

Arts2Work is a big idea based on a little-known fact.

The Fact: In 2015, the arts sector in the United States contributed \$166.3 billion in economic activity, supported 4.6 million jobs and generated \$27.5 billion in revenue to local, state and federal governments. *

The Big Idea: It is time to recognize and expand the huge contributions of working artists to the U.S. economy through a *national system of investment in creative people, businesses and nonprofit organizations.* *Arts2Work will ensure that subsidized, high-quality apprenticeship and professional development programs are available in the arts,* as they are in many other fields from telecommunications to construction to medicine. Artists and arts organizations contribute not only to the economy, but also to community vitality and resilience, improved educational outcomes, innovation in business, and cultural identity. Because much of the arts sector is comprised of bootstrapped nonprofits and freelancers in the gig economy, it is not recognized as an economic powerhouse, and workplace development needs and opportunities are marginalized or completely ignored. As a result, artists and arts organizations are effectively – if not intentionally -- excluded from local, state, and federal programs that support small business, youth employment, apprenticeships, and professional development. We must change this; a vibrant arts sector is a major contributor to a thriving economy and vital communities.

The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture (The Alliance) is leading **Arts2Work**, an initiative established to create a national network that links together existing resources and programs and establishes new ones in order to support the future of the creative economy in the United States. The Alliance has briefed members of Congress on the size and importance of the sector, identified federal, state, and local programs that support workforce development generally, looked closely at the role of the arts in local and regional economies across the country, and surveyed its own members. It has found that few leaders of arts organizations, cities, or Congress recognize the large and growing role of the arts in the economy, that the funding constraints of arts organizations keep them from focusing on their own workforce needs or those of the field, and that programs designed to help individuals find apprenticeship opportunities have not traditionally, or *ever*, been available in the arts.

The Alliance is building **Arts2Work** with an initial focus on media arts and creative technologies, which encompasses film, video and multimedia production and post-production, digital editing and archiving, emerging media (virtual reality, augmented reality and artificial intelligence), game design and development, and related professions. **The Alliance is currently working with the US Dept. of Labor, in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts, to create the very first Federally Registered Apprenticeships in Media Arts and Creative Technologies.** While providing new opportunities for diverse and underserved job-seekers, the intention is to open up funding streams for high-quality pre-apprenticeship training at media arts nonprofits, youth media centers, local community colleges and public access broadcast stations, for in-demand jobs like multimedia producer, digital archivist, and digital video editor. The vision also includes equal opportunity for communities of color, women, veterans, and disabled workers, and providing subsidies to participating employers towards first-year apprentice salaries while creating demand and opportunity for skilled creative workers. Employers in the program can be for-profit or non-profit, studios and agencies, broadcasters or news organizations, creative tech or corporate media, educational, libraries, web-based companies or non-media businesses with digital departments.

Arts2Work is a bold step towards making sustainable careers in the creative professions available for all, building stronger local and regional economies, and providing access and opportunity to diverse communities across the country. The time is now. We are actively pursuing funding partnerships, employer participants and state and regional training partners. Contact Wendy Levy, The Alliance Executive Director, wendy@thealliance.media or Christina Orticke, Arts2Work Senior Producer, christina@thealliance.media. To learn more, join our mailing list -- register with Arts2Work [here](#).