

MICHIGAN FILM & DIGITAL MEDIA OFFICE

FY2016 STRATEGIC PLAN ACHIEVEMENTS IN REVIEW

In May 2015, the Michigan Film & Digital Media Office (MFDMO) released a strategic plan. The plan included short- and long-term goals and recommendations to help bridge gaps among the creative industries, promote Pure Michigan, improve transparency and communication to legislative partners and, ultimately, ensure that taxpayer dollars are being used wisely. While the landscape of the MFDMO has changed drastically since the release of this plan with the end of the film incentive program, the MFDMO has been working diligently to implement as many recommendations as possible in FY 2016. The MFDMO is pleased to report that over 68 percent (26 of 38) of the recommendations have been completed and many will have continued implementation marks in the months and years to come. Please find a listing of the completed recommendations below.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT



Each project that is produced in Michigan provides the opportunity for the Michigan-based creative class to further develop their abilities. Promoting, strengthening and increasing local film and creative talent encourages this workforce to stay in Michigan, continue contributing to the local economy by developing their own content while attracting contractual work from out-of-state production and digital projects.

Recommendation: *Partner with film and creative industry members to conduct workshops in various regions of the state to provide training, connect talent with employment opportunities and increase awareness of the film and creative industry's breadth and depth in the state.*

Action: This recommendation has been accomplished through a variety of opportunities including sponsorship of talent training workshops across the state, engaging in the Digital Summit Detroit, co-hosting a Pure Michigan Business Connect (PMBC) for Creatives and solidifying film projects in Michigan, despite the lack of incentives. Below are some highlights:

- Sponsorship and participation in the Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts (UICA) first-ever VISITING FILM ARTIST SERIES in Grand Rapids. This two-day program brought cinema masters and local filmmakers and film aficionados together for a weekend of film-focused education and entertainment.
- Sponsorship and participation in the first-ever *Digital Summit - Detroit* held in Detroit. This two-day regional digital marketing conference provided leading-edge digital media and marketing seminars and top-flight networking with internet executives, online marketers, entrepreneurs and digital strategists. The MFDMO leveraged sponsorship to provide access to this professional development opportunity through a contest to college students. Students from the following colleges attended the two-day summit to engage with some of the

most prominent digital leaders in the state and across the nation: Eastern Michigan, University of Michigan, Mott Community College, Lansing Community College, Northwestern Michigan College, and Alma College.

- Partnered with Pure Michigan Business Connect, *Crain's Detroit Business*, and The Detroit Creative Corridor for the 2015 Creative Connect pitch event. Various companies/individuals were invited to pitch to an audience of agency executives and chief marketing officers in an effort to connect creative vendors with opportunities.
- Co-hosted *Creative Many* Michigan House at ArtPrize, a space in downtown Grand Rapids expertly curated with a collection of Michigan-made furniture, art and design. This host-site served as a physical and digital hub for attendees to ArtPrize, Waterfront Film Festival and Michigan Film Office Advisory Council meeting to experience Michigan-centric programming, dialogue, networking and entertainment.
- Elevated Michigan's exposure on the national and international levels with attendance to SXSW (South by Southwest) in Austin, Texas and Sundance Film Festival in Utah. During both events, the MFDMO was able to participate on panels and talent engaging opportunities to discuss life beyond incentives and how states can continue to attract projects despite not having state dollars to leverage (i.e. incentives).
- Developed a public/private partnership with the City of Detroit to continue to attract film productions to the region. Private partners that were willing to offset their costs for a film production were brought to the table and, in partnership with the MFDMO and City of Detroit, were able to solidify Comedy Central's first TV series season of *Detroiters* that began production in the Summer of 2016. This will yield a significant private investment impact for the City of Detroit and will also engage youth in hands-on learning experiences of working on a film production.
- At the Traverse City Film Festival (TCFF) on July 27, 2016, the MFDMO presented "*Create Your Film in Michigan*," a 90-minute interactive panel discussion featuring six creative industry members from around the state (producers, filmmakers, directors) as part of the TCFF's Film School presentations. The audience included aspiring filmmakers, students and other film aficionados attending the film festival. Topics covered included scripts, hiring crew, finance, legal considerations, logistical planning, sets, lighting, sound, cameras, rehearsal, recording, editing, effects, final cut, and distribution. The MFDMO developed a pocket card to illustrate the step-by-step process of making a film, provided printed biographies on all the presenters and offered the audience the opportunity to connect and network with the presenters after the panel discussion.

