



CreativeOhio:
A Blueprint for 2030

“Tactics without strategy is the noise
before defeat.” – Sun Tzu

Adopted March 8, 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP

CreativeOhio (CO) is the only statewide advocacy association representing Ohio's Creative Sector.

A rapidly changing landscape, post-pandemic, required us to reassess and re-articulate our direction and strategy to ensure CO and the state's creative sector are positioned for success both now and in the future.

We needed a new "compass" to strategically guide and prioritize our work, to inform the focus of our board's governance, and to ensure we are advocating and advancing the real needs of Ohio's creative sector.

To that end, CO initiated a strategic planning process during the summer and fall of 2022 to enhance and extend the organization's unwavering advocacy, education, and services to further strengthen Ohio's creative sector.

A core guiding principle in CO's strategic planning has been to stay closely connected to our core constituents — even as we uncover new and fully expanded opportunities and partners to fuse arts, creativity, community, citizens, and the economy.

We endeavored to engage a diverse mix of Ohio's creative sector stakeholders — members, donors, patrons, students, artists, policymakers, and others — to ensure we received a complete and representative perspective on our strategic direction and future work.

By listening, we have learned. And in learning, CO is now poised to play an even more significant and catalyzing role in advocating for and partnering with Ohio's creative sector.

Our strategic plan identifies opportunities and strategies that will allow us to secure, enhance, and leverage CO's core strengths and attributes 'to enrich our communities, citizens, and culture through constant advocacy and relentless support of Ohio creatives and the creative economy.'

Elizabeth Brown-Ellis
President
CreativeOhio Board

Angela Meleca
Executive Director
CreativeOhio

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CREATIVEOHIO, A POWER BEYOND ONE

Strategic Focus and Core Ideology

MISSION

We enrich our communities, citizens, and culture through constant advocacy and relentless support of Ohio creatives and the creative economy.

VISION

Our vision is to live in an embracing world of open minds, open hearts, and open arms.

VALUES

Integrity. Uncompromising character. Ethics and honor. Openness and transparency. Our worth as an organization is only as valuable as our members' integrity.

Collaboration. Because there's more than one question. There's no one answer. We begin with the passion of people collaborating. Along the continuum, we explore respectfully, finding consensus through a concert of collaboration.

Diversity and Inclusion. We celebrate all people and viewpoints and support a culture of inclusion, artistic expression, and equal access. This is the embracing philosophy from which our values are built.

Persistence. We represent Ohio artistry. We understand what fuels their expressions – tenacity and the courage to be original. Yet, persistence is the artist's faithful companion throughout this creative journey. As an organization, we use this same determination and diligence to champion and advance the creative causes of Ohio.

Accountability. This is the world's new truth. We view accountability as a commitment regardless of the outcome. As an organization, we understand that accountability yields trust. So, at every touchpoint, for our members, constituents, and the community at large, we are equally answerable to all.

Adopted by the CreativeOhio Board of Directors on June 15th, 2022.

OVERVIEW AND STRATEGIC SCAN

CreativeOhio (CO) is a member-driven, non-profit advocacy organization that helps cultivate and support the creative sector in Ohio. CO's advocacy is focused on ensuring Ohio meets both the economic and social imperatives of ensuring the state's creative enterprises are strong and vital.

Ohio's creative sector is big business. At total capacity, Ohio's creative industries are a critical economic driver. Pre-pandemic (2019), the state's creative industries supported over 329,000 jobs, \$18 billion in payroll, and \$55 billion in economic output. The sector is essential in developing, attracting, and retaining entrepreneurs, employers, and a highly skilled workforce in our state.

Equally important, Ohio's creative sector significantly contributes to our state's enriched quality of life. Whether through personal enjoyment, enriching perspectives, intellectual stimulation, and/or opportunities for public discourse and connection, the creative sector ensures our state has healthy, vibrant communities where people want to live, learn, and play.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Unfortunately, the creative sector's economic and social contributions to the state were significantly interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Its recovery is lagging, as documented in the 2022 research study "Creative Industries Economic Contribution Report."

