Creative Economies and Economic Recovery

Case Studies of Arts-Led Recovery and Resilience

Creative Vitality SUITE

WESTAF

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
KNOWLEDGE ★ REPRESENTATION ★ COMMUNITY

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Cover photo: Blacksmith at the Penland School of Craft. Photo by Robin Dryer

Introduction

As many look expectantly toward a post-COVID-19-pandemic environment in the United States, our state and regional economies struggle to recover from a pandemic-induced recession. Some areas are facing this endeavor while still trying to recalibrate from lingering effects of the Great Recession that occurred more than a decade ago. As we enter 2021, even areas that managed to rebound from prior economic crises are facing record-breaking unemployment, business closures, income losses and looming questions about how to reconstruct societal cohesion. Rebuilding and renewing an economy that will provide opportunity and prosperity for all is a colossal challenge, one that will require policymakers and community leaders to leave no stone unturned in their search for viable solutions.

To that end, **the arts and creative industries offer a powerful source of light for states and localities aiming to reignite economic growth.** In addition to their ability to provide hope, solace and even joy during dark times, the arts can rekindle economic recovery after hardship strikes a state or community. Creative organizations and enterprises provide jobs and produce revenues themselves. But they also help other sectors to blossom by stimulating economic activity in multiple sectors, attracting tourism and creating a climate conducive to business development.

History offers us many useful lessons hidden within past periods of crisis. In this spirit, the following collection of case studies shows how the creative economies of many regions achieved growth in the aftermath of the Great Recession of 2008-2009 and how these sectors exhibit continued resilience in the face of daunting circumstances. These stories highlight the strong synergies between cultural development and community-led economic development and how creativity contributes to the success of rural regions, metropolitan centers and communities with histories of persistent economic disenfranchisement and distress. These case studies also reveal the roles that artists, community members, elected officials, public administrators, community foundations, economic development professionals and others can play in developing thriving communities and robust economies.

Eleven states and communities are highlighted in these case studies: Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia. Each study examines the resilient regions and creative industries, dynamic organizations, well-established and innovative initiatives and programs, and a number of creative economy-supportive public policies. These textured stories present hard data and facts that point to growing industries and job markets, and high concentrations of creative activity in states and regions that are not always identified as creative centers. In Arizona, the Arizona Creative Communities Institute is explored alongside the development of the creative

economy in selected communities. The place of arts and culture within the regional development aspirations of Northwest Arkansas and the arts-led economic development of Western Massachusetts are examined, as is a suburban creative G L V W U L F W L Q 3 U L Q F H *HRUJH &RXQW\ Maryland, and cultural tourism in Appalachian Tennessee. Recent legislation that creates the pathway to a statewide creative districts program in Nebraska also is detailed : H V W 9 L U J L Q L D V profiled L Q D O R Q J Z L W K W K H P H W H R U L F U L V H R I * H R U J L D V I L O P L Q G X V W strategies that leverage the rich historical, scenic and cultural assets of rural regions in Southern Minnesota and Northeast Kingdom, Vermont also are presented.

Taken together, these case studies offer important insights:

- **Creative economy development strengthens overall economic development.** A focus on the creative economy has a place within comprehensive regional economic development strategies, both as an industry sector in its own right and as a catalyst influencing other sectors. Regions, industries and jobs growth units of analysis often used in the economic development sphere are equally applicable to creative activities.

- **Those who work in arts and cultural spaces deeply understand economic and community development imperatives and the potential of their work to grow their communities.** The case studies that follow show arts leaders as active co-architects of destination tourism, community revitalization, talent attraction, economic diversification, livability and regional economic development strategy broadly.

- **Rural and heartland communities thrive through the arts and culture.** Metropolitan and coastal areas are not the only reservoirs of creative talent. Communities of any size have homegrown cultural assets that can be mobilized for economic good.

- **Each community has a creative ecosystem that offers unique economic opportunities.** These case studies show that beneficial economic activity comes from arts subsectors as varied as film, music, the visual arts, artisan manufacturing and more. Strategies that center on the distinctive history, people, cultures and attributes of local communities can yield civic benefits as well as economic advantages.

- **Many regional creative economies have been incredibly resilient in the face of past economic turbulence.** This suggests that communities that make the arts and culture part of their economic fundamentals may be better equipped to survive current and future economic crises.

- **Success often comes through a combination of public and private efforts.** The communities profiled through this research are realizing positive economic outcomes through a varied mixture of public policies and government programs often originating from state arts agencies combined with leadership from businesses, philanthropists, individual artists and nonprofit cultural organizations. Public and private partnership endeavors can yield transformative results.

Methods

This set of case studies, developed by the Creative Vitality Suite team at the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF) in cooperation with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), incorporates three elements:

1. **Creative Vitality Suite data analysis:** The & U H D W L Y H 9 L W D O L W \ 6 X L W H was designed and developed by WESTAF, a regional nonprofit arts service organization, experienced research organization and developer of technology solutions for the arts. The tool incorporates a range of quantitative data sets related to creative industries, creative occupations, demographics, and arts and cultural nonprofit activities. The analysis conducted for this project focused primarily on using the Creative Vitality Index GLVFXVVHG LQ PRUH GHWDLO EHORZ WR XQG creative vitality by way of comparison with other regions, regional creative industries earning trends from 2011-2018 and regional creative occupation growth rate trends from 2011-2018. In a few cases, the top performing industries in terms of industry earnings in a given region also were identified. These three to four data points provide a framework with which to understand the strengths and ZHDNQHVVHV RI D UHJLRQ V FUHDWLYH HFRQRP\

2. **Interviews with regional experts and opinion formers:** The project team conducted 12 interviews with regional experts and opinion leaders who are quoted in the case studies. Interviewees included state arts agency and state film office staff, a regional foundation executive, a local community development leader, a regional arts service organization executive, a state senator, nonprofit arts organization staff and others. Interviewees were asked to comment on the evolving economic context in their regions or states since the Great Recession and their perspectives on the resilience of the creative economy and its contributions to the larger economy. They also were asked to comment on key initiatives, strategies, plans and programs to advance the creative economy.

3. **Secondary research:** Roughly 100 additional sources, including journal articles, newspaper articles, government agency reports, consultancy reports and other materials, were consulted to provide more detail on specific creative economy-supportive programs, initiatives, strategies and plans of states and regions and on the general economic conditions within states and regions.

Sources of Data

The primary sources of economic information used in this study are data sets held within the Creative Vitality Suite (CVSuite), including industry data (federal North American Industrial Classification codes), occupation data (Standard Occupational Classification codes) and nonprofit data (National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities codes). Industry and occupation data are integrated from Economic Modeling Specialists International based on information supplied from the U.S. Census Department and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nonprofit data is sourced from the National Center for Charitable Statistics.

Industries offered in the CVSuite were selected based on their relevance to the creative economy and the economic contributions that these industries offer to the creative economy. Input from CVSuite clients played an important role when selecting the industries for inclusion in the CVSuite. The occupations offered in the CVSuite were selected based on two criteria: (i) occupations that are highly correlated with measured skill sets in thinking creatively, originality and fine arts knowledge as measured by the O*NET occupational network database of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and (ii) input from CVSuite clients. The CVSuite includes primary and specialty industry and occupation codes. Primary CVSuite creative industries and occupations were chosen for review in this study primarily, but in some cases, a subset of industries and occupations was chosen to examine particular industries like film and media, music, or independent artists, writers and musicians. The primary creative industries and occupations include 81 industry codes and 74 occupation codes.

The CVSuite also includes data on creative industry earnings. These data reflect the total labor compensation earned by creative workers including wages, supplements to salaries (such as employer contributions to employee insurance or pension funds) and proprietor earnings for owner-operated creative businesses. In addition to providing a perspective on the livelihoods of creative workers, earnings data also offer a useful perspective on funds with a high probability of rippling through local economies as workers pay for necessities such as housing, transportation, food and other essential services.[1]

Creative Vitality Index

The Creative Vitality Index uses the data points described above to compare the per capita concentration of creative activity in two regions. Data on creative industries, occupations and cultural nonprofit revenues are indexed using a population based calculation. The resulting CVI value shows a region's concentration relative to another region. The Creative Vitality Index (CVI) is a proprietary index developed by the CVSuite.

Other Data Sources

In addition to CVSuite data, the project team also referred to a range of secondary data sources that provide data analyses related to the states and regions considered in these case studies. For example, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Creative Economy State Profiles, which present data of the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (developed in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts), are referred to in a number of case studies. In some case studies, analyses produced by localities, states or regional planning organizations also served as sources of data.

Region of Analysis

Case studies were selected based on consultation between NASAA and WESTAF with a view to having regional distribution, a breadth of various approaches to supporting the creative economy, and inclusion of rural, urban and suburban regions. Depending on the subject of each case study and the state and/or region it considers, CVSuite data analysis has been designed based on state, metropolitan statistical area, county or ZIP code boundaries.

Creative Community Building in Arizona

&RQQHFWLQJ FRPPXQLWLHV WR GHYHORS WKH VWDWH V FU

The Great Recession acutely depressed the Arizona economy as a whole, according to data from the U.S. Census.[2] Prior to the pandemic of 2020, Arizona was well into its recovery from contractions in employment, decreased homeownership and other challenges. However, the signs of a pandemic-induced recession now point to a worrying recurrence of economic hardships. Ari] R Q D V H F R Q R P L F R X W O R R N G X U pandemic mirrors the severe challenges the state experienced during the Great Recession in many ways. Research by the Economic and Business Research Center at The University of Arizona points out that quarterly employment dropped by 11.4% peak to trough during the Great Recession compared with 11.3% during the pandemic.[3]

As the state considers how best to arrest these declines and spark recovery, the arts are one economic sector that may offer a valuable strength. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) reports that arts and cultural production (a measure of the creative economy) accounts for $9,677,016,584 and 3.0% of the Arizona economy, contributing 86,704 jobs in 2017.[4] 7 K H V H F W R U V Y D O X H D G G H G S X W V L W D sectors like utilities and mining, agriculture, and education. BEA data also shows that per capita value added from the arts and cultural sector increased by 17% from 2009-17.[5] However, the creative sector, like many industries in Arizona, experienced volatility during that time span.

