

PRESS RELEASE

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Vermont Arts Council Announces Launch of Statewide Creative Economy Action Plan

Montpelier – The Vermont Arts Council announced that it has launched an in-depth assessment of Vermont’s creative assets. The ten-month endeavor will result in a comprehensive action plan to advance the creative economy in the state. The project is supported by major funding from Jane’s Trust, as well as grants from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the National Life Group Foundation. The effort is directed by the Vermont Creative Network, an initiative supported by the Vermont Arts Council.

“Vermont’s creative economy does more than create great jobs—it creates a great place to live, work and play,” said Ted Brady, deputy secretary of the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. “Nearly every aspect of Vermont’s economy is made stronger thanks to the creative people making art, music, and other art forms. Creative entrepreneurs, whether making a living, practicing a hobby, or anything in between, have helped create Vermont’s sense of place which is our primary tool in retaining Vermonters and recruiting new Vermonters.”

The action plan will identify concrete ways to boost the economic viability of the creative sector and will outline steps to build synergy between creative industries and other sectors. It will also offer strategies to align future workforce development with the needs of the state’s creative businesses and to position Vermont as an attractive place for artists, young people, and entrepreneurs.

“Recently, there has been a growing recognition of the economic potential of creative talents and businesses nationwide,” said Amy Cunningham, Vermont Arts Council deputy director and coordinator of the Vermont Creative Network. “There is a particularly compelling case to be made for the power of the creative economy in Vermont, where creative industries and occupations provide nearly nine percent of all employment. “

The Vermont Arts Council and the Vermont Creative Network are working with Mt. Auburn Associates, Melissa Levy of the Vermont-based Community Roots, and economic development expert Stuart Rosenfeld to conduct the in-depth research and to develop the plan. Mt. Auburn Associates and Stuart Rosenfeld have worked collaboratively for more than a decade on creative economy plans for states and cities across the nation. Stuart Rosenfeld and Melissa Levy worked together on the creative economy plan recently completed for the Northeast Kingdom.

The statewide project builds on several years of research, partnership-building, and community inquiry—including national research and two studies of the creative economy of east central

Vermont (Windsor and Orange counties; completed in 2016) and the Northeast Kingdom (released in January 2019). The Northeast Kingdom study demonstrated both the substantial economic power of the creative sector and the compelling needs for targeted investment, workforce training, coordinated marketing, and connecting creative enterprises to other economic sectors in the region.

About the Vermont Creative Network

The Vermont Creative Network was established by the Vermont Legislature in May 2016 as an initiative of the Vermont Arts Council. The Network is a broad collective of organizations, businesses, and individuals working to advance Vermont's creative sector.

About the Vermont Arts Council

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a Vermont where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. www.vermontartscouncil.org.

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