



## How to Partner with Your Chamber of Commerce Live Discussion

July 22, 2021

Speakers: Jessica Stern & Kelly Johnson

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**Marissa (she/her) @ AFTA:** You might get a little pop up right now asking you to consent to be recorded, so this is being recorded, and that is the new zoom feature. So, it seems like everyone is has joined us in a settled in so hello, and welcome to today's discussion about partnering with your Chamber of Commerce. My name is Marissa Shadburn, I'm the Field Education Coordinator with Americans for the Arts. I use she/her pronouns and today I'm calling from the unceded lands of the Piscataway and Nacotchtank people now known as Washington DC.

Before we get started, I would like to share some reminders about today's session first, as we know all know this webinar is being recorded and the recording will be available in a few business days on our team, where you access today's session. An automated live transcript is available for viewing to turn it on or off press the CC or closed captions button at the bottom of your screen and then select hot show or hide subtitle you can also click and drag the little box around the screen if you'd prefer to have your live transcript appear in a different portion of your screen.

And if you have any questions technical or otherwise, Please submit them through the chat located at the bottom of your screen, you can also send me a direct message through the chat searcher scroll for Marissa @ AFTA In the to field. And with that I'm pleased to pass things off to Jessica Stern, Senior Manager of Local Arts and Business Partnerships.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Thanks Marissa. Hi everyone, as Marissa mentioned I'm Jessica Stern, here, with Americans for the Arts. My pronouns are she/her and I'm calling in from the lands of the Jicarilla Apache, Pueblos, and Ute, also known as Taos New Mexico. For a visual description, I am a white woman with chin length blonde hair that's pulled back in a ponytail and I'm in an adobe home with tall ceilings and windows behind me. I am so happy that you're all with us today and I'm delighted to welcome our guest Kelly Johnson, Executive Director of the Arts and Business Alliance of Eugene in Eugene, Oregon. Kelly is one of the speakers in our on-demand series, and so, if you haven't reviewed those sessions, yet I highly recommend it.

And today is an opportunity, just to ask questions, both of our presenter Kelly, and have each other to share stories and examples and discuss ways to begin partnerships with your local chambers of commerce. We don't have a presentation plan for you today, and so we hope this will be a free-flowing conversation, which I will gladly moderate if you participated in the May 19 open discussion, which was our first one of these, this is going to be the same format.

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**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** So, to begin, if you could please chat your name and introduction into the chat box and I'm going to put in some of those things. If you could add in your name your organization or affiliation, the location and native land on which you reside and I've put the native land map link on there. And maybe an assumption that you might have about chambers of commerce in general or your own Chamber of Commerce and while you do that Kelly, would you like to say hello, briefly, while we give people a chance to check in in the chat.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAAE:** Sure absolutely and again, my name is Kelly I'm with the arts and science council and business alliance of Eugene and we are on Cassiopeia Indian land here in Eugene. I am a white woman with brown curly hair and big glasses I'm so happy to be here today, we have a really unique partnership with our local Chamber of Commerce, as they were part of the founding of my organization so they're kind of built into the DNA in partnership so I'm happy to tell you about my experience with them, and maybe how you can access your Chamber of Commerce and partner as well.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Thanks Kelly. So we're also going to start this off just to kind of get our brains in motion with some poll questions and just to take the temperature in the room per se and dive into discussion. So Marissa, would you mind launching those poll questions so The first one is have you watched some or all of the pre recorded videos in Part one of the series. Give folks a few minutes to think about that, and if you don't know what I'm talking about then feel free to just click no got a few folks. Just a couple more seconds on that one. Alright, so it looks like most I'm going to share this looks like most folks have not yet so that's totally fine you don't have to have watched them before coming into this space. But just so you know they do exist, and I believe we can share the link to those sessions there's also a digital toolkit as well, that is free for download.

Alright, so how about our next question. Have you ever engaged with your local Chamber of Commerce that can be attending one of their events met with their staff any sort of engagement with your local Chamber or chambers some communities have multiple chambers. Great we give this about 10 more seconds. All right. So it looks like the majority of you have. But 72% say yes 5% or excuse me 28% say no, so we can get into that a little bit.

How about the next one, Marissa. Have you ever partnered with the Chamber of Commerce or a similar business economic development organization and your work. So that kind of goes beyond showing up or maybe having a conversation with a staff member, but have you ever done a project or anything like that. 10 more seconds. Alright. And looks like an even split there so I'm curious about that too well, we can ask some questions about that.