Given the importance of the creative economy in Arizona, its continued advancement and resiliency are vital. The Arizona Commission on the Arts had the foresight to U H F R J Q L] H W K D W Q H Z D S S U R D F K H V Z H U H Q H H G H G W R V W U H Q economy in the last few years. It developed the Arizona Creative Communities Institute (AZ CCI) with $ U L] R Q D 6 W D W H 8 Q L Y H U V L W \ V + H U E H U J H U – Q V Arts and the Southwest Folklife Alliance to discover new ways to help communities especially rural areas and smaller cities develop their local creative economies.

Photo courtesy of Arizona Commission on the Arts

7 K U ugh Creative Communities, we focus on creative sector jobs and businesses by providing financial support for collaborative arts based experiments, alongside opportunities for individuals to learn and network across sectors, to more expansively L P D J L Q H Q H Z Z D \ V R I R S H U D

Jaime Dempsey, Arizona Commission on the Arts

Arizona Commission on the Arts Executive Director Jaime Dempsey describes AZ CCI as a multiyear and multipartner initiative driven by a local leadership team of community members from different sectors. AZ CCI had its first convening of nine teams in 2017. Together, these teams devised strategies to advance the creative

economy and bridge multisector partnerships. The Arizona Creative Communities Institute offers its participants the opportunity and resources (technical assistance, mentoring and grant funds) they need to rethink how they approach the creative economy and engage their communities through the arts. By providing a platform for participants to connect with each other, as well as a network of local, state, and national experts from diverse sectors to exchange knowledge, AZ CCI expands the impact of information sharing, empowering more communities in their efforts to put creativity to work for positive change.

> **– Q WKLV RQJRLQJ UHFRYHU\ ZRUN ZH IRFXV on individuals as centers of institutions and drivers of change, as opposed to leading place based work with facilities,** VWUXFWXUHV DQG V\VWHPV
>
> *Jaime Dempsey, Arizona Commission on the Arts*

Tangible Results from AZ Creative Communities

The nine communities that have developed Arizona Creative Communities Institute projects are Barrio Anita, Casa Grande, Douglas, Eastlake, Flagstaff, Globe, South Phoenix, Tempe, and Yuma. Participating communities have populations ranging from 725 (Barrio Anita) to 192,364 (Tempe). Outcomes of these projects are equally wide-ranging and include participatory public art projects, a cultural rebranding of communities to attract tourism, and improved relationships between community residents and their local government agencies.

Barrio Anita

Barrio Anita is a historically Hispanic neighborhood with a population of 725. In April 2018, the Barrio Anita team hosted a two-night community celebration FDOOHG %DUULR 6WRULHV %DUULR $QLWD Borderlands Theater collaborated with the Barrio Anita team, which included local residents and the director of the Oury Recreation Center, on the event. With the intention of fostering community engagement and offering residents DQ RSSRUWXQLW\ WR FHOHEUDWH DQG UHDIILUP WKHLU QHLJ 6WRULHV %DUULR $QLWD DFWLYLWLHV Vories. Participation in RG PXV the event coalesced the neighborhood's cultural assets, fostered an increased sense RI FRPPXQLW\ UHVSRQVLELOLW\ DPRQJ UHVLGHQWV DQG LPSU relationship with the City Council office that represents it. These are capacities necessary for community resiliency and recovery.

Photo courtesy of Arizona Commission on the Arts

Eastlake

Located in downtown Phoenix, the African American neighborhood of Eastlake has a S R S X O D W L R Q R I 7 K H F R Q F S H U V R Z H U H V W D E O L V K H G L Q & & – [Revitalizing the Soul of the City Through the Arts](#) Z D V W R U H E U D Q G W K H Q H L J K E R U K R R G D Q G to the community.[7] In the early 2000s, residents of Eastlake experienced displacement when a runway was planned for Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, which resulted in the Q H L J K E R U K R R G V J H Q W U L I L F D W L R Q D Q G O D U J H V H F W L R Q V R I sought to revitalize the community while maintaining its African American roots. The CCI team collaborated with the [Downtown Phoenix Partnership](#) to revise the official Phoenix tourist map to better highlight East O D N H V K L V W R U L F d l t u r a l K L W H F W X U I assets. The revised map is now being used to raise awareness of the community and

draw visitors, and their related spending, to Eastlake. The CCI project also has UHVXOWHG LQ SXEOLF DUW entrance, a video showcasing the contributions of African Americans in the neighborhood and a Jazz in the Park series. The team has quarterly meetings with the city manager to discuss ideas for the development of the community, which are then shared with various city departments. These meetings have resulted in a change to neighborhood zoning to allow multistory development and urban infill, and collaborations with the city on an action plan and a new housing development. 7KH WHDP V WR LQFUHDVH WKH visibility PPXQ appear to be working, as Eastlake was featured as one of *Phoenix New Times*s HPHUJLQJ FLWLHV 7KH (D has demonstrated how the cultural, architectural and historical attributes of a community can be harnessed to revitalize the neighborhood, improving the lives of its residents and attracting future visitors by celebrating its own unique identity.

First Friday community input event for Healthy Relationships hosted by AZ Creative Communities: Team Flagstaff. Photo by Stephanie Gerst, 2019

Members of Team Yuma discuss their plans during the second AZ Creative Communities Institute general meeting. Photo by Arizona Commission on the Arts, 2018

Creative Communities Lead the E [S D Q V L R Q R I $ Resilient Creative Economy

A review of the Creative Vitality Index (CVI) data on the communities that participated in the Arizona Creative Communities Institute indicates that they are making an impact on the state and driving the creative economy. Data show that the communities participating in the AZ CCI had a CVI value of 1.85, which indicates that the concentration and impact of the creative economy were significantly stronger for these communities than they were for the nation as a whole (with a benchmark of 1). The CVI value for these communities was also higher than the CVI value of the state of Arizona. The CVI data substantiates that the communities selected to engage with the Arizona Creative Communities Institute demonstrate that the arts can be a potent economic force across different geographies and community structures.

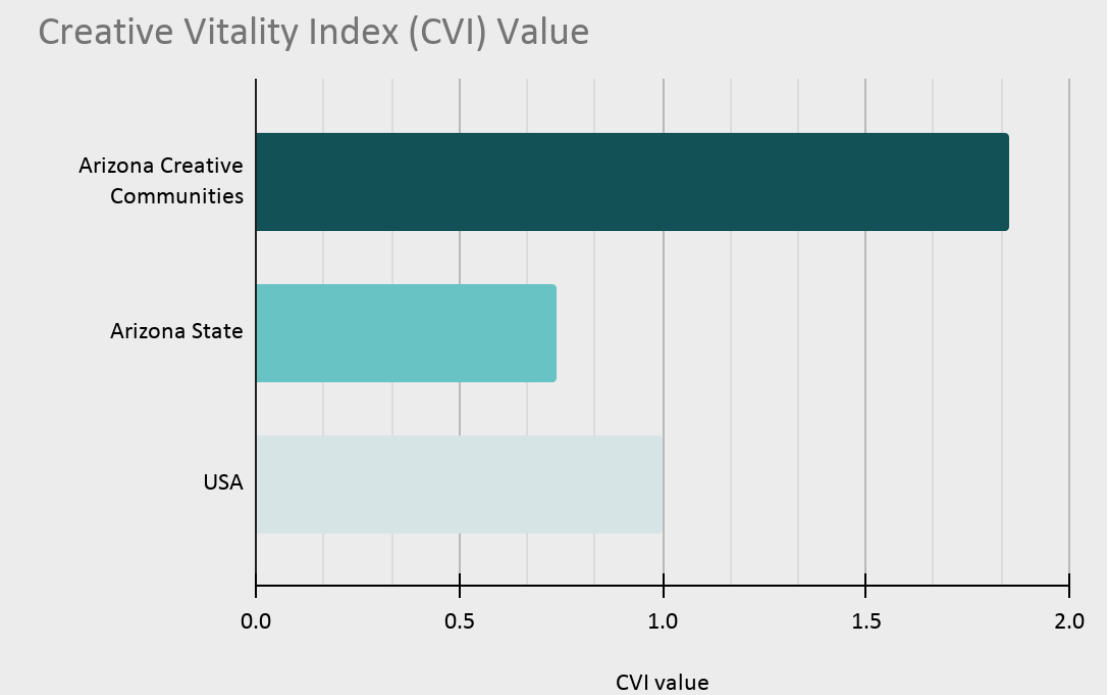

Figure 1. Creative Vitality Index Value: Arizona Creative Communities, State of Arizona, and USA comparison, CVSuite, 2020

Creative sector occupation growth was also positive between 2011 and 2018, growing by an average of 2.8% annually in Arizona Creative Communities compared to 2.6% in the state of Arizona as a whole.

