

California's Future Is Creative

Strategies for Cultural Resilience, Economic Growth, and Global Leadership



About This Document

This document was prepared by Institute for the Future (IFTF) for the members of the Creative Economy Workgroup of California (CEW) and the California Arts Council (CAC). It represents the culmination of the CEW's work on California's creative economy and describes recommendations developed by the group over the course of its assembly. It will be used to inform policy in the state to bolster California's creative economy. This report responds to the tasks set forth in AB127, the legislation authorizing the formation of the CEW.



About Creative Economy Workgroup

Established in the 2022 California budget, the 2024 Creative Economy Workgroup (CEW) is tasked with developing a strategic plan to conduct a comparative analysis with other jurisdictions, evaluate existing financing models and government initiatives, identify opportunities for educational programs and earn-and-learn job training employment, identify geographic areas with the least amount of access or opportunity for a creative economy, and analyze existing initiatives and projects, including the role local governments can play in creating a stronger creative economy. The strategic plan is due to the Legislature by June 30, 2025.



About California Arts Council

Established by the State of California in 1976, the California Arts Council (CAC) is a state agency with a mission of strengthening arts, culture, and creative expression as the tools to cultivate a better California for all.

The [California Arts Council](#) is California's only public arts grants provider with funding that is accessible to all 58 counties. As a state agency, California Arts Council supports local arts infrastructure and programming statewide through grants, programs, and services. The arts sector is large and diverse and its businesses and workforce are a significant contributor to our state economy and identity. California is home to 11,563 nonprofit arts organizations and our state's creative sector accounts for \$18.67 billion in assets and 15.4% of California's total employment.



About the California Jobs First State Economic Blueprint and the Creative Economy

In February 2025, Governor Newsom released the California Jobs First State Economic Blueprint which was developed over the past few years and is the first statewide economic development plan since the early 2000's. This blueprint, built on the foundation of 13 regional plans funded by the State, highlights 10 strategic industry sectors across California, including the Creative Economy. In the blueprint, the Creative Economy includes film and television as well as visual and performing arts. The blueprint outlines a series of broad activities that the State and regions should undertake over the next 10 years, including data collection, incentive and investment alignment, regulatory reforms, and business development - some of which are also reflected in this report.



About Institute for the Future

Institute for the Future (IFTF) is the world's leading futures organization. For over 55 years, businesses, governments, and social impact organizations have depended upon IFTF global forecasts, custom research, foresight education, and training to navigate complex change and develop future-ready strategies. IFTF methodologies and toolsets yield views of transformative possibilities across all sectors that together support a more equitable and sustainable future. Institute for the Future is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Palo Alto, California. For more information, visit www.iftf.org.

Contents

1. Letter From the Chair	4	6. Goals and Strategic Themes	29
2. Acknowledgments	6	GOAL 1: Prepare and support the workforce for creative economy sectors	30
3. Executive Summary	9	GOAL 2: Stabilize and grow creative economy businesses	32
4. Introduction	11	GOAL 3: Increase revenue to state and local areas through retention and promotion of cultural identity and tourism	34
The Scale and Value of California's Creative Economy	12	GOAL 4: Leverage all state opportunities as incentives for local cultural and creative development	36
North Star: A Vision for California's Creative Economy	13	GOAL 5: Define and track return on investment for the creative economy and creative workforce	38
The Creative Economy Workgroup and Strategic Planning Process	13	GOAL 6: Develop state and regional capacity and infrastructure to support the creative economy and creative economy strategic plan	40
A Phased Approach to the Development and Implementation of This Plan	17		
5. Future Forces Influencing the Creative Economy	18	7. Looking Ahead	42
FUTURE FORCE 1: Mental Health, Belonging, and Well-being: Our Social Fabric Is Fraying	19	8. References	43
FUTURE FORCE 2: Access to Capital and Risk-Taking: Concentration of Capital Is Decreasing Opportunities	21	9. Appendix	47
FUTURE FORCE 3: Affordability and Livability: Decoupling of Work and Living Locations Is Depleting California's Creative Infrastructure	23	CEW Meeting Agendas, Packets, and Summaries	47
FUTURE FORCE 4: Technology and Tradition: Technological Transformation Is Redefining Creative Work and Demand for Creative Products	25	California's Creative Economy: Research Review and Current State Analysis	47
FUTURE FORCE 5: Climate-Impacted World: Environmental Changes Are Disrupting Life and Work	27	Partial List of State Initiatives for Creative Workforce and Economic Development	48

Letter From the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

California's Future Is Creative presents California's first sector-specific strategy for sustaining and expanding the state's creative economy — a vital, urgent blueprint to protect California's global leadership in arts, culture, media, and innovation.

Developed through an 18-month process led by Institute for the Future and supported by the Creative Economy Workgroup — a formal advisory body of more than 30 leaders representing industries, communities, and regions across the state — this plan identifies six actionable and cost-effective policy recommendations to stabilize, grow, and future-proof California's creative sector.

The creative economy is a dynamic, interconnected ecosystem of people, businesses, and places. It spans independent artists, nonprofit organizations, commercial studios, cultural venues, and digital platforms. It fuels innovation, reflects California's diversity, and shapes the stories we tell and export to the world. It is a cornerstone of our state's economy, identity, and global influence.

But that influence is under increasing threat. Rising costs of living, climate disruption, automation, and a fraying social contract have destabilized creative careers and enterprises. Entire subsectors — such as live performance, independent film, and traditional arts — are struggling to recover from the effects of the pandemic and ongoing precarity.

Compounding these challenges is growing global competition for creative talent and content production. Nations such as Canada, South Korea, and the United Kingdom are making strategic, long-term investments in their creative sectors — offering tax incentives, workforce development programs, and export strategies that attract international production. Without comparable action, California risks losing the very industries it helped build.

This plan offers a timely, forward-looking response. Its six goals are designed for immediate alignment with state priorities, including:

- **Proposition 28**, which will invest nearly \$1 billion annually in arts education across California public schools
- **The Jobs First** initiative, which centers equitable regional job creation and career pathway development in emerging and creative sectors
- The **Cradle-to-Career data system** and the **California Master Plan for Career Education**, which provide scalable frameworks to connect creative learning, workforce pipelines, and lifelong opportunity

- **The California Creative Workforce Act of 2021** (California Senate Bill 628), which helped establish the California Creative Corps pilot initiative and defines creative workforce as essential to recovery and civic efforts, and a priority for the state
- **Assembly Bill 189 of 2015**, which defines cultural districts that drive economic activity, preservation of arts infrastructure, and important support for community cultural identity, and establishes a rigorous application and designation process

These investments and alignments, coupled with six high-level goals, will ensure that California remains a global capital of creativity while delivering high returns for communities across the state.

The plan presented here reflects the collaboration, expertise, and commitment of state agencies, nonprofit partners, industry leaders, and community stakeholders. Together, we can ensure that creativity is strategically leveraged to power California's next generation of innovation, growth, and civic leadership.



Danielle Brazell
Executive Director, California Arts Council Chair,
Creative Economy Workgroup

Acknowledgments

This work was driven by the passion and dedication of the members of the Creative Economy Workgroup, who represent multiple sectors, state agency and community partners, creative workers, and thought-leaders; California Arts Council staff; and its nonprofit consultant partner, Institute for the Future.

Creative Economy Workgroup Members

Established in the 2022 California budget, the 2024 Creative Economy Workgroup was tasked with working with a consultant (IFTF) to develop a strategic plan for California's creative future, based on research and analysis of existing models while anticipating future opportunities.

Dru Alejandro | tribal chairman, Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians

Ben Allen | state senator for California's 24th District, and co-chair of the Legislative Joint Committee on the Arts

Lauren Liene Appelbaum | senior vice president, entertainment and news media, RespectAbility, and founder, Entertainment Lab and Children's Content Lab

Julie Baker | chief executive officer, Californians for the Arts

Lindsie Bear | director of tribal giving at Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

Tasha Boerner | assemblymember, California's 77th District

Danielle Brazell | chair, executive director, California Arts Council

Matthew Buchholtz | global community lead, Riot Games

Roxanne Messina Captor | chair, California Arts Council, and owner, Messina Captor Films Inc.

Deborah Cullinan | vice president for the arts, Stanford University

Kale Cumings | president, American Federation of Musicians Local 6 (San Francisco)

Matthew Joseph D'Arrigo | director of creative youth development, The Clare Rose Center for Creative Youth Development

Tom DeCaigny | program officer, performing arts program, The Hewlett Foundation

Snehal Desai | artistic director, Center Theater Group

DeJon Ellis Jr. | business manager, IATSE Local 80 and IATSE International DEIA/education committee member

Sophie Fanelli | president and CEO, Stuart Foundation

Adam James Fowler | founding partner, CVL Economics

Jonathon Glus | director of cultural affairs, City of San Diego

David Michael Gonzales | director of labor relations and government affairs, Association of Independent Commercial Producers

Leah Goodwin | vice chair, California Arts Council, and owner, Leah Goodwin Creations

Tara Lynn Gray | director, California Office of the Small Business Advocate

Alejandro Gutierrez Chavez | executive director, Arts Connection

Ri-Karlo Handy | chief executive officer, Sunwise Media Inc., and founder, Handy Foundation

Gustavo Adolfo Herrera | chief executive officer, Arts for LA

Jason Jong | cultural and creative economy manager, City of Sacramento

Roy Hirabayashi | California Arts Council member, and co-founder, San Jose Taiko

Dorka Keehn | principal, Keehn on Art

Stewart Knox | secretary, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Jennifer Laine | executive director, San Benito County Arts Council

Lex Leifheit | interim Cultural Affairs Manager, City of Oakland, Arts and Culture Division

Kamaal Sharif Muhammad Martin | founder, Art Power Equity

Dee Dee Myers | director, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, and senior advisor to Gov. Gavin Newsom

Susan Rubio | senator, California's 22nd District

Ted Russell | principal, Ted Russell Consulting, LLC

Jas Sajjan | senior manager of government relations and public policy, Live Nation Entertainment

Kristin Sakoda | director, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture

Abby Snay | deputy secretary, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Christopher M. Ward | assemblymember, California's 78th District, and co-chair of the Legislative Joint Committee on the Arts

Sarah Weber | executive director, Association of California Symphony Orchestras

Interagency Working Group

Allison Frenzel | program specialist, California Department of Education

Sarah Gonzales | special assistant to the director, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development

Tara Lynn Gray | director of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate

Lauren Greenwood | deputy director, legislative and external affairs, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development

Somjita Mitra | chief economist, California Department of Finance

Karla Sayles | former deputy director, California Film Commission

Abby Snay | deputy secretary, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency

California Arts Council Staff

Danielle Brazell | executive director

Michelle Radmand | chief deputy director

Sylmia Britt | deputy director

Kristin Margolis | director of programs services

Carissa Gutierrez, | director of public affairs

Megan Morgan | race and equity manager

Rebecca Ratzkin | equity measures and evaluation manager

Julie Estrella | council liaison

Contributing Partners

Jennifer Laine | executive director, San Benito County Arts Council

Sophia K. Miller | executive director, City of Santa Monica Cultural Center

Tamaira "Miss Tee" Sandifer | founder and CEO, Studio T Arts & Entertainment

Christy Sandoval | director, El Teatro Campesino

Luis Valdez | founder, El Teatro Campesino

Expert Workshop Participants and Panelists

Kiley Arroyo | executive director, Cultural Strategies Council

Tom Ascheim | co-founder and principal, Pith & Pixie Dust

Madeline Ashby | consulting futurist and novelist

Jesse Bliss | executive director, Roots and Wings Project

Laura Callanan | founding partner, Upstart Co-Lab

Rebecca Campbell | board member, Meow Wolf

Johan Chu | assistant professor, MIT Sloan School of Management

Sabrina Klein Clement | consultant, Creative Education Consulting

Roshaun Davis | co-founder, Unseen Heroes

Andrew deWaard | assistant professor of media and popular culture, University of California, San Diego

Jan English-Lueck | professor of anthropology, San Jose State University

Gioia Fonda | professor of art, Sacramento City College

Marientina Gotsis | director, Creative Media and Behavioral Health Center, University of Southern California

Calder Johnson | managing artistic director, North Coast Repertory Theatre

Marc Bamuthi Joseph | vice president and artistic director, Social Impact at the Kennedy Center

Jeremy Liu | managing partner, Creative Development Partners

Elizabeth Merritt | vice president for strategic foresight and founding director, Center for the Future of Museums, American Alliance of Museums

Colin Mutchler | civic creator and entrepreneur

Josephine Ramirez | executive vice president, The Music Center

Rebecca Renard-Wilson | senior manager of youth development, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture

Barry Threw | executive director, Gray Area

Vinitha Watson | executive director, Zoo Labs

Amy C. Whitaker | associate professor of visual arts administration, New York University

Jonathan Youtt | founder, Cellspace

Mike Zuckerman | anticipatory applied geographer

Artists and Creative Workers Interviewed for This Project

IFTF interviewed 19 creative workers from across the state.

They include:

Rosalinda Verde Alexander	Duan Kellum
Ajani Amiri	John Meehan
Michael Borys	Emily Morales-Ortiz
Ainya S Carter	Meghan O’Keefe
David Elsenbroich	John Park
Maude Hale	Eryk Salvaggio
Mireya Hepner	Socks Whitmore

Institute for the Future (IFTF)

IFTF was contracted to provide research, support, facilitation. IFTF prepared this report.

