



Create Gwinnett Inc.

Building Gwinnett's Creative Economy

About Us & Our Strategy

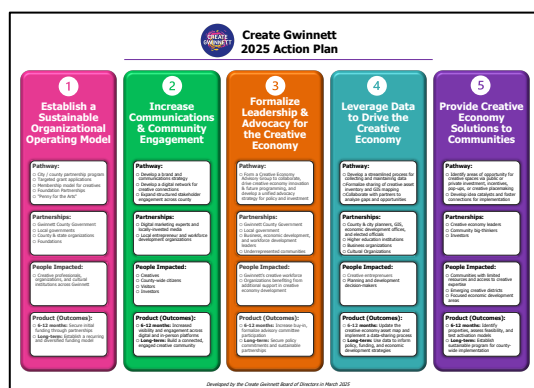
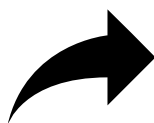
January 2026

About Create Gwinnett

Create Gwinnett, formerly ArtWorks Gwinnett, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving as the lead implementation partner for Gwinnett County's Creative Economy Master Plan. Originally established to advance arts and culture across Gwinnett, the organization was rebranded in 2025 as Create Gwinnett to reflect its expanded role in driving countywide creative economy development.

We are moving the Creative Economy Master Plan into implementation:

- Create Gwinnett is the nonprofit implementation lead for Gwinnett County's Creative Economy Master Plan. Developed through a multi-year public process with support from Gwinnett County, this plan outlines a vision for growing Gwinnett's creative economy as a catalyst for economic development, equity, and quality of life. The plan was adopted in 2024 and formally launched through Create Gwinnett in 2025.
- In 2025, we developed five Action Items for 2025-2028 and delivered early wins with support from Gwinnett County and community partners through the Creative Economy Plan.



Why partner with Create Gwinnett:

Create Gwinnett assists Gwinnett County, the 17 cities within the county, CIDs, community organizations, individual artists, and other partners throughout the region in order to advance the creative economy.

Create Gwinnett as your creative economy partner:

Local knowledge + national expertise + the right structure = new opportunities

- Rooted in Gwinnett:** We are the only organization solely focused on advancing the creative economy across Gwinnett County.
- Backed by Strategy:** Our countywide Creative Economy Master Plan ensures all project work connects with surrounding communities in a collaborative and meaningful way.
- Built for Flexibility:** As a 501(c)(3), we access grants, philanthropy, and contracts that governments cannot pursue directly. We serve all of Gwinnett County, including all 17 cities and unincorporated areas, ensuring equitable distribution of creative opportunities.

We also bring the right people to the table:

- We provide a space for organizations & individuals from across the county to come together to the same table and collaborate towards partnerships and external funding opportunities.

Background: What We've Accomplished in Just 6 Months

Since Mid-2025, Create Gwinnett has accomplished:

Community Engagement

- Developed relationships with over 45 stakeholders across government, business, education, and communities to identify partnership opportunities, understand needs, and create solutions together.
- Launched and grew channels that promote County-relevant opportunities to creatives with over 1,600 followers within the first two months, producing 4,042 monthly impressions. Launched a monthly newsletter with 49–56% open rates.

Development of Project Partnerships & Funding

- Worked with government and community partners to identify potential projects across Gwinnett County.
- Developed a grant tracking and application database to **recruit new external dollars** for creative economy projects.

Projects We've Advanced:



Gwinnett County Public Art & Creative Placemaking RFP: When Create Gwinnett recognized that most artists would not be able to participate in future county public art projects, the organization partnered with Hudgens Center for Art & Learning to respond to the RFP and create a mechanism for the county to hire artists for their projects with **greater accessibility and equity for all artists in Gwinnett**. Implementation is being finalized with county staff.



Viewpoint Health Partnership: Create Gwinnett has partnered with Viewpoint Health and their foundation to apply for and win public funds through South Arts, a regional grantmaking council of the National Endowment for the Arts, to hire artists to conduct therapeutic workshops with Viewpoint Health clients and implement community programming focused on health and the arts. This opportunity is bringing **new money & arts programming into Gwinnett County** and was only possible through the direct non-profit mission of Create Gwinnett.



Sugarloaf CID Partnership: Create Gwinnett Inc. worked with the Sugarloaf CID to recruit private foundation funding from Norfolk Southern to complete the Sugarloaf gateway murals under I-85. This project expanded the already funded work further and freed up CID funding for other initiatives. This opportunity is bringing **new money into Gwinnett County** and was only made possible because of the role of Create Gwinnett as a non-profit partner.