Recommendation: *Maintain efficient and accurate production, crew and locations directories that pair local talent with available production positions. Enhance the growth of these directories through promotional efforts by the office, industry partners, regional film offices, and MFDMO advisory council members.*

Action: This recommendation has been accomplished through the continual promotion of the MFDMO's online production directory. The maintenance of the production, crew and locations directories remains an ongoing process within the MFDMO. At present, there are 2,295 crew members and 1,642 support service listings as part of the production directory. Similarly, new submissions are routinely made to the locations directory. Presently, there are 5,977 locations listed.

Recommendation: *Encourage production companies to participate in film crew advancement efforts that focus on and include on-the-job training and mentorships to increase the skills and talents of those involved with the overall production.*

Action: Partnered with Mayor Duggan's office to develop the first-ever film internship program within the City's Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT) program. Grow Detroit's GDYT program is a 10 week summer youth employment program that combines work readiness training with on-the-job experience designed to prepare young Detroiters, ages 21 to 24, for Detroit's workforce. Comedy Central's comedy TV series, *Detroiters*, is the first film industry employer partner to participate by employing approximately 20 youth during the shooting of season 1 from June – August 2016.

Recommendation: *Explore opportunities for above-the-line and below-the line talent to participate in Michigan-based community service programs and organizations.*

Action: This recommendation has been added to each and every pre-production meeting conducted with a production company encouraging them to participate in a community service organization of their choosing to further give back to the region.

DIGITAL MEDIA



Most individuals utilize a phone, computer or other electronic device throughout the day. It continues to become part of a lifestyle and Michigan is home to some of the most talented individuals in this area. Strengthening the support of this industry and developing partnership with the private sector can help Michigan become the Midwest hub for digital media.

Recommendation: *Create public-private partnerships with those interested in growing the digital media sector in the state and help foster the economic growth of this industry. This yields the opportunity to declare Michigan as the Midwest digital media hub of the country.*

Action: The MFDMO has experienced many wonderful opportunities and an engaging private sector that is also focused on elevating the digital media and tech industries. Below are some of the highlights:

- Partnered with *Google* to advance their [CS First](#) Program in Michigan schools. This is an online program available to all schools in the state at **no cost** to them, nor any cost for Michigan taxpayers. The program is designed for 4th-8th graders. As of the end of FY 2016 there have been over 6,900 overall student interactions (including new and returning student visits since fall 2015) with the program as a result of MFDMO's partnership with Google. Due to its success, Google is leveraging the MFDMO's partnership to be a model for other states around the country to mirror and has created a [Michigan specific landing page](#) where the total impact can be further measured and promoted to encourage more schools and organizations to participate in this unique curriculum. Additionally, Google also has created a national Partners page which highlights Michigan's success story. Google stopped providing headphones to participating CS First schools in late 2015, so the MFDMO started providing basic headphones, by request, to schools in September 2016. By the end of the fourth quarter 2016, the MFDMO had distributed nearly 400 individual headphones to partner schools. Finally, in consultation with the Michigan Department of Education, the MFDMO implemented *Credly, Inc.*'s badge-based micro-credentialing service for CS First students; a *digital credit badge* documents and includes evidence and criteria about the CS First module the student has studied and earned. Both the headphones and the CS First digital badging are only available to schools who sign up for the CS First program through the MFDMO portal.
- Co-hosted *The Woz* along with faculty and students from Michigan State University which, for the second year, has introduced a digital media component into the Traverse City Film Festival. This event engaged students with festival-goers, continued to bridge the gap between film and technology, and showcased storytelling in a whole new medium.
- Honored by *Corp! Magazine* as the 2016 DiSciTech Winner. This award is given in recognition to those that have led the way in digital, science and technology,

making Michigan a better place to live and work. Specifically, the MFDMO was acknowledged for the expansion of the office name to include “digital media” and for partnering with *Google* to advance computer science education through the CS First program.

