



Vermont Creative Futures Act Bill Summary

The creative economy is essential to Vermont's future. Creative sector businesses and cultural organizations drive economic growth and community vitality, bolster Vermont's reputation as a place for innovation and imagination, and build thriving communities. The pandemic has profoundly jeopardized the economic viability of 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.

Our recovery package invests \$17.5 million in American Rescue Plan funds to help Vermont's vital creative sector recover from the impact of the pandemic and emerge stronger.

Funds would be appropriated to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development for administering by the Vermont Arts Council.

Recovery Package Components:

Creative Economy Grants

Hundreds of theaters, community arts centers, galleries, museums and dance studios are still struggling financially and facing an uncertain future. They need assistance to manage the high cost of COVID-safe equipment and supplies, to re-boot programs and re-engage their audiences, and to devise new financial models to survive.

- **Operations Support & Recovery.** (\$10 million) These grants would help organizations and businesses that sustained substantial losses due to Covid or who continue to operate at limited capacity.
- **Facility Adaptations.** (\$4 million) Purchase of air-purification systems, hand sanitizer dispensers, expanded outdoor seating, HVAC assessments and upgrades, etc. Grants would enable downtown theaters, museums, galleries, historic sites and community arts centers to safely re-open.
- **Safe Programming Adaptations.** (\$2 million) These grants would help with transitional costs required to implement safe public programming, such as touchless ticketing, online sales platforms, and COVID-related health and safety protocols

Creative Spaces Grants to revitalize vacant storefronts (\$750,000)

Grants will restore vitality to vacant retail or office spaces through art and culture, such as events, workshops, studios or exhibitions. Grants would provide rental income to landlords while

enabling artists or creative businesses to thrive and in turn sparking energy in towns and villages.

Statewide Promotion and Marketing of Vermont's Creative Sector (\$500,000)

Funds would support statewide and regional marketing of arts and culture events, venues and creative businesses that are essential to revive consumer confidence and spending.

Vermont Creative Network Coordinator and Network Support (\$250,000)

The Vermont Creative Network (VCN) was established by the state legislature in 2016, to advance Vermont's vibrant creative economy. Since then, the Arts Council has invested substantial staff time and financial resources to develop the VCN; establishing a statewide steering team, building local grassroots leadership in six Creative Zones; and conducting research to document Vermont's creative sector, culminating in the [CreateVT Action Plan](#). The funds requested would sustain and strengthen the VCN and support implementation of the CreateVT Plan.

[Follow the action of the bill on the Vermont General Assembly website.](#)

The cultural sector is poised to help Vermont recover. But we need our museums, theaters, galleries and studios to be there for Vermont when the worst of this pandemic is behind us, to bring us back together, inspire us, and enable our communities and businesses to thrive again.

At the requested level of support—\$17.5million—we will be able to provide critical, game-changing support to hundreds of our most vital cultural organizations and creative businesses. Without this support, we risk losing those enterprises that are both the heart of Vermont's cultural life and economic anchors for Vermont communities.