And how about our last one. Okay we're going to give a little more time for this one, and this is, you know what, what do you think is the top mission of chambers of commerce. And this isn't a trick question but there's also no wrong answer it's just what you think is the top. The top mission. We're going to give about 30 more seconds on this one Just to give you some time to think. 15 more seconds. alright. The last entries.

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**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Okay, so most of you said to support local businesses we've got a few votes for networking economic development, inclusive economic growth and to make the Community as strong as it can be. And so I think we can move on and those were just kind of to start off getting our thoughts all together in this space around chambers of commerce and maybe what they're there for and before I, I have a couple of questions, but I want to just make some space if anybody has any questions for the group or for Kelly right off the BAT feel free to add them into the chat or you can raise your digital hand. Or you can go off mute and just shout it out. Great.

Again this is kind of an open discussion time for anyone to ask questions or if you've had a success with your local Chamber that you're excited about sharing or you're having a challenge. All of those are what the space is for.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** I'm happy to kind of kick us off by sharing just some examples. And then answer questions. But sorry. So I would say that there are three kinds of ways that we partner with our local Chamber of Commerce and again, one of them is probably very specific to us as they were one of our kind of founders but. So my organization was kind of brought to existence by three kind of local or excuse me five local entities and the chamber of commerce is one and so all of those local entities still have a place in our work, they serve as board members and they all support us financially but what the Chamber has done instead of you know, cutting us a check every year is they support us through in kind support. So they support us by giving us office space so I'm in our Chamber of Commerce, right now, so they give me office space to use for our work and and then they provide us accounting and back end support, and so I know that they do this for several different local agencies in the Community. To just kind of bring that down that overhead costs, and so our mission is really to connect the local business community to the arts Community so. It kind of seems like it goes in partnership with the work of the Chamber of Commerce. And then two other ways that we protect her are that we partner with them on events so again they have access to this huge network of business people. And so we partnered up throw a couple signature events with them and then I also try my hardest to get arts and culture into their regular events as well.

And, and then the last thing that we do is we partner on a publication that we put out every year, which is kind of a guide to artists and arts organizations in our area. So we're trying our best to kind of leverage their network and they're spread into the business community. For arts and culture organizations here locally and so those are kind of some of the examples and if anybody wants to go more in depth I'm happy to chat but those are some of our successes with our Chamber of Commerce.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Thank you Kelly, I always appreciate how you've got such a wide array from working on your guide, which is a big project and also kind of an easy entry point for local arts and businesses to find each other to doing a lot of networking events and and the fact that you're so integrated. In your business models with your Chamber it kind of shows there's a there's a big range.

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**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** let's see I'm going to read this comment in the chat says, I have tried to be more involved with a local Chamber, but we are not getting very far we are routinely left out of Community wide events for being too far to walk. A less less than a block away from the next closest location included that's frustrating. We've offered to help take on some of the responsibility and tasks for some of the bigger local events and have been turned down we can't even get them to update our listings or calendar individually, when I talked to the Chamber staff and board they all sort of avoid us giving us a straight answer on anything.

That is super frustrating and I'm curious of either Kelly, if you have thoughts about that if you've experienced barriers, even though you're kind of born out of your Chamber or if anybody else has can commiserate with this experience or offer some advice.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** I guess my, my only thought and it sounds like a little bit like you're already doing this, so it might not be the greatest advice is at our local Chamber of Commerce there's lots of opportunities to serve and volunteer positions and kind of get to know the staff members really well so that, when there are opportunities they kind of your top of mind. So, for example, they have this whole young professionals series that they put on and a big summit and there's like all these different kind of event committees and they're open to the Community, so I think being on some of those committees or volunteer opportunities kind of gets you in a little closer with your Chamber of Commerce.

So that would just be one path, I would recommend is seeing if there's opportunities from people from your organizations to kind of serve in in those maybe leadership or planning roles and to get you better connected.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** I might also look at if there are overlapping connections and again, you might have already been doing this between your own board and either the Chamber board or Chamber Members who are the businesses that are part of the Chamber that are paid dues paying members that are also involved with your organization and are their advocates for you in that space that might be able to have that might have a different relationship and might be able to pull on some of those strings there. And see if you can get through and try to get get to that why what's what's the holdup on the Chamber end of things.

