



KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE CREATIVE ECONOMY ADVANCEMENT AND TOURISM EXPANSION (CREATE) PLAN

KENT COUNTY, the least populous county in the state, is located in central Delaware and is home to Dover, the state capital. Kent County is rich with history and boasts a number of Delaware's key cultural assets. However, the county suffers from perceptions that it is a cultural desert, and would also benefit from stakeholders being more strategically linked to peers in both the north and south of the state. In order to help Kent County take advantage of opportunities to grow its creative economy, the Delaware Arts Alliance has partnered with Sound Diplomacy to develop an action plan which is the combined result of desk research, stakeholder consultation, and data analysis.¹

¹ These findings are specific for Kent County. Please see the full CREATE Plan for statewide findings.
² GVA is the output minus intermediate consumption (the costs of all inputs – food and beverage suppliers, legal services, transportation, equipment, etc.).
³ Please refer to the statewide executive summary for the full SWOT analysis.



OBJECTIVES

Stimulate economic activity by fostering development and growth in all creative sectors.

Raise awareness and share knowledge amongst stakeholders in order to innovate and create a stronger and more sustainable ecosystem.

Increase transparency and accountability by introducing additional representative bodies for the full breadth of the creative economy and encouraging collaboration.

Improve strategic policy and funding infrastructure to support the entire creative economy.

Foster cross-sector collaboration and interdisciplinary dialogues to create new opportunities for the creative sector.

Ensure that sustainability practices are embedded into creative economy growth and development.

Expand opportunities for professional development for stakeholders in Delaware's creative economy.

Provide a more equitable public education and increase access to arts education for young people.

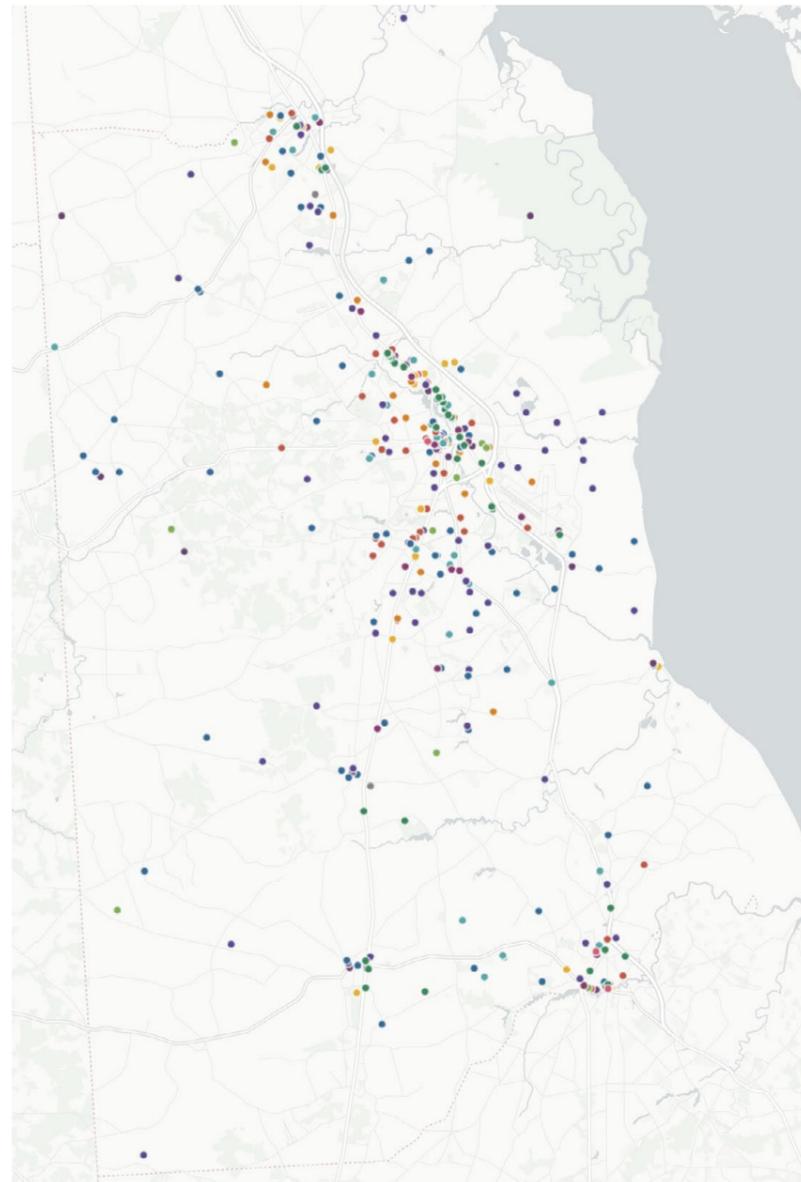
Build Delaware's identity around its creative economy and arts scene.

