

NORTHEAST OHIO



CREATIVE ECONOMY

ASSET ANALYSIS REPORT

2019



NORTHEAST OHIO

CREATIVE ECONOMY ASSET ANALYSIS

Understanding & Meeting the Needs of Creative Entrepreneurs in Cleveland and Beyond

Research and report prepared by:

Creative Startups

September 27th, 2019



CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2

PURPOSE & CONTEXT 4

- Purpose of Study and Report.....4
- The Creative Economy.....6
- Northeast Ohio as Context8
- Regional Creative Economy..... 10

METHODS 14

DATA 16

- Workforce..... 19
- Earning Spectrum of Creatives22
- Ecosystem Perceptions 25
- Resources..... 28
- Community Challenges..... 34
- Strengths & Vision 36

ANALYSIS 40

- I. Building the Bridge..... 40
- II. Fostering Community 43
- Encouraging Innovation..... 44
- Rethinking Funding..... 46
- Synthesis 48

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS 56

APPENDICES & SOURCES 64





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

Creative Startups, in partnership with JumpStart, The Cleveland Foundation, and the Kelvin & Eleanor Smith Foundation, is pleased to present this Asset Analysis Report. The report details the findings of a roughly five-month research project designed to engage creative economy stakeholders from Cleveland and the Northeast Ohio region. The purpose of the project is to understand the needs and goals of creative entrepreneurs building businesses in the expanding creative economy.

Creative Startups, the only global accelerator program for 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 skillful navigators, weaving the threads of heritage and innovation, creativity and market demand into a holistic tapestry: a startup.

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: new interpretations and technologies that invite us to explore culture and the human experience.

All humans are creative, and all cultures are dynamic, thus the creative economy is uniquely suited to build more inclusive

wealth generation, community engagement, and civic participation. Through investing in the success of diverse creative entrepreneurs, cities and regions are strategically mitigating challenges related to gentrification, job losses, shifting economic demand and trends.

As Cleveland and Northeast Ohio grapple with population outflux and demographic shifts, communities across the region are working to build future-facing economies that leverage underappreciated assets - including entrepreneurial talent, new opportunities for old industries, and a rising interest in affordable urban lifestyles.

Toward this end, this report was commissioned to gain insight into the needs, concerns, goals, and vision of the Cleveland's creative community. Together with our partners we broadened our scope to look at creatives

across Northeast Ohio, although the bulk of our data comes from entrepreneurs engaged in Cleveland. Note that the communities referenced are herein are, more often than not, implicitly Cleveland. The resulting data provides clear indicators of the creative community's priorities and preferences in regards to supporting creative entrepreneurs in Cleveland and beyond.

Northeast Ohio's creative community most consistently (and loudly) expresses concerns about collaboration, access to resources specific to creatives, equity and inclusion, and the need to be taken seriously as *entrepreneurs*. Creatives see barriers to accessing startup investment and highlight their struggle to find business-focused support and resources designed by and for creatives.

Respondents struggled to name organizations supporting creative practices and skill development despite the region's wealth of world-renowned creative institutions and higher education entities. They correctly noted a near total lack of resources for creatives building *businesses*.

Additionally, creatives recognize a lack of investors, programs, conferences and networks dedicated to creatives building companies. It is not surprising some respondents are concerned

that without greater investment in creative - and other - entrepreneurs, Cleveland will lose its lively, artistic and cultural ambience, leaving behind a homogenized culture.

Despite these challenges, and the concerns of creatives, respondents envision a future in which inclusivity and opportunity for all are widely held values. The pride that respondents feel for their communities is palpable and inspiring. Despite the challenges, there exists an overwhelming sense of abundance that is waiting to be unearthed and celebrated.

Many envision a possible future Cleveland in which creative entrepreneurs --in a wide range of creative industries -- are supported in building viable businesses and livelihoods.

In addition to this compelling shared vision, this report also discovers sizable demand for business-minded support services for creative entrepreneurs. 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 "gig economy" and into a structure offering greater stability, predictability, and job creation.

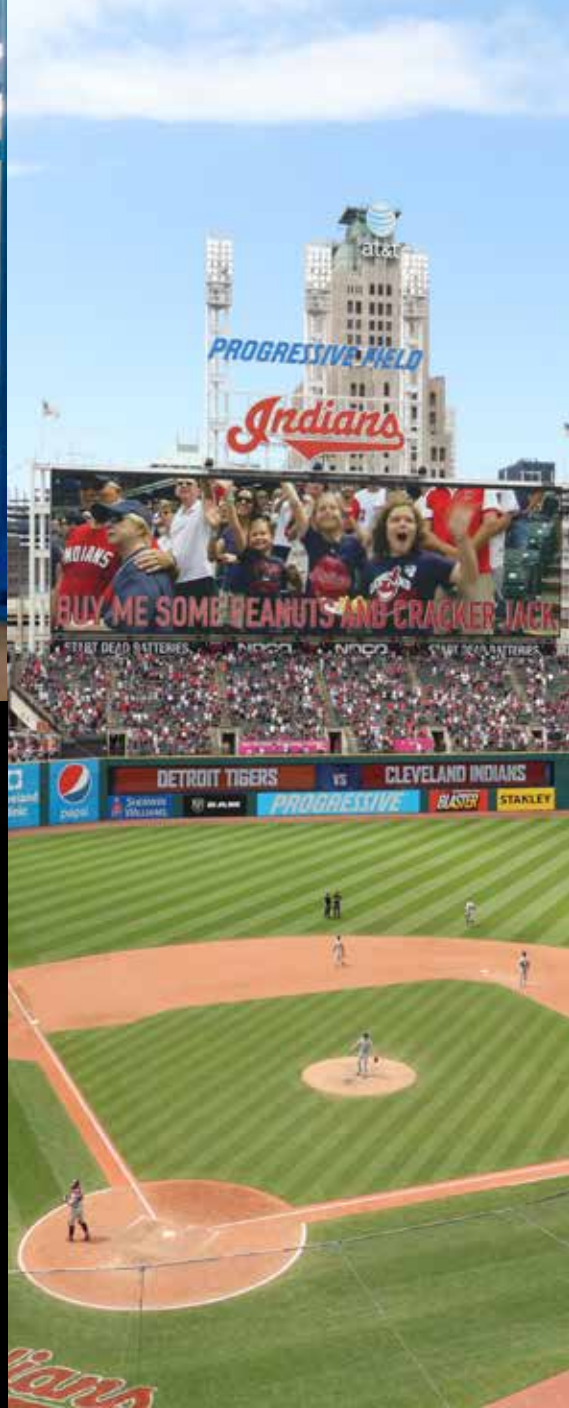
In summary, this report recommends the following actions to leaders with a passion for Ohio's creative economy and a commitment to building a better future for all.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS:

1. Building the bridge to the creative economy: developing creative-specific resources for founders;
2. Fostering a more equitable community: supporting under-resourced and underestimated founders;
3. Encouraging a culture of innovation: integrating creative entrepreneurship into legacy industry;
4. Rethinking institutional approaches to supporting creatives: challenges to the arts philanthropy model.

STRATEGIES:

- *Strategy 1: Outreach & Inclusion*
- *Strategy 2: Accelerate & Support*
- *Strategy 3: Build Pathways to Entrepreneurship*
- *Strategy 4: Foster Connections*
- *Strategy 5: Expand Capacity*





PURPOSE & CONTEXT



PURPOSE OF STUDY AND REPORT

What makes an entrepreneurial ecosystem and how do you build one that is thriving, resilient, and inclusive? Within the last decade a tremendous amount of effort and resources have been put towards answering this question on the part of policy makers, foundations, entrepreneurs, and more who wonder how their community might become the next startup juggernaut, teeming with jobs and private sector investment.

The Kauffman Foundation, one of the world's leading foundations focusing on entrepreneurship, recently released a draft of their new publication: "Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building Playbook."¹ In the Playbook the foundation defines an "entrepreneurial ecosystem" as a system grounded in its "people and the culture of trust and collabora-

tion that allows them to interact successfully," noting that a thriving ecosystem "allows for the fast flow of talent, information, and resources" to help "entrepreneurs quickly find what they need at each stage of growth."²

Thriving ecosystems center on entrepreneurs and necessitate elements like talent and capital to help companies grow, people and institutions with knowledge and resources to share, easy entry points into the ecosystem, and a robust culture of support, championing entrepreneurship, and storytelling.

At Creative Startups we are often invited to work alongside and within communities and organizations to explore how to build and implement entrepreneurship programs that reflect the community's vision, needs, and opportunities, while also making meaningful contributions to the broader ecosystem. Having

led and designed programs for creative entrepreneurs around the world for over 12 years, we are well acquainted with the pedagogical best practices and community-led strategies necessary for cultivating entrepreneurial growth.

More importantly, we know from experience that the most successful and resilient ecosystems emerge when all stakeholders work together toward a shared vision.

While startup juggernauts like Tel Aviv and Silicon Valley can inform entrepreneurship ecosystem strategies, communities are increasingly putting in place plans that leverage their unique regional assets, cultural heritage, and entrepreneurial talent. This place-based strategy delivers jobs and increases the attractiveness of the region.

While the thinkers, leaders, and officials who are driving the ecosystem conversation forward have done a tremendous amount of work to shift away from a copy and paste model of entrepreneurship development, the stories of emerging entrepreneurial ecosystems are all too often still told from a deficiency perspective. Instead, we champion an approach rooted in the theory of asset-framing. Coined by Trabian Shorters, founder of the BMe community organization, asset-framing is a “shift to narratives that define people by their aspirations and contributions” instead of narratives of “deficit and despair” which are used to “incite action from stakeholders” who are “unaware of the stigmatizing effects” of the narrative they are perpetuating.³

When approached by a potential partner to explore building entrepreneurship programs, we first take a step back to consider how we can better understand the community, because entrepreneurship strategies cannot be one size fits all.

This Asset Analysis report is intended to help us gain insight into the region’s history, creative economy landscape, sectors, and stakeholders. Through the in-depth process leading to this report, we seek to understand a shared vision, identify gaps in the creative economy ecosystem,

find points of opportunity where entrepreneurship programs could potentially unlock regional talent, and unleash a new wave of creative entrepreneurs to achieve a shared vision.

The Cleveland Foundation, The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation, and JumpStart, Inc. invited us to explore the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northeast Ohio and consider new ways of building bridges of support within the creative community. Incorporated in 1955, the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation carries forward the entrepreneurial spirit and passion for community shared by its namesakes. The Foundation supports organizations that exemplify “excellence in their missions, creativity in approach, fiscal responsibility, and leadership in their service to the community to positively impact the lives of citizens in Northeast Ohio.”⁴

Founded in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is one of the nation’s first community foundations. The foundation’s mission is to “enhance the lives of all residents of Greater Cleveland, now and for generations to come, by working together with our donors to build community endowment, address needs through grantmaking, and provide leadership on key community issues.”⁵

Founded in 2003, JumpStart is an impact-driven non-profit committed to unlocking “the full potential of diverse and ambitious entrepreneurs to economically transform entire communities.” JumpStart was founded with the vision of galvanizing entrepreneurial growth across Northeast Ohio.⁶ With the support of Ohio Third Frontier they also manage the Northeast Ohio Startup Network which collaborates to grow the entrepreneurial ecosystem across the 21 counties of Northeast Ohio.⁷ When combining the grants made by The Cleveland Foundation since inception with JumpStart’s direct investments into startups, the two organizations have contributed nearly \$1.8 billion dollars to the economy of Northeast Ohio.**ENDNOTE**

With their support Creative Startups set out to understand the state of the creative economy and engage as many entrepreneurs, creatives, and creative community stakeholders as possible to learn about what’s needed to develop a more resilient, inclusive, and equitable creative future for all in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio.

While the original scope of this report was specific to Cleveland, in conversations with JumpStart we decided to look more broadly and encourage respondents from across Northeast Ohio. It is

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: archives, museums, heritage sites
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
<p>For additional information regarding how nations define creative industries, we recommend the following reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-95261-1_2 https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/digital-library/What%20Do%20We%20Mean%20by%20CCI.PDF

not enough for Cuyahoga County to thrive while the rest of the ecosystem lags behind, and the team at JumpStart is prescient in this recognition. While the majority of our data does come from Cleveland respondents, we are fortunate to have the perspective of individuals from across the region who are all committed to building a thriving and resilient creative economy.

THE GLOBAL CREATIVE ECONOMY

Globally the creative economy is growing dramatically at 4% to 12% annually (growth rates vary from country to country) according to UNESCO data. Based on this data, global creative economy revenues are on track to reach \$3 trillion by 2020.⁸

According to a 2016 research report by Nesta, the creative economy employs over 14 million people in the USA - that's nearly 10% of all Americans.⁹ The U.S. Department of Commerce 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%.¹⁰ Moreover, creative economy jobs grew in all but 11 states.¹¹

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

John Howkins’ 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.” 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.”¹²

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 as contrasts to artistic endeavors. This framework was likely faulty at its inception. Today this framework 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, regardless of the sectors included, from the World Bank to the US Department of Commerce, from the US Census and American Community Survey, from the National Endowment for the Arts to Nesta, the data is strikingly clear: **The creative economy’s explosive growth remains unstoppable in every corner of the globe.**

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, blockchain, and VR/AR are disrupting creative industries.¹³

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

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

JOHN HOWKINS

Consider, for a moment, the evolution of filmmaking. Twenty years ago, film production required expensive equipment, access to production specialists, financiers, and 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 many ways. One difference is especially important: creatives are the storytellers who 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.

In fields as diverse as robotics, music, artificial intelligence, and dance, creative entrepreneurs shape our shared interpretations of phenomena. Imagine how we would understand extra-terrestrial life without films like E.T. or Alien. Or, how the struggle of African Americans would be understood without the speeches of the great Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Storytellers interpret and shape meaning. And human beings' never-ending need to understand the universe and our place in it ensures creative entrepreneurs will always encounter growing markets.

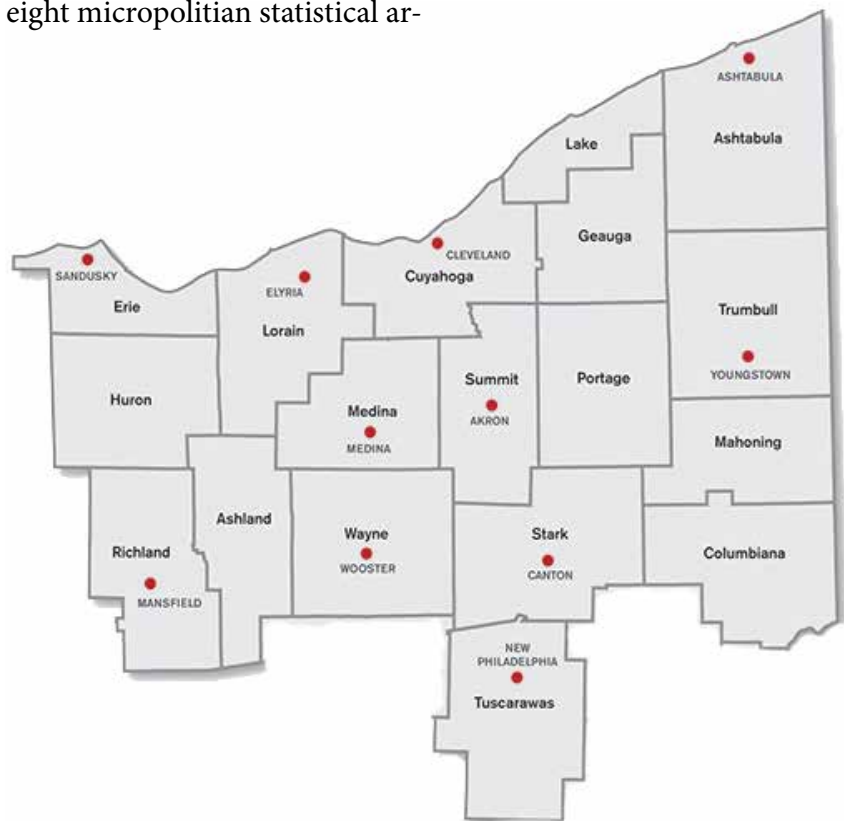
Given the dramatic shifts in social, cultural, natural and industrial ecologies transpiring around the world, it is not surprising that communities are embracing new forms of expression as we seek to understand contemporary human experiences. Moreover, this suggests the world's creative economy will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

NORTHEAST OHIO AS CONTEXT

Most broadly defined, Northeast Ohio is considered to cover 21 counties, six metropolitan areas, eight micropolitan statistical ar-

reas, and is home to roughly 4.2 million residents.

Telling a comprehensive story of such a geographically diverse place is undoubtedly difficult, especially when community and cultural definitions of place often blur with official political boundaries. As mentioned, in conversation with JumpStart we agreed to welcome responses from across the Northeast Ohio region, clustered into 18 counties defined by Team NEO, the Northeast Ohio Network Partner for JobsOhio.¹⁴



Map source: https://wikitravel.org/en/File:Counties_in_Northeast_Ohio.jpg



Mouth of the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio, circa 1920.

This includes the following counties: Ashland, Ashtabula, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Erie, Geauga, Huron, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Richland, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, and Wayne.

The first “Paleo-Indian People” to inhabit the land that is now Ohio can be traced to as early 13,000 BC, and were later followed by complex mound-building cultures such as the Adena and the Hopewell, and later the two language groups of the Iroquois (Wyan-dotte and the Mingo) and Algonquian (Shawnee, Delaware, Miami and Ottawa). In his seminal work *Ohio and Its People*, George W. Knepper notes that Ohio’s geological history can be traced even further than its Native American history, dating back well over 57 million years.¹⁵

As Knepper aptly notes, the coal beneath its surface would contribute in more ways than one to Ohio’s foundation. The story of Northeast Ohio was profoundly shaped by the astounding industrial era boom manufacturing, steel-making, and shipping in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, and the influx of wealth and European immigration that came with it.

