



ARTS FOR *ALL* | 2030





Artistic Director Luke Schroeder, with artist Yamel Palacios Aguirre and Ricardo Esqueda celebrate the completion of A Corner of Mexico, a community mural created with over 100 volunteers and supported by CCI's Folk and Traditional Art Grant. Photo courtesy of the Gunnison Creative District.



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# ARTS FOR *ALL* 2030

## CCI STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

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Colorado values arts and creativity.

Colorado Creative Industries (CCI), a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), advances the ways that arts and creativity make Colorado a better place to live, work, and play.

The arts are a significant part of Colorado's economy, accounting for \$18 billion annually in economic impact, 3.7% of the state's economy, and 104,163 total jobs according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Additionally, the arts are an avenue for creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and empathy. The arts play a pivotal role in helping communities thrive by bringing together people from all walks of life, revitalizing downtowns, encouraging tourism, and educating students.

We invited [Taloma Partners](#) to be our lead consultants, supported by [Regan Byrd Consulting](#). Their expertise has infused professional rigor and insight into the planning process. We want to thank all the artists, industry leaders, business owners, board members, government officials, educators, students and arts enthusiasts across Colorado who informed this plan. As we develop and implement CCI's next chapter, we will continue to solicit ideas and insight from the creative sector statewide.

CCI aspires to see a future where Colorado is a premiere creative economy. It's our responsibility and privilege to support Colorado's arts ecosystem. And we will continue to work towards a Colorado where everyone can experience the arts in whichever ways are meaningful to them, a Colorado where there are "Arts for All."







**“Colorado’s creative sector is a critical part of what makes Colorado the best state to live in. Access to the arts is an important outlet for all Coloradans and enhances our quality of life, strengthens our economy, and expands opportunities to learn about the diverse cultures across our state, helping us build a Colorado for All.”**

**—Colorado Governor Jared Polis**

Roots Music Project celebrates Juneteenth in Boulder, CO sharing both Black American and African heritage music, supporting artists like Blessing Chimanga pictured above. Photo courtesy of Roots Music Project. CCI supported this project through the Folk and Traditional Arts Grant.

# MISSION

To promote, support and expand the creative industries to drive Colorado's economy, grow jobs and enhance our quality of life.

# VISION

A Colorado arts ecosystem that supports artists and builds vibrant communities through arts, culture, and creative industries.

# VALUES

## I. Belonging

Access, inclusion, and a sense of belonging resulting in equitable participation

## II. Collaboration

Arts, culture, and creative industries contributing to well-being, at the intersection of health, education, transportation, and across sectors

## III. Community

Authentic, responsive, and community led connections

## IV. Cultural Vitality

Arts, culture and creative industries are critical to economy, well-being, and quality of life

## V. Transparency

Clear, open processes, and responsible allocation of resources



# CCI OVERVIEW

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- ▶ CCI was established in 1967 as Colorado Council on the Arts, Colorado's designated state arts agency, to ensure that our community receives the cultural, civic, economic, educational, and health benefits of the arts.
- ▶ CCI receives appropriations from the Colorado General Assembly to provide services and disburse grants. By law, state arts agencies also receive 40% of the federal grant funding provided to the National Endowment for the Arts.
- ▶ In fiscal year 2022-2023, CCI received their first operating budget increase in over a decade, an increase of 61.8%.
- ▶ Colorado has moved from 47th to 39th in the nation for state appropriation per capita, with \$0.56 per capita dedicated to arts, culture, and creative industries.
- ▶ Colorado has higher than average participation rates in the arts, ranking among the top five states for attending or visiting an art experience, personally performing and creating art, and reading literature.

## IN COLLABORATION WITH OEDIT

As a cabinet of the Governor's office, OEDIT works with statewide partners to create a positive business climate that encourages dynamic economic development and sustainable job growth. Under the leadership of the Colorado Governor, CCI advances the state's economy through financial and technical assistance in support of local and regional economic development activities throughout Colorado.

