



Nashville: A Creative Path Forward

March 5, 2026 | 6:00-8:00pm

Key Themes & Highlights

Overview

The Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville invited individual artists, creatives, and representatives from arts organizations to a feedback gathering session to hear directly from artists and arts administrators on their goals and challenges within the Nashville arts sector along with any specific advocacy priorities. Feedback was gathered via facilitated small groups as well as asynchronous self-guided reflection questions.

Top Community Priorities

Five themes emerged as the strongest signals that consistently appeared throughout the small group discussions and the self-guided reflection:

1. **Create Connectivity and Explore a Hub:** Create a single, user-friendly digital platform that includes a universal events calendar, a directory of local artists and talent, and a database for calls to artists, funding opportunities, and services.
2. **Secure Affordable Creative Spaces:** Advocate for subsidies, property tax waivers, or government-funded initiatives to convert available properties into affordable artist studios, rehearsal spaces, and performance venues.
3. **Bridge the Gap Between Arts, Tourism, Development:** Explore ways to strengthen partnerships with the Nashville Tourism Board and local developers to ensure local artists are integrated into new commercial projects, hotels, and public art initiatives.
4. **Strengthen Business and Administrative Support:** Provide accessible professional development focusing on the "business of art," including training on taxes, grant writing, marketing, and navigating the local arts landscape.
5. **Foster a Unified Advocacy Voice:** Develop a unified message that the creative community can rally behind and stay consistent with; create a mechanism to keep the community informed of relevant legislation and coordinate collective advocacy efforts, such as "Arts Day on the Hill".

Synthesis of Challenges and Goals

1. Affordability

- **Challenges:** Participants repeatedly pointed to challenges with affordability in Nashville, specifically around affordable studio space and affordable housing. They also discussed a disconnect between the creative community and tourism and development that is bringing a lot of money into Nashville.
- **Ideas for Solutions:** Secure 1% of the Metro budget for the arts, explore tax incentives for artist spaces, and create sustainable funding streams beyond state/federal grants;

gather and report data to demonstrate these challenges and the impact they are having on the creative community, such as tracking the number of full-time artists versus available housing.

2. Connectivity and Collaboration

- **Challenges:** The community is often "siloeed," with a lack of cross-pollination between different disciplines (e.g., visual arts vs. music) and a lack of awareness regarding existing resources. Many described the need to support small organizations or individuals more.
- **Ideas for Solutions:** Form an "Art Alliance" of creatives, host quarterly roundtable meetings, and implement collaborative grant programs to encourage partnership over competition; explore pathways that support new work and provide constructive critiques.

3. Data and Visibility

- **Challenges:** Two data gaps were identified: data to demonstrate the economic impact of the arts for advocacy and fundraising purposes, and data on local market values to inform artists pricing their work.
- **Ideas for Solutions:** Continue to report on the Creative Economy an Arts Economic Impact Report and

4. Education and Mentorship

- **Challenges:** New artists struggle to enter the ecosystem, and many creators lack the background or training required to handle administrative or business related tasks. Additionally, small organizations or individual artists often do not have the processes in place to meet the expectations of large organizations or corporate partners.
- **Ideas for Solutions:** Establish mentorship programs and offer professional development trainings on the business aspects of this work.