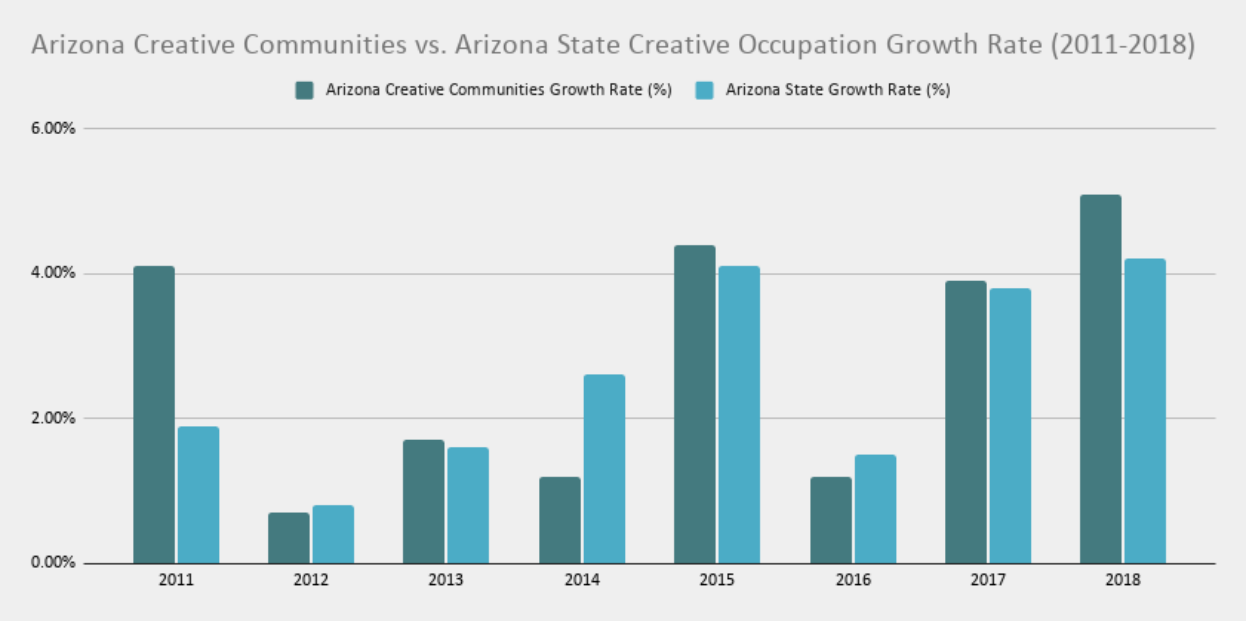

Figure 2. Arizona Creative Communities vs. State of Arizona Creative Occupation Growth Rate (%), CVSuite, 2020

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reimagined recovery. It is important to reinforce creative work on the ground, and what we learned from these communities will continue to influence

R X U Z R U N D Q G S U R J U D P V L Q W R W K H I X

Jaime Dempsey, Arizona Commission for the Arts

The AZ CCI program shows how creative economy growth and creative economic and community development can go hand in hand. Cross-sector and community-led partnerships are central to these efforts to ensure that communities have ownership of their cultural life, community stories, and arts and cultural experiences in ways that support civic engagement, community pride and increased cohesion, and economic opportunity.

Northwest Arkansas: The Resilient Economy of a Creative Region

Arts-led creative economy development in Northwest Arkansas

Northwest Arkansas, a region recognized for the presence of Walmart, other corporate headquarters and the now iconic Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, is an exceptionally resilient region recognized for its long arc of economic growth and impressive recovery from the Great Recession. *Forbes* ranked Northwest Arkansas as the #2 region in the United States for recession recovery in 2009.[8] Even amidst the SDQGHPLF UHFHVVLRQ RI 1RUWKZHVW $UNDQVDV economy remains dynamic, with the continued growth of many of its major companies, a growing population, and bolder aspirations to expand its economy by attracting creative talent.

The Northwest Arkansas Regional Arts Service Organization (RASO) was launched in 2019, ahead of the unforeseeable pandemic crisis, with an aim of developing the capacity of the arts as an economic sector across the region. Working in collaboration ZLWK DUWV EXVLQHVV FLYLF DQG SKLODQWKURSLF RUJDQL] economic development, the budding organization has been working within the context of a highly robust economic development agenda. Talent is one of the buzzwords that leads these conversations in Northwest Arkansas, and is particularly important in discussions of the creative economy that are balancing support for local talent and the attraction of world-class talent from larger markets.

Research on the impact of Crystal Bridges on the Bentonville economy demonstrates that it had a significant positive impact on the city spatially, commercially, economically and aspirationally, giving the city an identity and reputation nationally and internationally.[9] The museum is also consistently cited as a key feature of the livability of the entire Northwest Arkansas (NWA) region, and resident attendance grew by nearly 30 percentage points from 2012-2018, making it the most visited arts and cultural attraction in the region.[10] As Allyson Esposito, executive director of the RASO, VXJJHVWV &U\VWDO %ULGJHV SOD\V D FULWLFDO UROH L

What really put this region on the map was the opening of Crystal Bridges, which was only 10 years ago. The Museum opened amidst that recession, and plays several roles in the creative economy being a talent attractor with a workforce of over

400; providing free access every day, which has made it incredibly accessible to Arkansasans; and
D W W U D F W L Q J F X O W X U D O W R X U L V P

Allyson Esposito, Northwest Arkansas Regional Arts Service Organization

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Museum Way, Bentonville, Arkansas. Photo by Mick Haupt, Unsplash

1 R U W K Z H V W $sUHDWLYH Vitality

What began with Crystal Bridges establishing itself as a world-class art institution and bringing creative talent to the region has now gained breadth and momentum across the area's arts and cultural landscape. In turn, the arts and culture are coalescing as an important and visible sector in the region. As in other regions with strong creative

economies, particularly outside of major urb D Q D U H D V 1 : $ V F U H D W L Y H H F R Q
supported by major employers, academic institutions, and a rich and growing number of artists and arts organizations. Based on preliminary research undertaken by the RASO, Esposito has identified roughly 700 working artists and more than 250 arts and cultural organizations in the region. The music industry has been identified as a particular asset for the NWA creative economy, and a music strategy, still a rarity even in much larger urban markets, has been developed to set a roadmap to grow music as an economic sector. As Esposito suggests, this unique metropolitan statistical area (MSA) shares many parallels with much larger markets but also possesses a unique culture that prides itself on frugality and lean budgets, while pursuing grand aspirations. A geographically dispersed region nestled in the Ozarks and set apart from the major urban centers of Arkansas, itself a highly rural state, would not necessarily be considered a competitor with larger cities in business climate and cultural amenities. But, as Esposito points out, the region has many of the assets of larger metropolitan areas.

> **If you think of the communities that make up Northwest Arkansas as an MSA, the region has all the functional features of a major city. Walmart is** expanding **during this time and there are other major companies here. The creative assets are certainly here a flagship museum and university and a highly innovative community college doing programs around technology and art are just some** R I W K R V H
>
> *Allyson Esposito, Northwest Arkansas RASO*

Arts and cultural amenities in the area have contributed to the development of towns and cities in the region, supported revitalization through the growth of downtown businesses such as restaurants and other purveyors, directly employed residents, and supported the economic development plans of communities in the region.

*URZWK RI 1RUWKZHVW $UNDQVDV Creative Sector

&UHDWLYH 9LWDOLW\ 6XLWH GDWD DQDO\VLV VKRZV WKDW 1:
significantly from 2011-2018. Creative sector earnings (worker wages that ripple through the local economy) grew by 13% from 2011-2018.

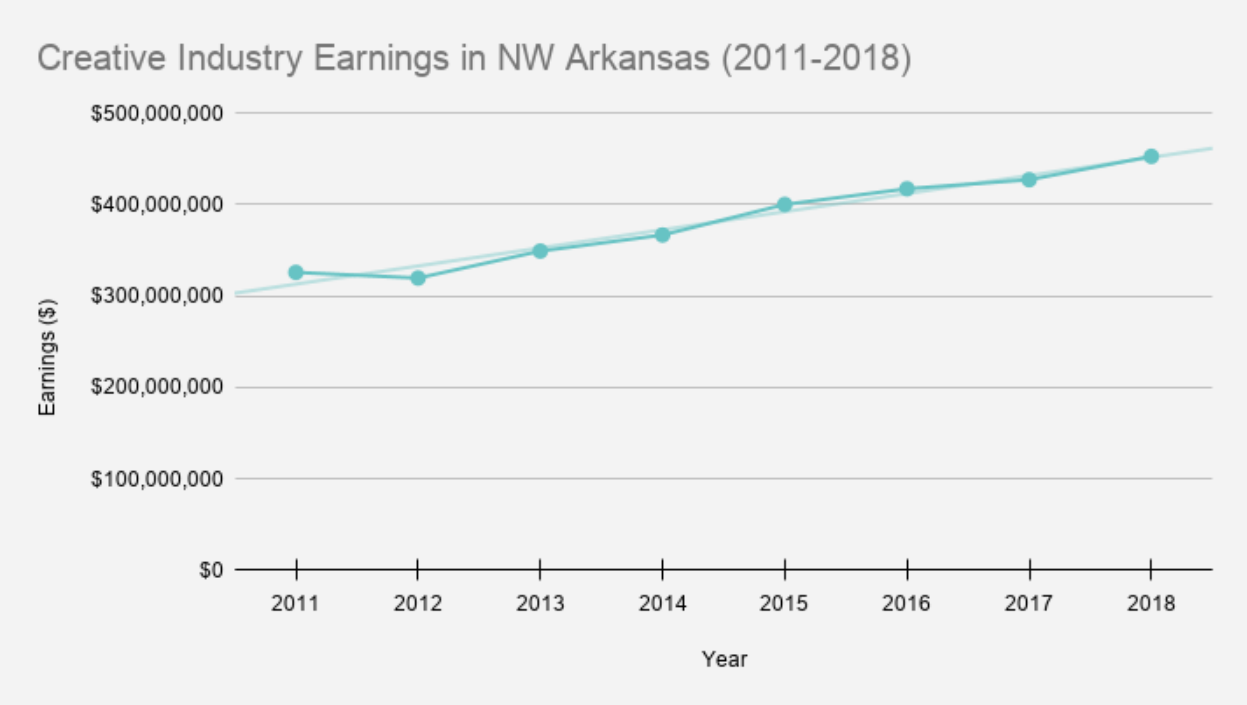


Figure 3. Creative industry earnings in Northwest Arkansas, 2011-2018, CVSuite, 2020

Creative job growth has maintained a positive trend over the same period, with an average annual growth rate of 3.6% from 2011-2018. Like the larger NWA economy, the creative economy, as a subset, has maintained consistent growth. Even though the pandemic and associated downturn have been and will continue to be disruptive, particularly for individual creative workers and smaller organizations, the genesis of the RASO means that there are regional efforts in place that can provide a strong foundation from which to work to mitigate the challenges.

