



RI CFA Gubernatorial Policy Initiatives and Action Priorities for 2010

As a candidate for Governor of Rhode Island, RI CFA urges you to adopt a Creative Sector plank within your campaign platform for the 2010 election. The Creative Sector plank may include a pledge to do the following if elected:

- 1. Create a position within state government to champion business and economic development in the for-profit Creative Sector.** Since 2007, the creative sector continues to be a strong and steady growth engine for our state. As of January 2010, Rhode Island was home to 2,434 creative businesses (both for-profit and non-profit) registered with Dun & Bradstreet that employ 13,168 people, showing an increase in jobs in this sector once again. Couple this with thought leaders across the globe rushing to embrace creative thinking and innovation; we have the seeds waiting to be sown that would position our state as a leader in one of the nation's strongest growth areas. In fact, IBM's 2010 CEO Survey of 1,500 corporate and public sector leaders across 60 nations and 33 industries revealed that – more than rigor, management discipline, integrity or even vision – to successfully navigate an increasingly complex world will require *creativity*. We already have the assets, yet the for-profit small creative business industry lacks proper high level coordination, resources and support. Without clearly identified leadership at the top of state government, our booming sector may suffer from a failure to thrive.

Placing a strategic focus to nurture the economic development of this growing industry sector would prove steady and consistent economic return for the State. It further capitalizes on efforts to retain our graduating students; strengthens our recognition nationwide as a place to find creative individuals for work and play; and continues to nurture the development of creative products and innovative R&D for other industry sectors. A position dedicated to the Creative Sector will send a compelling message to employers and job-seekers far beyond the reach of our state's borders.

- 2. Appoint a Creative Sector Council to oversee legislative initiatives to make state government friendly to the Creative Sector.** Like all sectors, the creative sector will grow with improved business-friendly policies at the state level. Potential areas of action or improvement include: targeted tax incentives, streamlined permitting processes and support and enforcement favorable legislative initiatives.
- 3. Introduce an increase to RI Council on the Arts' discretionary grant funds, from \$700,000 to \$1.5 million by 2014.** As indicated in the economic impact data cited above, the non-profit arts organizations and individual artists are key partners in the creative sector. The RI State Council on the Arts is the state's main support mechanism for artists and arts organizations, and is one of the more efficient agencies within state government. Current grants made by RISCA generate \$22 in additional economic impact for every \$1 the state invests. This significant return on this investment shows more clearly in the audience expenditures and that ripple effect: over one half billion dollars to the RI economy each year. This figure continues to grow annually, despite challenges facing the non-profit arts organizations attracting these audiences. The potential is great: with \$5.1 million requested in grant applications in FY10, more investment can be made.
- 4. Introduce a funding mechanism dedicated for arts education during the school day, to protect against loss of access for children due to cuts from general education costs.** Despite Rhode Island's progressive stand on arts education – that every child will show proficiency in the arts upon high school graduation – there continue to be a whittling away of teaching positions and arts programs each year. The state must hold communities accountable and build the resources required for communities to meet their mandated expectations. This past legislative season, Rhode Island made two remarkable steps towards a comprehensive education for all children in Rhode Island: the school board adopted the arts as a core curriculum in the K-12 GSEs and the state passed a school funding formula. Now is the time to continue on this momentum and address the issue of arts education inside the school day.