Recommendation: *Digitize locations that have been featured in film production on a mobile application that can be used for tourism purposes.*

Action: In agreement with Warner Bros. Pictures, Cruel & Unusual Films and Atlas Entertainment, the MFDMO commissioned *Mutually Human*, a software development firm based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to create a mobile application that highlights filming locations from the feature [Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice](#). A first-of-its-kind, domestic mobile application, the ***Batman v Superman Tour*** takes users on an up-close-and-personal tour of 12 filming locations in the City of Detroit. While unique content unlocked in the mobile app provides fans with a more intimate look into the filmmaking process, a community layer shows users local points of interest, such as places to dine, shop, accommodations and culturally enriching experiences. Additionally, one of the locations highlighted is the Ransom Gillis House in Brush Park, which is seen in its blighted state in the film. The installation on the app displays the before/blight photo of the house and allows the user to swipe to the after/restored photo. The MFDMO offered space on the Ransom Gillis mobile app page to the City of Detroit (Mayor’s Office) and *Quicken Loans* to tell the local story of how civic and corporate leadership by these entities is revitalizing neighborhoods in Detroit. This feel-good story will resonate with and inspire users to imagine Detroit as a place where they, too, can “live, work and play.” The MFDMO plans to expand the scope of this mobile app in the coming months with a phase II launch that will expand the number of locations to areas such as Pontiac, Lake Orion and East Lansing among others.

To view a promotional trailer the MFDMO developed for the mobile app, click play on the image below:



Recommendation: *Research the potential of hosting a digital media summit in Michigan to highlight what the state has to offer to the digital media industry on national and international levels.*

Action: Co-hosted *Digital Summit – Detroit*, an event that brought together some of Michigan’s most talented innovators. Launching its pilot conference for Detroit in 2015 and continued in 2016, *Digital Summit – Detroit* not only enjoyed near-capacity attendance, but also bolstered Michigan’s standing as the Midwest digital media hub.



EDUCATION

With several high schools, colleges, and universities across Michigan providing film and creative industry programs, there is an opportunity for the MFDMO to strengthen relationships with these institutions, utilize the skills and talent of the state's youth and apply employment matchmaking and place making techniques to encourage their decision to stay in Michigan and continue investing in its economy.

Recommendation: *Maintain an updated listing of high schools, colleges and universities with creative programs in the state and help connect students with industry related professional for hands-on educational opportunities, including skilled trades and digital media.*

Action: Coordinated the Digital Media and Film section of Career Expo at East Detroit High School by recruiting professionals from educational institution Specs Howard, mobile app development company *PIXO Group* and local IATSE.

For the second consecutive year, the MFDMO sponsored [Digital Summit Detroit](#), the premiere conference for digital branding strategies. Once again, the office offered a contest in which college students who submitted information about their college program, general interests in digital/new media, and what the MFDMO can do to better support this industry in Michigan received complimentary passes to Digital Summit Detroit. The MFDMO received submissions from students attending Michigan State University, U of M Dearborn, University of Michigan, Adrian College, Wayne State University, Delta College, Motion Picture Institute, Central Michigan University and Olivet College. This event is an important professional development opportunity for these students who can apply emerging trends in digital marketing strategies to their continued education.

The MFDMO offers a list of college and university programs in the fields of film and digital media/computer science on its website. This gives current or prospective students considering a career in the creative industries a resource to learn which programs may be the best fit for them. Going forward, the office hopes to include separate lists for additional college/university creative study programs such as music, fashion and design as well a list of creative arts specific high schools around the State of Michigan.

