

Wisconsin's Creative Economy Coalition: Launches to secure one-time funding for Wisconsin's Creative Sector

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[Madison, Wis.] – Arts organizations and creative businesses from across Wisconsin have joined forces to form **Wisconsin's Creative Economy Coalition**, an organization aimed at outlining the power of the creative sector as a vehicle to fuel Wisconsin's growth. Comprised of leading arts, cultural, and creative organizations and leaders statewide, the coalition will advocate the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance for one-time, generational funding for the state's arts and creative industries.

Coalition leaders are calling on lawmakers to finish the work a bipartisan legislature and Republican governor started over 20 years ago and fund the Wisconsin Artistic Endowment Foundation with \$100 million of one-time funding in the biennial state budget, to further boost economic development and growth across the state.

[Visit WisconsinCreates.com to learn more and view the growing list of statewide support.](https://www.wisconsincreates.com)

In 2001, Wisconsin was ahead of the curve in identifying the economic and growth potential the state's creative sector has on the overall vitality of the state. A bipartisan legislative council study committee recommended legislation that was included in the state budget and signed into law by Gov. Scott McCallum that created the Wisconsin Artistic Endowment Foundation. However, a funding mechanism was never identified for the foundation. Since that time, Wisconsin has fallen – ranking 50th nationally in per capita arts funding and lagging significantly

behind our Midwest neighbors.

Iowa, like Wisconsin, sits near the bottom, ranking 47th in the nation. To change their status and set a new trajectory, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds (R) announced a \$100m investment to bolster economic development, strengthen the quality of life in their communities, and attract new visitors and residents to the state through a historic investment called “Destination Iowa.” In promoting this investment, Gov. Reynolds noted that the investment in this sector builds on the momentum of all the other investments the state is making to grow the economy and their workforce.

Anne Katz, executive director of Create Wisconsin, highlighted the need for greater creative sector investment to spur new economic activity, stating “The creative sector is a jobs generator, contributing \$10.8 billion to Wisconsin’s economy annually and supporting nearly 90,000 workers, yet the state ranks last nationally in per capita funding for the arts and culture, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.”

Patrick Rath, president of the United Performing Arts Fund, said, “Wisconsin has developed some of the nation’s leading cultural institutions that are truly transforming the communities where they exist – places like Racine, Eau Claire, Appleton, Madison and Milwaukee. The future for these organizations continues to be fragile as private funding alone cannot keep up with rising costs. If we want these and all of Wisconsin’s creative hubs to be vibrant and here for future generations, investment needs to be made now before arts sector talent leaves our state.”

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

Wisconsin’s Creative Sector at a Glance:

- [Wisconsin spends](#) just \$0.14 per-capita to fund state arts organizations, ranking last in the nation, while Minnesota spends \$7.34, and Illinois spends \$5.04.
- [Since 2002](#), Wisconsin’s share of GDP coming from arts and culture fell 1.1%, while the national average fell just 0.2%.
- Wisconsin’s creative sector growth has [not kept pace](#) with the rest of the nation. Since 2020, economic impact has grown 8.44% in Wisconsin, compared

to 14.43% nationally.

- The state's arts and creative sector supports nearly 90,000 jobs [provides \\$10.8 billion](#) in economic value.
- Wisconsin is in its strongest fiscal position in at least forty years thanks to a projected [\\$7.1 billion](#) surplus.
- The creative industry includes, but is not limited to, film and video, music, performing arts, visual arts, museums, heritage sites, venues, festivals, and other cultural events that contribute to the state's cultural vibrancy and identity.

Adam Braatz, executive director of Imagine MKE, stated, "The transformative and connective power of creative industries acts as a catalyst for vibrant, engaged communities. Further, the creative economy is a strategic driver of economic growth and fosters the development of marketable skills that will future-proof Wisconsin's workforce."

"Investment in Wisconsin's creative economy can help remedy the brain drain that is hurting too many communities throughout the state, providing economic growth and enhancing quality of life for residents," said **Kim Brooks, small business owner and director of WorldFest Marinette/Menominee**, a creative community development initiative serving Marinette County.