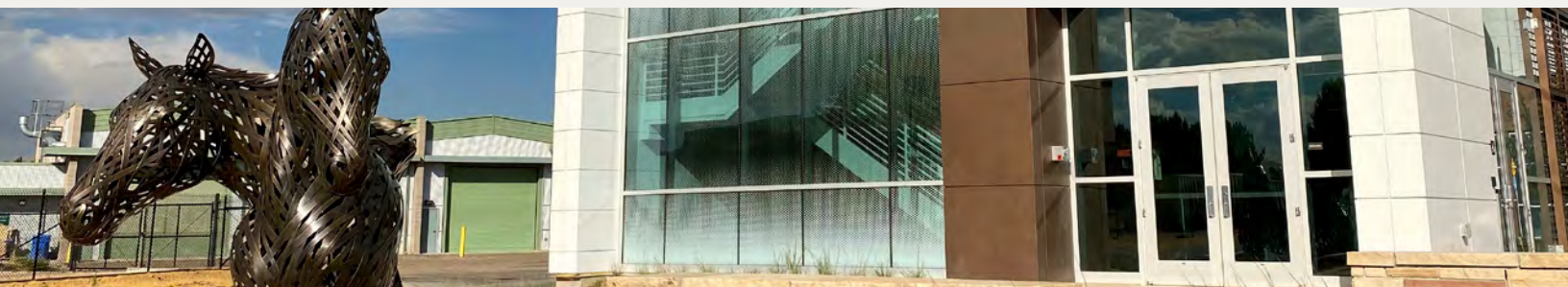
Through this five-year Strategic Plan, CCI will focus on expanding and leveraging resources and infrastructure for the creative industries in support of OEDIT's mission to empower all to thrive in Colorado's economy.

In partnership with OEDIT, CCI develops an annual division performance plan with integrated goals and an annual report measuring progress toward goals.

**OEDIT**  
**Annual**  
**Performance**  
**Plans**

## 2020-2024 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ▶ Awarded \$23 million in Colorado Arts Relief funding, over \$100 million in Community Revitalization Grants, and \$1.3 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to strengthen individual artists, organizations, businesses, and communities impacted by the COVID pandemic.
- ▶ Completed two Space to Create projects in the Corazón de Trinidad and Ridgway Creative Districts, providing 71 units of affordable live work housing for the creative sector. Four additional projects were initiated and are in various stages of predevelopment.
- ▶ Rebuilt the Folk & Traditional Arts program including the launch of a new project grant to support the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts. In the first two cycles of the program, \$136,950 was awarded to 46 organizations.
- ▶ Launched the Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth Grant program in partnership with Think 360 Arts, Bonfils-Stanton Foundation, Denver Arts and Venues and Gates Family Foundation which targets increased access to arts education for historically marginalized youth. In the first year, the program awarded \$398,750 in grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 to 21 organizations representing 10 Colorado counties.
- ▶ Supported arts centered community, economic development, and creative placemaking strategies by increasing the number of state certified creative districts from 23 to 30.
- ▶ Secured an additional \$1.25 million for the CCI annual budget with the support of the state legislature during the fiscal year 2023-2024 session, along with one-time funding of \$500,000 to support the statutory Creative District program and a refundable tax credit of \$10 million annually for five years to support Community Revitalization projects.



Michael Stuz, Double Equus. A piece from the Colorado State Art Collection, supported by the CCI Art in Public Places Program.



# CCI STAFF AND COUNCIL

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**Josh Blanchard**  
Director



**Christy Costello**  
Deputy Director



**Ruth Wilson**  
Administration and  
Partnerships Director



**Libby Barbee**  
Program Manager



**Emma Acheson**  
Program Manager



**Niko Huebler**  
Program Manager



**Kathryn Zeigler**  
Grants and Accessibility  
Manager



**Victoria Gonzalez**  
Marketing and  
Outreach Manager

## CCI ADVISORY COUNCIL

CCI is overseen by an advisory council. The council consists of 11 members who are appointed by the governor. Colorado Revised Statute 23-9-103 stipulates that council members shall be broadly representative of the major fields of the arts and appointed among private citizens who are widely known for their competence and experience in connection with the arts, as well as their knowledge of community and state interests.