Marina Gorbis executive director
Rebecca Shamash research director
Rod Falcon advisory services program director
Ayça Güralp research, project, and community manager
Ben Hamamoto research director
Nathalie López research manager
Teffera Teffera digital experiences manager
Jean Hagan executive producer
Robin Bogott art director
Helen Bruno production and design
Mark Frauenfelder editorial director
Rachel Hatch chief impact officer
Heidi Swillinger copy editor

Executive Summary

As a famously vibrant cultural hub, California attracts tourists and talented individuals from across the globe.

Creative industries also fuel California's economy: in 2023 they generated \$288 billion in value, representing 7.5% of the state's total economic output. With 821,183 workers employed in arts and cultural production — more than any other state — California leads the nation in industries such as film, design, digital media, and entertainment. These creative sectors, among others, are essential to the state's economic prosperity.

Beyond economic impact, creative activities deliver immense social benefits to California's residents. Research shows that participation in or exposure to the arts improves academic engagement among marginalized youth, boosts community mental health outcomes, increases levels of civic participation and social trust, and reduces recidivism rates.

However, these assets are now at risk. Despite overall statewide employment growth, California's creative economy workforce in 2024 remained 7% below its pre-pandemic peak. Between 2022 and 2023, the state lost 2.6% of its arts and cultural production jobs, while the nation gained 0.3%.

This plan responds directly to the challenges facing California's creative economy. It builds on the \$1 billion in annual funding for arts education secured by Proposition 28 and aligns with the governor's Jobs First agenda to expand workforce pipelines, retain creative enterprises, and distribute economic and social benefits more equitably. By combining targeted policy reforms, expanded public-private partnerships, and data-driven performance tracking, the plan aims to create jobs and support creative enterprises, strengthen California's global cultural leadership, and ensure that every resident benefits from the state's rich array of arts and culture activity.

About the Strategic Planning Process

The Creative Economy Workgroup (CEW) was established by California Assembly Bill 127 (AB127) and tasked with developing a strategic plan for the state's creative economy. The California Arts Council (CAC) led the strategic planning process, and its nonprofit partner, Institute for the Future (IFTF), facilitated meetings of the CEW and led an extensive research process. This document represents a synthesis of these activities.

NORTH STAR

Lead an inclusive and resilient creative economy that empowers artists, cultural workers, and entrepreneurs to drive culture, creativity, and innovation

GOALS

1. Prepare and support the workforce for creative economy sectors
2. Stabilize and grow creative economy businesses
3. Increase revenue to state and local areas through retention and promotion of cultural identity and tourism
4. Leverage all state opportunities as incentives for local cultural and creative development
5. Define and track return on investment for the creative economy and creative workforce
6. Develop state and regional capacity and infrastructure to support the creative economy and creative economy strategic plan

GOALS

California can strengthen its arts and culture ecology through strategic action by state and local governments, working in partnership with businesses and nonprofit organizations. By investing in artists, expanding creative infrastructure, and integrating the arts into key sectors, we can build a more prosperous and inclusive future for all Californians.

The CEW developed six goals for California's creative economy. Strategic themes, which include specific and practical recommendations, are included in the full report.

NORTH STAR

Lead an inclusive and resilient creative economy that empowers artists, cultural workers, and entrepreneurs to drive culture, creativity, and innovation

GOAL 1 | Prepare and support the workforce for creative economy sectors

Many freelance artists and creative workers struggle with financial stability due to lack of access to benefits. Their financial challenges are compounded by emerging technologies like AI that threaten their income and creative ownership. In addition, career pathways are often blocked, resulting in barriers to entry for workers who are needed to meet demand and fuel present and future economic growth in creative sectors.

GOAL 2 | Stabilize and grow creative economy businesses

It is increasingly difficult for creative businesses to stay competitive and thrive in California. As other states and countries vie for creative talent and enterprises, it is paramount that California incentivizes and supports creative businesses.

GOAL 3 | Increase revenue to state and local areas through retention and promotion of cultural identity and tourism

COVID-19 closures deepened the investment drought in downtown and Main Street areas, threatening creative businesses' financial sustainability and survival. Restrictive land use regulations block the activation of spaces that could attract new enterprises, workers, and customers. Meanwhile, gentrification and rising costs threaten to erase local cultural identity.

GOAL 4 | Leverage all state opportunities as incentives for local cultural and creative development

Promoters of arts, culture, and creative development at the local level lack access to and awareness of state-level support. Furthermore, government resources and programs offer limited opportunities for employment and funding for creatives working in fields such as health, climate, and disaster recovery.

GOAL 5 | Define and track return on investment for the creative economy and creative workforce

There is no standard way to define or measure the creative economy's impact at the state level. While national models exist, state and local agencies and institutions use varied definitions and metrics, leading to inconsistent results. Data collection is also a challenge due to a lack of coordination and integration with existing datasets. Without regular tracking, progress cannot be measured.

GOAL 6 | Develop state and regional capacity and infrastructure to support the creative economy and creative economy strategic plan

Arts, culture, and creativity are interwoven into every sector, yet California's current political and financial environment threatens its creative infrastructure. Agencies lack the coordination and integration to implement this plan's recommendations effectively.

Introduction

California is a global creative powerhouse, where the world's dreamers and innovators transform inspiration into economic strength and cultural vitality.

From our breathtaking coastlines to our transcendent deserts to our towering mountains, the state's natural grandeur and vibrant, diverse communities fuel creativity at every scale. From indigenous culture-bearers to cutting-edge game designers, from free-spirited music festivals to the silver screens of Hollywood, this fusion of artistic vision and economic opportunity makes California exceptional.

Art and creative production have contributed significantly to the state's economy for decades and will continue to boost California's productivity and vitality. California is home to more creative jobs than any other state in the country and leads the nation in a variety of creative industries, including film, design, digital media, and entertainment.

Today, however, California finds itself at a crossroads. The state is facing threats to its creative lifeblood, risking the loss of some of its essential creative enterprises and talent. In 2024, the number of creative economy jobs was 7% below the pre-pandemic peak, despite overall job growth in the state. Creative jobs are not disappearing everywhere, rather they are leaving California: between 2022 and

2023, California saw a 2.6% decrease in arts and cultural production jobs, despite a 0.3% increase nationwide.

Fierce competition from other jurisdictions, technological changes enabling distributed production, and diffusion of artificial intelligence tools driving new modes of creation are acting as tailwinds to the redistribution of creative work. At the same time, rising costs of living have made it harder for artists and creative workers to live in California, and increasing costs of labor and goods have made it harder for independent arts organizations to operate sustainably.

But Californians have never shied away from challenges, and those it faces today offer exciting possibilities for transformation. Now is the time to protect and bolster a creative economy that will fuel California's economic growth, preserve its reputation as a mecca for arts and culture, and improve the lives of all its residents by generating a healthier, more inspired, more civically engaged society.

California is uniquely positioned for this. As the fourth largest economy in the world, it boasts immense resources: a highly skilled and industrious workforce, top innovators, and legendary creative industries. California is home to a leading music industry, a booming digital media sector, globally renowned higher education programs in the arts, and world-class museums; it is the envy of other states and countries trying to establish or grow their own creative industries. In addition, California's diverse cultures and communities shape a vibrant arts and culture ecosystem. An array of traditional art forms, high-quality performing arts, and cutting-edge technological innovations inspire creativity across the state. Meanwhile, nonprofit, cultural, and community-based organizations enrich the lives of all Californians, provide cultural and professional opportunities to younger

generations, including those from marginalized communities, and prepare workers for creative-sector jobs. In short, California's creative workforce and organizations have the tools and talent to lead the way in shaping a thriving, creative, and inclusive future for the state.

This plan offers a timely, cost-effective response to the challenges facing California's creative economy, building on Proposition 28's \$1 billion annual investment in arts education and aligning with the Jobs First agenda to drive workforce resilience and equitable growth. Supporting the creative economy is good for all Californians: it contributes significantly to the state's culture and impacts residents' daily lives, positively influencing the state's health and its residents' well-being. It is also good business: representing 4.3% of employment in California, arts and cultural production contributes 7.5% of the state's GDP. As such, California has an explicit interest in growing creative industries, supporting creative workers, and improving access to creative jobs. This plan will help guide the way.

The Scale and Value of California's Creative Economy

California's creative sectors are key drivers of its economy. The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) estimates that in 2023 arts and cultural production in California accounted for 7.5% of the state's total economy, generating \$288 billion in value and supporting 821,183 jobs. But despite its size, there is no single definition of the creative economy – its exact size and scope differ depending on which industries, organization types, and workers are included in the count. For example, NASAA includes 35 industries, determined by the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), ranging from broadcasting to motion pictures, while the National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center (NASERC) tracks four areas: cultural workers, arts participation, cultural assets, and arts education. The Otis College of Art and Design focuses

on entertainment, architecture, fashion, creative goods and products, and performing arts, while CVL Economics includes organizations operating in creative sectors and argues for the inclusion of individuals working in both creative occupations and noncreative occupations in creative sectors. In addition, capturing the total scope of creative work and workers is difficult because most statistics do not fully take into account the economic contributions of gig, short-term, and independent workers. This is particularly important, given the prevalence of this type of work across creative sectors.

A review of existing data makes it clear that whatever definition or quantitative measurement is applied to the creative economy, the impact and value of the creative sectors are greater than the numbers suggest. Beyond its substantial economic contribution, creative organizations and activities enrich California and its residents in ways that defy traditional measurements and are often not captured in official statistics. Creative organizations and activities support cultural and artistic values that enhance societal well-being and enrich the lives of those who participate in them or are exposed to them. For example, they inspire marginalized youth, improve mental health, reduce recidivism rates, and contribute to the reputation and allure of the state.

Creative industries and their nonprofit, community-based, governmental, and academic counterparts rely on each other to grow and thrive. Accordingly, any plan to support the creative economy will be most successful if it strengthens all elements of the creative ecology. Scholars Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa propose an ecological approach that takes into account “the complex interdependencies that shape the demand for and production of arts and cultural offerings,” providing a holistic view of this critical sphere of society. Our adapted version of their arts and cultural ecology model

consists of three overlapping and interconnected parts:

- **People:** artists, creatives, and culture-bearers; creative workers and noncreative workers in arts, culture, and creative organizations; funders, investors, and other supporters of arts and culture; audiences and participants in arts and culture activities
- **Institutions:** creative businesses; arts and culture nonprofit organizations and community-based arts organizations; educational institutions; public agencies, including arts agencies; media organizations covering arts and culture
- **Places:** cultural regions, cities, neighborhoods, and virtual spaces for creative activities

Mapping strategies to this ecology model offers a systems perspective of the creative economy. The six goals and related strategic themes introduced on pg. 29 aim to strengthen all three parts of California's creative ecology in order to create a vibrant and sustainable creative economy in California.

North Star: A Vision for California's Creative Economy

Over the course of deliberations, the Creative Economy Workgroup (CEW) was able to articulate a goal, a North Star, for the future of California's creative economy:

Lead an inclusive and resilient creative economy that empowers artists, cultural workers, and entrepreneurs to drive culture, creativity, and innovation

California can cultivate a creative economy that will drive economic growth, preserve its reputation as a mecca for arts and culture, and improve the lives of all Californians. Even amid rapid social, technological, political, economic, and environmental changes, these efforts will foster a

healthier, more inspired, and more civically engaged society. In this scenario, the state would elevate creative work and organizations as essential forces in building sustainable, flourishing communities and inspiring the workforce. A resilient and inclusive creative economy will ensure that California remains a sanctuary for artists and a magnet for creative enterprises and production. This investment goes beyond economic growth: it safeguards the spirit of California for decades to come.

The Creative Economy Workgroup and Strategic Planning Process

The CEW was established by AB127 and tasked with developing a strategic plan for the state's creative economy. The director of the California Arts Council (CAC) was charged with nominating members to the CEW from a diverse range of creative industries and organizations. Institute for the Future (ITF), a nonprofit research organization dedicated to helping organizations and communities become future-ready, was chosen through a competitive process to facilitate CEW meetings and lead the research process to inform the strategic plan.

ITF designed and facilitated three in-person, day-long convenings of the CEW held in locations across the state. These meetings were open to members of the public, included time for public comment, and complied with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. To structure the CEW's convenings, ITF used its Foresight-Insight-Action framework, a process that employed a forward-looking, systems-based approach for developing strategies to support a competitive and vibrant creative economy that serves all Californians.

*See Appendix for links to meeting agendas, packets, and summaries.

FORESIGHT | Creative Economy Workgroup Meeting 1

Friday, May 17, 2024 | Santa Monica, California | Annenberg Community Beach House

This first workshop focused on foresight – identifying key external forces (future forces) shaping the future of the creative economy.

WORKSHOP GOALS

- Convene the CAC’s CEW and enlist its participation in discussing the forces shaping the future of California’s creative economy
- Share and solicit feedback on the CAC’s working definitions of the creative economy
- Surface the long-term implications of major drivers of change, identifying key arenas for transformation



Michelle Boos-Stone, Global Business Strategy Consultant and Graphic Recorder, Five Elements Consulting Group

INSIGHT | Creative Economy Workgroup Meeting 2

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 | San Juan Bautista, California | El Teatro Campesino

The second workshop focused on eliciting implications of the future forces developed in the first session. These insights focused on impacts to industry, jobs, creative communities, education, and other aspects of California’s creative economy.

