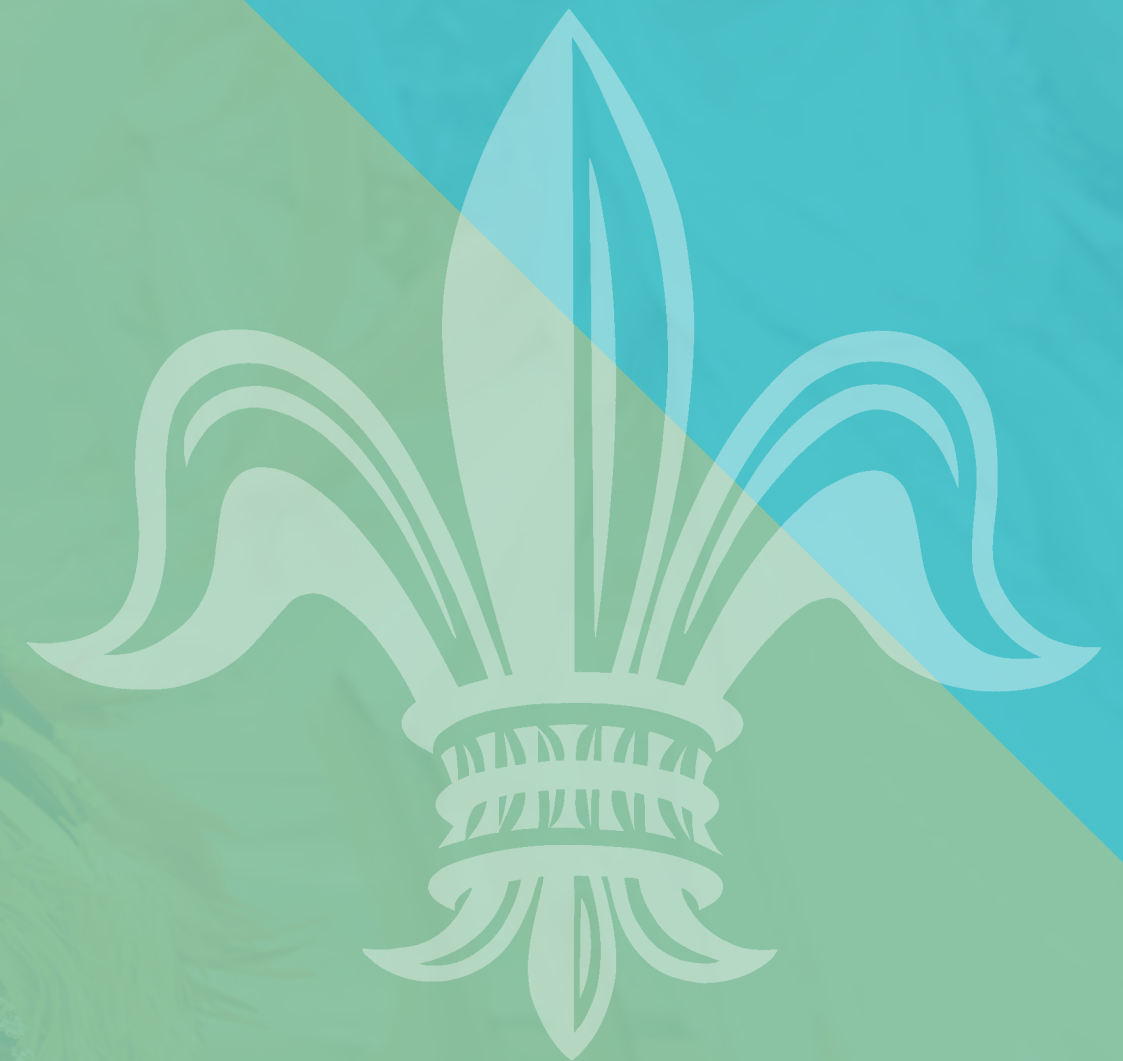


**City of New Orleans**

**Mayor LaToya Cantrell**



*Economic  
& Development  
Plan*

**For the New Orleans  
Tourism and Cultural Fund**





# Economic & Development Plan

July 29, 2020

I am proud to present the  
**Economic Development Plan,**

which will guide the activities of the newly formed New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund. In 2019, I worked with the State to allocate more tax dollars derived from tourism for the benefit of the City. The creation of this Fund as an economic development corporation focused on the cultural economy, culture bearers, and hospitality workers, which represents my administration's investment in recognizing the centrality of culture to our way of life. Culture is central not only to who we are as a city, but is what animates our civic life, gives our lives vibrancy, and drives the tourism industry as visitors are attracted to the cultural activities, products, and legacies that make New Orleans the one of a kind city we are.