### Current CCI Council Members

# CCI PROGRAMS

## COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Community Revitalization Tax Credit
- Creative Districts
- Space to Create

## ARTS EDUCATION

- Arts Education Partnership
- Colorado Poet Laureate
- Poetry Out Loud

## FUNDING AND AWARDS

- Arts in Society
- Colorado Creates
- Folk and Traditional Arts
- Governor's Creative Leadership Awards



Colorado  
Creative  
Industries

## PUBLIC ART

- Art in Public Places
- Creative Capitol

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Colorado Change Leader
- CCI Summit
- Advancing creatives
- Art of Access
- Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) Creativity Lab Initiative



# DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PROGRAMS

CCI has a range of programs that support the arts throughout Colorado. These are the primary programs of the agency. *\*Programs marked with an asterisk are administered and/or funded through partnerships.*

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## COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TAX CREDIT (CRTC):** The CRTC program provides capital investment for infrastructure that supports the creative industries and creative industry workforce. The CRTC program will invest up to \$50 million in available tax credits during tax years 2025-2030 for eligible Colorado tax payers and eligible projects that support the arts and culture ecosystem.



**CREATIVE DISTRICTS:** The Creative District program focuses on defining specific geographic areas that can attract artists and creative entrepreneurs to a community, infuse new energy and innovation and enhance the economic, civic and social capital of the community. The program includes certification, and technical assistance including the Call Yourself Creative framework.



**SPACE TO CREATE:** The first state-driven initiative for affordable live and work space for artists in the nation, Space to Create Colorado catalyzes resources for the development of housing and workspace capital projects supporting creative industries and the creative workforce in rural communities. Led by CCI, Space to Create partners with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), the Boettcher Foundation, in addition to other partners.

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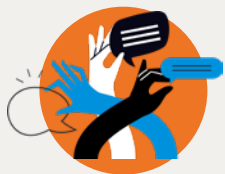
## ARTS EDUCATION



**\*ARTS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP:** In partnership with Think 360 Arts for Learning, CCI supports arts education statewide. Offerings include teacher professional development, creative aging, and the Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth collaborative grantmaking initiative that provides funding for P-12 schools and nonprofit organizations to address arts education access and harness the positive impacts of arts education. This includes a teaching artist roster of professional artists experienced in developing arts and arts integration curricula for participants of all ages.



**\*COLORADO POET LAUREATE:** In partnership with Colorado Humanities, CCI supports the governor-appointed state poet laureate who advocates for poetry, literacy, and literature by participating in readings and other events at the state capitol, schools, libraries, and literary festivals.



**\*POETRY OUT LOUD:** Poetry Out Loud is a national arts education program created by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation that encourages young performers in Colorado to bring the words of great poets to life through memorization, recitation, and competitive performance. It is currently administered by Empowered.

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## FUNDING & AWARDS



**\*ARTS IN SOCIETY:** Administered by RedLine Contemporary Art Center and funded through a cohort of Colorado foundations and government agencies, the Arts in Society Grant funds projects that help arts organizations and artists find solutions to civic and social challenges facing Colorado communities.



**COLORADO CREATES:** The Colorado Creates Grant provides general operating support to arts-focused nonprofit organizations, independent components of a college, university, or units of government to produce and present arts and cultural activities.



**FOLK AND TRADITIONAL ARTS:** The Folk and Traditional Arts Project Grant is dedicated to celebrating, documenting, and preserving Colorado's cultural heritage through folk and traditional arts.



**GOVERNOR'S CREATIVE LEADERSHIP AWARDS:** The Governor's Creative Leadership Awards recognize individuals that have demonstrated significant support or participation in activities statewide to advance the value of the creative industries in Colorado communities.



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## PUBLIC ART



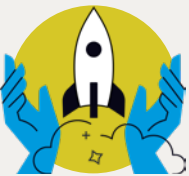
**ART IN PUBLIC PLACES:** Established in 1977, the Art in Public Places (AIPP) program commissions artwork for people to enjoy in publicly accessible areas inside and outside of state buildings. Colorado law requires 1% of the State's capital construction funds for new or renovated state buildings to pay for works of art. These art acquisitions form the state art collection.