WORKSHOP GOALS

- Review the map of forces shaping the next decade of California’s creative economy and identify disruptions across the arts and cultural ecology of people, institutions, and places
- Explore emerging priority areas for action among people, institutions, and places, and hear from panelists on the frontlines who are innovating change
- Generate possible actions focusing on four broad levers of change:
 - **policies** – regulations, legislation
 - **technologies** – platforms, digitization, automation
 - **markets** – monetization, ownership, partnerships with industry, competitiveness
 - **networks** – bottom-up, social-structured movements
- Draw out the consequences of different actions over the short, medium, and long term to fully anticipate impacts



Michelle Boos-Stone, Global Business Strategy Consultant and Graphic Recorder, Five Elements Consulting Group

ACTION | Creative Economy Workgroup Meeting 3

February 19-20, 2025 | Sacramento, California | Studio T Arts & Entertainment Innovation Factory

The third workshop used IFTF's action frameworks to brainstorm and refine specific strategies and tactics California can champion to grow and sustain its creative economy.

WORKSHOP GOALS

- Establish a creative forum for CEW members to collectively develop the priorities for California's art and culture ecosystem
- Identify and develop specific actions to fulfill legislative mandates that include immediate opportunities for impact, medium-term initiatives and projects, and long-term visions for a transformed and strengthened creative economy in California



Michelle Boos-Stone, Global Business Strategy Consultant and Graphic Recorder, Five Elements Consulting Group

Concurrently, IFTF led a research process to inform the strategic plan and respond to the tasks outlined in AB127. This process spanned 10 months and included the following activities:

- IFTF hosted a webinar for CEW members to introduce them to strategic foresight and prepare them to participate in gathering “signals of change,” small or local innovations – a new product, service, behavior, initiative, policy, data point, or technology – with the potential to scale in impact and affect other places, people, or markets. IFTF then conducted six “signal swarms” on topics related to the creative economy, involving CEW members as Bagley-Keene regulations would allow. IFTF produced six public newsletters sharing signals, resources, and insights about the ways the creative economy is changing.
- CEW members were asked to respond to a survey addressing the requirements set forth in AB127. IFTF collected and synthesized responses, in addition to conducting extensive desk research on the creative economy. IFTF then prepared an interim research report on California’s creative economy. (See appendix for a link to the report.)
- IFTF met with a selection of CEW members and other stakeholders individually to get input on the challenges and opportunities facing California’s creative economy, as well as the resources and leverage points they view as most valuable in supporting it.
- IFTF hosted a series of three expert workshops to gain insight into the challenges and opportunities facing California’s creative economy as it transitions into the next decade. IFTF defines “expert” broadly, and participants included leaders of for-profit and nonprofit creative enterprises and creative incubators; scholars of media, art, business, and anthropology; representatives of public arts agencies and initiatives; and advocates for youth and education.
- IFTF also conducted small-group interviews with artists and creative workers from across the state to

better understand how individuals on the ground are experiencing the changes shaping the creative economy today. IFTF interviewed 19 individuals ages 22 to 65 who lived across California, including in Sacramento, Visalia, Salinas, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Their career experiences varied from emerging to established, and they worked in a diverse array of sectors, including music, dance, design, gaming, visual arts, film/TV, and GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums). Their levels of educational attainment also varied; their annual incomes ranged from \$25,000 to \$150,000; and their employment statuses included full-time, part-time, freelance, gig, and self-employed.

This document represents a synthesis of all the efforts described above and reflects extensive discussions with and feedback from CEW members.

A Phased Approach to the Development and Implementation of This Plan

The creative economy strategic planning process is constructed in three phases and builds on the California Jobs First State Economic Blueprint. This document represents the completion of the first phase of this work.

PHASE 1 | Road Map/Plan Development

ACTIVITIES

- Establish the Creative Economy Workgroup, a legislatively appointed group of representative and diverse voices to help guide the framework.
- Develop the foundation and initial framework for the plan with key recommendations and areas of focus.
- Review and submit the plan to the Governor’s Office and Legislature.

TIMELINE

18 months | February 2024 to June 2025

PHASE 2 | Engagement and Operationalization

ACTIVITIES

- Launch statewide public engagement to test key recommendations and source local models and collaborative opportunities.
- Draft implementation plan that includes detailed actions, timelines, and needed people and partnerships.
- Draft plan addendum summarizing public input.
- Establish interagency state workgroups that align with each of the recommendation areas to facilitate collaboration and information and resource sharing, and to generate recommendations for policy and report integration.
- Conduct pilot testing to select priority strategies, including benchmark definition, data collection, and tracking.

TIMELINE

18 months | July 2025 to December 2026

PHASE 3 | Implementation and Evaluation

ACTIVITIES

- Launch plan activities based on implementation plan.
- Evaluate progress on the plan and revise as appropriate.
- Conduct biannual assessments, with first completed by December 2027.

TIMELINE

3 to 10 years | March 2026 to March 2036

The rest of this document presents a road map for California’s creative future. It outlines five future forces likely to influence the evolution of the creative economy over the next decade and discusses their implications for the entire creative ecology. It includes six goals and related strategic themes that the CEW believes hold the most promise for strengthening and preserving California’s creative economy for years to come. Finally, it discusses the next steps for the implementation of this plan.

Future Forces Influencing California's Creative Economy

Future forces are broad long-term trends that are likely to have a significant impact on a particular domain of activities.

They encompass social, technological, environmental, economic, and political trends and provide critical context for developing robust strategies. As we devise strategies and recommendations for bolstering California's creative economy, analysis of future forces allows us to envision policies designed to support tomorrow's creative economy, rather than a version of it that may be obsolete in a few years.

California's creative economy is influenced by many local, national, and global conditions that present both challenge and opportunity for creative workers and industry. Based on research and the discussions within the CEW, five key forces were identified that are likely to affect artists and creative workers, creative economy businesses, and nonprofit organizations.

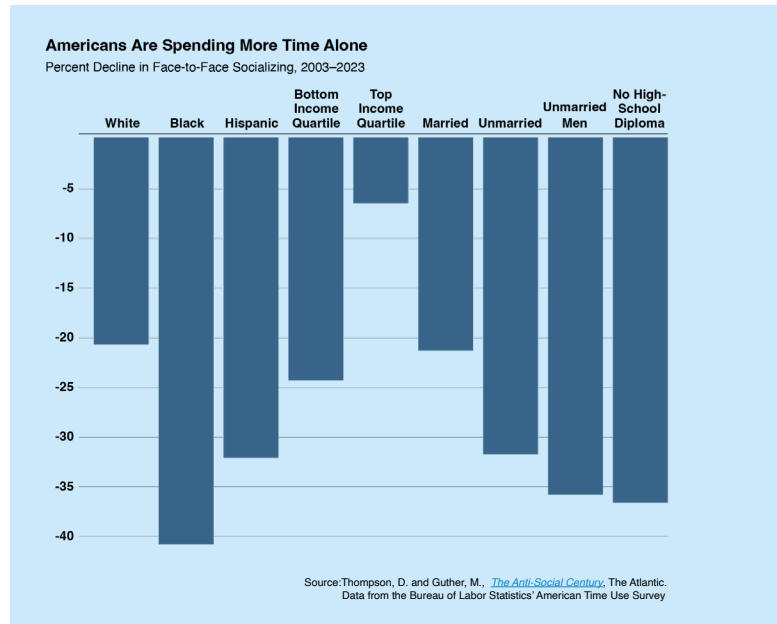
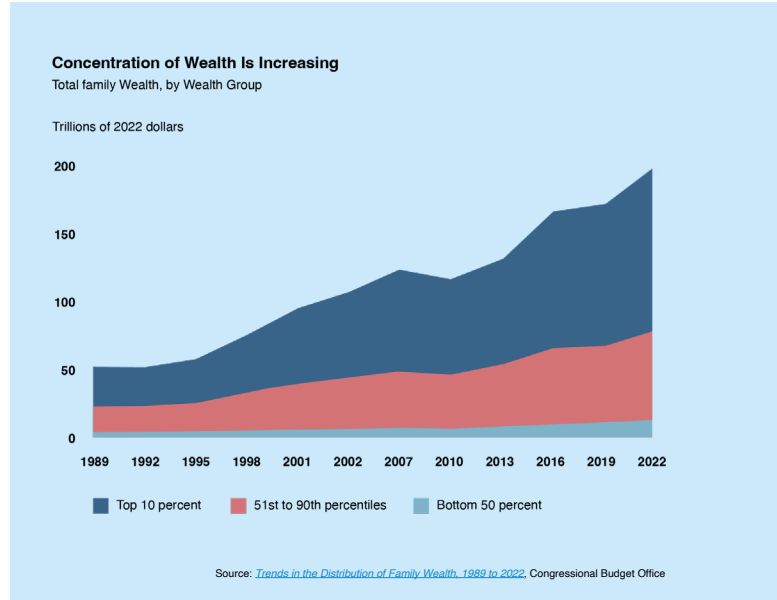
FUTURE FORCES

- 1 MENTAL HEALTH, BELONGING, AND WELL-BEING:**
Increasing Fragility of Social Fabric
- 2 ACCESS TO CAPITAL AND RISK-TAKING:**
Concentration of Capital Is Decreasing Opportunities
- 3 AFFORDABILITY AND LIVABILITY:**
Decoupling of Work and Living Locations Is Depleting California's Creative Infrastructure
- 4 TECHNOLOGY AND TRADITION:**
Technological Transformation Is Redefining Creative Work and Demand for Creative Products
- 5 CLIMATE-IMPACTED WORLD:**
Environmental Changes Are Disrupting Life and Work

FUTURE FORCE 1 MENTAL HEALTH, BELONGING, AND WELL-BEING: Our Social Fabric Is Fraying

America is becoming increasingly fractured. Wealth concentration is increasing, with the wealthiest 0.1% percent of Americans increasing their share of national wealth from 8.6% in 1989 to 13.8% in 2025, while the poorer half of families held steady at only 6% of national wealth between 1989 and 2022. Ideological divides are deepening and levels of trust are diminishing. In 2024, only 34% of Americans said they felt most people could be trusted, down from 46% in 1972. Americans are also becoming more isolated. People report having fewer close friendships, talking to friends less often, and relying less on them for personal support, with the share of U.S. adults who self-reported as having no close friends increasing from 3% in 1990 to 12% in 2021. At the same time, 74% of Americans say they do not feel a sense of belonging in their communities. Participation in organized social activities and community groups has likewise declined, while access to civic spaces where people can experience community life is diminishing. Americans spend more time at home and more time alone; between 2003 and 2020, the average time people spent alone each month increased by 24 hours, rising from about 142.5 hours in 2003 to 166.5 hours in 2020. Americans – especially those earning under \$150,000 annually – are going to fewer live events, with high cost appearing to be a key factor. These trends led to some terming this the “Anti-Social Century.”

The media landscape is also becoming highly fragmented, and media consumption is becoming increasingly individualized. While the shift from network TV and radio to social media platforms and streaming services like YouTube, Netflix, and Spotify has allowed for issue- and interest-driven communities to form, this trend is also undermining broadly shared cultural touchstones.



Americans trust each other less than they did a few decades ago.

in 1972 **46%** of adults said “most people can be trusted”
in 2018 **34%**

Source: General Social Survey and Pew Research

WHY IT MATTERS

In the face of growing inequality, social isolation, and public distrust, community-based arts and culture offer a proven, place-based strategy to repair our social fabric and advance public health and safety. For example, low-income youth who participate in the arts in and after school are five times less likely to drop out of school and more likely to be civically engaged, and lower-income neighborhoods with higher cultural assets have 18% less serious crime and 14% fewer investigations of child abuse and neglect. Meanwhile, arts-in-corrections programs improve inmates' ability to understand their emotions and communicate effectively. In addition, those who participate in the arts are twice as likely to volunteer than those who do not. Public art installations may increase social cohesion and trust among neighbors, while artmaking can increase friendship, empathy, and mutual trust between children from immigrant and resident populations.

Arts, cultural activities, and entertainment are powerful tools for fostering empathy, shared understanding, and belonging. Investing in culturally rooted creative infrastructure — especially in under-resourced communities — should be viewed as a public safety intervention, a mental health strategy, and a vehicle for civic belonging. It is a key way to reknit our frayed social fabric by reconnecting Californians to place, to one another, and to shared purpose.

