

PIONEER VALLEY CREATIVE ECONOMY NETWORK



TO DO CHECKLIST by Dee Boyle-Clapp, Jeff Bianchine and Diane Pearlman

How to create a Creative Economy Network

While this project could be a bit hard to replicate in our state given that Massachusetts requires permissions to be a member, a similar project in your area/state would open opportunities to expand the vision, survey your own constituents, and create your own key areas of focus. The Network is a group of expanding partners each serving their own constituents as well as agreeing to support the Network.

Gather Partners from across the region.

Who should be involved? Determine what each partner can bring to the table. Creative Economy Leaders, chambers of commerce, nonprofit arts organizations, tourism councils, business improvement and or cultural district leaders, artists, creative business leaders, professional development providers (preferably those devoted to artists).

What are your key goals?

Decide who you will serve. What messages you are trying to convey. What are the activities you will host and promote? For example, we opted NOT to promote individual exhibitions or performances on our joint calendar as there are too many, but chose to promote training and professional development instead.

Determine what support you need financially, logistically, and temporally from partners (will they be allowed to leave work to attend meetings?)

The areas were focus on (Talent, Visibility, Business Development, etc...) were pre-selected at the state level by Creative Industries, yet they may not serve your own audience, and they may need to be expanded over time.



Where?

The Pioneer Valley Creative Economy Network hosts monthly Plug-Ins that rotate to a new city/town each month, providing a chance to welcome new artists and to expand the opportunities for relationship building and expanding one's 'circle.' The host for the event provides food, features a creative business (food/alcohol vendors make great features!), and they work best if there is a theme or guided events that force people to connect with others.

What?

Besides the Plug-Ins, monthly lunchtime planning meetings, and the annual Creative Economy Summit, we work to promote one another's organizational programming and events via social media. In addition, we are a resource to one another and can help connect our own constituents to those who can best serve them.

Nuts and Bolts:

- Decide how to make decisions. Can people vote over the phone, online, can ad hoc groups make decisions on their own?
- Host regular meeting times (Our lunch time meeting is held the 3rd Wednesday of each month.)
- Create timed meeting agendas and stick to them.
- Have a 'check in' at the start of the meetings so all get to learn what is going on across the region.
- Determine if the state Creative Industries criteria is the best fit for your constituents, and adjust as needed.
- Acknowledge that not all partners are equal in terms of budget, dollars and staffing and their ability to contribute, but do make each equal in voice, vote, and sharing information about partner's own programming.
- Tap and share your collective resources. The Arts Extension Service conducted a region-wide survey of artist and creative business needs. Each partner contributed mailing lists and promoted the survey, in exchange, the surveys were given unique urls so each city/town was given their own data.