

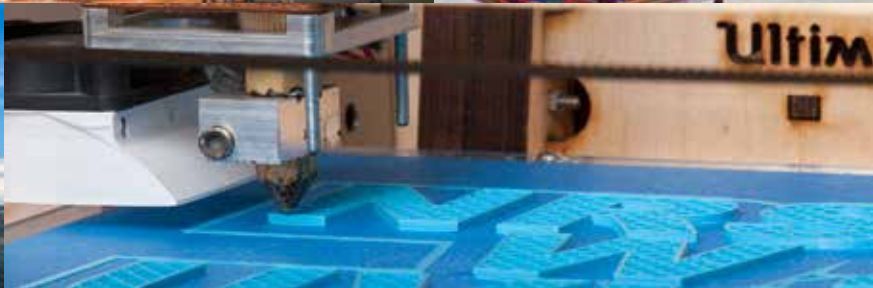
COLORADO

FRONT RANGE

CREATIVE ECONOMY

ASSET ANALYSIS REPORT

2019



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COLORADO & THE FRONT RANGE

CREATIVE ECONOMY ASSET ANALYSIS

*Understanding & Meeting the Needs of
Creative Entrepreneurs*



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
PURPOSE & CONTEXT	4
→ Colorado as Context	5
→ The Global Creative Economy	8
→ The Front Range's Creative Economy	10
METHODS	14
→ Research Questions.....	14
DATA	16
→ Respondents.....	16
→ Perceptions.....	20
→ Direct Quotes.....	22
→ A Shared Vision.....	28
→ Needs of Entrepreneurs.....	30
→ Program Demand.....	31
ANALYSIS.....	34
→ Research Question 1	36
→ Research Question 2	38
→ Research Question 3	40
→ Research Question 4	41
→ Research Question 5	42
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	44
PARTNERS & FUNDERS.....	48
APPENDICES & SOURCES	50

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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INTRODUCTION

Creative Startups, in partnership with Denver Arts & Venues, Denver OEDIT, Meow Wolf, Colorado Creative Industries (CCI), and Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC), is pleased to present this Asset Analysis Report. The report details the findings of a six-month research project designed to engage creative economy stakeholders from the Denver Metropolitan Area and Colorado Front Range region. The purpose of the project is to understand the needs and goals of creative entrepreneurs building businesses in the creative economy.

Creative Startups, the only global accelerator program dedicated to founders working in creative industries, partners to build programs that simultaneously provide support for founders

and engage the broader creative community.

Working with creative entrepreneurs in the USA, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and beyond, we attest to the value of providing guidance and opportunity for founders who are revolutionizing the creative economy.

Creative founders are skilful navigators, weaving the threads of heritage and innovation, creativity and market demand into a holistic tapestry: a creative business.

Startups in the creative economy arise from the wellspring of human ingenuity, creativity, and culture. Creative industries enterprises often require relatively little startup financing, capitalizing instead on intellectual property and new technologies that invite us to explore the exciting range of the human experience.

As Colorado grapples with extraordinary population growth and urbanization, transitions in its economic base, and shifts in neighborhood demographics, communities along the Front Range are working to build future-facing economies that are both inclusive and sustainable.

One strategy communities along the Front Range are pursuing is the increased support for and development of creative economy ecosystems and enterprises. Toward this end, this report was commissioned to gain insight into the needs, concerns, goals, and vision of the region's creative entrepreneur community. The resulting data indicate strong trends in each of these areas, providing clear indicators of the creative community's priorities and preferences in regards to supporting Colorado's creative entrepreneurs.



Colorado’s creative community most consistently (and loudly) expresses concerns about affordable housing and workspaces. Additionally, creatives see barriers to accessing startup investment and highlight their struggle to find business-focused support and resources designed by and for creatives. Respondents readily name an array of organizations supporting creative practices and skill development in arts, filmmaking, animation, and more. They also describe a paucity of startup accelerator resources dedicated to creatives and focused on the *businesses side* of growing a creative company.

This gap is perhaps accentuated by the abundance of accelerators, investors, conferences and networks dedicated to tech startups. It is not surprising some respondents are concerned that without greater investment in creative - and other - entrepreneurs, Denver will lose its lively, artistic and cultural ambiance, leaving behind a more homogenized culture.

Despite these challenges, respondents envision a future in which inclusivity and opportunity for all are widely held values. A majority of respondents express a vision for Colorado as a community in which ample connections and support weave together disparate neighborhoods and a wide range of creative entrepreneurs are support-

MANY ENVISION A POSSIBLE FUTURE COLORADO IN WHICH CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS ARE SUPPORTED IN BUILDING VIABLE BUSINESSES AND LIVELIHOODS.

ed in building viable businesses and livelihoods.

In addition to this compelling shared vision, this report also discovers the sizeable demand for business-centric support services dedicated to creative entrepreneurs. In every instance, when asked which types of business development services they would use, fewer than 25 percent of respondents declined interest in (described) services that support creative entrepreneurs. Comments in interviews and questionnaires alike unequivocally describe a need for entrepreneurship resources for creative businesses.

One obvious pathway to increasing economic security and mobility for creatives is to build their capacity to launch and grow successful companies. This income stability moves creatives out of the tenuous “gig economy” and into a business structure offering greater stability and predictability.

In summary, this report recommends the following actions to leaders across Colorado:

- (1) Proactively build bridges among creative communities, sectors, neighborhoods, interest groups, resource pools;
- (2) Expand capacity of existing organizations to support creative entrepreneurs. Deliver Creative Startups’ LABS programs via partners;
- (3) Create centers of excellence in the creative economy, anchored in the uniqueness of Colorado;
- (4) Increase and nurture connections among creatives and existing resources in tech and investment communities.

Investing in the success of Colorado’s creative entrepreneurs today holds the potential to construct more inclusive, vibrant, and unique communities across Colorado tomorrow.

Let’s get started.

PURPOSE & CONTEXT



Photo Credit: Mobilus In Mobili

Creative Startups works in partnership with communities to build and implement entrepreneurship programs that reflect the community's vision, needs, and opportunities. To understand communities, our team first conducts an Asset Analysis, a process intended to help us gain insight into the region's creative economy landscape, sectors, and stakeholders.

Moreover, the process allows us to understand a shared vision and identify gaps in the creative economy ecosystem, points of opportunity where our programs could potentially unlock regional talent and unleash a new wave of creative entrepreneurs to achieve the vision.

This report is intended to summarize the findings of the data we have collected through our Colorado Front Range Asset Analysis and, based on these findings, suggest possible next steps to effectively support Colorado's creative entrepreneurs and communities.

AUDIENCE

This report is intended to inform city and state leadership, neighborhood, community and economic developers, creative communities, and creative entrepreneurs. Additionally, we hope the report supports the growing involvement of impact investors in the creative economy and augments cross-sector activity among creative, tech, investment, policy, and entrepreneurship communities. The report's findings and suggested next steps offer a possible roadmap to those seeking to capitalize on Colorado's growing economic vibrancy while simultaneously lifting up diverse voices.

DEFICIENCIES

This study has three notable limitations: (1) it was conducted in English and the questionnaire was distributed via online channels. As such, creative community members whose English or access to

internet is limited are not well represented; (2) the study is not a comprehensive economic analysis and thus cannot definitively link respondents' perceptions to available economic data; (3) the study is limited in scope in terms of understanding specific business knowledge and skills that would most benefit creative entrepreneurs in the region. For example, the study does not attempt to parse which accounting programs creatives are familiar/not familiar with. Instead, the report assesses general knowledge gaps creative entrepreneurs perceive.

To address these deficiencies we use existing economic data, rely on our extensive experience working with diverse creative communities, and draw on over a decade of deploying programs that successfully meet the needs of a wide range of creative entrepreneurs.

COLORADO AS CONTEXT

Colorado’s cultural and economic history span millennia, reflecting the broader history of the Rocky Mountain region. Settled for thousands of years by American Indian tribes, the vast prairies and steep mountains of Colorado first greeted Europeans in the late 1600’s. The first known map of the homelands of Colorado’s diverse Native peoples was created by a Spaniard in 1776 as a party of Franciscan priests endeavored to find passage to California via the Rocky Mountains.¹ Not surprisingly, they turned back to New Mexico, defeated by Colorado’s towering peaks and brutal winters.

In 1850 gold was discovered, and soon thereafter, silver and coal. Mineral riches along with ranching and homesteading shaped Colorado’s economic booms and busts throughout the latter half of the 1800’s. By 1876, when Colorado was ad-

mitted to the Union as the 38th state, Colorado’s population was measured at 34,000.² By 1930, the population of Colorado hit 1,000,000 and in 1990 Colorado had nearly 3 million residents, with 56 percent of those living in the Denver Metro Area.³

The 1990’s were a boom time for Colorado’s economy as it expanded economic activity in telecommunications and high tech industries, doubling Colorado’s jobs in these sectors between 1990 and 2000. By 2000, “Colorado had evolved into an economy driven by advanced technology and the service industries.”⁴ In 2018 Colorado startups raised \$1.8 billion in investment, cementing its place in the global innovation economy.⁵

THE FRONT RANGE TODAY

Today Colorado’s population stands at 5.6 million and still, over half of the state’s residents live within the Fort Collins - Denver - Colorado Springs corridor.⁶ Colorado’s economy

along the Front Range is dominated by high tech industries including aerospace and aviation, bio-science, broadcasting and telecommunications, energy, financial services, and information technologies/software.

Higher education institutions abound: Denver alone offers eleven, four-year public and private colleges and universities, as well as several world-class research institutions.⁷

A wide range of undergraduate and graduate degree programs are offered (see Appendix A for a list of creative economy-related higher education offerings). Programs available in the area provide access to a range of courses including, for example:

- Film and Television Production and Writing
- 3D Graphics and Animation
- Digital Design
- Software Design
- Photography
- Digital Design
- Immersive Arts Technology
- Painting, Drawing, Illustration, and Photography
- Studio Art
- Transmedia Sculpture
- Audio and Image Enhancement and Authentication
- Computer Forensics
- Sound Design



Photo Credit: Dustin Cox

Colorado’s higher education institutions are staying ahead of the times, working to ensure what their students learn is relevant to and in demand among creative economy employers. The University of Colorado Denver campus, for example, is building a new degree area in Immersive Arts and Entertainment, to round out their robust Arts and Media offerings.

The diverse array of creative degree programs reflects the wider economic shifts along the corridor: communities previously anchored in natural resource industries are transforming to the knowledge economy. As one example, agricultural production in the state has shifted: large scale farms and ranches have given way to intensive artisan production of cannabis and specialty agricultural crops.⁸

A state long known for mountaineering and outdoor experiences, Colorado is embracing

the experiential economy with dynamic museums, abundant sporting events, 300+ breweries^{9, 10} and a burgeoning food scene. Indeed, Denver area restaurants have recently seen the fourth highest sales growth in the nation.¹¹

Accompanying the local food scene are scores of festivals. A brief sampling of the dozens of regional festivals includes:

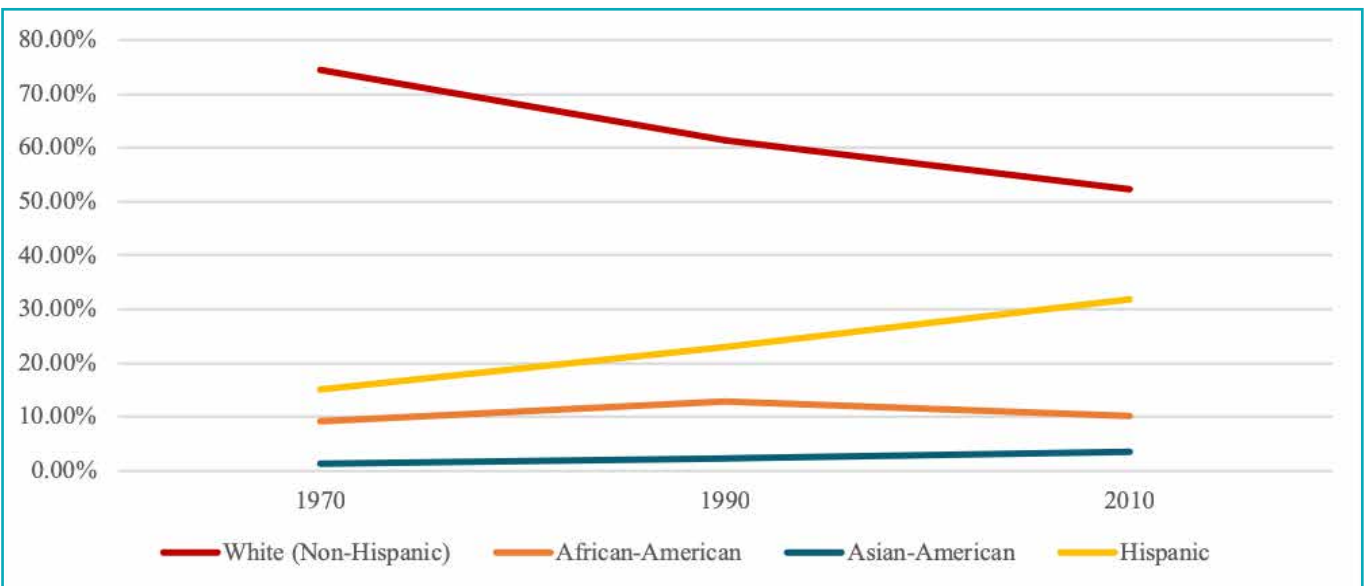
- 2019 Colorado Independent Women of Film Festival
- ARISE Music Festival
- Westwood Chile Fest
- Colorado Chocolate Festival
- Echo D’Afrique 2019
- Queridas Madres Event
- Red Rocks Summer Concert Series
- Biennial of the Americas
- Colorado Dragon Film Festival
- Denver Startup Week

With astonishing natural beauty, abundant cultural events and lifestyle activities, 300+ days of sunshine per year and a booming job market, it’s no wonder Colorado’s Front Range, and Denver specifically, has become the nation’s most highly sought-after place to live.¹²

And while Colorado may not yet be as ethnically diverse as other innovation-driven economies such as San Francisco or New York, it is drawing increasingly diverse populations seeking to thrive in the seemingly unstoppable Colorado economy.

This diversity contributes to the cultural fabric of Colorado. Events such as the Suave Fest brew festival for Latino-owned breweries and the Asian Arts Festival in Aurora highlight the range of activities that attract and entertain audiences while adding color and excitement to the region’s lifestyle activities.¹³

CHART 1: DENVER’S CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS



Source: Confluence-Denver.com

WITH GROWTH, CHANGE & CHALLENGES

The changing economy and consistent growth of professional and service jobs impacts the demographic makeup of the state. Over the past 40 years Denver has become more diverse with a majority of this diversity stemming from increases in the Hispanic population (see Chart 1). Recent reports show that from 2011 to 2017, “the percentage of Latinos relative to white residents in the Mile High City rose by nearly 8 percent.”¹⁴

Alongside the benefits of growth come the challenges that accompany urbanization and increased population density. Principal among these challenges are affordable housing and workspaces.



Photo Credit: Scorpions and Centaurs



Photo Credit: Obie Fernandez

Denver’s population grew 13.7 percent between 2010 and 2015 while the number of housing units grew at less than half that rate - just 6.4 percent.¹⁵ The result has been aggressive development to meet demand, leading to displacement of residents in older, lower income neighborhoods where developers can build high density units after moving out/ buying out renters and long-term residents.

Displacement leads to health and emotional strains on families. A 2014 study in the Bay Area of northern California determined, “gentrification has serious public health consequences that can harm a displaced person’s physical and psychological well-being.”¹⁶

Denver’s growth challenges reflect those found elsewhere: people of color are disproportionately moved from their neighborhoods, wealth gaps grow, and working class families are pushed farther from

the city center and access to jobs.¹⁷

Colorado’s leadership is aware of these challenges and recognizes current real estate and rental prices pose barriers to inclusive economic growth. The City of Denver, after careful research, has formulated 12 recommendations to combat displacement, ranging from supporting entrepreneurship in highly affected neighborhoods to the recent creation of a permanent revolving loan fund for affordable housing.¹⁸

Several initiatives focusing specifically on creatives are under way, including the state’s “Space to Create” program, Denver’s “Accessory Dwelling Loan”, and “Safe Occupancy” programs, as well as Artspace in the RiNO District.

Alongside efforts to tackle housing and workspace issues are nascent initiatives intended to expand the economic resiliency of creative entrepreneurs.

