support or services to **two resident companies**, Community Creative Center and the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas
- + We present performances by **several artistic affiliates** including the Northwest Arkansas Jazz Society and Trike Theater.

10x10 Arts Series

Access for All

Walton Arts Center's 10x10 Arts Series offers a curated selection of **10 performances** each season across a variety of genres including music, dance, comedy and theater, and all are priced at just \$10 per ticket.

It's more than just a good deal. Those ticket prices dramatically lower the financial barrier to become a performing arts patron. This series helps fulfill the organization's mission of making the arts accessible to the broader Northwest Arkansas community and aligns with a commitment toward inclusion and outreach.

The series also promotes engagement between artists and audience. After each show, audiences are encouraged to share feedback via handwritten Post-It® notes, which are passed along to the artists. There are also post-show conversations with artists, giving patrons a chance to directly interact, ask questions and deepen their understanding. All of this fosters curiosity about and shared ownership of the arts.

The 10x10 Arts Series serves as a bridge to community members who might not typically be able to afford tickets and allows them to experience artistically ambitious and globally-minded performances. It's a practical embodiment of the idea that excellence in the arts can be inclusive rather than exclusive.



Friends make it possible

Connecting All Corners of the Community

Walton Arts Center has developed an amazing working relationship with Springdale High School's Bilingual Bulldogs. This group of multilingual students work with our organization as translators for public and Classroom Series performances to make our venues welcoming for all audience members.

Students work with our frontline staff to scan tickets, troubleshoot ticket access and help patrons navigate the venue. They even help deliver the curtain speech in multiple languages. The students get real-world translation experience for their future careers.

The Bilingual Bulldogs also worked with a group of English Language Learners from Walker Elementary who came to see the Classroom Series production of *The Pa'akai We Bring* in spring 2025.

They taught the elementary students a chant about being proud of their bilingual skills and visited with the Hawaiian cast from *The Pa'akai We Bring*.



Watch the Bilingual Bulldog Chant

Bilingual Bulldogs backstage with Sonia de los Santos.



A New Home for Visual Arts

Walton Arts Center has deepened its commitment to visual arts in Northwest Arkansas with the opening of a new gallery in a historic space. Alexander Gallery at the Porter Art Warehouse, a 100-year-old former produce warehouse, is the **first new public art gallery on the Upper Ramble**. The building has been part of Walton Arts Center's lease with the city and the University of Arkansas since 1992 but had never been used as a public space because of the costly repairs needed to bring it up to code.



Recognizing the historical significance of the structure, the city added it to the National Register of Historic Places and invested just over \$1 million to restore the exterior of the building. That allowed Walton Arts Center to commit \$950,000 for an interior overhaul that honors the character of the warehouse while also creating more than **2,500 square feet with movable walls for flexible exhibition spaces**. Now refurbished to code and ADA accessible, the space also includes restrooms and gallery support space.



The gallery was created to showcase the work of local, regional and national visual artists, and it's at the epicenter of the city's arts and culture district. Walton Arts Center's vision is to make arts accessible to all and create an ecosystem of arts, culture and entertainment.

