August 10, 2020

Jobs Creation Strategies and Actionable Items for the Arts Sector

1. Employ Artists and Arts Organizations for Local Communication Strategies for Public Health Mandates

**Problem:** Cases of COVID 19 are rising in California and despite the government’s best efforts to mandate guidelines for public safety, communities across California are struggling to communicate the efficacy of the mandates. California is expansive and diverse and each community needs its own local strategy. Wearing masks and social distancing requires massive behavioral change.

**Solution:** Artists are persuasive communicators. Arts organizations are trusted community partners. Contract both to create targeted community based campaigns to comply with public health mandates.

**Actionable item:** We propose to establish a one-time grant fund of $5 million inside of the California Arts Council (CAC) to commission artists and trusted community arts organizations to create a public health campaign to increase awareness of, and compliance with, public health mandates. The CAC would distribute the funds to State Local Partners already identified in 53 out of 58 counties and work to find 5 other community partners in the remaining counties. The grants would instruct SLPs to hire local artists to create the campaigns and to hire local arts organizations to distribute the messaging.

2. Generate Jobs through a Statewide Training Program: CACreativeCorps

**Problem:** California’s economic and civic recovery will depend on rapidly returning as many people as possible to work. California’s $650 billion creative economy is the largest in the world with 2.7 million, or 15.4% of all jobs in California but COVID-19 has brought much of it to a standstill. Our state’s creative gathering places and producers,
including theaters, museums, concert venues, film & TV projects and community spaces will likely be the last to reopen at full capacity.

**Solution:** Develop an artists as essential worker program a **CACreativeCorps**. Contract community based arts organizations in counties across California already engaged in arts integration of social service based programs to train recent highschool and college graduates for programs such as artists in schools/distance learning, artists in affordable and senior housing/infrastructure projects, artists in health care, arts integrated into homeless provider programs, transportation and public safety using their creativity and skills related to social-emotional learning, cultural competency, trauma informed practice, and inspirational thinking to integrate into many aspects of recovery.

This updated works program would not only illustrate the value of the creative sector and the artist as essential workers and contributors to overcoming California’s greatest challenges but also keep this vital creative workforce off unemployment and facing homelessness. A 2016 study from the Center on Poverty and Inequality at Georgetown concluded that subsidized employment programs can be extremely effective in getting people into the job market and helping them stay there. The study also found subsidized employment programs have improved the school outcomes of workers’ children and lowered criminal-justice-system involvement among participants.

**Actionable item:** Establish an inter-agency California Creative Work, Training and Community Recovery Task Force to incorporate creative sector interventions into all aspects of California’s recovery and to build the CACreativeCorps. Create an immediate $1 million one time grant program to be administered by the CAC for up to 20 existing community based arts integration social service providers to build the training programs across the state.

### 3. Repurpose Existing Cultural Facilities

**Problem:** Arts and culture venues with live performance are unable to open to full capacity until Phase 4. These venues rely on earned income. Lawmakers are less likely to spend tax payers money to keep venues closed.

**Solution:** Repurpose the venues to act as classrooms for staggered school districts, child care, mental health and homeless services and facilities and for testing and information centers for public health and community conversations.

**Actionable item:** Create a roundtable with venues across the state and the Newsom Administration to determine best use of facilities to serve to benefit the state. If there is agreement on applicable usage, create a statewide entertainment facility repurpose program with government contracts to pay for usage.
4. Provide Low or No Cost Access to the Arts and compensate Artists and Arts Organizations for their Services

**Problem:** The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating existing inequities around accessing the arts and increasing our mental health crisis. At the same time arts organizations and artists continue to provide lifeline services to their constituents and are providing valuable free online content but have not been able to monetize this adaptation. Venues want to re-open but only when it is safe to do. In some counties there will opportunities to open with limited capacity and some will wait until Phase 4. Audiences may be hesitant to attend live performances and with a financial crisis and rising unemployment it is anticipated there will be a decrease in audience spending.

**Solution:** Model the National Museums for All program to “CA Arts for All”. According to California Association of Museums (CAM) there are 59 museums in California that currently offer free or discounted admission to people with EBT cards through a national Museums for All program. If the state wanted to promote and expand this program to all cultural organizations across California, they could develop an audience subsidies grant through the CAC to provide low- and no-cost engagement and entertainment opportunities for residents when venues are able to re-open. The funds could be allocated as grants now to help with cash flow. In addition grants could be given to provide free online programming as part of the “CA Arts for All” program. This would help to keep organizations open, employ artists and provide valuable programming with mental health benefits for all residents.

**Actionable item:** Develop a “CA Arts for All” grant program to be distributed by the CAC.

5. Employ artists and community cultural organizations in neighborhood revitalization, infrastructure projects and housing initiatives

**Problem:** California is facing a housing crisis as well as the need for ongoing infrastructure improvements to our schools, state parks, libraries and other public buildings.

**Solution:** As we look to deploy workforces programs through potential Federal Stimulus grant monies and potential ballot measures such as Schools and Communities First, and in order to improve our aging roads, bridges, schools, community centers, libraries, neighborhoods, housing and transportation hubs, artists should be employed to provide input, design, artworks and community cultural connections.

**Actionable item:** Designate 5% of all state and local government infrastructure or capital projects to employ artists and cultural organizations to provide input, design, artworks and community cultural connections.
6. **Artists in Residence in State Government**

**Problem:** Artists are underutilized workers and should be leveraged to help in state plans to related to resilience and recovery, continuing their work as part of the solution across multiple platforms and state agencies.

**Solution:** Embed artists into state agencies/departments for a sustained period of time to help provide innovative or new process improvements, creatively tackle a specific challenge of the department, and/or engage public stakeholders around community issues in creative ways and to advance civic dialogue and foster innovation in government through artist employment.

**Actionable item:** Identify host state agencies then host agencies should identify a unit or office with a specific opportunity to benefit from the program goals. Host agencies decide on a broad population, challenge, or goal the agency wishes to focus on and develop a needs statement.

- Contract with artists who would be paired with host agencies, using equity criteria
- Artists would have the opportunity to respond to specific host agency needs statements in their proposal. Artists would be reviewed based on set criteria related to their artistic practice, community representation, and interest/knowledge of the governmental issue to be addressed by the residency.
- Prioritize equity for artists representing marginalized communities, such as: Low-income, rural, age, formerly incarcerated