**CREATIVE CAPITOL:** The Creative Capitol Exhibition program showcases Colorado artists and organizations through rotating art exhibitions at the State Capitol building.

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



**COLORADO CHANGE LEADER:** The Colorado Change Leader Institute provides training to cultural and community leaders to create change in organizations, communities, and their daily lives. Change Leaders receive community response implementation grants to support a project following completion of the program.



**COLORADO CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SUMMIT:** The CCI Summit is a statewide annual professional development and networking convention for Colorado's creative sector to connect, learn, and be inspired.



**\*ADVANCING CREATIVES:** In partnership with Colorado Business Committee for the Arts (CBCA), Advancing Creatives provides cohort based technical assistance for creative professionals and entrepreneurs who want to articulate and take practical steps to achieve their business goals.



**\*ART OF ACCESS:** CCI is an organizing member of Art of Access, a network of individuals and organizations who work to advance accessible and inclusive practices across Colorado's cultural organizations through professional development, advocacy and resource sharing.



**RURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (RTAP) CREATIVITY LAB INITIATIVE:** An initiative created to support training and skill development through a site-specific workshop and follow-up for rural communities that want to investigate a strategic focus on creative industries and community vitality focused on the arts and culture.



Breaking ground at Artspace Colorado Springs. Supported by the CCI Community Revitalization Grant, this project creates livable, workable spaces for artists—keeping creativity thriving in Creative Districts.



# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

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**INCLUSIVE. STATEWIDE. TRANSPARENT.**

**ENGAGING. INTENTIONAL.**

We developed an inclusive strategic planning process involving extensive statewide engagement and ensuring diverse voices from all regions were heard. This approach fostered a collaborative environment where different perspectives were valued, leading to a comprehensive and well-rounded plan.

**PHASE  
1A**

Grounding

**PHASE  
1B**

Data Collection

**PHASE  
2A**

Strategy  
Development

**PHASE  
2B**

Refinement &  
Approval



## SPECIFIC ENGAGEMENT STEPS:

- Internal staff and council meetings
- In-person focus groups at CCI Summit in Pueblo: Creative District and Change Leaders sessions
- Program specific surveys
- Public survey deployed in English and Spanish, reaching over 800 stakeholders in 60 out of 64 counties
- Fourteen Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with creative sector participants
- Seven virtual statewide focus groups of 6-10 targeted stakeholders, ranging from arts education leaders to professional artists
- Eight virtual and in-person town halls across the state including Carbondale, Colorado Springs, Durango, Fort Collins, Manitou Springs, Ridgway, and Sterling.



Five actors performing in Phamaly Theatre Company's *The Rocky Horror Musical*. An organization supported by CCI's Colorado Creates Grant.

## CORE TEAM:

The Core Team, comprised of representatives from the CCI Council, CCI staff, OEDIT staff, and external partners, was in charge of the following:

- Providing overarching advice and counsel to the Strategic Planning process
- Serving as subject matter experts and external network connectors
- Acting as liaisons with the full CCI Council

The Core Team met several times throughout the process.

## CORE TEAM MEMBERS:

**Christin Crampton Day**, Executive Director, Colorado Business Committee for the Arts

**Mizraim Cordero**, Managing Director, State & Local Government Affairs | Mountain Region  
VP of Somos - United's Latino & Hispanic Business Resource Group

**Khadija K. Haynes**, Co-Founder, Colorado Black Arts Movement

**Erin Ogletree**, City Council Member, Trinidad

**Alex Oves**, Education Director, Think 360 Arts for Learning

**Laura Rodriguez**, Chief Strategy Officer, OEDIT

**David Holland**, Deputy Director, Creative West

**Louise Martorano**, Executive Director, RedLine Contemporary Art Center

**Regan Byrd**, Founder and Principal Consultant, Regan Byrd Consulting

**Christy Costello**, Deputy Director, Colorado Creative Industries

**Josh Blanchard**, Director, Colorado Creative Industries





## PLAN CONTEXT

**RESPONSIVE. RELEVANT. BOLD.**  
**ASPIRATIONAL. ACTION-ORIENTED.**

Our strategic plan is laser-focused on key priorities that align with our core mission. By concentrating on specific, impactful goals, we will ensure meaningful progress to best invest our resources into programs and services with the highest and best impacts on the creative sector. This targeted approach will allow us to deliver high quality outcomes for Colorado.