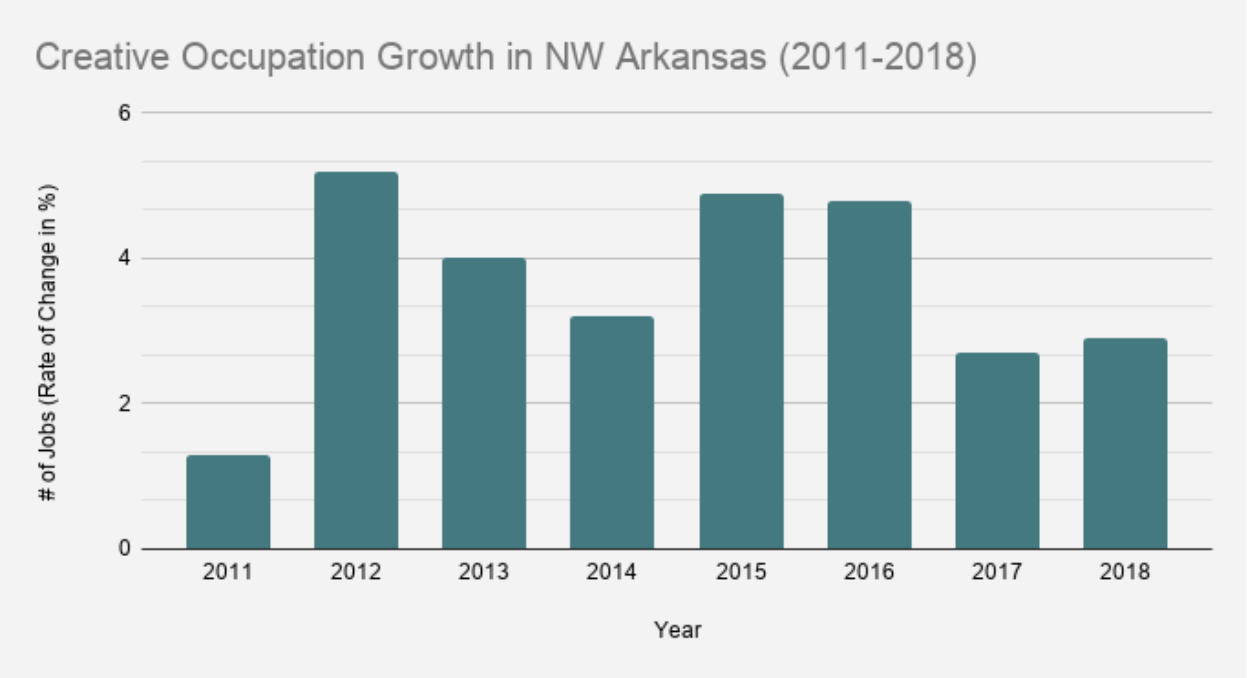


Figure 4. Creative occupation growth rate in Northwest Arkansas, 2011-2018, CVSuite, 2020

Recently opened institutions like NWA Ballet Theatre and the Momentary, a contemporary art satellite of Crystal Bridges, are broadening the programming opportunities for local communities and tourists even during the pandemic. Esposito expresses concern about the challenges facing artists in the midst of pandemic related business interruptions, which include reduced event related revenues and income from tourism. She emphasizes L W L V important to focus on creative workers and individuals. I firmly believe in, and we approach the work in terms of, a widely G L V W U L E X W H G L Q Y H V W P H Q W L Q V P D O O E X V L Q H V V H V D Q G K X that the economic well-being, entrepreneurial and recovery capacities of artists, arts organizations and all other businesses are intertwined.

7 K H U H J L R Q V F U H D W L Y H H F R Q R P \ E H \ **Bridges, is poised to help engineer economic resurgence after the pandemic and is now a visible** D Q G F R Q F H Q W U D W H G I R F X V I R U W K H U H G H Y H O R S P H Q W D V S L U D W L R Q V

Allyson Esposito, Northwest Arkansas RASO

Numerous creative initiatives recently initiated in the region include everything from the creation of new facilities through the creative adaptation of decommissioned spaces to cultural plans with local governments across the region to an online

regional artist talent showcase. An ambitious music strategy was launched early during the pandemic of 2020, based on strategy from the Northwest Arkansas Council and Sound Diplomacy. Noting that the music industry generated a total economic output of $389 million for the region's economy in 2016, the Northwest Arkansas Music Ecosystem Strategy and Action Plan lays out a coordinated and intentional blueprint for attracting music businesses, music related technology and multimedia investment to the region. It recommends leadership mechanisms, policy vehicles and promotional strategies to attain those goals.[11]

Jody Kuehner's "DITCH," one of the artworks incl X G H G L Q 6 W D W H R I Th e M o d e r n, Bentonville, Arkansas. Photo by Derick McKinney, Unsplash

In many ways, this is just the beginning of a much grander set of ambitions for the region. The Walton Family Foundation and Heartland Forward, an institute for economic renewal, recently released the Northwest Arkansas Economic Recovery

Strategy that establishes a clear direction for efforts to stabilize and drive the creative economy as an essential component of overall economic renewal for the region. The arts and culture are central to the regional aspirations, as the Heartland Forward VWUDWHJ\ VWDWHV 1:$ LV LQ +RZHYHU, but the region cannot afford to be complacent Specifically, the region should leverage its knowledge and university base; arts and culture offerings; outdoor recreation, biking infrastructure and quality of place; and a national airport, among other things to build an even more vibrant, inclusive, healthier, and more resilient economy for the future."[12] The report places arts and cultural development as the #2 (out of 7) priority development strategies, stating that:

> **NWA must double down on its already significant investments in arts and culture, which are essential for attracting and retaining talent and building the future economy.**
>
> *Heartland Forward*

By making the arts and culture a cornerstone of regional development, Northwest Arkansas not only is EHFRPLQJ WKH +HDUWODQG Arts, Culture and Recreation, it also has built its readiness to rebound from economic adversity.

* H R U J LEilD Industry and Its Creative Future

A robust film and television industry sparks growth and job creation for Georgians

Though the pandemic- L Q G X F H G U H F H V V L R Q L Q L W L D O \ F D X V H G D Q D success as one of W K H P R V W V L J Q L I L F D Q W F U H D W L Y H K X E V P D \ E H L creative economy has attained significant growth in recent years, and key sectors like the film industry achieved growth even during the Great Recession. As the economy recovers, these strong I X Q G D P H Q W D O V P D \ H Q D E O H W K H V W D W H V F U H L W V I R R W L Q J L Q U H F R Y H U \ D Q G D O O R Z L W W R F R Q W L Q X H W R economic success.

National Endowment for the Arts and Brookings Institution studies have noted the robust creative economy of the state of Georgia and its outperformance of other states nationally.[13] * H R U J L D V F U H D W L Y H H F R Q R P \ J U H Z E \ D Q D Q Q X D between 2015 and 2017.[14] Arts-led economic development and revitalization is part of the story of the creative economy's impact in Georgia, from communities like Thomasville and Sandy Springs to Macon.[15] According to the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), the creative economy generated value added of $24.4 billion to Georgia's economy in 2017, including $2.5 billion for motion pictures and $7 billion for broadcasting.[16] Numerous creative assets have helped integral industries such as film and broadcasting to continue growing during economic downturns.

Georgia is home to a thriving entertainment industry with national and international recognition of its music and film capacities. Through tax incentives, the presence of acclaimed studios, marketing of its film assets, and dissemination into global film S U R G X F W L R Q P D U N H W V * H R U J L D V I L O P L Q G X V W U \ K D V D F K L growth over more than a decade. During the Great Recession in 2008, the state of Georgia introduced production incentives aimed at making the Georgia film industry more competitive. Georgia has had a more than 40-year history of film production support, and the 2008 tax credit provisions expanded the 2005 tax incentive package, which included a 9% transferable base tax credit with an additional 3% for hiring Georgia residents, to a 20% transferable base tax credit and an additional 10% for the inclusion of a promotional logo recognizing state of Georgia support.[17] The film industry in Georgia attained further prominence following the 2008 tax credit expansion.

From 2007-20-01, Atlanta, Georgia, ranked as the seventh largest film market in the United States,[18] and in 2014, then-Gov. Nathan Deal touted Georgia as the third largest filmmaking state in the country, behind California and New York.[19] Senior

HOHFWHG RIILFLDOV GXULQJ WKLV SHULRG LGHQWLILHG ILOP industries, alongside construction and agriculture.[20] In 2017, Georgia was ranked as the leading filming location in the world by Film L.A., and then-Governor Deal DQQRXQFHG WKDW WKH ILOP DQG WHOHYLVLRQ LQGXVWU\ FR economy that year.[21] As Lee Thomas, deputy commissioner of the Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office suggests, the film industry has been a catalyst for the state.

> 7KH ILOP LQGXVWU\ KDV EHFRPH D PDJ **attracting hundreds of new support service companies, as well as help bring other business opportunities and stimulate other parts of the** HFRQRP\
>
> *Lee Thomas, Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office*

Industry research has shown that the tax incentives have supported related industries like gaming, animation and commercial production. Film activities catalyze construction, building material supplies, real estate, personal services (hair, makeup, tailors and dry cleaners), recycling and food service/catering businesses as well.

Photo courtesy of Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office

Academic research shows that employment in the motion picture industry continued to grow through the Great Recession in Georgia,[22] and an Andrew Young School Fiscal Research Center policy brief presents U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data showing a roughly 20-percentage-point spike in film industry employment growth in 2009, and continued growth through 2014.[23] % \ F R Q W U D V W W K H V W D W H V R Y H U D O O dropped by 5.4% during this period.[24] As Thomas recalls, the expansion of the tax credit in 2008 spurred employment opportunities in the film industry that provided a safe haven for some individuals who had been displaced.

7 K H U H F H V V L R Q E H J D Q U L J K W D I W H U W **had passed, so the film industry became a catalyst for economic recovery by putting people to work and engaging the services of small businesses** V W D W H Z L G H

Lee Thomas, Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office

Creative Vitality Suite data shows that the Georgia film industry grew by more than 58% from 2011-2018 and that its growth rate and trend overall outperformed the U.S. film industry as a whole during this period.