With efforts like Denver Startup Week’s Design Track, Colorado Creative Industries programs, Artiversity, Fort Collins’s leadership in the local music industry, and the determined work of myriad creative entrepreneurs, Colorado has the potential to grow an inclusive creative economy in which creative entrepreneurs are dominant economic forces, shaping vibrant communities.

THE GLOBAL CREATIVE ECONOMY

Globally the creative economy is growing dramatically at 4 to 12 percent annually (growth rates vary from country to country) according to UNESCO data. As growth continues at this pace, global creative economy annual revenues are on track to reach \$3 trillion by 2020.¹⁹

According to a 2016 research report by Nesta, the creative economy employs over 14 million people in the USA - that’s nearly 10 percent of all Americans.²⁰ The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that between 1998 and 2015, the arts and culture sectors (a segment of the creative industries) contribution to GDP grew by 40 percent.²¹ Moreover, creative economy jobs grew in all but 11 states during this period.²³

These numbers may surprise readers who are not familiar with contemporary definitions of the creative economy. Today’s creative industries, anchored in innovation and technology, include growth sectors such as pod-casting and online advertising, animation, and online games, as well as traditional arts and culture sectors such as theatre and dance.

It is widely understood that defining and measuring the creative economy is problematic. Nations vary in which industries and sectors they include when defining--and thus measuring--the emerging domain.

Furthermore, technological innovations leave industries in a constant state of flux, leading to new professions and sectors.

John Howkins’s definition of the creative economy, stated in his seminal work, *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas* (2001) frames the field. Howkins defines *creativity* as “the ability to generate something new” (p. Introduction). He defines *economy* as a system for the production, exchange and consumption of goods (and services). Weaving together these concepts, Howkins defines “a creative product ... as an economic good or service that results from creativity

and has economic value” (p. Introduction).²⁴

With this expansive definition, one begins to see that creativity is at the heart of all new inventions and innovations: information technology and engineering, biochemistry and environmental design are all influenced by creativity and the development of new tools, techniques, and solutions.

However, in the US, the creative economy is measured narrowly, relying on a post-WWII industry framework that situates manufacturing and engineering in contrast to artistic endeavors. This framework was likely faulty at its inception; today it is plainly misleading and contributes to challenges economists face in measuring creative economy outputs.

In any case, using the measurement tools at hand, in every study we review, whether published by the World Bank, the US Department of Commerce, the US Census and American Community Survey, WESTAF, the National Endowment for the Arts, or Nesta, the data is strikingly clear: the creative economy’s explosive growth remains unstoppable in every corner of the globe.

“

“

NEW IDEAS, NOT MONEY OR
MACHINERY, ARE THE SOURCE
OF SUCCESS TODAY, AND THE
**GREATEST SOURCE OF
PERSONAL SATISFACTION.**

..... *John Howkins*

EMERGING TRENDS

A recent McKinsey and World Economic Forum report, *Creative Disruption: The impact of emerging technologies on the creative economy* (2018), explores how emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, block chain, and VR/AR are disrupting creative industries.²⁵

These disruptions are generating new companies and high wage jobs, creating new forms and interpretations of culture and human expression.

Consider, for a moment, the evolution of film making. Twenty years ago, making and distributing a movie required expensive equipment, access to film production and financing resources, connections to distribution companies. Today, Instagram influencers often reach larger audiences than blockbuster movies, with little more than a smart phone.

The creative economy is unlike other economic endeavors in several ways, however, one is especially important: creatives are the storytellers who shape our cultural experiences, tell us who we were, who we are, and who we can become. Storytelling is perhaps the most distinctly human habit and has the power to drive social movements and shape social structures, values, and change.

TABLE 1: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Advertising and Related Services
Architecture and Engineering
Arts and Antique Markets
Crafts
Culinary
Design & Specialised Design Services
Designer Fashion
Drawing and Animation
Education & Libraries
Festivals
Film/motion Picture and Video
Heritage & Cultural Sites: parks, archives, museums
Interactive Media
Music/sound Recording
Performing Arts: theatre, dance, opera, circus, performers
Photography
Printing, Publishing, and Writing
Radio, Television, Podcasting, Broadcasting
Robotics
Software, Computer Games
Toys and Games
Virtual & Augmented Reality
Visual Arts

For additional information regarding how nations define creative industries, we recommend the following reports:

- https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-95261-1_2
- [https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/digital-library/What percent20Do percent20We percent20Mean percent20by percent20CCI.PDF](https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/digital-library/What%20Do%20We%20Mean%20by%20CCI.PDF)

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY'S EXPLOSIVE GROWTH REMAINS UNSTOPPABLE.

In fields as diverse as robotics, music, artificial intelligence, and dance, creative entrepreneurs shape our shared interpretations of phenomena. Imagine how we would understand robots without films like *Terminator*, how we would understand apartheid without songs of struggle, princesses without Disney.

Human beings' never-ending need to understand the universe and our place in it ensures creative entrepreneurs will always encounter growing markets.

Given the dramatic shifts in social, cultural, natural and industrial ecologies transpiring around the world, it is not surprising that communities are embracing new forms of expression as we seek to understand contemporary human experiences. Moreover, this suggests the world's creative economy will continue to grow faster than other sectors in the coming decades.

THE FRONT RANGE'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

As described, data utilized to measure the creative economy is parsed differently by researchers depending on location or particular interests. As a result, there

are variances in statistics associated with the creative economy.

In considering Colorado's creative industries, if one includes sports-related, engineering, and software industries, as is the norm in Europe, Asia, and much of Latin America, Colorado's creative industries are going gangbusters. Using a lens more traditionally applied in the USA, Colorado's creative industries are strong and growing. And, if one takes a very narrow interpretation, i.e. the arts and culture industries, one still sees significant economic impact.

The US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis 2019 reports show 4.4 percent of Colorado's GDP stems from arts and culture, placing it in the top eight states nationwide.²⁶ (Note that BEA does not include broader creative economy industries such as apps and software.) The same report shows arts and culture jobs in Colorado increased by 2.6 percent between 2015 and 2016.

The *2016 Creative Vitality Report* found a 3 percent increase in Colorado's creative industries earnings bringing the total to \$6 billion in 2016.²⁷

A similar study by the National Endowment for the Arts shows Colorado's economy receives \$14 billion in economic value generated by the narrowly defined "arts". The same study asserts the arts economy employs over 100,000 people in Colorado.²⁸

Notably, the WESTAF Creative Vitality and NEA studies take a somewhat narrow view on the creative industries, measuring primarily traditional arts and culture sectors (see the full list of the NAICS Codes utilized in WESTAF's Data Sources in the WESTAF report).

Our review of the same census data includes several NAICS codes not measured in these reports, including for example, "Audio and video equipment manufacturing", "Spectator sports", and "Blank magnetic and optical recording media manufacturing." (See Appendix B for full list of NAICS codes used for this report.)

This broader approach to NAICS codes data shows software and sporting industries far out-pacing the more traditionally (in the US) measured sectors such as film and music.

THE FRONT RANGE'S STRENGTHS

Applying an “arts and culture” lens to Colorado data, one still finds exciting patterns of growth in sectors such as music and design. For example, a 2018 report by Dr. Michael Seman found that Colorado is home to more than 100 music festivals.²⁹

The same report uses NAICS codes to identify employment and revenues generated by

Colorado’s burgeoning music scene and finds over 12,000 people are employed in music-related industries. In aggregate, the report shows Colorado’s music industries generate \$1.35 billion in revenues annually.

The Denver and Colorado Music Strategy, released in 2018, also indicates the music industry is one of the fastest growing industries, with 30 percent growth in employment from 2010 to 2016.³⁰

Other notable (selected) industries are described in Table 2 and demonstrate impressive numbers of employment and revenues generated by the sectors.

Colorado is at the forefront of the creative economy in part due to visionary leadership by state legislators and planners. In 2011 the legislature approved a bill establishing the Colorado Creative Districts.³¹

TABLE 2: SELECTED CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN COLORADO

NAICS Codes	Industry Classification	Number of Firms	Total Sales, Revenue	Annual Payroll	Total Employees
54143	Graphic design services	504	\$151,325,000	\$47,436,000	1,061
7139	Other amusement & recreation industries	1107	\$1,539,009,000	\$468,949,000	31,613
5418	Advertising, public relations, related services	860	\$1,579,453,000	\$439,700,000	6,061
4511	Sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument stores	1150	\$1,783,523,000	\$228,164,000	12,893
5112	Software publishers	289	\$2,978,590,000	\$853,375,000	7,454
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2433	\$3,783,005,000	\$1,322,928,000	51,235
312	Beverage & tobacco product manufacturing	132	\$4,079,434,000	\$223,304,000	3,784
5413	Architectural, engineering, and related services	3963	\$8,858,346,000	\$3,201,586,000	39,432

Source: FactFinder.Census.Gov

A note on reading NAICS codes: The lower the number, the more overarching the code. For example, “71” is the most broadly defined category for “arts entertainment, and recreation”. Under “71” readers can find the subset of industries such as “7139, Other amusement and recreation industries” and all other industries within that set.

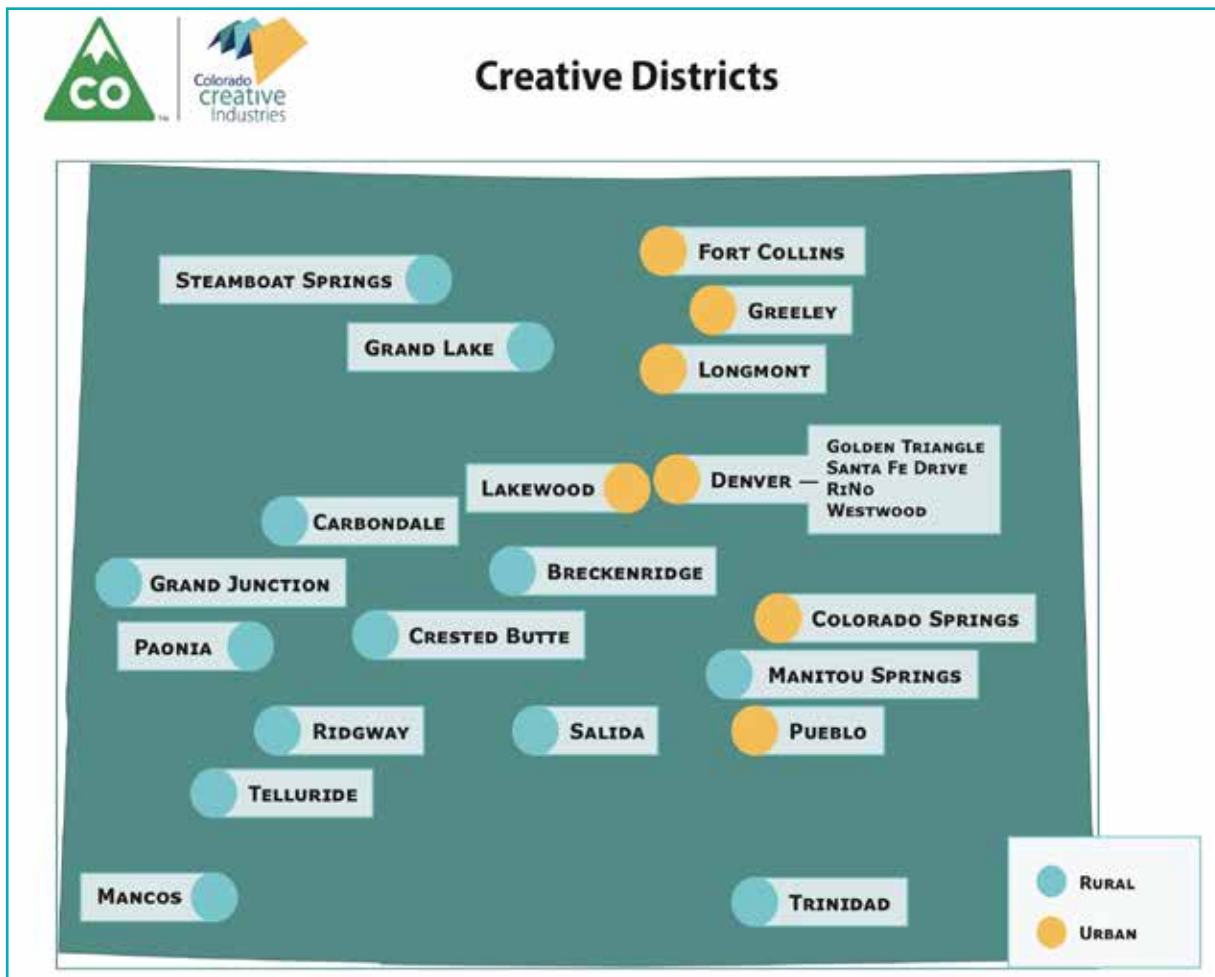
Today the program, aptly managed by Colorado Creative Industries (CCI), includes 23 certified Creative Districts with a robust array of programs designed to “attract artists and creative entrepreneurs to a community, infuse new energy and innovation and enhance economic and civic capital”.³²

The below map of Colorado’s Creative Districts, copied from

the CCI website, demonstrates the inclusive nature of the program: more than half of the districts lie in rural regions. Furthermore, CCI collects data and regularly publishes reports demonstrating the significant impact the creative economy has on communities large and small.

This advocacy is complemented by frequent media reports

highlighting activities and events within the districts, ensuring Colorado’s citizens are informed about - and inspired by - the work of creative entrepreneurs leading development and placemaking initiatives.



Source: Colorado Creative Districts’ website

METHODS



Photo Credit: Andrew Davidoff

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study has pursued answers to the following questions:

RQ1: What is the current creative economy landscape along the Front Range?

RQ2: What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the creative economy (sectors)?

RQ3: What challenges do creative economy stakeholders perceive?

RQ4: What are the opportunities to strengthen the creative economy and achieve a shared vision?

RQ5: What specific next steps are advised to pursue this vision?

SECONDARY RESEARCH

To understand the broader creative economy landscape and pertinent issues facing Colorado's creative entrepreneurs we reviewed nearly two dozen reports and data sets related to Colorado's historical development and current socio-economic conditions, creative economy, and contemporary issues, challenges, and opportunities. These reports are listed in Endnotes.

We utilized Creative Startups' data regarding creative entrepreneurs' self-confidence and self-reported knowledge and networks to complement the primary data. We collect ample pre and post data from all acceleration program participants. The secondary source data helps to complete the picture painted by primary data.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Creative Startups staff spent a total of 692 hours on the ground in Denver, meeting with, observing, and engaging with Colorado's creative economy stakeholders.

To grasp the needs of creative entrepreneurs we provided a week-long startup boot-camp for 14 startups and four hands-on workshops during Denver Startup Week. We also hosted 10 panels/speaker sessions during the week.

To gather direct input and ideas from creative economy stakeholders we met with entrepreneurs, creative industry corporate leaders, higher education and non-profit education leaders, community organizers, startup ecosystem leaders, and foundation staff.



Specifically, we:

- Conducted 87 informal interviews (“coffee meetings”) and 19 semi-structured interviews;
- Gathered 228 responses to on-line questionnaires;
- Attended five community events and meetings;
- Met with/partnered with six local media companies;
- Engaged 750+ people in workshops we hosted during Denver Startup Week (see Table 3);
- Included 14 startups participated in our week-long LABS Pre-Accelerator;
- Visited seven co-working or incubator facilities;
- Held six meetings with higher education leaders;
- Visited five certified creative districts;
- Connected with four regional philanthropic foundations working in creative economy.

Staff conducted both informal interviews, and semi-structured interviews.

The online questionnaire was hosted on Zoho Survey, an on-line platform. After collecting 190 (partial and complete) responses, the survey team edited the questionnaire by adding one question to more clearly classify respondents as “business owners/entrepreneurs” or “other respondents”. The questionnaire was re-opened and 39 additional responses (24 completed 14 partial) were collected.

Partial responses were reviewed to determine usability. Responses were discarded if fewer than 16 of the 21 questions were answered. If responses lacked integrity, for example, eight respondents provided nearly identical responses to open-ended questions, these response sets were discarded. After cleaning the questionnaire data, 107 reliable response sets remained. (To see the full list of questions refer to Appendix C.)

The questionnaire was distributed via direct emails to area stakeholders, promoted

on social media, and announced at Denver Startup Week to attendees at Design Track events.

Analysis of quantitative data was conducted using simple statistical analysis to find trends and patterns.

