Our mission is to improve the economy, vitality and quality of life in Eastern Connecticut by supporting the arts, cultural and creative community.

The Cultural Coalition often works behind-the-scenes serving AS THE SPOTLIGHT for the region’s arts and cultural businesses – the individuals, for profit entities, and nonprofit organizations that make-up the creative community, rather than being IN THE SPOTLIGHT ourselves.

During the past two years of the pandemic, we have raised our voice – to municipal leaders, elected officials, funders, government agencies, and more – to ensure that the individuals and entities that participate in arts, culture, history or creative pursuits in eastern Connecticut are represented in economic and community recovery strategies.

The Cultural Coalition has also responded to the changing needs of the arts and cultural sector and our communities, helping in recovery while they work towards the return to full capacity. We are grateful that the creative community continues to be a beacon of resiliency.

We look forward to the opportunities ahead as we support arts and culture recovery and work to strengthen the region’s economic and community health.
HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021, the Cultural Coalition hosted 80+ events, roundtables, and forums that resulted in:

- Steering $1.2+ million of municipal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support local recovery through a 1% for arts & culture advocacy campaign.

- Supporting the formation of a New London Cultural District, the second in Connecticut and first in eastern CT.

- Identifying and addressing vital needs of the sector due to the pandemic.

- Ensuring arts and culture are represented and included in economic and community recovery efforts and plans, local and statewide.

- Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism through our “Undoing Systemic Racism” workshop and one-on-one advising to nonprofits.

- Providing technical support with grant applications for Shuttered Venues Operating Grants, CT Humanities Cultural Fund Operating Support Grants, and hosting a federal NEA grants forum.

- Having nearly every grant that our Funding Booster Program had a hand in receive a grant award.

- Hosting Make Music Day Southeastern CT with 75 live, free music performances on June 21.

- Introducing The Resilience Room program to support the health and wellness of the creative sector’s artists and employees.

- Connecting with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) creatives through the Bridge Builder and PULSE program.

- Expanding our programs and services to serve the northeast region and now serving 25% of Connecticut’s municipalities.

REPRESENTING OUR REGION STATEWIDE

Designated Regional Service Organization (DRSO) Services

The Cultural Coalition is one of eight Designated Regional Service Organizations (DRSOs) for the CT Office of the Arts (COA) to support the Department of Economic and Community Development. This statewide network of service providers plays a key role that is mutually beneficial to the state’s citizens and creative economy, the regional arts and cultural infrastructure, and COAs goals, programs and services.

As a COA field office, the Cultural Coalition provides leadership, programs and services within its designated region in partnership with the CT Office of the Arts.

Southeast Towns:

- Bozrah
- Colchester
- East Lyme
- Franklin
- Lisbon
- Lyme
- Montville
- New London
- North Stonington

Northeast Towns:

- Ashford
- Brooklyn
- Canterbury
- Chaplin
- Killingly
- Columbia
- Coventry
- Eastford
- Hampton
- Hampton
- Mansfield
- Plainfield
- Pomfret
- Putnam
- Scotland
- Stafford
- Sterling
- Thompson
- Union
- Willington
- Windham
- Woodstock

In January 2021, the CT Office of the Arts announced the Cultural Coalition would serve as the DRSO for the following towns in Windham and Tolland counties while spearheading a regional arts and cultural assessment process.

The Cultural Coalition represents and advocates for members of the creative community through active participation as a liaison, Board member, strategic partner, committee member, and/or reporting agency with:

- Americans for the Arts
- U.S. Congress, Connecticut delegation and Connecticut General Assembly, including eastern CT delegation
- New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA)
- Connecticut Arts Alliance (CAA)
- Connecticut Humanities
- Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT
- Community Foundation of Eastern CT
- Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (DEMHS) Region 4 Recovery Steering Committee
- Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer)
- Southeastern CT Council of Governments (SECCOG)
- Other Chambers of Commerce including Greater Norwich Area & Greater Mystic
EXPANDING OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Welcoming the Northeast Region’s Creative Community

In early 2021, the Cultural Coalition began outreach and registration of arts & culture contacts in northeastern Connecticut to share CT Office of the Arts, regional, and other opportunities. Registration also helped the Cultural Coalition connect with the artists, arts and cultural businesses, community organizations, municipal leaders and economic development agencies in the northeast region to better advocate for and represent them. By year-end, 72 individuals had registered and joined as free members of the Cultural Coalition.