**Mary Zunick:** Our Organization has kind of done a similar thing our Chamber does a business after hours each month, so one of the business after our sponsors was. Last month, was one of our arts organizations sponsors, so I just went directly to them where I've met with the Chamber to and we've really been trying to reach out and involve our Chamber and find ways that could be synergistic for both organizations, I just called the friend, that was a sponsor and said hey Would you mind if our organization kind of co-sponsored.

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**Mary Zunick:** At your event, so it was a business after hours so artists came in and set up and that organization that business already has artwork hanging in it, so it was kind of a natural tie in so that we could be represented at that event and we took our banners and stuff to it just set up kind of in a corner. That we were in front of the business community that was there for networking and I also ask our Chamber to host and be a guest at our quarterly networking meeting where artists can come and have a discussion with Chamber leadership on how the Chamber and the arts community can work together to the benefit of both so.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** that's great which Community are you in Mary.

**Mary Zunick:** hot springs Arkansas.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Great great. Yeah I think sometimes figuring out, what are the different entry points and what are the different ways in and um, I think, for a long time for for decades chambers did not see the arts as a viable or necessary asset in their community or or the local arts agency as a kind of pure and similarly minded. You know service organization of small businesses and I often try to talk with business leaders and Chamber leaders that, that and say you know arts organizations, they might be nonprofits, but there are small businesses and your Members are small and large businesses, and there are a lot more similarities and differences and it's kind of interesting to see that, like oh yeah so.

**Mary Zunick:** That the creative economy, I mean that's what I pointed out to ours is the the walk down our Main Street, how many of those buildings are occupied by or and how many employees are employed by. The creative economies, the design galleries even culinary arts. And I just got to be good friend, well, I mean a good friend of mine was the Chamber board President and so that's how you make it happen just make friends with the President of the board or next year's president of the Board and asked for representation on the Chamber board that's.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Great there's a question in the chat are the arts organizations here in this room members of their chamber and you can like raise your hand or use the reaction feature that's easier if you don't want to turn on your camera or write in the chat got one yes thumbs up cool. Yes, a member of the local chamber. Not, no, no, yes, so some mixed mixed thumbs ups and a nose. Kind of a follow up question to that is well a couple of different questions for everyone in the in this group.

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**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** What might be the reason or the hesitation, of becoming a member and that's that might just be that could be like financial or time or never thought about it and also in in our poll. There was kind of a gap between folks who had engaged with their Chamber but might not have had a partnership and so I'm curious also have the distance between those two things if anybody has any thoughts about that. And Matt says the Iowa Chamber alliance has identified attracting talent and the biggest challenge their members face, we are a chamber Member great.

**Marcus Cox:** Hi Jessica, everybody I'm Marcus, I'm the one who asked the question mark is Cox from playhouse on the square in Memphis Tennessee so Memphis as I'm sure many of you all are aware, is metro spot were right there at the Center of the mid-South so we're surrounded hey hot springs so we're surrounded you know. With Arkansas on one side Mississippi beneath us and everything so within Memphis itself, we have the greater Memphis Chamber of Commerce, which is kind of you know, which is the super Chamber it's really big it encompasses so much many people. Even who aren't in Memphis proper are members of the greater mystic Chamber as are we, and then recently a couple of years ago we started joining the chamber of commerce's of other municipalities around us as well, so we're members in South haven Mississippi Hernandez Mississippi, Bartlett Tennessee, which is a subdivision it's just a suburb of Memphis German town as well and, in the last couple of years, we found that the benefit of being there is, you know. The greater Memphis Chamber is like his big Daddy right it's huge it's big it has all of the access that you need it has all the answers that you need it can get you in touch with people but we found that the beauty of joining the smaller chambers has been great because we get a better one on one connection and interaction with people so I'm in constant contact with the leadership of all of our chambers.

