

LT. GOVERNOR'S CREATIVE ECONOMY CONVENINGS



DELAWARE
ARTS
ALLIANCE

Agenda – 9/11/25

1. **Welcome & Introductions** (Lt. Governor) 9:30 – 9:35AM
2. **Key Topic of the Month** 9:35 – 10:20AM
 - **Creative Economy Small Business Supports**
 - Context: Neil Kirschling, Delaware Arts Alliance
 - Presentation from **Delaware Division of Small Business** with Director CJ Bell, Anastasia Jackson, & Joe Zilcosky.
 - Q&A and Discussion, All
3. **Community Updates** 10:20 – 10:30AM
 - Delaware Arts Alliance
 - Delaware Division of the Arts
 - Lt. Governor's Office
4. **Wrap Up** (Lt. Governor) 10:30AM



Introductions

(Lt. Governor Kyle Evans Gay)

In the Zoom chat, please share your:

- Name
- Organization (if affiliated) and/or
- Art Form (if you are a creative/artist/performer)
- Location in Delaware

Objectives

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- Attendees will leave with a greater understanding of the resources, supports, and programs available through the Division of Small Business.
 - Government, policymakers, and advocacy leaders will leave with a greater understanding of the needs of the creative community.

Context: CREATE Plan Findings



The Creative Economy

- The creative economy is a **dynamic, interconnected network of individuals, businesses, and nonprofits** dedicated to producing, sharing, and celebrating **cultural, artistic, and heritage-related goods, services, and activities**.
- Beyond its artistic value, the creative economy is a **powerful economic driver that fuels innovation, research and development, tourism, and efforts in placemaking and branding**.
- Supports a total of **18,551 jobs** in Delaware with an output of **\$3.7 billion**, surpassing industries like wholesale trade and agriculture.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Industry Support**

- **Small businesses account for 70.7% of the creative economy**, and an additional 17.8% are self-employed.
- Top self-reported **skill gaps mainly relate to business and management** for both creatives and organizations.

Tourism: In general, **Delaware exports consumers but does not import them.**

- **Funding:** The creative economy requires additional funding structures, with **67% of creatives and 68% of institutions not receiving grants in the last two years.**

- **Professional Development:**

- The creative economy needs more accessible and formalized professional development opportunities in areas like **marketing, social media, fundraising, business, and financial management.**
- There is a **lack of formal mentoring or guidance programs** available for young creatives.
- A lack of professional development pipelines contributes to **brain drain in the state.**



Image © the Dover Art League

SELECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Industry Support

5. Include the creative economy in statewide business and economic development communications and programs.
6. Create a full-time government position to represent the interests of the creative economy's self-employed and small businesses.
8. Modernize Delaware's film and media-production industry

Funding

12. Identify additional revenue streams to support Delaware's creative economy.

Professional Development

18. Host professional development workshops and lectures.
19. Improve professionalization related to copyright and IP with the support of legal professionals.

Infrastructure Development

21. Identify and promote spaces for the creative economy.



Image © Mike Pfeifer / 1440 Film Co

How Businesses Can Support the Creative Economy

The CREATE Plan offers the following recommendations to help business leaders capitalize on these opportunities:

- **Source creative services** such as graphic design, marketing, photography, and content creation from local businesses. Check out our asset map for ideas: [DELAWAREARTSALLIANCE.ORG/ASSETMAP](https://delawareartsalliance.org/assetmap)
- **Provide financial support** through sponsorship of local arts events, festivals, and exhibitions. Collaborate on microgrant programs with the Delaware Division of the Arts.
- **Incorporate creative or cultural elements into company events**, partnering with Delaware artists or arts organizations.
- **Enrich corporate environments by rotating local art exhibitions in office spaces.** Showcase regional cultural assets and events to employees, fostering engagement through initiatives such as subsidized ticketing and corporate memberships at arts and cultural venues.
- **Integrate arts and culture** to understand the communities we work in and with. This can include offering art classes, workshops, or visits to local galleries.
- **Sponsor** art supplies, instruments, equipment, workshops, or mentorship programs for students.
- **Employ artists** working in different mediums on a freelance basis to provide creative trainings to staff.
- **Be a voice for the CREATE Plan's recommendations** by sharing how these policy changes will help from your perspective. Our downloadable communications toolkit is your go-to resource for raising awareness: [DELAWAREARTSALLIANCE.ORG/CREATEPLANTOOLKIT](https://delawareartsalliance.org/createplantoolkit)

