

Two Years of Momentum Across Delaware's Creative Economy



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The Creative Economy Advancement & Tourism Expansion (CREATE) Plan engages Delawareans in shaping a shared vision for a thriving, inclusive, and interconnected creative economy. Developed by the Delaware Arts Alliance with input from over 600 residents from all walks of life, the CREATE Plan is the first of its kind in the nation and offers 25 actionable recommendations.

Two years after its unveiling in summer 2024, the plan's impact is building across the state — including a new film tax credit, student arts recognition, creative hubs, a unified tourism brand, and the first steps toward statewide creative districts.

See highlights from year two of the CREATE Plan and share your story of progress in Delaware's creative economy: [DELWAREARTSALLIANCE.ORG/STATEOFCREATE](https://delawareartsalliance.org/stateofcreate)



Image © Mike Pfeifer

Progress on the CREATE Plan can come from anywhere. State leaders, local governments, arts organizations, and individual artists all have a role to play in advancing Delaware's creative economy.

Legend:

- State Government
- Local Government
- Arts Organizations and Artists
- Schools

Delaware Signs Its First Film Tax Credit Into Law

For years, Delaware watched film jobs and spending go to neighboring states for lack of competitive incentives. That changed this summer with House Bill 364, the Delaware Entertainment Production Tax Credit, a 30% transferable credit for qualifying film, TV, esports, and digital media productions. Delaware's audiovisual and interactive media generates \$851.9 million in direct output, the highest of any creative-economy sector in the state, despite representing just 11% of its total assets. Advocates and local filmmakers agree the credit is only step one. Workforce training, a film-ready location database, and a modernized Film Commission still need to follow.

Advances CREATE Plan Recommendation 8

Creative Hubs Are Taking Root Across Delaware

Artists across Delaware still lack the physical space to create and the business tools to build lasting careers, a gap the CREATE Plan calls on each county to close. Local organizations aren't waiting on state funding to act. In Wilmington, West Side Grows Together's Creative Hub pairs studio and gallery space with hands-on workshops and public art projects. In Rehoboth Beach, the Developing Artist Collaboration has grown from a 2016 pop-up into a full workforce-development hub for Sussex County creators, whose West Side Creative Market alone has generated \$1.7 million in artist sales. Both models are proof of concept for a strategy that can help retain and develop creative talent statewide.

Advances CREATE Plan Recommendation 2

Delaware Formally Recognizes Student Artists

Delaware has long recognized high schoolers for academic, athletic, and language achievement, but never for the arts. Senate Bill 260 changes that, directing the Department of Education to create a Certificate of Arts Excellence for students who show sustained achievement in dance, music, theater, media arts, or visual arts. The law builds on 2025's Senate Concurrent Resolution 109 and closes a gap with the 27 states that already offer formal arts recognition or require arts credits for graduation. It passed with broad bipartisan support across all three counties. Educators and students say the certificate sends a message: years of rehearsals and practice count, and Delaware is investing in keeping that talent in state.

Advances CREATE Plan Recommendations 16 and 17



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Arts and Tourism Partners Build a Unified Cultural Brand

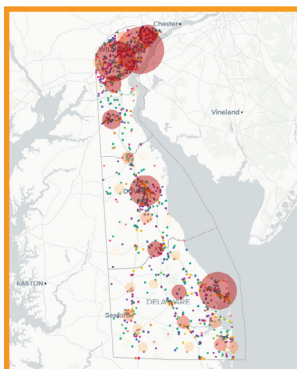
Tourism is Delaware's fourth-largest industry, and 50% of visitors seek out a cultural destination, well above the 31% national norm. Yet the state has never told that story with one consistent voice. This year, the Delaware Arts Alliance brought the Delaware Tourism Office, local visitor bureaus, economic development partners, and arts organizations together for the first time to build a shared messaging playbook and a discoverability guide that helps artists get found online and capture visitor data. The next step is making sure that message reaches across the state and translates into direct support for local artists.

Advances CREATE Plan Recommendations 9 and 11

Delaware Takes the First Step Toward Creative Districts

Nineteen states already run formal cultural district programs, creating a national network of designated districts that channel funding and tourism support to local creative corridors. Delaware doesn't have one yet, but Senate Concurrent Resolution 167 directs the Division of the Arts and the Division of Small Business to study what a statewide program could look like here. Communities across the state have already shown what's possible without formal backing, revitalizing downtowns and building creative spaces from scratch. A designated program could give them access to dedicated funding, clearer guidelines, and a way to replicate what's working from county to county.

Advances CREATE Plan Recommendations 5, 11, 12, and 21



Explore the Updated Economic Analysis and Asset Map

DAA is excited to share new economic data, including employment figures, showing the creative economy continuing to rebound post-pandemic. The CREATE Plan's interactive online asset map has also been enhanced, now showing creative assets in relation to household income, education, race, and transportation routes — making it an even stronger resource for identifying opportunities and fostering collaboration statewide.

View the map: DELAWAREARTSALLIANCE.ORG/ASSETMAP



LEARN MORE. SHARE YOUR STORY. GET INVOLVED.

DELAWAREARTSALLIANCE.ORG/STATEOFCREATE

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