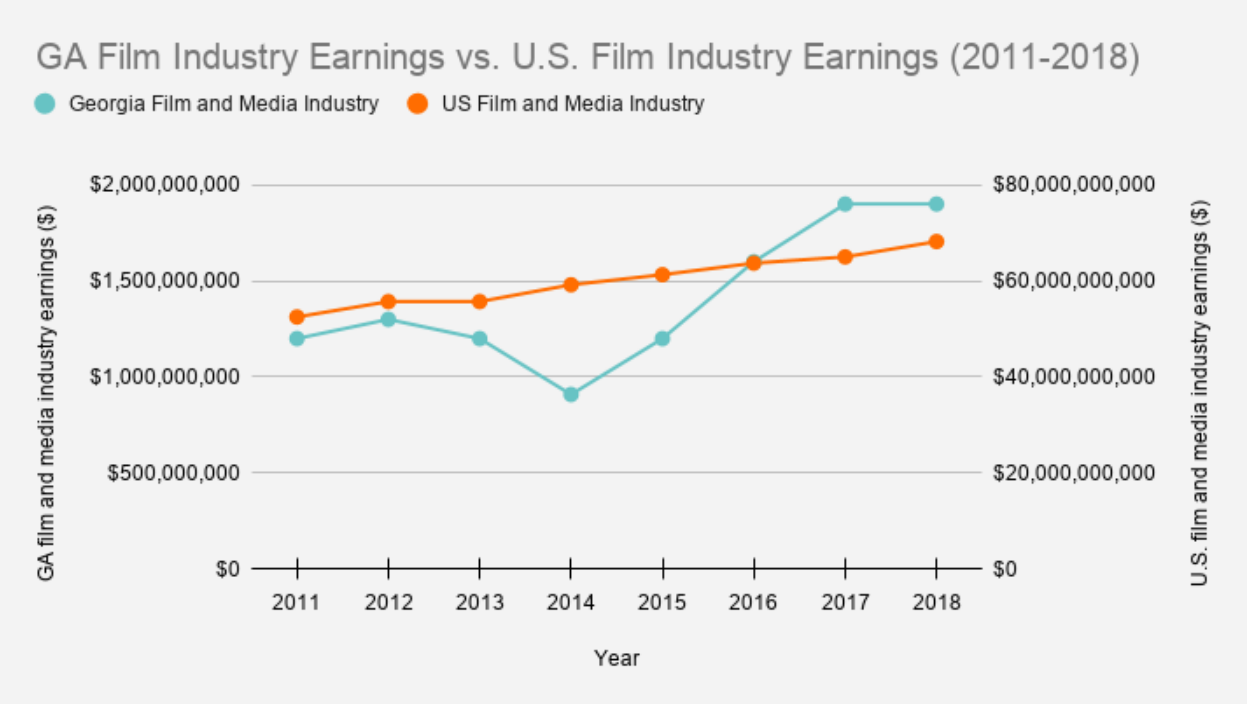


Figure 5. Georgia film industry earnings vs. U.S. film industry earnings, CVSuite, 2020

Employment in the film and media industry consistently grew between 2011 and 2018, with growth of more than 10% in 2015 and 2017. The robust growth in earnings for the industry over this period translated into increased employment opportunities as well.

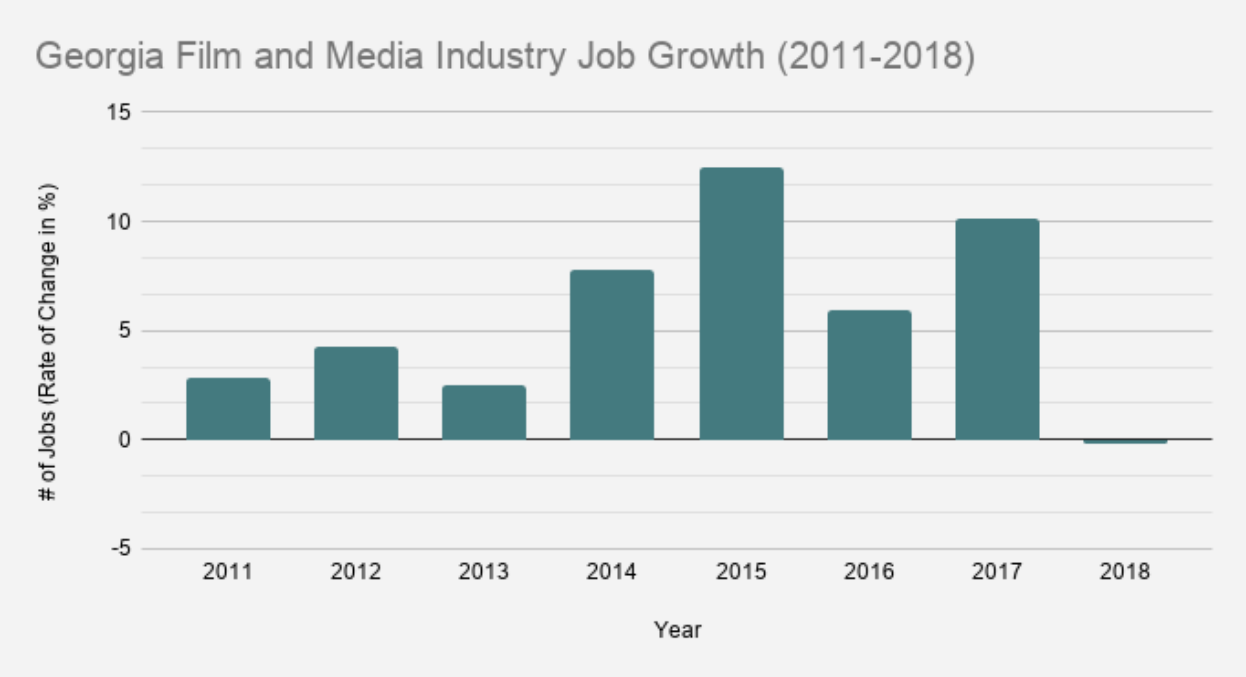


Figure 6. Georgia film and media industry job growth (2011-2018), CVSuite, 2020

There are calls to increase entry points to this important industry. Susanna Spiccia, a creative producer and the founder and former executive director of [re:imagine/ATL](), an organization that prepares youth for careers in film and digital media, argues that barriers to entry have fallen. Spiccia said in an interview with Georgia Public %URDGFDVWLQJ LQ$WODQWD WKDW because of the demand for more and more digital content, there is an opportunity for those with these skills sets to get in. Creativity GRHVQ W GLVFULPLQDWH :H UH DOO ERUQ ZLWK GLIIHUHQW ways of interacting with the world. You can translate that into a story and digital form LQ WRGD\ V ZRUOG[25]

Thomas stresses that opportunities are available outside of the Atlanta area and even to those that do not have technical skills in filmmaking. She states,

>)LOP DQG WHOHYLVLRQ SURGXFWLRQV **swath of people with different skill sets and they utilize a tremendous number of different products. Carpet and lumber providers, landscapers and**

accountants, hair stylists and painters all have UROHV LQ WKH ILOP LQGXVWU

Lee Thomas, Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office

Ozzie Areu, founder and CEO of Areu Brothers Studios and former senior team member of Tyler Perry Studios, cites the economic impact of the film industry on hospitality, construction, and other sectors and its potential to connect communities as reasons for launching his studio and seeking federal Opportunity Zones funding to support these interconnections.[26] Their desire to create jobs and engage young people with opportunities led his team to create an Opportunity Zones initiative that encompasses entertainment investments in film, television, music, gaming, stage plays, publishing and merchandise; investments in technology ventures; and real HVWDWH LQYHVWPHQWV WKDW DOORZ WKH FRPSDQ\ WR VXSS providing shared physical infrast UXFWXUH IRU FUHDWRUV[27] DQG FROODERUD

%HFDXVH RI WKH UDSLG GHYHORSPHQW RI *HRUJLD V ILOP DQ created the Georgia Film Academy in 2015, an organization that helps connect Georgians with jobs in the film industry. Jeff Stepkoff, the a FDGHP\ V LQDXJXUDO director, describes the a FDGHP\ DV WKH XPEUHOOD RUJDQL]DWLRQ FR >VWDWH V@ ILOP DQG WHOHYLVLRQ ZRUNIRUFH GHYHORSPHQ systems. As Stepkoff further explains, the a FDGHP\ V FHQWUDO IRFXV LV MREV Georgians and building a robust industry.

:H ZDQW WR JHW RXU SHRSOH RQWR WK get them working on these high-demand production jobs. In addition, we are committed to building a permanent and sustainable entertainment industry in Georgia. And we do that by supporting independent productions, local talent, our content creators and producing the work of Georgia based screenwriters.

Jeff Stepkoff, Georgia Film Academy

Photo courtesy of Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office

7KRPDV FRQVLGHUV ZRUNIRUFH GHYHORSPHQW DV WKH FHQW economic development systems and a key area of overlap with the interests of the film industry, saying,

> *HRUJLD LV ZRUNIRUFH RULHQWHG DQ
> **for economic development is on jobs and people. The film industry does that on its own, because the whole film industry is very labor-**
> LQWHQVLYH –W V EHHQ NH\ IRU XV WR
> **about our competitiveness with markets on the West Coast or in New York, but also to talk about how the people down the street, the**

lumber supplier or salesman, are being
L P S D F W H G E \ W K H L Q G X V W U \ V G H Y H O R S

Lee Thomas, Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office

Even as the pandemic caused serious setbacks for the film and entertainment industry, it also presented opportunities with a skyrocketing demand for original digital content. Creatives in the media industry have been adapting their practices to keep workers safe and ramp up production.[28] It is anticipated that jobs in the entertainment industry will recover faster than those in other sectors, but University of Georgia Selig Center for Economic Growth research suggests that it still may take years before they fully recover from the historic lows reached during the pandemic-induced recession.[29] Investing in the workforce will be critical to ensuring that the film and entertainment industry is able to continue its impressive trajectory and prominence.[30]

Nevertheless, the state still aspires to become one of the (if not the) preeminent film production markets globally[31] and views the film industry as an important ingredient for Georgia's economic recovery. In June 2020, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp declared film and TV production "open for business" in the state, joining with members of the Motion Picture Association to announce plans to bring back and hire an estimated 40,000 production workers to work on 75 productions and pump more than $2 billion L Q W R W K H * H R U J L D H F R Q R P \ R Y H U W K H I R O O R Z L Q J P R Q W K \ production industry is coming back and ready to jumpstart the Georgia economy by creating jobs and generating greatly needed investment and spending in communities D F U R V V W K H 3 H D F K 6 W D W H . H P S V D L G [32]