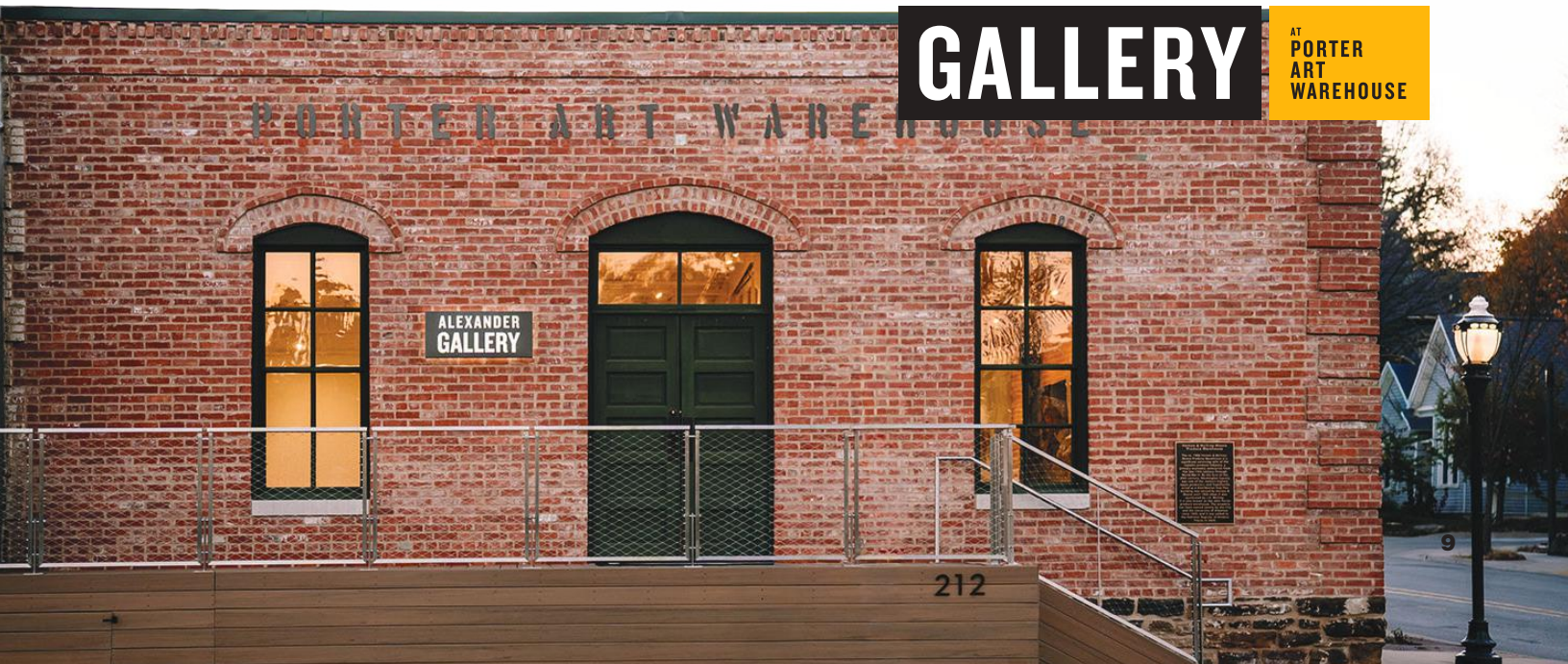
The grand opening took place October 29, 2025, with a ribbon-cutting and community reception for more than **500 people**. In a fitting tribute to the future of the gallery, the inaugural exhibition was the fifth annual *Our Art, Our Region, Our Time*.

The regional showcase featured **89 works by 75 artists from 19 cities** across the region selected from a record **235 submissions**.

Fayetteville Mayor Molly Rawn praised the transformation, noting that restoring the building “enriches all of our lives” and preserves a tangible piece of the city's history. A building that started as a community hub for area farmers is now a cultural gathering place for conversation and community.

ALEXANDER GALLERY

AT
PORTER
ART
WAREHOUSE



A Season That **Moved the Region**

From the first guitar riff of spring to the final encore of fall, the Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion's 2025 season drew people together – some from as far away as Alaska – energized local businesses, created community connection and drove regional momentum.

On show nights, the ripple effect starts early. Restaurants fill up, patios buzz and hotels see steady bookings as fans travel in from surrounding counties and neighboring states. The Walmart AMP's biggest nights can feel like mini-economic engines, creating income for small businesses and supporting hundreds of local workers, from parking crews and concessions teams to the hospitality staff at area businesses.

This year brought **277,400 attendees** across **39 concerts, two symphonic shows, one AMP Up the Arts benefit concert and 10 client events.** Touring was down this year across the industry, but the Walmart AMP still held its own and was in the top 10 of Live Nation's amphitheaters based on the number of shows presented.

The venue helped **913 veterans and their families** attend shows through Vet Tix. For many of these, free tickets gave them a fun night out as a family or stress-free date night after a challenging year.

Behind the Scenes

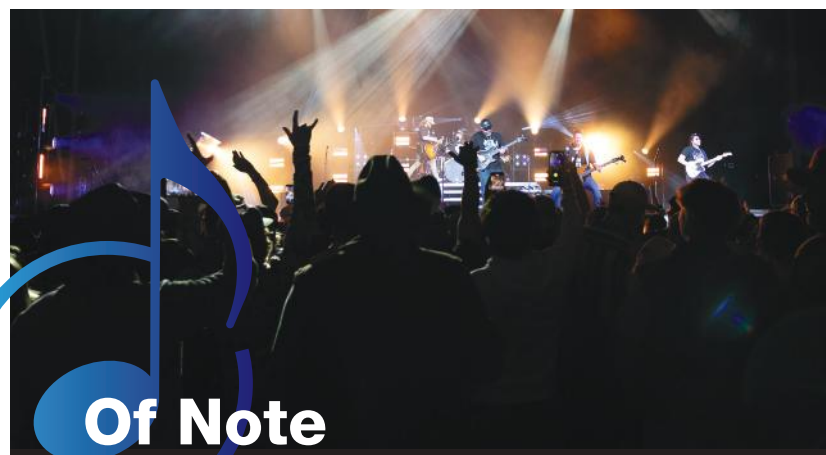
For **eight shows Best Friends Animal Rescue** brought adoptable dogs and one cat for artists and their crews to play with backstage. It's a win-win for all – everyone misses their pets on tour, and the interaction helps the animals become more social and adoptable.



