Washington Creative Districts

Annette Roth, Creative Districts Program Manager
Program History

- Legislation introduced in early 2017; broad support, became law May 2017

- Program began January 2018, First District in December 2018

- **RCW: Chapter 43.46.100 - 43.46.115**

- **WAC: Chapter 30-42**

Crowd of onlookers watch salmon run on Issaquah Creek during Issaquah’s Salmon Days, an annual arts and culture event that drew over 200,000 visitors in 2019. Photo courtesy City of Issaquah.
How the Program Works

- Planning, application and state-certification process
- Customized to each community
- ArtsWA works with communities
- Fosters authentic, diverse community engagement

https://www.arts.wa.gov/community-readiness-toolkit/

Metalworking student at Coyote Central School in Seattle. Photo courtesy of Coyote Central.
How We Support Communities

• Resources & guidance
• Equitable application process
• Networking opportunities
• Ongoing technical assistance
• Grants, capital projects, affordable housing, leadership training
• Experimental and flexible

L – R: Annette Roth; Michael Cade, Executive Director, Thurston EDC; Karen Hanan at the 2019 WEDA Awards. Creative Districts won the Innovation in Economic Development Award that year. Photo courtesy ArtsWA.
• Current funding is inadequate for program activities
• Success has brought opportunities
• Legislative requests for upcoming biennium are all funded; waiting on reconciliation
• WSDOT partnership for highway signage
• Dept. of Commerce has increased interest in creative economy

ArtsWA and WSDOT have a partnership to provide highway signage exclusively for Creative Districts.

This is the first sign installed in Washington, along Hwy 395 in Chewelah. Photo courtesy of WSDOT.
Creative Districts Capital Project Pilot Program

- $200,000 in supplemental budget for FY21
- Projects and funds must be complete by June 30, 2021 – short timeline
- Pooled grant process
- Small-scale capital projects
- Matching funds requirements

Glass and steel sculpture in downtown Langley, Washington’s 4th Creative District. Photo courtesy of Langley Creates.
Match Reduction Program

• Purpose is to ensure equity amongst districts

• Based on Washington State Recreation & Conservation Office program

• Communities (under 20K pop.), Underserved (project in census block w/ less than 70% MHI), sliding scale

• 5 of the 8 Districts were eligible

RCO has successfully administered program since 2016

Data determining eligibility comes from US Census

Almost $260,000 in additional leveraged investment
Front cover photo: A crowd gathers at Fort Worden State Park in Port Townsend for a concert hosted by Centrum. Photo courtesy of Port Townsend Creative District. Photo above: Attendees at Design in the Park outdoor display in Seattle.