But then also if I'm looking for something specific I'm able to you know call Lori Culture who runs things that the Germantown Chamber, and she says Oh, you need to talk to Ben. And I just got through I just had lunch with Ben or I saw been walking down Main Street so I'll tell him to give you a call or text you or something like that. So we've certainly found a great benefit and being members of the Chamber not just you know, working on the outside of it, but actually truly being members and working within. Our managing director actually became an ambassador for the greater Memphis chamber for that same reason, so that you know she's going to those ribbon cuttings she's meeting people talking to folks so that they hear who we are. And when they hear the name playhouse on the square. You know they will associate it if not for the shows that we do, and all the other stuff that we do they'll associate it with Oh, you know Marcus or Oh, you know what the gel and then that's a great way to broach those conversations that the other person that the opportunities that they're having with their chamber. I would highly recommend trying to if you're not members to get be a member and join in and then most Chamber Sue and I know y'all can since y'all know on a grander scale than I do, but most chambers also offer nonprofit rates as well, so we'll make it a little bit easier to join.

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**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** that's great Thank you so much Marcus and one thing that I really appreciate appreciate about what you said, is that there, there are a lot of chambers out there, and there are chamber multiple there can be multiple chambers for geographic areas, there can be affinity chambers. By demographics and different segments of population there can be women's chambers, there can be LGBT Q a chambers, there can be black chambers Hispanic chambers veteran chambers. And one of the things that we offer because that can that can feel really overwhelming right like oh my God, all of a sudden, I have to join eight organizations plus the big one, because usually there's kind of one as as Marcus was saying there's usually one you know main chamber.

In the toolkit that we've got there's a worksheet in the at the very end, that is kind of like an inventory and where you can go through and start to think about who are all the different kinds of chambers. That might be in your community and economic development agencies as well, and sometimes they might overlap and so doing that kind of field scan of your own private sector can be really helpful in in then starting to prioritize and and being able to do what Marcus is saying is you know starting to show up in different places and have those conversations and build those relationships. There's a question in the chat about what recommendations, do you have for smaller nonprofit organizations that do not have the staff or time to attend different networking events ribbon cuttings etc. Anybody have some thoughts on that?

**Marcus Cox:** I just say prioritize fight, you know, usually chambers are really good at scheduling those things in advance and you get I know we get the newsletter or emails pretty much the beginning of every week every Monday I have about seven that I read through you know and so we'll go through the calendars and say Oh, that seems like that's a good one, or it looks as if a sponsor an organization that's also one of our sponsors or donors or we're connected with in some way or it's a potential lead for us with sponsorship and donors and things like that that just happened to us this week I went to a ribbon cutting that I would have normally not gone to.

However, I just had a conversation with their marketing director and that conversation is moving towards a sponsorship top opportunity for our organization so the more times that they can see my face, I feel the better, so you know we were a small organization as well, and so we do prioritize the ones that we say we definitely need to go to. Try to split and conquer so, and then there are times, where we can't make a luncheon or you know we can't make that ribbon cutting and then we just just try to deal with it or make it up, so if I can't make bartlett this month I'm definitely going to bartlett's next month.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** I would just also echo something that Marcus said I'm like trying to get involved on a deeper level might be better than just trying to fit. Like all the events in again, because that can get overwhelming so he can.

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**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** prioritize find one that really fits your goals and then like you know join that committee join that planning committee or whatever, that is so that you're building those relationships, a little bit closer that can just be super powerful or just exploring different creative. Possibilities like our Chamber has a Annual Economic Summit that they put on every year and they're always looking for speakers some like hey ballet you know hey symphony like apply to be a speaker at the economic summit and talk about your impact in the Community, or you know, whenever they're looking for speakers, you know look for those opportunities to engage and be a part of those events.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** yeah these are great points and I think also one way to kind of prioritize as Marcus was saying is to really think about what your strategic goals are and why you want to be engaging with the Chamber, you know they are industry Association for businesses, just as local arts agencies can be industry associations for the arts and not assuming that everyone here works for local arts agency. But they they hold networks of networks, and so what what is really the strategic purpose of tapping into that network and what do you, what are your assets that you can bring to that relationship. That match their strategic vision. So there's a little bit of research required in there right, you know in thinking about what's the what is the Chamber so that last question of what's the top goal of chambers of commerce. The top goal of the large Chamber in Memphis might be different than the one in Eugene Oregon and so. Trying to understand even before you meet with them what they're trying to do and seeing how your your goals align with that can be another good opening for conversation, but also where to start and how not to get overwhelmed right off the bat. Some other maybe thoughts or questions or successes or struggles.

