

Commission to Study the Economic Impact of the Arts and Culture in New Hampshire

Conclusions

The Commission reached the following conclusions as a result of its deliberations:

- The Commission determined that arts and culture produce significant revenues for businesses within the state, and also for the state itself, but lacked sufficient time and resources to determine enough specifics to utilize this information for future action.
- An in-depth study of the economic value of New Hampshire's cultural sector would provide the baseline data needed to determine what actions might be necessary to further increase the contribution of arts and culture to state revenues. This would complete the work initiated by this Commission, and would provide a sound basis for determining the most appropriate level of future funding.
- Creation of an advisory committee to the Department of Cultural Resources could be helpful in assisting the Department in studying and promoting the state's cultural sector.
- A voluntary caucus within the Legislature, similar to the House Business Alliance, would be helpful in supporting and raising awareness of artistic and cultural activities. Possible activities might include disseminating information concerning pending legislation relating to arts and culture, identifying and recognizing those legislators who are artistically creative, establishing regular exhibits of New Hampshire art within the State House complex and assisting in research regarding the positive influence of arts and culture in the state.
- There is currently insufficient direct state funding for the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts to make it eligible for Federal matching funds without having to use in-kind contributions. Additional funding would make the Council eligible for these grants, increase its ability to boost state tax revenues, and would also help raise New Hampshire out of the bottom seven states in terms of per capita state funding for the arts.
- The Department of Cultural Resources could benefit from the development of a strategic plan.

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Recommendations

The Commission makes the following recommendations as a result of its studies and deliberations:

- Codify and promote the definition of New Hampshire arts and culture, as adopted in this report, to build greater understanding and support within state government and from the public, of the important role the creative economy plays in contributing both to the state's overall economy and our quality of life.
- Require administrative technology updates as appropriate within New Hampshire state government to allow for the comprehensive reporting and tracking of New Hampshire's creative economy industries including museums and art galleries, libraries, publishing, film and media, all facets of design, architectural and landscape firms, fashion, makerspaces, theater and performances, concerts, etc. as well as employment numbers, revenues generated, taxes paid and number of attendees and visitors at specific events.
- Create an interdepartmental committee modeled on the [Council on Resources and Development](#) (CORD) that would insure greater collaboration, support and promotion of our creative activities, enterprises and industries. Suggested membership should include designated personnel from the following departments: Cultural Resources; Resources and Economic Development (in particular the following Divisions: Parks; State Historic Sites; Economic Development; Travel and Tourism), Health and Human Services (Health and Mental Health); Education (Art, Music, Dance, Theatre, Design, Media Arts, Architecture and STEAM); Corrections (Therapy and Jobs) and Transportation (Highway Design and Environment); Department of Revenue.
- Support through the budgetary process, the Department of Cultural Resources' request to restore a position within the Division of the Arts that will be focused on strengthening, promoting and leveraging New Hampshire's creative economy (modeled on similar positions found in other states).
- Encourage the Department of Cultural Resources to explore opportunities for a more comprehensive study of the economic impact of arts and culture in New Hampshire, including data collection, in order to provide state decision-makers with the information needed to further leverage the benefits of the creative economy.
- Support the Department of Cultural Resources' efforts, working through the Division of the Arts, to continue to pursue and expand entrepreneurship training for individuals and organizations working in and contributing to New Hampshire's creative economy.
- Identify legislative incentives and benefits for film and digital media in New Hampshire, including the creation of a public/private partnership fund for film, digital media and theatrical production in honor of Commissioner Van McLeod.

- Encourage investment in statewide broadband access so that creative enterprises and individuals, regardless of location within the state, can harness the potential of the Internet to expand their businesses.
- Encourage and support the formation of a caucus within the State Legislature to act as a liaison between arts and cultural advocates and the larger legislative body and to communicate the sector's contributions to economic vitality and return on state investment.
- Continue support for programs that have demonstrated benefit, such as the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program and the Community Development Finance Authority, and expand their impact through measures such as increasing the CDFA tax credit threshold for arts and cultural infrastructure projects.
- Support through the budgeting process funding of the existing preservation planner position at the Division of Historical Resources, as there continues to be an unmet need for assistance and support for preservation of historic resources at the local level.
- Encourage the Commissioner of Cultural Resources to determine additional ways, including funding, staffing, best practices, organizational structure and outreach that would strengthen the Department in serving both the state and the public.
- Submit legislation to create an advisory committee to the Department of Cultural Resources (such as exists for other departments) to review and further the implementation of the above recommendations, as well as promote New Hampshire's creative economy.