Art + Community Conversations around the USA 250th Anniversary: Create Gwinnett recently formalized a partnership with Out of Hand Theatre, an Atlanta company focused on social justice, to bring short theatrical pieces paired with community meals to underserved communities across Gwinnett in 2026 at little to no cost to the community through national foundation support. This opportunity is bringing **access to the arts & community engagement** and was only made possible because of the role of Create Gwinnett as a non-profit partner.

How is this directly helping Gwinnett County?

Our engagement program is actively promoting county initiatives that impact or relate to the creative sector. From new public art to planning initiatives that creatives can be involved in, we are partnering with organizations across the county & communicating this information directly to our creative community.

How is this directly helping Gwinnett County?

We have structured Create Gwinnett as a flexible non-profit partnership model that the county can take advantage of to bring new grant and funding dollars into the art economy and involve artists in projects with equity at the forefront of artist participation.

Investment & Long-Term Sustainability

Long-Term Sustainability Strategy

Our sustainability planning processes over the last 6 months have shown that there is no single solution to long-term implementation of the Creative Economy Plan across Gwinnett County. Our financial strategy balances **public investment** with **earned revenue, grants, and philanthropy**:

- **Public Funding – A Foundation:** A multi-year service agreement with local governments positions Create Gwinnett to compete for external resources and bring new opportunities into the county.
- **Service Agreements – A Growth Pathway:** Create Gwinnett holds service agreements with municipalities and organizations to meet localized needs while staying aligned with the countywide plan.
- **Philanthropy, Grants, and Corporate Support – Leveraged Resources:** Public investment will serve as the match for major foundation and corporate funding. By Year 3, we will aim for a 1:1 leverage ratio of external / private dollars to public funds.

The Original Funders of the Creative Economy Plan

Create Gwinnett also serves the original public, corporate, nonprofit, and CID partners who invested in developing the Creative Economy Master Plan. These partners include:

- County: Gwinnett County Government
- Cities: Braselton, Buford, Duluth, Lawrenceville, Norcross, Peachtree Corners, Snellville, Sugar Hill, Suwanee, and the Gwinnett Municipal Association
- CIDs: Evermore, Gateway 85, Gwinnett Place, and Sugarloaf
- Corporate and nonprofit supporters: AT&T, the Community Foundation for Northeast Georgia, Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful, Gwinnett County Public School Foundation, and View Point Health

Shared Investment Plan

Partner	Contribution	Purpose
Gwinnett County	Annual service agreement (2026–2028)	Service agreement for delivery of countywide Creative Economy Master Plan priorities, support new arts project development, and leverage new external dollars
Municipal Partners	Annual service agreements with cities	Agreements modeled after the Gwinnett County service agreement; results in scaled municipal service delivery in areas such as creative placemaking, public art, or engagement initiatives
Explore Gwinnett / CVB	Program and marketing alignment; tourism/arts promotion resources	Align public arts initiatives with tourism and entertainment priorities, ensuring arts projects contribute to visitor growth and destination branding
Community Improvement Districts (CIDs)	Project-specific partnerships	Matching funds to implement creative placemaking and public art tied to corridor improvements
Community Partners (Libraries, health agencies, schools, etc.)	Project-specific partnerships	Matching funds to implement community programs and projects with an arts focus
Private Philanthropy, Grants, & Corporate Giving	Contributions towards projects or Capital Fund	Leverage public investment to multiply impact and create new opportunities

Create Gwinnett: 2026 – 2028 Goals

The following goals were developed by the Create Gwinnett Board of Directors after thoughtful input by community members and stakeholders throughout Gwinnett County identifying the greatest needs and opportunities within the creative economy.

1. Unlock and Leverage External Grant Funding

Create Gwinnett will position Gwinnett County to compete for external resources by serving as a nonprofit vehicle for arts and creative grants for projects throughout the entire county.

- **Deliverables**

- Annual Creative Economy Resource Development Plan with funding targets.
- Secure **\$75,000+ in Year 1, \$100,000 in Year 2, and \$150,000 in Year 3** in external grants to leverage existing funding for new or expanded projects or programs.