The report found that between 2019 and 2020, creative industry employment declined by over 41,000 (-12.63%), while total creative industry economic output fell by over \$8.6 billion (-15.74%). It also noted that while "creative industries remain a critical driver of the state and regional economies of Ohio, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on creative industries compared to all industries in Ohio due to the largely in-person nature of these industries." Further, the study noted, "Ohio's creative businesses were hardest hit with forced closures, the sector was closed longer than any other industry, and will be the last industry in Ohio to recover fully."

In response to the pandemic, CO successfully advocated public policy priorities to stabilize and position the state's creative and cultural industry for growth, including (1) increasing Ohio Arts Council funding; (2) mitigating COVID-19 policy and regulatory impacts; and (3) securing \$70 million in essential, one-time COVID relief funding.

CO's work during this period earned the creative industry a "seat at the table" with state and federal elected officials and policymakers. Equally as crucial to securing the "bridge" policies and investments that have helped stabilize and sustain the sector in the short term is CO's ongoing standing with these officials, as the work is far from finished, and the landscape ahead is full of challenges.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION REPORT

In 2022, CO partnered with eight regions across Ohio and the Center for Regional Development (CRD) at Bowling Green State University to thoroughly examine the effects of the pandemic on Ohio's creative sector. Key findings:

- In 2019, creative industries supported over 329,000 jobs, \$18 billion in payroll, and \$55 billion in economic output.
- In Employment, creative industries in Ohio saw a decline of -12.63%, compared to -4.23% for all industries in Ohio.
- In Payroll, creative industries in Ohio saw a decline of -7.28%, compared to -0.16% for all industries in Ohio.
- In Value Added (GDP), creative industries in Ohio declined by -13.62%, compared to -2.60% for all industries in Ohio.
- In Economic Output for creative industries in Ohio, there was a decline of -15.74%, compared to -4.34% for all industries in Ohio.

MACRO-TRENDS – ENVIRONMENTAL LANDSCAPE

In formulating CreativeOhio's strategic plan, we evaluated our newly minted vision, mission, and values along with the organization's unique attributes and aspirations within the context of current economic, political, social, and consumer trends.

Economy: The post-pandemic economic recovery has been uneven for both Ohio and the nation. There is a growing consensus that a downturn in the global economy is likely at some point in 2023 and may result in a mild worldwide recession. These conditions create uncertainty and potentially negatively impact support for artistic, cultural, and creative enterprises from nearly every revenue stream - public, private, individual, corporate, and endowment sources. The potential negative impact of a downturn on the creative sector will be further exacerbated if additional one-time support and new investments that creative entities need to get them "back on their feet" is not secured. The sector continues to experience an equivalent form of long COVID, with an estimated full recovery timeframe of 2-3 years.

Politics: The recent mid-term election has expanded and deepened the conservative "lens" and authority across all three branches of Ohio state government. This further supports CO's continued emphasis on repositioning the creative sector as an industry like any other. It is beginning to work. The constant refrains we used to hear in too many political circles that the arts, culture, and creative enterprises are a "luxury" are being replaced with questions about our "ROI on their contribution to the economy and community development." While we may still hear "there are more essential, higher priority needs," that is the case for everyone competing for state investment. Even without a "red wave" election at the federal level, the "Culture Wars" are projected to continue, as are the specific calls for eliminating the NEA and all appropriations for "nonessential services" like the arts, humanities, and libraries. This calls for doubling down on what has been working for us in making the economic arguments.

CREATIVEOHIO 2023-24 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Increasing Ohio Arts Council Funding

- 2024-25 Biennial Budget Advancement

Expanding Local Revenue Options

- Locally Enacted Admission Taxes
- State Authorized, Locally Enacted Sales Tax

Promoting Arts & Culture for Economic Growth

- Increase Film & Theatre Tax Credit
- Secure Ohio Arts Specialized License Plate

Advancing Civic Vitality in all Ohio Communities

- Arts Education Funding & School Partnerships
- Community Art Access Alliances & Resources

www.ohiocitizensforthearts.org/policy

MACRO-TRENDS – ENVIRONMENTAL LANDSCAPE, continued

Social: Changing demographics and consumer attitudes will also impact the landscape of CO's work. Gen-Z is now the largest and most racially and ethnically diverse generation in history. The multiplicity of backgrounds and viewpoints and the innate inclusiveness of this younger demographic often create tension with older Baby Boomers and Generation X, who control most of the wealth and hold critical positions in the workplace, government, and community organizations. The creative sector must successfully and authentically balance generational differences -and sometimes even divides- across a range of issues and dynamics (e.g., community activism, unionization, public protests for racial equality, women and LGBTQ+ rights, gun safety, etc.) if it is to be relevant and survive.