Monthly online public roundtables (7) were held to meet and hear directly from constituents, provide information, and connect them with resources. Core programs and services were extended to the northeast.

In October, Charlene Haukcom joined the Cultural Coalition as the Northeast Region (NER) Coordinator to serve as liaison, assess the arts & cultural landscape, support Coalition programs and services, and to respond to the region’s unique needs.

Funding Booster Program

To improve the arts and cultural sector’s ability to capitalize on funding opportunities, our Funding Booster Program offered a variety of professional development activities and access to free resources.

Program manager and professional grant writer, Jessica Morozowich, conducted a getting started with grant writing training, and provided one-on-one review and feedback on numerous grant drafts. The team held 10 online monthly grant clinics, including information about upcoming local, regional, state and federal grant opportunitites.

The Cultural Coalition hosted a NEA Grants information session in partnership with the Office of Congressman Joe Courtney. The annual grantees forum in October offered insights into the current funding environment, priorities for funders, and best practices for successful applications. Those new to grants have applied and received first-time awards. Seasoned and experienced grant writers have progressed to the next level of project support. For example, a small arts organization supporting mental health and wellness received their first federal NEA grant, Challenge America, putting the organization on the map and underscoring the important work that they do!

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Series

The Cultural Coalition continued a series of trainings to assist the region in redesigning policies and operations from a diverse, equitable, inclusive and anti-racist lens, with a sold-out (100 attendees), 3 hour online workshop on “Undoing Structural Racism.” The sessions were designed and facilitated by Thought Partner Solutions’ Founder and CEO, Jamal Jimerson. Customized for nonprofit organizations with an existing commitment and governance structure to support this work, the workshop included board members, staff, and DEI committee members from 42 organizations who received practical tips, tools and advice for implementing measurable and sustainable strategies for guiding their organizations.

Municipal Services

The Cultural Coalition’s expanded Municipal Services Program focused on helping municipalities begin to recover from the pandemic by integrating the creative community in economic and community development plans and actions. In addition to the work on Cultural Districts and municipal ARPA funds for arts & culture, the Cultural Coalition advised Mayors and First Selectmen, economic development departments & commissions, planners and project committees regarding updates to Plans of Conservation & Development, obtaining Sustainable CT certification, and other municipal projects.

ARPA Municipal Funds for Arts & Culture

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) delivered $350 billion to state, local, and tribal governments to support their response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency. Connecticut’s lack of county government meant that this funding went to 169 individual cities and towns. The Cultural Coalition took action to support our region’s municipalities and steer $1.2+ million of municipal ARPA funds to local arts & culture recovery.

Cultural Districts

A Cultural District is a specific area of a city or town identified by the municipality that has a number of cultural facilities, activities and/or assets – both for profit and nonprofit. The Cultural Coalition conducted a Cultural District overview presentation for municipalities to outline the process and goals for forming a Cultural District. The Cultural Coalition also assisted with community input sessions in New London and Stonington.

Art At The Airport

The Cultural Coalition and Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) featured local artists in quarterly public art exhibits at the Groton–New London Airport’s main terminal. Groton Public Library offered exhibit-related public programs and online activities.

