



Strategic Plan | 2025-2029

Draft 4.0

Leadership | Economic Development | Community

Executive Summary

Noblesville Creates is embarking on a transformative journey to redefine its role in the creative economy, shifting from an artist-focused organization to a citywide leader in economic development, cultural advocacy, and civic collaboration. This strategic plan establishes a bold vision that positions Noblesville Creates as a driving force for creative innovation, shaping policies, partnerships, and community engagement efforts that extend beyond the arts sector.

Vision & Impact

At the heart of this plan is a commitment to leveraging creativity as an economic engine and a tool for community enrichment. Noblesville Creates aims to elevate the creative economy by fostering strategic public-private partnerships, integrating the arts into economic development initiatives, and cultivating an ecosystem where artists, businesses, and civic leaders collaborate to drive regional growth.

The impact of this shift will be profound:

- **Economic Growth:** By positioning Noblesville as a creative hub, the organization will attract investment, talent, and industries that intersect with the arts, technology, and design sectors.
- **Community Development:** Noblesville Creates will foster a culture where artistic expression fuels a sense of belonging and civic pride, strengthening the city's identity as a cultural destination.
- **Public Policy Influence:** Through advocacy and leadership, the organization will champion increased public and private funding for the arts, ensuring that creativity remains central to Noblesville's future.

How this changes Noblesville Creates: A Shift from Artist Support to City-Level Leadership

Previously focused on directly supporting individual artists, Noblesville Creates is now expanding its mission to influence citywide policies, economic strategies, and regional planning. Key elements of this transformation include:

- **Leadership in Economic Development:** Collaborating with municipal governments, businesses, and cultural institutions to integrate creative industries into broader economic initiatives.
- **Advocacy for Arts Funding & Infrastructure:** Leading efforts to increase public and private investment in arts-based economic development.
- **Strategic Community Partnerships:** Expanding collaborations with corporate, civic, and nonprofit sectors to maximize the role of arts in shaping the region's future.



Strategic Planning Journey

Noblesville Creates seeks to deepen its impact in the community as it redefines the role the organization plays in the creative economy. At Bradford Consulting Group we seek to help illuminate the organizational and community opportunities for growth.

This strategic plan is the result of over 45 hours of dedicated work by the staff and board. Its essence is rooted in uplifting the organization's vision by harmonizing it with the insights and aspirations of your constituents, ensuring that it is both responsive and forward-looking.

The spirit of the plan is a testament to the organization's commitment to listening, adapting, and evolving with the needs of the community. As we look toward the horizon, the tasks before us take on a new level of significance. These steps are not just about maintaining your role; they are about accelerating progress for the arts in our state.

The journey ahead is filled with promise and potential. With this plan as the compass, Noblesville Creates is poised to navigate the challenges and seize the opportunities that will enable them to continue to thrive. The forthcoming work is the cornerstone of their path forward, laying the foundation for a jubilant fifteen-year anniversary celebration in 2027 that will honor past achievements and usher in a new era for the creative economy in central Indiana.



Perspective & The Creative Economy

Noblesville Creates is on the verge of state-wide impact and has arrived at the intersection of Hamilton County's burgeoning artistic identity. This organization, serving all of Hamilton County, is the heartbeat of the Noblesville Cultural Arts District. Because of this intersectionality and the county-wide role of the organization, Noblesville Creates is poised to drive the Creative Economy through innovation, perspective and persistence.

The creative economy is best understood as “the people, enterprises, and communities that transform artistic and cultural skills, knowledge, and ideas into economically productive goods, services, and places.” It represents the coming together of creativity, culture, and commerce.

For Indiana—and Noblesville in particular—this definition provides a guiding framework for fostering innovation and growth. Noblesville Creates, through its strategic planning process, has embraced this vision to position itself and the city of Noblesville as a hub where creativity is integrated into economic and community development. This collaborative approach recognizes the regional nuances of the creative economy and seeks to ensure that Noblesville's unique cultural assets, talent, and industries are aligned to maximize opportunities.

