Building upon organizational legitimacy theory, this paper investigates public access and commitment to audience diversity as two critically important values that convey moral legitimacy on public service organizations. Using the sample of 335 public and nonprofit cultural organizations located in the Detroit Metropolitan Area, this paper uses the GIS-modelling approach to develop an index of public access that takes into account institutional admissions policy, the physical characteristics of a location, and the availability of, and access to, transportation. The U.S. Census Bureau data is further used to analyze how accessible cultural institutions are to the traditionally underserved populations and multigenerational audiences. Our analysis reveals that cultural institutions are unevenly distributed in the geographic area, and that certain groups of the population are at a greater disadvantage in terms of their access to particular types of cultural amenities. These findings imply that, although legitimacy is seen as an important organizational goal, cultural organizations may be underutilizing an important community resource – diverse audiences – that would allow pursuing legitimacy goals in practice. These findings have important implications for overall urban prosperity and the sustainability of the arts and cultural sector itself.