

The Capital, Repairs, and Employment for Art Talent to Improve Visibility Everywhere (CREATIVE) Act

Introduced by: Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici

Endorsed by: Americans for the Arts, Arts Action Fund, Grantmakers in the Arts, Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon, National Association for Music Education (NAfME), National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), American Alliance of Museums, WESTAF

The arts are an integral part of a community's social and cultural fabric. Improving the quality and availability of arts facilities and arts-related programming has the potential to enrich lives, grow local economies, and provide people with opportunities for creative expression, socioeconomic mobility, and authentic community-building. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2020 the arts constituted a nearly trillion-dollar industry that supported 4.6 million jobs and represented over four percent of the U.S. economy.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, arts organizations and the facilities that house their programming and exhibitions experienced catastrophic declines in revenues, attendance, and their ability to retain employees and produce art. According to Americans for the Arts, organizations that primarily employ artists of color were more likely than other arts organizations to lack the financial resources needed to return to in-person programming. Fortunately, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a critical source of federal funding for local arts organizations, provided many local and state arts agencies and nonprofit arts organizations with grants to support pandemic recovery. Arts organizations used this funding to maintain and improve their facilities, retain artists and other workers, and continue the production of programs and performances. The NEA's emergency support for arts organizations during the pandemic and its longstanding grant programs render the NEA instrumental in advancing arts and culture in the United States.

The *Capital, Repairs, and Employment for Art Talent to Improve Visibility Everywhere (CREATIVE) Act* builds on the NEA's critical support for local arts agencies (LAAs) and arts organizations by expanding their grantmaking capacity. Specifically, the *CREATIVE Act* would:

- Expand Access to Capital for Facilities: Providing LAAs, museums, and 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organizations with the eligibility to apply for and receive one of three grants of up to \$5 million from a newly authorized, \$100 million NEA program to construct and acquire new facilities, maintain and improve existing facilities, or hire staff or produce art at existing facilities;
- Seek Community Input: Requiring eligible entities to include in their application information such as how the eligible entity's arts programs will benefit the community served by the eligible entity, how the entity will solicit input from diverse stakeholders, and how the entity will continue to operate its facility once grant funds have expired;
- Reach Underserved Communities: Assigning priority based on factors such as having limited accessibility to the arts, expressing a desire to produce art that is underrepresented in popular culture, being located in a rural community, having limited financial means to self-fund such projects, and proposing to further art education for the population served by the eligible entity;
- Create Strong Guardrails: Promoting accountability for grant funds by instituting reporting requirements and a procedure for returning unused or misspent funds to the Chairperson of the NEA; and
- Prioritize Rural Outreach: Directing the Chairperson of the NEA to reserve at least 20 percent of total grant funds for distribution to eligible entities located in rural communities.