Akron, founded in 1825 at the summit of the then developing Ohio and Erie Canal, quickly grew as the “Rubber Capital of the World” as the headquarters for companies including B.F. Goodrich Company, the Good-year Tire and Rubber Company, and Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. In 1950, Akron’s rubber industry employed more than eighty-five thousand workers and produced almost 30% of the rubber products used in the United States.¹⁶

Cleveland’s strategic geographic location led to its rapid industrial boom and growth during the Gilded Age when John D. Rockefeller founded Standard Oil there in 1870. With this, Northeast Ohio quickly rose as a hub of trade and manufacturing activity. By 1950, Cleveland had a population well over nine-hundred thousand.¹⁷

Equally as important to Northeast Ohio’s identity is the migration of African Americans that occurred as early as 1809. Indeed, many locations in Ohio were part of the Underground Railroad for African Americans fleeing slavery in the South. This accelerated during the Great Migration of 1916 - 1970 when nearly 6 million black individuals moved from the Southern United States to the Northeast, West, and Midwest.¹⁸

Throughout the 20th Century the region would be profoundly shaped by a series of booms and busts in industry and economy. Redlining and spatial segregation further divided many communities in Northeast Ohio while the suburbs of cities like Cleveland grew in parallel.¹⁹ Unfortunately, in 1978, Cleveland became the first city since the Great Depression to default on its financial obligations, to the sum of “\$15.5 million dollars in short-term loans from local banks.”²⁰

The entrepreneurial spirit that helped to drive Northeast Ohio to prosperity at the turn of the 20th century has helped propel its recovery and growth in recent years. With the presence of multiple Fortune 500 companies and a growing creative economy, it's clear that entrepreneurial thinking and an innovative spirit is part of Northeast Ohioan's DNA. Coupled with the rich diversity of its population, strong educational and arts institutions, and growing connections to global markets, Cleveland and Northeast Ohio is primed to thrive.

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT: THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

In the years after World War I, local developer Joseph Laronge had a vision for transforming the area between Euclid Avenue and East 14th Street in downtown Cleveland into a hub for vaudeville, movies, and theatre. Today, that area is known as Playhouse Square and is one of the largest theatre districts outside of Broadway. Playhouse Square is just one of the many hubs for creative and entrepreneurial activity in Northeast Ohio. Its success has made Cleveland a world-renowned arts mecca and highlights the region's strengths and potential.

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 Ohio's creative industries, if one includes sports-related, engineering, and software industries, as is the norm in Europe, Asia, and much of Latin America, the region, especially Cleveland, is thriving. Using a lens more traditionally applied in the USA, Northeast Ohio's creative industries are strong and growing. And, if one takes a very narrow interpretation of the arts and culture industries, they will still see significant economic impact.

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and

the Ohio Development Services Agency in their report analyzing economic activity from 2007-2017, at \$676.2 billion Ohio has the 7th largest GDP in the U.S. -- a size almost equivalent to the GDP of Switzerland.²¹ While manufacturing remains the largest sector in Ohio's economy at 16.6 percent, the service sector contributes 77.41 percent of the GDP, which includes arts and entertainment (1.17 percent), hospitality and tourism (2.49 percent) and education (0.92 percent).

Between 2009 and 2018 the economic impact of the arts and entertainment industries in Ohio increased by 47.5 percent and is forecasted to increase 2.2 percent annually through 2026.²²





The 2018 report “Ohio’s Creative Economy: The Economic Impact of the Arts and Creative Industries” from the Center for Regional Development at Bowling Green State University, notes that the creative industries contribute more than \$41.4 billion in economic activity annually in Ohio, and support 289,321 jobs.²³

Of this, roughly 27 percent of creative economy activity is located in cities in Northeast Ohio, primarily Akron, Cleveland, and Youngstown. The economic impact of these three cities alone is over \$10.8 billion, together employing nearly 85,000 people. Important to note is that this report defines the creative industries in six categories: Museums and Collections, Performing Arts, Visual Arts/Photography, Film, Radio, and Television, Design and Publishing, and Schools and Services --as informed by reporting from *Americans for the Arts*.

In 1990 the Ohio Legislature passed the Ohio’s Percent for Art legislation which “provides funds for the acquisition, commissioning and installation of works of art for new or renovated public buildings with appropriations of more than \$4 million.”²⁴ Despite this government support for the arts, recognition for the importance of the creative industries varies throughout local and regional economic development plans.

The Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Corporation (NEFCO) 2018 CEDS update, for instance, makes no mention of the arts or creative industries.²⁵ At the local level, the City of Medina Comprehensive Plan update champions that “smaller cities like Medina also have arts and cultural activities and opportunities that can play a large role in attracting young professionals to the City” (p.13).²⁶ The “Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan”

envisions Cleveland as a “mecca for arts and culture” (p.3).²⁷ The “Cuyahoga County Five-Year Economic Development Plan” has a strategic goal to “[promote arts, culture and tourism as a key component of the county’s economic development strategies” (p.5).²⁸

At the time of writing the City of Akron is working on the development of a new cultural plan with the independent Akron-based non-profit ArtsNow. ArtsCleveland (formerly the Community Partnership for Arts and Culture) has also done great work in their playbook “Elevating the Influence of Arts and Culture” and in the evolution of the Northeast Ohio Arts & Culture Plan.²⁹

On its own though, entrepreneurship, small business development, and workforce development are key strategic goals identified by economic development leaders in the region. The 2018 NEFCO CEDS identified the following strategic goals: encouraging “programs and projects that create and retain jobs,” supporting “entrepreneurial, innovative and technological development,” and supporting “efforts that will make the region more globally competitive” (p. 27). The Cuyahoga Five Year plan has a strategy to “Create an innovation / entrepreneurship continuum” but focuses on the

sectors of additive manufacturing, smart devices, and energy storage (p. 9).

The Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA) 2017 CEDS identify workforce and small business development as one of their eight strategic focus areas, although they do not mention the creative economy or arts at all (p. 21).³⁰

A 2016 report from Ohio State University states bluntly:

“On every metric, Ohio ranks among the states with the smallest share of employment in small businesses and new businesses [...] Ohio’s small businesses and new businesses lack dynamism when compared to the U.S. as a whole” (Rembert, et. al, p. 5).³¹

There is a clear opportunity to focus on strengthening the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem and bringing the creative industries into the fold.

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. For a full list of NAICS codes utilized see Appendix A.

TABLE 2: SELECTED CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN NE OHIO

NAICS Codes	Industry Classification	Number of Firms	Total Sales, Revenue	Annual Payroll	Total Employees
5413	Architectural, engineering, and related services	2458	\$5,104,332,000	\$1,757,918,000	26084
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	3012	\$4,578,293,000	\$1,700,228,000	44777
54133	Engineering services	1402	\$3,623,066,000	\$122,6126,000	16246
711	Performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries	720	\$1,911,460,000	\$966,811,000	8006
713	Amusement, gambling, and recreation industries	2108	\$1,400,690,000	\$394,765,000	20917
7112	Spectator sports	142	\$1,301,572,000	\$800,656,000	4780
5418	Advertising, public relations, and related services	946	\$976,116,000	\$291,288,000	5754
515	Broadcasting (except internet)	105	\$532,340,000	\$111,240,000	1639
4511	Sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument stores	515	\$462,924,000	\$51,888,000	3199
54131	Architectural services	418	\$449,070,000	\$158,936,000	2388



The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the Federal standard used for statistical analysis in classifying business establishments in the U.S. economy. Although an industry standard, NAICS codes are often self-selected by businesses and therefore varying in how accurately they reflect the service or goods provided by the business.

Table 2 details the top ten creative industries in the 18-county Northeast Ohio region, as ranked by total sales revenue for 2016 (the most recently available year). Some industries, such as arts, architecture, or entertainment might not be surprising given the strength of local ecosystem leaders such as the Cleveland Institute of Art, Playhouse Square, or creative companies like Sherwin-Williams and the L-Brands. But

in looking at Cleveland data alone for NAICS codes, arts and entertainment don't even make the top 10 industries and are well out-paced by industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation and warehousing.

Gambling and sports are two industries that have recently fallen under the purview of the creative economy, though they may seem surprising to some. If you visit a casino today it's likely that many of the machines you see will more closely resemble highly animated video game consoles than the hand-crank slot machines of yore.

It's increasingly common to see sports included alongside the creative industries in government cabinets outside of the U.S., while still not as common in the United States. Many make the case for sports as part of the creative economy within um-

brella industries of tourism and recreation, culture, and design (uniforms, logos).

The presence of teams such as the Cleveland Browns, the Cleveland Cavaliers, and the Cleveland Indians likely help bolster the strength of this category for the region. The NEFCO 2018 CEDS cites the pending development of a \$500 million Pro Football Hall of Fame Village in Canton, Ohio as holding “the promise of the next major economic development driver for the region” (p.9).

Given the region's history of manufacturing and production, and the presence of several large design firms, we were surprised not to see industrial design more prominently represented as a leading industry. This may be attributable to individuals self-categorizing within other NAICS categories, or present a clear opportunity to amplify design as a sector in the creative economy.

With the presence of organizations like the Cleveland Clinic, the Akron Children's Hospital, and Summa Health Systems, the medical industry is an unquestionably impactful part of the region's economy. While the medical industry is not generally considered as part of the creative economy, during this research we encountered a number of

med-tech companies using creative tools such as music or animation as part of healthcare interventions.

For instance, Cleveland-based company SeeLife is an animated biofeedback game that uses “designed imagery, music, and language to aid the player in regulating the autonomic system.”³² This is an example of a company that can easily be counted within the creative industries but may be classified differently.

Developing a thriving, resilient, and inclusive creative economy is a strategic opportunity for Cleveland and Northeast Ohio to distinguish itself nationally, to become more globally competitive, and to capitalize on existing strengths and industries.





METHODS



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study has pursued answers to the following questions:

RQ1: What is the current creative economy landscape and how has the past informed this landscape?

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 for growth for the entrepreneurial ecosystem?

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

This report is intended to inform city and state leadership, neighborhood, community and economic developers, creative communities, and creative entrepreneurs. The report's findings and suggested next steps offer a roadmap to those seeking to capitalize on Northeast Ohio's growing economic vibrancy while simultaneously lifting up diverse voices, including entrepreneurs from a wide range of backgrounds, thus expanding the region's distinct cultural offerings.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

Creative Startups staff spent roughly 388 hours on the ground in Northeast Ohio meeting with, observing, and engaging with the region's creative economy stakeholders. To better grasp the needs of creatives and gather direct input and ideas from 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 20 semi-structured interviews and 31 structured interviews;
- Gathered 189 responses to our online questionnaire;
- Hosted three community centered focus groups for entrepreneurs, creatives, and emerging student entrepreneurs;
- Visited three different counties;
- Held 8 meetings with higher education leaders;
- Visited 5 incubator or co-working facilities;
- Connected with 7 region-wide philanthropic foundations working in creative economy.

The online questionnaire was hosted on Zoho Survey - an online platform. 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 responses were discarded. After cleaning the questionnaire data, 102 reliable response sets remained.

To see the full list of questions refer to **Appendix B**. No identifying information from in-person interviews or online interviews will be used in this report or shared with individuals or entities outside of Creative Startups. The questionnaire was distributed via direct emails to area stakeholders, promoted on social media, and announced at all meetings and focus groups in the region.

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 that allows researchers to discover themes that consistently emerge across interviews and observations. Based on the survey data, we aimed to understand the relationship between those who identify as “creative entrepre-

neurs,” their business success, and the strength of the broader creative ecosystem.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

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

We also utilized Creative Startups’ extensive 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.

DEFICIENCIES

This study has four notable limitations:

1. At its largest, Northeast Ohio encompasses 21 counties and is home to over 4.5 million residents. It would be nearly impossible to accurately capture the input of each resident and thus this is a small and generally homogeneous sampling of the population, as will be explored further in the subsequent section;
2. The interviews were conducted in English and the online questionnaire was distributed via online channels. As such, creative community members whose English or access to internet is limited, or who have disabilities preventing the use of online forms, are not well represented;
3. The study is not a comprehensive economic analysis and thus cannot definitively link respondents’ perceptions to all available economic data;
4. The study is limited in scope in its focus on the needs and knowledge of creative entrepreneurs. For example, in terms of understanding specific business knowledge and skills that would most benefit creative entrepreneurs in the region the study does not attempt to parse which accounting programs creatives are familiar/not familiar with. Instead, the report assessed general knowledge needs and gaps creative entrepreneurs perceive.



NORTHEAST OHIO CREATIVE ECONOMY



DATA

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 nonprofit creative ventures.

Creative Employees:

Individuals working at creative companies (for or nonprofit).

Creative Economy Stakeholders:

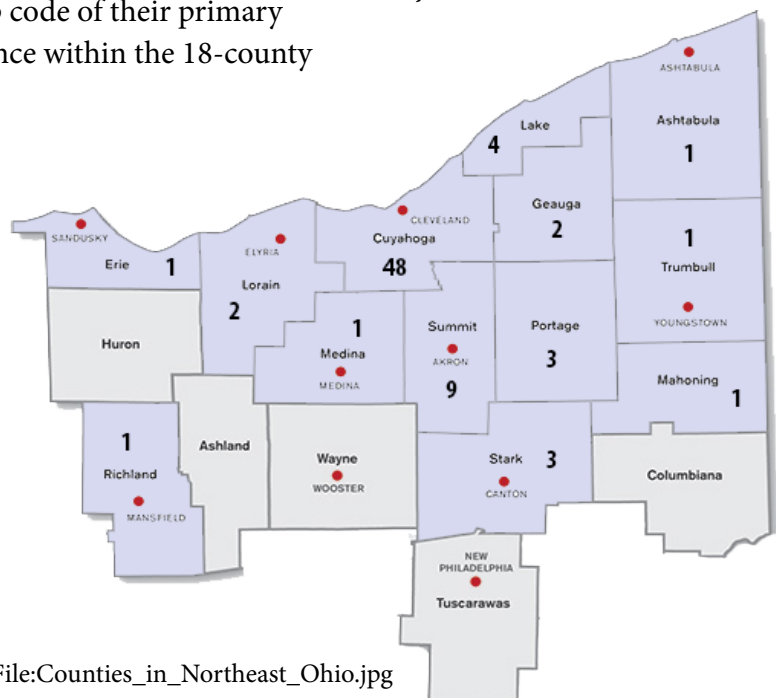
Individuals who work with or volunteer with organizations that provide resources or support to the creative economy, such as the Small Business Development Center, co-working facilities, or public libraries.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

As noted in the previous section, we received 102 eligible questionnaire responses from community members. This section provides a profile of those who responded in comparison with the demographic makeup of the region as a whole.

Considering only those who list the zip code of their primary residence within the 18-county

focus, Cuyahoga County is most prominently represented (62.3 percent of respondents), then Summit County (11.7 percent), Lake County (5.2 percent), and Stark (3.9 percent). Many creatives live in one community and work in a different one, so we asked, “*In which region are you, currently, most actively part of the creative community/economy?*”



Map source: https://wikitravel.org/en/File:Counties_in_Northeast_Ohio.jpg

80.3 percent of respondents report their creative practice or work is primarily located in Cuyahoga County.

5.6 percent in Summit County, 3.7 percent in Stark County, and the remaining 10.4 percent in Ashtabula, Lorain, Mahoning, and Richland Counties. In this case, as all of the respondents list their creative practice as located within the area of study and primarily within Cuyahoga County, we consider all 102 responses here in the demographic profile, although data will be further refined in subsequent sections. 50 percent of respondents have lived in Northeast Ohio for 20+ years, 10.4 percent for 10-20 years, 35.5 percent between 1-10 years, and only 3.7 percent have lived in the region for less than one year.

Data (Table 3)

Composite data for all 18 counties is based on the most recently available information from the US Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data from 2017.

TABLE 3: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

	Survey Responses	Composite (18 counties)
Age Range		
Under 18	0.93%	28.1 %
18 - 24	7.48%	8.3%
25 - 34	43%	21.6%
35 - 44	27.1%	
45 - 54	7.48%	25.9%
55 - 64	11.21%	
65 +	1.87%	16%
Race and Ethnicity		
White Alone	78.4%	40.5%
Black or African American	7.8%	7.0%
Hispanic or Latinx	2%	2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	.001%
Asian or Asian American	3.9%	0.9%
Two or more race groups	3.9%	1.3%
Native American or Alaskan Native	1%	0.1%
Prefer not to answer	2.9%	Not known

AGE RANGE:

The ACS combines the age ranges of 25-44 and 45-64, as seen in Table 3. At a combined 70.1 percent this age range is also the most heavily represented in our analysis. Data from a recent study commissioned by The Cleveland Foundation entitled “The Fifth Migration: A Study of Cleveland Millennials” notes that while “from 2010-2013, the migration of millennials to the core city of Cleveland was

sizable and outpacing some of our peer cities,”³³ Northeast Ohio as a whole has consistently seen a net -1.0% population decline from 2010-2018. The NEFCO 2018 CEDS described the consistent outmigration of individuals in this 25-44 year age range as “major challenge for a variety of entities with an interest in economic development” (p. 10) and lists the inability to retain young people as a “Weakness” for the region in their SWOT analysis.

RACE AND ETHNICITY:

The “Fifth Migration” report notes that “Cleveland has less racial and ethnic diversity than the country, even for millennials” and data on the Northeast

region parallels this fact. Although the demographics of our survey respondents reflect the demographic realities of the region, the lack of diversity is a glaring point of concern. If we combined the “White alone” category with the Census category of “non-Hispanic or Latino” (used to designate non-Hispanic White individuals) then the population of the region is roughly 88.7 percent white -- 6.8 percent higher than Ohio as a whole.

The survey did not receive any responses from individuals identifying as “Middle Eastern or North African,” a category not included in the census.

PRONOUNS, GENDER, AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

At Creative Startups we know that simply checking a box on a survey cannot possibly convey the complexity of an individual’s identity. In this process we encouraged individuals to self-identify in as many ways possible, especially regarding gender and sexual orientation, as for many the experience of both is inextricably combined. And this fact is not reflected in the binary sex options in the US Census or other documents. We also believe that if you don’t count it, you don’t know, and in the startup world there is paltry data on the intersection of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

The data in Table 4 tells us that the majority of respondents are cisgendered (someone whose gender identity is aligned with their sex assigned at birth) and heterosexual. Data from the Center for American Entrepre-

TABLE 4: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS		
	Survey Responses	Composite (18 counties)
Pronouns		
He/Him/His	34%	Unknown
She/Her/Hers	43.3%	
They/Them/Theirs	3.1%	
Zie/Hir/Hirs	3.1%	
Just my name please!	14.4%	
Prefer not to answer	0%	
Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation		
Male	40%	49.3%
Female	52.4%	50.7%
Transgender	0%	Unknown
Non-binary and/or genderqueer	0%	
Asexual	1%	
Intersex	0%	
Lesbian	0%	
Gay	1%	
Bisexual	0%	
Pansexual	1.9%	
Two-Spirit	1.9%	
Questioning	0%	
Just my name please!	1.9%	

neurship found that in 2017 only 16 percent of the \$84 billion dollars of VC funding invested in US companies went to teams with female founders, and only 2.5 percent went to all-female led teams.³⁴ The organization DigitalUndivided conducts an biennial demographic study of Black and Latinx women found-

ers called *ProjectDiane*. Their data shows that since 2009 Black women founders have raised only .0006 percent of the \$424.7 billion VC funding invested, while 0.32 percent went to Latinx women founders.³⁵

Data on LGBTQIA+ founders is significantly more difficult to find as only 63 percent of founders came out to investors during the fundraising process, according to data from StartOut.³⁶ 70 percent of female LBT founders surveyed raised less than \$750,000 in funding, while 47 percent of male GBT founders raised more than \$2 million.

