

How Investment in the Arts and Culture Magnifies Milwaukee's ARPA Priority Areas

The City of Milwaukee is beginning to consider how the nearly \$400 million of American Rescue Plan Act funds will be distributed. As a result of their first round of meetings to solicit feedback from the community, the city is looking to prioritize funding in the following areas: housing access and eviction prevention, early childhood education, economic and workforce development, infrastructure and transportation, public health, public safety, and climate change and environment.

Imagine MKE believes that at least 2% of these funds should be invested in Milwaukee's artists, creatives, and arts and culture community to recover from the pandemic and be leveraged as partner to help advance the City's priority areas toward creating a more equitable, vibrant, and thriving Milwaukee.

Directions: [Click here to take the Survey.](#)

- *Check the policy or issue that you feel most strongly about in the City's plans for the ARPA funds. Depending on the box you check, it might reveal a second selection for you to dive more deeply into the specific policy/issue area. Check the box that aligns with your view or opinion.*
- *The next question will be: "What else would help the city of Milwaukee be the best it can be? (optional)"*
 - *Please utilize the message points below that speak to the ways arts and culture can be critical to the City's priority areas to craft a response to this question.*
 - *It is important to personalize your response to focus in on the one or two areas that are of strongest interest to you, the policy/issue areas you chose, or your work.*
 - *Start with one of the "General Message points" and then add a point or two from the associated policy issue area.*
 - *Please do not copy and paste. The City will regard copy and paste responses as SPAM.*

If you are interested in learning more about how arts and culture impacts each of the City's priority areas, we have also included links to existing research, practices, and Art Place America's Field Scans.

The deadline for this survey is June 30. Please distribute this toolkit and call to action to your networks. We need as many people as possible delivering the message that artists, creatives, and arts and culture are needed to help Milwaukee recover and restart!

Opening/General Message Points

- Investment in arts, culture, and creativity will help Milwaukee be better as we emerge from COVID-19. A vibrant arts and culture community helps to increase community cohesion, inclusion, and equity.

- As Milwaukee plans its restart and emergence, our region's artists and arts and cultural production must be prioritized as an asset and partner because it can help to magnify and amplify the priority areas that the City is attempting to address with the ARPA Funds.
- Artists and creatives can leverage the arts and cultural production to help the City achieve its goals through community engagement, inspiration, and organizing. By funding these initiatives, the City would also be helping get artists and creatives – some of the most impacted by the pandemic – back to work.
- Non-profit arts and culture and the for-profit creative sector are a key driving force for our region and state's economy. The US Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that arts and cultural production in Wisconsin generated \$10.8 billion – or 3.1% of our state's GDP – and contributed almost 100,000 jobs. As with most sectors of Wisconsin's economy, Milwaukee drives the majority of that impact.

Housing Access and Eviction Prevention

- Through creative placemaking, arts and cultural production have long been strategies to help communities address their affordable housing needs. In Milwaukee, artists and creatives could work in the neighborhoods they live, with neighborhood organizations, to help capture stories from neighbors and residents to help organize their efforts to address housing access and affordability. Some of this work is already happening but it is fragmented and lacks coordination. A unified arts and cultural strategy to address this important issue can help to create scale and impact.
- Art Place America has a clearing house of the ways that integrated arts strategies can impact housing access and eviction prevention (<https://www.artplaceamerica.org/housing>)

Early Childhood Education

- The arts are vital to early childhood development and education. Access to the arts help children develop fine motor skills, accelerate cognitive development, and increase capability for math and language skills. The arts also help young children develop social-emotional learning skills. (<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/arts-in-early-childhood-dec2015-rev.pdf>)
- Investment in our region's artists and arts educators could help to grow partnerships with MPS and other education and youth serving organizations to increase the impact of early childhood development and youth development work.
- Art Place America Youth Development Field Scan: <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/youth-development>

