Asheville-Buncombe Arts Recovery **Framework**

Strengthening the systems that support arts, culture, and creative industries in Asheville and Buncombe County

Prepared for the Economy Recovery Board | July 2026

Project Background

Why This Work Was Undertaken

- Hurricane Helene exposed vulnerabilities across the arts and cultural sector
- Recovery created an opportunity to examine longer-term needs
- ArtsAVL partnered with Lord Cultural Resources to facilitate the process
- Supported by Buncombe County, City of Asheville, Explore Asheville, and Asheville Area Chamber

Engagement Included

- Arts Coalition Steering Committee
- Stakeholder interviews
- Focus groups
- Research and peer review
- Community Survey

City Participation

City Departments and Staff Participated Throughout the Process

- Community and Economic Development
- Community & Regional Entertainment Facilities
- Asheville Parks & Recreation
- Planning and Urban Design

City Contributions

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Steering discussions
- Review of draft recommendations

Framework Overview

Three Strategic Approaches

Strengthen
Existing systems and assets

Expand
Capacity, access, and opportunities

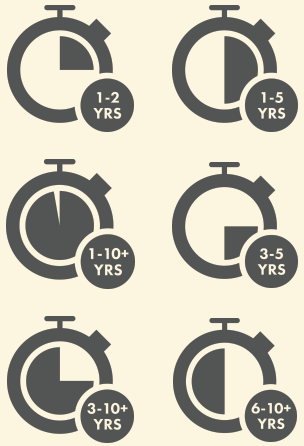
Integrate
Arts into broader community systems

Seven Focus Areas

- Arts Districts
- Public Art
- Arts in Parks, Libraries & Community Centers
- Public Arts & Entertainment Facilities
- Creative Economies
- Live & Work Space for Creatives
- Support for Arts Businesses

26 Recommendations

Short-, mid-, and long-term actions.



Community Feedback

Across All Seven Focus Areas We Heard:

- Systems remain fragmented and difficult to navigate.
- Stronger coordination and alignment are needed across organizations and sectors.
- Arts and culture should be integrated into broader community, economic, and recovery planning.
- Existing assets, programs, and investments should be strengthened rather than duplicated.
- Recovery presents an opportunity to build a more connected, resilient, and equitable creative ecosystem.
- Long-term success will require sustained collaboration, investment, and shared leadership.



Initiatives Already Underway

- Western North Carolina Creative Economy Survey (NC Departments of Commerce & Natural and Cultural Resources)– deadline Aug 31 | surveymonkey.com/r/W8B6LG7
- City and County continue planning for parks and Hurricane Helene-damaged commercial districts
- The City continues stakeholder engagement and feasibility assessments for a potential new Arts & Entertainment Facility
- ArtsAVL will conclude an arts district pilot initiative
- Working with partners to assess and improve public art
- Craft Your Commerce at Mountain BizWorks is purchasing and leasing guidance for creatives
- Studio/workspace initiatives are underways (i.e. Creative Campus)
- Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center redevelopment

