

# NEW YORK CITY FILM & TELEVISION INDUSTRY

## Economic Impact Study 2021

Commissioned by the NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME)



Soundstage at Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema. Image courtesy of Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema.

New York City has long played a vital role in the global film and television industry. Likewise, film and television has greatly influenced the city's development, both culturally and economically. Countless classics have been filmed in the city, which itself provides unparalleled scenery, from gritty streets to breath-taking skylines, and inspiration for diverse and compelling stories.

In 2019, New York City's film and television industry supported over

# 185,000

total jobs

# \$18.1 BILLION

in total wages

# \$81.6 BILLION

in total economic output

(direct, indirect, and induced impacts).

The key findings from the NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) New York City Film and Television Industry Economic Impact Study report include:

- The New York City film and television industry is directly responsible for 100,200 jobs (2 percent of all jobs in the city), \$12.2 billion in wages, and \$64.1 billion in direct economic output.
- Over the last 15 years, the industry added ~35,000 direct jobs, growing at an annual rate of 3 percent and outpacing the citywide job growth rate of 2 percent. Industry professionals earn an average of \$121,000 in annual wages (33 percent higher than the citywide average of \$91,000).
- New York City's film and television industry supports an additional 37,900 jobs, \$2.9 billion in wages, and \$8.2 billion in economic output by way of indirect economic impacts through transactions with suppliers and vendors to the industry's main sectors. The industry also provides an additional 46,900 jobs, \$3.1 billion in wages, and \$9.3 billion in economic output through induced economic impacts, which are created when job holders – both directly and indirectly supported by the industry – spend their wages in New York City.

The industry consists of seven key sectors:

- motion picture and video production
- talent
- subscription programming
- television broadcasting
- advertising and media buying
- postproduction and other services
- distribution and consumption

The report takes an in-depth look at the industry's seven sectors and explores their characteristics, dynamics, and trends. Among the key findings are:

- **Motion picture and video production is the job creation engine driving employment in New York City's film and television industry.**

46,700 direct jobs in 2019 (almost half of all direct industry jobs) are in motion picture and video production.

- **New York State tax credit programs have been instrumental for industry growth and remain key to attracting industry activity to New York City.**

Introduced in 2004, the program has been particularly beneficial for the motion picture and video production sector, which has accounted for 75 percent of the direct industry jobs added since 2004.

Introduced in 2010, the post-production tax credit spurred growth in post-production jobs, which grew by 4 percent annually between 2010 and 2019 (double the citywide growth rate of 2 percent over the same period).

- **New York City's soundstages and production facilities are rapidly expanding to meet increased demand, to the benefit of formerly industrial neighborhoods with underutilized assets.**

~60 qualified production facilities (QPFs) are located in New York City, constituting almost 2 million square feet of production space.

Motion picture and video production jobs grew at an annual rate of 9 percent in Brooklyn and 8 percent in Queens (compared to 3 percent citywide) from 2001–2019 – demonstrating the growing footprint of production facilities and activities outside of Manhattan, where the vast majority of jobs in the sector are still located.

- **Independent film thrives in New York City and distinguishes the city from other production hubs.**

Approximately 85 percent of filmmaking in New York City is independent.

- **Television drives production spending and hiring in New York City, as television series budgets continue to soar nationwide.**

In 2018, television productions receiving tax credits had an average spend of \$34 million, while film productions spent an average of \$4.5 million. Both film and television are nevertheless crucial to the city's culture and economy.

- **Cable networks and subscription programming companies make up the financial engine driving economic activity in New York City's film and television industry.**

Over 40 percent of the industry's direct economic output in 2019 came from cable networks and subscription programming companies.

Between 2012 and 2019, subscription programming's output increased by almost 50 percent.

- **New York City's film and television industry is integral to the city's vast arts, media, and entertainment ecosystem, and vice-versa.**

Over half of the city's television writers also write for other mediums, and many actors work in both theater and film and television.

- **The industry was disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but a recovery is underway.**

25 percent of jobs were lost by Summer 2020 for the film and television industry compared to the year prior due to the COVID-19 shutdown, whereas the overall NYC economy lost 18 percent of jobs over this period.

Overall, New York City's film and television industry is dynamic and growing. Yet there are opportunities for the City to help make it stronger. Guided by analysis of industry data and interviews with industry stakeholders, this report outlines six key areas of opportunity for New York City government initiatives:

- Supporting existing and new industry workforce development efforts.
- Enhancing the industry's community relations.
- Investigating the need for further investment to increase soundstage capacity.
- Advocating for the continuation and enhancement of state tax credit programs.
- Promoting the industry's environmental sustainability.
- Supporting the industry's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.