RECOVERY NEEDS FOR THE CREATIVE ECONOMY
FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- Incentivize Businesses and Local/State Governments to Put Creative Workers to Work.
- Fund Creative Jobs, Fellowships, Residencies, and Commissions in Federal Departments.
- Invest in Arts in K-12, Higher, and Out-of-School Education for Recovery.
- Pass the WORK Now Act (S.740), which includes arts and culture organizations as eligible entities, alongside the broader nonprofit sector.

TALKING POINTS

- **Incentivize Businesses and Local/State Governments to Put Creative Workers to Work**
  - Support businesses in engaging creative minds and driving innovation through financial incentives to accelerate hiring and re-opening and capitalize efforts to re-open through low- and no-interest loans.
  - Incentivize local and state partners to commission free community engagement opportunities, help cultural venues adapt their facilities and digital platforms, and provide safe settings for family learning, performances, and wellness programs.
  - Support technical assistance and support for creative workers, community partners, and funding entities to ensure that the dollars flowing to local arts-based community development efforts have maximal and long-term impact.
  - Focus on organizations that are led by members of and/or based in Black, Indigenous, and communities of color and have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, the economic crisis, and historical inequities.

- **Fund Creative Jobs, Fellowships, Residencies, and Commissions in Federal Departments**
  - Echoing the Works Progress Administration (WPA), provide funding to federal departments to employ and/or commission creative workers as artists-in-residence, community organizers, and teaching artists, and creative economy businesses to produce free and low-cost cultural experiences, with a specific focus on living-wage creative jobs.
  - Appropriate funds and direct federal departments to commission artists and community arts organizations to capture and document this unprecedented moment in our nation’s history through art works in the full range of artistic disciplines. In particular, expand the GSA Art in Architecture program to other federal infrastructure projects.
  - Employ artists and creative workers in residencies inside federal departments, drawing on existing models such as the National Parks Service Arts in Parks program and the AICAD/NOAA Fisheries Art + Science Fellowship, which embed artists in national infrastructure to improve public understanding of the environment.
  - Direct funds to support programs that engage creative workers to address community health issues; provide funding and guidelines for states, localities, and tribal governments to commission public health campaigns; integrate creative arts therapies into care; and support place-based programs to allow creatives entering the workforce to earn revenue with their creativity and reanimate local economies.
  - Complete implementation of, and fund, an ArtistCorps within AmeriCorps, beginning from existing authorizing language within the Serve America Act approved in the 111th Congress, to

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allow artists and creative workers to use their creative practice to heal communities, drive social-emotional learning, improve cultural competency and cohesion, address trauma, and inspire new thinking in communities.

- **Incentivizing investment in arts-based education and educators**
  - Through federal funds distributions and guidelines, matching grants, forgivable loans, and other mechanisms, support arts education, arts-integrated teaching, place-based cultural practice, intergenerational education, oral history, and the preservation of folk traditions.
  - Create a temporary bridge program through the Department of Education to incentivize local and state decisionmakers to protect arts educators (art, music, theater, media arts, and dance teachers in all public schools) during difficult budgeting processes.
  - Commission, through the Department of Education, the development of teacher professional development on arts- and creativity-inclusive trauma-informed education practice and incentivize districts to have teachers participate by tying participation rates to stimulus and recovery funding levels.
  - Through the Department of Education, develop funding that can distribute via higher education to provide internship and fellowship stipends commensurate with the local prevailing minimum wage for students and recent graduates, including creative workforce students and graduates wishing to use their creative skills in the workforce.
  - Increase cross-agency support for workplace training extended-learning opportunities; after school, weekend, and summer education; as well as creative youth development and provide federal leadership of arts education in equipping America’s students for the future.

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**BACKGROUND**

With 5.1 million arts and culture workers and over 675,000 small businesses generating $878 billion annually in every congressional district and local economy, the creative economy offers the best path to help revive America’s economy across our nation. Creative businesses are jobs multipliers, creating jobs at almost twice the national rate. The creative economy supports more U.S. jobs than the legal or public safety sectors and generates more in household income and tax revenue than agriculture and mining combined. Investment in the creative economy offers a strong return on investment in the wake of COVID-19.

That is why 204 chambers of commerce in all 50 states have written to Congress supporting legislation that would fund the creative economy as part of recovery, mayors from 10 major cities have written a similar letter encouraging the employment of creative workers, and the Nonprofit Infrastructure Investment Advisory Group has centered this same Put Creative Workers to Work investment in the policy agenda they have shared with Congress. Paying artists and other creative workers for their contributions to the health, equity, and well-being of our communities rebuilds our economy. To thrive tomorrow, we must create a jobs ecosystem for creative workers today.

A $20 billion investment in the creative economy would directly create or save 350,000 jobs; commission 300,000 new pieces of art; generate billions of dollars in local revenues through festivals, fairs, performances, and residencies; and help communities to process the trauma of COVID-19 and get back on their feet.

Investing in the creative engine will accelerate the economic recovery of American communities. The Put Creative Workers to Work proposals above were arrived at by a consortium of over 100 partner creative organizations, and have been endorsed by over 2,300 creative businesses and creative workers in all 50 states.

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