

Vermont Poll 2007

Arts in Vermont

Prepared by Michele C. Schmidt
The Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont
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Introduction

The Vermont Poll is an annual public opinion survey of Vermont residents who are 18 years of age and older, conducted by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont, to gauge Vermonters' opinions on current issues of interest to non-profit agencies, government officials, and researchers. On the 2007 Vermont Poll, five questions were asked of residents to gauge their awareness of the Vermont Arts Council (VAC), the creative economy, and the use of public funds for arts education (Appendix A). These variables were analyzed with the demographic variables collected by the survey, to understand what percentage of Vermonters holds certain opinions and what type of people are more likely to be aware of and support the arts and arts education.

Methodology

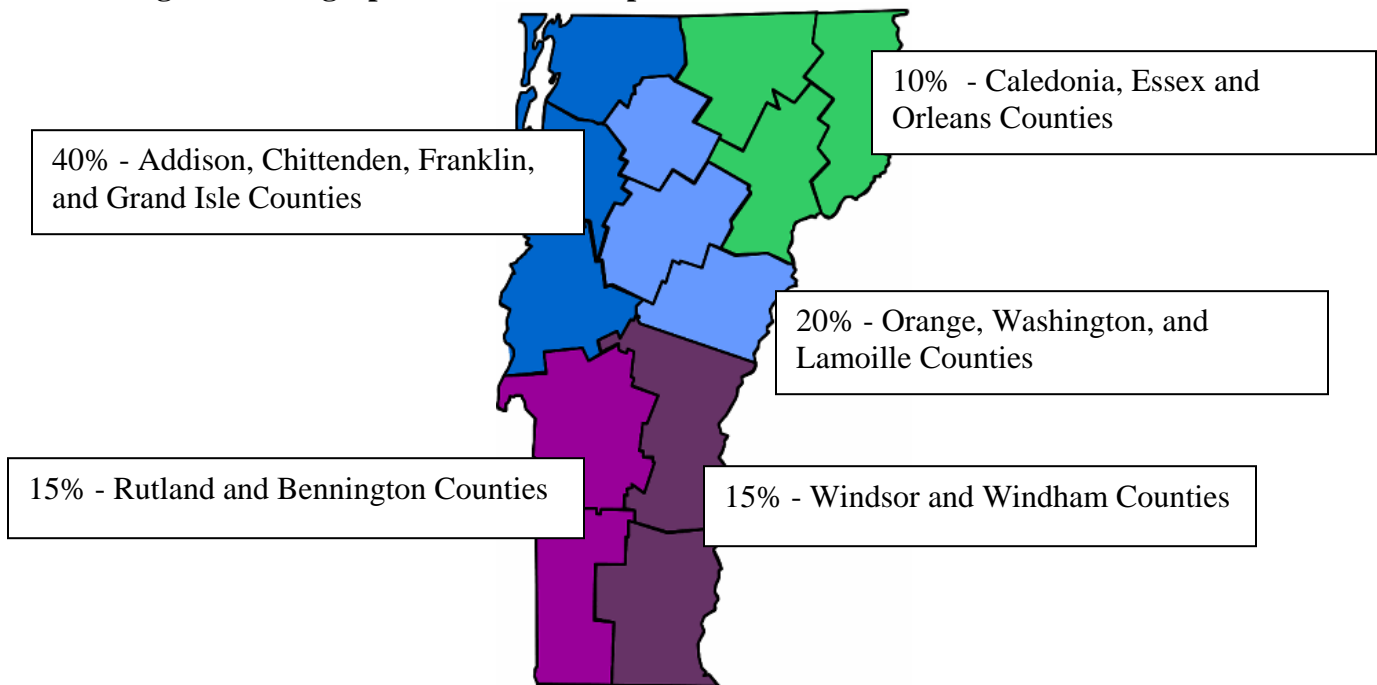
The data used in this report were collected by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont as part of the annual Vermont Poll. The survey was conducted between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. beginning on February 20, 2007 and ending on February 28, 2007. The telephone polling was conducted from the University of Vermont using computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI). The sample for the poll was drawn through random digit dialing and used all of the telephone exchanges in the state of Vermont as the sampling frame. Only Vermont residents over the age of eighteen were interviewed. The poll included questions on a variety of issues related to public policy in the state of Vermont. There were 599 respondents to the 2007 Vermont Poll (Version I). The results based on a group of this size have a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent at a confidence interval of 95 percent.

The following report presents a descriptive (univariate) analysis of all tax related questions and demographic variables as well as a prescriptive (bivariate) analysis of the tax questions and demographic variables. Data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 14.0. Statistical tests conducted included the chi square test (χ^2), independent sample t-test (t), and a one-way analysis of variance (f). Statistical precision values (p) were determined to be significant if they ranged from .00 to .10, with three levels of significance being represented in this report, including $\leq .01$ (highest significance), $\leq .05$ (moderate significance), and $\leq .10$ (low significance).

