



Department of Economic and  
Community Development

IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **DEPT. OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ARTS INITIATIVE AWARDED \$500,000**

*CreateHereNow Receives Second Largest Grant from ArtPlace America*

(HARTFORD, CT) - Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Commissioner Catherine Smith today announced that Connecticut's CreateHereNow pilot program has attracted \$500,000 in new arts funding from ArtPlace America, a national arts advocacy group.

CreateHereNow, administered by DECD's Office of the Arts, will help 20 participating cities and towns repurpose vacant spaces for artists and market these creative enterprises and the artists that conceive of them. The program fosters cooperative partnerships among municipalities, artists, entrepreneurs, and property owners.

"Our effort to bring arts directly into communities is important economically — not only does it revitalize communities, but it creates jobs and raises the visibility of the artists and their work," said Commissioner Smith. "More and more, states are realizing what an economic force the arts industry is and they are incorporating the arts in their overall economic development strategies. The fact that our program was recognized and was a winner in a highly competitive process confirms that our strategy is on the right course and is paying dividends."

Awardees were chosen based on their potential to transform communities through art and culture. DECD's Office of the Arts, the only state government agency to receive funding, is one of 54 organizations that will share \$15.2 million in creative placemaking grants awarded by ArtPlace America, a collaboration of 13 leading national and regional foundations, and six of the nation's largest banks. There were more than 1,200 applicants from 50 states and the District of Columbia—DECD received the second largest award.

"Creative placemaking is central to all our planning, and CreateHereNow is just the latest example. This alliance provides a learning network among those communities, creates a larger market for the local artists, and it creates a state resource to identify and develop the right local leadership to engage, ignite, and mentor local creative resources," said Deputy Commissioner Kip Bergstrom, DECD. "We're now starting to align our historic preservation grant making with our arts grants in support of

placemaking. I don't know of any other state that's doing that. It just shows that Connecticut is Still Revolutionary."

ArtPlace America is committed to accelerating creative placemaking, a concept that uses art as an integral component in community revitalization strategies, ultimately making cities and towns destinations and places where people want to live, work and visit. Over three rounds, ArtPlace America has awarded \$42.1 million to 134 grants to 124 organizations —and DECD — in 79 communities.

"ArtPlace America recognizes the central role arts and cultural activities can have in the revitalization of American cities," said Rip Rapson, chairman of ArtPlace America's President's Council. "With this grant award ArtPlace America is directing individual project support to scores of creative, high-impact projects throughout the country."

Last July, DECD incorporated an arts-based placemaking strategy within all of the state's existing arts programs to bolster the impact of arts organizations and to focus on strategies that create jobs and revitalize communities.

The complete list of 2013/2014 ArtPlace America awards can be found at [www.artplaceamerica.org](http://www.artplaceamerica.org).

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