New consumer and behavioral patterns challenging the creative sector even before COVID-19 -i.e., spending more time on streaming platforms offering greater quality content bookended by comfort and convenience, declining cultural memberships, increasing interest in DIY v. organizational curation and programming- have been accelerated by the pandemic. The physical world competes with the virtual world for resources, attention, and audience. Simultaneously, amidst all the uncertainty and change, the isolation of 2020 has unleashed a strong nostalgia for the good old days and a newfound desire to be rooted in tradition. As we advance, the creative sector will need a compelling hybrid "offer" of at-home and in-venue experiences to reach, keep, and grow a sustaining audience.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

A strategic internal and external SWOT analysis was conducted with CO board members, regional art council directors, and individual members, donors, and policymakers pinpointed the following strengths, vulnerabilities, and opportunities for advancing both the organization and the sector:

STRENGTHS:

- Advocacy
- Membership, Partners, and Allies
- Capabilities, Resources, and Infrastructure

WEAKNESSES:

- Strategy, Priorities, and Positioning
- Membership Proposition
- Capabilities, Resources, and Infrastructure

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Reach, Reputation, and Revenue
- Membership Growth
- Capabilities, Resources, and Infrastructure

THREATS:

- Macro Environmental Landscape
- Membership Diversity
- Capabilities, Resources, and Infrastructure

In addition, the planning participants identified and emphasized as essential the following broad points of focus in developing CO's strategic plan:

- Expand core capacities and secure the resources to allow more advocacy and field support
- Leverage brand relaunch for greater reach and reputation and steward residual OCA brand equity
- Engage members and allies more actively and authentically in the advocacy work
- Incent new members and coalition partners to join and advance the public policy agenda
- Develop a fully representative and deeply participative statewide board of governors
- Deepen the CO and OAC working relationship
- Frame a far-reaching policy agenda that looks beyond biennial budgets and transforms the sector

Based on the foregoing environmental scan and organizational assessment, we have articulated in the pages that follow a multi-year strategic framework comprised of a Critical Few Initiatives (CFIs) designed to strengthen and expand CO's capabilities, resources, and infrastructure, and in so doing, transform Ohio into a leading Creative Capital. Additionally, we have outlined critical measures of success to track our performance. These CFIs and performance metrics are anchored in prudence and realistic expectations and animated by forward-thinking aspirations.

