



COVID -19 TALKING POINTS

Given the magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis, Ohio's immediate priorities necessarily must focus on providing adequate access to healthcare, food, water and shelter. We share these priorities. Artists and the individuals who work for arts organizations are **real people with real jobs** supporting themselves and their families. At the same time, we want to make sure the arts industry is as viable and contributing a sector in the state's economic recovery as it has been prior to COVID-19 when we get to the other side of the crisis.

Economic Impact of the Arts

We know how impactful the creative economy has been to our state before this healthcare crisis, and we need to preserve and position it to play this role again in the future. A few facts pre-COVID-19:

- Art is a fundamentally entrepreneurial sector of the economy in Ohio supporting nearly 300,000 jobs and generating \$41B in economic activity.
- In our region alone, the economic impact is (plug in the appropriate geography)...

Akron

- The creative economy generates \$1.4 billion in the Akron MSA (metropolitan statistical area). It supports 17,608 jobs and supplies more than \$768 million in wages and proprietor income.
- Akron is a relatively small MSA but still has a strong creative economy with independent artists, writers, and performers being the largest employment block with 2,738 jobs.

Cincinnati

- The creative economy generates \$6.1 billion in the Cincinnati MSA (metropolitan statistical area). It supports 38,659 jobs and supplies more than \$2 billion in wages and proprietor income.
- Independent artists, writers, and performers have a strong employment influence in the MSA supporting 3,248 jobs annually.

Columbus

- The creative economy generates \$9.1 billion in the Columbus MSA (metropolitan statistical area). It supports 60,011 jobs and supplies more than \$3 billion in wages and proprietor income.
- Independent artists, writers and performers comprise the largest number of employees at nearly 7,500.

Cleveland

- The creative economy generates \$9.1 billion in the Cleveland MSA (metropolitan statistical area). It supports 62,499 jobs and supplies more than \$3.3 billion in wages and proprietor income.
- Promoters of performing arts and sports agents are a large industry in the Cleveland region. They generate \$670 million in economic impact and support 3,480 jobs.

Toledo

- The creative economy generates \$831 million in the Toledo MSA (metropolitan statistical area). It supports 12,065 jobs and supplies more than \$466 million in wages and proprietor income.
- Toledo's motion picture and video industries directly employs 339 people and generates more than \$49.5 million in economic activity.

Youngstown

- The creative economy generates \$341 million in the Youngstown MSA (metropolitan statistical area). It supports 4,794 jobs and supplies more than \$143 million in wages and proprietor income.
- Independent artists, writers and performer comprise the largest number of employees at 405.

(Source: Ohio Citizens for the Arts Foundation 2018 Creative Economy Study in conjunction with the Center for Regional Development and Bowling Green State University. Americans for the Arts)



- Though 70% of the creative industries' impact is located in Ohio's six metropolitan areas (Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, Akron, Youngstown) the economic impact is not just found in urban areas. Additional Ohio municipalities make up nearly thirty percent of the creative economy with more than \$12 billion in annual activity.
- In addition to the tangible economic impact we can measure, a vibrant arts sector elevates Ohio as a hub of creativity, attracting both employees and firms; draws tourists from all over the globe; and helps tackle significant social challenges such as substance abuse and addiction, veterans' health, educate the young, and aid the elderly.

COVID-19 Impact on the Arts

Artists and art organizations across the state are experiencing the negative impact of the virus. OCA conducted two online surveys in March 2020 to assess the preliminary impact of COVID-19 on Ohio's individual artists and arts organization.