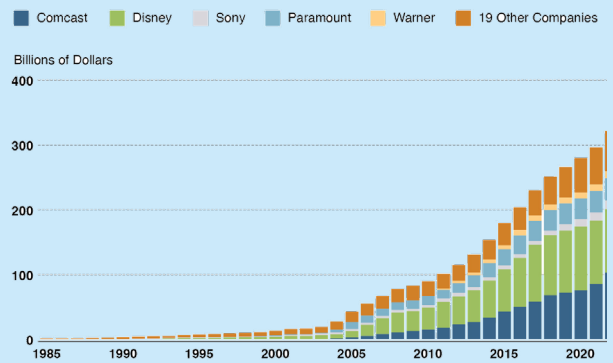
FUTURE FORCE 2 ACCESS TO CAPITAL AND RISK-TAKING: Concentration of Capital Is Decreasing Opportunities

A process of financialization – whereby financial markets, financial institutions, and financial elites gain greater influence over economic policy and economic outcomes – is underway in many sectors and is gaining momentum. Over the last several decades, private equity and investment firms increasingly moved from managing financial assets to buying physical assets and services, the infrastructure on which Americans rely for their daily lives. They now wield influence on medical practices, nursing homes, veterinary offices, even parking meters, and are eyeing restaurants, fine art collectibles, and live entertainment. These practices are impacting a number of creative fields, including the media sector, where aggressive mergers and acquisitions coupled with increased private equity investments have resulted in fewer but larger media conglomerates, many of which are owned largely by investment firms. In 1983, 90% of American media was owned by 50 companies; by 2011, only six companies owned 90% of media content. Similarly, today, one company owns over 80% of major concert venues in the United States. Furthermore, the consolidation of wealth has increased as the economy has financialized, with more corporate profits being allocated to investors and shareholders.

One significant outcome of this shift is creative risk aversion: a focus on safe creative projects from which investors can expect steady returns, rather than an emphasis on critical acclaim or artistic ingenuity – which leads to less available funding for a variety of creative projects. This is evidenced, in part, by the dramatic drop in films produced from an original screenplay. In 1988, these constituted 40% of theatrical box office sales, but by 2019, 94% of these sales are derivatives (i.e., remakes, films based on books, or continuations of existing franchises). Another outcome of financialization is a move toward business models that prioritize corporate profits at the expense of good creative jobs, increasing precarity for creative workers.

Asset Management Firms Own Increasingly Large Amounts of Equity in the Media Sector

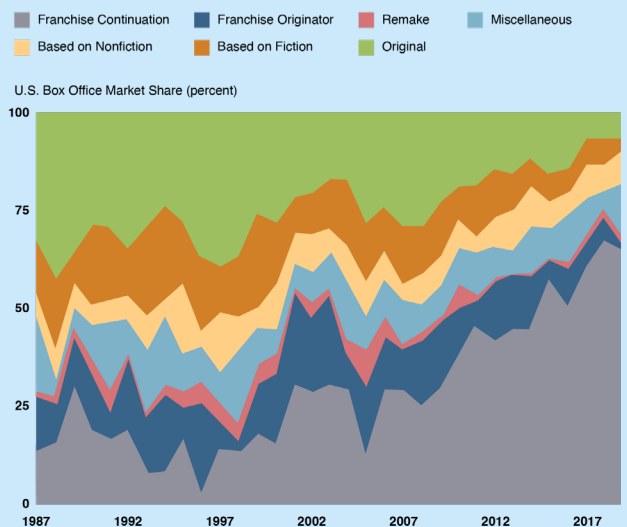
Equity of media corporations held by Vanguard, BlackRock, and State Street, 2000–2020.



Source: deWaard, A., *Derivative Media: How Wall Street Devours Culture*

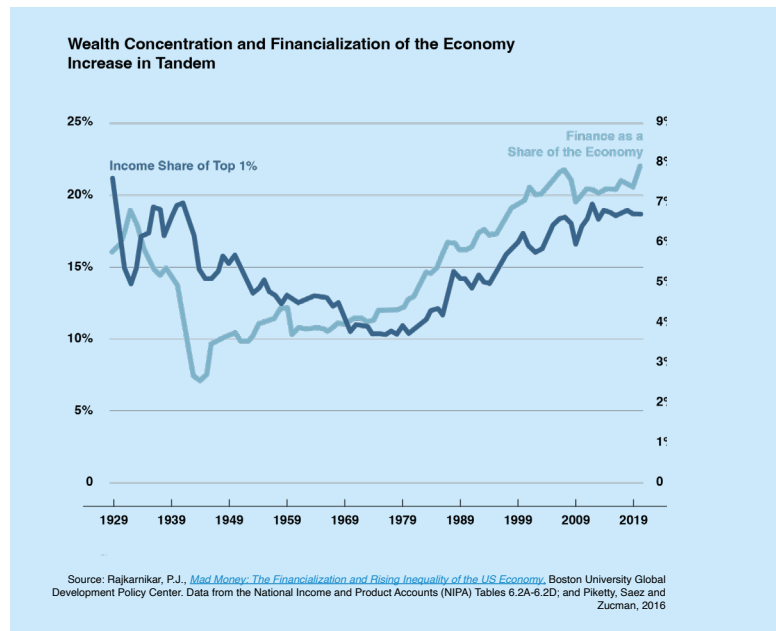
Fewer Original Films Finding Box Office Success

Originality of top 100 films by percentage of U.S. box office, 1987–2019.



Source: deWaard, A., *Derivative Media: How Wall Street Devours Culture*

Between 1985 and 2022, U.S. media companies spent \$320 billion dollars on dividends and stock buybacks, an amount that could have produced over 200,000 films with the same budget as Barry Jenkins’ Oscar-winning 2016 film “Moonlight,” or could have been spent on worker pay and benefits.



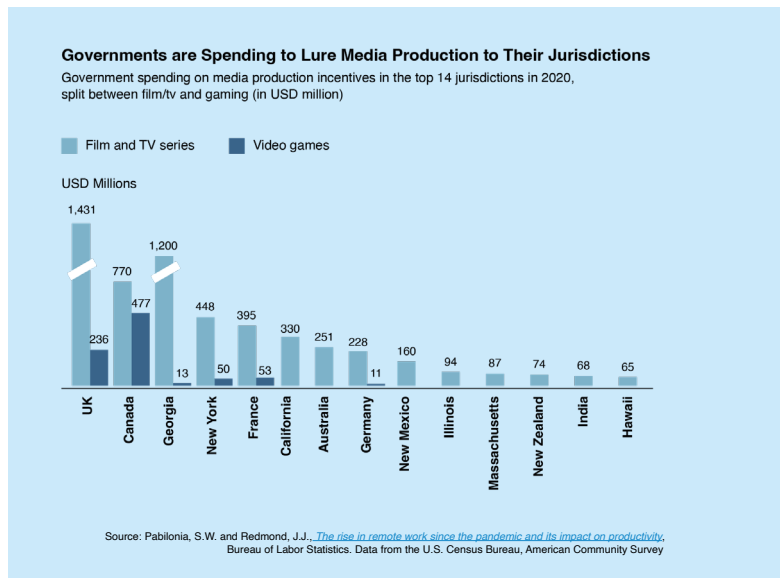
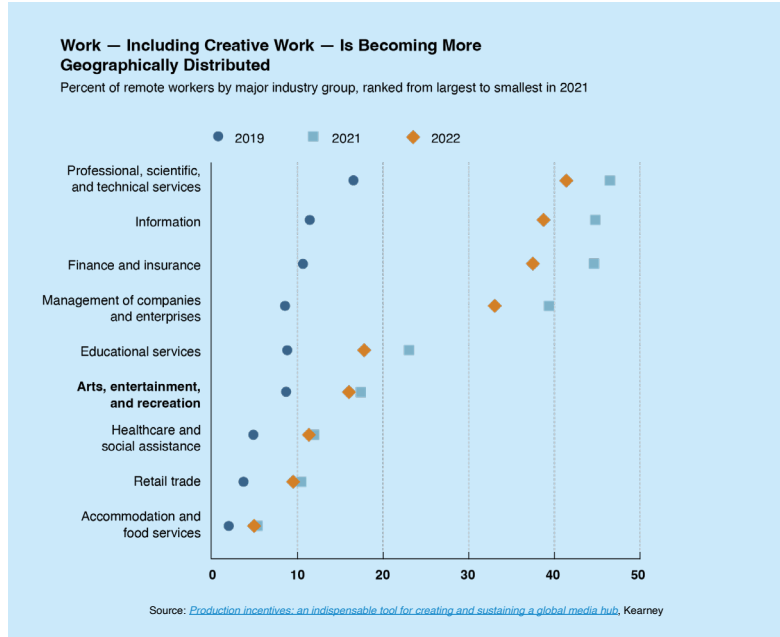
WHY IT MATTERS

Californians are deeply creative and innovative people. But industry concentration and excessive drive for shareholder returns lead to creative risk aversion, resulting in less diversity and innovation in arts and entertainment and less funding for smaller or bolder creative projects. Policymakers and arts advocates can help by providing incentives or alternative funding sources for independent or innovative creative projects and by helping to increase demand for these types of creative products. In turn, such creative projects will benefit the state by increasing the variety and value of arts and cultural products available to residents and visitors alike.

In addition, these changes are blocking pathways to creative careers and decreasing the number of good jobs available to creative workers, who already often lack job security and access to key benefits. Policymakers can address income precarity by expanding the opportunities creative workers have for affordable live-work spaces, portable benefits, and equitable access to grant and loan capital. In doing so, they have the chance to pilot policies that might support gig workers in other industries as well.

FUTURE FORCE 3 AFFORDABILITY AND LIVABILITY: Decoupling of Work and Living Locations Is Depleting California's Creative Infrastructure

Activities such as design, animation, and video editing – which previously needed to be done in dedicated studios with specialized equipment – can now be done by individuals or small groups working on personal computers or smart phones, due to the recent proliferation of inexpensive tools for media creation and communication and greater access to computing power. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated these trends by increasing employers' and workers' comfort with remote work. In January 2025, 29.4% of total paid workdays in the United States were performed fully from home, versus 7.2% in May 2020. These changes have led to a shift in the geography of work, with many individuals relocating to areas with lower costs of living. The result is that California has entered a new demographic era marked by slowing population growth, driven largely by residents moving to other states, a trend that, despite recent easing, remains near record highs. Between 2010 and 2023, the state saw a net loss of 2.5 million people to domestic migration. At the same time, there has been an increase in internal migration within California, with people moving away from the Bay Area and Los Angeles, likely enabled by possibilities for remote work. Bay Area residents who remain in California often relocate to Sacramento, the northern San Joaquin Valley, or the central coast, while people leaving Los Angeles most commonly move to the Inland Empire. Jurisdictions outside California are using the increase in worker mobility to their advantage by wooing economic activity via tax incentives and infrastructure projects. This is particularly acute in the film and television industry. In 2022, Los Angeles accounted for 35% of film and television production in the United States, but only 27% in 2024. At the same time, 31% of creative workers in the United States are self-employed, compared to about 10% of the broader workforce, meaning they are potentially less tethered to a stable job with a consistent employer in a specific location.



52% of Californians in arts-related occupations held two or more jobs

51% Californians in arts-related occupations worked as independent contractors

42% Californians in arts-related occupations had personal earnings below \$40,000 a year.

Source: Yelin, E., Iley, T., Trupin, L., Lafrance, A., Rhee, N., Varghese Mac, I., *Employment in Arts and Related Occupations and Industries in California*, California Labor Lab

Increases in the cost of living in California is one of the primary drivers of migration. Housing costs in particular have skyrocketed. In the late 1960s, the typical California home cost just over four times the average household income, but in 2022 that figure rose to 11 times the average household income. The price of a typical mid-tier home in California is now more than double that of a similar home elsewhere in the United States, with average monthly payments at about

\$5,861, up from \$3,078 in 2020 and \$1,863 in 2010. Notably, housing costs have outpaced wage growth. From 2020 to 2025, rents in California increased 38%, while average hourly wages rose by just 24%. For lower-income households in California, essential needs like food, housing, transportation, and health care make up 80% of their total spending, making relocation a potentially appealing option.

WHY IT MATTERS

Artists and creative workers are essential to California's cultural identity and its economy. However, scarcity of affordable housing combined with economic uncertainty threatens California's ability to retain them. In 2024, California's creative economy lost around 6,700 jobs, a decline of roughly 0.9%, despite a 0.3% rise in overall employment. The result of a potential exodus of artists is not just a loss of a few creative workers. Creative businesses and projects create local jobs, increase tourism, and stimulate the overall economy by creating opportunities for adjacent businesses in industries such as transportation, construction, and hospitality. The loss of these individuals, businesses, and activities has the potential to create negative ripple effects across state and local economies. Efforts to

lower the cost of living, particularly housing costs, will help retain creative talent and attract new talent to the state, while also making it easier for all workers who support arts and entertainment to live in California.

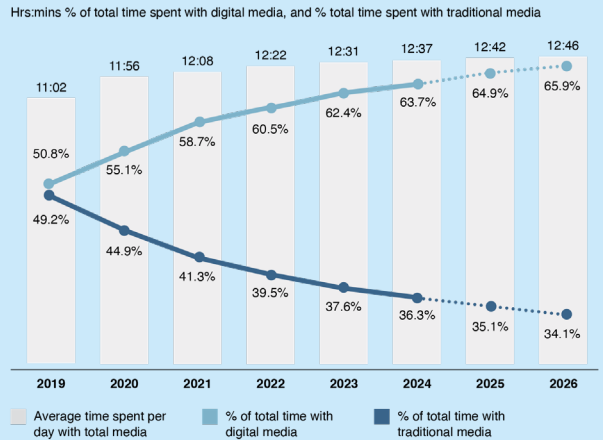
At the same time, the relocation of creative workers from major urban centers to suburban and rural areas of the state offers a great opportunity for the development of local and regional cultural centers and creative economies. These individuals represent a valuable resource and may have the capacity to revitalize downtown or Main Street areas, improve community vibrancy, and spur local economies across California.