2. Serve as Gwinnett's Philanthropic and Investment Gateway for the Arts

We will channel donor, corporate, and foundation support directly into projects and programs throughout Gwinnett County, aligning major private investments across the arts into a unified strategy.

- **Deliverables**

- Establish the **Gwinnett Creative Capital Fund** for funding new county arts projects & programs with an annual grant/sponsorship cycle with **\$250,000 in commitments** by year 3.
- Publish an **Annual Investment Impact Report** documenting leveraged dollars and outcomes.

3. Expand Equitable Access and Opportunity for Artists and Creative Firms

We will open new doors for local artists, cultural workers, and small firms to participate in County projects by lowering barriers and creating fair pathways.

- **Deliverables**

- Publish an **Annual Roster of Pre-Qualified Creatives** (100+ by year two).
- Host one **Creative Business Accelerator cohort annually** with 15–20 participants in partnership with the Entrepreneurship Center to create new pathways towards employment.
- Serve as a partner to increase participation of underrepresented individuals and businesses in the arts & creatives in **3-5 County-funded creative contracts annually**.

4. Deliver Data, Research, and Public Insight for Decision-Making

We will collect, analyze, and share data to guide County planning, advocacy, and resource allocation.

- **Deliverables**

- Launch and maintain a **Creative Economy Dashboard**, updated quarterly.
- Publish **Creative Directory 2.0** with 500 creatives and firms by year three.
- Provide **quarterly data briefs** and an **Annual Creative Economy Report**.
- Embed creative sector data in the **Countywide Workforce Study** and long-range planning.

5. Formalize Leadership and Advocacy for the Creative Economy

We will convene and connect leaders across sectors to sustain investment and drive policy innovation.

- **Deliverables**

- Convene a **Creative Economy Roundtable** quarterly with published recommendations.
- Produce one to **two annual policy briefs** on planning, workforce, or economic development.
- Host an **Annual Gwinnett Creative Economy Summit** with 200+ leaders and stakeholders.

Creative Economy Plan Implementation Deliverables & Timeline Summary

Category	Year 1 (2026)	Year 2 (2027)	Year 3 (2028)
Planning & Accountability	• Implementation Work Plan co-developed with funding partners • Quarterly Progress Reports • Annual Evaluation Report	• Implementation Work Plan updated with funding partners • Quarterly Progress Reports • Annual Evaluation Report	• Implementation Work Plan updated with funding partners • Quarterly Progress Reports • Annual Evaluation Report
Partnership 1: Recruit New External Funding	• Secure \$75,000 in new external resources for Gwinnett projects	• Secure \$100,000 in new external resources for Gwinnett projects	• Secure \$150,000+ in new external resources for Gwinnett projects
Partnership 2: Increase Arts Philanthropy	• Establish Gwinnett Creative Capital Fund framework	• Recruit first philanthropic and corporate partners	• Secure \$250,000 in new philanthropic and corporate contributions • Investment Impact Report
Partnership 3: Expand Equitable Access & Economic Opportunity	• Publish first Roster of Pre-Qualified Creatives • Train 12+ creatives in entrepreneurship skills through the Creative Business Accelerator • Assist three County-funded projects (public art, placemaking, or programming) with equitable artist participation	• Expand Creative Roster to 50+ creatives/firms • Train 20+ creatives in entrepreneurship skills through the Creative Business Accelerator • Assist five County-funded projects (public art, placemaking, or programming) with equitable artist participation	• Expand Creative Roster to 100+ creatives/firms • Train 30+ creatives in entrepreneurship skills through the Creative Business Accelerator • Assist at least five County-funded projects (public art, placemaking, or programming) with equitable artist participation
Partnership 4: Deliver Data & Research	• Launch Creative Economy Dashboard baseline • Launch Creative Directory	• Update Creative Economy Dashboard with new research • Expand Creative Directory to 250+ creatives/firms	• Update Creative Economy Dashboard with new research • Expand Creative Directory to 500+ creatives/firms
Partnership 5: Increase Engagement & Leadership	• Recruit & Launch Creative Economy Roundtable. • Host first Gwinnett Creative Economy Summit.	• Creative Economy Roundtable convened quarterly with published recommendations. • Host 2nd Annual Gwinnett Creative Economy Summit. • Produce one policy brief.	• Creative Economy Roundtable convened quarterly with published recommendations. • Host 3rd Annual Gwinnett Creative Economy Summit. • Produce two policy briefs.

Learn more & Get Involved

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