Respondent demographic profile

The gender of respondents was evenly split, with 50% (295) of respondents being female and 50% (292) male. The age of respondents ranged from 19 to 89 years with an average of 54 years (Std. 14.4) and median of 55 years. Respondents had between one and nine members in their household, with a median of two members. Thirty-one percent (178) of respondents had children in their household, while 69% (399) did not. Of those households with children, the number of children present ranged from one to five with a median of 2 children and mode of one child. The number of years that respondents have lived in Vermont ranged from 1 year to 86 years, with an average of 35 years (Std. 19.9). The majority of Vermonters surveyed (52%, 304) had achieved an associate's degree or more education and 48% (277) had taken some college courses or less education, including the completion of their high school education. Fifty-four percent (270) of those surveyed reported earning at or above the median income in Vermont (\$50,000 or more), while 46% (230) earned less than the median income. Based on county groupings, Figure 1 shows that 40% (226) of respondents live in the Champlain valley area, 20% (118) live in central Vermont, approximately 15% (84) live in the Southeastern part of Vermont and 15% (82) in the southwestern area, and 10% (57) live in the northeast kingdom (NEK).

Figure 1. Geographic location of respondents



Findings

Awareness of the VAC and the Creative Economy

Table 1 shows that 85% (497) of Vermonter Poll respondents had heard of the VAC, either generally speaking or in terms of its programs and services.

Table 1. Awareness of the Vermont Arts Council

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	497	85%
No	91	16%

(n=588)

Figure 1 shows that geographic location in the state of Vermont impacts respondent awareness of the VAC. Those living in the southwestern and northeastern parts of the state were more likely to have heard of the VAC, compared to the three other geographic locations ($\chi^2=7.90$ $p\leq.10$). In addition, education is related to awareness of the VAC. Those with an associate's degree or more education (91%, 275) are more likely to have heard of the VAC compared to 78% (214) of those with some college or less education ($\chi^2=19.10$ $p\leq.01$). Females (89%, 262) are also more likely to have heard of the VAC compared to males (81%, 231) ($\chi^2=7.92$ $p\leq.01$). No other demographic variables showed a significant relationship with awareness of the VAC.

Figure 1. Awareness of the VAC by geographic location

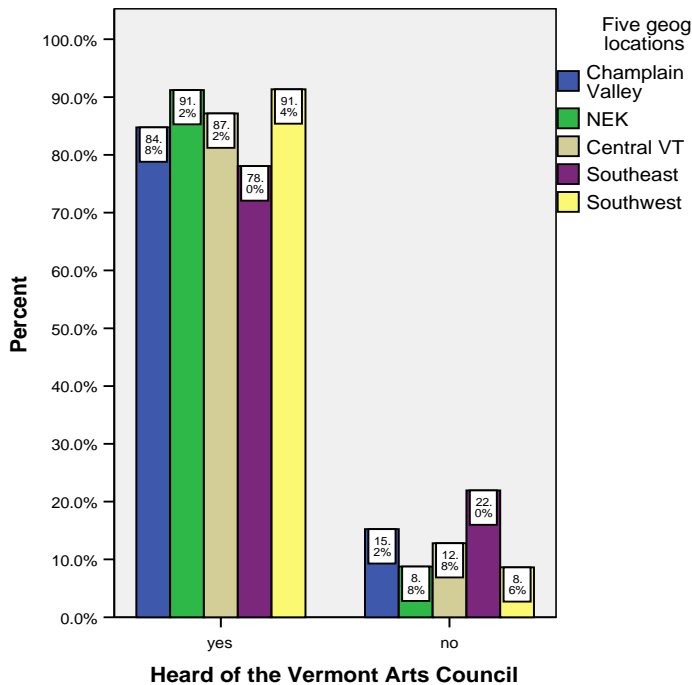


Table 2 shows that only 17% (98) of respondents have heard of the creative economy. When comparing awareness of the VAC to that of the creative economy, those who have heard of the VAC are more likely to also have heard of the creative economy ($\chi^2=11.96$ $p\leq.01$). Nineteen percent (94) of respondents who are aware of the VAC have also heard of the creative economy, compared to 4% (4) of those who have not heard of the VAC.