Analysis of qualitative data was done using constant comparison, a method of thematic analysis that allows researchers to discover themes that consistently emerge across interviews and observations.³³

TABLE 3: CREATIVE STARTUPS EVENTS AT DENVER STARTUP WEEK
Idea Vs. Opportunity (workshop)
Business Model (workshop)
Know the (cash) Flow (workshop)
It’s Not Business it’s Personal (workshop)
Synergies Not Silos (speaker)
Retail Apocalypse and The Rebirth (panel)
Designing Delight (panel)
Building Creative Cities and Economies (panel)
Publishing a Revolution (panel)
How to Tame a Titan (panel)
The Future of Financing Creativity (panel)
Entertainment Reimagined as Community Building (panel)
Creative Economy Entrepreneurs, Meet the Author! (speaker)
The Artists Inside Meow Wolf’s House (panel)
Downtown Denver Coloring Party (event)
USA Creative Business Cup National Finals (event)
Creative Startups LABS (4-day bootcamp)

DATA

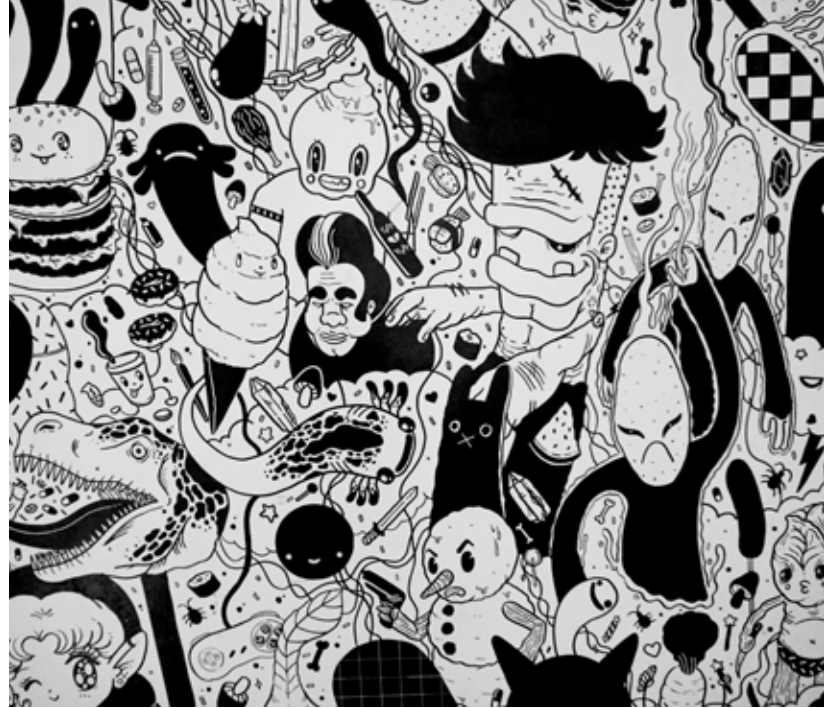


Photo Credit: Mary Madigan

RESPONDENTS

To protect the identity of data sources, we classify and refer to interviewees and questionnaire respondents as follows:

Creative Entrepreneurs: Individuals who have launched and are growing for-profit or not for profit creative ventures.

Creative Employees: Individuals working in for-profit creative companies.

Creative Economy Stakeholders: Individuals who work with or volunteer with organizations that provide resources or support to the creative economy, such as the Small Business Development Center, co-working facilities, or public libraries.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

Individuals from 87 different organizations (see full list in Appendix E) responded to the online questionnaire. To understand the background and role respondents play in the regional creative economy ecosystem, respondents were asked,

“What is your or your organization’s role in [your city’s] Creative Economy? Pick as many as you like!”

46 of 107 responses are classified as Creative Entrepreneurs (43 percent).

73 of the 107 responses are classified as Creative Economy Stakeholders (68 percent).

12 of the 107 responses are classified as Creative Employees (11 percent).

(As respondents could select more than one role, the totals exceed 100 percent.)

Detailed responses are charted in Chart 2 and roles accounting for fewer than 10 responses are listed below the chart.

For the individuals who checked “Creative Entrepreneur,” in the revised questionnaire (18 respondents) as their primary role in the ecosystem, 13/18 report that over 50 percent of their income stems from their enterprise.

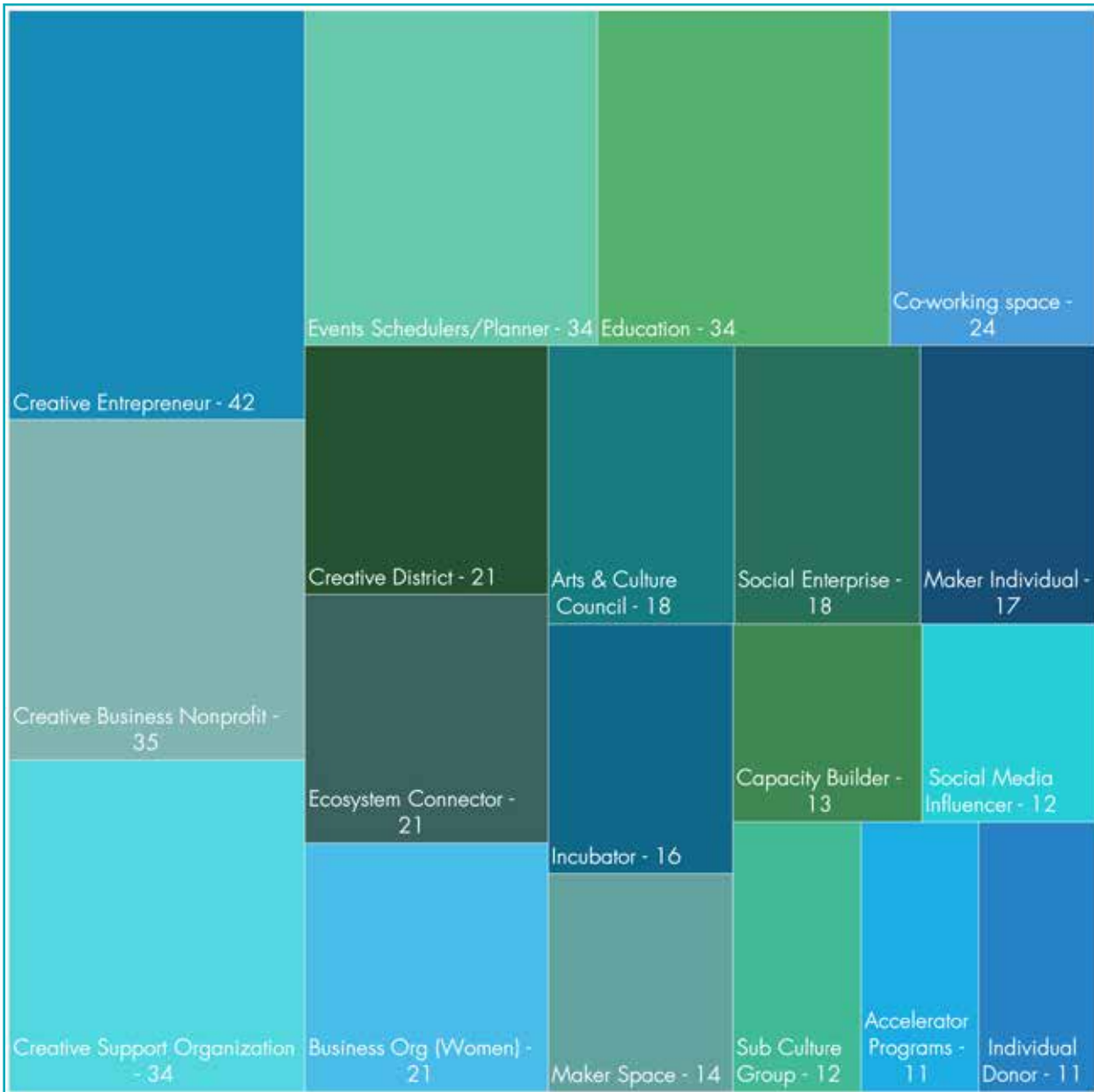
Less than 25 percent = 6

About 25 - 50 percent = 11

Over 50 percent, but not 100 percent = 6

100 percent I’m all-in! = 7

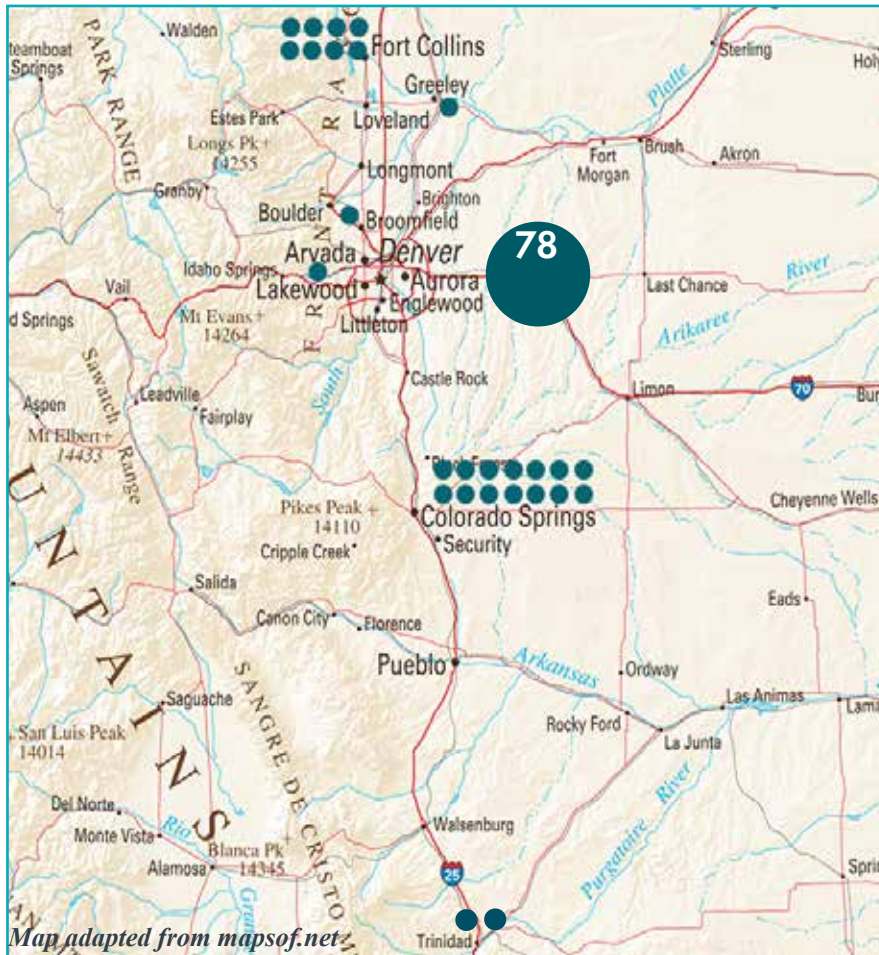
CHART 2: RESPONDENTS' ROLES IN ECOSYSTEM (10+ RESPONSES)



LIST 1: RESPONDENTS' ROLES IN ECOSYSTEM - FEWER THAN 10 RESPONSES

- Venture Capital Firm - 0
- Business Organization (Senior 65+) - 1
- Chambers of Commerce - 2
- Business Organization (Hispanic/Latinx) - 2
- Local Pub/Newspaper - 3
- Local Television - 3
- Radioshow/Podcast - 3
- Business Organization (African-American) - 3
- Angel (group/network) - 4
- Business Org (Asian American/Pacific Islander) - 4
- Business Organization (Immigrant and refugee) - 4
- Business Organization (Native) - 4
- Art zine/publication - 5
- Online/Digital Journalism - 5
- Biz Org (Disability/Accessibility) - 6
- Business Org (LGBTQ) - 6
- Corporate Sponsor - 7
- Small Biz Development Office - 7
- Economic Development Office - 8
- Startup Event - 8
- Coffee Shop - 9
- Foundation - 9
- Investor - 9
- Researcher - 9

MAP 1: RESPONDENTS' FRONT RANGE LOCATIONS



MAP 2: RESPONDENTS WITHIN DENVER AREA

REGIONS REPRESENTED

Data used to identify respondents' locations include zip codes. Of the 107 reliable and completed questionnaires, 105 provided reliable zip codes. Two respondents used zip codes such as "10000", perhaps to protect their identity.

Map 1 shows the respondents' distribution along the Front Range corridor. 78 of 105 of respondents are located in Denver Metro Area, constituting 74 percent of respondents (Map 2).

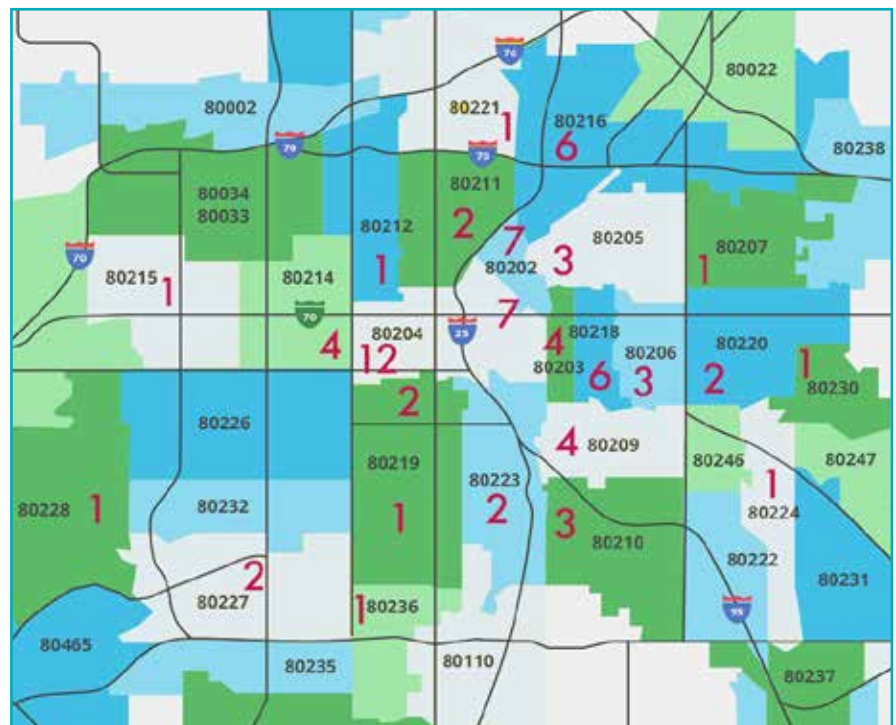
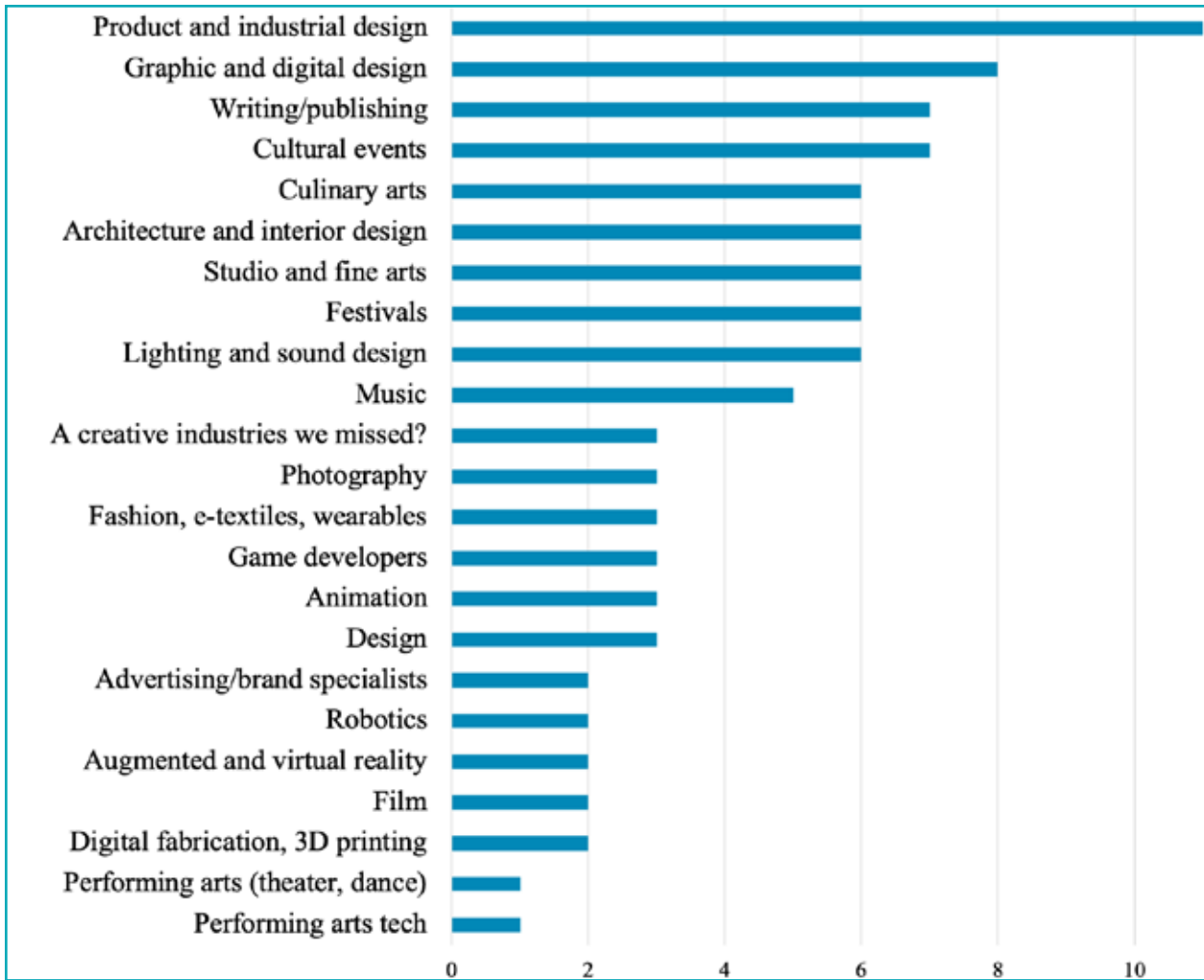


CHART 3: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES ALL RESPONDENTS WORK IN



SECTORS REPRESENTED

A majority of respondents work in design (industrial, graphic) as well as writing, publishing, events, and culinary arts.