Tackle geographic inequality by embedding creative economy growth efforts into every county.

Embed the values and imperatives of DEA&I into Delaware's creative economy and strategic thinking around it.

Put cultural tourism at the heart of Delaware's brand and marketing efforts, and expand existing cultural tourism offerings.

MAPPING ASSETS IN KENT COUNTY



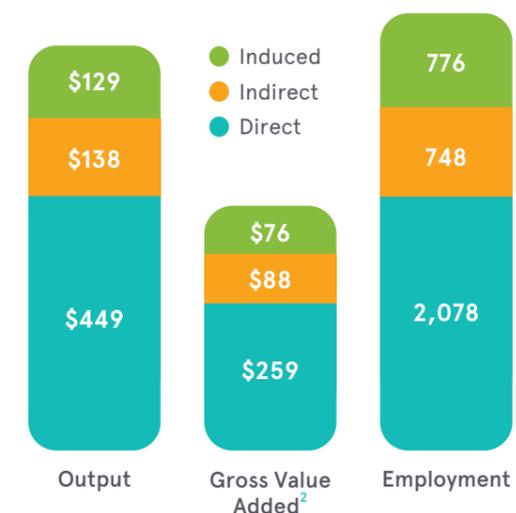
All categories are included and mapped on the [interactive map](#) developed specifically for Delaware.

- Kent County is composed of **458 assets**, representing **18%** of Delaware's total creative economy and tourism assets.
- The most prominent sectors in Kent County are design & creative services with **98 assets (21%)**, visual arts & crafts with **81 (18%)**, and audiovisual & interactive media with **54 (12%)**.

- DESIGN & CREATIVE SERVICES
- VISUAL ARTS & CRAFTS
- AUDIOVISUAL & INTERACTIVE MEDIA
- TOURISM
- ARTISTIC CREATION & PERFORMANCE
- PERFORMING ARTS: LIVE MUSIC, THEATRE, DANCE, CIRCUS
- BOOKS & PRESS
- CULTURAL EDUCATION
- INDUSTRY SUPPORT - RETAIL
- CULTURAL & NATURAL HERITAGE
- MUSIC RECORDING & PUBLISHING
- OTHER PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT

ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

KENT COUNTY ECONOMIC IMPACT CREATIVE ECONOMY (MILLION \$)



TOTAL MULTIPLIER EFFECT

For every \$1 of output of the creative economy, there is an output of \$0.59 in the rest of the economy.



SWOT ANALYSIS³

The following provides a sector-specific and transversal theme SWOT analysis of all research and stakeholder engagement findings from this project. The findings are divided by strengths and weaknesses (SW) within Delaware's creative economy and opportunities and threats (OT) that are outside of the creative economy but nonetheless influence it.

STRENGTHS

- Kent County has a **preponderance of music recording & publishing and cultural education assets**.
- Dover has **clear busking ordinances**.
- Dover has a Cultural Arts Center, an Inner City Cultural League, and stakeholders described the **local Art League as being very supportive**.
- There are **numerous cultural assets** throughout the state, including arts educational establishments and museums.
- **Arts and education institutions** in the county have **recently expanded**.
- **The Kent County Fund for the Arts grant supports local artists and projects**. The Fund's assets are managed by the CenDel Foundation.
- Dover is home to **prominent institutions** that are important to Delaware's creative economy.
- Organizations such as the **Downtown Dover Partnership** are ensuring that the arts are part of Downtown **rejuvenation activities**.
- There is a **cluster of assets in and around Smyrna**, which shows that there is **room for growth** and collaboration.