$ &UHDWLYH 'LVWULFW LQ 3ULQFH *HRUJH V

The arts, film and digital media bolster a s XEXUEDQ HFRQRP\

With a growing and diverse population 3UL QFH *HRU, Maryland has been recognized nationally as a prominent suburban African American majority community.[33] The county is home to a thriving arts district and a number of important anchor arts and cultural organizations, and is building momentum in connecting arts DQG FXOWXUH WR FRQYHUVDWLRQV DERXW WKH FRXQW\ V HF

During the Great Recession from 2007 to 2009, Prince George &RXQW\ V HFRQRP\ ZDV devastated by a mortgage and housing crisis. Homeowners who had previously held mortgage loans with low interest rates were dealing with foreclosures and many of them were left without notification of their high-interest loans for years.[34] The statewide housing crisis put the entire state of Maryland in difficult economic standing. According to an analysis conducted by CoreLogic, LQ 0DU\ODQG V 3UL QFH *HRUJH V &RXQW\ WKH XQGHUZDWHU PRUWJDJH UDWH KDG E had fallen to just 6.89% at the end of 2019. Still, the region remains in recovery, and three ZIP cRGHV LQ 3UL QFH *HRUJH V &RXQW\ UHSRUWHG QHJDWL 10% at the end of last year.[35] The effects of COVID-19 are leading to a resurgence of economic distress in the county, with unemployment rising to 9.9% in August 2020.[36]

As county leaders work to bolster local businesses and create more job opportunities, the creative sector may offer solutions. To propel this effort, diverse community members converged during a 6WDWH RI $UWV UR XQG WDEOH KHOG LQ *HRUJH V &RXQW\ $UWV DQG (PGAHC).[37] The county economic development corporation, the local chamber of commerce and other representatives of the county government and business community joined in dialogue with artists, creative entrepreneurs and nonprofit arts groups to discuss how best to foster a long-term effort to support the arts in the county. A formal study and community planning effort subsequently commenced, led by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Prince George's County Planning Department, the county Parks and Recreation Department and PGAHC.[38] Building off of economic analysis and resident input, the project seeks to "leverage arts and culture as a game-changing urban revitalization strategy that will assist in improving the quality of life in our communities across the county."[39]

Prince George's County's Creative Strengths

The arts and culture play an important role in both economic and community vitality LQ 3UL QFH *HRUJH V &RXQW\ FRQWULEXWLQJ WR LWV PDLQ V experiences to young people, and contributing to the cultural vibrancy of the area

through festivals and events. The county's Creative Vitality Index Value slightly exceeds the nation as a whole with a value of 1.01 in comparison to a national benchmark of 1.0.

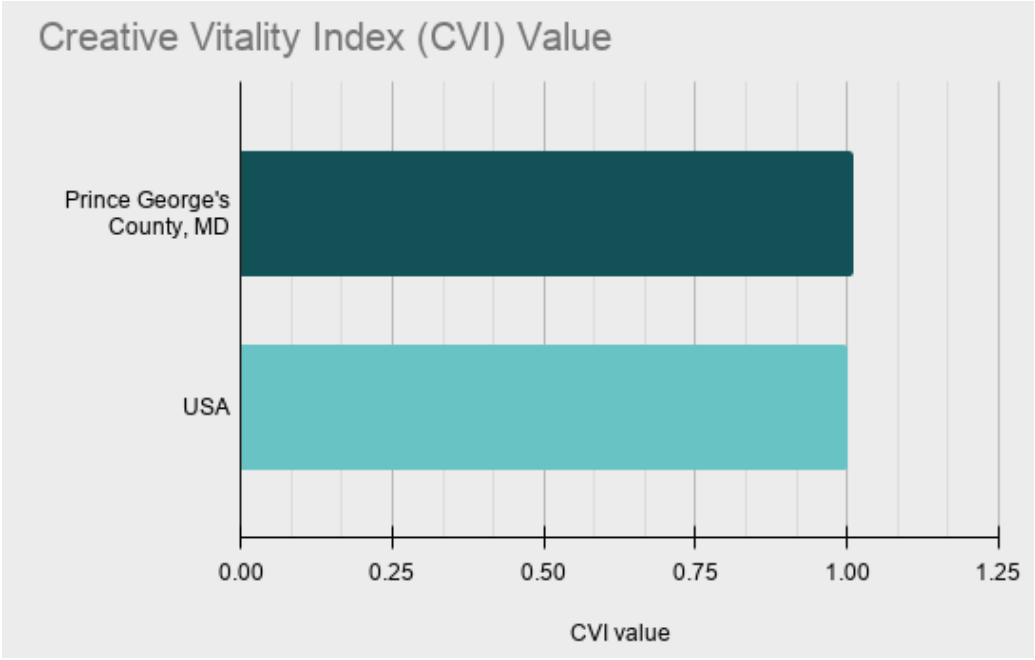
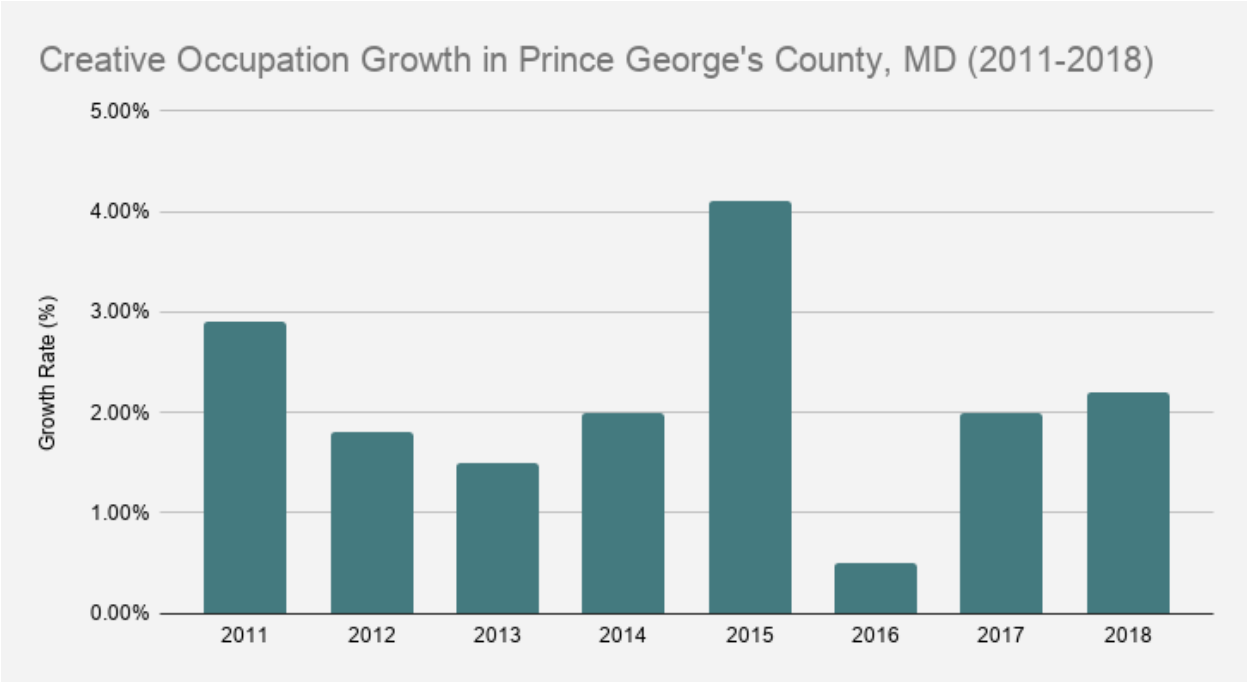


Figure 7. Creative Vitality Index Value, 3 U L Q F H * H R U J H V ,QF 9 $, VR USA, **CVSuite, 2020**

Creative jobs are the engine of the arts economy, and the county has been a strong performer in this light. It has posted growth in creative occupation rates for eight consecutive years, an increase that augments contributions to the local economy.



) L J X U H 3 U L Q F H * H R U J H V ,QF 9 $, VR USA, **CVSuite, 2020**

Gateway Arts District and Its C R Q W U L E X W L R Q W R 3 U R J U D P V *H R U J H V Creative Economy

Maryland is a leading example of what arts and entertainment districts can do to V X S S R U W D V W D W H V H W X S R U P X V X F F H V V I X O F U H D W L Y H other states across the country to establish their own creative districts. According to the Maryland Arts and Entertainment District Report prepared by the Towson University Regional Economic Studies Institute for the Maryland State Arts Council, 26 creative districts across the state of Maryland supported an estimated 1,620 direct, indirect and induced jobs, more than $157.6 million in total state GDP, $12.4 million in tax revenue impact and more than $50.8 million in total wages in FY2019.[40]

Citizen Paint Project, *34th Street Mural*, 2011, Mount Rainier, Maryland, Hyattsville CDC.

The Gateway Arts District the largest and oldest certified creative district in Maryland exemplifies the power of the arts to galvanize economic and community development. This creative corridor was formed in 2001 and runs for two miles

through the heart of four small towns (Mount Rainier, Brentwood, North Brentwood and Hyattsville). Well known for its renovated buildings, distinctive architecture, attractive landscaping and public art installations, it is an innovation hub for a significant and growing population of artists, art lovers, families, commuting professionals and students.