FUTURE FORCE 4 TECHNOLOGY AND TRADITION: Technological Transformation Is Redefining Creative Work and Demand for Creative Products

New technologies are changing the way creative content is produced, consumed, and marketed. Every aspect of creative production and distribution has been reshaped by new technological tools and platforms, enabling new media formats, increasing the speed of creative production, and increasing people’s access to creative tools. This shift is represented in the decline of traditional broadcast media as well as the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in all aspects of creative production. This technology is presenting challenges and opportunities that impact job security, income and intellectual property issues. In 2025, streaming officially overtook broadcast and cable as the most viewed TV format. In 2020, the average U.S. adult spent 42% of total video time consuming digital video and 58% watching TV; by 2024, those numbers had reversed. Video games have also become a national and multigenerational pastime, with 84% of kids and 60% of adults playing weekly, citing fun, relaxation, mental stimulation, and social connection as motivators.

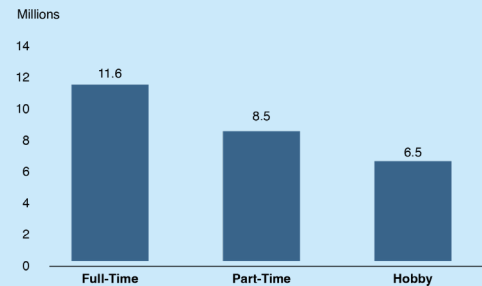
The result is that Americans’ media habits and preferences are being profoundly reshaped. More entertainment is being consumed in the home, with preferences for short-form media. The increasing popularity of short-form digital media has led to unprecedentedly high growth of the numbers of creators and the volume of creative content. In the United States, about 27 million people are now content creators, with 44% of them producing content as a full-time job. One effect of this shift is that artists are increasingly able to bypass traditional gatekeepers to reach audiences directly. For example, major record labels’ share of streaming sales dropped by 10% between 2015 and 2023. At the same time, tech-driven platforms play a powerful gatekeeping role in many creative industries, mediating the relationship between artist and audience. Furthermore, the introduction and proliferation of generative artificial intelligence is introducing additional uncertainty for artists, raising questions about ownership and fair use and impacting the labor market in various creative fields.

Americans 18+ Are Spending More Time with New Media
Average Time Spent Per Day With Total Media by US Adults, 2019-2026



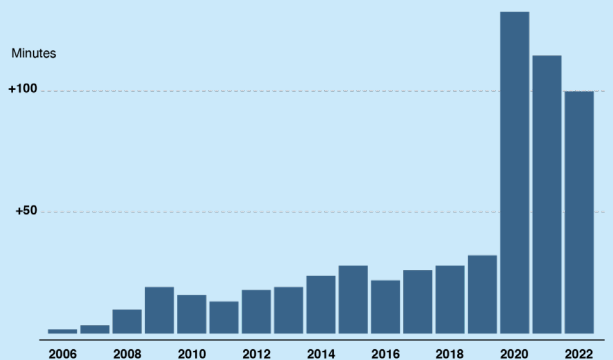
Source: Feger, A. [Digital media makes up nearly two-thirds of consumers' total time spent with media](#), EMARKETER

Large Numbers of Americans are Content Creators
Projected number of consumers identified as creators by full-time, part-time, hobby



Source: Keller, E., Evans, H., and Schneider, B., [Creators Uncovered: Insights from a Nationally Representative Study of US Creators](#), The Keller Advisory Group

Entertainment and Other Activities Are Moving into the Home
Change in average minutes spent at home compared with 2006



Source: Thompson, D. and Guther, M., [The Anti-Social Century](#), The Atlantic. Data from Patrick Sharkey's analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' American Time Use Survey

WHY IT MATTERS

As Americans' media habits change, traditional arts organizations – including theaters, symphonies, operas, and ballets – will need to change how they engage audiences. The new media environment comes with challenges – like more in-home entertainment and shortening attention spans – as well as opportunities – like the ability to livestream theatrical productions across the globe – increasing access to these forms of art. How these organizations adapt will determine their levels of viewership and their sustainability into the future. At the same time, shifts in media preferences, coupled with availability of new technologies, is leading to the emergence of new forms of creative experiences, like the popular Meow Wolf immersive exhibits and the immersive Las Vegas Sphere venue.

AI, immersive media (AR/VR), and digital distribution are revolutionizing content creation, monetization, and the skills required for creative careers. These technologies will likely make substantial contributions to the state's GDP, but are also likely to disrupt the careers and livelihoods of many artists and creative workers. As these technologies evolve and diffuse, policymakers will need to craft laws and regulations that allow California to maintain its dominance in technological innovation while ensuring that artists are fairly compensated for their work. In addition, the state will need to invest in digital literacy, tech apprenticeships, and cross-sector innovation hubs in order to provide equitable access to future-ready jobs and the new skills and tools needed for content production.

FUTURE FORCE 5 CLIMATE-IMPACTED WORLD: Environmental Changes Are Disrupting Life and Work

Disruptive climate events, from extreme heat waves to fires and floods, will increasingly become a reality for many communities in California and around the globe. Globally, 70% of the working population is exposed to excessive heat, resulting in almost 23 million injuries annually; in the Americas, workplace injuries due to heat stress increased 33.3 percent from 2000 to 2024. These dramatic changes to the environment are becoming increasingly costly. Insured losses from natural disasters in the United States total about \$100 billion a year as of 2023, compared to \$4.6 billion in 2000, which has led to insurance premiums increasing by 21% since 2015. And costs for climate mitigation efforts are staggering: they could reach \$12.5 billion by 2040 in Los Angeles County alone. Moreover, changes to climate are substantially impacting how and when we work outdoors, as well the ways we adapt and build indoor spaces, including theaters, studios, homes, and sporting and entertainment venues. Music festival and concert organizers are increasingly shifting dates in response to weather patterns. And in a 2022 survey of art museum directors, 35% reported that their museums had already experienced damage from climate change, requiring them to constantly update and maintain their facilities to ensure the safety of staff, visitors, and collections.

Expected Impacts of Climate Change On California



Temperature: The daily maximum average temperature, an indicator of extreme temperature shifts, is expected to rise 4.4°F–5.8°F by mid-century and 5.6°F–8.8°F by late century.



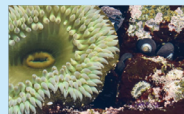
Precipitation: There is high confidence in projections that even if precipitation remains stable or increases, drought severity and the number of dry years will increase, even as more extreme precipitation events may occur.



Wildfire: A model developed for California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment projected up to a 77 percent increase in average area burned and a 50 percent increase in the frequency of fires exceeding 25,000 acres by 2100.



Sea-level rise, coastal flooding, and erosion: The current best available science predicts that the state's coastline could experience between 1.1–1.9 feet of sea-level rise by 2050 and between 2.4–6.9 feet by 2100.



Ocean warming, hypoxia, and acidification: Both warming and acidification can be catastrophic to marine ecosystems (e.g. disease, degradation, bleaching) and the coastal communities and industries that rely on them.



Human health: Communities across California are experiencing health impacts associated with the climate crisis today. Examples include injury, illness, and death from wildfires and wildfire smoke, extreme heat, drought, landslides, extreme weather events, vector-borne diseases, and associated mental health impacts.

Source: [Summary of Projected Climate Change Impacts on California](#), California Climate Adaptation Strategy

WHY IT MATTERS

Artists, venues, and cultural institutions face growing risks from wildfires, extreme heat, and climate-related displacement. In particular, creative work and demand for it are likely to be disrupted. Outdoor performances and film or photography shoots are likely to face challenges due to unsafe conditions, while climate-related travel restrictions will likely affect tourism and attendance at entertainment and cultural events. Resilience funding and green infrastructure investment can help safeguard California's creative future.

Creative industries and workers will play an important role in addressing and mitigating the effects of climate change in California. Artists and museums, for example, can educate the public about issues related to climate change.

And artists and creative workers should be involved in planning, designing, and building new and renewed spaces that inspire community, cultivate connection, and contribute to the robust social and cultural infrastructure needed to maintain resilience in light of environmental disruptions. Furthermore, artists can lessen the social impacts of climate change in their communities. Community-based arts organizations and arts-in-health efforts can ameliorate some of the deleterious health impacts of climate change, and artists and creative workers should be considered important second-responders in the wake of disasters, helping affected communities come together and heal.

The future forces outlined here reveal both the vulnerabilities and opportunities shaping California's creative economy. Centering artists and creative workers, the following recommendations respond to current conditions and emerging trends and positions the creative sector as essential to building a more equitable, resilient, and future-ready California.

Goals and Strategic Themes

California can strengthen its arts and culture ecology through strategic action by state and local governments, working in partnership with businesses and nonprofit organizations.

Together, these organizations can increase the number and quality of creative economy jobs available to Californians; improve access to education and training in arts and culture; and make it easier for individuals and all types of organizations to produce art, entertainment, and cultural goods in the state. By investing in artists, expanding creative infrastructure, and integrating the arts into key sectors, we can build a more prosperous and inclusive future for all Californians.

The following goals and strategic themes provide examples of specific, practical steps that state and local governments can take to strengthen California's creative economy.

NORTH STAR

Lead an inclusive and resilient creative economy that empowers artists, cultural workers, and entrepreneurs to drive culture, creativity, and innovation

GOALS

- 1 Prepare and support the workforce for creative economy sectors
- 2 Stabilize and grow creative economy businesses
- 3 Increase revenue to state and local areas through cultural identity and tourism
- 4 Leverage all state opportunities for local cultural and creative development
- 5 Define and track ROI for the creative economy and creative workforce
- 6 Develop capacity and infrastructure to support the creative economy

STRATEGIC THEMES

- Invest in a well-trained workforce and incentivize good jobs
- Ensure all creative economy workers have access to key benefits
- Explore ways to protect the intellectual property of individuals
- Ensure California's film and TV tax credits are globally competitive
- Support nonprofit organizations and live theatrical productions
- Fund Senate Bill 628, the Creative Workforce Act of 2021
- Provide assistance for businesses, create apprenticeships, and develop new financing models
- Ensure that every community has an artistic identity and arts within reach
- Reduce barriers for businesses to acquire spaces and put on events
- Increase exposure to arts and culture to fuel demand for creative products and events
- Support infrastructure development by collaborating with regional planning efforts
- Develop creative financial mechanisms to support arts, culture, and entertainment
- Support the integration of the creative workforce into other sectors
- Develop a definition of California's creative economy
- Build capacity for ongoing data collection, tracking, and reporting
- Support creative infrastructure to facilitate resource sharing and collaboration
- Integrate the creative workforce into state and local agencies

GOAL 1 | Prepare and support the workforce for creative economy sectors

Many freelance artists and creative workers struggle with financial stability due to lack of access to benefits. Their financial challenges are compounded by emerging technologies like AI that threaten their income and creative ownership. In addition, career pathways are often blocked, resulting in barriers to entry for workers who are needed to meet demand and fuel present and future economic growth in creative sectors. The strategies outlined below aim to address systems gaps through jobs and training programs, a benefits hub, and AI regulatory policy. Adopting these strategies will strengthen California's creative workforce by nurturing talent, fostering lasting career opportunities, and helping to distribute economic gains equitably.

STRATEGIC THEMES

1. Invest in a well-trained workforce and incentivize good jobs in arts, culture, and entertainment

- Collaborate and provide support for service corps programs focused on employment, such as Creative Corps
- Build a pipeline for credentialed visual and performing arts teachers using a regional approach, so that experienced teachers and collaborating nonprofit organizations can qualify for opportunities enabled by Proposition 28
- Expand existing apprenticeship programs and help businesses and organizations identify needs and fit for creative workers
- Establish a creative fellows program for recent high school graduates that provides education, apprenticeships, job placements, and stipends
- Cultivate partnerships between employers and workforce development programs to promote work-based learning
- Determine feasible incentives for companies and organizations to place students and/or apprentices as employees on projects to ensure pathways to jobs

2. Ensure all creative economy workers – including contract, sole-proprietor, and short-term workers – have access to key benefits

- Develop a centralized hub for creative workers to access benefits, training, networking and job opportunities. Specific elements of the hub may include:
 - Resources related to tax deductions or advice, unemployment insurance, unemployment assistance, affordable health insurance, disaster unemployment assistance, and Social Security net benefits
 - Supportive services for mental health, affordable housing, workforce training and capacity-building opportunities
- A creative entrepreneurship and business development program that provides training and tech assistance for accessing capital, marketing, communications, and other business needs for creative small businesses
- Build relationships with and utilize existing state affordable housing opportunities and programs to connect creatives to affordable housing

STRATEGIC THEMES (CONT.)

3. Implement a robust framework to protect Californians' creative intellectual property that supports transparency, engagement, and equity in the use of generative AI

- Explore ways to protect the intellectual property of individuals
- Consider introducing a specialized label such as "Made by a Creative Worker/Artist," or an AI-free arts certification to denote non-AI generated content
- Explore opportunities for AI technology companies to support creative communities through profit-sharing or other financial or in-kind supports

Examples

Guided is a cooperative that provides freelancers with administrative support so that they can focus on their core craft. The cooperative helps with contract management, invoicing, guaranteed payments, tax preparation, and health care.