There is a clear opportunity for the Northeast Ohio ecosystem - like all USA ecosystems - to think strategically about how it can better support entrepreneurs of diverse races and genders who have historically been under-resourced, excluded, and overlooked.

CREATIVE WORKFORCE

To answer the research questions we first sought to understand four things:

1. Who in the region is working in the creative economy and identifies as a creative entrepreneur;
2. How does this work impact their income and quality of life;
3. How do creative entrepreneurs impact the regional creative economy and local ecosystem;
4. What more resources or ecosystem shifts are needed for growth?

In the online survey we asked “What would you say is your primary job?” Respondents chose from five options (or “Other”):

1. I am a creative entrepreneur. I run a for-profit creative startup or business.
2. I am a creative entrepreneur. I run a non-profit creative organization.
3. I work for a creative economy support organization (e.g.. foundation or non-profit that supports creative entrepreneurs)
4. I am employed by a creative business/organization
5. I am an entrepreneur but would not describe my work as part of the creative industries.

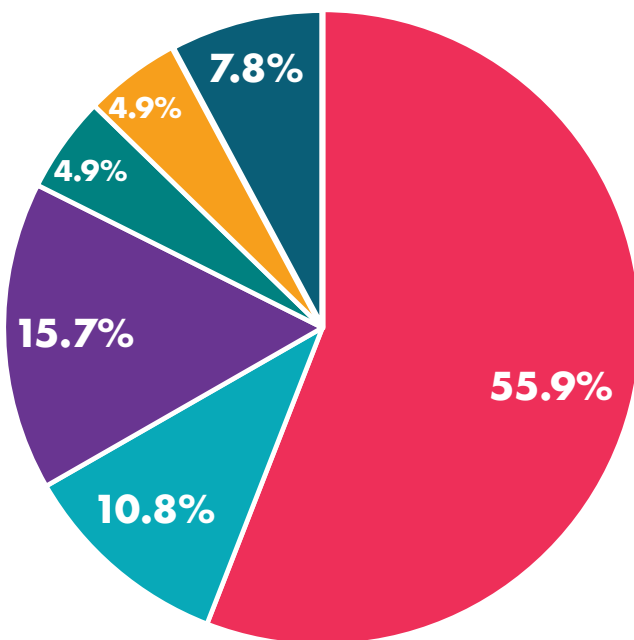
Importantly, 55.9 percent of respondents identify their role in the ecosystem as a creative entrepreneur running a for-profit business.



TABLE 5: NE OHIO LABOR AND ECONOMY

Poverty and Workforce	Cleveland City	Composite (18 counties)
Est. Labor Force (2018)	248,075	2,110,728
Unemployment Rate (2018)	4.3%	5%
Per Capita Personal Income (2017)	\$18,844	\$45,303
Median Household Income (2017)	\$27,854	\$54,013
Poverty Rate	35.2%	13.2%

FIGURE 1: PRIMARY JOB



- I'm a creative entrepreneur. I run a for profit creative start-up or business.
- I am a creative entrepreneur. I run a non-profit creative organization.
- I work for a creative economy support organization (e.g. a foundation or non-profit that supports creative entrepreneurs).
- I am employed by a creative business/organization
- I am an entrepreneur but would not describe my work as part of the creative industries
- Other (please specify)

FIGURE 2: ORGANIZATION’S PRIMARY ROLE IN THE CREATIVE ECOSYSTEM

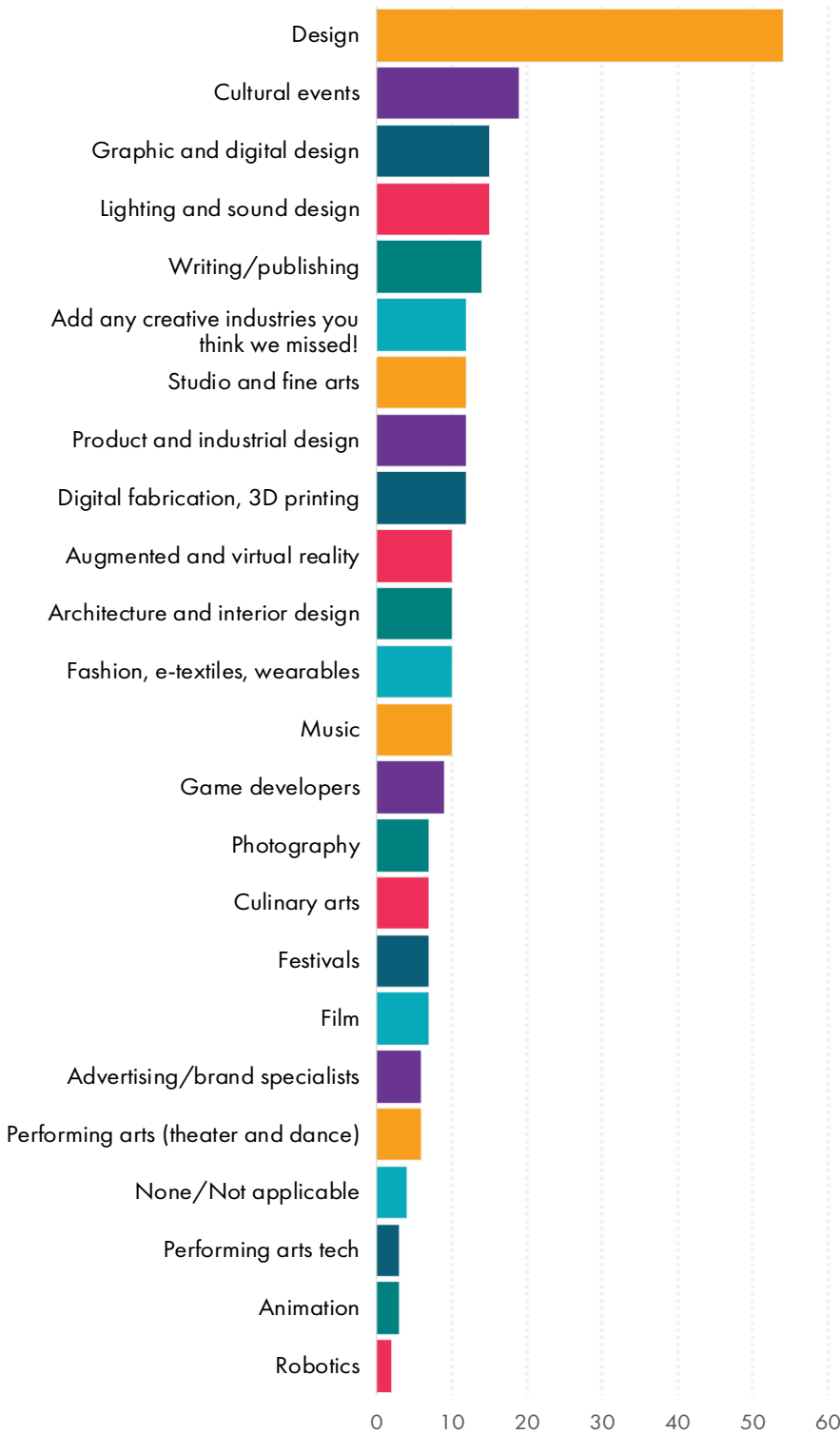


Figure 2 lists respondents answers to the question: “How would you describe you or your primary organization’s role in your region’s creative economy? Select no more than 3 options”. The graphic takes into account each individual occurrence of a response. For instance, if a respondent answered “Capacity builder, creative entrepreneur, online/digital journalism,” each response would be counted individually.

LIST 1: RESPONDENTS’ ROLES IN ECOSYSTEM - FEWER THAN 5 RESPONSES

- Art zine/publication - 3
- Chambers of Commerce - 4
- Corporate Sponsor - 2
- Creative Support Organization - 0
- Economic Development Office - 3
- Events Schedulers/Planner - 0
- Foundation - 0
- Local Publication/Newspaper - 1
- Local Television - 4
- Online/Digital Journalism - 1
- Radioshow/Podcast - 1
- Startup Event - 3
- Sub Culture Group - 0
- Social Enterprise - 3
- Venture Capital Firm - 0
- Business organization (African-American) - 1
- Business Organization (Asian American/Pacific Islander) - 0
- Business Organization (Disability/Accessibility) - 0
- Business Organization (Hispanic/Latinx) - 0
- Business Organization (Immigrant and refugee) - 0
- Business organization (LGBTQ) - 0
- Business Organization (Native) - 0
- Business Organization (Senior 65+) - 0
- Other: Film, Hospital, Independent artist

FIGURE 3: WHAT CREATIVE INDUSTRIES DO YOU ACTIVELY WORK IN?



LIST 2: RESPONDENTS' ROLES IN ECOSYSTEM - "Other"

- "Arts and culture broadly"
- IoT
- Applied drama
- Floral design
- DIY projects
- Death care
- Speaker events
- Software design
- Agriculture, indoor growing
- Real estate and software development

From the information in Figure 2 we see that among all respondents the majority consider their or their organization's role in the ecosystem as being a creative entrepreneur (33), next to being a capacity builder (12) or coworking space (12), an accelerator (11) or creative nonprofit (11).

Regarding the industries that people work in, (Figure 3) design is overwhelmingly represented (54), next to cultural events (19), and graphic and digital design (15).

Figure 2 lists respondents answers to the question: "What creative industries do you actively work in? Select up to three options." The graphic takes into account each individual occurrence of a response. For instance, if a respondent answered "animation, design, and film," each response would be counted individually.

THE EARNING SPECTRUM OF CREATIVES

It is important to understand how the work of creative entrepreneurs impacts their life, livelihoods, and the broader economy. We sought to know who among respondents not only identifies as a creative entrepreneur, but is actually making a living as a creative entrepreneur.

After the question in **Figure 1** we asked respondents:

If you checked “I am a Creative Entrepreneur,” what percentage of your income do you estimate comes from your entrepreneurial activities vs. other employment?

Options given were:

1. Less than 25%;
2. 25%-50%;
3. Over 50% but not 100%
4. 100%

The data indicate that among respondents:

- **70 percent of self-identified creative entrepreneurs earn 25 percent or more of their income from their creative work;**
- **37 percent of self-identified creative entrepreneurs earn 50 percent or more of their income from their creative work.**

Focusing analysis on the 70 percent of individuals self-identifying as *for-profit creative entrepreneurs earning 25% or more of their income from their creative practice*, the data indicate 89 respondents. For the rest of this section all data presented is based on responses from these 89 respondents, described as “*target respondents.*”

To discover which industry the target respondents work in we cross compared the target respondent group with the most commonly occurring data (over 5 responses) in **Figure 2** to understand what types of organizations creative entrepreneurs are leading. This provides the data presented in **Figure 4.**

30.3 percent of our target respondents self-identify as a creative entrepreneur. This suggests a shared recognition of the identity of “creative entrepreneur” as a valid role within the ecosystem.

We also sought to understand which target respondents identify their or their organization’s role as providing direct business services to creatives through programs such as accelerators, incubators, investor networks, and business support organizations.

Figure 5 tells us that **23.5 percent of target respondents view their role as providing direct support to other creative entrepreneurs.**

Figures 4 & 5 are important because this data suggest that creative entrepreneurs play a role in driving ecosystem development, supporting other creatives, and creating an income for themselves. It is important to be able to see that a sizable amount of individuals who view their primary job as being a creative entrepreneur are actually making money from this (37 - 70 percent).

They also view their role in their community in this light. Taken another way, the data would sound very different if the majority of respondents who viewed their primary job as creative entrepreneurs paradoxically made less than 25 percent of their income from their creative work and viewed their role as being a co-working space or an accelerator.

FIGURE 4: FOR-PROFIT CREATIVES' ROLES IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY (1)

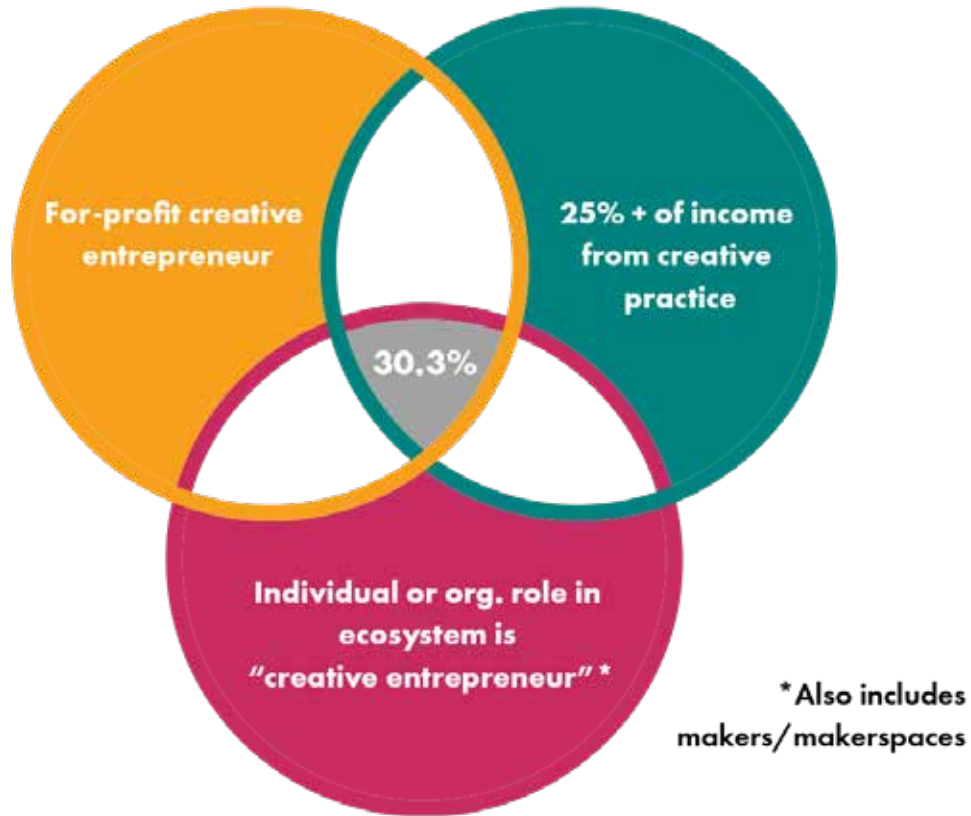


FIGURE 5: FOR-PROFIT CREATIVES' ROLES IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY (2)

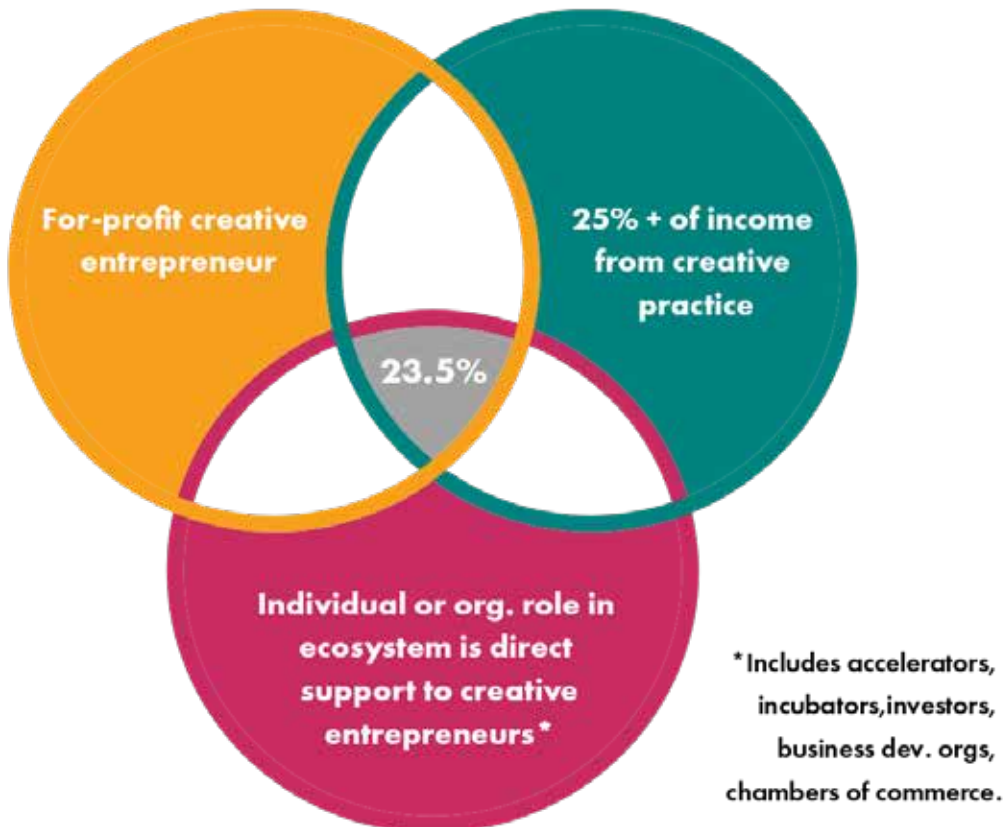
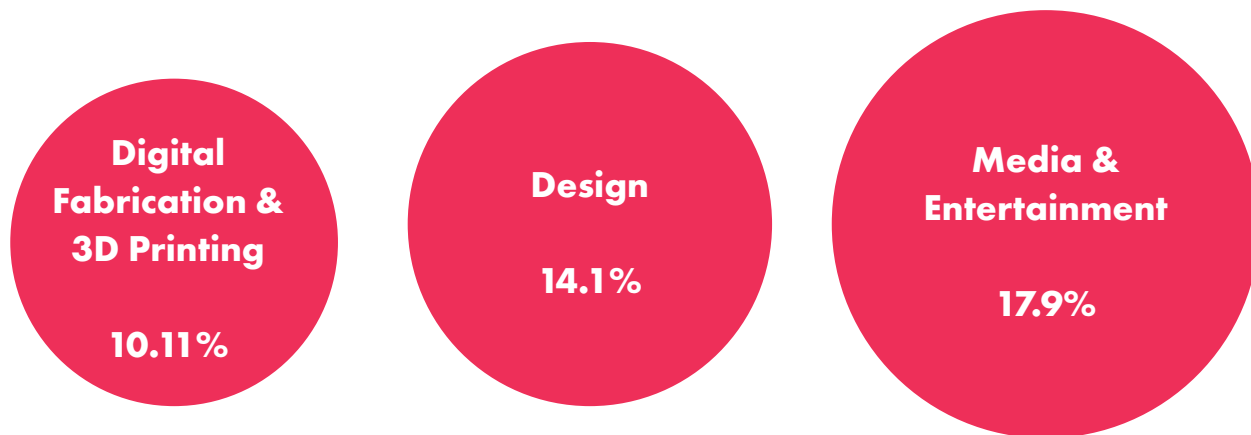


FIGURE 6: INDUSTRIES CREATIVES ARE WORKING IN



We then sought to understand in which creative economy industries are creative entrepreneurs working, and how this compares to regional strengths and perceptions.