This plan will serve as the foundation for the programming of the Fund's resources in the coming years. It is not meant to be a limiting document, but a starting point for what the Fund can do to support our cultural community. My administration created this plan by examining the current state of culture bearers, hospitality workers, and the cultural economy through research, forming focus groups of artists, cultural organizations, stakeholders, and businesses; and basing the Plan's broad goals from these sources. We believe that a plan that is data-driven and based on the needs of the community is most effective.

Our ultimate goal is to realize a more supported, diversified, and resilient cultural economy that serves the culture bearers and hospitality workers that make it work. As we all grapple with ongoing impacts in these challenging times and its economic impacts, I believe the creation of the New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund is more important than ever. Thank you to all who contributed to this plan and to all the culture bearers who are the heart and soul of our city.

Sincerely,



LaToya Cantrell, Mayor





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# Introduction

The New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund is an economic development corporation that will support sustainable and equitable tourism and support culture bearers and the cultural economy. The Fund will achieve this through programming, grants, and partnerships in the following areas: Economic Opportunities, Workforce Development, Affordable Housing, Healthcare, and Digital Cultural Infrastructure. The Fund will be overseen by a board and administered by the City of New Orleans.

In 2019, the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation (NOTMC), which marketing the city to leisure tourists, was absorbed into New Orleans & Co., which marketed to and managed conventions. New Orleans & Co. now covers both convention and leisure tourism marketing. The New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund is created with a portion of NOTMC's original funding that is not being transferred to New Orleans & Co.

In May 2020, City Council passed Ordinances 32,923, 32,924, and 32,925, that established the New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund as an economic development corporation and directed the development of an Economic Development Plan in accordance with state law. This plan will serve as the framework for the Fund's programming, collaboration, and grant program. The Plan assesses the state of culture bearers and the cultural economy in each issue area and offers tools to address economic, health and housing matters to benefit hospitality workers, culture bearers, and the cultural economy.

To ensure equitable funding and support of cultural industries and culture bearers, within four (4) months of the plan's adoption the President of the New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund, in consultation with the NOTCF Board and cultural stakeholders shall establish a Cultural Working Group. The working group shall establish a minimum of two annual meetings and include representatives from the cultural constituency, (Culinary Arts, Design, Entertainment, Literary Arts and Humanities, Preservation, and Visual Arts and Crafts) and other community stakeholders and relevant agencies as needed.

The Cultural Working Group shall:

- Be led by an NOTCF Board Member
- Recommend projects with specific performance metrics to gauge short-term and long-term outcomes
- Develop recommendations for project implementation
- Recommend budgets for proposed projects
- Engage the larger community to inform these recommendations, leveraging the expertise of local organizations and convening New Orleans cultural communities to provide input

All Cultural Working Group recommendations shall be brought before the NOTCF Board for review and approval.

We define the cultural economy as the people, enterprises, and communities that transform cultural skills, knowledge and ideas into economically productive goods, services and places. There are six key segments:

**CULINARY ARTS:** Food-related cultural products including food processing, specialty food products and locally owned, full-service restaurants (does not include franchise/non-local chain restaurants);

**DESIGN:** Individual designers and firms involved in the communication arts such as graphic design, printing, and advertising;

**ENTERTAINMENT:** The performing arts (music, theater, and dance), individual performers, and the film industries;

**LITERARY ARTS AND HUMANITIES:** Individual writers/editors, books, periodicals, and newspaper publishing;

**PRESERVATION:** Economic activities focused on the restoration and redevelopment of the built environment including architecture, landscape architecture, and a percentage of construction activity focused on preservation and renovation; and

**VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS:** Individual artists and craftspeople as well as the galleries and museums that present cultural products.

The New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund also seeks to enhance the Tourism sector by strengthening the cultural economy, which attracts tourists to the city, supporting events and festivals, creating digital cultural infrastructure that is available to tourists and encourages sustainable and equitable tourism, and supporting hospitality workers.