These responses are similar to those provided in Colorado Creative Industries’ 2017 Annual Report which, using Creative Vitality Suite data (US Census data using NAICS codes), reports a majority of creative economy workers in Colorado are classified as “Designers” including specialty design services.³⁴

US Census data on Colorado’s creative economy sectors includes sporting industries, and thus differs from the data in this report as sports entrepreneurs and organizations are not well represented in this report.

Relatively few respondents work in more “traditional” arts and culture sectors such as theatre and dance. This may be reflective of the respondents we successfully reached.

For-profit creative organizations employ far more people in

Colorado than nonprofit organizations; respondents reflect this difference.

Makers and “do-it-yourself” DIY’ers are well-represented in this survey as 17 individuals reported their role as a “maker” and 14 respondents reported their role as a “maker space”.

A review of the organizations represented by respondents (Appendix D) indicates a majority of respondents work in small organizations, with fewer than 50 employees.

PERCEPTIONS

CITY LEADERSHIP

Respondents provided a wide range of answers to the open-ended question,

“What do you think [your city] could better do to support creative entrepreneurs?”

Varied responses were analyzed and sorted along five emergent themes:

- 1.) Financial Sustainability
- 2.) Inclusion
- 3.) Policy and Planning
- 4.) Sustain Uniqueness of Place
- 5.) Specific Methods

The most frequently expressed concern pertains to financial sustainability, specifically, challenges related to affordable housing and workspaces. With 28 people commenting on affordability, this issue is at the center of creatives’ concerns.

Additionally, several creatives expressed frustration regarding the lack of financing for for-profit ventures, mentioning that established nonprofits seem to receive consistent funding while for-profit endeavors and new nonprofit ventures struggle to gain support.

In contrast, respondents also expressed concern that established creative organizations might be overlooked in the rush to support new startups.

TABLE 4: MY CITY COULD BETTER SUPPORT

Financial Sustainability for Creatives	(Sum) 58
Affordable Housing and Workspaces	28
Funding Options for Creatives/Artists	19
Tax and other policy, subsidized, incentives to support creatives	11
Inclusion	25
Outreach and inclusion of women, People of Color, LGBTQIA and people outside "arts corridors"	14
More broadly define creatives (beyond traditional arts and culture) to understand and support more creatives	11
Policy, Planning, and City Leadership	12
Coherent plan for "one-stop shop" for resources and opportunities for creative entrepreneurs	10
Transportation infrastructure to accommodate growth	1
Greater Accessibility to Broadband	1
Sustain and Grow Unique Qualities of Place	7
Support and sustain existing creative organizations	2
Support new, emerging organizations	3
Retain cultural character of place	2
Specific Methods Mentioned by Respondents	40
Support creatives as small business owners/for-profit entrepreneurs	17
Catalyze connections, networking, seminars	8
Increase promotional efforts to increase revenues	5
Provide public/no cost venues for musicians, artists, performers	5
Outreach and engagement between city and creatives, increased communication	4
Artist Residencies	1

The above categories of responses were developed through using thematic analysis (constant comparison) which allows researchers to distill qualitative data into overarching categories that represent the themes that emerge from a pool of qualitative responses.

Toward addressing these affordability and funding issues, some respondents shared ideas for specific policy and financial instruments.

Several respondents highlighted the need for greater connections and networks that support entrepreneurial success and nurture new ventures, while supporting existing organizations.

Ten respondents indicated their wish for city leaders to offer a “One-stop business information” tool and suggested “Get list of resources available on city’s website.”

Challenges in finding resources for creative entrepreneurs were discussed during interviews with respondents describing resources as “piecemeal”, and yet also recognizing their own limitations in finding resources.

Frustrations were often accompanied by a lengthy list of mentioned resources when asked, “Tell me some of the organizations supporting creatives...”.

ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED

- Bohemian Foundation
- Bonfils Stanton Foundation
- Colorado Business Committee for the Arts
- Colorado Enterprise Fund
- Colorado Film and Video Association
- Colorado Office of Film,

- Television, & Media and the tax incentive program for filmmakers
- Colorado Office of Economic Development
- Comal
- Community Wealth Building Network
- Denver Advertising Federation
- Denver Arts and Venues and Imagine 2020 (grants)
- Denver Foundation
- Denver Open Media
- Denver Retail Incubator
- Galvanize
- Illegal Pete’s
- LEAP Institute for the Arts
- Meow Wolf
- Mile High Community Loan Fund
- Redbarre Studios
- Redline Gallery
- RiNO Arts District
- Rocky Mountain Micro-Finance Institute
- Small Business Development Center’ Leading Edge Program
- The Commons

STRENGTHS

Coloradoans see many strengths in the ecosystem: the plethora of creative and arts events- such as music and cultural festivals - as well as characteristics of the region such as “openness” “friendly” and “vibrant” were frequently described.

It is important to note that several respondents highlighted positive perceptions of city, state, and regional creative economy efforts and policies. Colorado Creative Industries and Denver Arts & Venues were specifically mentioned as excellent resources for both for profit and nonprofit organizations.

“The City and State are already supportive, which is great. The work Arts & Venues and Colorado Creative Industries does is fantastic.”

“The best thing is our entrepreneurial spirit. We have a big sky and an open city.”

“The greatest strength is the place itself. I’m intentionally not in LA or NY -- because I love Denver.”

DIRECT QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT

“Pay educators/consultants to deliver incubator & accelerator programming to the most promising, job-creating arts endeavors in the city.”

“[We need] more intersection between creatives & resources to create sustainable businesses.”

“[I suggest the city] provide entrepreneurial support across the spectrum - in creative vocabulary.”

“I would like to see more grants, but more importantly, entrepreneurial education provided for artists.”

“It would be great to see a couple more resources for ‘for-profit’ businesses.”

INCLUSION - BROADLY DEFINED

“I would like to see more diversity in startups (not just tech), more awareness of the value of creatives, designers.”

“Increase diversity. Embrace change.”

“Make the entrepreneurship scene more equitable.”

“What might be helpful is if creative entrepreneurship was on their radar as a specific, holistic item in addition to their focus on helping artists, musicians, etc., which are creative entrepreneurs, but this singular focus may miss some potential synergies.”

“Honestly, I think we need to support the existing organizations before we focus so much on new entrepreneurs.”

**POLICY,
PLANNING,
AND CITY
LEADERSHIP**

“Advance the passage of a special taxing district like the SCFD in Denver, subsidize rents, improve available city properties for creative work spaces.”

“Work with Land trusts and Real Estate Investment Cooperative Models to create more commercial and residential real estate opportunities so creatives can remain in the region.”

**VISION FOR FRONT
RANGE’S CREATIVE
ECONOMY**

“Regional higher ed is supported as leaders in new industries.”

“My vision is that in five years creatives are involved in City planning.”

“[It would be ideal that] Denver has nationally leading events - like Art Prize or Design Week.”

“[My vision is that we have] a few unicorns and Denver being a clear leader in innovation in the industry.”

“It would be awesome to see, historically segregated areas, broken down, made into a new Denver, through creative industries. That would be amazing.”

**SUSTAIN & GROW
COLORADO’S UNIQUE
QUALITIES OF PLACE**

“Encourage and incentivize local businesses to use local creative services.”

“Stop tearing down beautiful architecture to put up cheaply built lifeless condos.”

“Protect our identity as a city, as an art community, and make it affordable to do business in this city.”

“DENVER IS SMALL, BUT PACKS A BIGGER CULTURAL PUNCH THAN ITS SIZE, PUNCHES ABOVE ITS WEIGHT.”
 Survey Respondent

MAKERSPACES

Makerspaces.com,³⁵ describes a makerspace as a collaborative work space inside public/private facilities and used for making, learning, and sharing. Open to entrepreneurs, makerspaces may have high tech or no-tech maker equipment.

EQUITY FUNDING

Equity funding is the process of raising capital through the sale of shares. By selling shares in their startup company to investors, founders sell ownership in their company in return for cash. This method of financing new ventures is more commonly used for growth companies.

ACCELERATORS

Accelerator programs provide startups a cohort-centric experience of limited duration, usually providing seed capital and offer networking and mentorship opportunities. Most end with a “demo day”³⁶ event for investors.

MATRIX 1: REGIONAL SUPPORT TARGETING CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS					
Organization	Maker or Co-working Space	Equity Funding	Workshops / Speakers	Startup Mentoring	Startup Accelerator
Alchemy	✓				
Bohemian Foundation			✓		
Bonfils Stanton Foundation			✓		
Caffeinated Mornings			✓		
CO Attorneys for the Arts			✓		
CO Biz Cmttee for the Arts			✓		
CO Creative Industries			✓		
CEDS Acadia Project			✓		
Create Denver			✓		
Denver Startup Week			✓		
Pikes Peak Makerspace			✓		
RiNO Creative District			✓		
TARRA	✓		✓		
CEDS The Acadia Project	✓		✓		
The Music District	✓		✓		

MATRIX 2: REGIONAL SUPPORT TARGETING ALL/ANY ENTREPRENEURS					
Organization	Maker or Co-working Space	Equity Funding	Workshops / Speakers	Startup Mentoring	Startup Accelerator
1 Million Cups			✓		
Black Business Initiative			✓	✓	
Blackstone Entrepreneurs Group				✓	
Boomtown	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Catalyst HTI		✓	✓	✓	✓
Canopy Boulder		✓		✓	✓
Catalyst Space Accelerator		✓		✓	✓
Darkfield		✓		✓	✓
Denver Angels		✓	✓		
CO Women's Chmbr Commerce			✓	✓	
Exponential Impact		✓			✓
Galvanize			✓	✓	
Icelab			✓		
Innosphere	✓			✓	
Peak Startup			✓		
Rocky Mountain Microfinance			✓	✓	
Rockies Venture Club		✓	✓		
SBDC /Leading Edge			✓	✓	
SCORE			✓	✓	
TechrIoT				✓	
Techstars		✓	✓	✓	✓
Uncharted			✓	✓	
Venture capital (10+ firms)		✓		✓	
Wayfinder Co-op		✓		✓	
Women Who Startup			✓		

The majority of organizations mentioned by respondents provide workshops or similar activities related to creative practices, skills, and production. There are ample resources for creatives seeking to develop their creative practice: from ceramics to projection light mapping to film making to sound design, workshops for creative skills abound.

However, of the full list of 96 resources mentioned, only 15 provide *entrepreneurship* focused workshops or speaker events relevant to creative industries entrepreneurs.

Moreover, none of the resources mentioned by respondents provide startup mentoring, equity financing, or startup acceleration programs designed by and for creatives.

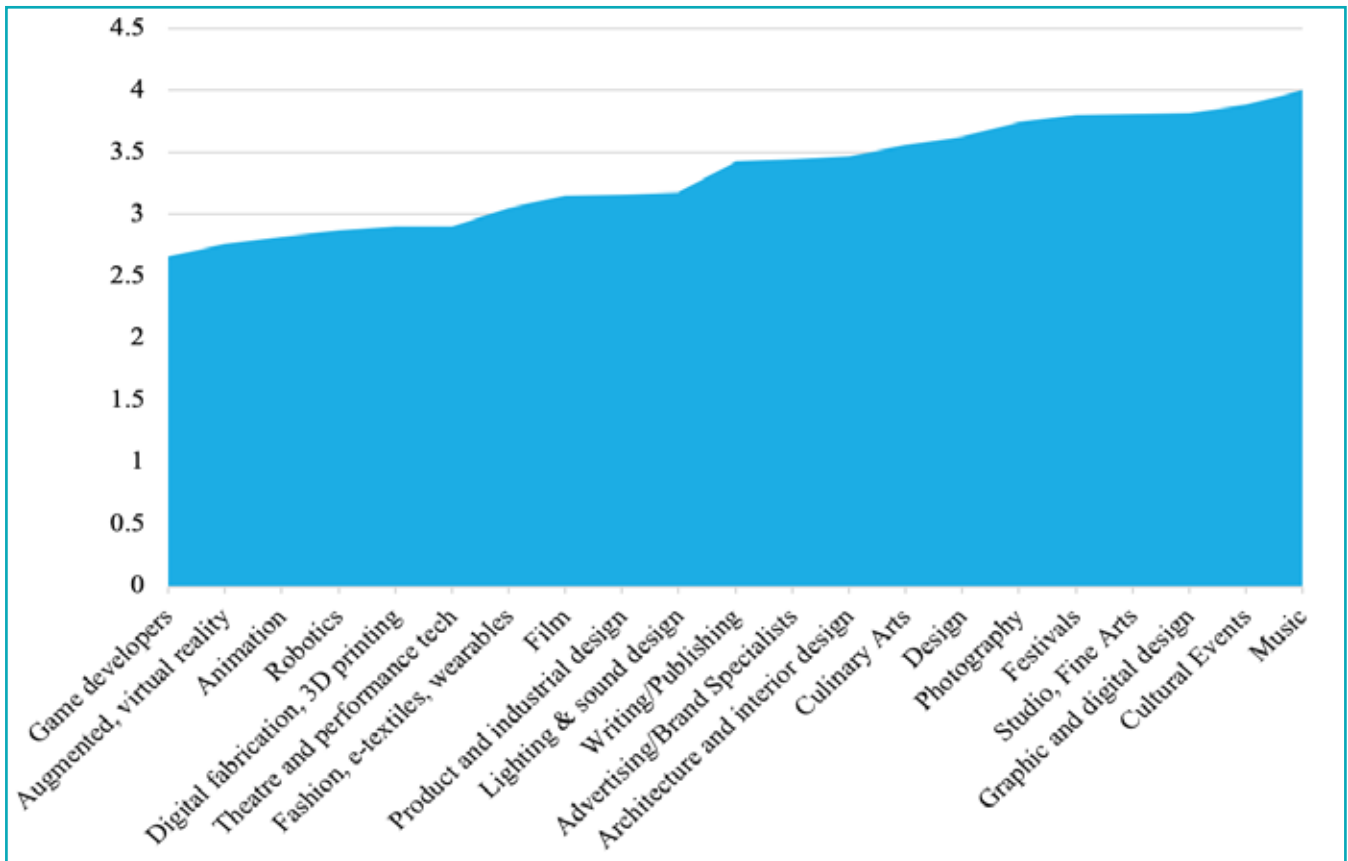
By comparison, a cursory web search led us to over 15 startup accelerators designed by and for the tech industries, plus myriad tech startup conferences, networks, and investor groups. 30 of the 75+ discovered in our search are listed in Matrix 2.

A SHARED VISION

Recall the overarching purpose of this study is to understand a shared vision and identify gaps in the creative economy ecosystem, points of opportunity where our programs might potentially unlock regional capacity to collectively achieve this vision.

Respondents shared their vision, answering an open-ended question:

CHART 5: INDUSTRY STRENGTHS AS PERCEIVED BY RESPONDENTS





DENVER'S CULTURAL SECTOR HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A VIBRANT, DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE ECOSYSTEM.