Artwork credit: “Animals at Play,” Priscila De Carvalho.  
Photo by Third Dune Productions. A piece from the Colorado State Art Collection, supported by the CCI Art in Public Places Program.



# OUR COMMITMENTS

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## **OUR COMMITMENT IS TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT POSITIVELY IMPACT THE ENTIRE STATE.**

Our goal is to ensure that every community in Colorado receives the cultural, civic, economic, educational and health benefits of the arts. As one of only a few statewide funders of arts and culture in Colorado, we strive to be equitable in supporting as many organizations as possible. Additionally, we prioritize funding in every legislative district throughout the state—40% of our grants are distributed in rural areas. This often results in grants of smaller sizes to more communities, rather than larger grants to fewer organizations.

## **OUR COMMITMENT IS TO DESIGN PROGRAMS WITH-AND FOR-ALL COMMUNITIES TO MEET THEIR UNIQUE NEEDS.**

We acknowledge that roughly 73% of Colorado's 64 counties are considered rural, yet approximately 13% of the state's population lives in these areas. Urban communities not only account for a larger share of the population but are also viewed as the centers of commerce. As such, we recognize the rural-urban dichotomy—a principle that highlights the differing nature of rural and urban spaces—which can manifest in economic, cultural, social, historical, and political differences.

## **OUR COMMITMENT IS TO WORK TOWARD SYSTEMIC CHANGE, CONTRIBUTING TO AN ECOSYSTEM WHERE COLORADANS CAN THRIVE IN THE CREATIVE SECTOR.**

This includes access to basic needs such as affordable housing, workforce training, and healthcare. We balance initiatives that drive long-term innovation and systematic change with direct services that support individual and local communities. By acting as a conduit, we can help artists access important resources, while also strengthening arts and culture throughout Colorado.





## OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

We are committed to ensuring that our systems, policies, and everyday work are inspired and driven by the message #ColoradoForALL. Colorado for ALL means working toward a Colorado where there are no barriers to accessing resources or navigating state and community systems based on one's identity. It means we support the human rights of our neighbors regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender presentation, citizenship status, education level, disability, socio-economic status, or any other visible or invisible social identity.

We are especially mindful of historically excluded and marginalized communities who, in the past and the present, are structurally and systemically denied economic, social, political, and environmental resources afforded to other groups, mainly through institutional policies and practices. As a result, we take an anti-oppressive lens in our diversity, equity, and inclusion work to make sure we are addressing the needs of historically marginalized communities.

We work in partnership with the Statewide Equity Office and various Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) thought partners to ensure our agency operates accessibly, equitably, and with positive impact on the communities we serve. In addition, our staff participates in the statewide Equity Alliance, and OEDIT's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee to advance the office's Strategic Plan.

Specific ways that we carry out these practices include:

-  Completing mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion training while supporting team members in pursuing additional training opportunities.
-  Designating a staff member as a 504 coordinator and actively participating in a leadership role within the Art of Access Network, where we provide cultural accessibility resources to the field.
-  Increasing access to our programs by prioritizing digital accessibility, language access, and accommodations.
-  Adhering to equitable best practices in our panel review process by selecting panelists with diverse backgrounds and providing them with thorough training and guidance.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY AND BELONGING

We are committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in everything we do. We acknowledge and address systemic barriers and are dedicated to addressing them by ensuring accessibility and creating opportunities for marginalized communities. This includes, but not limited to, rural communities, people with disabilities, communities of color, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQIA+ communities, and communities that experience financial barriers to participating in the arts.

As a statewide funding agency, we believe diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-oppression, and accessibility are essential to the success and sustainability of Colorado's creative industry. We encourage our grantees and partners to foster equitable environments where everyone, regardless of their abilities or identities, can participate and thrive in the creative economy. We recognize that achieving true equity is a long-term commitment that requires time, education and resources.



