

AZ Views

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Arizona Indicators Panel

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How Do Arizonans Spend their Personal Time?

Arizonans Are Active People, Even in their Spare Time

When they're not sleeping, working, or tending to other duties, Arizonans keep busy. From museum tours to farmer's markets, softball to spiritual quests, they spend their personal time on a wide array of different activities, from high culture to casual pastime. And—little surprise here—they tend to like to do them outside. These findings arise from a survey asking Arizonans about their leisure-time pursuits, leaving it for them to decide what they consider to be “arts and culture” or “leisure activities and pastimes.” In response, 45% of panelists say they regularly attend at least one type of arts and cultural event, and 77% say they say they regularly participate in leisure activities and pastimes. Half of each group is regularly involved in more than one type of activity.

Of course, not everybody does everything. One segment of state residents is especially fond of attending concerts, theater, and museums. But a wide variety of Arizonans enjoy the top four pastimes—sports and fitness, outdoor recreation, reading, and TV & movies. Further, many residents seem intent upon spending their spare time improving themselves and their personal lives: Asked which activities they most value, Arizonans' top choices were strengthening family relationships, exercise and staying healthy, sharpening my mind/intellectual pursuits, and having a spiritual life.

Arizona Indicators Panel

Data reported here come from the Arizona Indicators Panel. This is a *statewide* representative sample of Arizonans. Panel members have agreed to be surveyed online several times a year across many topic areas. This enables great depth and exploration of topics with the same sample group and solves some of the problems experienced in random sample telephone surveys. The results reported here come from two rounds of panel questions and were collected in May and July 2008. The results summarized here contain the statistically significant differences on selected demographic characteristics of panel participants that can be found at the end of this report.

Arizona Indicators is a partnership of Arizona State University, *The Arizona Republic*, Arizona Community Foundation, Valley of the Sun United Way, and Arizona Department of Commerce.

The survey results are generally consistent with other reports on the types and level of involvement in cultural events and personal pastimes and activities.¹ But unlike other studies, we do not presuppose what counts as a “cultural” activity, but allowed panelists to include anything they chose. We also asked panelists whether they were regularly involved in an activity, thus focusing on those with particular interests. Finally, we analyzed the findings by a variety of demographic characteristics that tell us things about people regularly involved in arts and cultural events and those reporting regular involvement in leisure activities and pastimes.

Nearly Half of Arizonans Seek Out Arts and Culture

Panelists were asked “What types of arts and culture events do you attend regularly?” and then prompted to type up to five responses in their own words. Their responses were coded into nine types. The following table shows the percentage of all panelists by type of cultural activity, and percentages for the 45% (295) who indicated that they regularly attended at least one type of event.

What types of arts and culture events do you attend regularly?		
Regularly attend	All panelists	At least one cultural event
Concerts	29%	64%
Festivals	21%	46%
Theater & plays	16%	36%
Museums & galleries	9%	21%
Some other cultural event	9%	19%
Professional sports or college sports	7%	15%
Expos and conventions	3%	6%
Religious cultural activity	2%	5%
Movies	2%	5%
	n=651	n=295

These open-ended responses reflect panelists’ personal views of what counts as “arts and culture events” and their understanding of what regular attendance means. Responses included predictable types of events, such as going to concerts, plays, and museums, but also religious events and the movies, which were also reported when panelists were asked about their “activities and pastimes” (see below). The “some other cultural event” included a wide variety of items, which were either too general for categorization or of low frequency—for example, “farmers’ market, cultural events, auctions, community activities,” etc.

The interrelationships of the top four categories are shown in the following table:

Sixty-six percent of those who regularly go to theater and plays also regularly go to concerts. Sixty-one percent of those who go to museums also go to concerts, and 31% of them also regularly attend theater and plays, suggesting a group of panelists with more than one type of regular cultural activity. However, only 1% said they regularly did all four. Despite these differing patterns of cultural activity, those who regularly

Type of art and culture event *		Festivals	Theater & plays	Museums & galleries
Concerts	Column %	44%	66%	61%
	Row %	34%	37%	20%
Festivals	Column %		36%	36%
	Row %		37%	16%
Theater & plays	Column %			31%
	Row %			53%

n=189

* To read this table: Row %, means, for example, that of regular concert goers 34% also regularly go to festivals. Column % means, for example, that of regular festival goers 44% also regularly go to concerts.