.....: *Survey Respondent*



“What is your vision for [your city’s] creative economy? For example, in five years, if you were to see two significant, positive changes in your creative economy, what would these be?”

Using thematic analysis to isolate the predominant themes, the two most common themes were economic security (40 mentions) and diversity and inclusion (39). Chart 6 displays the broad themes below.

CHART 6: RESPONDENTS’ VISION FOR THE REGIONAL CREATIVE ECONOMY

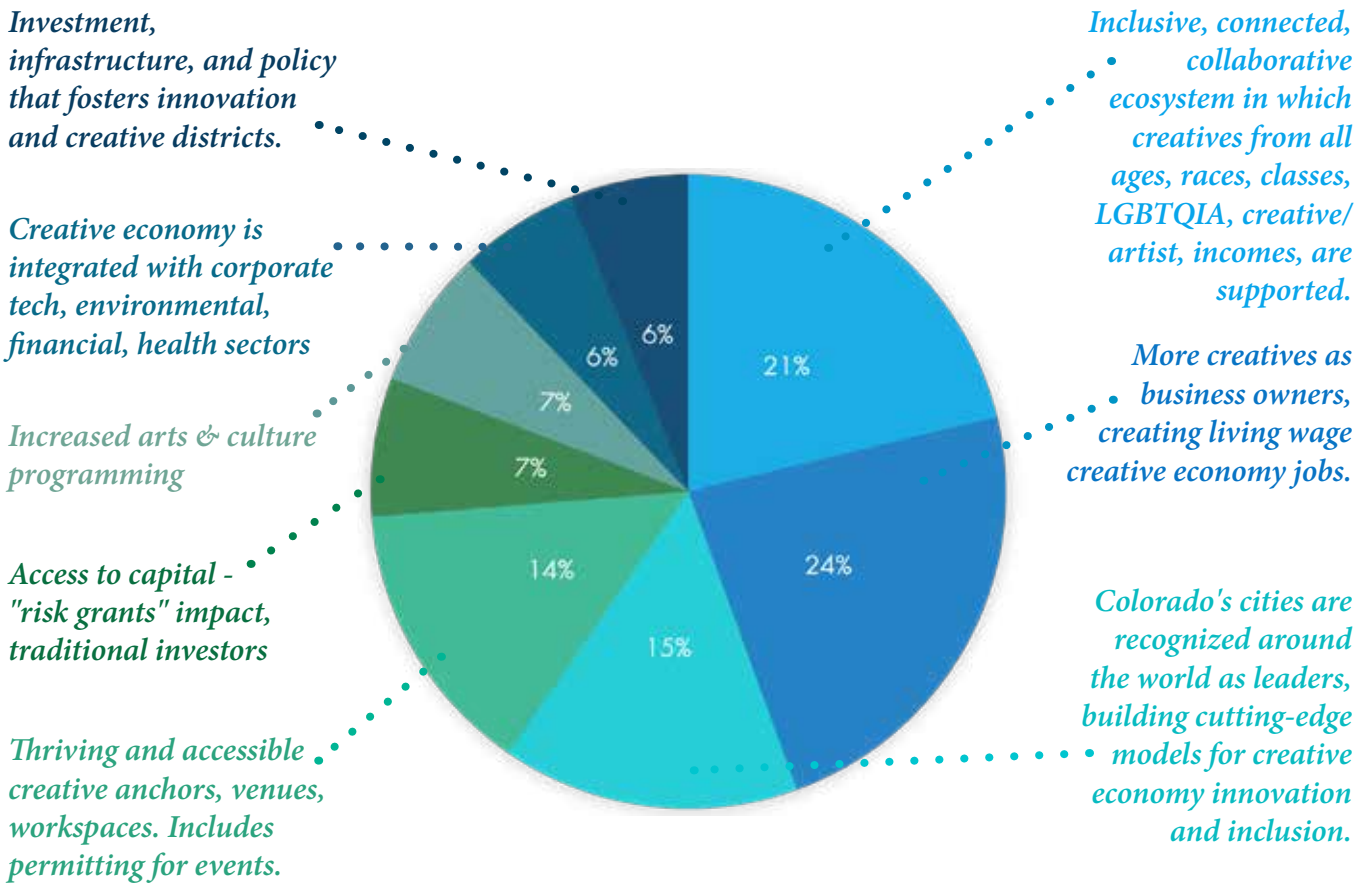
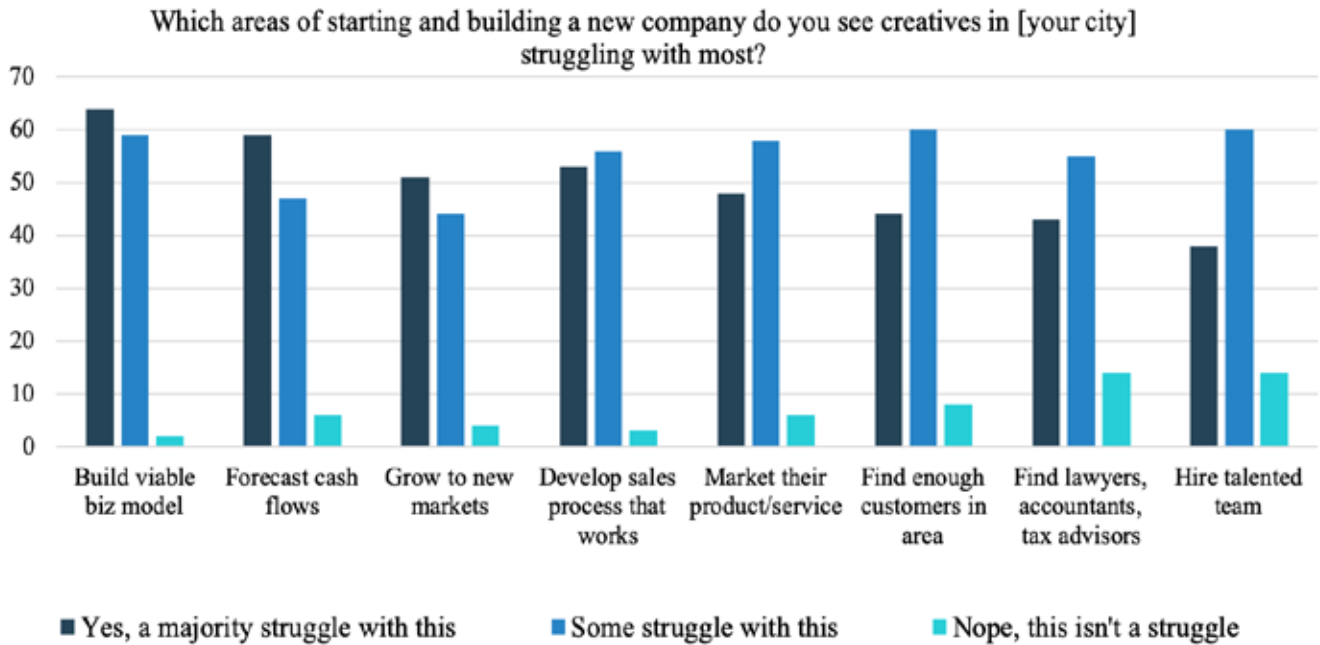


CHART 7: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF NEEDS



NEEDS OF CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS

Creative Startups’ pre and post data from our acceleration programs provides ample indication of the knowledge, skill, and network gaps creative founders face when launching and scaling their businesses.

Prior to completing our program, 64 percent of participants self-report feeling “somewhat familiar or very familiar” with the following startup concepts:

- Minimum viable product
- Seed round or A round
- Market segmentation
- Revenue share models
- Equity vs debt financing
- Business model elements

- Core value proposition
- Customer development methods.

Following our programs, an average of 94 percent report feeling “somewhat familiar or very familiar” with these same concepts.

Likewise, an average of 55 percent of participants report feeling “somewhat comfortable to very comfortable” with the following entrepreneurial leadership activities:

- Pitching investors
- Projecting and managing cash flows
- Setting and pursuing targeted market entry strategies
- Identifying profitable market

segments and reaching these

- Targeting ideal sources of growth capital
- Selling products/services to my customers
- Leading my team when things are not going well.

Following programs, 89 percent of respondents report feeling “somewhat comfortable to very comfortable” with these activities.

As another point of reference, 17 percent of participants report “Very strong network connections” to “investors, partners who provide solutions as we scale, and accounting and legal professionals” prior to the program while 35 percent report “Very strong” connections following the program.

Creatives stand to gain from business-oriented programs directed at building their knowledge, skills, vocabulary, and mastery of startup concepts and tools.

Chart 7 displays the data regarding respondents' perceptions of needs and gaps for creative entrepreneurs.

The data indicate that, in every area except "hiring a talented team", over 45 percent of respondents believe some or a majority of creative entrepreneurs struggle. From building a viable business model, to forecasting cash flows, growing into new markets, developing sales

processes, marketing, finding enough customers, and finding professional services, creatives struggle to build their ventures.

Business support services relating to these growth-oriented topics are few and far between for creatives. However, idea-stage workshops and events are widely available. One respondent observed:

"There are a lot of resources to help companies start, but less to be sustainable and grow."

It may be that Denver, like many regions, has fewer resources to help established organizations sustain and grow their impact and reach.

PROGRAM DEMAND

To gauge demand for startup and entrepreneurship programs designed by and for creatives, we asked two questions:

(1) Based on the descriptions [of Creative Startups programs] which Creative Startups Programs would you most likely want to participate in?

(2) How many creative entrepreneurs do you know who would be interested in a Creative Startups' program?

CHART 7: RESPONDENTS' INTEREST IN PROGRAMS

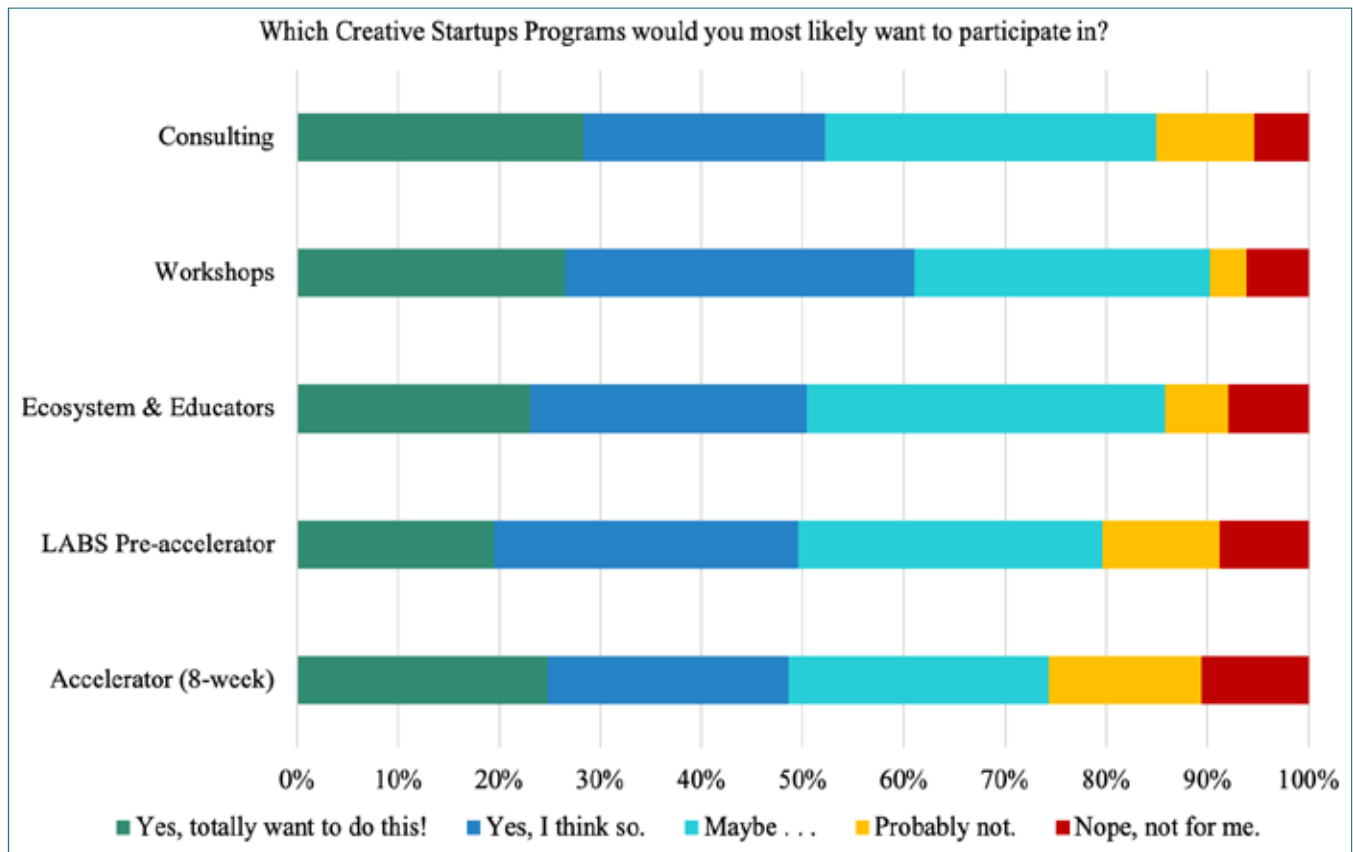


Chart 7 demonstrates very strong demand for Consulting Services and Workshops. Ecosystem and Educators is also of strong interest.

Regarding Accelerator and LABS programs, over 50 percent of respondents state, “Yes, totally want to do this!/ Think I want to do this.”

Notably, fewer than 12 percent showed “no interest” in the described programs.

At Denver Startup Week over 1,300 individuals signed up for our workshops including, Know the (cash) Flow, Business Model, Idea Vs. Opportunity, and our 4-day LABS.

When responding to questions regarding needs of creatives, respondents shared thoughtful comments similar to those we have received before, expressing concern that entrepreneurial resources will be served up to creatives in the same fashion they are to tech entrepreneurs.

This mirrors comments we have received when we ask creatives to “Share concerns” about the Creative Startups program they are joining,

Interest in entrepreneurship programs is strong. However, creatives want programs tailored to their unique needs and concerns, perspectives and challenges.

They seek support that reflects their non-conforming approach to building businesses, communities, and a shared vision.



CREATIVE STARTUPS PROGRAMS

ACCELERATOR

Rigorous 8-week intensive providing startups knowledge, networks & confidence to scale their companies.

LABS: PRE-ACCELERATOR

Four-week “startup bootcamp” for idea-stage & pre-revenue startups. Delivered in person and online.

ECOSYSTEM BUILDERS

Invited ecosystem leaders attend a week-long “Creative Entrepreneurship Ecosystem & Educators” seminar. “Train the trainer” approach builds capacity in community orgs.

WORKSHOPS

Designed in collaboration with clients to accelerate specific entrepreneur audiences and creative economy sectors.

Over 50 percent of respondents know over 25 creative entrepreneurs they believe “would be interested in a Creative Startups’ program”. Conversely, fewer than 15 percent reported that “none come to mind”.

As in the previous response set regarding demand, data indicate consulting and LABS face stronger demand than an accelerator program.

During interviews, respondents readily expressed the need for Creative Startups’ programs. Programs gaining most expressed interest are “Consulting” and “LABS”.

In addition to substantial demand for programs, Coloradoans expressed strong interest in supporting Creative Startups in connecting with creative entrepreneurs.