I often asked my board members, if I can be a guest at their tables at Chamber events yeah that's a good one, free seats. Or what other kind of business, you know oftentimes So when I was working at the local level in Portland Oregon long time ago I would try to get invited to as many of the business journal events, especially the business recognition events and try to get board members or other people to pay for my seat. Or if they had an extra seat, so that I could go and meet other business people and then find out, you know what what are your networks, what circles are you running in which also like meant a free meal and a fun event and then networking opportunities will make it work in the nonprofit sector right.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** I think you I mean this is maybe kind of been been said already, but for me it was really also finding that right fit. Before I was in this role, I worked at a different nonprofit I would attend a lot of Chamber events, I would go to those business after hours and stand in the corner, with my glass of wine and like not talk to anybody because I'm an introvert. And like Why am I spending my time doing this and then I attended a different style of an event that was more like small intimate you got to know people. And I was like this is the thing for me, and so I just started showing up and going to those consistently.



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**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** Those events that kind of match my personality and made it a little bit easier to network, because I know those walking into a room of 200 300 people at a networking event, it can be kind of intimidating sometimes.

**Mary Zunick:** One thing that I've tried to do is differentiate. Between the nonprofit arts organization that I work with and the art galleries and the individual artists who are actually small businesses within our Community, so the Chamber is not doing me a favor by you know I'm a nonprofit you know, but I represent all of these businesses it's not just a freebie or give me it's a vital part of the quality of place in our Community, we are part of what makes hot springs unique.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** yeah that's a that's a great point, I think that there's also a role, something that we started doing recently is. Our chamber of commerce has like welcome packets or relocation packets, that they do to businesses and individuals moving into our communities so I just made sure that there was a space and those welcome and relocation packets, to highlight arts and culture to say like. You know, one of the reasons you either should move to Eugene are going to love about you do when you get here is that we have an amazing arts and culture sector so that that is a really big tool for any of our areas to attract people into our you know vibrant communities.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Sorry folks my Internet cut out for a second, so I apologize if I disappeared, I appreciate Kelly you leading the conversation I Pam just came on camera. Well.

**Pam Warren-Alleghany Highlands:** Of course I don't know if anybody noticed, but I actually am representing the Allegheny highlands Chamber of Commerce and tourism in Covington Virginia and we're just right down the road from hot springs Virginia so I'm listening to everything that everyone saying you know a lot of the things that are going on what your chambers are doing a lot, similar to what we're doing course we're very small here, but something that we've started. We have a arts group that meets once a month and it's all of the different arts groups in the area, and so they kind of come together and collaborate, so that everyone has the opportunity to know what's going on the Chamber than we can help promote their projects, you know their events, what have you. You know, when we have a business after hours we're lucky to have 30 people there, so it is very intimate and small course we've not had one since prior to covert but things are changing a little bit, but you know this, one of the things that we I'm trying to think of the right word. We promote the arts in our area, because you know number one we promote tourism so we're going out and trying to get people to come in. And then eventually because of all the things that we have going on here, hopefully we'll have people to relocate to our area. So, and you mentioned relocation packets, you know we tried to put information in there about the things that are going to.

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**Pam Warren-Alleghany Highlands:** happen in the area, so that when someone new does move to the to our area they have. An idea of the arts and culture what's going on all the time, you know, everybody wants to be entertained so I really feel For those of you who do not have a chamber that's really supporting you. Because even though we're very small in numbers, you know we we do a lot to try to promote what's going on in our area.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Thank you so much Pam I'm I'm curious has it always been that way, as long as you've been involved with the Chamber that it's always been supportive or or was there some advocacy that needed to happen.

**Pam Warren-Alleghany Highlands:** Well um I have to say. Our executive director I'm just the office manager and I've been here five years and she's going on 12 years and she is just the kind of person that she wants to say. Every business every organization, whether its profit or nonprofit succeed and so she really goes out there to pull people together, because you can get more work done and accomplished a lot more in numbers than you can with one or two so as long as I've been involved with the Chamber it's always been like this. But now, this arts group I think they've been meeting at this, this is probably the third year, but it was all started because they went to a retreat. I can't remember exactly where that was and there were several of them representatives from the local arts went to this retreat and you know it kind of inspired everyone and got them, you know charged up really wanted to do a lot for the Community, and so you know, like I said it's been three years and the group still going strong.

