



OREGON'S CREATIVE & CULTURAL DISTRICTS PILOT PROGRAM

WHAT IS A CREATIVE & CULTURAL DISTRICT?

A Creative or Cultural District is an area with a high concentration of arts and/or cultural facilities and events that serve as anchors of attraction within their community. The district reflects the community's unique cultural heritage through its built environment and history, showcasing the region's artists and cultural traditions while increasing social engagement and visitors. Creative & Cultural Districts are found in all types of communities from small and rural to large and urban. They are created by the community to advance the community's goals.



Hillsboro Cultural Arts District

Creative & Cultural Districts are a **catalyst for regional investment** ranging from downtown revitalization, localized economic development and recovery measures, and serve as an incentive for new or relocating businesses. The role Creative & Cultural Districts play in providing a vibrant and appealing environment is a major factor in retaining young citizens and their families, attracting a creative workforce, and positioning the community as a cultural tourism destination while supporting existing residents.

Music, dance and theater events, artists' studios and galleries, historic buildings and museums, and street fairs and festivals contribute to the **quality of life** for residents and visitors alike. Creative & Cultural Districts entice people out of their homes into vibrant social spaces where families and neighbors engage with their local talent and cultural assets. Creative & Cultural Districts can offer opportunities for children, youth and adults to experience lifelong learning through the arts.

Districts are led by the community and provide **community-driven solutions** to local problems and needs. Often communities create districts as way to **retain and recruit artists, beautify downtowns, encourage visitation, and engage and elevate underserved communities**. Communities will have increased success in reaching

their goals with this type of intentional planning among a diverse group of stakeholders.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CULTURE IN OREGON

Arts and culture related spending pumps vital revenue into local restaurants, hotels and retail establishments. The most recent economic impact study conducted by the Oregon Arts Commission and Americans for the Arts provides compelling evidence that nonprofit arts and cultural institutions are a significant industry in the State of Oregon; one that generates \$687 million in economic activity statewide. The investment of \$364.1 million by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and an additional \$323 million in event related spending by their audiences supports 22,299 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$469.5 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$53 million in local and state government revenue. The study also refers to the impact of cultural tourism, stating that non-resident audiences spend more than twice as much as resident audiences, demonstrating that when a community attracts cultural tourists, it gains significant economic rewards.



Art Toledo, OR

VISION FOR A STATE-DESIGNATED PROGRAM

A state-designated Creative & Cultural Districts program would allow the Oregon Arts Commission to support communities in achieving their economic, community development and tourism goals related to arts, culture and business. A state-designated program would provide technical assistance, marketing and grants to support communities in this work.

Districts develop through the work of a broad group of stakeholders working together to create goals and programs/projects that support a shared vision their community. This includes representation from local municipalities, artists, arts and cultural leaders, economic development, tourism and community members. They work to identify community needs and problems and build a vision and plan for their Creative or Cultural District. Existing cultural assets and programs (e.g. Cultural Plans, Main Street, indigenous place names, events and celebrations) could be included in the planning process.

The Arts Commission is working with [Cultural Planning Group](#) to model a statewide program. Informed by dozens of interviews with stakeholders, research into existing programs in the US, and in consultation with other statewide cultural programs (e.g. Main Street Program), Cultural Planning Group has created program framework that the Arts Commission will utilize to implement the program.

PILOT PROGRAM

The Oregon Arts Commission plans to pilot this program in in 2-5 communities across the state to support the development and/or expansion of their districts while learning best practices to inform our statewide program. Communities will work with the Arts Commission directly in the development of their project, organizational structure, and key metrics and outcomes.

In addition to partnership with the pilot communities, the Arts Commission is building a technical assistant program for any community across the state that wishes to participate, including exploratory, emerging and existing districts. Technical assistance will include convenings, direct consultation, site visits, workshops, and support in planning, program development, marketing and evaluation.

Each participating pilot community would benefit from \$200,000 for the biennium to support projects in the community, organizational capacity and marketing/branding.



Changui Majadero at Sisters Folk Festival

EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAMS IN OTHER STATES

- Louisiana: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gs-j7l8R2s>
- Oceanside, CA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN10tHhtdzo>
- Austin, TX: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qicdY-VFSk>
- Paducah, KY: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXS6njzdsGY>
- Colorado Springs, CO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaQwoAEmPQI>

Oregon Examples in Development

- Hillsboro, OR- The [City of Hillsboro](#) recently hired a Cultural Arts District Manager to coordinate stakeholders, develop new events, increase public art and market cultural activities in their district.
- Toledo, OR- The City of Toledo contracted with a consultant to engage community stakeholders in creating an [arts district](#) in conjunction with their Main Street.

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