Strong Statewide Support

Wisconsin's Creative Economy Coalition is comprised of leading businesses, individuals, and leaders statewide – including theatres, museums, venues, and visual and performing arts entities – that help bring life to our state and fuel positive activity that lifts local economies. The Coalition and its supporters, who have pledged their commitment to this need and/or received prior support from the Wisconsin Arts Board, are focused on advocating for an important \$100m investment that will serve as a catalyst for increased economic activity across the state.

Acadia Theatre	<i>Hales Corners</i>	Milwaukee Artist Resource Network	<i>Milwaukee</i>
American Players Theatre	<i>Spring Green</i>	Milwaukee Chamber Theatre	<i>Milwaukee</i>
Arts + Literature Laboratory	<i>Madison</i>	Milwaukee Repertory Theater	<i>Milwaukee</i>

Arts Alliance of Greater Lake Mills	<i>Lake Mills</i>	Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra	<i>Milwaukee</i>
Arts Council of South Wood County	<i>Wisconsin Rapids</i>	Milwaukee Youth Arts Center	<i>Milwaukee</i>
ArtStart, Inc.	<i>Rhineland</i>	Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra	<i>Milwaukee</i>
ArtWorks for Milwaukee	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Next Act Theatre	<i>Milwaukee</i>
Bel Canto Chorus	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Northern Arts Council	<i>Rhineland</i>
Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass	<i>Neenah</i>	Northern Sky Theater	<i>Fish Creek</i>
Black Arts MKE	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Nova Linea Dance Company	<i>Waukesha</i>
Bookworm Gardens	<i>Sheboygan</i>	NWTC Artisan Center	<i>Green Bay</i>
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Green Bay	<i>Green Bay</i>	Organic Arts	<i>Milwaukee</i>
Cable Hayward Area Arts Council	<i>Hayward</i>	Overture Center for the Arts	<i>Madison</i>
Cambridge Arts Council	<i>Cambridge</i>	Pablo Center at the Confluence	<i>Eau Claire</i>
Capitol Civic Centre	<i>Manitowoc</i>	Peninsula Players Theatre	<i>Fish Creek</i>
Center for the Visual Arts	<i>Wausau</i>	Pewaukee Arts Council	<i>Pewaukee</i>
Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra	<i>Stevens Point</i>	Point Dance Ensemble	<i>Stevens Point</i>
Chequamegon Bay Arts Council	<i>Washburn</i>	Portage Center for the Arts	<i>Portage</i>
Christopher Max Design and Development	<i>Green Bay</i>	Present Music	<i>Milwaukee</i>
City of Green Bay Public Art Committee	<i>Green Bay</i>	Public Arts Initiative of Egg Harbor	<i>Egg Harbor</i>
Civic Music Association of Milwaukee	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Pump House Regional Arts Center	<i>La Crosse</i>
Concord Chamber Orchestra	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Racine Art Museum	<i>Racine</i>
CREATE Portage County	<i>Stevens Point</i>	Racine Arts Council	<i>Racine</i>