And of course we do A newsletter just every other week to let people know what's going on in the area, whether it be arts, or whatever. We also have an events calendar on our Chamber website so that the arts groups can put something on there, so you know it's just an ongoing thing and it's just something that we kind of take for granted that we're going to do here, you know it's not something that we have to do something we want to do for the Allegheny howletts.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** that's great Thank you so much Pam so glad you're here. I have, I can keep asking questions, but I also want to make space for anybody that has anything they want to share or other challenges, barriers, opportunities, they're curious about ideas. Comment in the chat says at the aurora Chamber, we have a long standing arts committee on the arts and business connection for the last few years, the committee has focused on demonstrating and promoting the value of integrating the arts as a business tool by exploring how business and industry can and does benefit the arts that's great the aurora Chamber that's such a great example of a way to connect. Business and the arts by by establishing that committee. And and I'm curious. You know, both for for Pam and in aurora you know, the use of data, and you know how much how much data, do you use versus how much time do you spend in conversation. kind of making that that business case for the earth.

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**MSchindler:** So you're asking how much data we use.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Just kind of the role of data that the economic impact, or you know the how you know how how business and industry can benefit from the arts, the recruitment kind of side of things versus you know telling stories and having more relationship building.

**MSchindler:** To do both. We partner with the fabulous Colorado business committee for the arts and they were kind of the inspiration for how we changed the way we do our meetings and they have all the statistics and once a year, we share those statistics and with our committee and trying to figure out how to appeal to people, because some people love statistics and some people love stories, so we do a lot of both. I have a fabulous chair and vice chair, and we think about how do we, how do we think of transportation and the arts and how do we tell the story of how arts is used in transportation or government or everything diversity and inclusion, but I do have to give credit to the Colorado business committee for the arts, because when I went through the leadership arts Program. We had had this committee before, and it was just like oh my gosh yes we don't want to talk to ourselves anymore, we want to talk to our businesses and show them how important it is to have the arts in every industry.

Great Thank you missy.

**Pam Warren-Alleghany Highlands:** And likewise we we do surveys all the time, where. We're Chamber but we're nonprofit also and so a lot of our funding comes from a local foundation, so therefore you know we've got to have those statistics those numbers in order to be able to show them that you know. The funds that they're giving us are going for the to promote the Allegheny highlands and and that all goes back to the arts, and you know all the local businesses, and you know our businesses are very supportive of our arts, we have a local theater it was a Masonic theater that was built in I believe 1903 and they just back. It was open to the public, I mean not 2005 2016 it was open to the public, after a \$6 million renovation, so therefore you know they depended on the local economy to help with a lot of that and so we're constantly getting those numbers and finding out, you know how much revenue is coming back into the to the arts in the Community from outsiders and local people all together.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** it's a great point I I I'm really happy to hear of the kind of continual. In drawing similarities between chambers and arts organizations are Chamber members and arts organizations and I think there's often, especially in the arts. I missing I love, how you said we don't want to talk to ourselves anymore in in not only kind of recognizing that the arts are like we know intrinsically the arts are such an important an integrated part of the Community.

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**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** And we are more similar than dissimilar to the businesses and the business entities and being able to step out and say, yes, we are similar, we do have similar goals we care about the economic prosperity of our communities, we we attract jobs we keep people here we make it livable. We support business.

**MSchindler:** Those are all really important as business and we are to enhance business. Exactly exactly.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** When one of the things that folks answered in the poll was that they believe that the top mission of the Chamber is to make the Community as strong as it can be, if I were to ask that question, what is the role of the arts organization. Would would that be dissimilar. Charmille has her hand raised.

**Charmille Walters:** hi can you hear me okay yeah hi I'm. testing out my new earbuds here. I have a question I hesitated coming to this because the focus is really about chambers and you know, we have our business Council here in South Florida, but they focus on organizations that have 250 K, a year budget and I'm interested in working with visual artists who have an agenda to develop relationships with environmentally responsible businesses and so like somebody mentioned before I'm a little bit of an introvert. How do you where do I start in trying to you know this arts and climate collective that we're forming for a specific project but it's made up of several individuals and it's a hybrid project of both visual artists forming artists and I'm trying to figure out how individual artists can start working with business like minded this recognize, you know I have an agenda to see what we could do to protect the planet.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Great question anybody. Have any responses. Sorry, to you.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** You know I'm my only thought is like. So, we have an event that we do every year with. That is called arts after hours that is kind of a networking event. To bring business leaders into learn about arts and culture organizations. And one of the things that happened one year was that we realized that there wasn't much training being put out there in the arts community about how to network effectively. So, we had all these artists leaders and artists kind of coming to this network event and then not really knowing what to do with themselves there, and so I think, maybe spending some time. Like doing some webinars or workshops on just like how to network and how to kind of connect with those like.

