

**Vermont Poll 2003**  
**Vermonters Support for Public Funding for the Arts**

Center for Rural Studies  
207 Morrill Hall  
University of Vermont

The following report presents the data collected during the 2003 Vermonter Poll in March by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont, on Vermonters' opinions of public funding for the arts. Where available, a comparative analysis is presented of the data collected in 2001 to 2003 to measure change in opinion over time.

### **Methodology**

The data were collected by the University of Vermont's Center for Rural Studies in their annual "Vermont Poll." The polling was conducted between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. beginning on February 27, 2003 and ending on March 5, 2003. The poll was conducted at the University of Vermont using computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI). The sample for the poll was drawn through random digit dialing and used all the telephone exchanges in the state of Vermont as the sampling frame. The poll included questions on a variety of issues related to public policy in the state of Vermont.

There were 641 respondents to the Vermonter Poll. The results based on a group of this size have a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points with a confidence interval of 95 percent. The median age of respondents was 49, with a range of 18-93 years. The median income for respondents was between \$35,000 and \$49,999. The median respondent had some college education but no degree.

The three questions asked on the Vermonter Poll 2003 related to public funding for the arts include:

- 1. How important is it for state government to provide funding entandom*

## **Analysis**

Statistical analysis was completed through the use of the software package SPSS 11.0.1 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). A univariate analysis of the data is presented to provide the frequency of responses given to each individual question. In addition, a bivariate analysis is presented to examine how the variables of gender, income, education, age, whether or not they have children under 18 living at home, geographic location (Chittenden County, Northeast Kingdom, and rest of the state of Vermont), county, type of location (rural, urban, suburban), and political party affiliation

Figure 1a. Importance of state government to provide funding to support arts programs, 2001(N = 703)

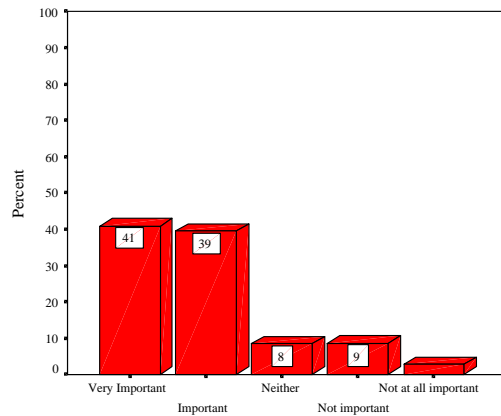
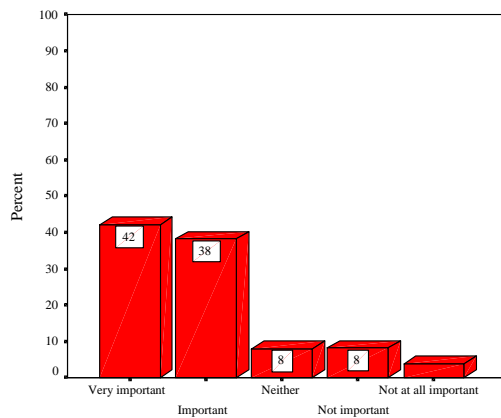


Figure 1b. Importance of state government to provide funding to support arts programs 2003 (N = 666)



### Cross Tabulation and Statistical Analysis

For the purposes of the cross tabulation and statistical analysis, the five categories were combined into three: "very important to important", "neither", and "not important to not at all important". Regardless of type of location, income, age, geographic location, county, and whether or not children under 18 live at home, the majority of respondents feel that it is either important or very important for state government to provide funding to support the arts. This is consistent with the findings from 2001. The variables of gender, education, and political affiliation were significant as discussed below.

#### Gender

Consistent with 2001, in 2003, females (84%; 295) are more likely than males (76%; 239) to feel that it is important or very important for state government to provide funding to support the arts.

Concomitantly, males (16%; 50) are more likely than females (8%; 29) to feel that it is not important or not at all important to provide funding to support the arts. ( $\chi^2 = 9.56$ ;  $p \leq .01$ ).

### ***Education***

Those with some college education or more (81%; 280) are more likely than those with a high school diploma or less (74%; 153) to feel that it is important or very important for state government to provide funding to support the arts.

Concomitantly, those with less education achieved (18%; 36) are more likely than those with higher education (10%; 33) to feel that it is not important or not at all important to provide funding to support the arts.

This finding is different compared to 2001, as in 2001 there was no significance associated with education. ( $\chi^2 = 7.38$ ;  $p \leq .05$ ).

### ***Political Affiliation***

Democrats (88%; 134) and Independents (86%; 165) are more likely to feel that it is important or very important for state government to provide funding to support the arts compared to Republicans (65%; 105) and those with no political affiliation (77%; 92).