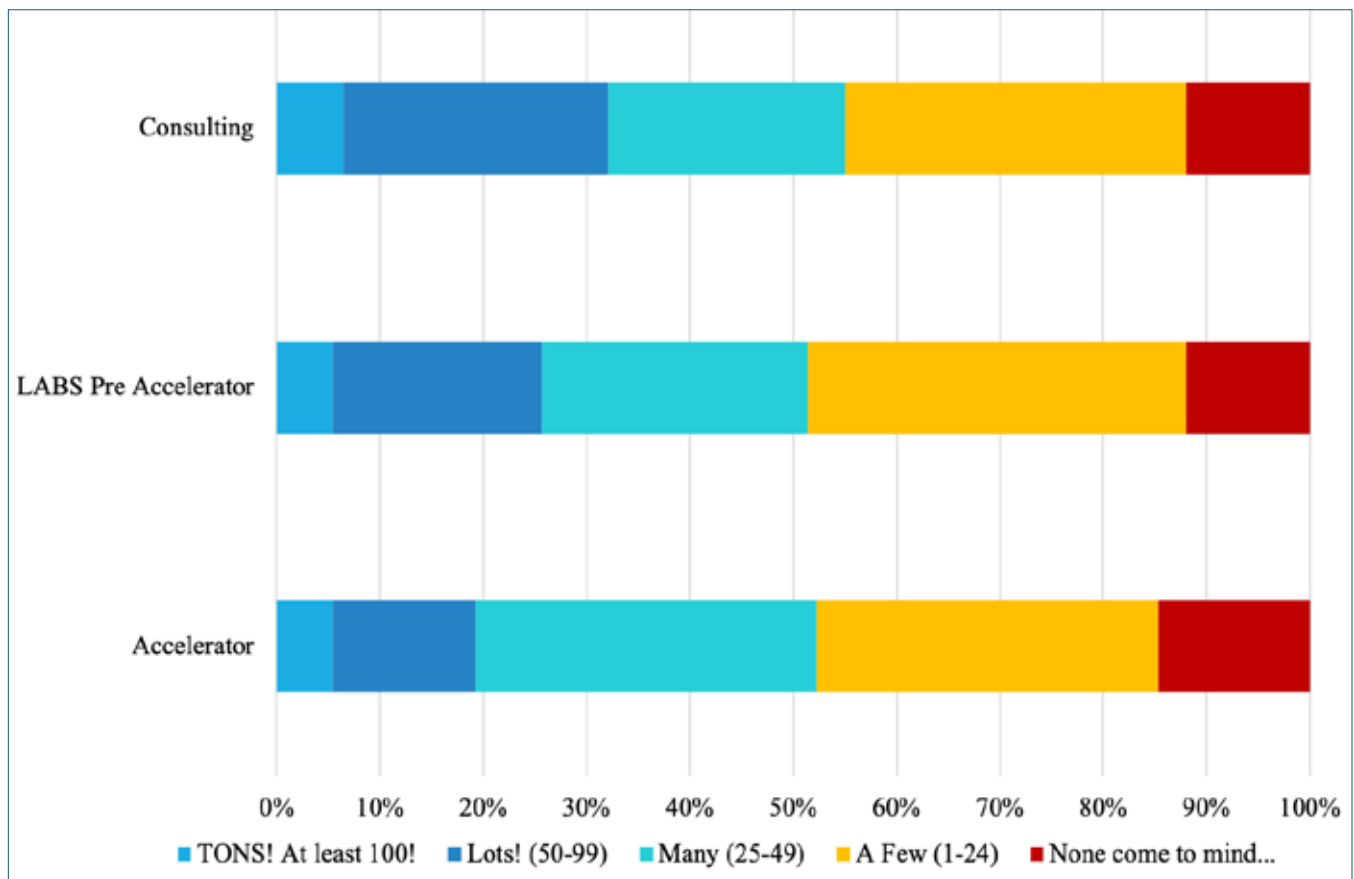
“I look forward to helping, in any way I can, to bring Creative Startups to Denver and to inform creatives about opportunities for them.”

The expressed interest in programs reflects the gap in available programming. Despite Colorado’s strong and growing creative industries, creatives have yet to be supported as entrepreneurs, business people, with the potential to grow

companies that generate employment and wealth, community revitalization, and connections among citizens who share a passion for the state.

Respondents, interviewees, attendees, experts, stakeholders, and others have informed this study. The below analysis provides interpretations and synthesis, connecting pieces of data to one another in order to tell a more comprehensive story.

CHART 8: RESPONSES TO “HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD BE INTERESTED?”





I WOULD LIKE TO SEE SUPPORT FOR CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS IN LOW-INCOME AREAS ... SO THAT DENVER BECOMES AN EXAMPLE, A MODEL FOR OTHER CITIES TO ADMIRE.

..... *Survey Respondent*



ANALYSIS



Photo Credit: Larry Lamsa

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What is the current creative economy landscape along the Front Range?

Perhaps most importantly, Coloradoans possess a natural sense of collaboration and inclusiveness. Working for many months with myriad organizations and leaders, our staff continuously found wide open doors and helpful attitudes awaiting. Leaders consistently reference one another and make introductions.

This fluidity of social capital greases the wheels of innovation and enables ideas and resources to more quickly move among sectors. As Colorado tackles the challenges it faces in building an inclusive and vibrant creative economy, this will prove useful.

The state faces both ample opportunities and legitimate challenges in fostering a robust, expanding creative economy.

The over-arching sentiment among respondents regarding the creative economy landscape was one of concern for sustainable livelihoods. This economic instability undermines creatives' long-term investment in community development as they feel they may need to leave if they can no longer afford rent or mortgages. As one person wrote,

“So many artists who add tons of value to our city are getting pushed out.”

As word of unaffordability spreads, it may deter creatives from moving to Denver and, over time, the city may lose its creative community, and the dynamism it brings. Smaller communities such as Trinidad and Salida reap the benefit as creatives move to their more affordable real estates. Howev-

er, this places creatives further from major markets and, in some cases, creatives are again left with financial insecurity.

Rapid development has also led to changes in the built environment. It is no secret that creatives tend to prefer funky, off-beat neighborhoods where creativity abides and monotony is shunned. Many new housing developments are perceived as cookie-cutter, lacking historical character. One respondent exclaimed,

“Stop tearing down beautiful architecture to put up cheaply built lifeless condos!”

As Coloradoans are keenly aware of their dynamic history and the value of their unique surroundings, with moderate effort and smart policies, developers could be enticed to

build housing that reflects the state’s unique history. It may be feasible to engage artists and designers through creative place-making initiatives that lead to development imbued with elements reflecting what is different and meaningful to Coloradoans about their state.

Models for this approach include Zeppelin Developers, a firm asserting the goal to “spark creativity and collaboration – focusing on human-centric design”.³⁷ Another example is Artspace, widely considered the leading developer of arts facilities across the nation, with projects in multiple locations across Colorado.

Colorado’s progressive policies and initiatives, including CCI’s Space to Create program, are leading the way to create affordable housing for creatives. The multi-million dollar investments being made in Trinidad, Ridgway, and more Creative Districts, demonstrate the viability of linking affordability with culturally relevant design and development.

Elegant historic buildings in communities large and small are being rehabilitated, transformed into cultural anchors and retail and housing centers.

Building creative place-making expertise among creatives in all aspects, from architecture and landscape design, to interior design and finishings, to historical preservation and renovation, to way-finding and sense-making, can expand economic opportunities and a unique sense of place. Creatives expressed concern that the uniqueness of Colorado may be lost in the tsunami of tech startup culture. To insure against this, cities can work with creatives to capture and tell the stories of Colorado through architecture, design, planning, and development.

As the tech sector burgeons, fields from design to advertising thrive alongside these sectors, complementing the growth of tech innovation industries. Arts and culture, festivals and live music, entertainment and sport-

ing events contribute to the state’s vibrant cultural scene. This in turn attracts newcomers to the region, drawn by the active and engaging lifestyle.

Somewhat surprisingly, respondents see weaknesses among more tech and innovation-driven creative sectors such as animation, gaming, robotics, AR/VR. This suggests a lack of awareness or a disconnect between the tech and creative sectors. This gap is aptly described by creatives who perceive the tech startup scene as exclusive, only readily offering support to entrepreneurs who fit the common stereotype of a “high growth founder”.

While this perception may be accurate in some circumstances, in the course of this research several “high-tech” resources shared interest in connecting with creatives. Additionally, impact and seed investors expressed interest in strengthening the creative sector.

Given the strength of the region’s tech industries, one pathway to prosperity for creatives may be to foster stronger connections between the tech and creative sectors. These connections may create job pathways and new venture formation in emerging fields like robotics and AR/VR.

Without facilitation or “bridge-building”, these communities



Photo Credit: Trinidad Architecture Library of Congress

risk staying at a distance. Given the benefits - economic, social, and cultural - of connecting creatives to technologists, this represents an opportunity to move Denver ahead of the curve. Technology and creative expression readily mix and, when they do, often lead to breakthrough growth companies and sectors.

Higher education institutions along the Front Range offer a deep and wide range of creative industries-related degrees and courses. The state is home to creative industries scholars, faculty, and departments collectively graduating thousands of creative youths each year. In contrast to other regions in the country where brain drain is rampant, graduates seek to stay in Colorado.

Connecting young creatives to established creative companies and startups through internships and applied scholarship may expand pathways for graduates to secure work in their chosen fields while infusing companies with fresh thinking and access to higher education resources. These relationships often lead to greater alignment between industry needs and higher education offerings, improving career outcomes.³⁸

One more challenge that merits discussion in regards to Denver in particular, is the abiding sense of disconnect among neighborhoods. This perception may stem from the disparity in incomes. For example, Sun

Valley residents struggle to stay above the poverty line while their neighbors two census tracts away earn over \$150,000 annually.³⁹ Similar disconnects exist between immigrant communities and established communities.

The gaps, however, are not limited to income, citizenship, or ethnic background. These divisions are also seen between the for-profit creative sectors and the arts and culture nonprofit sectors. This divide is likely a legacy of the historical perspective (we have witnessed) that arts organizations were deemed more worthy or legitimate if they were nonprofits.

As recently as a decade ago, a majority of studies related to regional creative economies was limited to the assessment of the economic impact of arts and culture non-profits.

Today, however, leading thinkers and scholars, planners and policy-makers understand the creative economy as a dynamic economic powerhouse, with a majority of creatives working in advertising, sports, animation, design, film, and music.

Future-facing communities are investing in creative endeavors regardless of tax-status, leveraging the job engine of the private sector while investing in the inclusiveness generated by nonprofits.

Meow Wolf, as one example, is structured as a Benefit Corporation “B-Corp,” and embodies a contemporary understanding of the integration of arts and culture, design and technology. Making grants to regional arts non-profits, Meow Wolf invests in their future workforce through supporting educational arts programs today.

Colorado has a growing cadre of impact investors whose expertise and interest could spark support for creatives founding new ventures that draw linkages among arts and culture and creative tech sectors, bringing to life an innovation-oriented approach to supporting creativity and livelihoods.

All in all, Colorado’s creative economy landscape is imbued with more strengths than challenges, more assets than gaps. Respondents readily acknowledge the challenges yet seem to accept them as manageable, remaining hopeful regional leaders will engage creatives and continue to implement policies and initiatives that tackle these challenges.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the creative economy (sectors)?

One notable strength and one notable weakness emerged - not in relation to any specific sector. First, regional organizations and



Photo Credit: Jack Gray

and feedback was clear: creatives see the music industry and cultural events/festivals on solid footing while gaming and animation, robotics and VR/AR are considered frail.

These perceptions reflect the vibrant events and festivals scene of Colorado. However, this doesn't help us gauge economic impact and individual incomes for creatives stemming from live events and festivals.

It may be that creatives could reap greater economic benefit through these events. Providing entrepreneurial education that highlights viable business models connected to festivals is worth considering.

Perceived weaknesses in the creative tech sectors (gaming, animation, VR/AR) may discourage creatives from pursuing startup ideas in these sectors. As mentioned above, building linkages between creatives, creative tech and deep tech communities may enable innovations to erupt.

initiatives including Colorado Creative Industries, Denver Arts and Venues, and RiNO - among others - have done a stellar job increasing awareness of and support for the creative economy. City leaders along the Front Range are educated about and engaged in the creative economy. Creatives widely recognize the various resources available to learn new creative practices. And there is a sense of community that stems from the valuable work implemented by these organizations. This is uncommon in our experience and demonstrates the state's natural sense of innovation.

Unfortunately, across the board, in nearly every interview and in most questionnaire response sets, the lack of resources for creative sector *entrepreneurs* was described. This gap was sometimes referenced in relation to the overabundance of resources for

“tech” entrepreneurs. However, given the foundational work of CCI, Denver Arts and Venues, and others, the necessary steps to build entrepreneurial capacity may be relatively straightforward.

The “strong” creative sectors in Colorado may or may not be well understood by respondents as the creative sectors are wide-ranging and disparate. For example, it may be unlikely that a dance professional would have insights into the field of robotics. That said, perceptions can influence reality

FUTURE FACING COMMUNITIES ARE INVESTING IN NEW CREATIVE VENTURES REGARDLESS OF TAX STATUS.

For example, in the blockbuster game Fortnite, music and gaming, the perceived “strongest” and “weakest” sectors were married with dance, helping propel the game to global fame!

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What challenges do creative economy stakeholders perceive?

The data clearly show three key challenges perceived by the creative community: (1) affordability of housing and workspaces, (2) inclusivity across a broad spectrum of community segments, and (3) a lack of startup support services designed for for-profit creatives.

Affordable housing is necessarily viewed through the lens of income and wages; affordability is a relative concept. As tech startups and related services are booming in the Denver/Boulder region, tech employees’ incomes have risen, driving up rents and home prices. Currently, some creatives feel pressure to move out of the Denver area. (And some Denver area residents have been displaced as properties are redeveloped.) While relocation may be one solution, it is infeasible, unfair, or impossible for many people.

A more sustainable solution to the challenge of affordable housing is to increase creative workers’ incomes. Expanding opportunities for business

ownership and increasing creative employment in the private sector will directly impact affordability. Data show that employees in the creative industries earn higher than median wages except in three occupations: craft artists, floral designers, and photographers. Generally, creative worker wages are above the \$37,690 median for all workers.”⁴⁰

The purpose of this study does not include a review or assessment of the on-going (and essential) efforts of the city to tackle displacement. However, it is relevant to mention that, a two-pronged approach is advised: the city can and should continue to implement important policy efforts directed at zoning, rent control, and affordable housing.

It is understood this alone will not alleviate affordability issues. We advise a deliberate effort be made to increase and accelerate the formation of new creative ventures in sectors tied to higher wages such as animation, gaming, VR, and immersive arts. Making it easier for creatives to start, grow, scale, and sustain their ventures will generate high wage jobs, enabling creatives to more readily afford workspaces and homes.

A gap that stands out clearly in this study is the need for highly accessible startup and scale-up resources dedicated to and tailored for creative entrepreneurs. While ample

creative skill development resources exist, and startup support for tech companies is widely available, creatives are without a “startup homebase”.

Surprisingly, the Front Range region does not currently offer an accelerator program for creative entrepreneurs. According to Ian Hathaway, startups graduating top accelerators show increased sustainability and growth. Additionally, regional startup ecosystems benefit from these programs.⁴¹

Given the strong interest creatives expressed herein for startup programs, and the entrepreneurial nature of Colorado’s economy, responding to this demand will likely meet success.

As there are ample startup resources in the region, and a ready supply of private enterprises and creative skill development organizations, weaving together existing resources, and building *their* capacity to support creative entrepreneurs may have a more sustainable impact that launching a solo initiative.

Additionally, a collective effort will more likely reach entrepreneurs currently disconnected. Lead partners on this effort could be existing organizations whose missions align with increasing wages and business ownership among creatives. Supporting partners should include a

wide diversity of community service organizations in order to include creatives from Native American, rural, Hispanic, tech, women, LGBTQIA, and other communities of interest or affiliation.

A broad-based coalition of partners will unleash the strongest entrepreneurial assets, engaging creative entrepreneurs from all corners of Colorado’s diverse communities.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4

What are the opportunities to strengthen the creative economy and achieve a shared vision?

There are six key areas of opportunity that may be considered “low hanging fruit”. These include:

(1) Continue to gather information from, build connections with regional creative communities to inform, shape, and implement policies that reflect the needs of creative entrepreneurs.

Many data points - comments and questionnaire feedback - suggest creatives’ concerns *are* being heard and that even more leadership and engagement from policy leaders in the creative ecosystem would be valued. The generally favorable view of the region’s creative policies suggest that leadership is heading in the right direction.

A call for policies that support affordable housing and safety and transportation, as well as use of city resources to support affordable workspaces and event venues are among the commonly shared comments. Denver, and other Front Range communities, will do well to continue programs that target affordability challenges.

Continued and growing investment in and support for organizations including Artspace, RiNO in downtown Denver, Colorado Creative Industries and the Space to Create program will continue to deliver solutions.

Notably, the tendency among funders to abandon established investments that seem to be doing well should be avoided. Instead, using empirical, evidence-based approaches to determine program effectiveness, and providing sustained funding to these programs, provides the support essential to building sustained change.

Incentivizing developers to hire artists and designers to help craft and build developments that reflect Colorado’s unique history and character may “kill two birds” and increase incomes and livability for creatives.

