

Dear Chairman Stewart and Members of the House Finance Committee,

We are writing today in support of CreativeOhio's budget amendment (HC2124) to increase the Ohio Arts Council's 2026-2027 biennial budget. The arts have proven to be a great return on investment for Ohio—creating jobs, generating tax revenue, attracting business and talent, and bringing dollars into the state while driving tourism. This amendment will ensure that ROI remains strong and uninterrupted.

As proposed in the Executive budget, the flat-line level of funding for the Council's sustainability grants will lead to significant reductions in operating budgets for hundreds of existing sustainability grantees statewide. This erosion in support happens because 193 new organizations have become eligible for sustainability grants in the new biennium. Bottom line, funding at just a continuation level and accommodating new grantees necessarily results in diminished support for existing recipients of sustainability funding. A preliminary estimate indicates the reductions on average would be as high as 15 percent.

CreativeOhio's proposed amendment HC2124 ensures there will not be significant reductions for currently funded organizations, including the world-renowned cultural assets in our major cities, as well as the community centers providing some of the only arts programming available in our more rural counties. It also strengthens Ohio's arts eco-system by investing in new organizations statewide that will further increase the sector's economic impact.

Despite being disproportionately, negatively affected by the COVID pandemic, Ohio's creative sector has rebounded. A new economic impact study released earlier this year shows in 2024, our creative sector directly contributed more than \$32.9B to the state's economy, employed more than 132,000 people, and generated nearly \$923M in state and local tax revenue. The creative sector accounts for more than 3% of the state's GDP, more than education or agriculture. Your vote to increase biennial appropriations will ensure our state's creative industry can continue to produce these economic contributions to Ohio's economy.

We urge you to support Amendment HC2124 to increase the Ohio Arts Council's 2026-2027 biennial budget.

Thank you for your consideration and vote.

The CreativeOhio Board of Directors



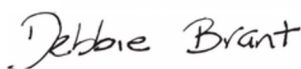
**Elizabeth Brown-Ellis**  
Executive Director,  
Lima Symphony Orchestra



**Stacie Boord**  
CEO,  
Shadowbox Live



**Rebekah Beaulieu, Ph.D.**  
President & CEO  
Taft Museum of Art



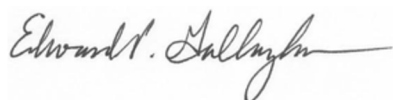
**Deborah Brant**  
President & CEO,  
Cincinnati Ballet



**Heather Clow**  
Executive Director, Marathon  
Center for the Performing  
Arts



**Rachel Fink**  
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**Ed Gallagher**  
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**Colleen Houston**  
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**Jack Jackson**  
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**Sue Porter**  
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**Rhonda Sewell**  
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**Chad Stearns**  
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Modo Media



**Chad Whittington,**  
President and CEO, Columbus  
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