Recommendation: *Strengthen relationships with high schools, colleges and universities that have a creative program by offering in-class presentations about the creative industry from the state's perspective and by connecting with social media directors to leverage messaging efforts.*

Action: The MFDMO was granted the opportunity to meet with several high schools, colleges and universities over the past several months to promote the film and creative industries and learn more about their specific curriculum initiatives and goals for the

future. Those in-class presentations included University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), Delta College (Bay City), Capital Area Career Tech Center (Mason), McCoy High School (Montrose), Ferris State University (Big Rapids), DeWitt Schools (DeWitt), and Cornerstone University (Grand Rapids).

On May 13, 2016, the MFDMO hosted a booth at Oak Park High School for the Kids First Initiative (KFI) International Career Pathways Expo featuring STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math). KFI is committed to providing all children with the opportunity to experience STEAM Careers despite their socio-economic background. STEAM not only helps to increase student engagement, but also unlocks the creativity and innovation that lies within children.

On August 4, 2016, the MFDMO participated in panel conducted by the University of Michigan Ross School of Business Sanger Leadership Center. The MFDMO engaged over 100 national and international professionals on *“How to Connect Local Design Talent to International Markets.”* This initiative is in service to the ongoing work that leverages the UNESCO *“City of Design Award.”*

Recommendation: *Connect high school, college and university ambassadors for the creative industry with the MFDMO advisory council to solicit their ideas, support their efforts and encourage the growth of youth in the creative industry.*

Action: The Michigan Film Office Advisory Council (MFOAC) is required by statute to meet three times a year. Since the unveiling of the 2015 strategic plan, the MFDMO has made it a priority to engage schools in the regular MFOAC meetings. Over the past year, the MFOAC has heard from Michigan State University, Ferris State University, Capital Area Career Tech Center, and College for Creative Studies.



PROMOTION

Michigan has a comeback story to tell – the economy continues to improve and Detroit is now thriving. One of the best ways to convey this positive message is through the creative industry.

Recommendation: Solicit and feature return-to-Michigan stories in newsletters, legislative reports, social media and on the MFDMO website that highlight individuals, businesses and projects that choose to return to Michigan to pursue their creative goals.

Action: It has become common practice for the MFDMO to feature success stories from the film and creative industry and folded into regular correspondence through newsletters, social media and press releases. It is critical to encourage the promotion of the indigenous industry that continues to grow Michigan’s creative economy.

The MFDMO also partnered with Grammy-award winning singer and songwriter, Michael Bolton to support the premiere of the [Gotta Keep Dreamin](#) documentary that served as the closing night event for Detroit Homecoming, a Crain’s Detroit Business event that brought more than 170 expats to their hometown to recharge, reinvest and rediscover their city. The film explores the roots of his greatest musical influences from *Hitsville USA*, but discovers so much more as it tells the inspirational story of Detroit’s rise, fall and resurgence highlighting heroic commitments and community initiatives.

Recommendation: Partner with the Pure Michigan tourism campaign to allow tourists to identify whether their visit was inspired by a film or creative industry feature.

Action: With the inclusion of the tourism mobile app featuring the locations whereby the *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* film was produced, a survey has been included in the mobile app where users identify their inspiration for their visit to Michigan. Additional film tours are being created and will be folded into future editions of the mobile app to encourage more tourism economic activity inspired by the film and creative industries.

In a slight variation of this recommendation, the MFDMO contracted with *Circle Michigan* in early 2016 to develop ten film tour itineraries that are planned around Michigan-made films. Each tour is posted to the [MFDMO website](#), the [Pure Michigan Travel Road Trips](#) web page and the [Circle Michigan](#) website.

Recommendation: *Provide promotional certificates to locations and communities that have been the sites for a project for both incented and non-incented film productions.*

Action: Recognized places whereby incented productions were filmed at a specific location by providing them a certificate to showcase the unique opportunity to be a part of the film industry. Additional certificates to non-incented projects will be distributed upon request and verification of the filming location.