Germany offers Künstlersozialkasse (KSK), a specialized social security system for artists and writers that helps cover health insurance, pensions, and long-term care insurance. The benefits are covered by a combination of individual worker contributions, a government subsidy, and levies on companies that use artistic works.

The California Arts Council's Creative Corps pilot program provided \$60 million in funding for a media, outreach, and engagement campaign related to public health, awareness of natural resources, civic engagement, and social justice. The funding created jobs, providing economic support to artists, ambassadors, and cultural workers serving all 58 California counties. The program also enabled opportunities for collaboration and partnerships between nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, and public agencies.

"Wouldn't it be great if California led by example, and said, 'Well, in California we care about art and culture so much that every artist that lives in California is entitled to health insurance.' " *

Visionary director, 46 years old, Los Angeles County

"An ideal journey for me within the next 10 years would be to have consistent work that will pay you what you're worth and that will credit you each and every time, even if it's just the smallest thing."

Dancer, videographer, makeup and hair artist, 29 years old, Los Angeles County

**All quotes have been edited for clarity.*

GOAL 2 | Stabilize and grow creative economy businesses

It is increasingly difficult for creative businesses to stay competitive and thrive in California. As other states and countries vie for creative talent and enterprises, it is paramount that California incentivizes and supports creative businesses. The following strategies will help creative companies grow and reinvest in the state's creative workforce, leading to stable jobs, innovation, and greater economic resilience and adaptability.

STRATEGIC THEMES

1. Ensure California's film and TV tax credits are globally competitive

- Further invest in California's proven Film and Television Tax Credit program
- Expand the definition of a qualified motion picture, and expand eligibility of projects
- Incentivize other aspects of creative production to take place in California

2. Provide financial support for nonprofit organizations and live theatrical productions

- Use financial incentives to support nonprofit theatre and performing arts organizations
- Provide tax credits or rebates for commercial theater projects with nonprofit organizations

3. Fund SB628, the Creative Workforce Act of 2021, through the California Creative Corps program and build a mechanism to support ongoing funding

- Use the Creative Corps network to help distribute and shape funding for workforce development
- Sustain living wages through a 1:1 match between funder and employer

4. Assistance for businesses to hire workers, create apprenticeship pathways, and develop new financing and ownership models that center equity

- Explore financial incentives for businesses hiring creative workers
- Partner with employers to identify needed skills and entry-level positions for apprenticeships that lead directly to employment

Examples

Illinois has a tax credit program for nonprofit theater productions that distributes \$2 million per fiscal year based on the nonprofit's annual budget. The program provides a transferable credit of 20% of qualified expenses, which include production spending and Illinois resident salaries, with an additional 15% tax credit on salaries of residents who live in economically disadvantaged areas whose unemployment rate is at least 150% of the state's annual average.

The UK's Creative Industries Council established a Creative Places Growth Fund for six regions outside of London, empowering local mayors to support creative businesses in their communities with access to finance, mentoring, and investor networks. Building on London's Creative Industries Districts, this initiative extends the concept of business innovation districts to smaller, entrepreneurial creative enterprises across the country.

"Incentivize people to stay here, live here, build this here, keep the talent here. If you move the next generation, if you build [this] elsewhere, they're going to stay there."

Production worker, 47 years old, San Diego County

"I don't see L.A. as the place I have to be anymore, where [before] it was the place I had to be. It's really sad. There's something about the location that was so magical to me in '96, when I moved there."

*Interactive design worker, 55 years old,
Los Angeles County*

GOAL 3 | Increase revenue to state and local areas through retention and promotion of cultural identity and tourism

COVID-19 closures deepened the investment drought in downtown and Main Street areas, threatening creative businesses' financial sustainability and survival. Restrictive land use regulations block the activation of spaces that could attract new enterprises, workers, and customers. Meanwhile, gentrification and rising costs threaten to erase local cultural identity. Strategies focus on two goals: increasing visibility and access for creative businesses at the local level, and partnering to facilitate their development and ownership. This approach will create vibrant cultural hubs that attract visitors, businesses, and workers, while preserving the authenticity and inclusivity of California's diverse creative spaces.

STRATEGIC THEMES

1. Develop new and expand existing place-based initiatives that ensure that every community has an artistic identity and arts within reach

- Expand the cultural district program, providing technical assistance and coalition-building to districts
- Establish an annual state designation for a different "California Creative Capital" to recognize and highlight creative sectors in locations around the state, particularly those in rural and underacknowledged areas
- Examine opportunities and requirements for establishing artist-owned districts where creatives own, manage, and govern their own communities through zoning regulation and investment
- Partner with departments such as the California Department of Transportation to bring visitors and greater visibility to cultural districts

2. Work with regional and local partners on initiatives to reduce barriers for arts, culture, and entertainment businesses to acquire spaces and put on events. Efforts may include policy to:

- Expedite community priority permitting processes and reduce costs for adaptive reuse or for change of use to a creative venue or business in cultural districts
- Increase the number of special-use districts that are zoned for arts, entertainment, and nightlife, or create zoning waivers for arts if a cultural benefit is provable
- Incentivize the reuse of existing buildings for public art, art studios, creative spaces, and nonprofit organizations to maintain and celebrate a historic sense of place
- Reform regulations related to noise ordinances, street closures, after-hour policies, sale of alcohol and THC products, and other relevant government services

3. Increase participation in and exposure to arts and culture to fuel demand for California creative products and events

- Offer state-funded vouchers to all K-12 public-school children to attend in-person art shows, theater, music, museums, and other cultural events or institutions
- Bring arts to every community in California and support longer contracts for artists by appropriating funding for projects that tour the state and visit rural areas

Examples

The California Cultural Districts and San Francisco Cultural Districts programs are examples of placemaking and placekeeping programs that preserve, strengthen, and promote cultural communities through increased visibility, cross-sector partnership support, and agency accessibility. Cultural districts are inherently about improving quality of life through both cultural and economic development activity.

The Creative Land Trust in the United Kingdom is a social enterprise aiming to obtain workspace for artists that would otherwise be unattainable. By securing 1,000 studios in London, the enterprise wants to build a financial and operating model to provide long-lasting, affordable studio space rentals.

The Bay Area's Community Arts Stabilization Trust provides stable rents, long-term leases, and pathways to ownership for creative workers, who need buildings and plenty of space for performances, producing art, and other creative endeavors.

France's "Pass Culture" program provides students with vouchers in order to sponsor cultural activities and education. The program initially targeted 18-year-olds but expanded in 2022 to include students ages 13 to 17. Students receive digital credits of €200 per student (spread over five years of schooling) to spend on cultural experiences including theater, museums, music lessons, and art supplies.

The City of New Orleans established a one-stop shop app for event permitting that allows organizers to search, apply, and track multiple permits and licenses through a single platform.

"San Bernardino is going through this transformation, and fortunately the arts community is part of the foundation of that rebuilding. Where we are located, there are three or four other arts-related businesses, and that is starting to bring people downtown. People are starting to spend money at local businesses."

*Educator, artist, and activist, 57 years old,
San Bernardino County*

"Create spaces from abandoned buildings, or turn whatever buildings that are not being used or are vacant into creative hubs. Turn those into spaces where people could come and feel like a community."

*Dancer, videographer, makeup and hair artist,
29 years old, Los Angeles County*

GOAL 4 | Leverage all state opportunities as incentives for local cultural and creative development

Promoters of arts, culture, and creative development at the local level lack access to and awareness of state-level support. Furthermore, government resources and programs offer limited opportunities for employment and funding for creatives working in fields such as health, climate, and disaster recovery. The following strategies will boost local activity by prioritizing creative workers in existing programs and rethinking financial and incentive models. They will also create opportunities for creative workers and help California effectively tackle challenges in health, disaster recovery, and climate resiliency.

STRATEGIC THEMES

1. Use a regional network approach to support infrastructure development by collaborating with regional planning efforts and Jobs First regional plans

- Audit existing state programs and opportunities to identify areas where cross-agency funding and other initiatives prioritize the creative economy
- Engage with Jobs First regional councils and staff to provide technical assistance and community connectivity

2. Develop creative financial mechanisms to support arts, culture, and entertainment.

For example:

- Reshape existing McCarty bill SB2720 (outlining a 1% tax for arts programs) to add incentive prioritization points for arts infrastructure investment around state-funded infrastructure projects, and include cultural plans in expenditure options
- Explore alternatives to grant-based financial support programs, such as equity-based investment models in which artists and creative businesses share revenue with the state, ensuring long-term sustainability

3. Support the integration of the creative workforce into other sectors.

This could include:

- Recognizing the role of arts and culture as a social determinant of health and a driver of well-being
- Launch an arts prescribing-type program that uses medical insurance, Medi-Cal, and California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) for arts and culture activities by allowing prescription reimbursement for cultural health interventions
- Integrate creatives in Community Health Workers (CHW)/Promotores work, and include artists in CHW engagement strategy
- Officially establish artists as second responders in disaster recovery efforts and integrate them into state emergency services

Examples

Stanford University established the Stanford Arts Prescribing Program, through which any student can receive an “arts prescription” from a participating “Art Pharmacy Care Navigator” for a dose of engagement in the arts in order to boost emotional well-being. Students can choose from a wide selection of prescreened activities and experiences, and the fees are covered by the university.

Los Angeles’s Destination Crenshaw’s networked approach to infrastructure unites community, arts, and economic development along the Crenshaw Corridor — transforming a transit project into a bold investment in Black public spaces, local businesses, and cultural expression.

Inclusive Action for the City is a nonprofit community development financial institution in Los Angeles that provides transformative capital to underinvested communities. By combining accessible funding with policy advocacy and community-led research, it supports economic models that shift power and resources toward historically marginalized groups.

“Every city needs entertainment. Every city needs art. And if you’re classified as a disadvantaged business enterprise, what contracts can I apply for as an artist? What can I add to the table? What [is] the state not think[ing] about because a lot of our elected officials are not creative? [For example], what can the high speed rail look like? How does that benefit us as a state and as artists?”

Performing arts director, 38 years old, Tulare County

“I’m able to teach different members of the community how to weave, whether it’s youth that are part of a mental health group, whether it’s women who are survivors of domestic violence, if it’s immigrants that have come here alone — what we call unaccompanied minors — or people who have fled trauma in their home countries ...I’m really able to work with these community members in providing these workshops, which we have found to be very therapeutic, very helpful.”

Textile artist, 28 years old, Ventura County

GOAL 5 | Define and track return on investment for the creative economy and creative workforce

There is no standard way to define or measure the creative economy's impact at the state level. While national models exist, state and local agencies and institutions use varied definitions and metrics, leading to inconsistent results. Data collection is also a challenge due to a lack of coordination and integration with existing datasets. Without regular tracking, progress cannot be measured. Strategies begin with adopting a statewide definition of creative economy that includes "return on imagination and innovation" impacts — value beyond economic returns, like social and health benefits. Training organizations and agencies to collect data will increase adoption and ensure more representative results. A standard set of measures, not to include personally identifiable information (PII), will help California invest wisely in its creative economy, target support more effectively, and showcase the true value of creative work at the state and local levels.

STRATEGIC THEMES

1. Develop a definition of California's creative economy that is inclusive of nonprofit and for-profit businesses and is in alignment with local, regional, and national frameworks

- Create a standard set of measures and frameworks in alignment with other agencies, national efforts, and federal code sets, including a definition of relevant industries
- Define and employ measures that are not solely economic, such as social benefits as a return on innovation or imagination

2. Build capacity for ongoing data collection, tracking, and reporting

- Establish a method for robust data collection on employment in the creative economy, especially related to short-term and sole-proprietor creative workers
- Provide technical assistance to support data collection response and accuracy
- Link efforts to other state agency databases, such as Cradle to Career, the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, and the Franchise Tax Board
- Partner with communities and local agencies to evaluate the impact of significant place-based and regional creative-sector initiatives, such as cultural districts and Creative Corps, with an emphasis on physical and mental health, civic health, social cohesion, and sense-of-belonging impacts

Examples

To gain insight into freelance and gig work, the California Labor Lab published “Employment in Arts and Related Occupations and Industries in California” using data from 4,014 working-age Californians interviewed in the California Work and Health Survey (CWHS) between November 2022 and May 2023.

JPMorgan Chase conducted the largest analysis of online platform earners to date, examining anonymized data from over 260,000 core checking-account customers who earned income on at least 30 platforms. This research provides detailed insights into how workers generate income through online platforms.

Americans for the Arts’s Animating Democracy program aims to demonstrate the public value of creative work that contributes to social change across sectors. Its “Continuum of Impact” guide suggests ways to define and measure the social and civic outcomes of arts and culture programs.

“Let’s bring artists to the room. They will have something valuable to bring to the table. And at the end of the day, that’s what this comes down to: Artists are valuable. They’re not just here to make something pretty. They’re not just here to entertain you. They are a valuable asset to your communities, to your states, to your countries. They are valuable.”

*Executive director of a youth arts organization,
34 years old, Monterey County*

“We’ve known for quite a while that the systems of identification and support within the arts and culture sector have limited our policy understanding of the creative workforce by its size, economic impact, role in our state’s larger innovation economy, and — perhaps most consequentially — impact on place and community. Collectively establishing a baseline definition of California’s creative economy will allow us to benchmark and measure success here in California and against other global economies that actively invest in creative industries, including Britain, Japan, China, South Korea, Colombia, Brazil, and South Africa.”