Table 2. Awareness of the creative economy

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	98	17%
No	489	83%

(n=587)

Examining demographic variables against having heard of the creative economy, having an associate's degree or more education (23%, 67), made a person more likely to have heard of the creative economy, compared to 10% (27) of those with some college education or less ($\chi^2=16.73$ $p\leq.01$). Further, those who have lived in Vermont for fewer years (average 29 years, Std 19) are more likely to have heard of the creative economy, compared to those who have lived in Vermont for a longer period of time (average 37 years, Std 20) ($t=-3.47$ $p\leq.01$). No other demographic variables showed significance in predicting awareness of the creative economy.

Support for funding of the arts

Table 3 shows that 38% of respondents think Vermont should place a high or very high priority on spending funds on arts education and other art programs and services. On the other hand, 27% feel that a low to very low priority should be given to spending on the arts. Thirty seven percent have a neutral opinion on the issue.

Table 3. Level of priority that respondents feel Vermont should place on spending funds on arts education and other art programs and services

	Frequency	Percent
Very Low priority	51	9%
Low priority	104	18%
Neither a low nor a high priority	216	37%
High priority	169	30%
Very high priority	44	8%

(n=584)

Figure 2 shows that respondent who have achieved a higher level of education or more likely to place a high priority on state funding for the arts, compared to those with less education ($\chi^2=8.85$ $p\leq.01$). Gender also showed significance, as females (40%, 117) are more likely to place a high priority on state spending for the arts compared to 33% (94) of males ($\chi^2=14.67$ $p\leq.01$). Further, those who have lived in Vermont for fewer years (ave 31, Std 19) are more likely to place a high priority on spending for the arts compared to those who have lived in Vermonter for a longer time (ave 38, Std 20) who placed a

neutral or low priority on spending for the arts. No other demographic variables were found to have a significant relationship.

Figure 2. Level of priority that respondents feel Vermont should place on spending funds on arts education by education level

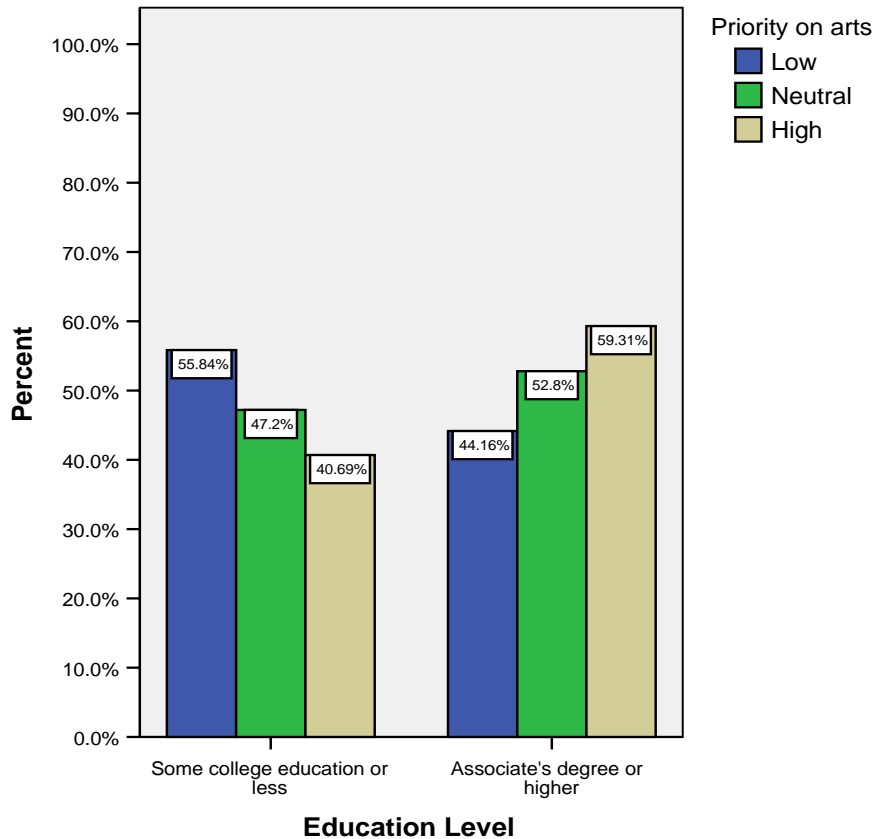


Table 4 displays that almost a 50/50 split of respondents to the Vermonter poll are in favor of increasing state tax dollars to support arts education in public schools.

Table 4. Support increasing state tax dollars to support arts education in public schools

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	277	49%
No	284	51%

(n=561)

Again, education level and gender are significant predictors of support for increasing state tax dollars for arts education in public schools. Fifty-six percent (161) of those with an associate's degree or more education were in support of increased spending of taxes on arts education compared to 43% (110) of those with some college education or less ($\chi^2=9.58$ $p \leq .01$). Likewise, women (53%, 145) compared to men (46%, 127) were more

likely to support an increase in tax dollars spend on arts education in public schools ($\chi^2=2.74$ $p\leq.10$). In addition, an independent sample t-test showed that those who are younger ($p\leq.01$), have more children in the household ($p\leq.10$) and have lived in Vermont for fewer years ($p\leq.01$) are more likely to be supportive of an increase in state tax dollars to support arts education in public schools. No other demographic variables were significant.