CREATIVEOHIO: A BLUEPRINT FOR 2030

A Critical Few Initiatives (CFIs) to Transform Ohio's Creative Sector

STRATEGIC FOCUS	TRIENNIUM 1 - 2023-2025 CFIs	TRIENNIUM 2 - 2026-2028 CFIs	TRIENNIUM 3 - 2029-2031 CFIs
<p>HOLDING THE LINE: What we must do to develop capacity and secure our base</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team: build the “right” mix of full-time staff and consultants who are necessary to advance the work as a unified team; train, incent, and retain the talent; establish communication and workplace infrastructure protocols. • Governance: continue expanding the breadth and depth of CO board representation; deepen each trustee’s engagement in the work. • Finances: develop a sustainable operating budget: diversify CO operating revenues & leverage the foundation; frame a statewide fundraising strategy for individual, corporate, and foundation grants, contributions, and sponsorships. • Rebrand: leverage CO launch with members, allies, and elected officials to build reach, reputation, and revenues. 		
<p>ADDING OFFENSE: What we must do to build constituency and leverage our base</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership: secure growth via tiered, customized membership pathways that offer a unique value proposition for a diverse range of constituencies – individual artists, non-traditional cultural organizations, for-profit creatives, students, educators, allies; set a regular cadence of communication and dialogue with members; authentically engage them both in owning and advocating the work. • Allies & Partners: strengthen relationships with state and regional entities supporting the arts; establish strategic partnerships with higher education and creative sector employers that advance workforce development and expand the “upstream” advocacy network; pilot partnership models to assess feasibility and scalability. • R&D: develop and monetize CO’s capacity to offer research, non-advocacy services, and thought leadership for members and the field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership: continue to expand and deepen active member involvement in framing CO’s public policy agenda and advocating for same. • Allies & Partners: sustain and leverage relationships with state and regional entities supporting the arts; invest in bringing the model collegiate and workforce development alliances to scale regionally and statewide; align and engage these partners in CO’s advocacy initiatives. • R&D: continue thoughtfully expanding CO’s research, services and thought leadership for members and the field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership: continue to expand and deepen active member involvement in framing CO’s public policy agenda and advocating for same. • Allies & Partners: sustain and leverage relationships with state and regional entities supporting the arts; invest in bringing the model collegiate & workforce development alliances to scale regionally and statewide; align and engage these partners in CO’s advocacy initiatives.
<p>CHANGING THE GAME: What we must do to transform the sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biennial Budget: secure or exceed OAC’s 2024-25 budget recommendations. • Public Policy: advance & achieve annual (2023-25) CO agenda, particularly film/theater tax credit & local revenue options; build effective relationships with key leadership in both the Executive and Legislative branches. • Impact Advocacy: develop a long-term “grassroots and grass tops” advocacy campaign to increase public investment in the sector; build a “Creative Caucus” in the General Assembly; establish a PAC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biennial Budget: secure or exceed OAC’s 2026-27 budget proposal. • Public Policy: advance and achieve annual (2026-28) CO agenda; sustain effective Executive and Legislative branch relationships. • Impact Advocacy: increase CO PAC investments and endorsements to continue building the CO “Creative Caucus” and expanding awareness and increasing buy-in and support for the sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biennial Budget: secure or exceed OAC’s 2028-29 budget proposal. • Public Policy: advance and achieve annual (2029-31) CO agenda; sustain effective Executive and Legislative branch relationships. • Impact Advocacy: leverage CO “Creative Caucus” and PAC investments to secure additional, dedicated public revenue source for Ohio’s Creative sector.

Note: This strategic plan is rooted in CQI principles & practices.

ASSESSING CO'S PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

CreativeOhio: A Blueprint for 2030 is focused on achieving success in the following core areas:

Creative Economy: Ohio's arts and creative sector will become an even more significant differentiator for our state, contributing meaningfully to its overall economic development and vitality.

Value & Use: as statewide awareness and participation in cultural experiences and creative expression grow, so will the demand for more programming in our communities and schools.

Partners: our members, allies, and governing board will grow in numbers and diversity, and our relationships and collaborations with each will be enhanced through deeper engagement.

Capacity: our resources, operations, and capabilities will expand to deliver greater advocacy results and high-quality resources for our members and partners.

Impact: the ultimate measure of success will be our public policy wins, including an expanded, diversified funding model for the state's creative sector that ensures its sustainability and growth.

CO PERFORMANCE INDICATORS INCLUDE:

Creative Economy

- Key economic indicators (i.e., GDP, jobs, payroll, taxes)

Value & Use

- Statewide education and awareness trendlines
- Engagement and participation in community and school-based programming

Partners

- Recruitment and retention of members and allies
- Engagement and participation of members and allies

Capacity

- New, diverse revenues for expanded CO operations and foundation initiatives
- Board and staff recruitment, retention, and diversity

Impact

- Advocacy "Wins"
- Increases in existing funding sources and new funding and investment

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the participation and perspective of our members, allies, arts patrons, civic and business leaders, and elected officials from across Ohio who have informed and shaped this plan. We also sincerely appreciate the partnership we enjoy every day and the insights provided in this planning process by our regional peers and colleagues:

ArtsNow, Nicole Mullet, Executive Director (Akron)

Assembly for the Arts, Jeremy V. Johnson, President & CEO (Cleveland)

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, Jill Paulsen, Executive Director, (Cleveland)