In 2021, the winter exhibit showcased reproductions of oil paintings and graphic illustrations depicting the mission of the United States Coast Guard International Ice Patrol, which has its Operations Center in New London. In a virtual live event, staff from OPCEN described their work in receiving, processing and distributing iceberg warning reports. Attendees learned that the Coast Guard aircraft that conduct the iceberg reconnaissance work, depart from the Groton-New London Airport.

continued on next page

In 2021, New London established the first Cultural District in eastern CT, the second in Connecticut.
EXPANDING OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Art At The Airport (continued)

The spring and summer exhibit, Take Flight, featured colorful mosaic tiles hand-crafted in clay by Paul and Esther Halifery of Lilywork Artisan Tile in Stonington. Each mosaic depicted a specific moment in aviation history. Next was Peace in Nature, a mixed media gallery exhibit of artwork created by Artreach, Inc.’s program members with master teaching artist Faith Satterfield, who guided the artists in exploring the natural elements, focusing on earth, sky, and water.

Rising Tide Series

The Cultural Coalition’s signature Rising Tide program, roundtable conversations with our partners, continued to be essential for gathering “boots on the ground” information from the arts & culture community about the impact of the pandemic. With the vital issues identified, the Cultural Coalition advocated for and represented the sector in planning the path to recovery. Regular and ad hoc online meetings also assisted the Cultural Coalition in sharing information, fostering collaboration, and providing a space for peer to peer support.

The Resilience Room

The Cultural Coalition launched The Resilience Room program to provide a community of support for the arts and cultural industry in eastern CT, including employers and employees, individual artists, and volunteers. Beginning in March, emotional wellness facilitators hosted 10 guided discussions and provided resources for participants to build their personal emotional resiliency to help deal with current struggles and better handle the stresses of the future.

Bridge Builder Program

From January to June, the CT Office of the Arts’ Bridge Builders Program placed an Arts Community Impact Coordinator with the Cultural Coalition to serve as an engagement lead with a focus on cultural vibrancy and social/artistic justice.

The Arts Community Impact Coordinator worked to identify various affiliation circles and creative networks in the region that were not being served. Three “PULSE” Zoom meetings were held to provide space for innovative thinking creatives in the region to discuss the industry, culture, and provide opportunities for community building.

Roundtables and topics included:

- (6) Pop-up Partner Check-ins – plans for reopening, audience protocols, summer events.
- (11) Exec.Dir./CEO SECT Large Orgs Roundtables – advocacy, legislative issues, relief programs, plans for reopening, major events & galas, runway for recovery.
- (11) Arts in Health Collaborative Meetings – providing arts programs during the pandemic, input on new Resilience Room program, arts approach to health and wellness, including serving the military community.

Artistic Micro-Entrepreneur Program (continued)

Group members with master teaching artist Faith Satterfield, who guided the artists in exploring the natural elements, focusing on earth, sky, and water.

Artist Professional Development

Presented by Mass MoCA and brought to eastern Connecticut in partnership with the CT Office of the Arts, the Assets for Artists program offered 12 free online professional development workshops for artists-entrepreneurs in the state’s rural areas during 2021. Additionally, program participants were offered one-on-one technical assistance and the opportunity to attend additional workshops held for other audiences. Eastern Connecticut creative microenterprises accounted for 30% of the total rural artists served in the state, with many clients participating in multiple offerings.

Make Music Day 2021 in southeastern CT

The Cultural Coalition was pleased to showcase fifty-five different musicians (individuals, duos or groups) on June 21st for our fourth annual event coordinated in the southeast region. With most performances outdoors, live and in-person, following the all-virtual celebration in 2020, thirty locations were able to host free music-making events. Nearly half of the day’s seventy-five performances happened in New London at multiple venues. Old Lyme coordinated a dozen performers along a one-mile route. Events were also held at Norwich Arts Center, East Lyme Community Center, and libraries in Groton and Waterford.

Make Music Southeastern CT is part of Make Music Day, a global music celebration held on the summer solstice each year in more than 1,000 cities in 120 countries, that brings people of all ages and skill levels together to share music in free public performances.