- The survey results reveal **devastating economic implications** for our state's arts sector. Of the organizations reporting, the findings conservatively estimate the initial loss to Ohio's arts and cultural industry at \$100M a month. We predict when *all organizations* can respond and fully assess their final circumstance, the loss will be exponentially greater. For example:
 - The Cleveland Museum of Art in anticipating lost revenues of more than \$5 million because of the coronavirus pandemic, announced it will immediately furlough all part-time staff and temporarily lay off a portion of its unionized staff, which includes security guards.
 - The American Alliance of Museums, an organization that offers recommendations for the leadership of institutions across the country, estimates that the closures are costing its members, on average, at least \$33 million a day.
 - The Akron Art Museum is projecting a total \$933,000 in losses, almost a quarter of its \$4.2 million annual budget, and a lengthy closure will undoubtedly have a long-lasting impact on finances and staff.
 - When regional museums close, the surrounding communities lose much more than cultural enrichment. The Akron Art Museum serves around 8,000 students through school tours, the majority of which take place in May.
- The unexpected loss of event-dependent revenue and declining charitable contributions from businesses and individuals – and soon public sector grant sources- are immediately and negatively impacting both arts organizations and individual artists.
- Closings, layoffs, furloughs, lost gigs, lack of healthcare coverage, diminished cash reserves, and other measures of economic instability and insecurity are mounting by the day and are projected to worsen over time.
- The economic damage to arts organizations, artists, and livelihoods is immediate, and we have serious concerns about many of the organizations still being here when we come out of this crisis.
- Many of our hospitals integrate the arts into their experience in some way or another, and they rely on our creative sector to supply the talent to do so. At a time when our hospitals are overwhelmed, the arts offer special help with caregiver wellbeing as well as patient experience and healthcare outcomes.



What OCA is Doing

OCA is working to ensure that the arts community is safeguarded and treated just like other nonprofits, small businesses, and gig workers that are integral to society. We are focused on ensuring artists and cultural organizations can navigate and survive the immediate situation, and continue to contribute to our economy, education systems, and quality of life on the other side of the crisis. Specifically:

- We have established a working task force of the board that “meets” weekly to ensure OCA is an effective “bridge” between policymakers and the field in identifying, facilitating, and solving issues, especially implementation barriers in the CARES legislation related to unemployment relief and SBA loan regulations.
- We are “at the table.” OCA’s Director and lobbying team are participating alongside every other industry in the Governor’s Development Service Agency director’s weekly tele-conference. This working group of business leader’s is providing input, dialoguing, and receiving status reports about a range of issues, including key topics such as state closure guidance and re-opening orders.
- OCA’s Task Force is developing a menu of short-term ideas and policy initiatives to mitigate the COVID-19 disruption and potential state budget cuts as well as exploring opportunities for long-term financial stability and growth.
- Bottom line, our work is focused on preservation in the short-term and positioning our arts and creative industry for future growth both in our local economies and our state economy as a whole.

What You Can Do

We need the board and our member organizations active involvement in our advocacy efforts. We’d like your help with the following:

- Bring us your stories about the impact of COVID-19 on your organization and your region. We need to continue to “make real” the impact and implications of the pandemic for the arts community.
- If you have a working relationship with your State Senator and/or Representative, let us know so we can evaluate how best to leverage it in legislative testimony or advocacy calls and meetings.
- Use the economic impact and COVID-19 facts and bullets from above as well as any of these additional messages below to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, to advocate in your social media networks, and /or to present at your local chamber/rotary next they convene:
 - ✓ *Arts businesses, independent workers and arts educators are small business and part of the workforce. The creative sector spends dollars in the economy like any other sector. We need to support all workers so they can support all small businesses.*
 - ✓ *Dollars supporting arts institutions create dollars that support other business. A successful institution fosters an environment for restaurants, bars and shops to grow. You’re not just strengthening an institution; you’re strengthening an entire community.*
 - ✓ *Arts organizations serve artistic and educational missions through the work of artists, writers, educators, designers, technicians, publishers, producers, agents, managers, and others who work in full-time, part-time, hourly, seasonal, and freelance capacities. Together, they are vital contributors to the nonprofit sector, support and fuel local business, and are essential to the economy of the communities they serve.*
 - ✓ *Investing in the arts sector is an investment into Ohio’s economy and its capacity to generate creative solutions to complex problems, support the health and well-being of communities, educate and inspire lifelong learners.*