*Jonathon Glus, CEW member and director of
cultural affairs, City of San Diego*

GOAL 6 | Develop state and regional capacity and infrastructure to support the creative economy and creative economy strategic plan

Arts, culture, and creativity are interwoven into every sector, yet California's current political and financial environment threatens its creative infrastructure. Agencies lack the coordination and integration to implement this plan's recommendations effectively. Strategies that strengthen partnerships, communication, and collaboration between state agencies and at the regional level will create opportunities for investment and support the adoption of this plan. Adopting the strategies below will build resilient institutions that improve capacities for resource distribution, strengthen infrastructure statewide, and drive creative economy growth.

STRATEGIC THEMES

1. Promote the work of and invest in the capacity of existing agencies, State-Local Partners, and cultural hubs to ensure creative workers have knowledge of existing resources and to encourage others to build additional creative infrastructure

- Empower the CAC and other state and regional arts agencies to become financial intermediaries to support the establishment of equitable creative businesses, including community land trusts, cooperatives, and collectively owned platforms
- Evaluate state arts agency opportunities for relationship-building and collaboration with other agencies and state leadership, including cabinet members, to advance the plan and future of California's creative sectors
- Create stronger links between the California Arts Council and other state departments, such as the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, and California's Office of Small Business Advocate

2. Integrate the creative workforce into state and local agencies. Initiatives might include:

- Embedding creative workers in state government agencies to support special projects and strategy through expansion and scaling of cultural strategist/fellowship programs
- Integrating Native cultural leaders in land stewardship by placing Indigenous experts (basket-weavers, cultural-burn experts, food sovereignty workers) in policymaking positions related to land use and stewardship

Examples

New York City's Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment has several career development programs, including those focused on women in film, TV, and theater, and trainings for production assistants, post-production, animation, and other creative occupations.

South Africa has a minister of sport, arts, and culture in its national cabinet, ensuring that arts and culture is prioritized at the highest level of government.

San Diego adopted a regional model that integrates the creative workforce into both nonprofit arts and broader economic development systems through a shared policy-driven strategy. By embedding creative economy language across municipal and regional agencies, including workforce development, K-12 and higher education, and cultural policy, San Diego has created an aligned framework that not only centers creative workers but also allows for rapid, transparent responses to state programs. This approach enables the region to pilot state-level initiatives, foster local collaborations, and attract impact investments more effectively.

In 2024, the City of Oakland launched its third cycle of Cultural Strategists-in-Government program. The program seeks to co-create new ways of fulfilling equity aspirations by having city workers collaborate with cultural strategists rooted in communities most affected by systemic inequities, offering fresh perspectives to help shape a more just and inclusive Oakland.

“California is home to a vibrant network of local arts agencies, State-Local Partners, and arts service organizations that advance the state’s work at the local level, while communicating community needs and perspectives directly to state agencies and policymakers. Strengthening this cultural infrastructure – which works hand-in-hand with artists, nonprofits, creative businesses, and culture bearers – is one of the most powerful strategies in this plan and will be especially valuable for rural, under-resourced, and historically overlooked communities.”

*Jennifer Laine, CEW member and executive director,
San Benito County Arts Council*

Looking Ahead

The goals and strategic themes identified in this plan set the stage for increased public engagement and the development of a detailed implementation plan, which will begin in July 2025.

As we move into phase two, the CAC will prioritize relationship-building and coordination with state agencies and local and regional partners (including California Arts Council's State-Local Partners and State Regional Networks), data measurement definitions and strategies, convening a national creative economy data workgroup, and piloting Cultural Policy Fellowship strategies to embed creative workers in government. This work will be done with public feedback and involve deeper engagement at the regional and local level with artists and creative workers as well as businesses to capture local practices that highlight the culture and diversity of California's creative economy.

California's creative economy is evolving at a rapid pace. While this plan lays a solid foundation, relevant agencies must continue to collaborate on a coordinated cross-sector and regional approach to fully leverage its full economic and social potential to benefit all Californians for the next generation and beyond.

References

1. Adler, P. & Osman, T. (2025). [Otis College Update on the Creative Economy](#). Otis College Report on the Creative Economy.
2. [Creative Economy State Profiles](#) (n.d.). National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.
3. Adler, P. & Osman, T. (2025). [Otis College Update on the Creative Economy](#). Otis College Report on the Creative Economy.
4. [Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, California - 2023](#) (n.d.). Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts.
5. [California is now the 4th largest economy in the world](#) (2025). California Gov. Gavin Newsom.
6. [State Superintendent Tony Thurmond Announces Implementation of Proposition 28: Arts and Music in Schools](#) (2023). California Department of Education News Release.
7. [California Jobs First State Economic Blueprint](#) (2025). California Jobs First.
8. [Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, California - 2023](#) (n.d.). Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Endowment for the Arts.
9. [Creative Economy State Profiles](#) (n.d.). National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.
10. [Creative Economy Research](#) (2024). National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.
11. [Creative Economy State Profiles](#) (n.d.). National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.
12. [Measuring the Arts](#) (n.d.). National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center.
13. [California's Creative Economy: Key Highlights from 2023](#) (2024). Otis College Report on the Creative Economy. Otis College of Art and Design.
14. [CVL Economics](#) (n.d.).
15. [Artists in the Workforce: Selected Demographic Characteristics Prior to COVID 19](#) (2022). National Endowment for the Arts.
16. Fancourt D. & Finn S. (2019). [What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review](#). Copenhagen: World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe.
17. Walking D.J. (2012). [Fighting Poverty, Armed With Violins](#). The New York Times.
18. [Arts and Health](#) (n.d.). National Endowment for the Arts.
19. [Making Art, Making a Difference](#) (n.d.). California Arts in Corrections.
20. [Arts and Culture](#) (n.d.). Visit California.
21. Markusen, A., Gadwa, A., Barbour, E., Brewers, W. (2011). [California's Arts and Cultural Ecology](#). The James Irvine Foundation.
22. [AB 127](#) (California, 2023). Chaptered by Secretary of State, Chapter 45, Statutes of 2023. LegiScan.
23. [California Jobs First State Economic Blueprint](#) (2025). California Jobs First.
24. Brown, M., McKernan, S.M., Garon, T., Cohen, O., Harvey, C., Steurle, C.E., Biu, O. (2024). [Nine Charts about Wealth Inequality in America](#). Urban Institute.
25. [Share of Net Worth Held by the Top 0.1% \(99.9th to 100th Wealth Percentiles\)](#) (2025). Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System US.
26. Karamcheva, N. (2024). [Trends in the Distribution of Family Wealth, 1989 to 2022](#). Congressional Budget Office.
27. Parker, K., Horowitz, J.M., Brown, A., Fry, R., Cohn, D.V., Igielnik, R. (2018). [What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities](#). Pew Research Center.
28. Burn-Murdoch, J. (2024). [A New Global Gender Divide is Emerging](#). Financial Times.
29. Silver, L., Keeter, S., Kramer, S., Lippert, J., Hernandez Ramones, S., Cooperman, A., Baronavski, C., Webster, B., Nadeem, R., Chavda, J. (2025). [Americans' Trust in One Another](#). Pew Research Center.
30. Kannan, V.D., & Veazie P.J. (2022). [US trends in social isolation, social engagement, and companionship nationally and by age, sex, race/ethnicity, family income, and work hours, 2003–2020](#). SSM Population Health.
31. Cox, D.A. (2021). [The State of American Friendship: Change, Challenges, and Loss](#). Survey Center on American Life.
32. Armstrong, M. (2022). [Friendships: Less is now more](#). World Economic Forum.

33. Argo, N. & Sheikh, H. (2024). [The Belonging Barometer: The State of Belonging in America. Revised ed.](#) Over Zero and The American Immigration Council.
34. Cox, D.A. & Pressler, S. (2024). [Disconnected: The Growing Class Divide in American Civic Life.](#) Survey Center on American Life.
35. Sharkey, P. (2024). [Homebound: The Long-Term Rise in Time Spent at Home Among U.S. Adults.](#) Sociological Science.
36. [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation](#) (2023). The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community.
37. [Live Events Now A Luxury](#) (2025). Provoke Insights.
38. Thompson, D. (2025). [The Anti-Social Century.](#) The Atlantic.
39. Staley, W. (2024). [How Everyone Got Lost In Netflix's Endless Library.](#) The New York Times.
40. [Arts + Social Impact Explorer Fact Sheet: Arts+ Youth Education](#) (n.d.). Americans for the Arts.
41. [Culture and Social Wellbeing in New York City: Highlights of a Two Year Research Project](#) (2017). University of Pennsylvania Social Impact of the Arts Project.
42. [Arts in Corrections: County Jail Projects](#) (2017). California Lawyers for the Arts.
43. [The Arts and Civic Engagement](#) (2007). National Endowment for the Arts.
44. Tebes, J.K., Matlin, S.M., Hunter, B., Thompson, A.B., Prince, D.M., Mohatt, N. (2015). [Porch Light Program Final Evaluation Report.](#) Yale University School of Medicine.
45. Lee, D. (2013). [How the Arts Generate Social Capital to Foster Intergroup Social Cohesion.](#) The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society.
46. Palley, T. (2007). Working Paper No. 525, [Financialization: What It Is and Why It Matters.](#) The Levy Economics Institute.
47. Davis, G., Kim, S. (2015). [Financialization of the US Economy.](#) Annual Review of Sociology.
48. [Private Equity—2024 Review and 2025 Outlook](#) (2025). Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance.
49. Moss, S.M. (2025). [Renewed Optimism: Private Equity 2024 Year-In-Review and 2025 Industry Outlook.](#) Cherry Bekaert.
50. Singh, Y., Reddy, M., Zhu, J. (2024). [Life cycle of private equity investments in physician practices: an overview of private equity exits.](#) Health Affairs Scholar.
51. Gupta, A., Howell, S.T., Yannelis, C. [How Patients Fare When Private Equity Funds Acquire Nursing Homes.](#) National Bureau of Economic Research.
52. Olen, H. (2024). [Why Your Vet Bill is So High.](#) The Atlantic.
53. Schmidt, R. (2025). [Chicago parking meters have generated \\$2B for private company, audits show.](#) NBC 5 Chicago News.
54. Osman, J. (2025). [Why Private Equity Is Coming For Casual Dining.](#) Forbes.
55. Erskine, M.F. (2025). [Can Family Offices Apply Private Equity Discipline To Art And Collectibles Investments?](#) Forbes.
56. Rose, S. (2025). [Private equity sees opportunity in live entertainment.](#) Buy Out Insider.
57. deWaard, A. (2023). [Derivative Media: How Wall Street Devours Culture.](#) University of California Press.
58. Lutz, A. (2012). ["These 6 Corporations Control 90% Of The Media In America".](#) Business Insider.
59. Kramer, R. (2024). [When the Music Stops: Can Antitrust Law Dismantle Live Nation's Dominance?](#) Cornell Undergraduate Law & Society Review.
60. Rajkarnikar, P.J. (2022). [Mad Money: The Financialization and Rising Inequality of the US Economy.](#) Boston University Global Development Policy Center.
61. deWaard, A. (2023). [Derivative Media: How Wall Street Devours Culture.](#) University of California Press.
62. [Media And Consolidation Research Organization Lab data visualizations](#) (n.d.). University of California, San Diego.
63. Barker, J.D. (2025). [Streaming, Storytelling and the Future of Hollywood.](#) Rolling Stone.
64. Bessner, D. (2024). [The Life and Death of Hollywood.](#) Harper's Magazine.
65. deWaard, A. (2023). [Derivative Media: How Wall Street Devours Culture.](#) University of California Press.
66. Littleton, C. (2021). [Hollywood Has a Showrunner Apprentice Problem.](#) Variety.
67. [Arts Workers in California: Creating a More Inclusive Social Contract to Meet Arts Workers' and Other Independent Contractors' Needs](#) (2021). Urban Institute.
68. Levin, AG. (2025). [Economic Development Implications of Remote Work in the Post-Pandemic Environment, from the Congressional Research Service.](#) Congressional Research Service.
69. Keight, A. (2025). [PODS Moving Trends Report: Where Are People Moving to \(and From\) in 2025?](#) PODS.
70. Johnson, H., McGhee, E. (2025). [Who's Leaving California—and Who's Moving In?](#) Public Policy Institute of California.