CSU Pueblo Ballet Folklórico dancers during the 2024 Governor's Creative Leadership Awards Luncheon at the CCI Summit in Pueblo, CO. Photo by Gina M. Gallardo.





Students from the Free Theater Project in Ridgway, CO, showcasing puppets for their production of *She Kills Monsters*. An organization supported by CCI funding collaborative program Equity in Arts Learning. Photo courtesy of Weehawken Creative Arts.



# 5 PILLARS

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1

## **PUBLIC INVESTMENT + RESOURCES**

PROVIDING CRITICAL SUPPORT TO COLORADO'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

2

## **PROGRAMS + PARTNERSHIPS**

ENSURING THE VITALITY OF COLORADO'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

3

## **PUBLIC POLICY + EDUCATION**

MAKING COLORADO THE BEST PLACE FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

4

## **MARKETING + STORYTELLING**

AMPLIFYING VOICES OF THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

5

## **ENGAGEMENT + OUTREACH**

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

**Through extensive stakeholder engagement and data collection, we have identified strategic pillars that will guide our priorities over the next five years.** These pillars will inform how we allocate budgets, plan staffing and shape our operational work. While the actions listed below reflect ideas gathered during the engagement process, our staff will further define and detail these actions in annual work plans to ensure effective implementation.

# PILLAR 1: PUBLIC INVESTMENT + RESOURCES

## PROVIDING CRITICAL SUPPORT TO COLORADO'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

**The arts are an economic engine.** Providing resources, both financial and technical assistance, to arts, culture and creative industries businesses and individual artists is crucial for fostering a thriving arts ecosystem. These resources sustain and grow the creative sector, enabling artists and organizations to innovate, reach wider audiences, and contribute significantly to the state's cultural and economic vitality. This support ensures that the arts remain accessible and vibrant across all communities.

**Goal Statement:** Expand economic development opportunities within the creative industries sector.

### Key Criteria:



**Mission alignment**



**Statewide impact**



**Unique role for CCI**



**Engages/leverages local communities**



**Leverages resources/investments**

**Objective:** Maximize financial support and leverage programming and technical support.

### Actions:

- Provide direct access to funding for arts, culture and creative industries
- Explore sustainable, ongoing funding streams

### Community Feedback:

“CCI is creating arteries for support throughout all of CO, providing a lifeline for some areas.”

“Arts in CO are dramatically underfunded when you look at the needs of the state.”

“Is funding for the arts sector sustainable?”



## Actions cont'd:

- Fund general operations and support capital projects through the Colorado Creates and Community Revitalization Tax Credit programs
- Leverage state dollars through collaborative partnership grants including Arts in Society and Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth
- Launch an “innovation fund” to meet communities where they are through support of innovative activities, events and projects that do not fit into existing programs yet are aligned with our priorities
- Formalize an annual evaluation system for grant programs to streamline processes and increase accessibility to the public
- Facilitate increased and coordinated funding through public-private and philanthropic partnerships
- Build capacity and infrastructure within the creative industries sector through knowledge-sharing, tools, resources, and evidence-based practices
- Facilitate connections with funders and share information and resources about funding opportunities at the national and local level; Explore pathways to support venture fund opportunities for creative companies
- Explore the potential for funding individual artists through a statewide prize or fellowship for artists
- Work directly with local governments, artists, and arts organizations in communities to help develop creative placemaking and placekeeping strategies that respond to unique economic, physical, and social challenges by integrating arts, design and cultural resources

On set of *The Basket Lady* with the Ute community of Towaoc Reservation in Montezuma County, Colorado. Project supported by OEDIT divisions CCI and the Colorado Office of Film, Television, and Media. Photo courtesy of Boulder filmmaker Bruce Borowsky, a CCI Change Leader and Arts in Society grantee.



# PILLAR 2: PROGRAMS + PARTNERSHIPS

## ENSURING THE VITALITY OF COLORADO'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

**The arts are essential to local communities.** Conducting an in-depth review and analysis of current programs is crucial for us to ensure resources are effectively utilized. This process will help identify which programs are delivering the most value and impact, allowing the agency to make informed decisions about which initiatives to continue, modify, or phase out. Ultimately, this will enhance the overall effectiveness and sustainability of Colorado's arts and cultural offerings, as well as maximize limited resources.