Arts and Culture Awards

The Cultural Coalition honored Chelsea Groton Bank as the 2021 “Outstanding Business Supporter of Arts and Culture” and Florence Griswold Museum as the “Outstanding Arts and Cultural Organization.” The Cultural Coalition presented the annual awards in special collaboration at the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut’s Regional Awards Celebration on July 22. The Cultural Coalition award recipients received engraved original works of art by local artist Jeffry Pan.
CULTURAL COALITION

Our Members

500+ businesses, organizations and individuals who live, work and support the arts, heritage, cultural and creative sector.

The Cultural Coalition is a free membership organization (registered partners/contacts) serving in 42 municipalities in eastern Connecticut.

Members by Municipality

Southeast Region (since 2014)
- Bozrah: 0
- Colchester: 10
- East Lyme: 22
- Franklin: 1
- Griswold: 5
- Groton: 54
- Lebanon: 5
- Ledyard: 12
- Lisbon: 2
- Lyme: 1
- Montville: 5
- New London: 97
- North Stonington: 6
- Norwich: 59
- Old Lyme: 21
- Preston: 8
- Salem: 6
- Sprague: 3
- Stonington: 67
- Voluntown: 1
- Waterford: 15
- New London County: 3
- Outside Southeast CT: 98

TOTAL 501

Northeast Region (since Jan. 2021)
- Ashford: 1
- Brooklyn: 0
- Canterbury: 1
- Chaplin: 1
- Columbia: 0
- Coventry: 7
- Eastford: 0
- Hampton: 0
- Killingly: 3
- Mansfield: 14
- Plainfield: 1
- Pomfret: 5
- Putnam: 6
- Scotland: 0
- Stafford: 1
- Sterling: 1
- Thompson: 3
- Union: 0
- Willington: 2
- Windham (Town of): 3
- City of Willimantic: 12
- Woodstock: 3
- Outside NER & SECT: 8

TOTAL 72

5% Government/ Municipal

53% For Profit/ Individual

42% Nonprofit 501c3 & other

Our region is home to world-class museums, nationally recognized performing & visual arts centers, local, regional and national history & heritage assets, innovative creative businesses, and a bevy of talented musicians, artists, thespians and other members of the creative community.

Our members make up a robust and vibrant creative economy that has a ripple effect on quality of life, tourism, economic development, health & wellness, and community vitality in the region.

Category

- 26% Artists
- 19% Creative Business
- 7% Historic Site/ Heritage Org
- 4% Performing Arts Org
- 3% Museum
- 3% Arts Org /Assoc.
- 2% Creative Org
- 3% Vis. & Perf. Arts Center
- 3% Educational Inst./Instruct
- 4% Econ. Dev Agency/ Chamber
- 3% Social/Human Service Org
- 4% Municipal/Gov
- 3% Community Org/Assoc.
- 1% Other
- 1% Funder
- 1% Cultural Org

Cultural Connections
Find out more about our members in the free online Directory, Cultural Connections.

Our members make up a robust and vibrant creative economy that has a ripple effect on quality of life, tourism, economic development, health & wellness, and community vitality in the region.
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Cultural Coalition is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization. We pursue our mission with financial conservatism and transparency. The Coalition is committed to the highest level of integrity in its administrative, service and outreach activities; and we maintain records accurately and transparently.

FY 2020-2021 INCOME

Our largest grants in 2021 came from the CT Office of the Arts/Department of Economic and Community Development to deliver services as the Designated Regional Service Organization for 42 towns in eastern Connecticut, and from Connecticut Humanities as part of the CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grants. Major grant support also came from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut and the Frank Loomis Palmer Fund.

The Cultural Coalition secured Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds to maintain employment for two full-time staff.

We are grateful to numerous donors, sponsors, and Supporting Cast members for their support and to businesses for their in-kind donations of services.

FY 2020-2021 EXPENSES

Reflecting the Board of Directors’ belief that the Coalition ensures concomitant growth of resources to advance our mission, including personnel, financial resources and facilities, our goal is to financially invest in the future.

SUPPORTING CAST & DONORS

Supporting Cast

Members of the Supporting Cast have made a three-year commitment to help the Cultural Coalition AMPLIFY our voice for the cultural sector, our programs and services, and our impact.

