



CreativeOhio 2023 Public Policy Agenda

CreativeOhio (CO) is a member-driven, non-profit organization that helps cultivate Ohio's arts and cultural industry. CO's mission is to enrich our communities, citizens, and culture through constant advocacy and relentless support of Ohio creatives and the creative economy.

As a result of CO's advocacy, the arts and creative industry in Ohio was recognized for its essential contribution to the state when the legislature provided a historic 21% increase in its funding for the arts in the 2022-2023 state budget cycle. This could not have happened without the active engagement of our members at the grassroots level and the Statehouse.

While we commend the Governor and the legislative leaders for the continued commitment to the arts and creative industry in Ohio, we continue to advocate for additional economic relief for our hard-hit sector. Many of our members across the state are adopting deficit budgets as expenses continue to climb. At the same time, earned income levels remain depressed as audiences' return rate lags pre-pandemic levels in some instances, as much as 50% less. So, we will continue to educate and advocate for additional one-time economic relief.

CO's broader agenda will advocate the following critical public policy priorities in 2023 that will further stabilize and position our state's creative and cultural industry for growth. These policy priorities include:

BIENNIAL BUDGET: The Governor will introduce the 2024-2025 biennial state budget no later than the first week of February 2023. The appropriation for the Ohio Arts Council is included in the budget, which uses nearly all its funding for direct support through grants to individual artists and arts organizations. The legislature must pass the budget and deliver it to the Governor for signature no later than June 30, 2023. Throughout this process, the legislature can increase, decrease, or make other changes in the allocation of these funds. CO

will advocate for increased funding levels for the Ohio Arts Council, which recognizes the increased costs our members are experiencing. While educating lawmakers on the vital role the creative industry plays in the economy, education, and the state's cultural diversity, if circumstances allow, we will seek additional funding channels above and separate from the Council's funding.

LOCAL ADMISSION TAXES: Admission taxes have been imposed on ticket sales in many communities throughout the state; while some earmark the proceeds to support the arts in the community, some do not. CO will monitor and work with members seeking assistance navigating these issues at the local level and, when appropriate, at the state level.

ARTS & CULTURE PERMISSIVE LOCAL FUNDING: Cuyahoga County has long benefited from a state-authorized and locally enacted sales tax that supports arts and culture within the county. Currently, this mechanism is only available to Cuyahoga County by law. In the past, statewide coalitions have worked to change Ohio law to make this opportunity available to other communities across the state to provide additional public funds for the arts at the local level. CO will monitor and may participate in the advocacy of these efforts.

MOTION PICTURE & THEATRE TAX CREDIT: The popular Motion Picture Tax Credit was expanded recently to include Broadway theatrical productions. Next session, CO will continue to support a coalition of cities, film commissions, and performing arts centers to lobby for increasing the cap on this successful tax credit program which not only provides significant economic stimulus to the state but also maintains employment for many in the creative industries.

EDUCATION FUNDING: Many CO members are directly funded or have forged essential partnerships with local schools across Ohio. CO will advocate for continued funding for arts education and opportunities for school children to access arts and culture in their communities in productive partnerships with our members.

ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY: CO continues to advocate for programs to encourage and fund connecting arts organizations and individual artists with historically under-served communities, including economically distressed state regions, senior citizens, and correction facilities.

ARTS AS AN INDUSTRY: CO members operate much like any other business in the state. Our members are impacted by employment law, health & environmental regulations, non-profit corporation law, charitable giving tax treatment, and many other issues that can directly impact our members' ability to succeed. CO maintains regular contact with our like organizations representing the business sector and will continue to work together for all our members' interests.

OHIO ARTS SPECIALIZED LICENSE PLATE: CO will continue to seek the legislative authorization of a specialized license plate honoring Ohio creatives, which will allow any Ohioan to order the unique plate, and the proceeds of sales of the plates will be directed to the CO Foundation to help further our mission.

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