¹ For example, the National Endowment Art’s *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* (2002) found that approximately a third of respondents said they had gone to an arts performance in the previous year and one quarter had visited an art museum.

attend the most popular types of art and culture events have a similar profile: they are more likely to have college degrees, household incomes of \$60K or more, and live in Tucson or in Maricopa County outside of Phoenix.

Arizonans Go Out to Play

The same approach to gathering information on arts and culture was applied to leisure activities and pastimes: Panelists were asked “What are the leisure activities and pastimes that you participate in regularly?” and then prompted to type up to five responses in their own words. Seventy-seven percent of panelists (501) gave at least one entry. Their responses were analyzed and coded into thirteen types of activities. The following tables show the percentage of all panelists by type of activity or pastime, and percentages for the 77% who indicated that they regularly participate in at least one activity or pastime.

Regularly attend	All panelists	At least one cultural event
Sports and fitness	42%	55%
Outdoor recreation (Hiking, boating, camping, etc.)	24%	32%
Reading	22%	28%
TV & movies	20%	26%
Other	20%	26%
Time with family & friends	14%	18%
Arts, crafts, & hobbies	14%	18%
Cards and Games	7%	9%
Wine, food, cooking	6%	8%
Making music	6%	8%
Gardening	5%	6%
Travel	5%	6%
Computing, electronic games	4%	5%
Religious	4%	5%

n=651 n=501

The “other” category again included a wide variety of suggestions which were either unclassifiable or of low frequency, for example, “showing dogs, volunteering, dancing, flying, gambling, Sweet Adelines,” etc.

The interrelationships of the top four categories (outdoor recreation, sports and fitness, reading, and TV and movies) are shown in the following table:

The strongest associations were among outdoor recreation or reading or watching TV and movies and regular involvement in sports and fitness activities. However, only 2% of panelists reported regularly doing all four. Unlike participation in cultural events, the social characteristics of those who regularly participate in the most popular activities or pastimes are quite varied:

Type of activity or pastime		Outdoor recreation	Reading	TV & movies
Sports and fitness	Column %	59%	56%	48%
	Row %	34%	28%	23%
Outdoor recreation	Column %		25%	21%
	Row %		22%	17%
Reading	Column %			35%
	Row %			33%


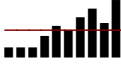











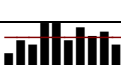






n=273

- Those who say they regularly participate in sports and fitness activities are more likely to be male, have a college degree, be among the highest family income groups, and live in Maricopa County outside Phoenix.

- Those who say they regularly participate in outdoor recreational activities are more likely to be male, be in the younger age categories, have a lower level of education, be members of the majority community, not working, or live in Tucson.
- Those who say they read regularly are more likely to be female, between ages 30-44, and not working.
- Those who say they regularly watch TV or movies are more likely to be in the lowest income group and live in Phoenix.

Arizonans Value Family, Health, and Exercise

Panelists were asked how important 12 social or cultural activities were to them. They were also asked how frequently they did them. They were prompted to score both questions on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 was low and 10 was high. The following chart shows the average scores for each item and their distribution.

Social/cultural pursuit	How important?		How often?	
	Average score	Low-hi* distribution	Average score	Low-hi distribution
Strengthening family relationships	7.9		7.0	
Exercising and staying healthy	7.3		6.2	
Sharpening my mind; intellectual pursuits	7.2		6.0	
Having a spiritual life	6.8		6.2	
Developing my creativity	6.5		5.3	
Making new friends and expanding my social network	6.5		5.4	
Learning about new ideas	6.4		5.7	
Supporting environmental causes and conservation efforts	6.2		4.0	
Being involved in a cause	5.4		4.1	
Volunteering in my community	5.3		4.0	

n=626-632

*The line through the bars indicates the average score.

Scores for importance and how often they were done tracked fairly evenly across topics. The largest discrepancy was for supporting environmental causes and conservation efforts, where the importance was given an average score out of 10 of 6.2, but only 4.0 for how often it was done.

Scores for the top four ranked social and cultural pursuits (strengthening family relationships, exercise and staying healthy, sharpening my mind/intellectual pursuits, and having a spiritual life) were analyzed by selected demographic characteristics.