The Cultural Economic Development Plan addresses the following guiding objectives:

**ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:** business training, expanding commercial opportunities, monetization of cultural work, help for first-time entrepreneurs, and support of events and festivals;

**DIGITAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE:** Digital Cultural Infrastructure: creation of online directories and platforms for culture bearers, shared digital information on the cultural economy for gathering data and assessing gaps to formulate policy, partnership to complete an artist census, and marketing of these online platforms to visitors;

**HEALTHCARE:** explore ways to increase access of cultural artists and hospitality workers to healthcare

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** Trainings to increase local workforce and diversity, facilitate training in cultural arts such as music and art, initiatives to increase gig pay for musicians and other gig workers, and

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Engage with organizations to share financial education such as opening a bank account and building credit for culture bearers and hospitality workers to enhance their ability to have housing security or qualify for homeownership.



# Culture Bearer Definition

The New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund seeks to develop and sustain both the tourism and cultural industries. In the context of the Fund and its founding ordinance, which requires this plan to define “culture-bearers” as those served by the Fund, it is important to balance the traditional meaning of the term with a definition that also opens up the benefits of the fund to a wider constituency of cultural practitioners.

Since the origins of the city, culture bearers from Black-led, root cultural forms have built the foundations of our world-renowned and unique culture of New Orleans. As their practices continued to evolve and send ripples throughout the cultural landscape, their contributions were often co-opted and overlooked by those with greater social capital and those who dominated the prevailing cultural narrative. But without these traditional Black culture bearers, New Orleans would not be New Orleans—and we must continue to honor and support their influence and art today, because it is the well-spring of creativity.

The Fund serves these traditional culture bearers, and it must also serve the wider creative community that contributes to the cultural economy that defines the city today. In this context, culture bearers include those traditional culture bearers who form the foundation of the cultural economy and whose practices undergird so many other forms of expression, as well as those other creatives who also create and support the vibrant identity of New Orleans for their own expression, as a part of their civic, spiritual, and indigenous traditions and/or commercial use. The art, products, and practices of both traditional culture bearers and other creatives also fuel tourism by creating the experiences that make New Orleans a vibrant city with deep cultural roots and meaning.





# Digital Cultural Infrastructure

Until the recent past, most emphasis has been on physical cultural infrastructure, the people, places, organizations, and activities that exist in a defined space. New Orleans has a rich cultural infrastructure that includes thousands of culture bearers, over a hundred cultural nonprofits, Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, New Orleans Mardi Gras Indians, Carnival krewes, musicians, artists, craftspeople, film workers, and over 2,700 cultural businesses. Cultural infrastructure also includes our festival spaces, second line routes, art markets, and other activities that don't always exist permanently in space and time.

COVID-19 has made digital connection more important than ever. With businesses, venues, museums, and gatherings off-limits, the creation of online spaces for cultural activity is what may very well keep many cultural businesses and culture bearers reaching global audiences.

## Why Digital Cultural Infrastructure?

Collecting and integrating cultural information digitally increases access

Allows connections between cultural assets and programs to be made through mapping tools and databases

Encourages equity by giving equal space to a wider variety of culture bearers, organizations, and activities

Enhances tourism by increasing exposure of cultural activities to a wider audience and bringing culture bearers economic benefits

Encourages partnerships between cultural institutions and government, schools, and other actors that can enhance cultural activity because they can more easily discover one another

Allows planners to integrate culture into planning

Allows entrepreneurs and culture bearers to strategically do business and create partnerships

Allows the City and other actors to identify places and people that are not currently being served by cultural infrastructure

## What is Sustainable Tourism?

Continuing growth in tourism can have negative impacts on the environment of tourism destinations and their residents. As an example, we see this in New Orleans in the rise of short-term rentals in neighborhoods that attract tourism, but then push out local residents.

Sustainable tourism seeks to mitigate negative impacts of mass tourism through informing tourists how they can better protect the city and by nourishing the tourism industry.

Informing visitors of the culture, politics and economy of the destination

Respecting local cultures

Patronizing businesses that support the local culture and culture bearers

Supporting small businesses

Sustainable tourism also addresses equity. It focuses on respect for residents and their culture and lifestyle, as well as ensuring that the benefits of the tourism economy are felt evenly by those who produce it, particularly culture bearers.

Digital Infrastructure greatly contributes to these ideals by highlighting heretofore unknown cultural assets and culture bearers, allowing them to benefit from the industry. It allows tourists to easily access the culture and understand it. Finally, provides an equal platform for all.