Economic & Workforce Development

- Arts and culture are vital ingredients in economic development. Cultural and arts production have been consistent sources of economic growth, during both good and difficult economic times.
- Arts and culture increase economic development in localities by attracting businesses, creating new jobs, increasing tax revenues, and promoting tourism. Arts and culture also play a key role in urban revitalization and community renewal strategies.
- The City of Milwaukee has recognized this with the ARCH program which provides low-cost loans to artists to revitalize city owned properties as community arts centers.
- The five roles for arts and culture and design in economic development: <https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/five-roles-for-arts-culture-and-design-in-economic-development.pdf>
- Art Place America's Economic Development Field Scan: <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/economic-development>

Infrastructure & Transportation

- The Arts play an important role in infrastructure projects. As part of the New Deal, the WPA funded many public art and infrastructure projects that helped to put artists back to work by doing what they do best – by creating. This funding not only provided a wage to thousands of artists but also inspired many art works, buildings, and designs that live on to this day.
- Similarly, artists and creatives in Milwaukee can be leveraged in a similar way with the ARPA funds to achieve these goals of improving our city's infrastructure and transportation.
- "When Art Worked" Infrastructure and the New Deal: <https://rbtus.com/infrastructure-artwhen-art-worked-the-new-deal-art-and-democracy-by-roger-kennedy/>
- Art Place America Brief on Arts and Transportation: <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/transportation>

Public Health

- The connection between art and health is an important one. Access to art is an emerging social determinant of health as studies have shown that the arts and creative expression help to boost immune systems, reduce stress, elevate mood and lower blood

pressure. Some studies have shown that hospital patients who are exposed to art heal more quickly.

- Artists and creatives are also key messengers to validate public health information. This was exemplified in Milwaukee over the last year when artists and creatives were engaged to help amplify and design public health messages to reach communities that were being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- Arts organizations, individual artists, and health leaders in Milwaukee are beginning to align their work with our city and county's public health goals through Imagine MKE's Arts and Public Health leaders cohort.
- By investing in this work, Milwaukee can be a leader in this emerging area of applied research and practice.
- The Connection Between Art, Healing and Public Health: <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2008.156497>
- The World Health Organization Pilots Large scale study on arts and health: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-determinants/behavioural-and-cultural-insights-for-health/news2/news/2021/04/using-the-arts-to-improve-health-who-pioneers-large-scale,-arts-based-health-interventions>
- Arts Place America's Art and Health Field Scan: <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/health>

Public Safety

- Arts has a key role in increasing public safety. The [City's Office of Violence Prevention's Blueprint for Peace](#) identified the arts and creativity as a factor for community resilience.
- By activating communities through art and creative placemaking, spaces can become more inclusive and welcoming for people from disparate backgrounds to come together and build community.
- By engaging artists and creatives to work with neighborhood organizations, we can begin to re-imagine and build bridges in our communities.
- Urban Institute and Art Place: Examining the Ways Arts and Culture Intersect with Public Safety: <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/79271/2000725-Examining-the-Ways-Arts-and-Culture-Intersect-with-Public-Safety.pdf>
- The Urban Institute's Case Study on the Beerline Trail as public safety and placemaking: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99035/milwaukee_beerline_trail_extension.pdf

- Art Place America Art and Public Safety Field Scan:
<https://www.artplaceamerica.org/public-safety>

Climate Change & Environment

- One of the key challenges in addressing climate change is that it is a tough topic to face, with mind-numbing numbers and a scale that is difficult for people to perceive enough to take action on. The arts play a key storytelling role to cut through the informational challenge inherent in climate change to change the narrative on climate inaction.
- Organizations and artists in Milwaukee are already collaborating on projects like [WaterMarks](#), which uses public art to tell the story of the health of our sewers.
- Milwaukee artists and creatives could be engaged to work with the City and environmental organizations to scale WaterMarks and other projects that help to share the story of our precious environment.
- Art Place Arts and Climate Change Field Scan:
<https://www.artplaceamerica.org/environment-energy>