**Goal Statement:** Determine CCI's future focus to ensure the effective utilization of resources and enhance the overall sustainability and impact of CCI's offerings.

### Key Criteria:



**Mission alignment**



**Statewide impact**



**Unique role for CCI**



**Avoids duplication**

**Objective:** Conduct thorough and deliberate analysis of all current programs to identify high-impact initiatives; augment, adapt or transition out, as needed.

### Community Feedback:

**“What is CCI's opportunity to have more impact with fewer programs?”**

**“CCI has done a great job of creating vibrancy, now it needs to be sustained.”**

**“CCI can be a connection point – a leveraging opportunity.”**

## Actions:

- Clarify our role vis a vis partners' roles; identify our focus(es) and communicate widely
- Review data from previous years to analyze reach, impact, benefit and budget/resource allocation of our programs
- Conduct customer satisfaction mapping exercises to identify which programs are being utilized
- Bring relevant best practices from other states to Colorado
- Develop the leadership pipeline in arts, culture and creative industries with a focus on enhancing opportunities for historically marginalized groups
- Evolve Creative District program and identify sustainable funding sources
- Strengthen orientation program and develop a mentoring program for new creative district directors
- Leverage Change Leaders program with more meetups and networking
- Audit and update the Annual CCI Summit to better align frequency, location, topics and stakeholders with industry demand
- Develop plans for programs that are being phased out including communications, transitional technical assistance, possible bridge funding, and identification of a partner to lead in future
- Enhance partnerships with arts education partners to increase arts education opportunities and support lifelong learning
- Develop alliances with more major statewide entities



Conference attendees network at the annual CCI Summit in Crested Butte, CO. Photo by Nolan Blunck Photography.



# PILLAR 3: PUBLIC POLICY + EDUCATION

## MAKING COLORADO THE BEST PLACE FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

**The arts have social impact.** Public policy efforts are vital to strengthening Colorado’s creative industries sector. By raising awareness of and advocating for supportive policies, the state can ensure that creative enterprises receive the recognition and resources they need to thrive while serving as conduits for addressing community priorities and social challenges. These efforts will help cultivate a robust arts community throughout the state, driving economic growth and enriching the cultural landscape for all residents.

**Goal Statement:** Support the Colorado Creative Industries Ecosystem.

### Key Criteria:



**Mission alignment**



**Statewide impact**



**Unique role for CCI**



**Avoids duplication**

**Objective:** Clarify our role in garnering support for the creative industries at a systemic level and determine best approaches to partnerships.

### Actions:

- Position CCI as the lead agency within state government for social and economic change through the arts

### Community Feedback:



*Elected officials need to understand creative districts and their value.”*

*“We need to get our message out to the community, elected officials and voters.”*

*“Help us get additional support at the state and local level.”*

### Actions cont'd:

- Conduct gap analysis based on identified role, and identify opportunities
- Produce research, statistics, and general information about the arts for the benefit of the arts sector and beyond
- Support local communities in seeking additional/municipal funding
- Develop alignment with regional and statewide arts organizations regarding strategic planning efforts
- Engage in and support the Colorado Statewide Arts Policy Framework
- Prioritize top social issues related to the creative industries sector success (ex. health care, housing, transportation, etc.)
- Partner with state agency peers to identify opportunities for involvement and integration
- Create a semi-annual statewide economic impact report aligned with other existing arts and culture data projects
- Strengthen the arts education ecosystem through access to arts education for arts learners of all ages and abilities, educator professional development and teaching artist capacity



# PILLAR 4: MARKETING + STORYTELLING

## AMPLIFYING VOICES OF THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

**The arts unify communities.** A statewide marketing plan is essential to highlight the significant economic and cultural contributions of Colorado’s creative industries. By promoting these creative industries, the state can attract more tourists, investors, artists, and aspiring talent, ultimately boosting local economies and fostering vibrant, innovative communities. This initiative will also help to raise awareness about the diverse artistic and cultural offerings available throughout Colorado and encourage more people to engage with and support the creative sector as partners, patrons, donors and supporters.