Concomitantly, Republicans (24%; 38) and those with no political affiliation (14%; 17) are more likely to feel that it is not important or not at all important to provide funding to support the arts, compared to Democrats (5%; 8) and Independents (7%; 7%;

Table 2a. Dollar range of state tax dollars respondents would be willing to spend to provide additional support for the arts, 2001 (N=248)

<b>Dollar range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
\$1-25	72	29%
\$26-50	39	16%
\$51-100	82	33%
\$101-200	21	8%
\$201-300	11	4%
\$401-500	21	8%
\$501+	2	1%

Table 2b. Dollar range of state tax dollars respondents would be willing to spend to provide additional support for the arts, 2003 (N=269)

<b>Dollar Range</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
\$1-25	52	19%
\$26-50	41	15%
\$51-100	65	24%
\$101-200	23	9%
\$201-300	34	13%
\$301-400	8	3%
\$401-500	46	17%

## **Cross Tabulation and Statistical Analysis**

For the purposes of analysis, the dollar amount that respondents would be willing to spend to provide additional support for the arts was broken into three categories: those not willing to spend any money, who indicated \$0.00, or "non supporter" (22%; 145), those willing to spend between \$1.00 and \$100.00 or "moderate supporter" (23%; 158) and those willing to spend between \$101.00 and \$500.00, or "high supporter" (55%; 371).

Variables including type of location, gender, geographic location, county, and whether or not children were present at home were not significant influences on the amount of tax dollars a person would be willing to spend to provide additional support for the arts. Most of these variables are consistent with 2001, however, in 2001 having children at home under age of 18 and geographic region were significant variables. The variables of education, income, age, and political affiliation are significant in 2003 as discussed below. These are new findings since 2001.

### ***Education***

Those with a high school education or less (34%; 70) were more likely to be in the non supporter group compared to those with some college or more education (18%; 63).

Those with some college or more were more likely to be in the moderate supporter (25%; 88) and the high supporter (57%; 200) groups compared with those with a high school education or less (19%; 40 moderate supporter and 47%; 98 high supporter).

This variable was not significant in 2001. ( $\chi^2 = 17.87$ ;  $p \leq .01$ ).

### ***Income***

Those households earning less than the median income in Vermont (less than \$34,999) (28%; 54) are more likely to be in the non supporter group compared to those earning at or more than the median income (more than \$35,000) (19%; 79).

Those households earning at or more than the median income are more likely to be in the moderate (27%; 112) and high (54%; 222) supporter groups than those earning less than the median income (20%; 38 moderate and 52%; 100 high).

This variable was not significant in 2001. ( $\chi^2 = 7.73$ ;  $p \leq .05$ ).

### ***Age***

Those who are younger are more likely to be in the moderate (mean age 47) and high supporter (mean age 50) groups compared to those who are older (mean age 54).

This variable was not significant in 2001. ( $F = 0.14$ ;  $p = 0.71$ )

Independents (60%; 116) and Democrats (57%; 87) are more likely to be in the high supporter group compared to Republicans (49%; 79) and those with no political affiliation (49%; 60).

This variable was not tested for significance in 2001. ( $\chi^2 = 19.35$ ;  $p \leq .01$ ).

**Top Priority to Receive Funding from State Tax Dollar Money**

Vermonters were asked to indicate which of the following would be their top priority to receive funding from the state tax dollar money from question two. The options included: local organizations that offer arts events and programs; arts education programs in schools; and arts programs provided by local social service agencies such as Head Start or Youth Service Bureau.

Table 3a. and 3b. illustrates that the majority of respondents for both 2001 and 2003 hold arts education programs in schools as their top priority area to receive funding from state tax dollar money with 61% (339) in 2001 and 63% (383) in 2003. The second priority area are local organizations that offer arts events and programs, followed by arts programs provided by local social service agencies. Responses are consistent for both years. Figure 3a. and 3b. present these data in graphic format.