We distilled the data in **Figure 3** based on our target respondents. As individuals were allowed to select up to three options we examined the most common single responses and overlapping industries. This data combines into three primary industries:

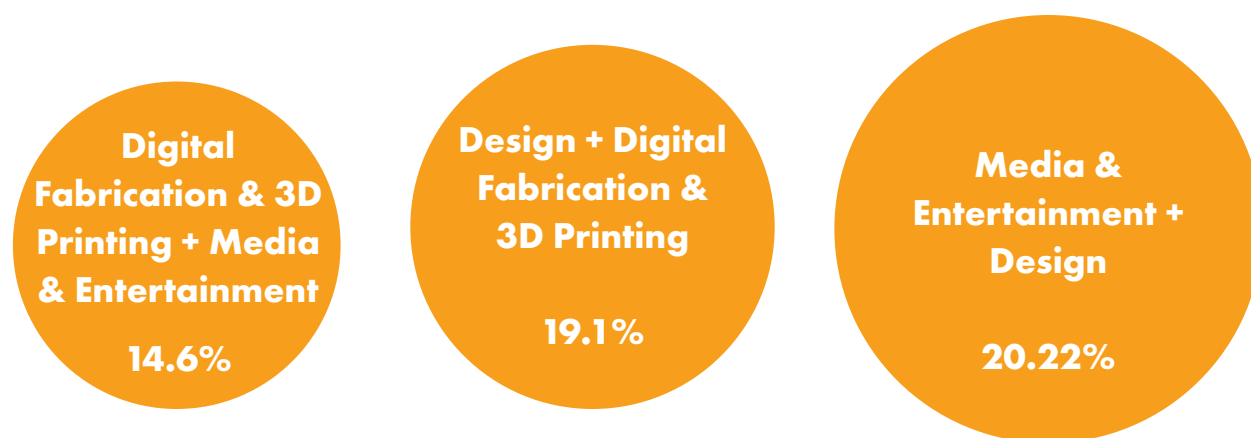
design, media and entertainment, and digital fabrication and 3D printing (Figure 6).

Some individuals report working in a combination of media and entertainment, design, digital fabrication and 3D printing; the ratio of these responses is presented in **Figure 7**.

The data presented in **Figures 4-7** reflect respondents' occupations. The majority are creative entrepreneurs earning

25 percent or more of their income from running a for-profit creative business or working in a creative economy support organization (in the fields of media and entertainment, design, or digital fabrication and 3D printing). This information clarifies who is providing input, and provides insight into which industries have the strongest potential for growth and income generation.

FIGURE 7: COMBINED INDUSTRIES CREATIVES WORK IN



ECOSYSTEM PERCEPTIONS AND COOPERATION

For an entrepreneur ecosystem to thrive, all parts need to be working cooperatively to build industry strength and competitiveness. Often, broader perceptions of the ecosystem are incongruous with individual experiences or startup growth. Seeking to see if this is the case in Northeast Ohio, we examine ecosystem perceptions regarding cooperation and industry vibrancy. We then compare how these perceptions affect entrepreneurial success. In the survey we asked:

How would you describe the entrepreneurial, creative, small business, or startup ecosystem in your community?

Response options include:

1. Welcoming to newcomers or new ideas;
2. Skeptical of newcomers or new ideas;
3. Neutral;
4. Cooperative (e.g., sharing resources or information);
5. Uncooperative (e.g., not sharing resources or information);
6. I don't feel like I am familiar enough to know;
7. Prefer not to respond.

Of all respondents, only 37.3 percent observe the ecosystem welcoming of newcomers and new ideas. Only 36.5 percent find the ecosystems cooperative. 27.7 percent find the ecosystem explicitly uncooperative and 10.3 percent find the ecosystem skeptical.

Data pertaining to how target respondents (creative entrepreneurs) perceive their ecosystems are detailed in **Chart 8**.

Using correlation analysis of the above response options with creative entrepreneurs earning 50 percent or more of their income from their creative work we see that:

There is a 97 percent correlation between positive perceptions of ecosystem cooperation and an entrepreneur earning 50% or more of their income from their creative work.

This correlation suggests that the more positive the respondent views the ecosystem, the higher their income from entrepreneurial endeavors is. It may also be that the cooperative an ecosystem is, the more likely it is that entrepreneurs can earn significant incomes.

FIGURE 8: ECOSYSTEM PERCEPTIONS



**THERE IS A CLEAR NEED
TO FOCUS ON CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION
THROUGHOUT THE STARTUP ECOSYSTEM
TO BOOST INDUSTRY STRENGTHS
AND REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS.**

feedback from our focus groups and interviews, in which the consensus among participants was that resources, knowledge, or networks are neither easily accessible nor cooperative.

On this point survey and interview respondents provided the following feedback:

Q: *“The city is very ‘old man energy’ and everyone I talked to there made me second guess what we were doing. I missed steps in so many things just because it’s my first time and I didn’t know how to do them. I wish there was more strategy and*

someone to help me navigate the chain of command.

Q: *“No one here is really running the conversation about resources, so it’s disorganized and it makes people really jaded.”*

FIGURE 9: EASE OF FINDING RESOURCES FOR STARTING A BUSINESS

How much do you agree with this statement: *“If I wanted to start a business in Northeast Ohio it would be easy for me to find the resources and information I need (e.g.. obtaining a business license, getting tax help, pursuing a loan, connecting with an entrepreneur social group).”*

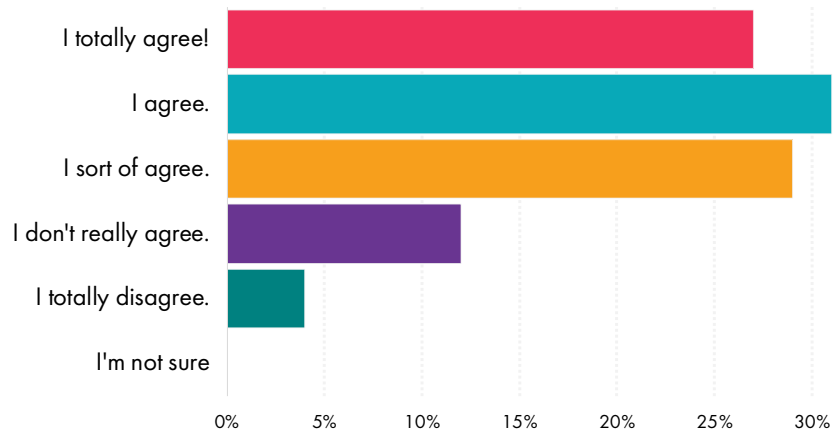
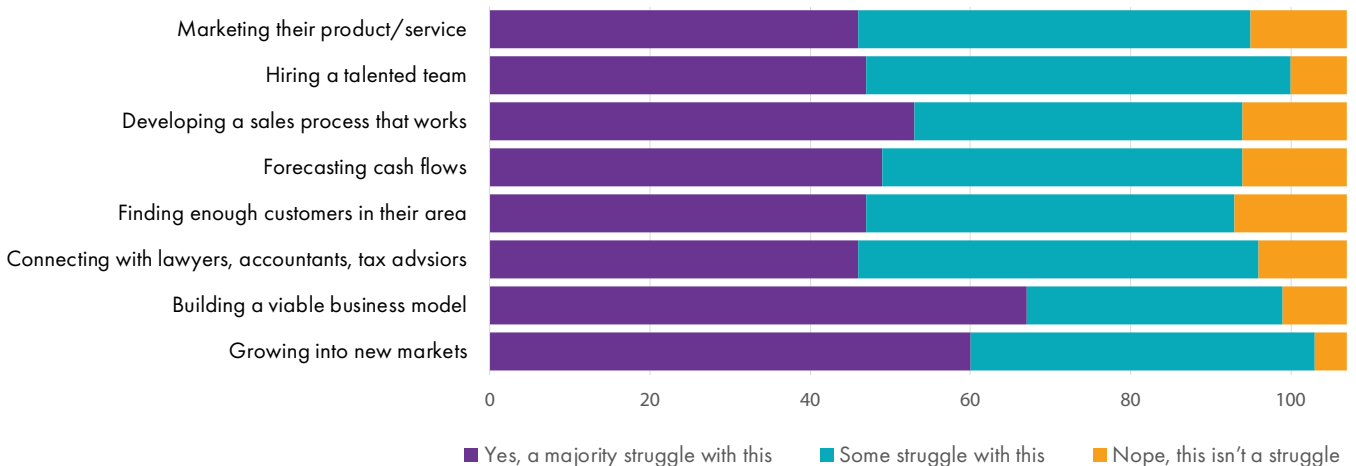


FIGURE 10: AREAS CREATIVES STRUGGLE WITH

Which areas of starting and building a new company do you see creatives in your region struggling with most? “Other” responses included: Soft skills; recruiting from a limited talent pool; funding for launching; lack of support from big businesses and corporations.





Q: “When starting my business I felt like there was nowhere for me to network in the ways I wanted to network. I couldn’t figure out where to meet founders or new business owners.”

Q: “You don’t see a lot of resources available for strategic planning. I think having that kind of insight would have helped an entrepreneur like me stay on track.”

Q: “My impression is that the resources are generally here, but there isn’t a network or way to access them, in a way that isn’t confusing or overwhelming.”

Q: “There are a lot of programs for early stage stuff and JumpStart has done a great job at navigating and building that ecosystem. But when it comes to sales and marketing, it’s really hard to find resources.”

Q: “Really really getting to know your customer is something that entrepreneurs here could be better advised on.”

Q: “I would say the creative community in Cleveland is great at sharing work and being supportive, but no one ever shares or talks

about ‘here’s how you run a creative business’ and no one is transparent about it as a business owner. It’s frustrating because you don’t know what to do as a business owner or how to price. There isn’t a sense of ‘were all in it together’.”

Q: “We need a clear place for entrepreneurs just getting started to figure out what your needs are.”

Q: “It was so hard to navigate the resources here so we’ve just had to cobble together this makeshift community to build our own support network.”

Q: “A lot of people don’t know where to go, and a lot of the big entities give them the runaround in terms of finding resources.”

Q: “There are a number of tremendous organizations that are fueling the creative economy here. But we need to think about how to professionalize our resources and bring them together better.”

Q: “Financial planning was something we really needed because it’s so different than just putting your plan down on paper, it has to be living. I didn’t go to business school so I just had no clue. I didn’t

know how to scale and grow and work smarter and didn’t know who could help me do it.”

Q: “We have so many creative people here but what is really lacking is the cohesion of the creative community.”

Q: “One of the biggest challenges is that we don’t have a lot of central organization either geographically or online even.”

Q: “The whole ecosystem feels wildly disconnected and profoundly unwelcoming.”



RESOURCES: SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

To dig in further on the question of resources, we asked entrepreneurs in our survey:

“Please share the names of resources/programs currently available to creative entrepreneurs [in your city].”

The resources in **Matrix 1** draw from responses to this question (p. 32). We were interested to see which non-governmental and non-higher education organizations are providing *direct business development support* to creative entrepreneurs building

for-profit companies.

For business development resources we looked at the following:

- Focused networking or business advocacy;
- Makerspace or co-working space;
- Mentorship;
- Business workshops or classes;
- Incubator or accelerator programs;
- Business support funding (grants, loans);
- Equity Investment

For organizations with whom we have not had contact we reviewed their websites to assess program and resource availability. We applied existing, commonly used definitions of “Makerspace”, “Co-working”, “Equity Funding”, “Workshops/Speakers”, “Startup mentoring”, and “Startup Accelerator” to categorize the resources provided by listed organizations.

In terms of workshops and events, we did not examine organizations whose workshops or events are primarily creative-practice focused (acting classes, music lessons, etc). Regarding networking and business advocacy, we excluded entities that aggregate lists of resources and focused on entities who engage networking and

advocacy with founder development. For food incubators we included shared commercial kitchen space under the “Maker or Co-Working” category.

The majority of organizations provide workshops, business classes, or networking opportunities. Bounce Innovation Hub in Akron and FlashStarts + StartMart in Cleveland provide resources in all categories, although both of their accelerator and incubator programs lean more towards supporting software and technology focused startups.

It should be noted that 23 individuals responded with “*I can’t think of anything.*” From this, two key points are revealed in looking at all of our data on resources within the ecosystem. First, there is not necessarily an overwhelming lack of startup resources startups, but a lack of cohesion of resources and ease of navigation for entrepreneurs. And second, resources tend to be polarized between artist-as-entrepreneur support and technology entrepreneurs. There are fewer resources that exist for creative startups at any stage in building their business.

MATRIX 1: REGIONAL SUPPORT FOR CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS

Organization	Maker or Co-working Space	Engaged Networking	Startup Mentoring	Business classes/ workshops	Startup Accelerator/ Incubator	Financial Support
AIGA		✓		✓		
ArtsCleveland (Creative Compass/Artist as an Entrepreneur Institute)		✓	✓	✓		
Bounce Innovation Hub	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Central Kitchen Incubator	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Council of Smaller Enterprises		✓		✓		
CreativeMornings		✓				
ECDI: Economic & Community Development Institute		✓	✓	✓		✓
Elyria Works Now				✓		
FlashStarts + StartMart	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ingenuity Cleveland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
JumpStart		✓	✓	✓		
LaunchHouse	✓					
MidTown Tech Hive	✓					
MAGNET: The Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network			✓	✓	✓	
New Entrepreneurs Opportunity Fund			✓	✓		✓
SummitArtspace	✓		✓	✓		
The Presidents Council		✓				
Sears think[box]	✓		✓	✓	✓	
The Well Akron	✓		✓	✓	✓	

CREATIVE ECONOMY RESOURCES LISTED BY RESPONDENTS

- 78th Street Studios
- American Advertising Federation
- Acerbic
- AIGA
- Akron Community Foundation
- Akron Universities
- Artist Archives of the Western Reserve
- Arts in Stark
- ArtsCleveland (Creative Compass/Artist as an Entrepreneur Institute)
- ArtsNow
- Aviatra Accelerators (Bad Girl Ventures)³⁷
- BayArts
- Better Business Bureau
- Beachland Ballroom
- Bounce Innovation Hub
- Brick Ceramic Studio
- Burton D. Morgan Foundation
- Central Kitchen Incubator
- Center for Arts-Inspired Learning
- Cleveland Institute of Art
- Cleveland Institute of Music
- City of Lakewood
- Cleveland Arts Education Consortium
- Cleveland Arts Prize
- Cleveland Flea
- Cleveland Foundation
- Cleveland Intl Film Festival
- Cleveland Museum of Art
- Council of Smaller Enterprises
- CreativeMornings
- Cuyahoga Arts and Culture
- Destination Cleveland
- ECDI: Economic & Community Development Institute
- Elyria Works Now
- FlashStarts
- Fresh Water Cleveland
- Transformer Station and FRONT Film Program
- Lakeland Community College
- GAR Foundation
- Gordon Square Arts District
- Happy Dog
- Heights Arts
- Ingenuity Cleveland
- JumpStart
- Karamu House
- Kent State
- Knight Foundation
- LAND Studio
- LaunchHouse
- Literary Cleveland
- Lorain County Chamber of Commerce
- Maelstrom Collaborative
- MAGNET: The Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth
- MidTown Tech Hive
- Network
- Negative Space gallery
- New Entrepreneurs Opportunity Fund
- Ohio Arts Council
- PNC Financial Services Group
- Praxis Fiber Workshop
- Public Library System
- City of Cleveland Economic Development
- SBA
- SBDC
- SCORE
- Sixth City Sounds
- SPACES
- StartMart
- SummitArtspace
- Superior Sounds Studios
- The Presidents Council
- Sears think[box]
- The Well Akron
- YARDS Project
- Zygote Press



I'M ALWAYS ASTONISHED BY THE WEIGHT AND IMPACT OF THE CREATIVES IN THIS COMMUNITY, BUT **WE'VE GOT TO BREAK DOWN THESE SILOS.**

..... INTERVIEW RESPONDENT

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

To better understand the disconnect between perceptions of cooperation and the availability and accessibility of resources within communities, we asked:

What do you think [your city/ community] can do to better support creative entrepreneurs? For example, if you had to pick the top one or two things to change what would they be?

We analyzed the anecdotal feedback from our interviews and focus groups and compared them with the responses to the above question. We looked for trends in responses and clustered the patterns as seen in **Table 6**.

TABLE 6: MY CITY COULD DO BETTER TO SUPPORT

What my city can do better is ...	
Resources to build foundational business knowledge	40
Outreach and inclusion of women, People of Color, LGBTQIA and other overlooked/under-resourced founders	36
Funding Options for Creatives/Artists	31
Connect with corporations	30
More broadly define creatives (beyond traditional arts and culture) to understand and support more creatives	28
Be willing to take risks (Gov., investors, foundations)	27
Coherent plan for “one-stop shop” for resources	23
Support new, emerging organizations and talent retention	16
Support and sustain existing creative organizations	15
Peer network for founders	14
Resources that understand me as a creative business	10
Cooperation, transparency, sharing of resources	10
Specific tactics mentioned by respondents (<10)	
Support connecting to customers/markets	9
Storytelling	8
Tax and other policy, subsidized, incentives to support creatives	6
Events and resources that accommodate working parents	5
Fewer pitch competitions and events	3

Given previous feedback and data we were not surprised to see that top requests from entrepreneurs include assistance in building and strengthening foundational business knowledge, stronger efforts toward equity and inclusion, funding, assistance in navigating the ecosystem, and more cooperation. However, new categories that stood out include:

1. Risk aversion in the ecosystem;
2. A need for greater storytelling and celebration of entrepreneurs;
3. Concerns about transparency and honesty with regards to institutional and governmental leaders;
4. Feeling like existing resources don't understand the needs of creative entrepreneurs.

