



Promoting Economic Opportunity and the Creative Economy

Fostering Economic Growth and Expanding Opportunities through Investment in the Creative Economy

Issue Summary:

Public investment in the arts is essential for economic vitality, supporting job growth, driving tourism, and fostering innovation. Supporting the creative economy revitalizes main streets, preserves cultural heritage, all while contributing significantly to the national economy. Federal small business and workforce development programs should focus on creating pathways for economic advancement including through career pathways and entrepreneurship in the creative industries.

Why Investing in the Creative Economy Matters:

- According to the BEA, in 2022, arts and cultural production contributed over **\$1.1 trillion to the U.S. economy**, accounting for **4.3% of GDP** and supporting **5.2 million jobs**. Notably, the sector's growth rate of 4.8% outpaced the broader economy's 1.9% increase that year.
- Creative jobs are **resistant to automation**, relying on uniquely human skills like innovation, storytelling, and craftsmanship. Investing in the creative economy and workforce ensures stable, **future-oriented careers** across cultural industries.
- Despite this significant impact, the sector faces **unique challenges**. Creative workers often **lack access to workforce training**, career pathways, and professional development programs available in other industries. Artists are **more than three times as likely as the U.S. workforce to be self-employed**, often experiencing contract-based work and lack health benefits, making financial sustainability difficult.

What Congress Should Do:

- **Sponsor and co-sponsor key legislation**—Support bills like the *Charitable Act*, *Performing Arts Tax Parity Act (PATPA)*, *CREATE Act*, *Creative Workforce Investment Act*, and *Arts Education for All Act (AEFA)* to strengthen career pathways in the creative sector from K-12 education all the way to workforce opportunities.
- **Enhance workforce training for creatives**—Through the reauthorization of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*, advocate for language changes that establish training programs, apprenticeships, and professional certifications for creative workers, aligning them with key sectors like water, housing, broadband, transit, and energy.

Who We Represent:

The **Western Arts Advocacy Network** is a group of leaders from statewide arts advocacy organizations and other key advocates from across the Western region, which includes **16 states and jurisdictions**. We champion public investment and funding for arts and creativity, particularly in rural and remote communities. **We call on the 119th Congress to support arts, culture, and the creative economy** with Congressional action in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding and renewed unleashing of innovation and economic opportunity.

This brief was prepared by Creative West, Western Arts Advocacy Network, and the Cultural Advocacy Group—a coalition of arts and culture stakeholders working to shape federal policy.