Recommendation: *Increase Michigan's presence and participation in domestic and international film and creative industry events and trade shows to ensure maximum exposure at efficient costs.*

Action: The MFDMO has many opportunities to elevate the creative industry on national and international stages. The MFDMO has partnered with Michigan's own national and international festivals and events including:

- "ArtPrize OnScreen: Presented by Waterfront Film Festival," the first-ever integration of film into ArtPrize, an internationally renowned art festival in Grand Rapids
- North American International Auto Show, promoting through social media advocacy and MFDMO email distribution list "[Courageous Persuaders](#)" (Students create a 30-second commercial to warn middle school students about the dangers of underage drinking or the dangers of texting while driving) and "[5X5 Pitch Competition](#)" where *Creative Many* Michigan House hosts Michigan's most dynamic companies, organizations, artists, and entrepreneurs who tell their stories under one roof.

The MFDMO also elevated Michigan's exposure on the national and international levels with attendance to SXSW (South by Southwest) in Austin, Texas and Sundance Film Festival in Utah. During both events, the MFDMO was able to participate on panels and talent engaging opportunities to discuss life beyond incentives and how states can continue to attract projects despite not having state dollars to leverage (i.e. incentives).

TRANSPARENCY



Since the inception of the film credit in 2008, to the transition to the film incentive in 2012, the transparency of the program has been enhanced; however, there is always room for additional improvement. As the MFDMO continues to expand its responsibilities into other diverse areas, maintaining transparency will remain a priority.

Recommendation: *Maintain current requirements and further enhance legislative reporting to provide legislators all relevant data and material related to the film and creative industries to ensure they have all information at their disposal as they make legislative decisions.*

Action: In addition to highlighting progress on the strategic plan recommendations, the expanded legislative quarterly reports have included a more thorough dashboard that maintains legislatively required data and provides additional information on each project to ensure transparency of the incentive and disbursement process.

Recommendation: *Provide legislators quarterly progress reports as to the implementation of this strategic plan.*

Action: This recommendation was immediately implemented following the release of the 2015 strategic plan. Each legislatively required quarterly report has since included a summary of the recommendations that were accomplished in the previous quarter. Those quarterly reports can be found on www.michiganfilmoffice.org.

Recommendation: *Encourage film and creative industries to expand their external outreach during a production by connecting with their respective local and legislative leaders to convey the impact and importance of the project happening in their community.*

Action: This recommendation has been added to each and every pre-production meeting conducted with a production company encouraging them to engage their local legislators to visit a film set and get a behind-the-scenes perspective of the film industry.

Recommendation: *Update and modernize the MFDMO website to ensure easy access and navigation of the information.*

Action: The MFDMO launched a [new website](#) that folded the office under the umbrella of its parent organization, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The new site provides a very clean, user-friendly layout, while maintaining essential services from the previous website. New features include a portal for users to access creative industry jobs that are posted through www.mitalent.org and a mechanism that allows the office to capture data on Michigan-made productions and new media projects. The MFDMO

works to continuously improve upon the new website, keep it regularly updated, and share relevant information that impacts the creative industries in Michigan.

Recommendation: *Ensure regular communication with the creative industry by providing consistent, periodic updates that would include information from the MFO, highlights of upcoming projects happening across the state, and return-to-Michigan stories to show the growth of the creative industry in Michigan.*

Action: Ensuring regular communication with creative partners is critical. The MFDMO has been able to accomplish this effort through the growth of an email distribution list and integrating a monthly newsletter to keep the industry informed about current projects and upcoming events. Additionally, the MFDMO strives to meet with industry stakeholders around the state to provide updates on news and initiatives from the office and engage directly with the creative community to gain feedback. Some of these opportunities include, but are not limited to, presentation and meetings with the *Michigan Film & Video Alliance* (Grand Rapids), *Film Fatales* (Detroit), *Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan* (Lansing), *Tech248* (Oakland County), and *Grand Rapids Public Museum* (Grand Rapids).

