Vermont Creative Futures Act: The Need

The creative economy is essential to Vermont’s future vitality. The pandemic has profoundly jeopardized the economic viability of creative sector businesses, museums, theaters, galleries, studios, performing arts venues and other cultural organizations. Studies show that entrepreneurs and younger workers are attracted to regions with vibrant cultural offerings which help to grow economic development opportunities.

- Vermont’s creative sector lost >8,000 jobs & >$216 million in sales from April-July 2020 [Brookings study].
- In July 2021, 197 cultural organizations in Vermont reported $36M in lost revenue.

“It feels like we’re back on the edge of the precipice again.”
--historic site director
Vermont Creative Futures Act: The Need

- These businesses were the **first to close** to protect public health and among the **last to reopen**, and many are still struggling.

- The future remains uncertain. Audiences are skittish; many theaters are still not filling all of their seats. **Recovery is expensive.**

- They need assistance to manage the **high cost of Covid-safe supplies**, re-boot programs, re-engage audiences, and devise new financial models.

It is imperative that we ensure this sector survives this long-lasting crisis. Last year’s decisions to support the arts & culture sector provided a **crucial lifeline** to get us this far.

With the **Vermont Creative Futures Act**, we can get Vermont’s creative businesses & organizations to the other side.
Vermont Creative Futures Act: The Solution

Creative Economy Grants

Over 200 creative businesses & cultural organizations will be given an infusion of support to rebuild and recover, ensuring the viability of these important community institutions:

- **$10M** for operating support and recovery
- **$4M** for facility adaptations to make museums, galleries, & theaters Covid-safe, e.g. purchase air-purification systems, expand outdoor seating, HVAC assessments & upgrades.
- **$2M** for transitional costs required to implement safe public programming

For a downtown theater, opera house, or community center, this means:

- Increased security for vaccine card checks ($2,400)
- Hand sanitizer ($3,800)
- Additional cleaning ($6,084)
- Rapid tests for artists, staff, crew ($100,000+)
- Tent rental ($980 - $1200/mo)
Vermont Creative Futures Act: The Solution

Creative Spaces Grants

$750K for Creative Spaces Grants to restore vitality to vacant buildings in downtowns & villages across Vermont, to:

- Provide affordable spaces for small creative businesses to find their footing
- Provide landlords with rental income on spaces that would otherwise remain vacant
- Bring new energy to struggling downtowns
Vermont Creative Futures Act: The Solution

- **$500K** to support state & regional marketing of arts and cultural events, venues & businesses to revive consumer confidence and spending

- **$250K** to implement the CreateVT Action Plan
  - The Legislature provided seed funds for the Network in 2016.
  - This would not only protect that investment but ensure the initiative’s growth.
Why Invest in Vermont’s Creative Sector?

- Creative entrepreneurs and artists **drive economic growth**, make our **downtowns stronger**, and **attract the younger families** that Vermont needs to keep growing.
  - The creative sector represents more than 40,000 jobs (9.3% of all employment)
  - Arts & culture events **promote tourism** & consumer spending

- Cultural organizations promote social and emotional **resilience**, hold **our history**, and **connect** communities.

- Support for the creative sector is an **investment** in Vermont’s future.

*More information at vermontcreativenetwork.org*