# Economic Development Plan

For the New Orleans  
Tourism and Cultural Fund



## Neighborhood Navigators

Through a partnership, with the Mayor's Neighborhood Engagement Office, a new program has been created to assist with the development of safety precautionary measures in response to COVID-19.

The primary function of Neighborhood Navigators will be to guide residents through the process of applying for benefits through the CARES Act, as well as state and local resources. In addition, Neighborhood Navigators will also provide residents with important and timely information as it relates to the pandemic and the needs of their communities.

## Economic Development Plan

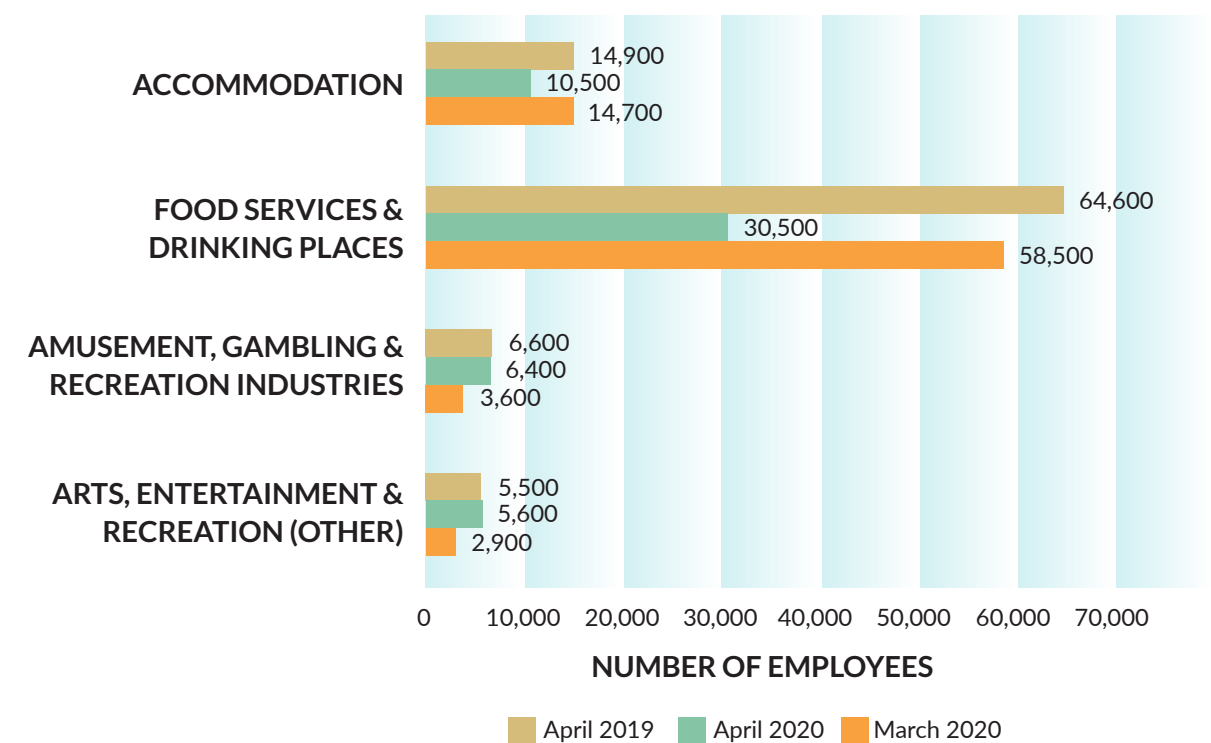




# Economic Opportunities

All culture bearers and hospitality workers, especially due to the intense impacts of COVID-19 on their various sources of incomes, cultural or otherwise, are in need of new economic opportunities for their crafts and for their crucial “day jobs” that often provide benefits and other stability to their economic life. The state tracks employment in Accommodation; Food Services & Drinking Places; Amusement, Gambling & Recreation; and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. These cover jobs in hotels, restaurants, bars, casinos, live entertainment venues, museums, and other recreational venues. As of March 2020, there were 79,700 employees in these jobs.

## RAW EMPLOYMENT DATA FOR LEISURE & HOSPITALITY JOBS IN NEW ORLEANS MSA



COVID-19 has been particularly hard on hospitality workers who have filed the highest number of unemployment claims both statewide and in the city. What these numbers do not capture is the effect of COVID-19 on culture bearers who work in the gig economy such as musicians and artists. Grant programs have been implemented for this population. While we do not have all the data from all programs, so far 1,850 gig employees have applied for assistance, primarily musicians, artists, and tour guides.