71. Johnson, H., Bohn, S., McGhee, E. (2024). [How Has Remote Work Affected Migration around the State?](#) Public Policy Institute of California.
72. [Production is Fleeing Los Angeles: How Poor Policies Push Producers Away](#) (2024). FILMTAKE.
73. Yang, J., Briggs, A., Shakesprere, J., Spievack, N., Spaulding, S., Brown, S. (2021). [Arts Workers in California](#). Urban Institute.
74. Barton, Stephanie (2025). [Five Fast Facts on the Cost of Living in California](#). Public Policy Institute of California.
75. Christopher, B., Tobias, M. (2024). [Californians: Here's why your housing costs are so high](#). CalMatters.
76. Bentz, Alex (2025). [California Housing Affordability Tracker \(1st Quarter 2025\)](#). The California Legislature's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor.
77. Bentz, Alex (2025). [California Housing Affordability Tracker \(1st Quarter 2025\)](#). The California Legislature's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor.
78. Barton, Stephanie (2025). [Five Fast Facts on the Cost of Living in California](#). Public Policy Institute of California.
79. [Otis College Update on the Creative Economy](#) (2025). Otis College of Art and Design.
80. Bourton, Lucy (2023). [Shades of Intelligence: 83% of creatives are already using machine learning tools – is now the time to get on side with AI?](#) It's Nice That.
81. [Streaming Reaches Historic TV Milestone. Eclipses Combined Broadcast and Cable Viewing For First Time](#) (2025). Nielsen.
82. Cramer-Flood, Ethan (2025). [US Time Spent With Media 2025](#). EMARKETER.
83. Entertainment Software Association (2025). [Essential Facts about the US Video Game Industry](#).
84. Thompson, Derek (2025). [The Anti-Social Century](#). The Atlantic.
85. [Creators Uncovered: Insights from a Nationally Representative Study of US Creators](#) (2023). The Keller Advisory Group.
86. Shaw, Lucas (2024). [The Next Wave of Music Industry Consolidation Is Here](#). Bloomberg.
87. Whiting, Kate (2024). [This is how AI is impacting – and shaping – the creative industries, according to experts at Davos](#). World Economic Forum.
88. Mullinax, Hope (2023). [Dreamworks Co-Founder Thinks 90% of Animation Labor Could Be Cut With AI](#). Collider.
89. Merchant, Brian (2024). [AI is Already Taking Jobs in the Video Game Industry](#). Wired.
90. [Who we are](#) (n.d.). Meow Wolf.
91. [Sphere](#) (n.d.). The Sphere.
92. Tomaselli, A., Acar, O. (2024). [How GenAI Changes Creative Work](#). MIT Sloan Management Review.
93. [Heat at work: Implications for safety and health](#) (2024). International Labour Organization.
94. Parshley, Lois (2023). [As climate risks mount, the insurance safety net is collapsing](#). Grist.
95. [Los Angeles County's Climate Cost Challenge](#) (2024). The Center for Climate Integrity.
96. Brecht, Robert (n.d.). [The Impact of Climate Change on Outdoor Music Events](#). TSE Entertainment.
97. Dressel, J., Sweeney, L. (2023). [How Have Art Museums Been Impacted by Climate Change?](#) Ithaka S+R.
98. Jowett, Patrick (2025). [Los Angeles wildfires devastate local arts scene](#). Arts Professional.
99. Jowett, Patrick (2025). [Los Angeles wildfires devastate local arts scene](#). Arts Professional.
100. Siegel, Jeremy (2018). [California's Tourism Industry Hit Hard by Wildfires](#). KQED.
101. Lee, Katrice (2022). [Museums have a role to play in climate resilience](#). CalMatters.
102. Siembieda, Danielle (2024). [San José Climate Art Program](#). City of San José Office of Cultural Affairs.
103. Carson, Bear (2018). ["Beauty and the Beast": Art and Climate Change at California's Grace Hudson Museum](#). National Trust for Historic Preservation.
104. [Guided Freelance Cooperative](#)
105. [Social Security Insurance for Artists and Writers](#) (2025). Künstlersozialkasse.
106. [California Arts Council 2022 California Creative Corps Administering Organization Program Descriptions](#) (2022). California Arts Council.
107. [Illinois Live Theater Production Tax Credit Program](#) (n.d.). Illinois Department of Commerce and Economy Opportunity.
108. [£380m funding package announced in Creative Industries Sector Plan](#) (2025). Creative Industries Council.
109. [Celebrating the breadth and diversity of California's extensive cultural assets](#) (2025). California Cultural Districts.
110. [The San Francisco Cultural Districts Program](#) (n.d.). City and County of San Francisco.
111. [Strategy 2021-2025: Making Space for Art](#) (n.d.). Creative Land Trust.
112. [Community Arts Stabilization Trust](#).
113. [France: The Culture Pass for secondary school pupils](#) (2022). European Commission.

114. [One Stop App](#) (n.d). City of New Orleans.
115. [Stanford Arts Prescribing Program](#). Office of the Vice President for the Arts.
116. [Destination Crenshaw](#).
117. [Inclusive Action for the City](#).
118. Yelin, E., Iley, T., Trupin, L., Lafrance, A., Rhee, N., Mac, I.V. (n.d.), [Employment in Arts and Related Occupations and Industries in California](#). California Labor Lab.
119. [The Online Platform Economy: Who earns the most?](#) (2016). JPMorgan Chase.
120. [Animating Democracy](#). Americans for the Arts.
121. [Women's Fund for Media, Music & Theatre](#). New York City's Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment.
122. [Creative Economy in the San Diego Region](#). San Diego Regional Policy Center and the City of San Diego.
123. [Cultural Strategist-in-Government Program](#). Oakland Fund for Public Innovation.

Appendix

Additional materials from this project can be found at
<https://arts.ca.gov/programs/creative-economy-workgroup/>

FORESIGHT | Creative Economy Workgroup Meeting 1

Friday, May 17, 2024 | Santa Monica, California | Annenberg Community Beach House

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Packet](#)
- [Meeting Summary](#)

INSIGHT | Creative Economy Workgroup Meeting 2

Tuesday, October 15, 2024 | San Juan Bautista, California | El Teatro Campesino

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Packet](#)
- [Meeting Summary](#)

ACTION | Creative Economy Workgroup Meeting 3

February 19-20, 2025 | Sacramento, California | Studio T Arts & Entertainment Innovation Factory

- [Agenda](#)
- [Meeting Packet](#)
- [Meeting Summary](#)

California's Creative Economy: Research Review and Current State Analysis

Prepared for the California Arts Council by Institute for the Future
Draft, July 8, 2024

Partial List of State Initiatives For Creative Workforce and Economic Development

Below is a partial list of current programs and initiatives focused on California's creative economy, prepared by the California Arts Council.

- **[California Apprenticeship Initiative \(CAI\)](#)**: Launched by the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) in 2016, this grant program supports the development of apprenticeships in nontraditional sectors such as health care, education, and technology, and boosts diversity, equity, and inclusion in apprenticeship. This supports apprenticeship planning, implementation, and expansion for secondary institutions and community colleges.
- **[Apprenticeship Innovation Funding \(AIF\)](#)**: Introduced in 2022 under the Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (IACA) to help sustain and grow new and innovative apprenticeship. This fund has allocated \$95 million to date and reimburses apprenticeship program sponsors at a rate of \$3,500 per apprentice per year, with an additional \$1,000 per apprenticeship completion. AIF also funds local education agencies for training apprentices at a rate of \$9.98 per training hour for those trained in 2023. Rates are updated annually.
- **[Related and Supplemental Instruction Reimbursement Program \(RSI\)](#)**: For the 2023-2024 budget year, this program had \$93 million in funding for CCCCCO to reimburse local education agencies (LEAs) for the hours of instruction they provide to apprentices at a rate of \$9.98 per training hour. AIF-T and RSI are benchmarked to each other, and LEAs can only fund the training of apprentices through RSI, AIF-T or Full Time Equivalent Student Funding (FTES), but cannot double-collect across these categories.
- **[California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship Grant \(COYA\)](#)**: Established under 2023's [California Senate Bill 191](#) and is dedicated exclusively to serve opportunity youth. The program earmarked \$40 million for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship grants to serve youth who are disconnected from the education, employment, and housing systems. The first grant awards were announced in July 2024.

- K-12 **Strong Workforce Program**: Commencing with the 2018–19 fiscal year, \$150 million was allocated to the California Community College Chancellor’s Office on an annual and ongoing basis to K-12 LEAs through the K-12 Strong Workforce Program (K-12 SWP) to create, support, or expand high-quality CTE at the K-12 level (Education Code, Section 88827), which can include pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships.
- **Golden State Pathways Program**: In 2022, the California Legislature passed the Golden State Pathways Program Grant Act (California Education Code 53020–53025). The purpose of the Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP) is to provide K-12 LEAs with the resources to promote pathways in high-wage, high-skill, high-growth areas, including technology, health care, education, and climate-related fields that, among other things, allow pupils to advance seamlessly from high school to college and career and provide the workforce needed for economic growth. In 2024, \$500 million was allocated, with \$470 million going directly to LEAs.
- **CTE Incentive Grant**: California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program (California Education Code 53070 - 53076.4) is a state education, economic, and workforce development initiative with the goal of providing K-12 pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to transition to employment and postsecondary education. The purpose of the competitive program is to encourage, maintain, and strengthen the delivery of high-quality career technical education programs. In the 2023-24 school year, \$300 million was allocated.
- **California Adult Education Program (CAEP)** supports high quality programs and practices developed through the integration of K-12 adult education and community college resources on a regional level that are uniquely suited to equip all available workers with the tools they need to contribute to California’s economic growth. There are close to 400 CAEP members and more than 1,000 community partners within the 71 consortia that work synergistically through their multiple partner locations in every part of the state to create available access points for adult learners.
- **California Creative Corps (CCC)** is a \$60 million investment in infrastructure development and creative-worker job creation to support media, outreach, and engagement campaigns to increase awareness of four community issue areas, including public health, civic engagement, climate issues, and social justice. The goal is to increase the ways in which artists are engaged in public work and demonstrate the power of the creative workforce. Fourteen administering organizations have distributed over \$46 million to over 300 artists and 1,000 organizations throughout the state.

- **California Arts Council Cultural District Program (CAC)** is an initiative started in 2015 to develop, support, and preserve California’s extensive and diverse cultural assets through official state designation and an initial investment so that communities can leverage the state’s considerable assets to promote arts and culture locally. The first cohort of 14 districts were certified in 2017. They received an annual stipend of \$5,000 and state-designation for five years. Districts are located throughout the state, in both rural and urban centers as far south as San Diego and as far north as Nevada County. Each of the designated districts is required to have and cultivate a strong triad of partnerships between local government, arts/cultural organizations, and artists, and a proven capacity for community engagement and economic growth. In 2022, CAC was able to provide greater financial support and an extension of designation for an additional five years through a one-time investment of \$10 million.
- **Film and Television Tax Credit Program 4.0 (California Film Commission; GO-Biz)**: As a one-stop resource for film and TV production across the state, CFC administers the Tax Credit 4.0 program that provides tax credits based on qualified expenditures for eligible productions that are produced in California. The program was reauthorized for an additional five years. Since 2009, this program has brought over \$27 billion in California expenditures and secured over 209,000 cast and crew jobs in the state. Each fiscal year, \$750 million in tax credits are allocated to TV projects, relocating TV, indie features, and non-indie features. Applications are reviewed and approved via a jobs ratio ranking – a process to identify projects most likely to increase jobs and economic activity in the state.
- **The California Natural Resources Agency’s Museum Grant Program (Natural Resources Board)** provides funding for small capital projects at museums in California. The program’s goals are to support museums that are reflective of and rooted in underserved communities, and to support COVID recovery for those severely impacted. The 2021 legislation supports \$50 million in funding.
- **California Competes Tax Credit Unit (CCTC; GO-Biz)**: The California Competes Tax Credit (CCTC) is an income tax credit available to businesses that want to locate in California or stay and grow in California. Businesses of any industry, size, or location compete for over \$180 million available in tax credits by applying in one of the three application periods each year. Applicants will be analyzed based on 14 different factors of evaluation, including number of full-time jobs being created, amount of investment, and strategic importance to the state or region.
- **The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (California Office of the Small Business Advocate; GO-Biz)**: A State Treasury program established in 2024 to support small nonprofit performing arts organizations (SNPAOs) in hiring and retaining employees by reimbursing a portion of their payroll costs. SNPAOs include nonprofit local theaters, performing arts education organizations, performing arts event coordinators, local performing arts councils, and related organizations. The fund will provide over \$11 million in grants.

- **California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA)**: The California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) supports economic growth by providing resources and support to the state’s 4.1 million small businesses, including nonprofits and startups. Its mission is to help all California small business-owners find and navigate resources, programs, and regulations so they can start, manage, grow, become more resilient, and thrive. By ensuring equitable access to capital, markets, and networks, it aims to help democratize access to capital, diversify the innovation economy and drive economic mobility through entrepreneurship.
- **Governor’s California Jobs First initiative (The Office of Regional Economic Development Initiatives; GO-Biz)**: Part of the \$600 million Regional Investment Initiative, Jobs First provides \$182 million to 13 collaboratives across the state. The initiative aims to promote economic growth and job creation, providing technical assistance to regional partners in implementing their economic strategies, and developing and executing California’s statewide economic development road map. As of June 2024, the program has 159,000 job creation commitments, with \$50 billion in private investment and over 1,000 awards over the past 10 years.
- **Proposition 28: The Arts and Music in Schools (AMS) Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act (California Dept of Education)**: A voter-approved initiative that requires ongoing funding to support arts instruction in schools beginning in 2023–24. The legislation allocates 1% of K-12 school funding from the prior fiscal year to guarantee additional arts education programming. The bulk of funds must be used to hire experienced arts education staff, with smaller proportions for training, supplies materials, and participation in arts educational partnership programs.
- **Visit California**: A nonprofit organization that develops and maintains marketing programs – in partnership with the state’s travel industry – that promote travel to, and within, California. Arts and culture are promoted as part of marketing and branding of California travel/tourism.

The U.S. Department of Labor and the Employment Training Administration also run rounds of the [Workforce Pathways for Youth](#) and [YouthBuild](#) grants each year. Youthbuild is now open to occupations beyond construction trades.