Table 5 shows that the majority of Vermonter poll respondents would be willing to spend an additional \$1 to \$100 of their personal state taxes to support arts education in public schools. Overall, 25% would be willing to spend an additional \$101 or more dollars to support this cause. As one would assume, respondents who would like the government to place a high priority on spending public funds to support the arts were more likely to pay an additional \$101 or more dollars of their person tax dollars to support this cause (33%, 46), compared to those who indicated a neutral or low priority (14%, 14) ($\chi^2=11.37$ $p\leq.01$). Consistent with the results above, those who have lived in Vermont for fewer years (ave 27 years Std 18) would spend \$101 or more of their personal tax dollars compared to those who have lived in Vermont for a longer period of time (ave 32 years Std 18) ($t=2.06$ $p\leq.05$). No other variables were found to be significant.

Table 5. Amount of additional personal state taxes respondents would be willing to spend to support arts education in public schools

	Frequency	Percent
\$1-50	108	44%
\$51-100	78	32%
\$101-200	36	15%
\$201 or more	24	10%

(n=246)

Conclusions

In general, The VAC has been successful in raising awareness of its existence as the majority of persons surveyed (85%) have heard of the VAC. Those living in the areas of southwestern Vermont and the NEK are more likely to have heard of the VAC compared to the three other regions of central, Champlain valley (northwest), and southeast. Geographic location was not a significant factor for any of the other variables. However, only 17% have heard of the creative economy, suggesting that more public relations, education and outreach are needed to increase awareness of this concept. As the researcher expected, those who are familiar with the VAC are also more likely to be aware of the creative economy. Thus, the VAC could continue to educate their membership, supports and constituents about the creative economy since this appears to be their target audience.

Regarding support for funding of the arts, Vermonters showed mixed results. Almost 40% of respondents think Vermont should place a high or very high priority on spending funds on arts education and other art programs and services and almost 50% would like the state to increase funding for the arts. However, when it comes to spending one's

personal tax dollars, three-quarters of Vermonters wish to spend an additional \$1 to \$100, with 44% desiring to spend only between \$1 and \$50.

Looking at demographic relationships, the results suggest that having a higher level of education, being female, and having lived in Vermont are main characteristics that predict a person's awareness of and support for the arts. Having higher levels of education was a significant predictor of most variables tested, including being aware of the VAC and the creative economy, feeling that the state should place a high priority on spending funds on arts education and other arts programs and services and that the state should increase the amount of tax dollars spent on this cause. Those who are female are more likely to have heard of the VAC, place a high priority on state spending for the arts and support an increase in tax dollars spend on arts education in public schools.

Further, those who have lived in Vermont for fewer years are more likely to have heard of the creative economy, possibly because this is a fairly new concept that has been introduced to the state. Living in Vermont for fewer years was also significantly related to placing a high priority on spending for the arts by state government, supporting an increase in state tax dollars to support arts education in public schools, and being willing to spend additional personal tax dollars to support the arts. Interesting, age was not a significant variable except that younger people were found to be more supportive of an increase in state tax dollars to support arts education in public schools. In addition, as one might expect, having more children also impacts one's support of increasing state tax dollars to support this cause.

The results suggest the main supporters for arts education, the creative economy and spending tax dollars to support the arts are well-educated, females, and those who are newer to living in the state of Vermont.

Appendix A: Vermonter Poll 2007 Questions

The next several questions are focused on the arts in Vermont.

Have you heard of the Vermont Arts Council, either generally speaking or in terms of its programs and services?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know [DO NOT READ]
4. Refused [DO NOT READ]

Have you heard of the Creative Economy?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know [DO NOT READ]
4. Refused [DO NOT READ]

How much of a priority should Vermont place on spending public funds on arts education and other arts programs and services?

1. Very low priority
2. Low priority
3. Neither a low nor a high priority
4. High priority
5. Very high priority
6. Don't know [DO NOT READ]
7. Refused [DO NOT READ]

Yes or no, are you in favor of increasing state tax dollars to support arts education in public schools?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know [DO NOT READ]
4. Refused [DO NOT READ]

How much more of your personal state taxes would you be willing to spend to support arts education in public schools?

1. \$1-\$50
2. \$51-\$100
3. \$101-\$200
4. \$201 or more
5. Don't know [DO NOT READ]
6. Refused [DO NOT READ]