Did you know? [DELAWARESCENE.COM](https://delawareartsalliance.org) is the state's main source for arts and culture. Access events, view the roster of artists, and post jobs and opportunities for creatives.

Read More: [CREATE Plan for Business Leaders One-Pager](#)



DELAWARE DIVISION OF SMALL
BUSINESS

“It Starts With Us”





Current Funding Pathways

- EDGE 2.0
 - SSBCI
 - Main St Accelerator
 - Film Commission
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EDGE 2.0

- 2 Categories: Entrepreneur and STEM
- 3:1 Match Required
 - **ie: If you apply for \$150,000, you must match that with \$50k of private funding.**
- Those in business less than 7 years are eligible to apply
- Majority of staff (51%) and business are located in Delaware
- Bonus points for:
 - Women, Minority, Veteran, and persons with disabilities owned businesses
 - Businesses located in Opportunity Zones
 - Governor's Industries of Interest





-Eligibility

- Businesses can employ **up to 15** full-time employees
 - (2 PT = 1 FT)
- Businesses must have **fewer than \$700K in gross assets**



-Awards and Awardees

- There is no set number of winners, and no set dollar amount awarded.
 - The winners are the best of the best
 - Flexible funding model
- Entrepreneur track (up to 10 finalists): Up to \$400K total available (60% increase in funding)
- STEM track (up to 8 finalists): Up to \$750K total available (50% increase in funding)
- **Finalists and awardees will receive additional post-pitch in-kind services and/or award supports to help them grow.**
- EDGE finalists who apply for SSBCI or Strategic Funds will receive an expedited review.





State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) “The Race to \$14M”





DCAP & DLPP

- Delaware Capital Access Program (DCAP) & Delaware Loan Participation Program (DLPP)
 - **Incentivizes CDFIs to lend to people they traditionally would not**
 - Below market rate loans because of DSB involvement
 - Ex: Mortgage rate of 6% vs 3%, savings over time
- Program specifically helps businesses that have minor collateral or credit issues
 - With additional support for socially or economically disadvantaged individuals (also known as SEDI), or very small businesses (<10 employees)





DASCP

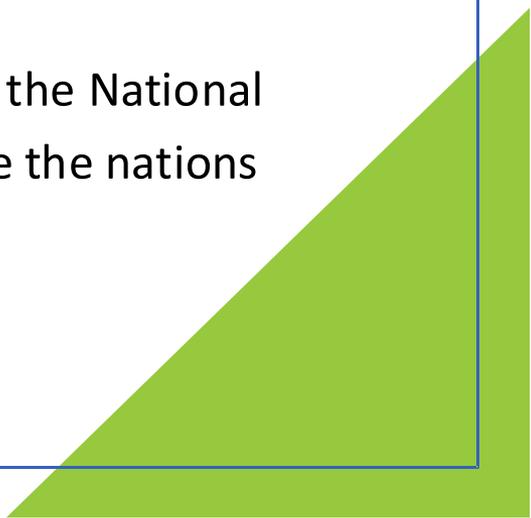
- Delaware Accelerator and Seed Capital Program (DASCP)
- Provides early-stage access to capital for high-impact startup companies.
 - **It allows the state to provide matching funds of up to \$1 million in companies**, after they have completed their seed round of funding.
 - This is available to companies with 100 or fewer employees, and have a lead negotiator.