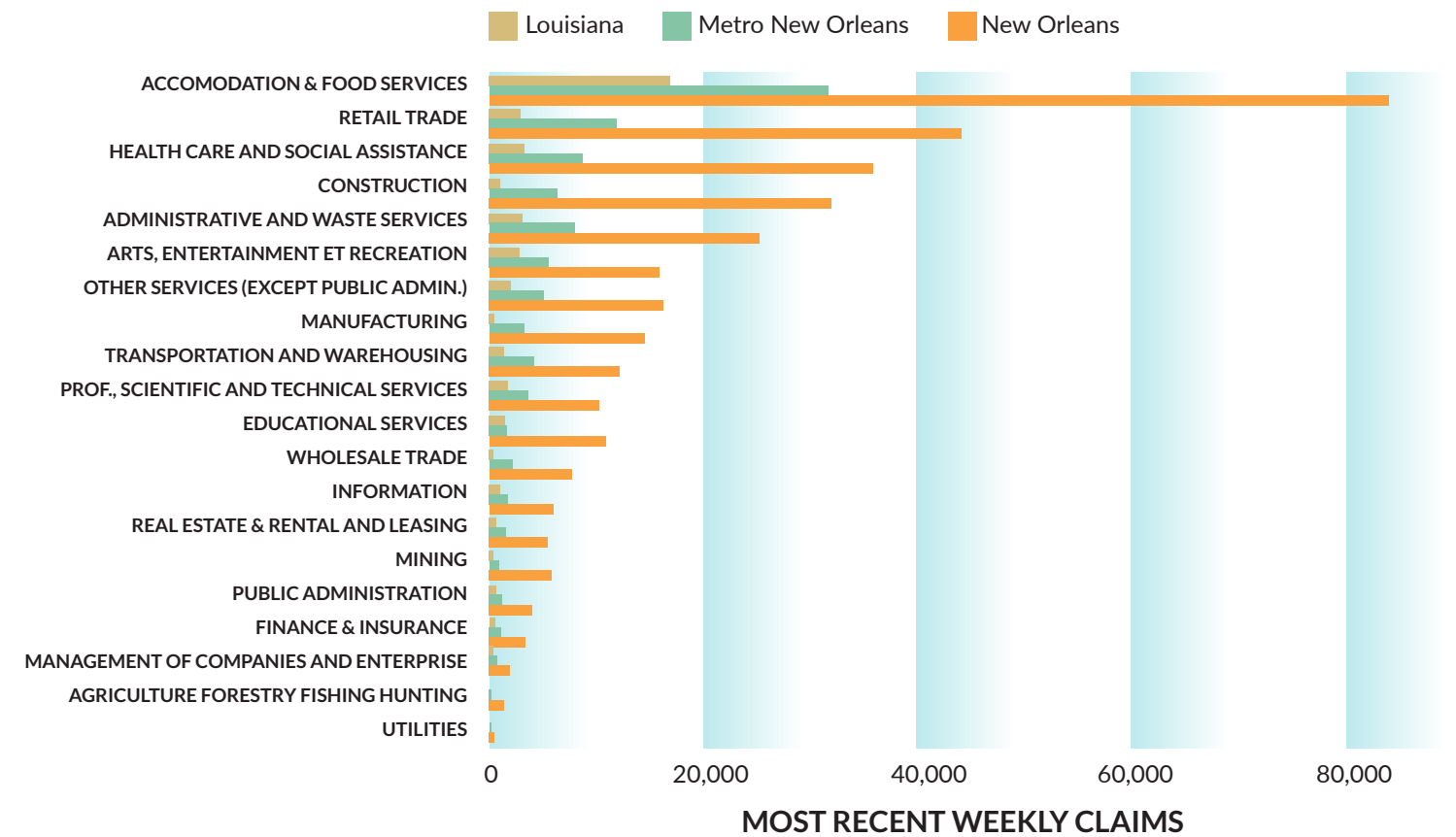
New Orleans is also home to over 2,700 small cultural businesses, including restaurants, galleries, art collectives, music venues, bookstores, film studios, production offices, transportation and catering companies, talent agencies, postproduction companies, design firms, and more. These businesses can be the product of entrepreneurial culture bearers or long-standing businesses that have passed down through generations. This does not include many culture bearers who have started their own micro-businesses or may have businesses that have no permanent location but instead work festivals and events. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has also had an impact on businesses, particularly restaurants, bars, and live entertainment venues. While we still don't know the full extent of that impact, many of these types of businesses have tried to sustain themselves through take-out, curbside service, or online sales. However, many businesses don't have the capacity for these options, or the nature of the business does not lend itself to them.





## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMS BY INDUSTRY

Local numbers are estimated based on state-wide claims by industry







Our economy is also greatly supported by our cultural events and festivals. Not only do festivals draw tourists, but they have an impact on our local economy through employment, taxes, and increased exposure and opportunities for culture bearers as shown in the figure below. However, with the suspension of gatherings due to COVID-19, this sector of the economy is no longer providing these benefits. When events eventually return, The New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund will provide a grant program to support events and festivals.



**PRODUCTION TEAM**

- Employment
- Wages
- Networking
- Experience
- Gigs

**MUSICIANS**

- Exposure
- Gigs
- Recording Sales
- Free Media Advertising

**VISUAL ARTS**

- Exposure
- Access to thousands of attendees
- Sales and Networking
- Sales Tax

**RESTAURANTS, FOOD TRUCKS, & CATERERS**

- Exposure
- Access to thousands of attendees
- Build local customer base
- Free media advertising
- Sales Tax

**VISITORS**

- Hotels
- Restaurants
- Clubs & Live Entertainment
- Repeat Travelers
- Sales & Hotel Taxes



A background image of a New Orleans street scene, likely the French Quarter, featuring historic buildings, flags, and people. A large, light-colored fleur-de-lis is overlaid on the right side of the image. The text 'Workforce & Development' is written in a white, cursive script at the bottom left.

# Workforce & Development

Many segments in the cultural sector benefit from a trained and educated workforce. Unlike some more traditional industries, many cultural industries have very specialized training programs and/or apprenticeships. We see this in Film, Preservation, Traditional Culture, Visual Art, and Music. Unfortunately, traditional workforce training programs do not provide access to these rarified forms of training as federal funding often requires that training lead to an official certification. Additionally, our schools have slashed funding for cultural education again and again. Many culture bearers also have non-cultural jobs to supplement their cultural work and provide security and benefits that their cultural work may not provide. It is important to support the ability of culture bearers to continue in non-cultural work as well.

Wages are an issue across the city in a variety of industries. New Orleans has lower income on average than the rest of the nation. Cultural sectors also tend to have lower annual wages than the median household income of \$39,500. A large segment of the cultural economy in New Orleans is the Culinary sector, while other sectors also suffer from a lack of a living wage, particularly at the lower levels of the professions, Culinary stands out as a low wage sector, often significantly below minimum wage and tip dependent. Musicians who earn their money primarily by gigs also experience below minimum wages as they may only be paid through tips, a share of the bar tab, or other means that don't necessarily guarantee a standard rate of pay. Many cultural jobs are freelance, or contract based, such as graphic design, visual art, and preservation restoration work. Compensation can vary widely by project, and although contract workers eventually became eligible for unemployment during COVID-19, the benefits are less than those for traditional employment.

## Income

In 2016, incomes in the City of New Orleans were 33% lower than the national average

Half of the City's households earn less than \$38,600

Black households earn 54% less than white households, compared to a 39% difference nationally

Black households have a median income of \$25,300, compared to \$35,600 for Hispanics and \$67,800 for white households

New Orleans has severe income inequality, with almost 33% of white households earning over \$114,000, while only 6% of Black households earning at that level

47% of Black households earn less than \$23,200, while only 14% of white households do





# Economic + Development Plan

For the New Orleans  
Tourism and Cultural Fund



## Film Insight

Customized trainings for jobs in the film industry and direct employment by participants on film and television series filming in the city provide opportunities for our film workers to obtain membership in industry unions which ensure high wages and consistent employment.

Film productions, television series, documentaries and commercials spent \$782M prior to COVID-19 in 2019 in New Orleans. These expenditures directly benefited the local economy including wages for local film workers, film studio management and staff, grip and electric companies, post production, rental of public and private properties, wages for local talent, rental of camera equipment and transportation trucks and permitting revenue for the city.