Table 3a. Top priority area to receive funding from state tax dollar money, 2001  
(N = 559)

<b>Priority Area</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Local organizations that offer arts events and programs	140	25%
Arts education programs in schools	339	61%
Arts programs provided by local social service agencies such as Head Start or Youth Service Bureau	80	14%

Table 3a. Top priority area to receive funding from state tax dollar money, 2003  
(N = 609)

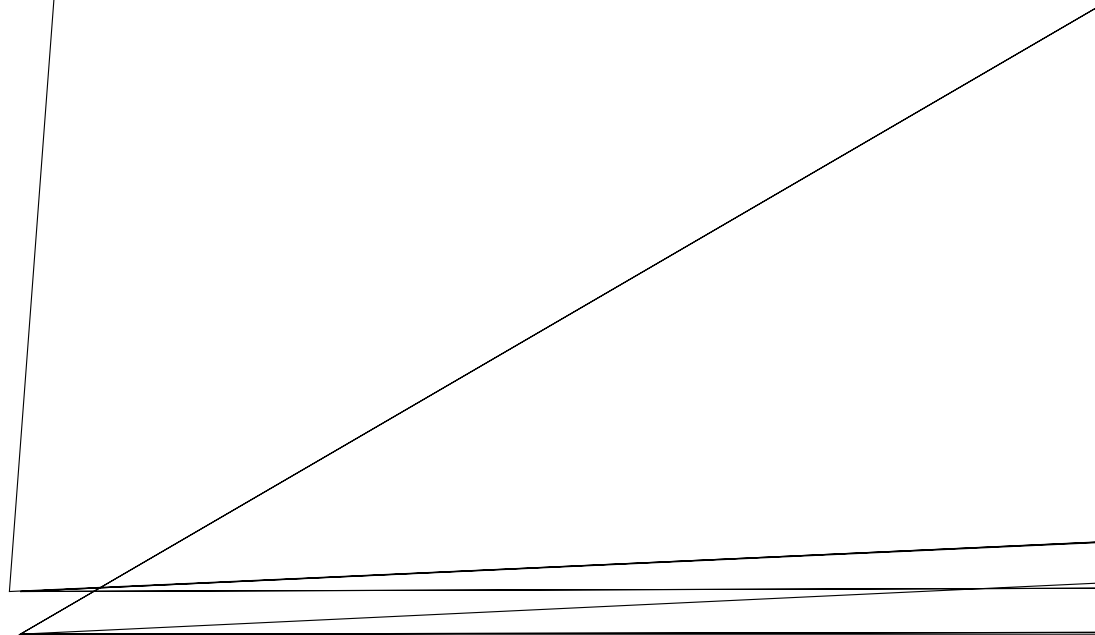
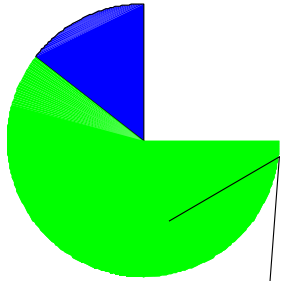
<b>Priority Area</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Local organizations that offer arts events and programs	136	22%
Arts education programs in schools	383	63%
Arts programs provided by local social service agencies such as Head Start or Youth Service Bureau	90	



Figure 3a. and 3b. Top priority area to receive funding from new pool of money, 2001 and 2003.

Figure 3a. 2001 (N = 559)

Figure 3b. 2003 (N = 609)



This variable was not tested for significance in 2001. ( $\chi^2 = 8.27$ ;  $p \leq .10$ ).

*Having Children at home*

### **Support for the arts in state tax dollars for additional funding**

In both 2001 and 2003, between 65-70% of respondents indicated support for the arts by denoting a dollar value from \$1.00 to \$500.00 in state tax dollars that they would be willing to spend to provide additional support for the arts.

Results show that support for the arts has increased from 2001 to 2003, as in 2001 55% indicated a moderate level of support and 15% indicated a high level of support in that they would spend an additional \$51.00-100.00 (moderate) in state tax dollars or \$101.00-\$500.00 (high) for support of the arts. In 2003, 23% indicated a moderate level of support and 55% indicated a high level of support for the arts.

Variables including type of location, gender, geographic location, county, and whether or not children were present at home are not significant influences on the amount of tax dollars a person would be willing to spend to provide additional support for the arts. Most of these variables are consistent with 2001, however, in 2001 having children at home under age of 18 and geographic region were significant variables. In 2003, having higher education, earning at or above the median income in Vermont, being younger, and being Independent or Democrat are the variables that show significance towards moderate and high levels of support. These are new findings compared to 2001.

These data show that Vermonters support for addition funding of the arts through state tax dollars allocation continues to increase, with most indicating a moderate to high level of support.

### **Priority areas to receive state tax dollars**

The majority of respondents (between 61-63%) for both 2001 and 2003 hold arts education programs in schools as their top priority area to receive funding from state tax dollar money as indicated in question two (see above). The second priority area are local organizations that offer arts events and programs, followed by arts programs provided by local social service agencies. Responses are consistent for both years.

Regardless of gender, age, income, geographic location, county, or political affiliation, the majority of respondents support arts education programs in schools to receive funding from state tax dollars. These findings are consistent with 2001.

Local organizations that offer arts programs .10 Bome are not significant i c.0008 e afor Tc -0008 fir