(2) Increase pathways for graduating creatives to work in area companies and launch their own ventures. Higher education leaders in the state are uncommonly well-versed in the current and future state of the creative economy. Colorado’s higher ed leaders are pro-

IMAGINE 2020 DENVER’S CULTURAL PLAN & VISION ELEMENTS

Integration: Arts, culture and creativity are fully integrated into all aspects of life in Denver.

Amplification: Arts, culture, creativity are amplified in the city and to the world.

Accessibility: Arts, culture and creativity are truly inclusive and accessible for all.

Lifelong Learning: Exposure, appreciation, participation in creative endeavors span lifetimes.

Local Talent: Diverse artistic and creative professionals are locally cultivated and flourishing.

Economic Vitality: Denver’s economic vitality is accelerated by arts, culture and creativity.

Collective Leadership: Collective leadership is committed to high impact results across Denver.

actively developing courses and degree programs that align with future hiring needs.

Building further connections between the private creative sector and higher ed organizations will ensure career pathways that retain graduates and move them into creative careers that pay high wages, essential for those seeking to live in Denver.

Higher ed institutions with creative tracks can offer more entrepreneurship courses, workshops, short-course seminars. To spark the entrepreneurial mindset among college-aged youth, introducing the entrepreneurship path as one career option early on likely leads to more venture formation among creatives.

(3) Build a loose collaboration of organizations working together to support creatives as business owners. As stated above, existing organizations whose missions fit this directive, may be best equipped to receive support and funding to do this. Partners in this collaboration could agree to shared goals such as, “Work collaboratively to help launch 500 new creative companies by 2025.”

Importantly, this type of initiative should not be foisted on an existing organization without ample support to do so. A next step would be to invite existing Colorado-based organizations to

consider leading this effort, or participating. Funding sources would need to commit to multi-year support to ensure sustainability of an effort such as this.

(4) Lead community conversations in and with organizations that support under-served and excluded creatives. Host Coffee & Creatives in public libraries, churches, community centers in under-served communities.

(5) Build capacity of existing organizations to provide excellent startup support services to creative entrepreneurs.

(6) Offer programs to help launch, grow, and sustain creative enterprises. We recommend programs specifically dedicated to enterprise success be made available to creative entrepreneurs. These programs will necessarily focus on the core aspects of the entrepreneurial journey of creative entrepreneurs. Example topics include:

- Idea to Opportunity
- Prototyping and Product Development
- Design Thinking for Customer Delight
- Sales and Do the Numbers
- Business Model
- Cash Flow Analysis
- Pitching Investors
- Financial Modeling

These workshops, seminars, and accelerators would achieve greater impact in nurturing diversity and dynamism if they were hosted in partnership with area organizations. For example, Creative Startups has partnered with Trinidad/Raton’s Center for Community Innovation to host a LABS program. Through training and supporting an Educator based in Raton we implemented a more localized approach. Capacity-building approaches also more closely align with creative community values regarding engaging diversity in meaningful fashion.

RESEARCH QUESTION 5

What specific next steps are advised to pursue this vision?

The next, and final section of the report outlines a set of five Recommended Strategies with suggested tactical activities identified for each Strategy.

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 Cori Anderson, DesignsByKari
 Mark Byzewski, Tucker Neary, Jeff Muceus
 Nan Palmero, Paul Sableman



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS



Photo Credit: Joe Van

This study was commissioned to gain greater understanding as we build informed strategies to support Colorado’s creative entrepreneurs.

As has been stated previously, some city and state leaders are already pursuing, implementing, or considering strategies such as the ones described below. In these cases we strongly recommend building on these existing efforts, shoring up what is working and strengthening existing initiatives.

In sum, the following four areas of recommendations are offered:

- (1) Pro-actively build bridges among creative communities, sectors, neighborhoods, interest groups, and resource pools;
- (2) Accelerate and support creative founders through expanding capacity of existing organizations to support creative entrepreneurs. Deliver Creative Startups’ LABS programs.

Once LABS has generated critical mass of creatives seeking accelerator programming, launch full accelerator.

- (3) Create centers of excellence in the creative economy, anchored in the uniqueness of Colorado;
- (4) Foster connections among creatives and existing resources in tech and investment communities.

STRATEGY 1: BUILD BRIDGES

The shared vision of the creative community necessitates a pro-actively inclusive approach undergird all initiatives. As a reminder, the overarching vision respondents share includes:

- Financial stability and success for creatives;*
- Inclusion (broadly defined);*

Colorado is a global creative economy leader;
Sustained and expanded resources for creatives.

To build these bridges, several approaches are suggested:

- (1) Support partnerships among community organizations already deeply connected in diverse communities and develop capacity to engage and connect with potential entrepreneurs.

Consider supporting outreach positions focused on entrepreneurship.

- (2) Work with community organizations to establish measurable goals for new businesses started by people from a wide range of backgrounds, neighborhoods, and abilities. Track success in partnership.

- (3) Utilize community centers, libraries, churches, health

tech sectors, higher education offerings, and future market growth areas - such as immersive arts, gaming, animation, VR/AR, e-sports, music and entertainment.

While existing creative industries (music, festivals, culinary, brewing, creative/outdoor tourism) may be ideal anchors for the region, we suggest the state undertake a more strategic approach in analyzing and identifying sectors and aligning stakeholders.

Moreover, Colorado can work to maintain its uniqueness through a market-centric approach that engages creative talent in the design, and development of place. For example, in New Mexico, affordable housing developer Homewise contracts regional artisans to create and build lighting, furniture, tiles, and landscape design elements for housing developments - resulting in millions in contracts for artisans.

(1) Identify three to five sectors in which the state can become national leaders. A strategic approach to selecting these sectors - and likely an outside planning consultancy - would be helpful.

(2) Consider amplifying creatives' ability to grow businesses tied to existing strengths such as music, festivals, culinary, outdoor tourism. Provide workshops and build linkages related to sectors that are naturally emerging and growing.

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE FOR NEXT STEPS	
Build Bridges	
Launch partnerships among community organizations	Q4 2019
Establish measureable goals for new businesses	Q1 2020
Utilize community's existing facilities for workshops, etc.	on-going
Provide entrepreneurship training in a customer-centric mode	Q2 2020
Launch public info campaign re: successful creative entrepreneurs	Q3 2020
Support nonconformist and unconventional "arts and culture"	on-going
Accelerate and Support	
Community organizations expand capacity to support entrepreneurs. Co-host workshops and "office hours" with support from e-ship orgs	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2020
Deliver Creative Startups LABS (ideally twice in English, once in Spanish)	Q2, Q3, Q4 2020
If critical mass exists, launch and deliver full accelerator, focused on growth businesses, in 2021	Q3 2020- Q3 2021
Create Centers of Excellence	
Develop a sector-targeting strategy	Q2 -Q4 2020
Invest in sectors that build on, expand Colorado's uniqueness	on-going
Partner with higher ed and private sector creative companies to align re: strategies/priorities	2021
Foster Startup Connections	
Host tech + creatives meet-ups, workshops	Launch Q1 2020
Develop courses in creative tech	2021
Engage private sector leaders & investors	on-going
Build and support linkages between creative and STEM fields (STEAM!)	on-going

(3) Engage higher education leadership to align strategic directions and priorities. Collaborate on building centers of excellence together with private sector and industry leaders, higher ed, and community stakeholders.

(4) Support higher education: increase options for graduating creatives to work in regional creative companies. Colorado’s higher ed leaders are proactively developing courses and degree programs that align with future hiring needs.

STRATEGY 4: FOSTER STARTUP CONNECTIONS

The creative community of Colorado has much to gain from the existing, abundant startup resources dedicated to tech. Many leaders at these organizations expressed interest in engaging with creative entrepreneurs.

(1) Host meet-ups bringing together the creative and tech communities. Invite speakers relevant to both communities. Work with higher ed, regional corporates, small and emerging creative businesses to identify bleeding edge topics.

(2) Higher ed organizations can offer courses/seminars on new technologies for creatives”.

(3) Engage area creative tech mentors to sponsor creative tech workshops for specific industries including music, film, gaming, immersive arts tech.

(4) Create linkages among STEAM departments and create internships at creative companies that offer a cross-disciplinary learning experience.

A FEW PARTING WORDS

Seismic shifts in the global economy are underfoot. As societies move from industrial to knowledge-based systems of production, creativity is more essential than ever. For the first time in history, soon more people will make a living from their minds than their muscles.

What an exciting time to be a human being!

Yet, these are also challenging times for creatives. The values of free speech and unadulterated creativity are in peril. Young creatives struggle to find well-paying work tied to their creative talents. And corporate behemoths exploit market systems, blocking pathways to inclusive prosperity.

One proactive approach to tackling these complex

challenges is to equip creatives to become entrepreneurs, building businesses that stem these perilous trends.

Entrepreneurship is often defined as the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently under control. It is the bold undertaking of striving to meet the needs of others (through products and services) while meeting one’s own financial needs. When grounded in empathy, it can be a lever for lifting up entire communities.

Working with creative entrepreneurs around the world, we have witnessed time and again the values creative entrepreneurs actualize through their businesses: empathy and a celebration of diversity, love of community and heritage, and passion for innovation and building what’s next.

By lighting the landing strip for creative entrepreneurs we invest in leaders who enliven the values central to democracy.



PARTNERS & FUNDERS



DENVER ARTS & VENUES, CREATE DENVER

Denver Arts & Venues enriches and advances Denver's quality of life and economic vitality through premier public venues, arts, cultural and entertainment opportunities.

Arts & Venues is responsible for operating some of the region's most renowned facilities, including Red Rocks Park and Amphitheater, the Denver Performing Arts Complex, Colorado Convention Center, Denver Coliseum and McNichols Civic Center Building.

Arts & Venues also oversees the Denver Public Art Program, Create Denver, Arts Education Fund and other entertainment and cultural events such as the Five Points Jazz Festival, Urban Arts Fund, P.S. You Are Here and implementation of IMAGINE 2020: Denver's Cultural Plan. Denver Arts & Venues

is committed to diversity, equity and inclusiveness in all our programs, initiatives and decision-making processes.

COLORADO CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

A division of the Office of Economic Development & International Trade Colorado Creative Industries believes in the power of creativity to inspire human connections, create social change and support economic vibrancy throughout Colorado.

CCI believes in the practice of creation, the artists and entrepreneurs who contribute to our rich culture and the benefits of our creative economy.

We support and encourage the innovators, creators, change-makers and dreamers who improve our quality of life and make Colorado creative. We focus on strengthening the vitality of visual, performing

and literary arts through promotion, resources and funding opportunities. We believe in bold innovation and the invaluable contributions the arts bring to this beautiful state.

DENVER OEDIT

The Denver Office of Economic Development (OED) is dedicated to advancing economic prosperity for the City of Denver, its businesses, neighborhoods and residents. Our purposeful and intentional approach to economic development is designed to broaden the tax base, stimulate balanced growth, increase the availability and affordability of housing, revitalize neighborhoods, and develop a skilled workforce for our region's employers. Working with a wide variety of community partners, we work to build and sustain an economic culture that reflects values of innovation and sustainability.

MEOW WOLF

Meow Wolf is a Santa Fe, New Mexico based arts and entertainment group established in 2008 as an art collective. A certified Benefit Corporation “B Corp”, Meow Wolf will open an immersive arts destination in downtown Denver in 2020.

Meow Wolf’s 2017 Impact Report details the company’s economic, social, and environmental efforts for community betterment. Highlights include: providing living wages and benefits to over 350 employees; donating \$250,000 to Do It Yourself (DIY) groups across the country and providing \$500,000 in cash, marketing, and/or other in-kind value to local charitable organizations.

COLORADO SBDC

The Colorado SBDC Network consists of 14 community-based full-time centers and more than 70 part-time centers that provide free, effective and confidential one-on-one consulting services in the areas of:

- Marketing
- Business plan writing
- Financial assistance
- Loan packaging
- QuickBooks
- Health and wellness
- Social media strategies
- Transportation contracts
- Certifications

- International trade
- Business valuation
- Management
- Feasibility analysis
- Veteran certifications
- Government procurement
- Website development
- Taxes
- Human resources
- Access to capital
- E-commerce
- Exit strategies

CREATIVE STARTUPS

Creative Startups is the only global accelerator for creative entrepreneurs. We provide guidance and opportunity for founders revolutionizing the storytelling and entertainment, food/food tech, and design sectors.

We understand that the creative economy is a global economic wave.

Creative Startups is singular in our ability to identify creative founders who are driven to build a profitable company while retaining an uncompromising commitment to their creative vision. We guide these founders from seed stage to market success.

We work with local partners to build place-based economic development initiatives, job creation in creative industries, inclusive creative startup ecosystems, and wealth creation for investors and creatives.

Since 2014, Creative Startups programs have served over 200 startups. On average 70 percent of our founders are women or People of Color, 80 percent of our founders are from creative professions. Our startups have created over 450 jobs, raised \$210 million in investment and created over \$45 million in new revenues.

APPENDICES & SOURCES



Photo Credit: Cori Anderson

APPENDIX A: REGIONAL HIGHER ED CREATIVE ECONOMY OFFERINGS

This is a select list of both institutions and offerings. An exhaustive list would be several pages as Colorado offers a wide range and selection of creative tech, skills, and production learning opportunities,

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

- Apparel Design
- Architecture
- Arts Leadership & Administration
- Dance Techniques (Ballet, Jazz, Modern)
- Design & Merchandising
- Electronic Art
- Fibers (textiles)
- Film Studies
- Graphic Design
- Integrated Visual Studies
- Interior Design
- Journalism
- Metalsmithing
- Music Composition
- Music, Stage, and Sports Production
- Painting
- Photo Image Making

- Pottery
- Studio Arts (Printmaking, Drawing, Sculpture)
- Theatre – Acting/Directing
- Theatre, Design & Technology

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-BOULDER

- Advertising – Creative
- Advertising – Strategy
- Architectural Engineering
- Art Practices (Studio Arts)
- Choral Conducting
- Cinema Studies & Moving Image Arts
- Creative Writing
- Dance
- Environmental Design
- Filmmaking
- Journalism

- Media Design
- Media Production
- Media Studies
- Music Education (Percussion, Instrumental, Choral, Woodwind, Jazz, etc.)
- Music Entrepreneurship
- Music Theory
- Music, Technology, & Media
- Sports and Media
- Technology, Arts & Media

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-DENVER

- 3D Graphics & Animation
- Art Practices
- Creative Writing
- Digital Design
- Film & Television Production
- Film & Television Writing
- Historic Preservation
- Illustration
- Media Forensics
- Music Business
- Music Performance
- Performance for Film & Television
- Photography
- Recording Arts
- Singer/Songwriter
- Urban Design
- Visual Arts

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY

- 3d Modeling
- Brewery Operations
- Computer Aided Design

- Computer Aided Manufacturing
- Geometric Dimensioning
- Human Performance and Sports
- Robotics for Manufacturing
- Technical Drawing
- Theatre
- Theatre Design and Technology
- Tool Design and Production Tooling

JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY

- Baking & Pastry Arts
- Culinary Arts
- Culinary Product Development
- Culinary Science & Nutrition
- Fashion Merchandising & Retailing
- Food Service Management
- Food Writing
- Sports Entertainment & Events Management
-

ADDITIONAL INSTITUTIONS WITH CREATIVE ECONOMY COURSES

Denver School of Metal Arts

Denver Jewelry Studio

Boulder Jewelry

Colorado Center for Metal Arts

Boulder Metalsmithing Association

Paragon Culinary School

Cook Street School of Fine Cooking

Emily Griffith Technical College

APPENDIX B: NAICS CODES

The below list of NAICS codes were used for this research study. This list is somewhat more inclusive than that used by many leading US-based creative economy organizations as Creative Startups works globally.

