

# The Arts Sector and COVID-19 Relief

March 2020

Community by community, the COVID-19 crisis is rapidly affecting the creative sector, its workforce, and the communities it serves. As Congress and the Administration consider new forms of federal economic assistance that may be targeted or widespread, we urge support for business continuity relief and support for the arts workforce that will sustain the arts sector's unique capacity to support the U.S. economy, uplift the human spirit, and provide lifelong learning.

- Arts organizations serve artistic and educational missions through the work of administrators, artists, writers, educators, designers, technicians, publishers, producers, agents, managers, and others who work in full-time, part-time, hourly, seasonal, and freelance capacities. Together, they are vital contributors to the nonprofit sector, support and fuel local business, and are essential to the economy of the communities they serve.
- Just this month, the Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that the arts and culture workforce contributed \$877.8 billion, or 4.5 percent, to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017.
- The unexpected loss of event-dependent revenue and income for the full range of people who make up the workforce of the arts and the declines in charitable contributions are immediately impacting arts organizations and individual livelihoods, and will worsen over time.
- Federal relief in response to COVID-19 should ensure the viability of nonprofit arts organizations, artists, and the creative sector is addressed, including:
  - Access to multiple forms of stimulus funding aimed at community development, nonprofit arts and small business continuity, and relief for self-employed individuals, as well as dedicated funding administered by the National Endowment for the Arts to accomplish these goals.
  - Paid leave and unemployment relief provisions for employees and self-employed workers that support both the arts workforce and the arts organizations that hire them.
  - Rapid, streamlined access to SBA disaster relief loans and FEMA disaster assistance for arts organizations, cultural sector small businesses, and self-employed individuals.
  - Enhanced deductions for charitable contributions to support continuity plans for nonprofit arts organizations and their workforce, such as a universal charitable deduction, available to all taxpayers.

Investing in the arts sector is an investment in our nation's capacity to generate creative solutions to complex problems, support the health and well-being of communities, educate and inspire lifelong learners, and drive economic activity. The arts sector is innovating to provide online arts experiences and distance learning opportunities and will be an essential partner in jump-starting local, state, and national recovery efforts during and after COVID-19, and should be supported by all forms of relief.

## **The Arts Sector and COVID-19 Relief**

American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada

American Alliance of Museums

American Composers Forum

Americans for the Arts

Association of Art Museum Directors

Association of Performing Arts Professionals

Carnegie Hall

CERF+ -- The Artists Safety Net

Chamber Music America

Chorus America

Dance/USA

Early Music America

League of American Orchestras

LitNet

Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

National Alliance for Musical Theatre

National Art Education Association

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC)

National Council for the Traditional Arts

Network of Ensemble Theaters

New Music USA

New York Foundation for the Arts

OPERA America

PEN America

Performing Arts Alliance

Performing Arts Readiness

Phi Beta Kappa Society

Recording Academy

Theatre Communications Group

Theatre for Young Audiences/USA