Delaware On Main St Program

This program serves as the statewide coordinator for the National Main Street Center's efforts to revitalize and preserve the nations downtowns and commercial corridor





Offerings

1. Accelerator Program

- a. 8-week accelerator that provides small businesses on Main Streets to take the next steps in growing their business and start to thrive

2. Technical Assistance & Sponsorship Opportunities through:

- *Accredited Main Streets:*

- Rehoboth Beach Main St, Downtown Milford Inc, Downtown Dover Partnership, and Downtown Visions

- *Affiliate Main St Organizations:*

- *Seaford, Milton, Georgetown, Harrington, Middletown, Smyrna, and Delaware City Main Street*
- *Brandywine Village, Newark Partnership, Cornerstone Westend CDC*





Delaware Motion Picture and Television Commission

The Delaware Motion Picture and Television Development Commission is a state entity established to promote the film and television industry in Delaware



Entertainment Industry Fund

- Entertainment Industry Fund. These funds shall be used to establish a pilot program providing incentives for the entertainment industry in the creation of media projects and digital interactive entertainment in Delaware.
- Applicants with projects between \$200,000 and \$500,000, can seek reimbursement of up to 20% of production, preproduction, or postproduction expenditures incurred in the State, that are directly used in a production activity or digital entertainment activity.
- Project over \$500,000 currently has had all of its funding allocated.



DELAWARE DIVISION OF SMALL
BUSINESS

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Q&A and Discussion



Community Updates

Delaware Arts Alliance

Delaware Division of the Arts

Lt. Governor's Office

Arts Advocates

Please add your updates to the chat!



Wrap Up

(Lt. Governor Kyle Evans Gay)

Next Call: Nov. 13, 2025, at 9:30AM

Topic: SCR109 (CTE Pathways), Workforce Development, Internships, and Implications to the Creative Economy

Guest Speakers: Delaware Department of Labor & Department of Education

Register at bit.ly/LTGOVCEC



Appendix: Case Studies in the CREATE Plan

Recommendation #5:

Include the creative economy in statewide business and economic development communications and programs.

Benchmark: Choose Washington: Creative Economy, US

- Choose Washington is Washington State's economic development department. It has a webpage and an individual within the department dedicated to supporting and growing the creative economy. [View Website Here.](#)
- The website markets Washington as a "**Creative Economy hotbed for new ideas**", is inclusive of broad creative roles, and provides an **Industry Snapshot**, which explains the impact of the creative economy.

Programming Details:

- **Funding Distribution: \$70M** awarded by Washington Department Of Commerce in collaboration with State Arts Commission to **3,787 for-profit & non-profit small businesses** impacted by the pandemic. **\$3M also awarded** to support **community festivals & events** affected by the pandemic.
- **Training Programs: Created the "The Creative Academy"**, providing a series of modules creatives can use to **turn their passion into a business** (ex. Financials, P/L statements, cash flow projections, tax reporting)
- **Spur Innovation:** Expanding broadband into rural communities, increasing access to capital, connecting those with an idea to those who can help it become realized (ex. Manufacturers, engineers, marketers, and export consultants). Supporting skill-building & workforce development in career-connected learning (ex. Game design, software, filmmaking).

Key Initiatives

1. Support pandemic recovery.
2. Connect the creative economy with other key industries.
3. Reenergize Washington's film industry.
4. Connect Washington's gaming industry.
5. Engage in long-range planning for the creative economy.

Recommendation #6:

Create a full-time government position to represent the interests of the creative economy's self-employed and small businesses.

Benchmark: ALCS Proposal for a Freelancer Commissioner, UK

- In 2023, the UK's "**Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society**" (ALCS) called the government to establish a **dedicated channel for engaging with the freelancer workforce – a Freelance Commissioner.**

Programming Details:

- The Commissioner would be tasked with:
 - **Holding regular roundtables** with different sectors, with representatives from member organizations and freelancers.
 - **Plugging the gap in knowledge** currently held around self-employed work.
 - **Championing the vital role freelance, self-employed and atypical workers play across the creative & cultural sectors**, while identifying and finding solutions to the systemic challenges that they face
 - **Building policy**, such as to secure shared parental leave for freelancers.
 - [View Website Here.](#)