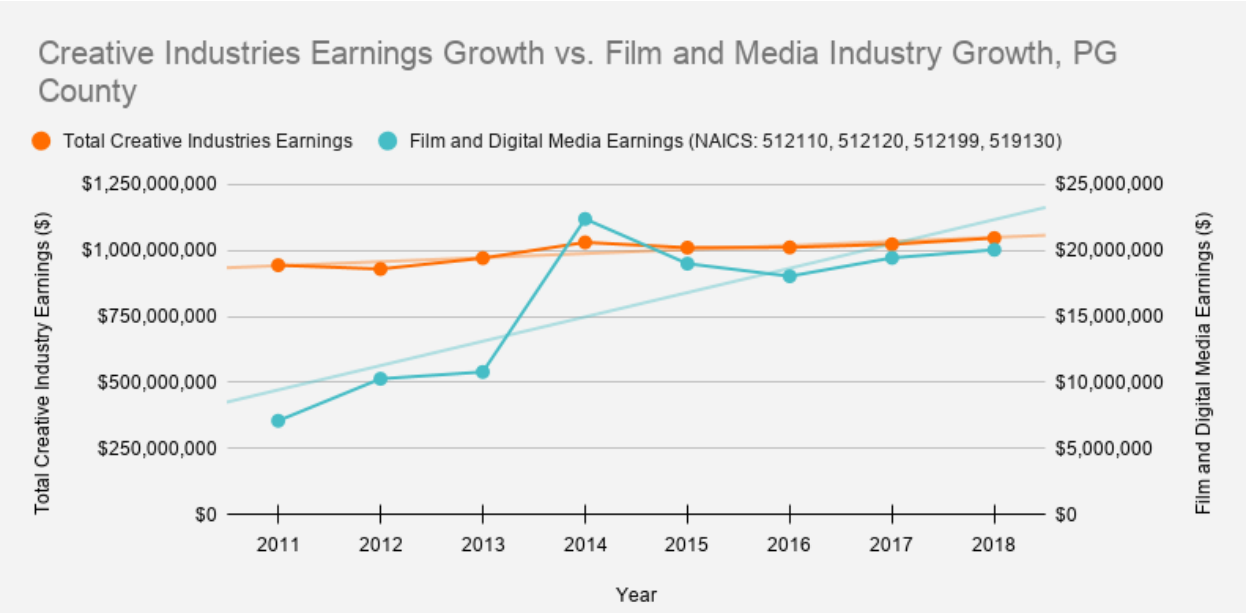
Discover the Arts, Prince George's County, Maryland, Gateway Arts District.

Not only does this creative district preserve and expand Prince George's County's creative economy, it is home to an array of restaurants, coffee houses, local and regional theatres, galleries and entertainment, and local arts and crafts stores. It has created an environment where artists can play, live and work and where commerce thrives on cultural activity and a climate attractive to both businesses and residents.

According to the Towson University study, the Gateway Arts District added $4.8 million to the state GDP in 2019 and paid $1.4 million in wages and compensation through new business startups, cultural events and festivals occurring in 2019.[41] To further capitalize on this economic productivity, Gateway Arts District, in conjunction with Hyattsville Community Development Corporation (the operator of the Arts and Entertainment District), has future plans to extend the creative district neighborhoods with the support of growing retail businesses in the area. According to Stuart Eisenberg, executive director of Hyattsville Community Development Corporation, Prince George's County's creative economy supports the quality of life in the area, and the development projects within the district have maintained positive momentum during past recessions. Although the current environment may prove very difficult, the arts in Prince George's County have been inventive and resilient in coping with prior economic crises. This resourcefulness will be invoked again as artists and businesses in the district cope with the effects of the pandemic and work to help the county achieve.

Film and Digital Media Industry G U R Z W K L Q 3 U L Q F H * H R U J H V & R X Q W \

Prince George's County has a potential future growth opportunity with film and digital media, too. Since 2000, 78 films and 5 television shows have been shot in the state of Maryland. Many productions have decided to film their shows in Maryland due to its close proximity to Washington, ' & : D V K L Q J W R Q F D Q E H U H V W U L F W L Y H D filmed due to security reasons, so Maryland is close enough that if you just want to take a day and do a couple shots \ R X U H F O R V H H Q R X J K > W R ' & @ W R E H at a fairly low cost, V D \ V & K U L V . Andrew Metcalfe reporter for *The Baltimore Sun.*[42] This opens the door to new opportunities in film and digital media initiatives in Prince George's County.



)LJXUH &UHDWLYH LQGXVWULHV HDUQLQJV JURZWK YV ILOP DQG PHGLD *HRUJH V & RXQW\ MD, CVSuite, 2020

Creative Vitality Suite data shows the comparison of Prince Georges County film and digital media earnings compared to the overall creative industry earnings in the region. Between 2011 and 2018, the film and media industry grew at a more significant rate than the creative economy as a whole. In 2011, the state of Maryland passed the Maryland Film Production Employment Act, which replaced an older state incentives program.[43] According to the Maryland Film Office, the new act enabled movie production crews to receive a tax rebate of up to 25% of direct costs[44] to incentivize production crews to film in Maryland. Works being filmed in Prince George's County in 2020 will air on Black Entertainment Television and in AMC Theatres.[45] The prospect of increased film activity also has influenced new networks to start up, such as Creative Edge Collaborative. Creative Edge Collaborative is a filmmaking community based in the Gateway Arts District whose mission is to create

strategic partnerships in combination with creative placemaking and arts incubation services for the film and digital media industry. It supports the growth of current and future media professionals and entrepreneurs.

3U L Q F H * H R U J H V &R X Q W \ K D V P D Q \ F U H D W L Y H D V V H W V W K D W as key institutions continue to plan improved ways of supporting arts and culture across the county. The county also has cultivated arts leadership that understands how to bring arts and culture more firmly and confidently into discussions about the F R X Q W \ V economic future.

Creative Ecosystem Building in Western Massachusetts

Next generation arts jobs program leverages the creative sector

Western Massachusetts is a region with a thriving arts and cultural life and a community that has seen firsthand how arts and cultural institutions and the creative economy can revitalize areas destabilized by deindustrialization and other economic forces. Mass MoCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art), Tanglewood Music Festival, - D F R E V and other leading arts organizations have contributed to stronger economies and communities in the region for decades. These organizations, and a range of influential smaller ones, are now host sites for a groundbreaking new initiative, Artists at Work. The program aims to contribute to the resilience of the UHJLRQV FUHDWLYH VHFWRU ZKLOH SURYLGLQJ GLUHFW HPS ZKR GULYH WKH VXFFHVV RI WKLV YLWDOO\ LPSRUWDQW LQG

Emergence of Western Mass as a Creative Region

Western Massachusetts, which includes the Berkshires, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire, is in many ways the perfect incubator for the new Artists at Work initiative because the region has a history of activating its cultural assets for economic renewal. An analysis of the region using the Creative Vitality Suite shows that the region has a Creative Vitality Index score of 1.27, illustrating the stronger concentration and impact RI WKH FUHDWLYH VHFWRU RQ WKH UHJLRQV HFRQRP\ WKDQ

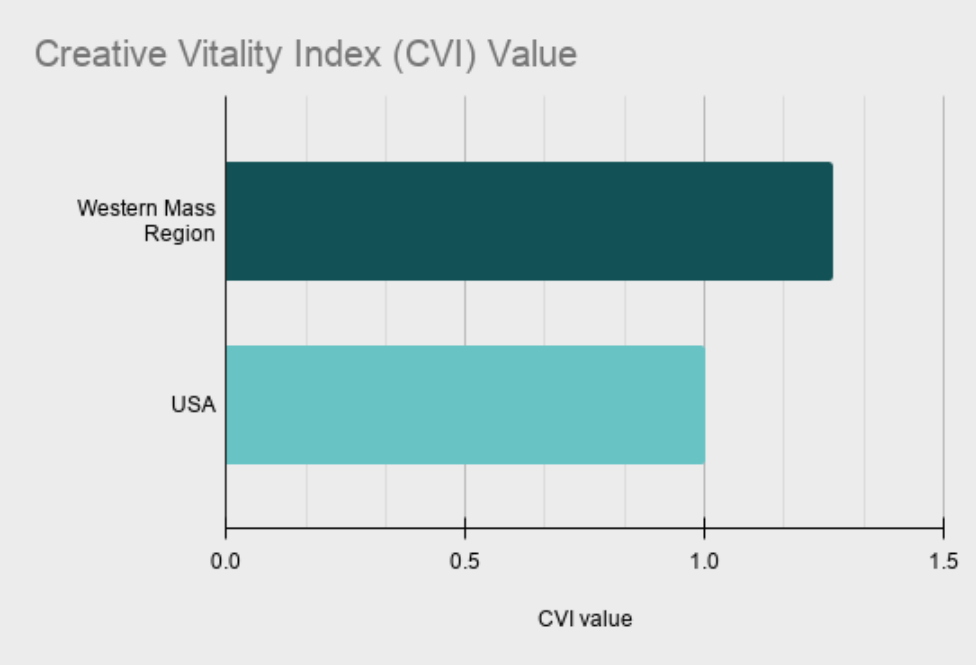


Figure 10. Creative Vitality Index Value comparison, Western Massachusetts and USA, CVSuite, 2020

We chose Western Massachusetts to pilot Artists at Work, because the region has answered the question of whether culture can be an economic driver. We knew we did not need to convince people that the creative economy, particularly artists, can contribute to the prosperity of an area.

Rachel Chanoff, Artists at Work

One of the drivers of the development of the creative economy over the past 20 years has been the diversification of the region evident in North Adams, where the decline and closure of Sprague Electric in the 1980s and 1990s set an unlikely foundation for the opening of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA). The closure of the plant led many to leave the area and local employment was reported to have risen to more than 14% during the exit.[46] Rachel Chanoff, curator for performing arts and film at Mass MoCA and an architect of Artists at Work through a private curatorial firm, witnessed firsthand the transformation of the former Sprague Electric site into Mass MoCA. Chanoff describes the strength of this initially unlikely contribution to the economic reemergence of North Adams in these terms:

North Adams is really the lens to see the effect of the Great Recession and other economic change on the creative economy in Western Mass. Pre-2008, the Sprague Electric factory closed, and a massive percentage of the population was connected to it at the time. North Adams fell off the tax rolls, and they were considering paths forward like a shopping mall, a prison, or developing lakefront real estate. No one was thinking of a contemporary art museum as an economic development opportunity, but Mass MoCA really emerged as a major employer, economic driver, and amplifier that supported the development of hotels, restaurants, and other businesses locally. Because of what we saw firsthand, there is not a question about whether the arts can be an economic driver in a region. Culture is an economic driver. 2008 stopped the trajectory to some extent, but culture was already part of the recovery path and the continued relevance of Mass MoCA during and after the Recession reconfirmed this.

