

Economic Impact of the Creative Economy in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties

UCSB Economic Forecast Project

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Contents

| | | |
|----------|---|----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 2 |
| 2 | Methodology | 2 |
| 2.1 | Data Description | 2 |
| 2.2 | IMPLAN | 2 |
| 2.3 | Creative Industry Definition and NAICS–IMPLAN Mapping | 3 |
| 3 | Economic Impacts | 4 |
| 3.1 | Total Impacts | 5 |
| 3.2 | Impacts by County | 5 |
| 3.3 | Fiscal Impacts | 6 |
| 3.4 | Employment Impacts by Industry | 7 |
| 4 | Conclusion | 8 |

1 Introduction

California is well known for its music and movie industries. Like the state as a whole, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties are home to many individuals who earn their livelihoods through creative work. Creative work includes fashion design, architecture, performing arts schools, art galleries, and a variety of other creative industries. Individuals who pursue creative endeavors in their work can support themselves financially and provide economic benefits to their communities when they hire workers and spend their earnings.

The Creative Economy consists of twelve sectors: Architecture and Interior Design, Art Dealers, Communication Arts, Digital Media, Entertainment, Fashion, Furniture and Decorative Arts, Industrial Design Services, Publishing and Printing, Toys, Visual and Performing Arts Providers, and Fine and Performing Arts Schools.

This report uses data on employment and wages in these 12 sectors to estimate the economic impact of the Creative Economy. This report begins by defining the Creative Economy and outlining the data and IMPLAN methodology used in the analysis. It then presents total economic impacts for the two-county region, followed by impacts for each county, fiscal impacts, and employment impacts by industry. The report concludes with a brief discussion of the Creative Economy's broader role.

2 Methodology

Our analysis estimates the economic impact of the Creative Economy in Santa Barbara County and Ventura County using data on employment and wages from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; forecasts of employment and wages estimated using IMPLAN ProTM, an input-output model. IMPLAN output is reported in 2026 dollars.

2.1 Data Description

Data on employment, wages, and establishments in the Creative Economy was obtained from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This data is available at the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code level. This report uses data from 2024, which is the most recent year of data available.

2.2 IMPLAN

The modeling software used for the economic analysis was IMPLAN ProTM (IMPLAN). The IMPLAN website explains, "As the leading provider of economic impact data and analytical applications, we've spent decades serving the economic data needs of researchers, policy makers,

decision makers, advocates, business leaders, governments and more. IMPLAN has been re-defining the field of economics for over 40 years. Created by academics to serve the needs of the United States Forest Services, it has been transformed today to serve as a solution-provider for anyone interested in understanding their economy.” Users of IMPLAN today include economic development organizations, governments, associations, corporations, universities and consulting companies such as Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler, Purdue University, the United States Department of Agriculture, Colliers International, the United States Coast Guard, Argonne National Laboratory, Arizona State University, and Clemson University.

Input-output models are accounting tables tracing the linkages of inter-industry purchases and sales in a specific study area. They are used to calculate the effects per dollar of spending on jobs, income, and additional expenditures in that specific area. These models produce estimates of local spending impacts (referred to as multipliers) using these inter-industry linkages. IMPLAN uses information about the types and amounts of production factors — raw materials, labor, and intermediate goods — needed to produce any given output. IMPLAN uses dollar valuations of these inputs, and traces the currency flows from the original purchases of goods as they work their way through the study area economy.

In input-output terminology, an initial expenditure is referred to as a direct impact. The entity receiving the payment of that initial expenditure is expected to buy some of its inputs locally. Those purchases by the impacted entity attributable to the increase in business generated by the initial expenditure are referred to as an indirect impact. Finally, employees of the firms that are impacted both directly and indirectly are expected to spend some of their income locally. The additional local spending by these employees generated through this mechanism is referred to as induced impact.

2.3 Creative Industry Definition and NAICS–IMPLAN Mapping

Creative industries are identified at the six-digit NAICS level and grouped into twelve sectors, including Architecture and Interior Design, Art Dealers, Communication Arts, Digital Media, Entertainment, Fashion, Furniture and Decorative Arts, Industrial Design Services, Publishing and Printing, Toys, Visual and Performing Arts Providers, and Fine and Performing Arts Schools.

Because IMPLAN uses its own industry scheme rather than NAICS codes, each NAICS-based creative sector must be mapped to the corresponding IMPLAN industry. This mapping ensures that employment and wage data collected using NAICS definitions can be accurately translated into the IMPLAN model. In practice, each NAICS code (or group of codes) is assigned to the IMPLAN industry that most closely reflects the underlying production activity. For example, NAICS 541310 (Architectural Services), 541320 (Landscape Design), and 541340 (Drafting Services) are all mapped to IMPLAN Sector 439: Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services.

The complete NAICS–IMPLAN mapping used in this report is shown in Table 1. This mapping determines how employment and wage inputs are aggregated, how industry spending patterns are assigned within IMPLAN, and how resulting impacts are allocated across sectors in both counties.