Recommendation #8:

Modernize Delaware's Film & Media-production Industry

Benchmarks: Utah Motion Film Incentive Program & Motion Picture Production Program in Louisiana

- **Utah: 20-25% tax credit** for projects that spend a minimum of \$500K in Utah, with additional incentives available for productions shot at least 75% in rural counties. **\$6.79M available annually from State legislature.** Additional assistance includes:
 - Assistance finding locally based crew
 - Facilities and vendors for production support
 - Options for viable locations throughout the state, including a list of "Film Ready Communities"
 - Guidance on conflict resolution, including workplace harassment, and for making productions more sustainable/greener.
- **Louisiana:** Supports pre-production, creation, and post-production audiovisual work with a **tax credit up to 40% of total qualified in-state production expenditures**, and an extra 5% credit on Visual Effects (VFX) in state. A minimum of \$50K of in-state expenses for screenplays, and \$300K for all other eligible productions is required. **\$150M in credits available per fiscal year** and can be transferred back to the State for 90% of face value, and 2% transfer fee. 10% of cap is reserved for **independent films**, 5% is reserved for **screenplay productions**.
- **Both:** Programs have helped to generate local revenue for local businesses and residents, created jobs, and increased direct, indirect, and induced spending.
- **Delaware:** **H.B. 237** introduced by State's film commission to establish a 30% transferable tax credit for in-state film, TV, esports, and video game productions. **\$25M annual cap**, mandatory audits, and internship requirements.

Recommendation #12:

Identify Additional Revenue Streams to Support Delaware's Creative Economy

Benchmark: Maryland's State Arts Budget Provision and Support

- Supported by the Governor's Office and distributed by the Maryland State Arts Council, provision promises that year on year, State Arts Council **shall not receive fund appropriations which are less than what was granted to the Council the year before**, and has a provision for **increase the budget when the general budget itself increases**.
- [View Website Here.](#)

Benchmark: Maryland's Arts & Culture Capital Grant Program

- Known as the "**Arts Capital Grant**", passed in 2021 and provides grants for **acquisition, expansion, renovation, or major repairs to a facility or other infrastructure**. \$3M is available for the program for fiscal years 2024-2029 with a competitive application process and a project cap of \$500K per fiscal year. Projects prioritizing energy-efficient building methods, increased access for people with disabilities, or expanded programming to serve broader audiences are strongly encouraged.
- [View Website Here.](#)

Recommendation #21:

Identify and promote spaces for the creative economy.

Highlight: Downtowns & Arts Integration

- Alongside including the arts in economic development plans, supporting public transit and the arts in urban centers will help cultivate a creative economy that can attract & retain talented professionals, and offer a more equitable ecosystem.
- **Repurposing underused and abandoned spaces, and collaborating between Development & Cultural Sectors**, especially in downtown areas, will help rejuvenate the spaces and expand a fair and accessible creative economy in Delaware. Opportunity to:
 - Mixed-use spaces featuring fairs and other types of cultural tourism events/offerings
 - Pilot programs in potential/priority areas
 - Require cultural aspect/community engagement of development schemes
- **Benchmark: [Community Arts Stabilization Trust \(CAST\) \(San Francisco\)](#)** - Private real estate organization focused on securing and stewarding affordable, inclusive spaces that are oriented around the community and cultural & creative expression. It provides experience, financial resources, and partnerships as well as building teams to ensure that cultural and community facilities are embedded in real estate developments. Helps build pathways to ownership, enabling artists to secure long-term affordable leases, and created dedicated spaces for cultural activity.
- **Benchmark: [Cultural Space Program \(Seattle\)](#)** - City of Seattle created a division to work with artists, arts organizations, developers, and builders to manage and support cultural spaces, allocate grants and activate underused/unused spaces. Created the "SpaceFinderSeattle.org", a free to use web database compiling rental space listings that are available for artists, community organizations, and cultural entities.