

COVID-19 & THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES in CALIFORNIA

Creativity, arts, and culture are big business in California, but the unique nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing economic crisis has made the nonprofit creative sector **the hardest hit sector in the country**.¹ Research shows that investment in the arts directly improves the health of the broader economy.¹ Without investment and incentives from federal and state governments, the creative engine driving our local and national economies will continue to struggle.²

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY IS BIG BUSINESS IN CALIFORNIA

THE U.S.'S CREATIVE ECONOMY	
\$878 billion	generated annually in the United States by the creative economy ⁱⁱ
4.5%	of GDP generated annually in the United States by the creative economy ⁱⁱ
673,656	creative businesses in the United States ^{iv}
5.1 million	creative workers in the United States ⁱⁱ

CALIFORNIA'S CREATIVE ECONOMY	
\$230.3 billion	generated annually in California by the creative economy ⁱⁱⁱ
8.2%	of GSP generated annually in California by the creative economy ⁱⁱⁱ
103,191	creative businesses in California ^{iv}
764,100	creative workers in California ⁱⁱⁱ

COVID-19 HAS DEVASTATED CALIFORNIA'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

RIGHT NOW, IN THE UNITED STATES...	
\$150 billion	lost revenue for creative economy businesses through July 2020 (est.) ^v
67%	creative businesses severely impacted by COVID-19 ^{vi}
2.7 million (52% unemployed)	creative workers made unemployed by COVID-19 ^v
62%	of creative workers have experienced a drastic decrease in work ^{vii}
\$77.2 billion	total loss of revenue for creative workers in 2020 (est.) ^v
\$15,140 (a 43% loss/person)	average loss of creative revenue per creative worker in 2020 ^{v, vii}
55%	creative workers now have no savings ^{vii}

RIGHT NOW, IN CALIFORNIA...	
\$43.1 billion	lost revenue for creative economy businesses in 2020 in California (est.) ^v
69%	California creative businesses severely impacted by COVID-19 ^{vi}
453,332 (59% unemployed)	creative workers made unemployed by COVID-19 in California ^v
65%	of creative workers have experienced a drastic decrease in work ^{vii}
\$14.2 billion	total loss of revenue for creative workers in California in 2020 (est.) ^v
\$18,584 (a 37% loss/person)	average loss of creative revenue per creative worker in California in 2020 ^v
60%	creatives in California now have no savings ^{vii}



¹ According to [analysis](#) from Johns Hopkins University, the Arts, Culture, and Recreation sector experienced job losses at three times the rate of the next-most-impacted sector from January to August 2020.

² **What is the creative economy?** An \$878 billion economic ecosystem of for-profit and nonprofit creative industries, artists, educators, entrepreneurs, vendors, policymakers and funders that produce and distribute creativity- and arts-based goods and services. They use their creativity to create jobs, revenue, community resources, and cultural engagement.

This document was prepared by Americans for the Arts and California Arts Advocates.

THE CREATIVE SECTOR MAKES COMMUNITIES HEALTHIER AND STRONGER

72% of Americans believe the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, or ethnicity.^{viii}

73% of Americans agree that art helps them understand other cultures better.^{viii}

\$31.47

average amount each arts attendee spends *beyond the ticket cost* on meals, retail, parking, lodging, local transportation, childcare, and souvenirs. These dollars provide vital income to local merchants, energize the downtown, and pay salaries and wages in non-arts sectors.

CREATIVE WORKERS AND BUSINESSES STAND READY TO AID RECOVERY

76%

of artists have used their art to raise morale and create community cohesion during the pandemic.^{vii}

83%

of creative workers are ready today to put their creative practice to use as part of the national recovery.^{vii}

89%

of arts nonprofits boosted morale through their art during the pandemic.^{vi}

THE CREATIVE ENGINE CAN POWER CALIFORNIA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Any investment in infrastructure, community, and workforce recovery must include the creative economy.

Additional Relief for Creative Workers and Companies

To address the devastating long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the creative sector, and to preserve cultural infrastructure and capitalize on the economic and social rebuilding benefits of the arts, creative workers and creative businesses seek additional investment in relief efforts including \$50 million in CA Relief Grants for nonprofit cultural organizations.

Restart Funds & Hiring/Retention Incentives

Both directly and by redistribution to local and state government, the creative sector seeks financial runways to allow cash-strapped creative businesses to restart and produce new sellable creative products and incentives for businesses and schools to accelerate rehiring and encourage retention of creative workers.

State Investment in Residencies, Commissions

Echoing previous federal works programs, the creative sector seeks artist and creative worker residencies within state agencies, direct commissioning of individual artists and cultural organizations, and the integration of creative workers into health, safety, education, and community development programs as outlined in the CA Creative Corps Pilot Program.

Improved Conditions for Independent Contractors

91% of all arts, culture, and recreation businesses are solo entrepreneurs, and millions of creative workers are independent workers.^{ix} This locks them out of unemployment benefits, affordable health insurance, and access to capital—which must change to ensure a sustainable living.

Changes to Inequitable Federal Policies

At no additional cost to the government, the creative sector seeks adjustments to various existing federal policies that disallow or discriminate against creative workers and other independent workers. These are outlined in the CREATE and PLACE Acts.

Stronger Representation within Government

To coordinate the policy relevant to the creative economy, with a particular focus on recovery and relief, the creative sector recommends the installation of an Arts, Culture, and Creative Economy senior advisor to maximize the impact and recognition of creative enterprise.



These recommendations include a [combined policy proposal](#) that merges the [Put Creative Workers to Work](#) platform, which has been endorsed by over 2,300 creative businesses and workers in all 50 states, and the [Defend Arts Workers Now \(DAWN\) Act](#).^{xi}

ⁱ Source: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#), 2020

ⁱⁱ Source: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#), 2017

ⁱⁱⁱ Source: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis - State Profiles](#), 2017

^{iv} Source: Americans for the Arts, [Creative Industries](#), 2017

^v Source: Brookings Institution, [Lost Art](#), 2020

^{vi} Source: Americans for the Arts, [COVID-19 Impact on the Nonprofit Arts Sector](#), 2020, as of December 20, 2020

^{vii} Source: Americans for the Arts, [COVID-19 Impact on Creative Workers](#), 2020, as of December 20, 2020

^{viii} Source: Americans for the Arts, [America Speaks Out About the Arts](#), 2018^{ix} Source: CERF+, [Pandemic Assistance Falls Short for Self-Employed Workers](#), 2020 Source: Americans for the Arts, [Arts & Economic Prosperity 5](#), 2017