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**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** Because you could easily find a list of businesses and reach out to them, but it's kind of like learning how to go about it, that is often I think I missed step in the process is kind of thinking through that networking approach. So that would be maybe one one step it's like trying to find some resources on on how to network, and again I am the interest also like how to network within your personality so like you might get some advice that's out there that maybe doesn't mesh with your style, so I think you have to also be authentic with like who you are, as a person, and not. Trying to match just what you think would work in a massive networking opportunity.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** I also don't see a collective of artists operating very differently than a traditional arts organization, the business models in the text structure might be different, but ultimately there. It seems to me, as though the Chamber might be a good place to start understanding, who that the businesses that share those values are that you're looking to connect with and so some of those same. You know, doing the research and looking through the membership lists and if you can join name or showing up at as Kelly, said, the events that feel comfortable or having conversations and trying to understand, through the Chamber staff, you know who are the businesses and the people and maybe there are other people with in businesses that don't seem obvious that can be really strong allies for you or who could lead you to the right people who are thinking about the same thing, because I do think that, that chambers and their Members are trying to make better communities, and you can find those those same kind of affinities as well, and then I also do want to make a plug for the association of Chamber of Commerce executives, which is the national industry Association for local chambers. And they can be a resource as well, and so they might, they might have some suggestions of WHO to go to in the south Florida area that could connect you read other business folks.

**Charmille Walters:** Thank you for both suggestions, it is about learning how to develop relationships and some artists are introverts, and so the ones who are outgoing are able to build these relationships, but if you're shy. It's really hard and especially talking to the CEO of a huge business it's intimidating so it's like how have you you've been approach and make sure that you're like minded you know, so thank you for the suggestion I love the webinar series. For maybe that's where I start because we haven't formally become a collective, I'm kind of calling it into being we're working on this particular project. But it's all individual artists who've been curated for a specific project and I'm like well, maybe we could form a collective and kind of have a learning group on how to start developing these authentic relationships within your personality trait.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Right. Right, I would also be curious to know what are the non-arts organizations that are environmentally focused or who are connected with those businesses that could help expand that network and and support the hurts work in that.

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**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** Is a small little trick that I've done over time, this is a little bit nerdy, but I find when I'm networking with what kind of anybody that businesspeople in particular. Is that, like everybody has like something that they're into right some element of arts and culture that they're into so. Either in my database, or just like in my contacts on Google I'll be like Okay, I talked to you know mark at this plumbing company. And he mentioned that like he was in a band when he was little so then I'm like okay I'm going to send him, like all the cool music stuff that I see in town. So, I tried to just make these little notes about about those business owners and where their passions might lie in the arts, so that, like, I can be that, like friendly. Network connection and and hopefully that they remember like okay yeah Kelly Kelly paid attention she knew that I like music and now I know all these cool local places to go. Right, thank you.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** We have about 10 minutes left are their other questions out there or ideas. I love like Community workshopping ideas that folks might have or if they're thinking about approaching a potential partner and looking for guidance that's a fun group thing group think thing that we can do here.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** one kind of maybe final example also that I'd like to throw out. I mentioned earlier that we produce this arts guide that is really like a listing of organizations that artists, but the piece that I left out, is what we also do within that. Is highlight businesses that like have cool partnerships, so that they, hopefully, are also inspired. Right, so if a business grabs this and they're like you know I like the arts, but I don't really know how to partner with organizations that we had like three or four stories of how businesses connect with local arts and then the whole guide of who they could partner with, so I think sometimes that business people need you to connect those dots to say you know I'm interested, but I don't know how to build this kind of mutually beneficial partnership, so I think sometimes sharing examples, just like as we're doing here can be really helpful I'm out there in the business community.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** that's great Kelly I'm curious as where do you source those examples what's your go to place.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** Well, I honestly, so I kind of. Put the ask out there and like one of our newsletters like if you have a story send it in if. You have a cool partnership, but, honestly I just like it's just for me going out and being in the Community and I walk by a business who's got a muralist painting a beautiful mural on the side of their building and I make a note, or I see a really cool thing come up from a local arts organizations on Facebook, so I just kind of like note when I see cool partnerships and then I reach out and say hey could you tell me a little bit more about this, because I think it's cool and I think other businesses would.