A diversity of infrastructure and businesses to support the film industry and a well-trained experienced workforce increases economic benefits to the local economy by attracting a consistent level of productions from major studios such as Netflix, Disney, CBS, Fox, Amazon, Sony, media and marketing companies and independent projects.

Training programs will continue to prioritize opportunities for people of color and women as they are underrepresented in our local film workforce which is consistent with the national film workforce.

## Wages

The hospitality and tourism workforce are 60% Black and pays a relatively low average wage of \$34,200

Performing Arts also has a 54% Black workforce, but even lower wages of \$29,900

Video Production and Distribution employs 2,000 workers, 71% of whom are white, with an average wage of \$47,100

Hospitality establishments (including restaurants) pay \$22,000, and their workforce is 51% white and 38% Black

Community organizations, which can include cultural organizations, have an average pay of \$32,400 and employ a workforce that is 47% white and 46% black



# Affordable Housing

Housing is a city-wide crisis for everyone, not just culture bearers. Loss of employment with COVID-19 will only exacerbate the problem. Rents have skyrocketed since Katrina, and many households spend more than one third of their monthly income on housing. Some more than fifty percent. Lower-paid culture bearers are especially susceptible to paying far more than they can afford for housing. They are also the first to get pushed out of gentrifying neighborhoods as short-term rentals and tourism take over a neighborhood after the cultural activity there makes it desirable. With 53.6% of homes occupied by renters, this is a major issue that needs to be addressed.

The pattern has been seen in many cities. Neighborhoods occupied by artists, musicians, and craftspeople become centers of cultural activity and vibrancy. As wealthier residents and tourists are attracted to these areas, they purchase property for vacation homes, to develop into higher end apartments, or more recently, to convert into whole home short term rentals marketed to tourists. The original residents are literally displaced or slowly priced out of the rental market.

Within the last five years, 54% of whites owned a home versus 41% of Black New Orleanians. Owning a home in New Orleans is also difficult for many culture bearers as well. Many don't have the necessary credit or experience with financial institutions to obtain a mortgage, and culture bearers of color face discrimination in real estate and banking. In addition, Katrina displaced many culture bearers who lived in family homes that were destroyed. Homeowners are also not immune to spending more of their income on housing costs than they can afford.

Many culture bearers work on a gig basis, may not have a bank account, and may not have built up credit, making homebuying a daunting prospect. Sharing of information from the Office of Affordable Housing and Community Development and its partners to address housing security will offer:

Culture bearers and hospitality workers with financial education training on topics such as opening a bank account, building credit, managing savings, and other skills that will enhance their ability to have housing security or qualify for homeownership

Increase access of culture bearers and hospitality workers to knowledge of homeownership readiness through the Direct Homebuyer Assistance Program. The program provides subsidies for down payments and closing costs, and includes a required Homeownership Training

Connect culture bearers and hospitality workers, particularly those who experience housing insecurity, illegal evictions and other housing issues with Southeast Louisiana Legal Services and other advocacy resources that provide free legal aid

Although the number of homeless culture bearers and hospitality workers is not known, many homeless are living in shelters and are fully employed but having trouble securing housing. The City will connect homeless culture bearers with Unity of Greater New Orleans, which can help get them into transitional housing.

## The Affordability Crisis

In 2016, 51% of renters were paying 35% or more of their pre-tax income on housing

25% of homeowners paid 35% or more in housing costs as well

The annual household income needed to afford to rent in the city is \$38,000, but over 70% of workers earn an average of \$35,000

12% of full-time workers earn less than \$17,500 annually making market-rate housing unattainable





# Economic & Development Plan

## Short Term Rentals and Housing

As of July 2019, Short Term Rentals (STRs) made up 3.5% of occupied housing in New Orleans, a high rate for similarly sized cities. In the Marigny, Bywater, and Tremé 16% of units are STRs. 82% of STRs are for whole homes and off the market to residents.

Many STRs are concentrated in areas near the French Quarter and other destinations that locals rely on for work. Finally, STRs increase rents. In the 7th Ward, rents have increased 30% for a two bedroom; in Mid-City, two bedrooms have increased by 28%; and the Bywater has seen a staggering 72% increase in rent for three bedrooms. These increases adversely affect families.