- 71: Arts, entertainment, and recreation
- 312: Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing
- 315: Apparel manufacturing
- 512: Motion picture and sound recording industries
- 515: Broadcasting (except internet)
- 711: Performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries
- 712: Museums, historical sites, and similar institutions
- 3121: Beverage manufacturing
- 3151: Apparel knitting mills
- 3152: Cut and sew apparel manufacturing
- 3322: Cutlery and handtool manufacturing
- 3343: Audio & video equipment manufacturing
- 3346: Manufacturing and reproducing magnetic and optical media
- 4452: Specialty food stores
- 4511: Sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument stores
- 5111: Newspaper, periodical, book, and directory publishers
- 5112: Software publishers
- 5121: Motion picture and video industries
- 5122: Sound recording industries
- 5151: Radio and television broadcasting
- 5152: Cable and other subscription programming
- 5413: Architectural, engineering, and related services
- 5414: Specialized design services
- 5417: Scientific research and development services
- 5418: Advertising, public relations, and related services
- 7111: Performing arts companies
- 7112: Spectator sports
- 7113: Promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar events
- 7114: Agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers, and other public figures
- 7115: Independent artists, writers, and performers
- 7121: Museums, historical sites, and similar institutions
- 7139: Other amusement and recreation industries
- 31211: Soft drink and ice manufacturing
- 31212: Breweries
- 31213: Wineries
- 31214: Distilleries
- 32312: Support activities for printing
- 32591: Printing ink manufacturing
- 33422: Radio and television broadcasting and wireless communications equipment manufacturing
- 33429: Other communications equipment manufacturing
- 33512: Lighting fixture manufacturing
- 33991: Jewelry and silverware manufacturing

- 33992: Sporting and athletic goods manufacturing
- 33993: Doll, toy, and game manufacturing
- 42391: Sporting and recreational goods and supplies merchant wholesalers
- 42392: Toy and hobby goods and supplies merchant wholesalers
- 42394: Jewelry, watch, precious stone, and precious metal merchant wholesalers
- 44831: Jewelry stores
- 45112: Hobby, toy, and game stores
- 45114: Musical instrument and supplies stores
- 45322: Gift, novelty, and souvenir stores
- 45392: Art dealers
- 51111: Newspaper publishers
- 51112: Periodical publishers
- 51113: Book publishers
- 51211: Motion picture and video production
- 51212: Motion picture and video distribution
- 51213: Motion picture and video exhibition
- 51219: Postproduction services and other motion picture and video industries
- 51221: Record production
- 51222: Integrated record production/distribution
- 51223: Music publishers
- 51224: Sound recording studios
- 51511: Radio broadcasting
- 51512: Television broadcasting
- 51521: Cable & other subscription programming
- 51911: News syndicates
- 51912: Libraries and archives
- 51913: Internet publishing and broadcasting and web search portals
- 54131: Architectural services
- 54132: Landscape architectural services
- 54133: Engineering services
- 54134: Drafting services
- 54141: Interior design services
- 54142: Industrial design services
- 54143: Graphic design services
- 54149: Other specialized design services
- 54169: Other scientific and technical consulting services
- 54171: Research and development in the physical, engineering, and life sciences
- 54181: Advertising agencies
- 54182: Public relations agencies
- 54183: Media buying agencies
- 54184: Media representatives
- 54192: Photographic services
- 56152: Tour operators
- 61161: Fine arts schools
- 71111: Theater companies & dinner theaters
- 71112: Dance companies
- 71113: Musical groups and artists
- 71119: Other performing arts companies
- 71121: Spectator sports
- 71131: Promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar events with facilities
- 71132: Promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar events without facilities
- 71141: Agents and managers for artists, athletes,

entertainers, and other public figures	451110: Sporting goods stores
71151: Independent artists, writers, and performers	511110: Newspaper publishers
71211: Museums	511120: Periodical publishers
71212: Historical sites	511191: Greeting card publishers
71213: Zoos and botanical gardens	512110: Motion picture and video production
71311: Amusement and theme parks	512120: Motion picture and video distribution
71312: Amusement arcades	512131: Motion picture theaters (except drive-ins)
71399: All other amusement & recreation industries	512132: Drive-in motion picture theaters
312111: Soft drink manufacturing	512191: Teleproduction and other postproduction services
312112: Bottled water manufacturing	512199: Other motion picture and video industries
312113: Ice manufacturing	512210: Record production
312120: Breweries	512220: Integrated record production/distribution
312130: Wineries	512230: Music publishers
312140: Distilleries	512240: Sound recording studios
323113: Commercial screen printing	512290: Other sound recording industries
323117: Books printing	515111: Radio networks
325992: Photographic film, paper, plate, and chemical manufacturing	515112: Radio stations
327212: Other pressed and blown glass and glassware manufacturing	515120: Television broadcasting
333314: Optical instrument and lens manufacturing	515210: Cable, subscription programming
334220: Radio and television broadcasting and wireless communications equipment manufacturing	541310: Architectural services
334613: Blank magnetic and optical recording media manufacturing	541320: Landscape architectural services
334614: Software and other prerecorded compact disc, tape, and record reproducing	541330: Engineering services
339992: Musical instrument manufacturing	541410: Interior design services
	541420: Industrial design services
	541430: Graphic design services
	541490: Other specialized design services
	541810: Advertising agencies
	541820: Public relations agencies

- 541830: Media buying agencies
- 541840: Media representatives
- 541921: Photography studios, portrait
- 541922: Commercial photography
- 711110: Theater companies and dinner theaters
- 711120: Dance companies
- 711190: Other performing arts companies
- 711211: Sports teams and clubs
- 711310: Promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar events with facilities
- 711320: Promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar events without facilities
- 711410: Agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers, and other public figures
- 711510: Independent artists, writers, and performers
- 4239901: Musical instruments and supplies merchant wholesalers
- 4512111: Book stores, general
- 4512112: Specialty book stores
- 4512113: College book stores
- 5122902: Producers of taped radio programs
- 5122909: All other sound recording industries
- 5416909: All other scientific and technical consulting services
- 5418401: Radio and television advertising representatives
- 5418402: Publishers' advertising representatives
- 7111101: Opera companies
- 7111102: Theater companies
- 7111103: Dinner theaters
- 7111301: Symphony orchestras and chamber music organizations
- 7111309: Other music groups and artists
- 7111909: Other performing arts companies (except circuses)
- 7112111: Football clubs
- 7112112: Baseball clubs
- 7112119: Other professional sports teams and clubs
- 7139901: Dance halls

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

1.) Enter your email to get started!

2.) In which region are you, currently, most actively part of the creative community/economy? Please pick one...

Choices:

<i>Denver</i>	<i>Aurora</i>	<i>Boulder</i>	<i>Littleton</i>
<i>Lakewood</i>	<i>Englewood</i>	<i>Fort Collins</i>	<i>Colorado Springs</i>

3.) Enter your Zip Code.

4.) Business or Organization Name.

5.) What is your or your organization’s role in [your community’s] Creative Economy? Pick as many as you like! Choices:

<i>Accelerator Programs</i>	<i>Foundation</i>	<i>Sub Culture Group</i>
<i>Angel (group/network)</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Social Enterprise</i>
<i>Art zine/publication</i>	<i>Incubator</i>	<i>Venture Capital Firm</i>
<i>Arts & Culture Council</i>	<i>Individual Donor</i>	<i>Business Organization (African-American)</i>
<i>Capacity Builder</i>	<i>Investor</i>	<i>Business Organization (Asian American/Pacific Islander)</i>
<i>Chambers of Commerce</i>	<i>Leading Researcher</i>	<i>Business Organization (Disability/Accessibility)</i>
<i>Co-working space</i>	<i>Local Publication/Newspaper</i>	<i>Business Organization (Hispanic/Latinx)</i>
<i>Coffee Shop</i>	<i>Local Television</i>	<i>Business Organization (Immigrant and refugee)</i>
<i>Corporate Sponsor</i>	<i>Maker Space</i>	<i>Business organization (LGBTQ)</i>
<i>Creative Business Nonprofit</i>	<i>Maker Individual</i>	<i>Business Organization (Native)</i>
<i>Creative District</i>	<i>Online/Digital Journalism</i>	<i>Business Organization (Senior 65+)</i>
<i>Creative Entrepreneur</i>	<i>Radioshow/Podcast</i>	<i>Business Organization (Women)</i>
<i>Creative Support Organization</i>	<i>Small Business Development Office</i>	
<i>Economic Development Office</i>	<i>Social Media Influencer</i>	
<i>Ecosystem Connector</i>	<i>Startup Event</i>	
<i>Events Schedulers/Planner</i>		

6.) If you checked “Creative Entrepreneur,” what percentage of your income do you estimate comes from your entrepreneurial activities vs. a “day job”?

Less than 25 percent

About 25 - 50 percent

Over 50 percent, but less than full-time

100+ percent I’m all-in!

7.) What creative industries do you actively work in?

Design

Fashion, e-textiles, wearables

Robotics

Animation

Graphic and digital design

Festivals

Game developers

Writing and publishing

Film

Product and industrial design

Architecture and interior design

Music

Augmented and virtual reality

Culinary arts

Studio and Fine Arts

Lighting and sound design

Theatre and performance tech

Cultural Events

Photography

Advertising/brand specialists

Digital fabrication, 3D printing

Comment box: Add any creative industries you think we missed.

8.) In your opinion, how strong or vibrant are the creative industries in [your community]? Score 1-5 (5 = strong/vibrant).

Choices:

Design

Fashion, e-textiles, wearables

Robotics

Animation

Graphic and digital design

Film

Game developers

Writing and publishing

Music

Product and industrial design

Architecture and interior design

Festivals

Augmented and virtual reality

Augmented and virtual reality

Photography

Lighting and sound design

Theatre and performance tech

Cultural Events

Advertising/brand specialists

Studio and Fine Arts

Digital fabrication, 3D printing

Comment box: Add any creative industries you think we missed.

9.) Please share the names of a few successful creative entrepreneurs, organizations or businesses in your region who might want to support new founders as they launch their companies and ideas?

Open comment box.

10.) Please share the names of resources/programs currently available to creative entrepreneurs in [your community]? *Open comment box.*

11.) If you were pitching [your community] to a creative entrepreneur in another city, what would you say are [your community's] strengths? *Open comment box.*

12.) What do you think the City of [your community] can do to better support creative entrepreneurs? *Open comment box.*

13.) What is your vision for [your community's] creative economy? For example, in 5 years, if you were to see 2 significant, positive changes in your creative economy, what would these be?

Open comment box.

Descriptions of Creative Startups's programs:

***Creative Startups Accelerator** is an eight-week program built for creative companies determined to dramatically grow their venture, and create jobs, wealth, and returns on investment. The Accelerator meets the needs of creatives who have proven the demand for their products but need to set a path toward global growth and impact.*

***Creative Startups LABS** is a four-week program designed for creative entrepreneurs with an idea or a startup just getting off the ground. LABS provide entrepreneurs a strong foundation for understanding the opportunity and path toward success.*

***Creative Startups Ecosystem and Educators' Circle** supports the growth of inclusive creative economy networks and resources. The Circle also "trains trainers" to effectively lead and facilitate entrepreneurship programs, including Creative Startups LABS, for creative entrepreneurs.*

***Creative Startups Workshops and Consulting** are designed with clients and range from ecosystem design to creative corridor development.*

14.) Based on the descriptions above, which Creative Startups Programs would you most likely want to participate in?

Accelerator (8-week)

LABS Pre-accelerator (4-week)

Workshops

Ecosystem and Educator's Circle (Train the trainer)

Consulting

15.) How many creative entrepreneurs do you know who would be interested in a Creative Startups' program?

Accelerator (8-week) *LABS Pre-accelerator (4-week)* *Workshops*

Ecosystem and Educator's Circle (Train the trainer) *Consulting*

Any additional comments?

16.) Which areas of starting and building a new company do you see creatives in [your community] struggling with most? *Matrix of responses:*

Yes, a majority struggle with this. Some struggle with this. Nope, this isn't a struggle.

Growing into new markets

Building a viable business model

Finding enough customers in their area

Forecasting cash flows

Developing a sales process that works

Hiring a talented team

Marketing their product/service

17.) Please help us connect with the full range of the creative community in [your community], where they live and work. Share ideas such as coffee shops, co-working spaces, blogs, podcasts, thought leaders.

Open comment box.

18.) Is there anything else that you would like to share with or ask us? *Open comment box.*

19.) Upload any attachments (images, reports, files) that you would like to share with us. *Upload area.*

20.) Would you like to receive a copy of the final report as well as news and updates on a future Denver Creative Startups Accelerator?

Yes

No

Yes, but please use this email instead.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF RESPONDENTS' ORGANIZATIONS

- Alt Ethos and Denver Arts + Technology Advancement
- American Music School
- AR Design Shop
- Beefsteak Charlie
- Blaise Freelance
- Blue Linen Creative
- Bold Betties
- Bonfils-Stanton Foundation
- Boulder POV, LLC
- Brushwork-Black Ink Studio
- Burger King
- Cacao Chemistry
- Challenge Day
- City and County of Denver, Mayor's Office/North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative
- College of Arts & Media
- Colorado Business Committee for the Arts
- Colorado Photography School
- Columbine Chorale
- Control Group Production
- Create Places
- Creative Density Coworking
- Curious Theatre Company
- Danae Falliers
- Denver Arts & Venues
- Denver Children's Choir
- Denver Public Library
- Denver Public Library - ideaLAB
- Downtown Artery
- Downtown Colorado Springs Creative District
- Downtown Fort Collins Creative District
- Colorado Dragon Boat Festival
- Eclectic CO
- Energy Advantage Roofing & Solar
- Erin K. Barnes Media
- Escape Realm
- Fort Collins Museum of Discovery
- GoodCinema
- goPDO
- Grade A Investment
- Highwater Wealth Management
- Honey Tea & Me
- Housefish
- Ideaison
- illegal petes, inc
- Intrinsic Paths
- Kim Robards Dance
- Kreuser Gallery
- LAS Dean's Office at UCCS
- Legendary LTD
- Leon Gallery
- Levitt Pavilion Denver
- Lisa MichotArt
- Listen Productions
- Manitou Art Center
- McAllister House Museum
- Meow Wolf
- Mongolian Culture & Heritage Center
- Mountain to Sound
- National Western Stock Show
- Onyro Creative
- Pikes Peak Market
- Point A Solutions
- Rampfee
- Rubedo

Wheelchair Sports Camp
Unit E
Birdseed Collective
SeriesFest
Silva Studios
Stories on Stage
Studio C3
The Carter Payne / Local Relic
The Denver Theatre District
The Machine Shop
The Manager
The Music District
The Temple
The VIA Company
Think 360 Arts for Learning
Thomas Denver
Tina Floersch Design & Photography
Trash as Art & Aurora Arts District
Trinidad Creative District
Tuck and Roll Productions
Underground Music Showcase, Two Parts
University of Colorado Boulder
UC - Denver, College of Arts & Media
Urban Arts Council
WESTAF

APPENDIX E: LIST OF RESOURCES MENTIONED BY RESPONDENTS

- 1 Million Cups
- 48hr film fest
- American Music School
- Art Lab
- Articulate
- Aurora Cultural Arts District
- Aurora Urban Renewal
- Birdseed Collective
- Black Business Initiative
- Bohemian Foundation
- Bonfils Stanton Foundation
- Boomtown
- Building Bridges
- Caffeinated Mornings
- Catalyst HTI
- Colorado Attorneys for the Arts
- Colorado Business Committee for the Arts
- Colorado Creative Industries
- Colorado Institute for Social Impact
- Colorado Music Collective
- Colorado Rocks for Teachers
- Commons on Champa
- Community Enterprise Development Services
- Confluence Magazine
- Control Group Productions
- Cottonwood Center for the Arts
- Create Denver
- Creative Collab
- Creative Mornings
- Creative Startups
- Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region
- DATA/Morphos 360
- Denver Arts & Venues
- Denver Egoist
- Denver Film Society
- Denver Immersive Summit
- Denver Office of Strategic Partnerships
- Denver Open Media
- Denver Startup Week
- Denver Theatre District
- DIME
- Domelab
- Downtown Artery
- Downtown Creative District
- Emerging Arts Leaders Network (Americans for the Arts)
- Epicentral
- FC Media
- Filmmaker Fund
- Fort Collins Startup Week
- Ft. Collins Unity
- General Assembly
- GirlBoss
- Grasslands Agency
- Illegal Pete's
- IM Tour
- Innosphere
- Leading Edge (SBDC)
- Milkhaus
- Mirage Foundation
- Mirror Image Arts
- Morphos 360
- Muse
- Northwest Aurora Grant
- Octopus initiative
- OEDIT
- Peak Startup
- Peaks Arts Prize
- Pharos Grants
- Pikes Peak Arts Council
- Pikes Peak Makerspace
- PS You Are Here
- Public Libraries
- Redline Gallery
- RiNO Creative District
- Rockies Venture Club
- Rocky Mountain Microfinance Institute
- Scientific and Cultural Facilities District
- SCORE
- Series at Alliance Center
- SeriesFest
- SIG
- Small Business Development Center
- Startup Coop Accelerator
- Swallow Hill Music
- TARRA
- TechRIoT
- TechStars
- The Church
- The Lyric
- The Music District
- The Acadia Project
- The Wayfaring Band
- Unit E
- Women Who Startup
- Women in Design
- Youth on Record

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