Table 1: **Mapping of Creative Economy NAICS Codes to IMPLAN Sectors**

| Creative Sector | NAICS Codes Included | IMPLAN Code | IMPLAN Industry Description |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------|---|
| Architecture & Interior Design | 332323; 54131; 54132; 54134; 54141 | 439 | Architectural, engineering, and related services |
| Art Dealers | 45392 | 395 | Retail – Miscellaneous store retailers |
| Communication Arts | 54143; 54181; 541921; 541922 | 447 | Advertising, public relations, and related services |
| Digital Media | 5112 | 410 | Software publishers |
| Entertainment | 51211; 51212; 51219; 5122; 515112; 515120; 5152 | 411 | Motion picture and video industries |
| Fashion | 313; 315; 3162; 316992; 32562; 33991; 42394; 4243; 42434; 54149 | 440 | Specialized design services |
| Furniture & Decorative Arts | 314; 327111; 327112; 327212; 327999; 33512; 337; 4232 | 350 | Nonupholstered wood household furniture manufacturing |
| Industrial Design Services | 54142 | 440 | Specialized design services |
| Publishing & Printing | 3231; 424920; 511110; 511120; 511130; 511199; 511191; 519120; 519130 | 144 | Printing |
| Toys | 33993; 42392 | 366 | Doll, toy, and game manufacturing |
| Visual & Performing Arts Providers | 339992; 71111; 71112; 71113; 71119; 71151; 71141; 71211 | 481 | Independent artists, writers, and performers |
| Fine & Performing Arts Schools | 61161 | 464 | Other educational services |

3 Economic Impacts

The creative economy represents a significant source of employment and economic activity in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Impacts are reported as direct effects, indirect effects,

and induced effects. A direct impact is an initial expenditure. An indirect impact is a purchase made by the recipient of an initial expenditure, which is attributable to the increase in business generated by the initial expenditure. An induced impact is the local spending by employees of impacted firms attributable to changes in income related to the direct and indirect impacts of the initial expenditure. Impacts to economic output and jobs were estimated using the IMPLAN input-output analysis of 2024 county-level data for Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, but results are reported in 2026 dollars.

3.1 Total Impacts

Table 2 summarizes the combined economic impacts of the creative economy across Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. The two-county region generates an estimated **24,478 jobs** and approximately **\$8.39 billion** in total economic output. Direct effects account for **7,508 jobs**, with an additional **9,221 indirect jobs**, and **7,748 induced jobs**. Total labor income associated with creative economy activity is approximately **\$2.97 billion**, and total value added is estimated at **\$4.63 billion**.

Table 2: **Total Impact of the Creative Economy**

| Impact Type | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Direct | 7,508 | \$1,632,476,922.81 | \$2,475,379,734.25 | \$4,820,382,055.38 |
| Indirect | 9,221 | \$825,255,346.45 | \$1,161,469,398.76 | \$2,023,622,982.82 |
| Induced | 7,748 | \$516,822,576.19 | \$995,950,972.87 | \$1,547,178,366.56 |
| Total | 24,478 | \$2,974,554,845.46 | \$4,632,800,105.89 | \$8,391,183,404.75 |

Note: Each job is equivalent to one year of full-time employment; dollar values are in 2026 dollars.

3.2 Impacts by County

County-level estimates for Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties are presented below. Table 3 reports the economic impacts of the creative economy in Santa Barbara County. Creative industries support approximately **11,232 total jobs** in the county. The direct employment in creative industries is **4,136 jobs**. The indirect impact is **3,887 jobs**, and the induced impacts contribute **3,208 jobs**. Total labor income associated with creative industry activity is estimated at **\$1.30 billion**, with total value added of approximately **\$2.19 billion**. Total output generated by these activities is **\$3.82 billion**.

Table 3: **Economic Impacts of the Creative Economy: Santa Barbara County**

| Impact Type | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Direct | 4,136 | \$696,603,581.56 | \$1,206,436,190.52 | \$2,194,853,028.38 |
| Indirect | 3,887 | \$372,624,721.01 | \$558,636,884.02 | \$969,327,391.66 |
| Induced | 3,208 | \$231,253,449.61 | \$431,671,346.49 | \$663,263,695.20 |
| Total | 11,232 | \$1,300,481,752.18 | \$2,196,744,421.03 | \$3,827,444,115.24 |

Note: Each job is equivalent to one year of full-time employment; dollar values are in 2026 dollars.

Table 4 provides estimates for Ventura County. Creative industries support approximately **13,246 total jobs**. Direct employment in creative sectors accounts for **3,372 jobs**, with **5,334 indirect jobs** and **4,540 induced jobs**. Total labor income associated with creative economy activity in Ventura County is estimated at **\$1.67 billion**, and total value added is approximately **\$2.43 billion**. Total output generated by creative industries is **\$4.56 billion**.

 Table 4: **Economic Impacts of the Creative Economy: Ventura County**

| Impact Type | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added | Output |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Direct | 3,372 | \$935,873,341.25 | \$1,268,943,543.73 | \$2,625,529,027.00 |
| Indirect | 5,334 | \$452,630,625.44 | \$602,832,514.74 | \$1,054,295,591.16 |
| Induced | 4,540 | \$285,569,126.58 | \$564,279,626.38 | \$883,914,671.36 |
| Total | 13,246 | \$1,674,073,093.28 | \$2,436,055,684.86 | \$4,563,739,289.51 |

Note: Each job is equivalent to one year of full-time employment; dollar values are in 2026 dollars.