On this topic, feedback from entrepreneurs included:



Q “We need more support for LGBTQ founders. The Federal Government doesn’t really count us on forms and stuff and it doesn’t feel like we really count in the ecosystem here either.”

Q “There isn’t really a queer small business community or even a discussion of keeping money in the queer business community.”

Q “The City of Cleveland only cares when things go well because then they can take credit, but they need to know it’s not them. It’s the creatives.”

Q “I wish there was a space where I could feel safe with queer creatives of color. I wish I had a supportive community of creatives like me who challenge me and also guide me.”

Q “There’s a real disconnect between the creative community and the resource providers.”

Q “I’ve done the workshops and the cocktail things and gone to JumpStart and whatnot and they don’t get creatives. They just think ‘freelance artist’ and tell me they can’t help.”

Q “The City and the foundations only want to do things if they can take credit.”

Q “Although it’s a supportive

environment people don’t really celebrate themselves. Like it’s hard to find spotlights on cool entrepreneur stories.”

Q “We really need to do a better job of showcasing ‘why Cleveland’ and telling the story of our creatives.”

Q “There is a real need for transparency with these big startup organizations and arts foundations that are supposed to be working for the community in Cleveland. As far as I can see they’re just shuffling money around and patting each other on the back.”

Q “Cleveland has an intense history of racism. The ecosystem has done nothing to be supportive of black and brown entrepreneurs and artists”

Q “We’re creatives and we want to build a business but most resources just don’t know what to do with us.”

Q “So much of the money that gets invested is state money, which means that it’s not entrepreneurs who are investing, it’s people who are super risk-averse. But even the private investors are risk averse.”

Q “Our investors need to know it’s not just about money, it’s about the ability to identify

opportunity. They’re so focused on money – and safe money – that they’re not willing to look at opportunity.”

Q “Our incubators and accelerators are glorified office space, so of course our investors are risk averse. Our entrepreneurs aren’t prepared.”

Q “The financial part of our business is in constant triage and there are a lot of accountants or business supporters who just don’t know how creative business models are different.”

Q “We really need to bring excluded individuals into the fold. People who are experiencing poverty or racism or are disabled -- they’re part of our ecosystem too.”

Q “There is a distrust of all of the organizations in Cleveland who have a lot of money to throw around at things but aren’t led by entrepreneurs themselves.”

Q “There’s disconnect between the pressure to be the next unicorn and the fact that we don’t have the resources to help entrepreneur’s perform at that caliber. Let’s stop calling our donkey’s the next unicorn.”



STRENGTHS AND A SHARED VISION

The subsequent sections of this report will focus on recommendations and key areas of focus based on the presented data, but before moving forward we also needed to understand what is working for creatives in the ecosystem, and what is the shared vision for the future.

We asked respondents:

If you were pitching [your city] to a creative entrepreneur in another city, what would you say are [your city's] strengths?

Following the same pattern analysis process as seen in Table 6 (p.34), we found the following trends in responses as seen in **Table 7**.

We also asked people,

What is your vision for [your city'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?

Using the same cluster analysis we produced the results in **Table 8**.

There is notably far more clustering and consensus around categories for these questions than the question posed around “What can your city do better to support creatives?”

TABLE 7: STRENGTHS OF COMMUNITY	
If I were pitching my city...	Frequency
Affordable space (live/work) and low cost of living	35
Unique sense of community	29
Up and coming industries -- sense of growth and promise	27
Passionate about place	24
Diversity	15
Natural resources	13
Small town ‘vibe’ or ability to know your community.	11

TABLE 8: VISION FOR COMMUNITY	
In 5 years our creative economy is...	Frequency
More of our creatives and recent graduates are staying here	27
There are more physical spaces for creatives	26
There is more direct funding for creative companies	19
Creative companies are thriving	16
Our ecosystem is more diverse, equitable, and inclusive	14
There are more types of creative industries in the region	12
We are building the pipeline of support from idea-stage entrepreneurs to large corporations	10
Stakeholders and gatekeepers are less risk averse and more willing to take action	9
Infrastructure equity (transportation, housing, health)	9

Across communities large and small in Northeast Ohio there is a strong sense of passion for place and people, aspirations for growth, and a high value placed on the unique sense of community and diversity. People frequently spoke to us of the “Cleveland Spirit” and the pride they felt for their community and desire to play a role in building positive change.

Previous data shows a number of challenges but also a strong sense of forward momentum and a sentiment that Cleveland and Northeast Ohio is on the cusp of vibrant and sustainable growth. Cleveland and the region is fortunate to have an existing wealth of creative resources, instead of struggling to build from the ground up as many do.

But it’s clear that these resources are not being leveraged fully to support creatives and build community. We have no doubt

that when they begin to be, explosive growth is possible. While there is clearly a shared vision for an inclusive, prosperous creative economy for all Ohioans, this naturally begets the question, *how can this vision be achieved?*

The reader likely recalls 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 could potentially unlock regional talent and unleash a new wave of creative entrepreneurs to achieve the vision.

In the subsequent section we turn to the data surrounding the question of how programs may equip creative entrepreneurs to, collectively, achieve the shared vision. We also examine four strategic areas of focus that we have identified as the stron-

gest inflection points for change.

Cleveland and Northeast Ohio is not alone in these challenges. Communities around the world struggle to collaborate and innovate; to build the bridge between sectors; to repair racial, gender, and socioeconomic divisions; and to balance future-forward growth with a unique sense of place.

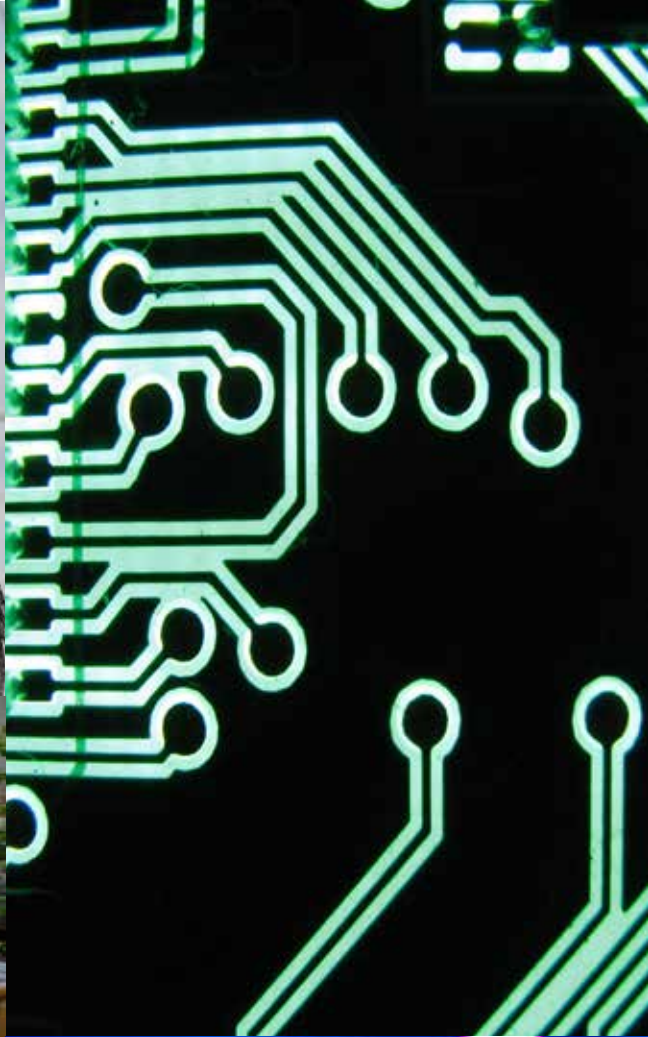
But as our data so far has shown, Northeast Ohioans are proving themselves unique in their willingness to ask tough questions and provide honest feedback in the pursuit of a stronger ecosystem for all. How we get there together is the subject of our subsequent analysis.





OUR PEOPLE AND THEIR PASSION FOR THE REGION ARE A TREMENDOUS STRENGTH. **I WANT US TO BE THE REGION THAT EVERYONE WANTS TO COME TO.**

 INTERVIEW RESPONDENT





ANALYSIS



AREAS OF FOCUS

As part of our analysis and efforts to answer our five research questions we have identified four key areas where, based on the previous data, we believe there is the greatest potential for impact and growth. These categories include:

1. Building the bridge to the creative economy: developing creative-specific resources for founders;
2. Fostering a more equitable community: supporting under-resourced and underestimated founders;
3. Encouraging a culture of innovation: integrating creative entrepreneurship into legacy industry;
4. Rethinking institutional approaches to supporting creatives: challenges to the arts philanthropy model.

I. BUILDING THE BRIDGE TO THE CREATIVE ECONOMY:

Developing Creative-specific Resources for Founders

As mentioned, in our data on the earning spectrum of creatives (p. 22-24) we were surprised to see that 70 percent of our respondents earn 25 percent or more of their income from their creative work, and 37 percent earn 50 percent or more of their income from their creative work. But a gap quickly emerged in contrasting that data with our qualitative feedback and the data in **Chart 10: Areas Creatives Struggle With (p.24)**.

This indicates that across the board creatives struggle with building foundational business skills and concepts like building a viable business model or forecasting cash flows, and connecting with the service providers, team members, and ecosystem support needed to thrive.

Furthermore, as many respondents noted, the need is not just more resources, but greater ease in navigating those resources and resources that understand creative businesses. At Creative Startups we actively push against the ‘starving artist’ narrative. This all too common trope disempowers artists and creatives, casting them in a light of being incapable of managing a business; it perpetuates biases among investors, foundations, higher education leaders, policy leaders and beyond.

At the same time, we know from experience that game-changing creatives have ideas that challenge and disrupt traditional models and methods of doing business. A resource provider who is used to working with more traditional business models or brick and mortar service companies might understandably feel ill-equipped to support

a founder with a VR app that is poised to revolutionize the animation industry. Creatives are far outpacing our higher education institutions and resource providers when it comes to challenging traditional business models.

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:

- Projecting and managing cash flows
- Pitching investors
- Setting and pursuing targeted market entry strategies
- Identifying profitable market segments and reaching these
- Targeting ideal sources of growth capital
- Selling my 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 capacity. Identifying creative entrepreneurs’ needs regarding building viable business models growing into new markets as the most needed areas of support, suggest a linkage between financial con-

cerns regarding business sustainability.

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

- ? *Based on the descriptions above, which Creative Startups Programs would you most likely want to participate in?*
- ? *How many creative entrepreneurs do you know who would be interested in a Creative Startups’ program?*

Figure 11 details the responses to question 1 above. 82.35 percent of respondents responded between “Maybe” and “Yes” to participating in an Accelerator. 69.61 percent responded between “Maybe” and “Yes” to participating in a pre-accelerator LABS. 71.57 percent responded between “Maybe” and “Yes” to participating in a train-the-trainer style Educator’s Circle, and 84.31 percent replied “Yes” to participating in workshops.

Considering that the majority of our target respondents indicated deriving a majority of income from their creative business, we are not surprised to see less interest in pre-accelerator programs and more interest in accelerator

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. THIS TRAIN THE TRAINER SEMINAR DEVELOPS CAPACITY IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS.

WORKSHOPS



DESIGNED IN COLLABORATION WITH CLIENTS TO ACCELERATE SPECIFIC ENTREPRENEUR AUDIENCES AND CREATIVE ECONOMY SECTORS.

programs. But these individuals recognize the need for resources for early-stage founders, as indicated in the high percentage of positive LABS responses.

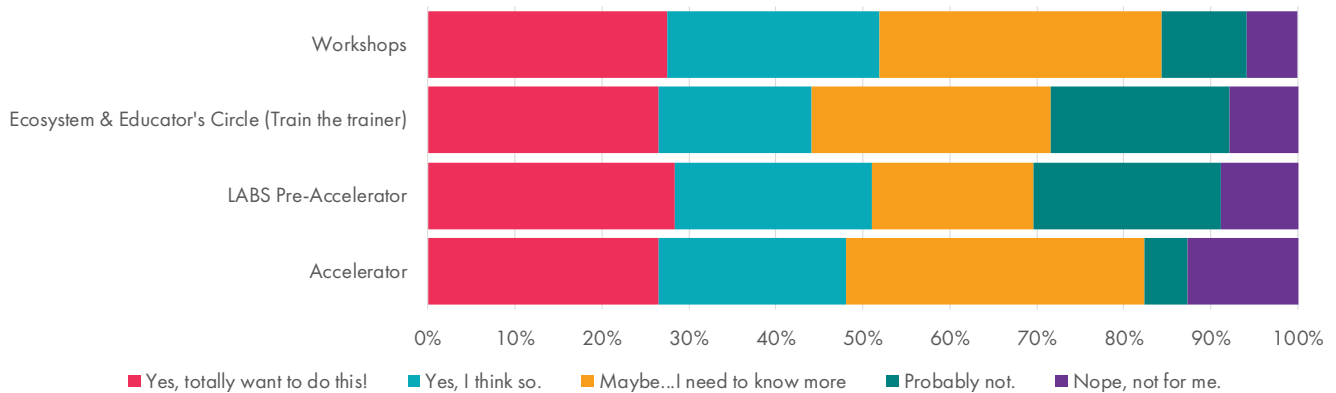
Figure 12 details responses to the second question. Again, given respondents' feedback regarding the lack of resources

for creative entrepreneurs, the strong interest in Pre-Accelerator LABS. There is a clear opportunity here to strengthen the pipeline of startup growth from idea to investment for creative founders.

The expressed interest in and enthusiasm for programs re-

flects the gap in available programming specific to creative entrepreneurs. Despite Cleveland and Northeast Ohio's strong and growing creative industries, creatives have yet to be supported fully as entrepreneurs.

FIGURE 11 11: WHICH PROGRAM WOULD YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN?



II. FOSTERING A MORE EQUITABLE COMMUNITY:

Supporting Under-resourced and Under-estimated Founders

As indicated in respondents an-

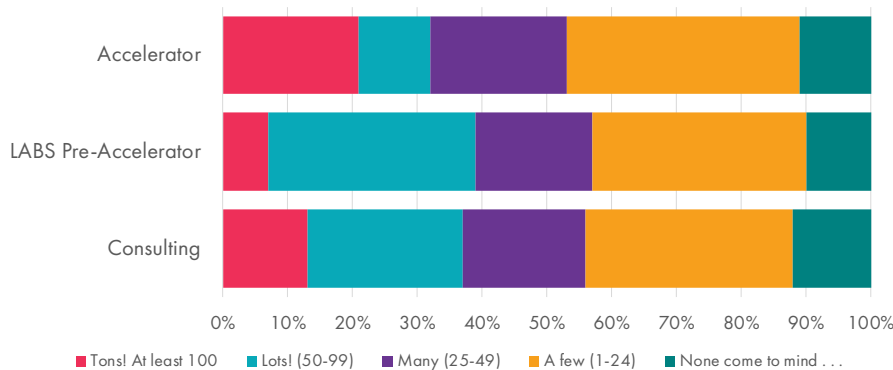
ecdotal feedback, and as detailed earlier in our Data section (p. 17 -18), the startup and creative community in Northeast Ohio, and especially Cleveland, is deeply concerned with issues

of social, racial, and economic inequity.

2018 data from the Center for Community Solutions notes that in Cuyahoga County Black individuals are 1.7 times more likely to live in poverty than White residents, and White residents also make 2.1 times more, on average, than their Black counterparts.³⁸ Black individuals in Ohio are also 5.6 times more likely to be incarcerated than White individuals, and Latinx individuals are 1.2 times more likely to be incarcerated.

CHART 12: HOW MANY ENTREPRENEURS DO YOU KNOW?

How many creatives would participate?



The LGBTQ population in Ohio is estimated at roughly 4.3 percent, of which 33 percent have an annual income less than \$24k and 11 percent are unemployed.³⁹ Of Ohioans between the ages of 18 to 64 21.5 percent experience a disability and the latest ACS data suggests that 72.7 percent of this population is unemployed at any given time.

From 2000 to 2018 “Ohio’s foreign-born population has increased by 56 percent” and accounts for almost 5 percent of the State’s population.⁴⁰ Of these foreign-born residents, over 26,000 are entrepreneurs that employ close to 125,000 individuals, yet they are over-represented in low-wage service industry jobs such as nail salons, storage facilities, and the manufacturing of chemicals and cosmetics. Of this population there are an estimated 112,000 thousand undocumented immigrants who contributed almost \$240 million in taxes to the state in 2018.⁴¹

When considered intersectionally — to draw on the term coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw — experiences of discrimination are compounded and life threatening, such as the rising rates of violence against the Black transgender community in the U.S.

Confronting this context is important not simply as a matter of injustice, but because it presents the opportunity to re-frame the conversation to recognize the multitude of richness that diverse individuals bring to the communities we live in and the companies we work for.

Of recent a significant amount of data has come to the fore indicating that diverse teams outperform nondiverse teams. In 2018 Boston Consulting Group and the Technical University of Munich surveyed close to 2,000 companies globally and found that on average, more

diverse teams were statistically more innovative: 45 percent of their revenues came from products developed within the last 3 years, compared to only 20 percent in non-diverse teams.⁴²

In addition, companies with more racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to “have financial returns above their respective national industry medians,” while gender-diverse teams are 15% more likely to see increased returns.⁴³

While the investment world is still catching up to this reality, a number of firms – like Backstage Capital, Pipeline Angels, Unshackled Ventures, and Harlem Capital – are leading the charge to break barriers and refute misconceptions. The problem is, as many writers and thinkers have pointed out, not the myth of the empty pipeline in investing, but one of structural barriers and mindset.⁴⁴

Northeast Ohio is of course not unique in facing these challenges but does have the opportunity of addressing them uniquely and building capacity in existing organizations who are already doing relevant work, supporting diverse founders. In conversation one individual said frankly,

“If we’re not thinking critically about how to get capital and resources to diverse founders then this whole process has been for not.”

