
ARTS AND CULTURE ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT BOARD MEETING MAY 4, 2022

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Create an Arts and Culture Economic Recovery Strategy that will function as a guiding document for regional partners to align work to support arts and culture organizations.

Completion date: June 30, 2022

PROJECT ELEMENTS

- Advisory Committee
- Interviews with cities and counties, employers, partners, guilds
- Secondary workforce data analysis
- Cultural Workforce Survey and focus groups
- Scan of National and Global strategies

INITIAL INSIGHTS

- Arts and culture was one of the hardest hit sectors and audiences and revenues still have not fully returned.
- Employment continues to lag, though total wages are recovering – highlighting inequity on the recovery path.
- Nearly one-quarter of cultural workers work outside the sector for additional income, more predictable income, or benefits.
- Only about one-third of cultural workers have seen arts and culture income return to pre-pandemic levels.
- About 30% are considering leaving the sector in the next 1-3 years, and 15% are considering leaving the Puget Sound region.
- Cultural workers' areas of greatest concern:
 - Wages
 - Affordable Housing
 - Affordable Benefits

Trends in Puget Sound Arts and Culture Employment, Wages and Revenues

	2019-20	2020-21
Employment	-26%	-1%
Wages	-9%	6%
Revenues	-23%	4%

Sources: Washington State Employment Security Department (2019-22); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019-22); High Peak Strategy LLC (2022).

WORKERS VOICES

Because of the odd hours often involved with arts sector work, **access to childcare for working parents is essential to retaining them in the workforce.**

Prior to the pandemic, my workplace had an in-house childcare facility that provided free child care while I was teaching. They eliminated this option during the pandemic and will not be bringing it back..

We need to provide more livable wages in our sector to encourage BIPOC candidates to work with us. The arts continue to be a place where privileged, white, cis-gendered people can afford to work/intern for free and as such they make up the majority of our workforce. **Equity starts with better wages/benefits to encourage diversity which promotes inclusion.**

It needs to be valued publicly. We spent 18+ months without ANY performances/concerts - **if we do not protect and support the cultural orgs we will become [a] boring and more undesirable city to live in !!**

We need to get the state, especially L&I and ESD, to list arts and culture workers as actual occupations. As a stagehand, I was required to lie on the application and say I was an AV operator. **Accessing benefits is very hard when they think your occupation doesn't exist.**

PRIORITIES AND INITIAL STRATEGY AREAS

Equity

Transformation and Innovation

Regionally shared resources and platforms

Partnerships for space, data, income opportunities, and networking

Case-making and cultural policy

Coordinated messaging and data for funders, policy makers, and audiences to support a resilient business model

Support for cultural workers

Programs supporting wages, housing, and benefits access for recruitment and retention of workers

Quality of life

Activate public spaces and civic life. Engage major employers and economic development community

DISCUSSION AND GUIDANCE

- Which strategy areas stand out to you and what is your guidance for continued exploration of these areas?
- How does a focus on Arts and Culture integrate with your own economic development scope? What have you seen be successful?
- What would you like to see by June 30 and how can PSRC position for opportunities after June 30?

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT TEAM

BERK Consulting Team

- Vivien Savath
- Allegra Calder
- Katharine Goetz
- Spencer Cohen, High Peak Strategy LLC

PSRC

- Noah Boggess
- Jason Thibedeau

Advisory Committee

- Sarah Sidman, ArtsFund
- Kari Johnson, Snohomish County Arts Commission
- Kate McKenzie, Snohomish County Arts Commission
- David Fischer, Tacoma Arts Live
- Lee Reyes, Kitsap County
- Elizabeth MacPherson, Mithun
- Amy Chasanov, 5th Ave Theatre
- Annique Bennett, Snohomish County
- Joe McIlwain, Edmonds Center for the Arts
- Joshua Heim, 4Culture