The creative economy encompasses a wide spectrum of participants and industries. Traditional creative professions, such as artists, performers, musicians, writers, designers, and architects, are integral to its foundation. Likewise, industries like film production, fine arts schools, and advertising agencies play key roles. Fortunately, Noblesville Creates emphasizes inclusivity in its approach acknowledging the value of diverse contributors—from culinary arts and humanities to graphic design and photography. By treating all creative industries and workers as active contributors, Noblesville is cultivating a vibrant ecosystem where creativity fuels economic vitality and community enrichment.

Through its strategic planning, Noblesville Creates is laying the groundwork for sustainable growth, fostering collaborations between creative professionals, businesses, and civic organizations to transform the Noblesville and the county into a model for how other cities can create a dynamic destination for creativity, culture, and commerce.



Vision & Position

Indiana's Creative Economy: A Call to Action

Indiana boasts a wealth of creative assets, yet its creative economy remains underdeveloped compared to national benchmarks. According to a report prepared by Patterns, CICI & Pathemy Strategies, the arts and cultural industries contributed \$9.3 billion to the state's economy—just 2.0% of Indiana's Gross State Product in 2022. While this figure is significant, it highlights untapped potential in leveraging creativity to drive economic growth.

The 21st century has seen an explosion of new creative industries—such as video games, podcasting, animation, and augmented reality—that blend artistic talent with technological innovation. Emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, promise to create even more opportunities for creative industries in the future. To remain competitive as a county, we must intensify our focus on the creative economy and position ourselves to capitalize on these cutting-edge sectors.

A Path Forward: Noblesville Creates as a Model

As noted by the Brookings Institution, cultivating a thriving creative economy requires collaboration through local public-private partnerships involving municipal governments, arts and cultural organizations, economic development agencies, community groups, philanthropy, and the private sector. Hamilton County is well-positioned to meet this challenge thanks to its strong institutions and history of collaboration.

Noblesville Creates exemplifies this collaborative approach. Its strategic planning process prioritizes leadership, economic development, and community, aiming to transform Noblesville into a model creative hub. By integrating the arts, culture, and emerging technologies into economic and community development, Noblesville Creates highlights how local efforts can drive statewide progress. Their leadership in managing the Arts District designation in Noblesville and their city-wide master arts planning for Noblesville and Westfield are prime examples of leadership capacity.

Strategic Priorities for Indiana's Creative Economy

According to the same 2024 report by Patterns, CICI & Pathemy, to outpace our neighbors and achieve our full potential, Indiana's communities and stakeholders must embrace the following strategies:

- **Elevate Differentiators:** Highlight unique creative assets that set Indiana apart, while identifying and addressing gaps in the ecosystem.
- **Develop Density:** Build clusters of arts and culture assets to enhance their impact and visibility.
- **Nurture Emerging Sub-Sectors:** Invest in promising creative industries, particularly those at the intersection of technology and the arts, such as AI-powered design or interactive media.
- **Forge Connections:** Strengthen ties between artists, creatives, and the civic and corporate sectors to foster collaboration and innovation.



Challenges and Opportunities

Currently, Indiana's creative workforce comprises just 82,813 workers—2.5% of statewide employment—ranking it near the bottom nationally. Public funding for the arts lags other states, contributing to lower average compensation for arts and cultural jobs (\$63,105 compared to \$71,529 for all salaried jobs statewide). These disparities, along with an analysis of affordability in our county, highlight the need for deliberate action to attract and retain creative talent and industries.

However, with its existing cultural institutions, community-driven initiatives like Noblesville Creates, the Cultural Arts District and a growing recognition of the creative economy's potential, Indiana is well-positioned to move wage growth, GSP spending and accessibility for artists to create in the cities they call home, forward. By fostering collaboration, supporting innovation, and investing strategically, Noblesville Creates can help the state transform its creative economy into a cornerstone of economic growth and community enrichment.