**Goal Statement:** Increase public support and recognition for the value and impact of Colorado’s Creative Industry Sector.

### Key Criteria:



**Mission alignment**



**Statewide impact**



**Unique role for CCI**



**Engages/leverages local communities**



**Leverages resources/investments**



**Positions CO as a national leader**

**Objective:** Develop and launch a statewide, multi-year storytelling campaign that elevates arts and culture.

### Community Feedback:

“

**\$18.1 billion industry.  
4% of the economy. Own  
this. Share this.”**

**“A state level cultural  
tourism marketing  
campaign focused on  
the creative sector  
would show the value in  
our state.”**

**“We need to define  
the creative industry  
ecosystem and its value.”**



## Actions:

- Research successful models in other states
- Hire a Marketing and Outreach Manager to increase our reach across the state, enabling more communities to utilize arts resources to build their economy and communities
- Create umbrella brand and tagline
- Utilize digital and social media to better amplify our grants and programs
- Create other visual and digital assets/collateral
- Expand partnerships with relevant Colorado State agencies
- Develop toolkits/resources that can be utilized by Creative Districts and other partners to activate at local level
- Organize a roadshow and leverage our programs
- Utilize film and media to establish consistent avenues for highlighting creative industries
- Serve as a statewide creative hub and resource navigator
- Support the America 250 - Colorado 150 Commission with programming centered on elevating the diverse arts and culture



### **America 250 - Colorado 150 Commemoration:**

In 2026, Colorado will observe two significant anniversaries: the signing of the Declaration of Independence and Colorado's entrance into the Union. Led by History Colorado, the America 250 - Colorado 150 Commission is committed to recognizing that our shared history includes the experiences of all who have called Colorado home. CCI looks forward to contributing to this statewide effort with programming centered on elevating Colorado's diverse arts and culture.

# PILLAR 5: ENGAGEMENT + OUTREACH

## CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITIES

**The arts improve quality of life.** From rural towns to the urban corridor, arts and creativity enrich Colorado's communities. They celebrate local culture and foster connection, cohesion, and the entrepreneurial spirit vital for thriving places. To maximize its impact on the creative industries, CCI must communicate effectively about its programs and offerings. By clearly outlining the benefits and opportunities available, we can ensure that artists, businesses, and organizations are well-informed and can fully utilize the support offered. Enhanced communication will lead to increased participation, collaboration, and growth within the creative sector.

**Goal Statement:** Expand our services to new audiences and communities to enhance the state's creative economy.

### Key Criteria:



**Mission alignment**



**Statewide impact**



**Unique role for CCI**



**Avoids duplication**

**Objective:** Communicate benefits available through CCI as Colorado's designated statewide Arts agency.

### Actions:

- Create and disseminate CCI Annual report

### Community Feedback:



*Help us elevate our stories and strengthen our efforts without recreating the wheel."*

*"Supporting individual creatives requires strengthening the entire ecosystem."*

*"People really know how to work with each other, be in community, and have a willingness to collaborate even if resources are limited – that should be leveraged."*

## Actions cont'd:

- Invest in language access as well as accessibility in physical and digital spaces to remove barriers
- Support the field with cultural accessibility training and resources
- Strengthen role of CCI as a convener through peer learning opportunities and regional and industry specific networking events
- Develop handbooks on common challenges, “how-to” guides
- Develop an outreach plan (webinars, road shows) to articulate our programs and initiatives and impact
- Prioritize data-driven methods to broaden and deepen engagement with underserved communities
- Assign staff to specific regions, to increase our reach across the state, enabling more communities to utilize arts resources to build their economy and communities
- Serve as a connector and resource hub
- Strengthen efforts to share information about how to access basic business services, back of house support, legal, health insurance, and other essential resources
- Equip CCI Council members with key messaging to elevate them as representatives
- Improve training and resources for the CCI council, Change Leader and Creative District networks and other local partners



CSU Pueblo Ballet Folklórico dancers during the 2024 Governor's Creative Leadership Awards Luncheon at the CCI Summit in Pueblo, CO. Photo by Gina M. Gallardo.





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