And we agree. At Creative Startups we’re proud that 72 percent of our alumni are women, LGBTQIA+, or founders of color, but we know we can always do better; that is the responsibility of our privilege.

Offering entrepreneurship programs for diverse founders is a start, but in our experience this needs to be led from within by engaging founders, mentors,

 I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD BE AN ENTREPRENEUR BECAUSE I’M GAY.

 INTERVIEWEE

and community leaders who are experts in their lived experiences. Programs also need to take into account other barriers to participation, such as location and access to transportation, language, cost, program hours, childcare, and accessible environments (e.g., sensory-friendly, elevators, chairs that fit a variety of body sizes, etc).

A diverse population is as much a part of Ohio's DNA as the entrepreneurial spirit with which it was founded is. When the two are paired and diverse founders are supported in building companies the whole ecosystem thrives. Equity is the foundation for creativity and vibrancy, the bedrock of building a community we all want to live in.

III. ENCOURAGING A CULTURE OF INNOVATION:

Integrating Creative Entrepreneurship into Legacy Industry

Cleveland and Northeast Ohio is fortunate to be home to a long list of successful creative companies, yet as our data has shown the bridge between these companies and emerging creative entrepreneurs has yet to be built. Some of the companies in the region include:

- TravelCenters of America
- J.M. Smucker

- American Greetings
- Sherwin Williams
- Cedar Fair Entertainment
- Day Glo Color Corporation
- Progressive Insurance

Corporations all over struggle to keep pace with the startup innovators whose ideas can radically disrupt time-tested industries overnight. Industries that have relied on a single business model for decades are suddenly being pushed to innovate or be left on the sidelines.

Seemingly 'uncreative' industries like construction or agriculture are finding new growth with the integration of creative technologies like AR/VR or 3D printing.

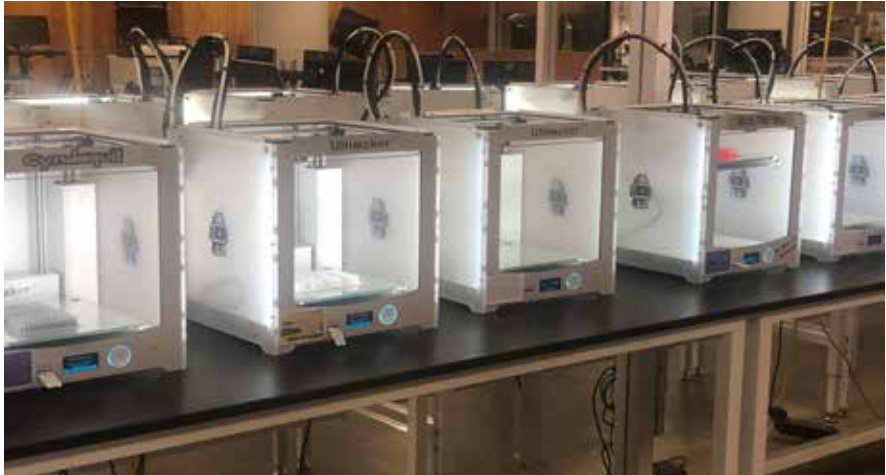
Many major corporations (like Google, Coca-Cola, Disney, Target, and Sprint to name a few) have developed their own in-house accelerator programs, in addition to sponsoring programs.

The challenge with this is that more often than not corporate accelerators serve as a means for internal talent scouting, not supporting entrepreneurs building companies.

But when the partnerships are mutually beneficial large industry and burgeoning startups can both benefit and build a robust culture of support and innovation. Having successful creative companies who are engaged in the local creative ecosystem helps fight the narratives that relegate creative entrepreneurs to the realm of hobbyists and arts 'and crafts', and dismisses their ideas and their potential. Some of the feedback we heard from respondents includes:

“IF WE'RE NOT THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT HOW TO GET CAPITAL AND RESOURCES TO DIVERSE FOUNDERS THEN THIS WHOLE PROCESS HAS BEEN FOR NOT.”

INTERVIEWEE



Q *“I feel like some of the bigger companies don’t really care about growing companies. Mentorship is really hard to come by.”*

Q *“We need to change the thinking around big companies and local culture. I mean, we have the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and we should have a music and production scene that rivals Nashville.”*

Q *“We have so many great resources and big companies, but we’re shipping our talent off to other places and we have a failure to launch community.”*

Q *“There is a real lack of design integration in traditional manufacturing and also investment in the manufacturing and design sector.”*

Q *“We need more cross-industry thinking. Our medical industry, for example, is huge here but we don’t see enough*

conversations in the medical industry that are engaging with the creative industries or design or manufacturing.”

Q *“Cleveland has this amazing industrial base that has tons of resources -- like these big companies have tons of salvage and waste that would be great for artists . There are so many companies here that could have a role in the creative industries but they’re not plugged in.”*

Q *“We need to ask how can some of the legacy companies in the region engage with young startups. Because we need to get these companies to see the power of innovative design.”*

Q *“I think more of our young people would stay here if they felt like they could build a company here but with an international presence.”*

Programs for creative entrepreneurs benefit from the expertise, financial support, and connections that come from large legacy companies in a region. In our experience, most successful entrepreneurs know firsthand the value of good mentorship and are happy to give back in meaningful, mutually beneficial ways. More importantly, these collaborations help build the landscape of possibility for entrepreneurs and help them to build stronger, more resilient companies. As Eric Weissman of Forbes recently stated,

“Big companies of a certain size kind of get settled into whatever community they built up from. At some point, it’s tough for them to move their physical location, but that doesn’t mean they need to be stagnant when it comes to innovation -- especially not alienated from the startup world.”

Existing companies benefit immensely from the new energy and ideas that startups and entrepreneurs bring which can help them innovate on and improve on legacy products. The support of large companies also helps to address regional concerns about population decline and workforce readiness.

Recent data shows that while Northeast Ohio annually “has a talent supply pipeline of more

than 280,000 students enrolled in postsecondary education,” the population has continued to decline over the past (almost) two decades.⁴⁵ Given Cleveland and Northeast Ohio’s world renowned higher educational institutions and large base of creative corporations this consistent out-migration may seem paradoxical. We see it as an opportunity to build the bridge between emerging talent and industry leaders.

III. RETHINKING INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES TO SUPPORTING CREATIVES:

Challenges to the Arts-Philanthropy Model

In addition to the strength of Cleveland’s creative companies, the region is undoubtedly known for the wealth of its cultural institutions, galleries, museums, and foundations. Many of these institutions are known worldwide, but as our data has shown the resources and support that the larger creative community can provide is not reaching aspiring founders. And more specifically, these resources are trapped within a model of funding and way of thinking that could be considered outdated, or at least, incredibly restrictive in terms of the types of creative growth it encourages.

In reviewing existing resource providers we struggled to find financial opportunities for for-profit creatives, or non-profit grants or fellowships that weren’t program or project focused. Many have lamented the loss of the artists fellowships previously offered by Arts Cleveland that provided support for creatives’ living expenses.

Here is some of the feedback we received from participants on this topic:

“The only systems of support here focus on solo-artists building their arts practice.”

“Creatives who are trying to build companies can’t get funding here. And people don’t need another workshop, they need a paycheck.”

“There is a dearth of resources for for-profit creative entrepreneurs.”

“People are getting tired of chasing after grants.”

“The support infrastructure for the arts is underperforming.”

“I think a lot could be done to elevate different business models for the arts and creative industries.”

“These foundations have so much money but the ‘old guard’ has done so little for so long.”

“A lot of the resources are coming from foundations so it’s hard for an organization that is a social entrepreneurship for-profit hybrid to find resources outside of the foundation structure.”

“The arts is an industry driven by social capital. But that currency doesn’t physically feed you or your organization.”

“The ways we measure arts organizations is profoundly disconnected from the very philosophical reasons we love art. Like we say we love art because it makes us feel good and makes our world better, but that’s not how foundations measure it.”

“We have amazing institutions and support but it doesn’t trickle down to the individual artists. We have a lot of big foundations that came out of the cultural wars in the ‘90’s and their money just circulates to other giant foundations, not to artists.”



As a non-profit in the creative industries, we at Creative Startups are well aware of the challenges faced by creative businesses. For far too long creatives have been told that the only way to make a living from their creative practice, and maintain their artistic integrity (in other words, not ‘sell out’), is to become a nonprofit.

Nonprofits and NGO’s around the world do valuable - indeed lifesaving and transformative - work. We are not debating the essential role of nonprofits.

However, as a method for exponentially growing the role of creativity in developing just, equitable, and inclusive societies, the nonprofit structure and business model is will not suffice.

Recent works such as *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* and *Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance* provide valuable insights into the ways in which philanthropy models may perpetuate hierarchical power structures, reinforce biases, and contribute to entrenched poverty and inequality.⁴⁶

Creatives looking to transform their creative expression into for-profit companies, scale their sales, expand their impact, and employ others merit effective support that propels their success in forprofit markets.

Creatives looking to provide for themselves and their families while committing to their artistic practice also need support. Both types of creatives

are to be celebrated for the value they bring to their communities and for the potential of their ideas, but the same mechanisms of support, education, or financing will not necessarily work for both.

New programs introduced to the NEO ecosystem must recognize their responsibility to educate creatives on alternative business models, **and also** educate investors, city and community leaders, and universities on the varied ways creatives can make meaningful and financially-viable contributions to their community.

SYNTHESIS

Respondents, interviewees, attendees, experts, stakeholders, and others have informed this study. The below assessment reflects the synthesis of all previous provided data and input, secondary and desk research, and insights gleaned from our four key focus areas to try to tell a more comprehensive story.

This story attempts to respond to the research questions set forth in the beginning of this report. The below analysis is organized into sections responding to each of the questions.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1:

What is the current creative economy landscape and how has the past informed this landscape?

We, like nearly everyone we spoke to, believe that Cleveland and Northeast Ohio are overflowing with reasons to be proud of its creative community. The museums, galleries, and educational institutions are world class. Multiple global corporations see this potential and choose this region – over anywhere else in the world – to call home.

Yet there are still challenges. Ecosystems evolve: they thrive and struggle, pull apart and come back together. Facing

these challenges is part of the process of ecosystem growth.

One aspect of the current creative economy is the dichotomy between a population that is extremely passionate about place and people, and the proclivity to siloing and resource hoarding. 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. Yet our data shows that this ease of access and support isn't trickling down to entrepreneurs except, perhaps, to those who are already successful.

This fluidity of social capital greases the wheels of innovation and enables ideas and resources to more quickly move among sectors. And, as our data show, increases business profitability and entrepreneurial success.

Collaboration without the expectation of return and a willingness to risk social capital (for those with the privilege of holding it) is a key point to consider for the ecosystem leaders in Northeast Ohio working to build an inclusive and vibrant creative economy.

Fundamental to risking and spreading social capital is recognizing that it is unequally distributed from the beginning. This fact relates not just to respondents concerns around inequities in race, class, gender, or geography, but also to concerns about what type of businesses are considered creative and who gets to make those decisions.

Of course, having your idea discounted is incomparable to experiences of racial or gender discrimination. But when we



perpetuate narrow models of entrepreneurial success inequities only multiply.

As one respondent bluntly said:

Q *“It’s so hard to get outside of the established art world and find new ways of supporting artists. It’s so paternalistic and top-down. No one wants to make the connections between artists and the gate keepers. We need more people willing to open doors.”*

Another noted:

Q *“Unless you’re really IP based or in a tech sector it really feels like you’re getting a second class approach.”*

There is a strong sense of frustration amongst respondents with ‘gate-keeping’ and support services that are not equipped to support creative businesses, or

not willing to expand long-held definitions of what a successful business or a successful entrepreneur looks like. Fundamental to supporting a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem in any location is for all of us to actively challenging our biases around what we consider a ‘successful’ entrepreneur looks like.

Creative potential exists in entrepreneurs of all backgrounds in all places and the more we can broaden our own networks to extend resources, the more this is discovered. Northeast Ohio is founded on a diverse population with a strong entrepreneurial spirit, but access to entrepreneurship as pathway is not being distributed equally today.

This is, of course, a monumental challenge that won’t be solved

overnight. To draw on the feedback from respondents, one way to mediate this might be focusing thoughtfully on which entrepreneur’s stories and expertise are being uplifted more often than others. For decision makers, it’s worth asking: Are the same handful of entrepreneurs always the ones invited to be a panelist for a workshop or interviewee for an article? Are events, or cocktail hours, or outreach sessions always in locations only accessible by car? Is success being measured only in returns on the dollar, or are we also counting the impact of inclusion within the context of community? Storytelling alone cannot fix issues of structural inequality, but it can profoundly help when followed with concrete action.

Among respondents there is a hunger for more celebration of the people and ideas that make this region unique. As one respondent said, *“everyone in this region has that underdog spirit.”* Another said:

Q *“There is so much undiscovered talent here. We need to get better at storytelling, and not just bragging to our own audience. We need to get the message out there more broadly and begin to see ourselves as a competitor on a national and global level.”*



While the underdog spirit can inspire healthy competition and motivation to achieve the seemingly impossible, chronically, it can paralyze entrepreneurial and community growth. To tell better stories and increase access to resources fundamentally requires broadening definitions of what success looks like. It also requires expanding our definitions of *where* success takes place. Entrepreneurs with global ambitions and local commitments help fuel the ecosystem and support the next generation of startups.

As has been well stated, Northeast Ohio’s creative economy is poised to thrive and continue the state’s legacy of entrepreneurial excellence. But this growth will require breaking down barriers in access, thinking, ways of funding, and definitions of creativity. It will also require uplifting and capitalizing on the creative richness already existing in the region. Unlike many places, Northeast Ohio is not lacking in creative institutions and struggling to build a cultural context from the ground up.

The struggle lies in connecting the legacy institutions to emerging entrepreneurs.

These are, certainly no simple tasks. But as one respondent said:

Q *“Sure, we’ve got big problems. But we need to stop tripping over our feet about them and set some big goals. We need big vision before we lose all the people that make this place great.”*

Communities around the world are struggling with similar questions but we can bet from experience that the ones that succeed in building resilient creative economies will be ones that place entrepreneurs at the center and actively advocate for more access for all.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2:

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

Cleveland is rich ground for creative collisions. The strength of multiple varied industries like manufacturing, design, sports and entertainment, and health-care mean that there is ample potential for innovation when these industries cross paths – the challenge is getting them to do so. Given these conditions we were not surprised to see design, digital fabrication, and media/entertainment leading the categories that our respondents are working in.

But as our research shows, the existing resources for entrepreneurs are not reflecting this

reality, and in turn stifle potential and fuel siloed thinking. Indeed, our data shows that some of the strongest industries in Ohio in terms of financial impact (p. 12), such as architecture, performing arts, and design, are actually perceived as weakest by entrepreneurs surveyed, even if those are the same industries in which the majority are making their income.

Measuring target respondents’ (creative entrepreneurs) perceptions of their industry as “vibrant and growing” we see that, despite working in dominant industries (according to NAICS data) creative entrepreneurs do not perceive their industry to be vibrant and growing. In other words, only 23 percent of creative entrepreneurs working in digital fabrication and 3D printing perceive the industry to be thriving and growing in Cleveland.

- Digital fabrication & 3D printing: 23 percent
- Graphic and Digital Design: 28 percent
- Industrial design: 40 percent
- Entertainment design: 29 percent
- Architecture: 35 percent
- Theater and performance: 31 percent.



This data tells us that although there is a parallel between large leading industries and industries where entrepreneurs are developing companies, there is not a sense of a shared ecosystem. For example: while theater and entertainment is an enormous revenue generator for the state of Ohio, and an area in which a combined 38.2 percent of respondents are building companies, the majority of respondents do not see themselves as sharing an ecosystem that is thriving and growing.

This disconnect reflects the need to connect large legacy companies and industries to emerging entrepreneurs to build the pipeline of support and possibility. Furthermore, all of these large companies are driven by the intersection of creativity and technology. As our respondents have

shown, Northeast Ohio has strong resources for high-tech entrepreneurs and consequently a proclivity towards defining ‘creative’ by the parameters of the fine arts world.

These gaps indicate exciting potential for growth when energy is focused on encouraging the intersection of creativity and technology. 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 risk staying at a distance. Given the benefits - economic, social, and cultural - of connecting creatives to technologists, this represents an opportunity to move Cleveland and Northeast Ohio ahead of the curve. Technology and creative expression readily mix and, when they do, often lead to breakthrough growth companies

and sectors.

The region’s higher education institutions offer an exceptionally deep and wide range of creative industries-related degrees and courses. The state is home to creative industries scholars, faculty, and departments who, collectively, produce thousands of creative graduates annually.

Capitalizing on this asset to connect creative companies and startup ventures to higher education 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.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3:

What challenges do creative economy stakeholders perceive?

The answer to this question is primarily detailed earlier in this section regarding the four key areas of need and focus we identified for building a thriving creative economy in Cleveland and beyond. These include:

- (1)** Building the bridge to the creative economy: creative-specific resources for founders;
- (2)** Fostering a more equitable

community: supporting under-resourced and under-estimated founders;

(3) Encouraging a culture of innovation: integrating creative entrepreneurship into legacy industry;

(4) Rethinking institutional approaches to supporting creatives: challenges to the arts philanthropy model.

Each of these issues intersects actively with the others, which means that the most effective creative economy interventions will support growth across multiple challenge areas. Supporting under-resourced and over-looked founders helps to shift the mindset around what creative businesses look like and shifts the conversation around funding. Re-thinking traditional models of funding encourages innovation and opens the door to new founders and new ideas.

Building the bridge between legacy industries and creative entrepreneurs fosters a community of support and resource sharing. And building programs specific to creatives knits together each of those threads in the ecosystem.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4:

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

There are four key areas of opportunity that are most actionable. These include:

(1) Continue to gather information from and build connections to regional creative communities in order to inform, shape, and implement programs and policies that reflect the needs of diverse creative entrepreneurs, and help Cleveland lead in a way that also uplifts the rest of the region.

Many data points - comments and questionnaire feedback - suggest creatives' concerns **are not** being heard and that even more leadership and engagement from policy leaders in the creative ecosystem would be valued. Trust building and genuine engagement will be needed to help move Cleveland and the region forward.