PATRONS

($2,500 - $4,999/year)
Robert G. Youngs
Family Foundation, Inc.

AMBASSADORS

($1,000 - $2,499/year)
Connecticut College
Tom & Marcia Marien
Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center/Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

STEWARDS

($500 - $999/year)
Anonymous
Eugene O’Neill Theater Center
Mystic Seaport Museum

FRIENDS

($300 - $499/year)
Daniel & Kathryn Brandl
Florence Griswold Museum
Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center
Lyman Allyn Art Museum
Morgan & Lisa McGinley
Mystic Knotwork, LLC

2021 Donors

Caleb Bailey & Dr. Sara Baker Bailey
Dara Blackstone
Theresa Broach
Ashby Carlisle
Connecticut Early Music Society
Ralph Crispino, Jr.
Eastern Connecticut Ballet, Inc.
Jerome & Christine Fischer
Carol Androckio Lewitt
Gail and Bruce MacDonald
David Madacsi
Bud McAllister
Patricia McManus, LLC *
Mystic Paper Beasts
Theatre Co.:Dragon’s Egg
Joanne Paradis
Lori Robishaw
Bob & Nita Ross
Nishant Sahoo - Merrill Lynch
Tom & Candy Sanford
Sea Research Foundation, Inc./Mystic Aquarium
Sideways Studio
Town of Groton
Michael & Jennifer Urgo

Thank you also to donors who have supported us online through AmazonSmile Foundation, Facebook Fundraiser/Network for Good, and PayPal Giving Fund programs.
2021 Benefactors, Matching Gifts, Grants & Sponsors

Benefactors

Yale New Haven Health

Chelsea Groton

Matching Gifts
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation

Grants
Chelsea Groton Foundation
Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
Connecticut Humanities
Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
Frank L Palmer FD TR, Bank of America, N.A. Trustee
Make Music Alliance Inc.
Robert G. Youngs Family Foundation, Inc.
State of CT, Office of the Arts/Department of Economic & Community Development
The Bodenwein Public Benevolent Foundation, Bank of America, N.A. Trustee

Sponsors
Charter Oak Federal Credit Union
Conway, Londregan, Sheehan & Monaco, P.C.
Cumulus Media
Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
New London Music Festivals
Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer)

Board, Advisory Council & Staff

Board of Directors (Dec. 2021)

Co-Chairs
Nishant Sahoo – Financial Advisor, Devoe/Schrage/Sahoo and Associates
– Merrill Lynch (Stonington)
Chandler Smith – Associate Producer, Eugene O’Neill Theater Center (Waterford)

Vice Chair
Caleb Bailey – Executive Director, Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra
(New London)

Treasurer
Tyler Eames – Market Manager VP, People’s United Bank (Madison)

Secretary
Dan McMahon – Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Goodspeed Musicals (East Haddam)

Carrie Dyer – Chief Executive Officer, Reliance Health, Inc. (Norwich)
Rachael Gaudio – Attorney, Waller, Smith & Palmer, P.C. (New London)
Rachael Gavin – Founder/CEO, PR(SM) Resistance Coalition (New London)
Kolton Harris – Program Associate, Connecticut Office of the Arts (New London)

Advisory Council

Nancy Bulkeley – Senior Community Affairs Representative, Dominion Energy (Waterford)
Eric Garofano – Attorney, Conway, Londregan, Sheehan & Monaco, P.C. (Stonington)
Lisa McGinley – Retired, Deputy Managing Editor, The Day (New London)
Robert Richter – Director of Arts Programming, Connecticut College (New London)

Robert Ross – Executive Director, Connecticut Office of Military Affairs (Hartford/Groton)
Steve Sigel – Executive Director, Garde Arts Center (New London)
Christopher Zendan – (Groton)

Staff
Wendy Bury, Executive Director
Deb Mathiasen, Assistant Director

Please contact us if your name has been inadvertently omitted or misspelled in this report.

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