Recommendation: *Leverage social media and networking efforts by incorporating and featuring more infographics about the creative industry, strengthening the MFO's relationships with schools, colleges and universities, enhancing location scouting opportunities, highlighting Pure Michigan features related to the creative industry and featuring regional film offices and MFO advisory council members.*

Action: Social media drives the creative economy. Through strategic engagement, the MFDMO has surpassed over 10,000 followers on Facebook and engages all social media users through live-tweeting Council meetings, events, partnership efforts and training opportunities.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

The MFDMO continues to learn what is done well, what areas can be improved upon and what can be accomplished to keep Michigan competitive across the country. This includes the need to streamline services, provide timely and accurate responses and leverage film and creative industry partners that are focused on accomplishing the same goal.

Recommendation: Maintain a user-friendly website where individuals interested in the film and creative industry can identify local creative industry partners and organizations and discover opportunities on how to get involved.

Action: The MFDMO considers this recommendation to be ongoing and consistently strives to provide this important service. The office monitors the analytical data from its website in order to get a sense about what users are most engaging with on the website; this allows the office to tailor its efforts on updating the website to meet the most essential needs of users. As such, the MFDMO launched a [new website](#) that folded the office under the umbrella of its parent organization, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The new site provides a very clean, user-friendly layout, while maintaining essential services from the previous website. New features include a portal for users to access creative industry jobs that are posted through www.MiTalent.org and a mechanism that allows the office to capture data on Michigan-made productions and new media projects. The MFDMO works continuously to improve the new website, keep it regularly updated, and share relevant information that impacts the creative industries in Michigan.

Recommendation: Evaluate and streamline application and funding disbursement process to maintain efficiency of data being collected and ensure competitiveness in comparison to other states.

Action: Streamlining the application process for the incentive program was accomplished prior to the end of the incentive program by modernizing internal approval processes to make use of digital technology to create efficiencies. The disbursement process was streamlined to ensure efficiency of state government while also maintaining the integrity of the incentive program. The new process reduces the turnaround time in half, going from an average of 180 days to 90 days. The largest incentive to be disbursed (*Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*) was completed in 40 business days.



MEASURES AND METRICS

Capturing and measuring data is an important step in the effort to understand what initiatives are successful and what should be improved to increase the benefits of a program.

Recommendation: *Create a mechanism to capture data on all film projects in Michigan -- incented and non-incented -- to measure the breadth and depth of the film and creative industry and realize its impact.*

Action: The MFDMO created a fillable form specifically for filmmakers to share information about their completed projects in the State of Michigan. This will help the office get a sense of where these projects are occurring in the state, the size of the budgets, and how many workers the projects employed. The information amassed from these projects will help the office advance the creative industries in Michigan.

Recommendation: *Conduct an economic study on the impact of film in the tourism industry and how Michigan compares to other states.*

Action: The MFDMO intended on commissioning an economic impact study; however, through various conversations with the creative industry, the office was made aware that the non-profit, *Creative Many*, was already conducting such a study that would serve the needs and purpose the MFDMO was trying to accomplish. The *Creative Many* report, [Creative State Michigan 2016 Creative Industries Report](#), was released in March 2016 and will serve as a strong resource as the office moves forward in supporting the creative industries.

Recommendation: *Strengthen relationships with all film festivals in the state to garner data related to how many attendees participated in the festival and economic impact of the festivals in the various communities.*

Action: Developed and implemented new application process and forms for festival and event sponsorship requests that evaluate the return for sponsorships investments in terms of how event activities align with and contribute to the MFDMO's overall mission. The process includes the requirement of data regarding economic and community impact data of event in exchange for funding to ensure taxpayer dollars are being spent efficiently.

Recommendation: *Evaluate the foundation of the digital media sector in Michigan and where it compares among other states.*

Action: Engaged the Michigan Economic Development Corporation research team to evaluate the foundation of the digital media sector in Michigan along with the current trends. Leveraging the information also provided by the Talent Investment Agency (TIA),

the “hot jobs” listing that includes digital media, computer science and IT jobs as high-tech, high-wage career industries that are in high-demand in Michigan. The computer science industry alone is growing at a rate of three-and-a-half times the state average.