Create Waunakee	<i>Waunakee</i>	Racine Symphony Orchestra	<i>Racine</i>
Create Wisconsin	<i>Madison</i>	Racine Theatre Guild	<i>Racine</i>
Creative Downtown Appleton	<i>Appleton</i>	Renaissance Theatreworks	<i>Milwaukee</i>
Danceworks MKE	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Richland Area Arts Council	<i>Richland Center</i>
Dane Arts	<i>Madison</i>	River Falls Community Arts Base	<i>River Falls</i>
Dodge County Center for the Arts	<i>Beaver Dam</i>	River Valley Arts	<i>Spring Green</i>
Door Community Auditorium	<i>Fish Creek</i>	Rountree Gallery	<i>Platteville</i>
Driver Opera House Center for the Arts	<i>Darlington</i>	Shake Rag Alley Center for the Arts	<i>Mineral Point</i>
Fine Arts Foundation of the Westby Area	<i>Westby</i>	Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts	<i>Brookfield</i>
First Act Children's Theatre	<i>Madison</i>	Shell Lake Arts Center	<i>Shell Lake</i>
First Stage	<i>Milwaukee</i>	South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center	<i>South Milwaukee</i>
Florentine Opera	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Stefanie H. Weill Center for the Performing Arts	<i>Sheboygan</i>
Fort Atkinson Arts Council	<i>Fort Atkinson</i>	Sterling Silver Studio	<i>Superior</i>
Fort Atkinson Chamber of Commerce	<i>Fort Atkinson</i>	Stevens Point Convention and Visitors Bureau	<i>Stevens Point</i>
Forte Theatre Company	<i>Franklin</i>	Stone House Development	<i>Madison</i>
Forward Theater	<i>Madison</i>	Sun Prairie Civic Theatre	<i>Sun Prairie</i>
Fox Cities Performing Arts Center	<i>Appleton</i>	Superior Council for the Arts	<i>Superior</i>
Frederic Arts	<i>Frederic</i>	Superior Craft School	<i>Superior</i>
Geneva Lake Arts Foundation	<i>Lake Geneva</i>	Ten Chimneys	<i>Waukesha</i>
Grand Opera House	<i>Oshkosh</i>	The Hardy Gallery	<i>Ephraim</i>

Heid Music	<i>Appleton</i>	The Heist	<i>Ripon</i>
Imagine MKE	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Thrasher Opera House	<i>Green Lake</i>
Innovation Center Stoughton	<i>Stoughton</i>	TNW Ensemble Theater	<i>Madison</i>
Janesville Performing Arts Center	<i>Janesville</i>	Trout Museum of Art	<i>Appleton</i>
John Michael Kohler Arts Center	<i>Sheboygan</i>	United Performing Arts Fund	<i>Milwaukee</i>
Katherine Kramer Projects	<i>Verona</i>	UW Extension, Arts & Culture Committee, Sauk County	<i>Baraboo</i>
Kids from Wisconsin	<i>Milwaukee</i>	UW-Madison Division of the Arts	<i>Madison</i>
Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua	<i>Bayfield</i>	Verona Area Performing Arts Series	<i>Verona</i>
Land O' Lakes Arts	<i>Land o'Lakes</i>	Viroqua Chamber Main Street	<i>Viroqua</i>
LaPointe Center for the Arts	<i>LaPointe</i>	Visit Eau Claire	<i>Eau Claire</i>
League of Wisconsin Municipalities	<i>Madison</i>	Viterbo University Fine Arts	<i>La Crosse</i>
Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum	<i>Wausau</i>	Walworth County Arts Council	<i>Delavan</i>
Lemon Street Gallery	<i>Kenosha</i>	Wausau Area Performing Arts Foundation	<i>Wausau</i>
LuCille Tack Center for the Arts	<i>Spencer</i>	We Think Big LLC	<i>Madison</i>
Madison Arts Commission	<i>Madison</i>	Weidner Center for the Performing Arts	<i>Green Bay</i>
Madison Community Foundation	<i>Madison</i>	Whitewater Arts Alliance	<i>Whitewater</i>
Madison Gas and Electric	<i>Madison</i>	Wisconsin Conservatory of Music	<i>Milwaukee</i>
Madison Opera	<i>Madison</i>	Wisconsin Counties Association	

Madison Symphony Orchestra	<i>Madison</i>	Wisconsin Craft	
Madison Youth Choirs	<i>Madison</i>	Wisconsin Presenters Network	
Make Music Madison	<i>Madison</i>	Wisconsin School Music Association	<i>Waunakee</i>
Marcus Performing Arts Center	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Wisconsin Writers Association	
Midsummers Music	<i>Sister Bay</i>	Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras	<i>Madison</i>
Mile of Music	<i>Appleton</i>	Wormfarm Institute	<i>Reedsburg</i>
Milwaukee Art Museum	<i>Milwaukee</i>		

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