Noblesville Creates Mission & Vision



Vision:

In 5 years, Noblesville Creates will be recognized as a world-class arts agency, serving as a vital and valuable asset to the City of Noblesville & Hamilton County.

1.Characterizing “arts agency”

- Change makers
- Representatives
- Community & Artists

2.Describing “serving as”

- Partners
- Strategic Champion (roadblocks)

3.Defining “asset” attributes

- a. Force multiplier
- b. Necessity vs. benefit



Mission:

Our mission is to cultivate arts resources to enrich the lives of everyone who experiences our community.

1.Defining “cultivate”

- Intentionality
- Caring for...
- Inclusive

2.Defining “arts resources”

- Arts Advocacy
- Business of the arts
- Built environment

3.Defining “our community”

- Anyone who is affected by artistic expression
- Centrally located, globally impactful



Strategic Focus Areas

Noblesville Creates strategic plan establishes three priority areas to guide the organization's direction and focus over the next five years:

LEADERSHIP

Cultivate a creative economy through the collaboration of local public-private partnerships, municipal governments, arts and cultural organizations, economic development agencies, community groups, philanthropy, and the private sector

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Deliver data-driven results for the arts that elevates an understanding of how art creates a sense of belonging and can be used as an economic development tool

COMMUNITY

Cultivate a community of artists & supporters, beyond the traditional confines of a studio or gallery, that forge connections between the artist and the civic or corporate community



Strategic Plan Priorities & Top Strategies

Priority One:

Leadership: Cultivate a creative economy through the collaboration of local public-private partnerships, municipal governments, arts and cultural organizations, economic development agencies, community groups, philanthropy, and the private sector

Top Line Strategies:



City-wide master arts planning

Intentional communication on the power of art

Strategic board development

Desired Outcome: The public and private sectors recognize the power of the creative economy and a measurable increase in the creative workforce is realized

Priority Two:

Economic Development: Deliver data-driven results for the arts that elevates an understanding of how art creates a sense of belonging and can be used as an economic development tool

Top Line Strategies:



Arts impact study & symposium on belonging

Intentional arts evaluation beyond programs

Partnerships with economic development teams

Desired Outcome: Public funding for the arts is increased in the cities and towns where Noblesville Creates has established Master Arts Plans, leading to elevated strategies to attract and retain creative talent and industries



Priority Three:

Community: Cultivate a community of artists & supporters beyond the traditional confines of a studio or gallery that forge connections between the artist and the civic or corporate community

Top Line Strategies:



Advocacy for the creative economy

Fundraising and resource development

Community marketing and engagement

By elevating differentiators, Noblesville Creates will highlight unique creative assets that set Indiana apart identifying and addressing gaps in the ecosystem and attracting additional support



Implementation Roadmap

Noblesville Creates will use a progressive approach to implementing its five-year strategic plan, with each year building on the previous with increased results. The first year, 2025 will focus on positioning itself for strategic growth by building brand awareness and operational capacity, while enhancing and expanding internal operating capacity to serve the community. Year 2 & 3 will allow Noblesville Creates to have diversified its resources to execute its strategic goals, including continuing those launched in Year 1. Finally, in Year 4 & 5, Noblesville Creates leadership will grow the impact and deepen its work by streamlining partnerships and developing county-wide strategies.



In this approach, the first year is arguably the most crucial, as it will set the tone for what is to come. As such, Bradford Consulting Group is providing a general overview of the plan's implementation over the full plan period, along with detailed recommendations for how to approach and maximize strategic progress in the first year.