# Healthcare

The nature of cultural work is often gig-based or freelance, including artists, musicians, designers, writers, film workers, photographers and many others. Other culture bearers work one or more “day jobs” for steady income or benefits that their cultural practice does not provide. Many simply do not have access to healthcare. Hospitality workers, which includes cultural workers such as restaurant employees, also often don’t have healthcare insurance.

Behavioral health is crucial to overall health and quality of life. According to University Health Center New Orleans (UHCNO), those with behavioral health issues such as mental illness or substance abuse face higher rates of various health issues such as cardiovascular problems, diabetes, obesity, infectious disease and more. There is a lack of connectivity between behavioral health services and primary health services resulting in discontinuity of care, and particularly a lack of access to preventative care, which the Musicians’ Clinic of New Orleans has identified as a major issue for culture bearers.

From 2016 to 2018 in Louisiana, adults receiving behavioral health care skyrocketed from 15,600 to 57,000. UHCNO reports that many more did not access behavioral health care because they could not afford it (43%) or did not know where to access it (27%).



## 504HealthNet Community Health Centers Demographics

- 71% racial or ethnic minorities
- 51% on Medicaid or CHIP
- 23% are uninsured
- 9% on Medicare
- 97% at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level

## Current Status of Hospitality and Culture Bearers

- Hospitality workers in 2019 made \$22,000 annually including tips but Medicare cuts off individuals at an income of \$16,764
- Only 30% of restaurants provide healthcare nationwide
- Musicians, Mardi Gras Indians, Social Aid & Pleasure Club members, dancers, performers, artists, and culture workers share a tendency towards premature death from preventable causes particularly members of the Black community
- The Data Center notes that in 2015, Black New Orleanians were 56% more likely to die of cancer and heart disease than whites and 49% more likely to die of stroke
- The life expectancy for Black males in New Orleans is 68, compared to 78.2 for males nationwide





### Behavioral Health in Louisiana

Despite the Medicaid expansion in 2016, Louisiana residents are still struggling to access mental health care. Many providers do not accept Medicaid patients due to low reimbursement rates and wait times for appointments can be months

Louisiana ranked 45th in access to mental health care out of all 50 states in 2018

Nearly 1 in every 5 adults in Louisiana has a mental illness

### Neighborhoods with High Barriers to Healthcare

According to University Health Center New Orleans, the following areas face the highest difficulties in accessing healthcare. This is determined by assessing the populace's issues with:

- Income
  - Culture
  - Education
  - Insurance
  - Housing
- Neighborhoods:
- Iberville
  - Tremé
  - Central City
  - New Orleans East
  - Lower Ninth Ward
  - Holy Cross
  - Bywater
  - St. Claude

According to the New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, only 10-20% of health outcomes are determined by healthcare. Social determinants:

- Economic Stability
- Neighborhood and Physical Environment
- Education
- Food
- Community and Social Context
- Healthcare System

These determinants are driven by equity, and ensuring equity improves health outcomes.

### Mental Health First Aid

MHFA is a national program from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is a training program that is based on peer-reviewed research. Trainees learn:

- The signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses
- To identify professional and self-help resources
- Increase their ability to help distressed individuals
- Increase their own mental wellness

### Partners

- 504HealthNet
- The Office of Cultural Economy
- New Orleans Musicians' Assistance Foundation
- City of New Orleans Health Department
- New Orleans & Co
- Hospitality and Cultural Industries



# The Economic Benefits of Effective, Accessible Healthcare

Better healthcare for hospitality and culture bearers is a necessity no matter what and the primary benefit is to their health. But a healthier cultural community provides economic benefits as well.

- Better employee attendance
- Better productivity
- Improved financial security through accessing affordable health resources and insurance
- Lowered health costs through more preventative care and less emergency services use for routine healthcare
- Greater equity between hospitality and culture bearers and other industries in healthcare access



## Conclusion

The New Orleans Tourism and Cultural Fund has been created as an economic development corporation that will hopefully enhance cultural, creative, and hospitality industries, stakeholders, organizations, and culture bearers for many years. This Plan is not limited to the immediate future but meant to encompass many years’ worth of initiatives. We will not be able to achieve these goals without the support and partnership of our community, many of whom have been engaging in this work for years. We look forward to working with the vibrant cultural community of New Orleans and bring their goals and visions to life, together.



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Credits

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RESEARCH & DRAFTING

Alison Gavrell

EDITING

Lisa D. Alexis

DESIGN, LAYOUT AND ART DIRECTION

Scott Ott Creative Inc.