



**Lancaster Chamber**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Lancaster County Launches Strategic Arts Initiative and Countywide Economic & Community Arts Impact Study**

**Lancaster, PA (March 10, 2026)** – The Foundation of the Lancaster Chamber, in partnership with the Ware Center for the Arts, community leaders and arts organizations across the county, has launched the **Lancaster County Strategic Arts Initiative**, a collaborative effort designed to better understand, strengthen, and invest in Lancaster County's vibrant arts and culture sector.

As a first step in the initiative, the Foundation has engaged **Fourth Economy**, a nationally recognized community and economic development consulting firm, to conduct a countywide Economic & Community Impact Study of Lancaster County's arts and culture ecosystem.

The study will provide a comprehensive analysis of the arts sector's economic contributions, community impact, and future opportunities. The findings will help inform the development of a long-term strategic plan for the arts in Lancaster County, led by a community-based task force that will guide the initiative following completion of the study.

The last countywide arts impact study was conducted in 2010. Since that time, Lancaster County's arts ecosystem has grown significantly, with expanded cultural institutions, creative businesses, festivals, educational programs, and individual artists contributing to the region's economic vitality, civic identity, and quality of life.

"Lancaster County has become an extraordinary example of what can happen when a community believes in the power of the arts," said John Gerdy, founder of Music For Everyone and a co-leader of the initiative. "The arts help shape who we are as a

community. They strengthen our economy, enrich our schools, and bring people together in meaningful ways. This initiative gives us an opportunity to better understand that impact and to work collectively to ensure the arts continue to thrive across Lancaster County.”

Fourth Economy will conduct extensive community engagement throughout the study, including stakeholder interviews, surveys, and focus groups with artists, arts organizations, educators, businesses, and community leaders. The final report will analyze the sector’s economic and community impact while outlining strategic opportunities that can guide future investment and coordination.

Following completion of the study, a community-based Task Force will work together to review the findings and develop a long-term strategic plan for the arts in Lancaster County. Building on the study’s data and recommendations, the group will help identify priorities, strategies, and opportunities to strengthen the county’s creative ecosystem. The initiative will also support the formation of a **Lancaster County Arts Alliance**, a collaborative network designed to increase communication and partnership among artists, arts organizations, and community stakeholders. In addition, leaders will explore the development of an entity dedicated to advocating for the arts and coordinating efforts to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of Lancaster County’s creative sector.

“This initiative is about ensuring that Lancaster County continues to be a place where the creative arts industry can thrive,” said Justin Johnson, Director of Communications at the Lancaster Chamber. “By gathering new data, listening to the voices of artists and organizations, and working collaboratively as a community, we can better understand the role the arts play in our economy and identify the strategies needed to support the sector for the future.”

To launch the initiative and begin the community conversation, organizers will host a public event on **Wednesday, March 25**, bringing together artists, cultural organizations, civic leaders, and community members interested in the future of the arts in Lancaster County.

## Event Details

**State of the Arts:** *A Community Conversation on the Future of the Creative Arts in Lancaster County*

**Date:** March 25, 2026

**Location:** The Ware Center for the Arts, 42 N. Prince Street, Lancaster, PA 17603

**Time:** 5:30-8:00 PM (Doors Open: 5:30 PM, Networking 5:30-6:30 PM, Program 6:30-8:00 PM)

The evening will include an introduction to the Strategic Arts Initiative, a presentation from Fourth Economy on the upcoming study process, and opportunities for attendees to share their perspectives and feedback.

Community participation will play a critical role in shaping the study and the strategic recommendations that follow. Organizers encourage artists, arts supporters, business leaders, educators, and residents to attend and help contribute to the conversation.

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The Lancaster County Strategic Arts Initiative is being organized through The Foundation of the Lancaster Chamber, in partnership with The Ware Center for the Arts and in collaboration with regional arts organizations, cultural institutions, and community partners. The initiative aims to strengthen collaboration across the arts community, shift the public narrative around the impact of the arts, and position the creative sector as a key driver of Lancaster County's economic and community future.

To learn more go to [www.lancasterchamber.com/strategicartsinitiative](http://www.lancasterchamber.com/strategicartsinitiative)

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*At the Lancaster Chamber, our mission is to create the environment, facilitate partnerships, and lead on issues that elevate business success. Established in 1872, the Chamber celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, commemorating 150 years of impact, support, engagement, and leadership for the Lancaster County business community. The Chamber continues to leverage the collective strength of the business community. By advancing a pro-business agenda, supporting community-focused initiatives, including Workforce, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and being committed to providing resources for all business professionals – the Chamber strives to build Lancaster into a thriving community for all.*