Walmart AMP hosted **111 artists** and worked with **nine local businesses** to bring in special services and make backstage feel like home – everything from **7Brew to Urban Cellar Winery to Blake Street Gym.**

From the start, the Arkansas Music Pavilion and now the Walmart AMP has expanded partnerships with local nonprofits. Nonprofit partners have the opportunity to raise money by working in the venue's concession stands. This year, **five nonprofits raised a total of \$126,370.**

Walmart AMP staff carries that commitment to community service further by washing and donating unclaimed blankets to area animal shelters and even donating extra food from artist catering to five area churches and schools throughout the season.



+ First two-show day: **Nate Bargatze**

- + Top artists requests: Saratoga Water, ginger shots, Red Bull, house-made smoothies/ juices, Celsius, meat sticks, hard boiled eggs
- + Number of towels used by artists in the 2025 season: 7,050
- + Largest tour (based on number of people backstage): **Twenty One Pilots** - 121
- + Largest tour (based on vehicles backstage): **Jonas Brothers** – 17 trucks, 14 buses, 1 trailer, 1 catering bandwagon

AMP 2025 Season
Highlights



Case Study: Economic and Community Impact of Touring Broadway

In August 2024 Walton Arts Center didn't just present **12 performances** of the blockbuster *Hamilton*, but it also hosted **two weeks of technical rehearsals** for the *Angelica Tour of Hamilton* to get the show prepared and ready for its life on the road.

Walton Arts Center is excited to play a role in helping tours get on the road and has **hosted technical rehearsals and tour launches for 18 shows to date**. Producers want to come here because of the skill and professionalism of our team, and they love how affordable, welcoming and supportive our community is for their cast and crew.

We all know *Hamilton* is a big draw, but how much does a technical rehearsal and show like this impact the community?

More than **100 cast, management, crew, designers and directors** came together in Fayetteville for the rehearsals and performances. Those cast members stayed in hotels, ate in local restaurants, explored local stores and local sights and used services like physical therapists, gyms and more.

Hamilton was also a driver for subscription sales in the 2025 season, and while the bulk of subscribers still came from Washington, Benton, Carroll, Madison, Crawford and Sebastian counties, **our subscriber base expanded as far east as Jonesboro, south to Pine Bluff and north into Joplin and Springfield**.

You can really see the impact of a show like *Hamilton* when you look at single ticket sales. Patrons from **14 states outside of Arkansas purchased tickets** to the show, expanding our regional reach from Colorado to Tennessee and Louisiana to Nebraska.

These patrons travel in for a show. Stay overnight, enjoy dinner and sightseeing – all of which drives our local economy.

There are also very tangible benefits to the local economy:

\$80,000	Lodging for rehearsals
\$77,000	Local spending for food, transportation and incidentals
\$104,500	Salary for 325 local crew
\$2,400	Local lodging tax
\$3,140	Local sales tax
\$6.9M	Economic impact of a Broadway tour*
\$7.17M	TOTAL IMPACT OF HAMILTON

*According to The Broadway League's Economic Impact of Touring Broadway 2016-19.

Subscription and Single Ticket Reach:

● Hamilton Single Ticket Buyers ● Broadway subscribers



The tour dance captain led a free workshop for **30 local dancers**

Walton Arts Center

By the **Numbers** FY25

(July 2024-June 2025)

138,715 Tickets sold

200 Performances and events

5,731 Broadway subscriber seats

238 Volunteers donating
19,917 hours

432,016
Total
Tickets

Walmart AMP

By the **Numbers** FY26

(April 2025-March 2026)

293,301 Tickets sold

52 Shows and events

9 Shows with more than
10,000 tickets sold

\$50.69 Average ticket price

252
Total
Shows & Events

Community Impact

1,010 Annual employees

\$55 million Annual operating budget

17% Budget funded by donations

1,832 Tickets donated to 18 agencies or nonprofits serving
NWA residents

32,000 Students and teachers served by arts education programming

277 Teachers received arts integration training

122,720 Pounds of materials were kept out of a landfill by recycling



State and Local Economic Impact

\$50,708 Fayetteville sales and liquor tax revenue

\$666,207 Rogers sales and liquor tax revenue

\$14,733 Washington County sale tax revenue

\$294,301 Benton County sales tax revenue

\$2.26 million Arkansas sales and liquor tax revenue

Total Economic Impact*

\$68.1 million in event-related spending

Over 1,000 jobs supported



*Based on Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Calculator for Arkansas