

# *Vermont Council on Culture and Innovation*

*...Advancing Vermont's Creative Economy*

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## **Charge**

This is the original Charge document, agreed upon July 31, 2003

Throughout the history of the State of Vermont, arts and cultural activities have been key strengths of our communities. They nurture innovation, provide educational activities, and celebrate values, character, and tradition. Today, these activities are an engine supporting sustainable economic development in every community of the state. From town libraries and local historical societies to performance halls and galleries; from web developers and graphic designers to artisans and performing and fine artists, this industry cluster represents an unheralded sector of Vermont's economy.

Vermont's heritage, arts, and culture are cornerstones of the state economy in their own right; they also serve as foundations for the "Vermont Brand" so essential to the success of the state's tourism, manufacturing, forest product and agricultural economies. This "Creative Economy" is critical to the future competitiveness of Vermont. It is an integral, but hidden strength of the state that deserves understanding, recognition and investment.

The Creative Economy is comprised of creative individuals (artists, musicians, designers, and others), not-for-profit arts, humanities, and cultural heritage organizations, and private sector businesses whose products and services are dependent on people motivated by an environment that fosters innovative thinking.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) establishes the charge of the Vermont Council on Culture and Innovation (VCCI) to analyze the role of and challenges to the Creative Economy in the State of Vermont and build a practical and strategic plan for its advancement. VCCI will evaluate the needs of Vermont communities and the current organization of this economic sector and build a comprehensive set of policy recommendations to deliver to the Governor, Vermont's Legislature and Congressional delegation, businesses and organizations within the sector, and interested parties statewide. VCCI will have a one-year life.

## **VCCI Goals**

- Evaluate the role of the Creative Economy in community, economic and cultural development in the State of Vermont.
- Consider long-term Vermont goals for the Creative Economy.

- Identify strategic state policies that would promote jobs and opportunities in this sector.
- Build connections with and make recommendations to collaborating organizations, including Creative Economy sector stakeholders, to complement, coordinate and support both existing and new local, in-state regional, and statewide efforts.
- Document what Vermont communities need from policy and resource perspectives to sustain and enhance the cultural sector, and encourage jobs and opportunities based in the Creative Economy.
- Supply research to state, federal and private investors to assist them in making the best use of resources for the long-term growth and vitality of Vermont's Creative Economy.
- Provide Vermont input in federal legislation as appropriate.

## **VCCI Timeline**

- VCCI Convened **May 2003**
- VCCI will hold a series of focus forums to solicit input from interested parties in communities throughout the state. **June to October**
- VCCI will gather and consolidate quantitative and qualitative data on the role of the creative economy in Vermont. **July to October**
- VCCI will evaluate existing studies of the value and impact of the creative economy, and extend them by case studies and community models from within Vermont. **July to October**
- VCCI will commission and oversee an evaluation of the existing organizational structure of the arts and culture sector in Vermont. **Completed by March 2004**
- VCCI will take testimony from community leaders, Creative Economy entrepreneurs and organizations, and Vermont policy makers. **Ongoing to May 2004**
- VCCI will review successful models of innovative programs that have increased public and private investment in the arts and culture sector. **Completed by May 2004**

- Based on the picture of the current state of the creative economy, the council will evaluate current and future needs and strategic solutions to these needs. VCCI will then produce a consolidated set of practical, workable, policy recommendations in a Final Report to the VCRD, the Governor, VT State Legislature, VT's Congressional delegation, concerned agencies, private sector businesses, corporations and foundations. **June 2004**
- With VCRD, VCCI Members will work to engage Vermonters towards implementation of the blueprint or plan of action contained in the VCCI Final Report. **June 2004 Ongoing**

## **VCCI Membership**

VCCI will act as a public/private partnership including representatives from state, business, local organizations, statewide non-profits, policy leaders, and producers and consumers from the creative economy. VCRD will invite individuals to serve on the VCCI to capture leading ideas, rather than seek representatives from specific organizations or businesses. In their discussions, VCCI members will be asked to consider the interests of the sector as a whole.

## **The Role of the Vermont Council on Rural Development**

VCRD will develop the collaborative framework for the VCCI, invite participants, build the charge to the group, and establish a reporting sequence to the Governor's Office, other concerned state agencies, VT's Congressional delegation, the Vermont State Legislature, and statewide arts and cultural organizations. VCRD will establish a chair for this effort, provide expert facilitation, produce and distribute reports, and carry the recommendations of the committee to state and federal policy-makers and legislators.

VCRD is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping Vermonters and Vermont communities develop their capacity to create a prosperous and sustainable future through coordination, collaboration, and the effective use of public and private resources. A dynamic partnership of federal, state, local, non-profit and private partners, VCRD is actively non-partisan. Its neutrality, along with its established reputation for community-based facilitation, put it in a unique position to sponsor, moderate, and coordinate committees concerned with policy questions of statewide importance.