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**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** You know, be interested so it's a lot of just me trying to keep my ear to the ground. And also, kind of connecting with those local arts leaders to say you know, is there a business out there in the Community, that you think is stellar a good patron of the arts or that you partner with frequently.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** I have one one more question and then I think unless folks want to keep continuing this conversation, we can certainly give you your time back in the day. But Kelly, I we asked this question in your prerecorded session in the series, but I love asking this question what's one thing that maybe an arts leader should not do when they go into a business conversation or a chamber environment what's the thing to avoid.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** And that's a really good question. I think um. So, I might take this from a little bit of a opposite angle, but I once was sitting down with a local business owner and it here in Eugene this might be similar in a lot of different communities, we have like one of the most. We have a lot of nonprofits and our community, and so the business community is often feeling very tapped by asks. And so, I think sometimes there are some walls up when you kind of meet somebody and you say you work in nonprofit or you work in arts and culture that they're like oh no they're going to kind of make that ask. But I was that I was talking to a business owner she owns a chocolate company here in town and her she's an artist lover right so she has that inclination first that she wants to give back to the arts. But I she just said, you know I have goals as a business and if your nonprofit or if your arts organization comes to me and wants to help me move my goals forward in some way like that's a great way to like start that conversation so to go in with questions about the person's company, I think, is like a great first step so for her, she was working on demographics she said, you know I want to younger, I want to appeal to start appealing to younger clientele. She also wanted to grow across the state. So, if you're she was looking for arts organizations that had younger demographics and statewide appeals So if you kind of fit that or can say you know, like we have this festival that draws people in from everywhere so get your name out and kind of matching those goals. I think the mistake, you can make is is going in for an ass for going into an event without that kind of like curiosity about the business and their goals, so I think that would be my answer.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** That. Yeah, we we all have mutual mutual things that we're working towards that to align and I think we often get bogged down by the scarcity and the the or the mindset of scarcity and the real need for cash like that that is real right but letting that get in the way, sometimes of the deeper relationship and the longer term benefits can definitely harm the relationship at the outset.

**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** And I think something we had chatted about in the session about this kind of similar topic is we all are coming with such value right, so it is an equal equation like.

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**Kelly Johnson (she/hers) | ABAE:** You have so much that you can bring bringing to the businesses are these chambers, like all of your organizations are powerful so you're you're also coming with this lens of like. I have so much to offer I have so much to that can uplift your organization like let's help each other out.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** That's great. I don't think there's anything else, I can say that would be better than anybody else have any last thoughts or or questions or offerings before we kind of wrap up today. Alright well as a reminder, you can view the on-demand sessions, as well as the digital toolkit. This is a three-part series, and each part has three on demand sessions and a toolkit. So again, part one is available now our 201 level series is going to come out in the fall and we're hoping to continue to hold these periodic live conversations for peer learning and connecting and and idea sharing So if you have questions after the session or ideas or suggestions any kind of feedback, please don't hesitate to contact me I'm going to put my email in the chat. You can reach out to me for anything and also again be sure to check out the Association of Chamber of Commerce executive blog and their website. I love going to their website and checking out what other chambers are up to across the country they have a lot of great examples and inspiration as Kelly mentioned getting those examples is really important, and I think for us arts folks as well. So, I think that's all I have for today, Marissa, did we have any any wrapping up points.

**Marissa (she/her) @ AFTA:** Just a reminder that we recorded this discussion and I'll be adding it to the activity page where you access today's session in a few business days and you'll receive an email when it's ready, so if you want to come back and review this recording it will be ready in a few days. I also updated the resources tab on the activity page, and I put that link in the chat. On that tab you'll find a link to register for the on-demand webinars and also a direct link to the toolkit as well on if you need any assistance with accessing the on demand activities, a toolkit anything like that, please feel free to be in touch with us, you can email us at arts you at [artsu@artsusa.org](mailto:artsu@artsusa.org).

And otherwise we look forward to seeing you at the next conversation and we'll be sure to be in touch of when we have a new date for that so thanks again and have a great rest of your day.

**Jessica Stern (she/hers): Americans for the Arts:** Thanks everybody take care.