Dancer Dante Brown is collaborating with the nonprofit Roots Rising to promote sustainable farming and food access through the Artists at Work initiative. Photo courtesy of Jacob's Pillow, September 3, 2020

A 2017 study by the Center for Creative Community Development at Williams College ILQGV WKDW WKH ORFDO HFRQRP\ LV QHDUO\ PLOOLRQ OD MoCA operations and visitors, and if MASS MoCA were not present there would be at least 586 fewer jobs in the county, increasing the local unemployment rate by nearly a fXOO SHUFHQW DJH SRLQW[47]

Despite it V LPSDFW WKLV story of just one visionary institution. The Tanglewood Music Festival and Mass MoCA together bring more than $150 million to the local economy every year, largely through cultural tourism.[48] Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Williamstown Theatre Festival and a number of museums are additional influential anchors across this region. Artists at Work has been developed in partnership with these and other organizations in order to showcase the impact and FRQWLQXHG UHOHYDQFH RI WKHVH FXOWXUDO KXEV DV DQF

Beyond influential arts and cultural organizations, the creative economy of Western Mass has also been purposefully catalyzed by multisector initiatives like the Pioneer Valley Creative Network, a collaborative of public and private partners that works to connect and expand opportunities for artists and creative businesses in the three

counties of the Pioneer Valley. The companies, chambers of commerce, tourism councils, universities and other educational institutions, local governments, and cultural and business improvement districts that participate in this network collectively reach and connect thousands of artists and creative businesses with these DFWLYLWLHV HDFK \HDU 7KH UHJLRQ V FRPPXQLW\ IRXQGDWL public and private colleges and universities are also catalysts and drivers of the UHJLRQ V FUHDWLYH HFRQRP through investment, research, network building, educating the workforce and many other efforts.

Independent Artists as a Growth Industry in Western Mass

:KLOH WKH WHUP JURZWK LQGXVWU\ FUHDWLYH HFRQRP is new to many venture backed startups for those for whom that term is even meaningful, in this region it accurately describes individual artists as a key industry in the local creative economy. In Western Massachusetts, Creative Vitality Suite data analysis, using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, shows that the earnings of independent artists in the region grew markedly from 2015-2018 after having largely maintained a solid earnings level in the prior four years. Between 2015 and 2018, the earnings of independent artists increased by more than 45%, earnings which in turn are passed on to the local economy.

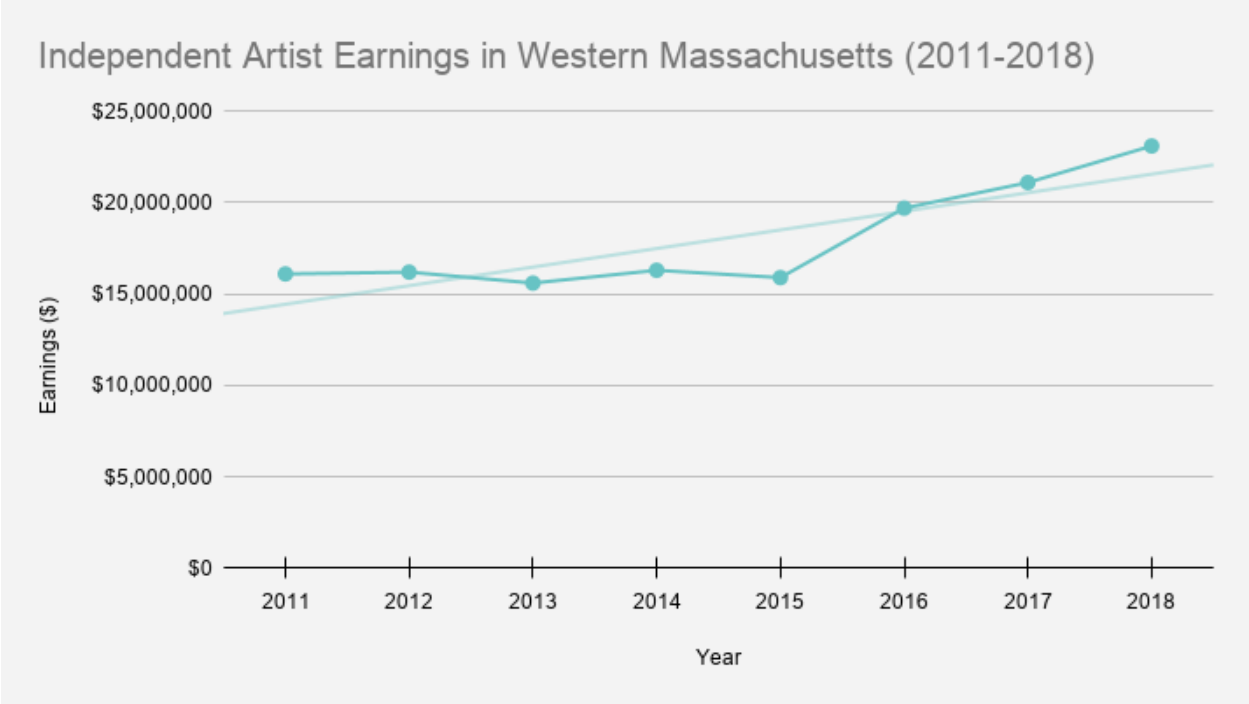


Figure 11. Independent artist earnings in Western Massachusetts (2011-2018), CVSuite, 2020

One can readily assume that the pandemic induced economic crisis has negatively affected this broadly positive trend. It is in this context that a network of organizations across the region welcomed Artists at Work as a pilot initiative to amplify the UHVLOLHQFH DQG LPSDFW RI WKH UHJLRQ V FUHDWLYH HFRV

7KH SDQGHPLF LV D VFRUFKHG HDUWK
eventually we will be in seats. Artists are leading us into this transition, and we need to weave what DUWLVWV GR LQWR HYHU\GD\ OLIH

Rachel Chanoff, Artists at Work

Working Artists and Creative Ecosystems

Artists at Work, in many ways a next-generation jobs program, has been developed to build new models for supporting the regional economy that centers on artists. Artists at Work is led by independent curator and production company THE OFFICE performing arts + film, which launched a pilot program in Western Mass in July 2020. According to Chanoff, the lead architect of this initiative, Artists at Work has been designed to offer artists a living wage, paid for 6 to 12 months, to work with cultural institutions (hubs) that DUH YLWDO WR WKH UHJLRQ V FUHDWLYH HFRQ impact organizations on arts education and community initiatives that are meant to drive civic participation and engagement. Through the Artists at Work initiative, local creators and cultural organizations are connecting to local initiatives in areas such as youth mental health, suicide prevention, food access, youth at risk, campaigns for COVID-19 awareness in communities of color and other civic engagements designed to foster healthy communities.

We not only want to pay artists for making the beautiful work they create within their own artistic practices, but the second deliverable of the program is that they are also embedded in a local social impact initiative and hosted in a local cultural hub. We were thinking about what we can do to impact an entire ecosystem rather than simply a part of the ecosystem.

Rachel Chanoff, Artists at Work

7KH LGHD RI DQ DUWLVWLF GLYLGHQG KDV EHHQ DGYDQFHG
Ann Markusen since the early 2000s.[49] This research has shown empirically that artists produce dividends through income streams that connect them with producers and consumers inside and outside of the region. Even though this idea has long been recognized, as new research on the creative econ R P \ RI WKH UHJLRQ SRLQWV RX
is no dearth of policy recommendations for the so-called creative sector. Policies that consider the specific contours of the artistic labor market, however, are lacking effective policies must be tailored to the spec L I L F V RI WKDW UHJLRQ V DUWLVW
community(ies) [as] the needs and assets of artists and artisans are place-specific,
VKDSHG E\ UHJLRQDO LQVWLWXWLRQV[50] Artists at Work tests QG HFRQR
new strategies to support the artistic labor market to leverage the regional artistic dividend in ways that respond to the specific context of place.

The lessons learned from the six artists involved in the initial summer 2020 pilot program of Artists at Work are designed to inform larger-scale and longer-term creative workforce strategies in the future. A robust creative economy can, in turn, help the region's larger economy to meet the new challenges in the wake of business and venue closures caused by COVID-19. In addition to building civic capital during a vulnerable time, Artists at Work is building new workforce structures and partnerships that will help to sustain the regional economy in a postpandemic setting.

5HG :LQJ 0LQQHVRWD V 0LFURSROLWDQ &UH

A community builds upon its cultural and creative assets in a growing rural region

For more than a decade, Red Wing has been recognized as a burgeoning creative hub in southeastern Minnesota due to its major creative companies, iconic arts and cultural institutions, scenic outdoor attractions, and strong cultural tourism. In 2008, the National Trust for Historic Preservation placed Red Wing on its distinctive GHVWLQDWLRQV OLVW QHDUO\ LWV UHODWLRQVKLS WR WKH PLVVLVVLSSL 5LYHU DQG its prized natural environment.[51] That same year, *National Geographic* named Red Wing the top 23rd historic destination in the world.[52] A 2015 Creative Minnesota study IRXQG WKDW WKH HFRQRPLF LPSDFW RI 5HG :LQJ V QRQSURILW highest in the state.[53] 7KLV VWXG\ IRXQG WKDW WKH FLW\ V QRQSURILW contributes a total of more than $2.2 million to the local economy annually.[54]

Red Wing benefits from historic arts organizations, such as the Sheldon Theatre, as well as a broader set of growing organizations and institutions that support creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship, such as the Red Wing Innovation Incubator and The Cultureshed. Cultural tourism is key to the development of the creative economy in the area; 84% of arts and culture attendees outside of southern Minnesota said they came to Red Wing specifically for an arts and culture event.[55] The local community is finding opportunities within these creative and cultural assets to bolster this rural, smal O FLW\ V HFRQRPLF FRQGLWLRQV DQG LPSURYH LWV RXWO

Figure 12. Total creative industries earnings in Red Wing, Minnesota (2011-2018), CVSuite, 2020