

Wisconsin's Creative Economy Coalition: Economic development organizations back Wisconsin's Creative Economy Coalition in effort to boost creative sector

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[Madison, Wis.] – Just days after the launch of Wisconsin's Creative Economy Coalition – a statewide effort comprised of over 130 arts, cultural, and creative organizations – several business and economic development-focused organizations are adding their support to the effort. The coalition represents the start of a necessary conversation on funding for the creative sector to boost the state's overall economic success and is advocating the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance for one-time, generational funding for the state's art and creative industries.

Economic development and business leaders know firsthand the issues their communities face – including the struggle to retain and attract talent – and the opportunity provided by cultural amenities that create a destination and drive economic value. The creative sector contributes \$10.8 billion annually to Wisconsin's economy and supports nearly 90,000 jobs.

Organizations joining Wisconsin's Creative Economy Coalition today include:

Appleton Downtown

Authentic Superior

Barron County Economic Development Corporation

Grow North

Kenosha Community Foundation

Let's Minocqua Visitors Bureau + Chamber of Commerce

Madison Community Foundation

Madison Regional Economic Partnership (MadREP)

Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC)

Milwaukee Downtown

Prosperity Southwest

SW Regional Planning Commission

The NEW North

Viroqua Chamber Main Street

Visions Northwest

Visit Eau Claire

Chris Clemens, director of Viroqua Chamber Main Street, stated, "Wisconsin must continue to cultivate a competitive, creative workforce that fuels and grows the 21st century economy and all of our communities."

Wisconsin's economy is in its strongest fiscal position in at least 40 years, with a projected \$7.1 billion surplus. Unfortunately, the state currently ranks last nationally in per capita funding for the arts and culture, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. The coalition seeks \$100 million of one-time funding for the Wisconsin Artistic Endowment Foundation to further boost economic development and growth across the state.

Minnesota currently ranks third in the nation for arts and culture funding, spending \$7.34 compared to Wisconsin's 14 cents.

Iowa, like Wisconsin, sits near the bottom in the nation for arts and culture funding, though they have begun efforts to reverse course. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds' (R) announcement of a \$100 million investment is an attempt to bolster economic development, strengthen the quality of life in their communities, and attract new visitors and residents to the state.

“Without proper investment in the arts, culture, and creativity, Wisconsin risks losing out on both opportunities for economic growth and in attracting creative individuals and workers. Wisconsin has seen a fraction of the economic growth the rest of the nation has - a clear indication that urgent action is needed,” said **Anne Katz, executive director of Create Wisconsin.**

Wisconsin's Creative Economy Coalition is comprised of leading businesses and individuals in the state's creative sector focused on advocating for an important investment that will serve as a catalyst for increased economic activity across the state. Visit WisconsinCreates.com to learn more.