

The Economic Impacts of the Columbia Museum of Art on the City of Columbia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Columbia Museum of Art is located in downtown Columbia at the intersection of Main Street and Hampton Street. The museum is viewed as “the anchor” of the revitalization of downtown Columbia as well as one of the major cultural organizations in the Central Carolina area. The museum has over 20,000 square feet of gallery space allowing the facilities to showcase its own substantial art collection as well as traveling art exhibitions.

The Columbia Museum of Art serves the entire metro area and in particular downtown Columbia in many ways. In addition to its primary mission of showcasing its art collection and bringing traveling art exhibitions to the area, the museum also serves the Columbia community in the following ways:

1. **The museum is a major component of the downtown economy.** The museum buys goods and services from many businesses in Columbia. The museum’s expenditures were more than \$2.6 million in 2005. This is important to the City since the vast majority of the museum’s expenditures stay in the local economy.
2. **The museum is a downtown retail establishment.** The museum gift shop caters to museum patrons and features goods not only related to current exhibitions, but also features products from major museums around the world. Museum store sales were almost \$115,000 last year.
3. **The museum is a major contributor to downtown Columbia tourism.** Attendance for the museum is over 75,000 people per year, 48% of the visitors are from areas outside Richland County and 16% are from outside of South Carolina.



4. **The museum is a provider of arts education.** Over the past decade, art programs in public schools have steadily deteriorated and the Columbia Museum of Art has stepped in to fill the gap. The museum provides tour guides for field trips and also has an active outreach program that includes visiting local schools ensuring that Columbia area children receive a comprehensive arts education.

5. **The museum is a venue for local events.** The Columbia Museum of Art has facilities for events such as board meetings, private dinners, wedding receptions and cocktail receptions. The museum can accommodate parties from 10 – 1,000 people. Last year, 17,890 people attended events held at the CMA.

6. **The museum is the cultural anchor of the revitalization of downtown Columbia.** When the city of Columbia wanted to improve the downtown area in 1998, it asked the Columbia Museum of Art to relocate to the corner of Hampton and Main Street. Since then, the downtown area has thrived. New businesses are locating downtown, existing tenants are renewing their leases and there have been a number of new luxury condos and apartments built in the downtown area.

Economic Impacts of the Columbia Museum of Art

The Columbia Museum of Art greatly impacts the economy of downtown Columbia as well as the entire metro area. The results of this study indicate:

- The CMA directly and indirectly supports almost 160 jobs in the Columbia area

- The CMA generates more than **\$9,700,000** in economic activity due to direct, indirect and induced impacts of the museum

- The City of Columbia receives a **more than a ten-fold** return on the City's investment of \$675,000.



- The CMA activities generate local hospitality and tourism tax revenues of at least \$80,000 a year
- The CMA has an average monthly attendance of over 6,250 people – almost 77,000 a year
- CMA visitors spend almost \$1.7 million in Columbia directly on lodging facilities
- Visitors to the CMA spend over \$1.6 million in Columbia’s eating and drinking establishments
- An average of almost 1,500 people per month attend meetings, receptions and other events at the museum – drawing many downtown from other areas
- The CMA’s arts education programs reach over 16,000 area children a year

All of these benefits accrue to Columbia even though only about 25% of the museum’s operating budget is provided by appropriations from the City Council. The rest of the funding is provided by grants from Richland County, local corporations, individual citizens and income generated through the operation of the museum.

The Columbia Museum of Art enhances the image of Columbia, which is vital to the long-term success of the city. A survey done by the South Carolina Arts Commission indicated that 99% of CEO’s state that the availability of cultural activities is an important consideration when choosing a new location (<http://www.state.sc.us/arts>).

Currently, Columbia is competing with other South Carolina cities to lure the best businesses and the brightest workforce. Charleston, Greenville and Spartanburg all have an art museum, which makes it even more important for the Columbia Museum of Art to receive funding to continue operations.



The Columbia Museum of Art is well appreciated in the business community. Many of Columbia's leaders understand the importance of the museum and have written letters voicing their support. They include:

Dr. Andrew Sorensen – President University of South Carolina
Joel Smith – Dean of USC's Darla Moore School of Business
M. Edward Sellers – President and CEO of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC
Leighton Lord III – Nexsen Pruet Law Firm
Edward Mullins – Nelson Mullins Law Firm
Dr. Caroline Whitson – President of Columbia College
James Gambrell – City of Columbia Office of Economic Development
Matt Kennell – City Center Partnership