Furthermore, with a few exceptions, our data did not suggest a strong exchange of ideas and resources between major creative hubs such as Cleveland, Akron, Youngstown, or other areas. JumpStart is one of the few organizations that does offer programs in multiple locations across the Northeast Ohio region, and recently opened an office in Toledo. As a leader in the region JumpStart is poised to continue this collaborative and cross-regional thinking to foster further growth.

(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.

Northeast Ohio's higher education leaders are pro-actively developing courses and degree programs that align with future hiring needs. Leaders at the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and the University of Akron are all thinking about how to better integrate entrepreneurship into traditional fine arts courses. And organizations like the Young Entrepreneur Institute are working to build the pathway to entrepreneurship starting in elementary school.

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

Higher ed institutions with creative tracks can offer more entrepreneurship courses, work-



shops, seminars. To spark the entrepreneurial mindset among college-aged youth, introducing the entrepreneurship path as one career option early on will lead to more venture formation among creatives.

(3) Build capacity in existing organizations to provide excellent startup support services to creative entrepreneurs and encourage collaborations. As part of this study we have spoken with a number of organizations who

are willing to advise on the development of creative programs. Bringing together leaders across industries, higher education, foundations and non-profits, and elsewhere brings more resources to entrepreneurs than any one entity could do on their own.

(4) 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. A localized approach is a more sustainable, capacity-building approach which aligns with creative community values.

2020 CITY WIDE PLAN

CONNECTING CLEVELAND

- Connections:** Connecting people and place to local and global opportunities.
- Building on Assets:** Strengthen assets for unique growth and prosperity.
- Regeneration:** Bringing new life to neglected land and buildings.
- Re-imagining Place:** Encouraging development that fosters high quality of life experiences.
- Choice:** Creating communities of choice where people want to live and can prosper.
- Celebrating diversity:** Embracing diversity and breaking down barriers.
- Sustainability:** Building a community that is safe and sustainable for all.





RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS



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

In the spirit of entrepreneurship, the recommended next steps are highly actionable and meant to be useful to any leader or organization seeking to catalyze entrepreneurship. Some are JumpStart specific, others are meant to be broadly focused on the many actors in the ecosystem.

STRATEGY 1: OUTREACH & INCLUSION

The shared vision of the creative community necessitates that a proactively inclusive approach undergird all initiatives. To achieve inclusivity, several approaches are suggested:

(1) Strengthen and build partnerships among JumpStart and creative community organizations deeply connected in

diverse communities to deepen a mutual capacity to engage and connect with potential entrepreneurs.

(2) Work with community organizations to establish measurable goals for new entrepreneurship programs to ensure programs are meeting realistic needs and goals.

(3) Meet the community where they are at. Utilize community centers, libraries, churches, health centers and other existing facilities that serve a wide constituency when delivering workshops and outreach activities.

(4) Elevate storytelling. Highlight the range of successful creative entrepreneurs (race, class, industry, age, ability) through public campaigns, in panels and speaking events.

(5) Support nonconformist and unconventional “arts and culture” practices to demonstrate

commitment to arts outside the spectrum of what many deem to be “real” art.

(6) Provide entrepreneurship training in a customer-centric mode: deliver programs in a highly accessible manner, taking into consideration challenges such as parking, hours of operation, child care, language, relevant mentors and content.

STRATEGY 2: ACCELERATE & SUPPORT

Providing business-oriented support to creatives is of paramount need. The data clearly show strong demand for entrepreneurship training and skill development. While there is demand for consulting and workshops, we believe these can be well provided through existing community organizations.

Among our respondents, many of whom are already earning a significant portion of their

income from their creative business, there was a strong interest in a full 10-week Accelerator program. However, respondents also identified that the broader ecosystem is lacking support for idea-stage entrepreneurs who would be best-suited for a 4-week “Creative Startups LABS” program. In this case, both could serve the ecosystem well. To help meet demand for programming we recommend:

- (1) Existing community-based organizations consider expanding capacity to effectively support creative entrepreneurs in their communities. Creative Startups Educator’s Circle train-the-trainer program effectively supports existing entrepreneur-focused centers of excellence and community leaders in developing their ability to work with creative entrepreneurs.
- (2) We recommend launching a series of two LABS programs in 2020 in partnership with existing organizations serving underserved creative communities. Partner organizations would be given ample support to create “Entrepreneurship Educator” positions that sustain the efforts for 3 - 5 years. This will also necessitate engaging 10-15 diverse creative tech mentors from regional creative companies.
- (3) Building from this initial set of LABS, we recommend

launching a full Creative Startups Accelerator in 2021. The accelerator will draw on the critical mass of diverse communities and growth-oriented creative tech founders engaged through LABS.

**STRATEGY 3:
BUILD THE PATHWAY TO
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The consistent population outflux in Northeast Ohio is not only a reality on paper but a major point of concern among respondents. Respondents shared a strong sense that Northeast Ohio, and especially Cleveland, is at risk of losing a precious resource: young and diverse creatives.

There is also a sense that mentorship is hard to come by and that the doors to successful creatives in the region remain closed. Cleveland and Northeast Ohio would be wise to consider ways to leverage the various regional organizations focusing on entrepreneurship and the strength of established creative companies and institutions.

It may be that emerging graduates at an institution such as CIA have a greater likelihood of connecting with existing companies than, for example, individuals who have not completed college, are a single parent or recently immigrant.

Yet, a handful of higher education resources are focusing on the intersection of business and the creative industries. To attract and retain more young creatives, efforts can be made by higher education leaders to extend existing events and resources to connect with underserved communities, and capture under-connected creatives who are considering leaving.

- (1) Consider ways to convene higher education leaders with leading community organizations, startup organizations, and corporate leaders. Diversity and equity should always be at the forefront, and corporate and foundation leaders may need to be pushed outside of their usual meeting spaces to meet organizations where they are at. Consider how could these partnerships influence events and programming? Could a pitch competition happen after a CreativeMornings event? Could a manufacturing CEO and their team sit in on the portfolio reviews of fine-arts graduates?
- (2) Increase pathways for graduating creatives to work in area companies and launch their own ventures. Higher education leaders in the region are becoming increasingly well-versed in the current and future state of

the creative economy. Some of Cleveland and Northeast Ohio’s higher ed leaders are proactively developing courses and degree programs that align with future hiring needs. But these steps may be likely going unnoticed by the broader corporate or investment world.

(3) Clearer ecosystem mapping was a demand across the board from respondents. There is a sense that resources aren’t talking to each other and are ill equipped to direct entrepreneurs when unable to provide for them. It is likely that a separate project or initiative would need to be funded and developed to map and consistently update the resources available to creative entrepreneurs at all stages of their business journey.

STRATEGY 4: FOSTER CONNECTIONS

The region has much to gain from connecting people across industries, neighborhoods, sectors, and expertise. There was a sense among participants that Cleveland and its resource providers exist on their own island. Certainly, some funding and resources are geographically limited. But a curiosity about other regions and willingness to engage is boundless. Cleveland based organizations should

consider how to begin connecting with other regional creative economy organizations.

Creative + tech

(1) Host meet-ups bringing together the creative and tech communities with speakers (regional or national) relevant to multiple communities. Work with higher ed, regional corporates to identify bleeding edge topics.

(2) Engage regional tech/creative corporates to sponsor Creative Tech Workshops for specific industries including music, film, gaming.

(3) Engage higher ed STEM fields and create internships at creative companies with a focus on underrepresented entrepreneurs.

For profit + nonprofit

(1) Host workshops for creatives addressing the basic topics of “nonprofit” or “for profit and various other options such as co-operatives, B-corps, etc.

(2) Support creative nonprofits to partner with for-profit creative businesses and generate peer learning regarding sustainable models.

STRATEGY 5: EXPAND CAPACITY

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 Cleveland and Northeast Ohio-based organizations to consider leading more cross-industry and geographically diverse efforts to support creatives. A regional creative economy entity could:

(1) Lead community conversations in and with organizations that support under-served and excluded creatives.

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

(3) Offer programs to help launch, grow, and sustain creative enterprises.

There is a wealth of existing creative organizations in the region who could benefit from being better connected to mutually support entrepreneurs. Many also could benefit from shared financial support, and these types of consortium efforts — even within organizations in Cleveland — can open new grant or funding opportunities.

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE FOR NEXT STEPS	
Outreach and Inclusion	
Formalize partnerships among community organizations for program input	Q1 2020
Establish measureable 3-year goals & outcomes with partners	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	Q2 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".	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2020
Deliver Creative Startups LABS	Q3, Q4 2020
If critical mass exists, launch Creative Startups Accelerator	Q4 2020 / Q1 2021
Host Creative Startups Accelerator	Q3/Q4 2021
Build the Pathway to Entrepreneurship	
Convene local organizations, higher ed, corporations	On-going
Connect with key organizations working with overlooked and underserved entrepreneurs.	Ongoing
Foster Connections	
Host creative tech events with diverse industry and community partners (once each quarter)	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 2020
Build relationships with creative organizations within Cleveland and across the region	Ongoing
Expand Capacity	
Consider grants or other funding opportunities that bolster organizational capacity or can support larger programming	Ongoing

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. Creatives fight against racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, economic barriers and a multitude of other ways that people are excluded from structures that foster entrepreneurial and creative success. Corporate behemoths exploit market systems, blocking pathways to inclusive prosperity. Outdated mindsets and antiquated ways of funding stifle growth. The challenges seem indomitable.

One proactive approach to tackling these complex challenges is to equip creatives to become entrepreneurs. Our experience tells us that coupling this approach with a proactive effort to expand higher education, finance, and

market structures to a broad swath of creatives results in dynamic and resilient creative economies.

Entrepreneurship is often defined as “the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently under control.”

This definition posits entrepreneurship as the bold undertaking of striving to meet the needs of others regardless of how possible this may seem at the outset. When grounded in empathy and connection to culture and community, creative entrepreneurs can be levers 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 our democracy. We build stronger, more equitable communities where the weird and wonderful is celebrated, where the overlooked and underestimated are given the resources needed to thrive. Where all can envision a prosperous future in which they play an essential role.

This work is not easy. The goals are monumental and the need can feel daunting. Together, we can take the first step forward in achieving the impossible.

Let’s get started!





I WANT US TO BE THE REGION THAT
EVERYONE WANTS TO COME TO.
**THERE ARE UNTAPPED
CREATIVE RICHES HERE.**

..... INTERVIEW RESPONDENT

NORTHEAST OHIO CREATIVE ECONOMY



FUNDERS



THE KELVIN & ELEANOR SMITH FOUNDATION

Incorporated in 1955, the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation carries forward the entrepreneurial spirit and passion for community shared by its namesakes. The Foundation supports organizations that exemplify “excellence in their missions, creativity in approach, fiscal responsibility, and leadership in their service to the community” to positively impact the lives of citizens in Northeast Ohio.” They focus on supporting projects in the areas of: arts and culture; economic development; education; environment; health; and human services.

JUMPSTART, INC.

Founded in 2003, JumpStart is an impact-driven non-profit committed to unlocking “the full potential of diverse and ambitious entrepreneurs to economically transform entire communities.” JumpStart was founded with the vision of galvanizing entrepreneurial growth across Northeast Ohio and. With the support of Ohio Third Frontier they also manage the Northeast Ohio Startup Network which collaborates to grow the entrepreneurial ecosystem across the 21 counties of Northeast Ohio. JumpStart has distinguished themselves as leading tech focused investors and for their support to entrepreneurs in Cleveland and the region.

THE CLEVELAND FOUNDATION

Founded in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is one of the first and largest community foundations with a mission to “enhance the lives of all residents of Greater Cleveland, now and for generations to come, by working together with our donors to build community endowment, address needs through grant-making, and provide leadership on key community issues.” The support of their team and their donors helps fuel the creative vibrancy and strong community spirit that Cleveland and Ohio is well known for. Their work supports individuals in Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga Counties.

CREATIVE STARTUPS

Creative Startups is the leading global accelerator for creative Entrepreneurs. We work with local partners to build a region's creative tech and innovation economy, place-based economic development initiatives, job creation in creative industries, inclusive creative startup ecosystem and wealth creation for investors and creatives.

Since 2014, Creative Startups programs have served over 92 startups, on average 70% of our founders are women or POC, 80% of our founders are from creative professions. Our startups have created over 450 jobs, raised \$47 Million in investment and created over \$22 Million in new revenues.

Our most recent Impact Report for 2018 can be viewed here:

<http://bit.ly/creative-impact-2018>





APPENDICES & SOURCES



APPENDIX A: 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 | 3343: Audio & video equipment manufacturing | tions, and related services |
| 312: Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing | 3346: Manufacturing and reproducing magnetic and optical media | 7111: Performing arts companies |
| 315: Apparel manufacturing | 4452: Specialty food stores | 7112: Spectator sports |
| 512: Motion picture and sound recording industries | 4511: Sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument stores | 7113: Promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar events |
| 515: Broadcasting (except internet) | 5111: Newspaper, periodical, book, and directory publishers | 7114: Agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers, and other public figures |
| 711: Performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries | 5112: Software publishers | 7115: Independent artists, writers, and performers |
| 712: Museums, historical sites, and similar institutions | 5121: Motion picture and video industries | 7121: Museums, historical sites, and similar institutions |
| 3121: Beverage manufacturing | 5122: Sound recording industries | 7139: Other amusement and recreation industries |
| 3151: Apparel knitting mills | 5151: Radio and television broadcasting | 31211: Soft drink and ice manufacturing |
| 3152: Cut and sew apparel manufacturing | 5152: Cable and other subscription programming | 31212: Breweries |
| 3322: Cutlery and handtool manufacturing | 5413: Architectural, engineering, and related services | 31213: Wineries |
| | 5414: Specialized design services | 31214: Distilleries |
| | 5417: Scientific research and development services | 32312: Support activities for printing |
| | 5418: Advertising, public relations, and related services | 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
- 71151: Independent artists, writers, and performers
- 71211: Museums
- 71212: Historical sites
- 71213: Zoos and botanical gardens
- 71311: Amusement and theme parks
- 71312: Amusement arcades
- 71399: All other amusement & recreation industries
- 312111: Soft drink manufacturing
- 312112: Bottled water manufacturing
- 312113: Ice manufacturing
- 312120: Breweries
- 312130: Wineries
- 312140: Distilleries
- 323113: Commercial screen

printing	512220: Integrated record production/distribution	events with facilities
323117: Books printing	512230: Music publishers	711320: Promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar events without facilities
325992: Photographic film, paper, plate, and chemical manufacturing	512240: Sound recording studios	711410: Agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers, and other public figures
327212: Other pressed and blown glass and glassware manufacturing	512290: Other sound recording industries	711510: Independent artists, writers, and performers
333314: Optical instrument and lens manufacturing	515111: Radio networks	4239901: Musical instruments and supplies merchant wholesalers
334220: Radio and television broadcasting and wireless communications equipment manufacturing	515112: Radio stations	4512111: Book stores, general
334613: Blank magnetic and optical recording media manufacturing	515120: Television broadcasting	4512112: Specialty book stores
334614: Software and other pre-recorded compact disc, tape, and record reproducing	515210: Cable, subscription programming	4512113: College book stores
339992: Musical instrument manufacturing	541310: Architectural services	5122902: Producers of taped radio programs
451110: Sporting goods stores	541320: Landscape architectural services	5122909: All other sound recording industries
511110: Newspaper publishers	541330: Engineering services	5416909: All other scientific and technical consulting services
511120: Periodical publishers	541410: Interior design services	5418401: Radio and television advertising representatives
511191: Greeting card publishers	541420: Industrial design services	5418402: Publishers' advertising representatives
512110: Motion picture and video production	541430: Graphic design services	7111101: Opera companies
512120: Motion picture and video distribution	541490: Other specialized design services	7111102: Theater companies
512131: Motion picture theaters (except drive-ins)	541810: Advertising agencies	7111103: Dinner theaters
512132: Drive-in motion picture theaters	541820: Public relations agencies	7111301: Symphony orchestras and chamber music organizations
512191: Teleproduction and other postproduction services	541830: Media buying agencies	7111309: Other music groups and artists
512199: Other motion picture and video industries	541840: Media representatives	7111909: Other performing arts companies (except circuses)
512210: Record production	541921: Photography studios, portrait	7112111: Football clubs
	541922: Commercial photography	7112112: Baseball clubs
	711110: Theater companies and dinner theaters	7112119: Other professional sports teams and clubs
	711120: Dance companies	
	711190: Other performing arts companies	
	711211: Sports teams and clubs	
	711310: Promoters of performing arts, sports, and similar	

APPENDIX B: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE'S QUESTIONS

7139901: Dance halls

1. Enter your email to get started!

2. Your first and last name

3. My pronouns are:

He/Him/His

She/Her/Hers

They/Them/Theirs

Zie/Hir/Hirs

Just my name please!

Prefer not to answer

4. What is your age range?

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

Prefer not to answer

5. If you are willing to share, please let us know which of the following describes you (you can pick as many as you'd like!)

Male

Female

Transgender

Non-binary and/or genderqueer

Another awesome gender

Asexual

Intersex

Lesbian

Gay

Bisexual

Pansexual

Two-spirit

Questioning

Just my name please!

Prefer not to answer

Other

6. If you are willing to share, please let us know which of the following describes you (you can pick as many as you'd like!)

White

Middle Eastern or North African

Asian American or Asian

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

Native American or Alaskan Native

Hispanic or Latinx

Black or African American

Prefer not to answer

Other

7. How long have you lived in Northeast Ohio?

Less than one year

1-5 Years

5-10 Years

10-15 Years

15-20 Years

20+ Years

8. Zip code: Please list the zip code for the area you consider to be your primary residence.

9. In which region are you, currently, most actively part of the creative community/economy? This might be different than the zip code listed above. Please pick one...

Cleveland

Akron

Canton-Massillon

Youngstown-Warren

Mansfield

Weirton-Steubenville

Norwalk

Sandusky

10. What would you say is your primary job?

Please select one:

- I am a creative entrepreneur. I run a for-profit creative startup or business.
- I am a creative entrepreneur. I run a non-profit creative organization.
- I work for a creative economy support organization (e.g., foundation or non-profit that supports creative entrepreneurs).
- I am employed by a creative business/organization
- I am an entrepreneur but would not describe my work as part of the creative industries
- Other

11. If you checked “I am a Creative Entrepreneur,” what percentage of your income do you estimate comes from your entrepreneurial activities vs. other employment?

- Less than 25%
- About 25 - 50%
- Over 50%, but not quite 100%
- 100+%

12. Business or Organization Name: Is there a primary business or organization you affiliate yourself with? Please list that here.