2025: Capacity Building & Brand Development

Priority One: Leadership



City-wide master arts planninga

- Execution of existing partnership agreements (Westfield, Noblesville)
- Defined integration with city planning and economic development teams

Intentional communication on the power of art

- Brand awareness study from consideration to loyalty for Noblesville Creates
- Resource development (earned & owned) for economic impact messaging

Strategic board development

- Needs assessment of board roles for future growth
- Board, committee & staff alignment for strategic plan implementation (staffing structure, revenue, resources)

Priority Two: Economic Development

Arts impact study & symposium on belonging

- Brand activation (owned and earned) to bring awareness to arts economic impacts
- Leadership positioning in city-wide arts planning

Intentional arts evaluation beyond programs

- Partnership alignment with leading arts agencies to determine the potential of arts in county
- Development of impact metrics for storytelling and a redefinition of "success" (GDP, Liveable Wages)

Partnerships with economic development teams

- Quarterly planning meetings with Noblesville and Westfield for artist engagement & recruitment strategies
- Integration of arts leadership in key council meetings and economic development conversations

Priority Three: Community

Advocacy for the creative economy

- Budget alignment for paid media strategy
- Intentional engagement by NC leadership on the opportunity gaps within the arts economy

Fundraising and resource development

- Diversifying case for support to bring alignment of funders interested in economic vitality of community (not just the arts)
- Board committees focused on engagement beyond events
- Needs assessment for store front, programming space and physical footprint

Community marketing and engagement

- Development of brand value proposition for marketing
- Transition from events based marketing to impact based marketing for arts on economy



2026 - 2027: Strategic Implementation



Priority One: Leadership

City-wide master arts planning

- Execution of large-scale arts projects for partner cities
- Development of rural arts plans using community partners

Intentional communication on the power of art

- Appointment to city-wide planning initiatives
- Communication strategies providing evidence on the benefits of artist wage growth and gross state spending increases

Strategic board development

- Partner representation on the board of directors (Elected Officials, Institutions, etc.)
- Annual fundraising parlors on the power of the arts

Priority Two: Economic Development

Arts impact study & symposium on belonging

- Hosted symposium for county leadership on arts gross product and wage opportunity gaps
- Annual report in partnership with arts leaders

Intentional arts evaluation beyond programs

- Pioneering arts evaluation to incorporate economic impact
- Redefining the role of programs that directly align with the economic well-being of the arts in Hamilton County

Partnerships with economic development teams

- Incorporation of the arts into tourism planning
- Further alignment with county chambers on business recruitment and talent retention

Priority Three: Community

Advocacy for the creative economy

- Arts as a resource for partner organizations, led by Noblesville Creates
- Active participation by NC leadership relative to state-wide advocacy efforts around the arts

Fundraising and resource development

- Development of fundraising strategies that secure project funding for cities & towns
- Development of wage strategies for artist retention in county
- Implementation of public/private partnerships based on needs assessment of physical space

Community marketing and engagement

- Asset development for partner cities, focused on how to leverage the arts to foster belonging and create economic vitality
- Rural engagement around the arts for Northern Hamilton County



2028-2029: County-wide Activation

Priority One: Leadership



City-wide master arts planning

- Regional planning led by Noblesville Creates on intentional arts districts
- Coaching from Hamilton County leadership to other counties around the country on arts incorporation

Intentional communication on the power of art

- Regional contracts with midwest cities leveraging Noblesville Creates initiatives
- Ongoing advocacy work at the state house for arts in community

Strategic board development

- Regional representation beyond Hamilton County on Noblesville creates Board of Directors
- Fundors, partners and growth leaders represented on the Noblesville Board of Directors

Priority Two: Economic Development

Arts impact study & symposium on belonging

- Organizational integration with partner organizations for economic development relative to arts impact
- Regional symposium on arts

Intentional arts evaluation beyond programs

- Evaluation tools for partners that generate earned income for organization
- Regional leadership on arts for business leaders

Partnerships with economic development teams

- Business engagement & recruitment to the county influenced by arts opportunities
- Communities sought after for wage growth in artist sector

Priority Three: Community

Advocacy for the creative economy

- Development of lobbying practices or separate organization for arts advocacy at state-level

Fundraising and resource development

- Execution of grant-making strategies for cities and towns
- Deployment of strategies to influence cultural institutions impact on States Gross Product

Community marketing and engagement

- Hamilton County leveraging Noblesville Creates marketing and fundraising strategies for state-wide funding opportunities