- Those who thought strengthening family relationships was important were more likely to be female, have a college degree, or be in the higher income group. Those who said they actually did things to strengthen family relationships were more likely to be female, majority group, working, in the higher income group, or living in Maricopa County outside Phoenix.
- Panelists who said exercising and staying healthy were important were more likely to be 45 years or over, have a college degree, be a member of a minority group, be retired, or be in the higher income group. Those who said they actually did something about exercise and staying healthy were more likely to be 60 years of age or more, have a college degree, be retired, or live in Maricopa County outside Phoenix.
- Respondents who said it is important to exercise their minds or follow intellectual pursuits were more likely to have a college degree, be in the lowest *and* the highest income groups, or live in Maricopa County outside Phoenix. Those who said they followed such pursuits were more likely to be male, be in the 45-59 age category, have a college degree, be in the lowest income group, or not live in the “rest of the state” region.
- Those who said that having a spiritual life was important were more likely to be female, 60 years of age or more, have a higher level of education than high school, be minority, retired, and with mid-level family incomes (\$30-\$60K).

Understanding How Arizonans Keep Busy

These data provide a baseline of self-reported and self-defined involvement in a broad range of cultural activities and pastimes. While only a first step in examining how Arizonans spend their personal time, they do provide a more nuanced and detailed picture than was previously available. The picture they suggest is one of a busy, active population sharing a lot of interests—especially regarding outdoor activities—yet also containing discernible subgroups devoted to particular pursuits. True, a considerable number of panelists—about 20%—report no regular cultural or pastime activity; but this does not necessarily mean people are doing nothing. The finding may be due to how respondents prefer to express themselves. While regular involvement in religious activities were cited by a very small percentage of respondents, for example, the fact that “having a spiritual life” ranked so high in importance suggests that people are religiously and spiritually involved but don’t use these categories to describe it.

These data also suggest that what people mean by “regular” involvement may well alter—at least in frequency—by type of activity. For example, those who engage in “regular” outdoor recreation may do so more often than those who report “regular” attendance at museums and galleries. Further exploration could provide empirically-based approaches to gauging these metrics. Other areas worthy of follow-up research include Arizonans’ assessment of the quantity and quality of activities available to them. Would they do more if more choices were available? Are there activities they would like to pursue but feel blocked from doing so? To what degree are people’s choices about where to

live and what job to take shaped by a desire to pursue a “leisure-time” activity? Far from being mere sidelights to “serious” issues of work and career, preferences for personal-time activities can play major roles in determining how and where people live. One purpose of work, after all, is to enable us to pursue social and cultural activities that enrich our lives and help us grow and fulfill our potential. The importance of Arizona’s climate in supporting many of those activities is an old story that continues to play out today. But much more remains to be discovered about state residents’ less obvious but no less important private-time preferences.

Panel Data Participant Demographic Variables ¹					
Demographic Characteristics		First round – May 2008		Second round – June 2008	
Gender	Male	309	48%	268	48%
	Female	342	52%	288	52%
Age	18-29	98	15%	75	14%
	30-44	210	32%	188	34%
	45-59	184	28%	156	28%
	60+	158	24%	136	24%
Education	High school diploma or less	267	41%	241	43%
	Some college	208	32%	162	29%
	College degree+	176	27%	152	27%
Household Income	Up to \$30K	156	24%	11	20%
	\$30-60K	224	34%	198	36%
	\$60K+	271	42%	248	45%
Race/ethnicity ²	Majority	401	62%	365	66%
	Minority	250	38%	191	34%
Employment ³	Working	371	57%	306	55%
	Not-working	152	23%	145	26%
	Retired	128	20%	105	19%
Region ⁴	Phoenix	149	23%	158	29%
	Rest of Maricopa	195	30%	167	30%
	Tucson	134	21%	88	16%
	Rest of state	170	26%	140	25%
Total		n=651		n=556	

¹ These data are weighted to be representative of Arizona as a whole.

² Majority comprises “White, non-Hispanic” (61.6%); Minority comprises, “Black non-Hispanic” (4.1%), “Other, non-Hispanic” (7/0%), “Hispanic” (26.0%), “two-races, non-Hispanic” (0.9%). Percentages are for first round.

³ Working comprises “Working as a paid employee” (49.7%) and “Self-employed” (7.3%); Not Working comprises “Not working, looking for work”(8.4%), “Not working, disabled” (7.8%), and “Not working, other” (7.1%); Retired is 19.6%. Percentages are for first round.

⁴ Regions were defined from a combination of zip code and county information. Phoenix was defined as all of the panelists living in Phoenix zip codes (23%) and Rest of Maricopa as all of the Maricopa County residents not in Phoenix (30%). Tucson was defined as all of the panelists in Tucson’s zip codes (21%) and Rest of State as any panelists not living in the other three categories (26%). Percentages are for first round.



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