3.3 Fiscal Impacts

 Table 5: **Fiscal Impact of the Creative Economy: Santa Barbara County**

| Type of Impact | County | State | Federal | Total |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Direct | \$10,798,406.37 | \$56,102,648.11 | \$157,593,074.39 | \$245,672,173.71 |
| Indirect | \$4,928,668.40 | \$26,311,225.87 | \$79,797,780.93 | \$120,697,711.96 |
| Induced | \$8,019,471.44 | \$26,191,660.91 | \$53,381,750.00 | \$103,357,134.62 |
| Total | \$23,746,546.21 | \$108,605,534.89 | \$290,772,605.32 | \$469,727,020.29 |

Note: Each job is equivalent to one year of full-time employment; dollar values are in 2026 dollars.

Table 6: **Fiscal Impact of the Creative Economy: Ventura County**

| Type of Impact | County | State | Federal | Total |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Direct | \$14,368,733.66 | \$72,335,981.87 | \$188,831,358.81 | \$298,050,485.63 |
| Indirect | \$6,459,075.96 | \$33,304,131.50 | \$97,297,834.50 | \$147,179,124.72 |
| Induced | \$12,554,674.87 | \$41,239,044.35 | \$72,664,169.33 | \$146,198,891.88 |
| Total | \$33,382,484.49 | \$146,879,157.71 | \$358,793,362.64 | \$591,428,502.23 |

Note: Each job is equivalent to one year of full-time employment; dollar values are in 2026 dollars.

The Creative Economy generates tax revenue at the county, state and federal levels, producing a positive fiscal impact. Like the economic impact of the Creative Economy, the fiscal impact consists of direct, indirect and induced impacts. The direct fiscal impact is the fiscal impact of direct economic activity in the Creative Economy, while the indirect and induced fiscal impacts are the fiscal impacts of direct and induced economic activity, respectively.

Table 5 shows that the Creative Economy's total fiscal impact in Santa Barbara County to be \$469 million. The majority of this impact arises from direct economic activity, which produces \$245 million in total direct tax revenue. The largest component of that \$469 million is \$290 million in total federal tax revenue.

3.4 Employment Impacts by Industry

This section breaks down employment impacts by county and industry. Table 7 shows that in Santa Barbara County, the Digital Media and Architecture and Interior Design sectors have the largest total impacts on employment. The total impact of the Digital Media sector is 2,330 jobs, and the total impact of the Architecture and Interior Design sector is 854 jobs.

 Table 7: **Employment Impact by Industry: Santa Barbara County**

| Sector | Direct | Indirect | Induced | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------|----------|---------|-------|
| Architecture and Interior Design | 813 | 34 | 7 | 854 |
| Communication Arts | 267 | 36 | 5 | 308 |
| Digital Media | 1,829 | 472 | 29 | 2,330 |
| Entertainment | 85 | 56 | 7 | 148 |
| Fashion & Industrial Design Services | 140 | 8 | 3 | 152 |
| Fine & Performing Arts Schools | 287 | 35 | 42 | 364 |
| Furniture and Decorative Arts | 113 | 0 | 0 | 113 |
| Publishing & Printing | 122 | 4 | 1 | 126 |
| Toys | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Visual and Performing Arts Providers | 480 | 269 | 12 | 761 |

* Each job is the equivalent of one year of full-time employment.

Table 8 shows that in Ventura County the Visual and Performing Arts Providers sector has the largest total impact on employment at 1,903 jobs. The sector with the next-largest employment impact is Communication Arts, with a total employment impact of 540 jobs.

Table 8: **Employment Impact by Industry: Ventura County**

| Sector | Direct | Indirect | Induced | Total |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Architecture and Interior Design | 430 | 32 | 10 | 471 |
| Art Dealers | 0 | 6 | 82 | 88 |
| Communication Arts | 496 | 36 | 8 | 540 |
| Digital Media | 296 | 26 | 9 | 331 |
| Entertainment | 197 | 98 | 10 | 305 |
| Fashion & Industrial Design Services | 238 | 9 | 4 | 251 |
| Fine & Performing Arts Schools | 0 | 25 | 69 | 94 |
| Furniture and Decorative Arts | 298 | 0 | 0 | 298 |
| Publishing & Printing | 449 | 9 | 2 | 460 |
| Toys | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Visual and Performing Arts Providers | 968 | 920 | 15 | 1,903 |

* Each job is the equivalent of one year of full-time employment.

4 Conclusion

The Creative Economy contributes to the economies of both Santa Barbara County and Ventura County. This contribution includes substantial wage and salary employment, as well as self-employment, nonprofit organizations, and arts education. The Creative Economy not only enriches local culture by providing opportunities to visit art museums and attend live performances, it also benefits the community through the economic activity it generates.