13. How would you describe you or your primary organization’s role in [your community’s] creative economy? Select no more than 3 options.

- Accelerator Programs
- Angel (group/network)
- Art zine/publication
- Arts & Culture Council
- Capacity Builder
- Chambers of Commerce
- Co-working space
- Coffee Shop
- Corporate Sponsor
- Creative Business Nonprofit
- Creative District
- Creative Entrepreneur
- Creative Support Organization
- Economic Development Office
- Ecosystem Connector

- Events Schedulers/Planner
- Foundation
- Education
- Incubator
- Individual Donor
- Investor
- Leading Researcher
- Local Publication/Newspaper
- Local Television
- Maker Space
- Maker Individual
- Online/Digital Journalism
- Radioshow/Podcast
- Small Business Development Office
- Social Media Influencer
- Startup Event
- Sub Culture Group
- Social Enterprise
- Venture Capital Firm
- Business organization (African-American)
- Business Organization (Asian American/Pacific Islander)
- Business Organization (Disability/Accessibility)
- Business Organization (Hispanic/Latinx)
- Business Organization (Immigrant and refugee)
- Business organization (LGBTQ)
- Business Organization (Native)
- Business Organization (Senior 65+)
- Business Organization (Women)
- Other

14. What creative industries do you actively work in? Select up to three.

- Design; Fashion; E-textiles; Wearables; Animation; Writing/ publishing; Graphic and digital design; Game developers; Product and industrial design; Architecture and interior design; Film; Augmented and virtual reality; Music; Culinary arts; Lighting and sound design; Robotics; Festivals; Theatre and performance tech; Cultural Events; Photography; Studio and Fine Arts; Advertising/brand specialists; Digital fabrication and 3D printing; Other.

15. How would you describe the entrepreneurial, creative, small business, or startup ecosystem in [your community]? Select up to 2:
Welcoming to newcomers or new ideas;
Skeptical of newcomers or new ideas;
Neutral;
Cooperative (e.g.. sharing resources or information);
Uncooperative (e.g.. not sharing resources or information);
I don't feel like I am familiar enough to know;
Prefer not to respond;

16. How much do you agree with this statement: *"If I wanted to start a business in Northeast Ohio it would be easy for me to find the resources and information I need (e.g.. obtaining a business license, getting tax help, pursuing a loan, connecting with an entrepreneur social group)."* *This question applies if you have already started a business.
I totally agree!;
I agree;
I sort of agree.
I don't really agree;
I totally disagree;
I'm not sure...

17. 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; Animation; Writing/ publishing; Graphic and digital design; Game developers; Product and industrial design; Architecture and interior design; Film; Augmented and virtual reality; Music; Culinary arts; Lighting and sound design; Robotics; Festivals; Theatre and performance tech; Cultural Events; Photography; Studio and Fine Arts; Advertising/brand specialists; Digital fabrication and 3D printing; Other.*

18. Do you know any successful creative entrepreneurs, organizations, or businesses in your region who might want to support new founders as they launch their creative com-

panies and ideas? We'd love to talk with them! Please share here. *Open comment box.*

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

20. What would you say are some of the top challenges facing creative entrepreneurs in your region? Please indicate if this is based on personal experience, general observation, or both. *Open comment box.*

21. Which creative economy organizations in [your community] provide startup and business support services for creative entrepreneurs? *Open comment box.*

22. 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.*

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

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.

24. Based on the descriptions above, which Creative Startups Programs would you most likely want to participate in? *Matrix of responses:*
- Yes, totally want to do this!*
 - Yes, I think so.*
 - Maybe...I need to know more*
 - Probably not.*
 - Nope, not for me.*
- Accelerator (8-week)*
LABS Pre-accelerator (4-week)
Ecosystem and Educator’s Circle (Train the trainer)
Workshops

Consulting
Any additional comments?

25. How many creative entrepreneurs do you know who would be interested in a Creative Startups’ program? *Matrix of responses:*
- TONS! At least 100!*
 - Lots! (50-99)*
 - Many (25-49)*
 - A few (1-24)*
 - None come to mind...*
26. 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
27. How would you recommend to best reach creative entrepreneurs in your community? We aim to reach underserved and unreached entrepreneurs, especially! For example, at which off-beat, out of the way, very rarely heard of, festivals, coffee shops, or hangouts would you publicize resources? *Open comment box*
28. Is there anything else that you would like to share with or ask us?
29. Would you like to receive a copy of the final report as well as news and updates on a future Cleveland Creative Startups Accelerator?
- Yes*
 - No*
 - Yes, but please use this email instead.*

END NOTES

- 1 Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (2018).
- 2 Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (2018).
- 3 BMe Community (2019). “Asset-Framing.”
- 4 Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation (2019).
- 5 Cleveland Community Foundation (2019).
- 6 JumpStart, Inc. (2019).
- 7 Ohio Development Services Agency (2019).
- 8 UNESCO (2013).
- 9 Nathan, M., et. al. (2016).
- 10 US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (2016).
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Howkins, J. (2001).
- 13 World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company (2018).
- 14 JobsOhio is “a private, nonprofit corporation designed to drive job creation and new capital investment in Ohio through business attraction, retention and expansion efforts.” Team Neo (2019).
- 15 Knepper, G.W. (1989).
- 16 Ohio History Connection (n.d). “Rubber Industry.”
- 17 U.S. Bureau of the Census (1998).
- 18 Kusmer, K. “African Americans” (2019).
- 19 Michney, T. (2017).
- 20 Ohio History Connection (n.d). “Cleveland, Ohio’s Default.”
- 21 Larrick, D. (2019).
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Center for Regional Development (2018).
- 24 Ohio Arts Council (n.d.) “Ohio Percent for Art Program.” <https://oac.ohio.gov/percent-for-art>
- 25 NEFCO 2018 CEDS (2018).
- 26 City of Medina Comprehensive Plan (2007).

- 27 Cleveland City Planning Commission (2019).
- 28 Cuyahoga County Five-Year Economic Development Plan 2018-2022 (2018).
- 29 Creative Compass (2018). “Elevating the Influence of Arts and Culture: A Cleveland Playbook”.
- 30 Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA).
- 31 Ohio State University (2016). “Small Business & Entrepreneurship in Ohio: Promoting Prosperity by Growing from Within.”
- 32 SeeLife “About.”
- 33 Piiparinen, R., et. al. (2016), p. 3
- 34 Hathaway, I. (2019). “The Ascent of Women-Founded Venture-Backed Startups in the United States.”
- 35 DigitalUndivided (2018). “ProjectDiane.”
- 36 Deutsch, H.W., et. al., (2016).
- 37 Center for Community Solutions (2019).
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Deutsch, H.W., et. al., (2016).
- 40 Ohio: Opportunities for New Americans (2018).
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Boston Consulting Group (2018).
- 43 Hunt, V., et. al. (2015).
- 44 Gassam, J. (2018).
- 45 TeamNEO (2019).
- 46 Incite (2007). *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex and Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance*

WORKS REFERENCED + CONSULTED

- Arts in Stark (2013). “20/20 Vision Plan.” <https://www.artsinstark.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2020-Vision-Plan-2013-06-20.pdf>
- BMe Community (2019). “Asset-Framing.” <https://bmecommunity.org/asset-framing/>
- Boshara, R., et. al. (2015). “The Demographics of Wealth: How Age, Education and Race Separate Thrivers from Strugglers in Today’s Economy.” Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, issue 2. <https://www.stlouisfed.org/~//media/Files/PDFs/HFS/essays/HFS-Essay-2-2015-Education-and-Wealth.pdf>
- Boston Consulting Group (2018). “How Diverse Leadership Boost Innovation.” <https://www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2018/how-diverse-leadership-teams-boost-innovation.aspx>
- Deutsch, H.W., et. al., (2016). “THE STATE OF LGBT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE U.S.” https://startout.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/State_of_LGBT_Entrepreneurship.pdf
- Center for Regional Development (2018). “Ohio’s Creative Economy: The Economic Impact of the Arts and Creative Industries,” Bowling Green State University. <https://www.gcac.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/OCAEconomicImpactStudy.pdf>
- City of Medina (2007). “City of Medina Comprehensive Plan Update.” http://www.medinaoh.org/includes/uploads/Residents/Copy_of_Medina_Comprehensive_Plan_AS_ADOPTED.pdf
- Cleveland City Planning Commission (2019). “Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan.” <http://planning.city.cleveland.oh.us/cwp/planIntro.php>
- Cleveland City Planning Commission (n.d.) “Cuyahoga Innovation Zones.” http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/sites/default/files/forms_publications/CuyahogaInnovationZones.pdf
- Cleveland Community Foundation (2019). “About.” <https://www.clevelandfoundation.org/about/quick-facts/>
- The Cleveland Foundation (2019). “About.” <https://www.clevelandfoundation.org/about/quick-facts/>
- Cleveland Museum of Art (2019). “For the Benefit of All: The CMA’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan.” <https://www.clevelandart.org/sites/default/files/documents/other/Diversity%2C%20Equity%20and%20Inclusion%20Plan.pdf>
- Creative Compass (2018). “Elevating the Influence of Arts and Culture: A Cleveland Playbook.” <https://mycreativecompass.org/Research/neighborhoods/Elevate>
- “Cuyahoga County Five-Year Economic Development Plan 2018 - 2022” (2018). <https://www.cuyahogacounty.us/docs/default-source/development/economicdevelopmentplan.pdf>
- DigitalUndivided (2018). “ProjectDiane.” <https://projectdiane.digitalundivided.com/latinx/>
- Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (2018). “The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building Playbook

- Draft 3.0” <https://www.kauffman.org/ecosystem-playbook-draft-3/introduction>
- Fairlie, R., et. al (2017.) “The Kauffman Index of Startup Activity: National Trends.” Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2974462>
- Gassam, J. “Five Reasons Why The Pipeline Problem Is Just A Myth”. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2018/12/18/5-reasons-why-the-pipeline-problem-is-just-a-myth/#6a1b24b1227a>
- Hathaway, I. (2019). “The Ascent of Women-Founded Venture-Backed Startups in the United States,” Center for American Entrepreneurship. <http://www.startupsusa.org/women-founded-venture-backed-startups/#appendix>
- Howkins, J. (2001). *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*. London: The Penguin Group.
- Hunt, V., et. al. (2015). “Diversity Matters.” McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/why%20diversity%20matters/diversity%20matters.ashx>
- Incite (2007). *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex and Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance*
- JumpStart, Inc. (2019). “About Us: Our Work.” <https://www.jumpstartinc.org/about/our-work/>
- The Kelvin & Eleanor Smith Foundation (2019). “Mission.” <http://kesmithfoundation.org/mission.html>
- Knepper, G.W. (1989). *Ohio and Its People: Bicentennial Edition*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press.
- Kusmer, K. “African Americans,” *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*. Case Western Reserve (2019).
- Larrick, D. (2019). “Gross Domestic Product from Ohio: State Level Only Edition,” Ohio Research Office. <https://development.ohio.gov/files/research/E1001.pdf>
- Mallach, A., and Brachman, L. (2013). “Regenerating America’s Legacy Cities.” <https://ti.org/pdfs/LegacyCities.pdf>
- Michney, T. (2017). *Surrogate Suburbs: Black Upward Mobility and Neighborhood Change in Cleveland, 1900–1980*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press
- Nathan, M., et. al. (2016). “Creative Economy Employment in the US, Canada, and the UK: A Comparative Analysis,” NESTA. <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/creative-economy-employment-in-the-us-canada-and-the-uk/>
- NEFCO (2019). “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2019 Annual Performance Report.” <http://www.nefcoplanning.org/publications/CEDS/2019%20Annual%20Performance%20Report.pdf>

- New American Economy (2019). “Ohio.” <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/ohio/>
- Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization (NEFCO) (2017). “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2017 Annual Performance Report.” <http://necoplanning.org/publications/CEDS/final%202017%20CEDS%20Annual%20Performance%20Report%202017%200117.pdf>
- Ohio Arts Council (n.d.) “Ohio Percent for Art Program.” <https://oac.ohio.gov/percent-for-art>
- Ohio Development Services Agency (2019). https://development.ohio.gov/bs_thirdfrontier/esp.htm
- Ohio History Connection (n.d.) “Cleveland, Ohio’s Default.” https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Cleveland,_Ohio%27s_Default
- Ohio History Connection (n.d.) “Rubber Industry.” https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Rubber_Industry
- Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association (OMEGA) (2018). “Annual CEDS Report.” <https://omegadistrict.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/OMEGA-CEDS-2018-final.pdf>
- Ohio: Opportunities for New Americans (2018). “One Ohio, Many Stories Strategies for Helping New Ohioans Integrate, Contribute and Become a Thriving Part of Ohio’s Success.” <https://development.ohio.gov/newamericans/files/new%20americans%20report%208.pdf>
- Ohio: Opportunities for Ohioans for Disabilities (2019). “Empowering Ohioans with disabilities through employment, disability determinations, and independence.” <https://ood.ohio.gov/Services/Comprehensive-Statewide-Needs-Assessment-2018/Section-IV-Disability-Demographics-and-Employment-Status/Age-and-Disabilities-in-Ohio>
- Piiparinen, R., et. al. (2016) “The Fifth Migration: A Study of Cleveland Millennials.” Cleveland State University. https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2339&context=urban_facpub
- Rembert, M., et. al. (2016). “Small Business & Entrepreneurship in Ohio: Promoting Prosperity by Growing from Within.” Swank Program in Rural-Urban Policy, Ohio State University. https://aede.osu.edu/sites/aede/files/publication_files/Swank-Small-Biz-Entrepreneurs.pdf
- See Life (n.d.). “About.” <http://www.playseelife.com/about.html>
- The Sentencing Project (2019). “State by State Data: Ohio.” <https://www.sentencingproject.org/the-facts/#map>
- TeamNEO (2018). “Smart Manufacturing – Industrial Internet of Things (IoT) Roadmap for Northeast Ohio.” <https://teamneo.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/smart-manufacturing-iiot-roadmap.pdf>
- TeamNEO (2019). “Aligning Opportunities in Northeast Ohio: A Resource to Aid in Addressing the Demand and Supply Imbalance in the Region’s Workforce.” <https://teamneo.org/p-content/up>

loads/2019/07/2019-aligning-opportunities-executive-summary.pdf

Techstars (2018). “Assessment and Roadmap Report Cleveland, Ohio.” [https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/3089456/9%20-%20Cleveland%20Assessment%20Final%20Report\(digital, public%20use%20approved\).pdf](https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/3089456/9%20-%20Cleveland%20Assessment%20Final%20Report(digital,public%20use%20approved).pdf)

UNESCO (2013). “Creative Economy Report: Widening Local Development Pathways.” http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/2013-creative-economy-report-widening-local-development-pathways-en_1.pdf

U.S. Bureau of the Census (1998). “Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1950.” <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab18.txt>

US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (2016). “Arts and Culture Continues to Grow in 2016.” <https://www.bea.gov/system/files/2019-03/acpsa0319.pdf>

Weissman, E. (2018). “Creating An Ecosystem: Who Benefits When Big Companies Work With Startups?” *Forbes*. <https://bit.ly/343Zpmm>

Welles, H. (2019). “Construction industry gets creative with artificial intelligence, virtual reality.” *Born2Invest*. <https://born2invest.com/articles/construction-industry-artificial-intelligence-virtual-reality/?fbclid=IwAR0ka20K0WLn1rDdEKVzyCZIPKABYH7B0eerkmB0r77hDNZfEumFQDYr2o>

The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law (2019). “LGBT Demographic Data Interactive.” <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/?topic=LGBT&area=39#economic>

World Economic Forum and McKinsey & Company (2018). “Creative Disruption: The impact of emerging technologies on the creative economy.” http://www3.weforum.org/docs/39655_CREATIVE-DISRUPTION.pdf

PHOTO + IMAGE SOURCES

- Cover: (Top to bottom, left to right) photo of bridge - Julia Youngs; spotted balloons in pink mirrored room - Erik Drost; man and woman sitting - Erik Drost, outdoor light display - Erik Drost; woman playing VR - The People Speak.
- Page 1: (Top to bottom, left to right) Photo of people at park- Phil Kalina; yellow mural - Julia Youngs; red light display - Erik Drost; man playing guitar - Erik Drost; woman singing - Erik Drost; Trust rotunda - Chewy_734; juggler - Erik Drost.
- Page 2: Cleveland sign at night- Erik Drost.
- Page 4: Cleveland mural - Julia Youngs; baseball field- Chris Chow, man playing trumpet- Bryan Thompson; House of Blues - David Veksler; statue close up- Erik Drost.
- Page 5: Chalk rainbow pathway- Erik Drost.
- Page 10: Historic image of Cayuhoga River - Library of Congress
- Page 11: Playhouse sign - unattributed.
- Page 12: Room of mirrors - Erik Drost.
- Page 14: Ballerina- Erik Drost
- Page 16: Ballerina- Erik Drost; old machinery - DarkDay; spotted balloons in pink mirrored room - Erik Drost; Brewellas Marvelous sitting area - Julia Youngs; woman and man working - Creative Startups.
- Page 19: Woman playing VR - The People Speak; man playing violin - Erik Drost; cement structure- Lance Anderson; creative space - Julia Youngs; moon behind Cleveland- Erik Drost.
- Page 20: Cleveland street at night- Erik Drost.
- Page 41: Bus - Julia Youngs.
- Page 43: Woman photographer - FaceMePls; digital circuits - Peter Shanks; peacock sculpture- Tim Evanson; woman singing- Erik Drost; statue of man running- Erik Drost.
- Page 44: Great Lakes Brewing Co. sign- DJ Johnson.
- Page 50: Digital printers - Julia Youngs.
- Page 52: Three men performing- Erik Drost.
- Page 53: Brewellas Marvelous - Julia Youngs.
- Page 54: Cleveland sign - Erik Drost.
- Page 56: Playing on VR - Creative Startups.
- Page 58: Man and woman - Creative Startups.
- Page 59: Cavaliers player - Erik Drost; Ballerina- Erik Drost; West Side Market- Lance Anderson; outdoor light display- Erik Drost; stage performers - Huntington Theatre Company.
- Page 64: Creative Startups 2019 Accelerator cohort - Creative Startups.
- Page 66: People at park- Phil Kalina.
- Page 67: Creative Startups Accelerator 2015 - Creative Startups.
- Page 68: Greetings from Cleveland mural- Warren LeMay.