ArtsWave, Alecia Kintner, President & CEO (Cincinnati)

Greater Columbus Arts Council, Tom Katzenmeyer, President & CEO (Columbus)

Culture Works, Lisa Hanson, President & CEO, (Dayton)

Arts in Stark, David Whitehill, President & CEO, (Stark County)

The Arts Commission, Marc Folk, President & CEO, (Toledo)

Julie Henahan, Former Director, Ohio Arts Council

Wayne Lawson, Professor Emeritus, The Ohio State University, Department Arts, Administration, Public Policy, & Education

Linda Woggon, Former Executive Director, Ohio Citizens for the Arts

JOIN US!

creativeoh.org/join-us

MEMBERS

African American Chamber of Commerce (AACC) | Akron Art Museum | Akron Civic Theatre | American Legacy Theatre | Arts Center of Newcomerstown (ARTSNCT) | Arts Cleveland | ArtsinStark | ArtsNow | ArtsWave | ArtWorks | Ashtabula Arts Center | Assembly for the Arts | Ballet Western Reserve | BalletMet | Beck Center for the Arts | Bluecoats | The Butler Institute for the Arts | Canton Museum of Art | Canton Palace Theatre | Canton Symphony Orchestra | CATCO | Chamber Music Columbus | The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati | Cincinnati Art Museum | Cincinnati Shakespeare Company | Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (CSO) | Cinema Columbus | Clark State Performing Arts Center | Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF) | The Cleveland Museum of Art | The Cleveland Orchestra | Cleveland Public Theatre | Cleveland Zoological Society | Columbus Association for the Performing Arts (CAPA) | Columbus Children's Theatre | Columbus College of Art & Design | Columbus Museum of Art | Columbus Music Commission | Columbus Symphony | Columbus Zoo | Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) | The Contemporary Dayton (The CO) | Culture Works | Cuyahoga Arts & Culture | Dayton Art Institute | Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC) | Dayton Live | Dayton Performing Arts Alliance | Decorative Arts Center of Ohio | Dublin Arts Council | Elementz | Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati | Fairmount Center for the Arts | Film Columbus | Fine Arts Association | Fitton Center for Creative Arts | Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens | Gateway Film Center | Great Lakes Theater | Greater Columbus Arts Council | GroundWorks | Harmony | The Human Race Theatre Company | JAC Live Events | JAC Management Group | Jazz Arts Group | Columbus | Karamu | Kent State University College of the Arts | Kent State University Tuscarawas Performing Arts Center | The King Arts Complex | Lakeside Chautauqua | LAND Studio | Leadership Mahoning Valley | Lima Symphony Orchestra | MadLab Theatre | Magical Theatre Company | Majestic Theatre | Marathon Center for the Performing Arts | Massillon Community Arts Council | Massillon Museum | Midland Theatre | moCa Cleveland | Momentum Excellence | Muse Machine | The Music Settlement | Near West Theatre | North Pointe Ballet | Oberlin College & Conservatory | Ohio University College of Fine Arts | Opera Columbus Palace Theatre | Marion | The Peggy R. McConnell Arts Center of Worthington (The MAC) | The People's Bank Theatre | Piqua Arts Council | Playhouse Square | Pomerene Center for the Arts | ProMusica Chamber Orchestra | Renaissance Performing Arts | The Ritz Theatre | Rock and Roll Hall of Fame + Museum | ROY G BIV Gallery | The Sandusky State Theatre | Scioto Literary | Shadowbox Live | Short North Stage | Springfield Museum of Art | Springfield Regional Arts Council | Stambaugh Auditorium | Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens | Stuart's Opera House | Taft Museum of Art | Tantrum Theater | Thurber House | Toledo Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA) | Toledo Museum of Art | Toledo Opera | Tuscarawas Arts Partnership | Tuscarawas Philharmonic | U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants | The University of Akron | Valentine Theatre | Van Wert Live | Veterans Memorial Civic & Convention Center | Westcott Center for Architecture + Design | Wexner Center for the Arts | Youngstown Area Jewish Federation | Youngstown State University Cliffe College of Creative Arts | Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber Foundation | Zanesville Museum of Art



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