WEAKNESSES

- **Kent requires a regulatory refresh** of events permitting and liquor licensing processes, etc.
- Dover has actively identified a **Cultural District** within its borders, but stakeholders **perceive it as inactive**.
- There is **significant geographic inequity in terms of arts access**, with activities distinguished by stakeholders as "above" and "below" the Chesapeake and Delaware canal.
- Various stakeholders in **more rural parts of the state noted feeling left out of Delaware's creative scene**.
- Regulations for special events are **out of date**.
- **Public transport options** during weekends and evenings are either nonexistent or extremely limited.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Milford is considered an **"art town"** by stakeholders, and the mapping shows a **cluster of assets** there.
- There are a number of economic development projects in Milford and Dover, but **few of them specifically concern the creative economy**.
- There are numerous Downtown Development Plans for towns and cities in the county. These **reflect an appetite to think strategically about urban development** and to upgrade infrastructure and opportunities for economic growth.
- A **strategic focus on the creative economy** provides the county an opportunity to develop **equitable economic growth and equitable educational opportunities**.

THREATS

- Currently, there is **little alignment between players in Dover**.

REGULATIONS, PERMITS & LICENSING UPDATE

Kent County, and its town and city councils, should review regulations, permits and licensing processes which impact the creative economy, with a focus on those listed below.

National benchmarks for these topics are provided in the full report. In addition, it should collaborate with Delaware's Alcoholic Beverage Control Commissioner and other statewide stakeholders to modernize liquor licenses in the state and implement a One-Stop Shop for permits and licensing processes.

County Regulations to Review

- Sound Ordinance
- Event Permits
- All Ages Ordinances

City Regulations to Review

- Sound Ordinance
- Agent of Change
- Busking

CREATE Plan Recommendations

Informed by the research and analysis outlined here, these are the actionable recommendations that require regional involvement and implementation. Kent County Council, alongside the councils in Smyrna and Dover will need to be involved in implementing and supporting these recommendations, as will city and town councils. Recommendations 3, 8, 10, 12 and 22 in particular require legislative support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNTY ACTIONS

CREATIVE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT

#1 Establish a Creative Economy Task Force That Continues To Build Cross-Sectoral Collaboration and Engage Stakeholders

Stakeholders located in Kent County should be included in this Task Force.

#2 Establish Creative Hubs in Each County

A creative hub in Kent County will improve residents' access to cultural life.

#3 Update Special Event and Performance-Related Permits and Licenses at the State, County, and City Level

Inspired by national benchmarks, Kent County should review and revise licenses and permits related to events.

#4 Develop a Statewide Digital "One-Stop Shop" for Permits and Licenses

Permit and licensing processes from across Kent County should be included in this platform.

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

#5 Include the Creative Economy in Statewide Business and Economic Development Communications and Programs

Economic and business development plans in Kent County should be inclusive of creative economy sectors.

#8 Modernize Delaware's Film & Media-production Industry

Kent County should review and revise its film permits.

TOURISM

#9 Develop a Statewide Cultural Economy Brand to Benefit Tourism, Economic Development, Export, and Audience Development

Stakeholders from Kent County should be involved in planning and implementation efforts to generate this brand and identity.

#10 Increase Cultural Tourism Offerings

Kent County should identify opportunities for linking its creative economy with tourists and tourism assets.

FUNDING

#12 Identify Additional Revenue Streams to Support Delaware's Creative Economy

Stakeholders from across the county should work to identify funding sources and investment opportunities for the for-profit arts and creative sectors from untapped organizations and entities.

EDUCATION

#14 Secure Arts Funding for Every Student in Public Education

Stakeholders from Kent County should campaign for sustained arts education funding from the State, and the County and City governments can supplement arts education funding with their own investments.

#16 Improve Career Development Opportunities for Secondary Education Students

Introduce county-specific career days and mentorship programs to facilitate the entrance of more young people into the creative industries.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#18 Host Professional Development Workshops and Lectures

Local business development and creative economy professional groups should be part of efforts to organize, promote and host workshops, lectures and networking events on creative economy professionalization across the state.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

#21 Identify and Promote Spaces for the Creative Economy

Vacant and underused property in towns and cities throughout Kent County should be reviewed for their viability to be used by artists and other creative economy professionals.

#22 Support Access to Increased Public Transportation in Delaware

Kent County should identify ways in which existing public transport gaps could be covered by localized services, i.e. shuttle buses for special events.

MARKETING AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

#23 Offer Transit Shelter and Outdoor Advertising Space to Nonprofits

Publicly owned facades and buildings in Kent County should be identified and offered as sites where creative economy organizations can advertise events and initiatives