

The United States Conference of Mayors 88th Annual Meeting

Supporting COVID-19 Relief for Arts and Cultural Institutions

WHEREAS, the pandemic has severely impacted our cities in many ways with crippling impacts on artists and our arts and cultural organizations, who are integral to enabling our communities to survive and thrive economically and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, this pandemic has resulted in a catastrophic financial impact on individual artists and nonprofit arts organizations, leaving artists and organizations in significant economic hardship and risk of collapse; and

WHEREAS, the country is at grave risk of permanently losing essential arts and cultural organizational partners that are critical to our national identity and will be essential to accelerate our regional recovery efforts; and

WHEREAS, our arts and culture organizations connect people to each other and ensure that creativity thrives among a wide breadth of our communities, from seniors to children, and members of our society who are under-resourced, hard to count, and more vulnerable now than they have ever been; and

WHEREAS, despite all of this, the arts industry and cultural sector is innovating right now to provide online art experiences and distance learning opportunities for people of all ages, helping address social isolation and mental health issues, providing direct health benefits to our communities, but, in many cases, with very limited resources; and

WHEREAS, as Congress formulates future relief packages, greater relief is needed for the recovery of our arts and culture communities; and

WHEREAS, this is about far more than the cancellation of performances and exhibitions; this is about individuals-artists and cultural workers alike-whose livelihoods are being threatened if not irrevocably impacted,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The United States Conference of Mayors urges Congress and the Administration to provide increased COVID-19 relief and recovery support for the arts and culture sector. Specifically, mayors urge for legislative relief that:

- Extends the duration of unemployment insurance for artists, arts professionals, and self-employed workers whose income has been negatively impacted by COVID-19 through the calendar year 2022 understanding that many will continue to be out of work as the economy struggles to regain its foothold for the next three years;
- Adjusts the Economic Stabilization Fund or other mechanisms to implement programs that support all nonprofit employers, regardless of employee headcount, including loan forgiveness and other provisions; and provides clear guidance and maximum flexibility to private lenders to prioritize processing the applications of charitable nonprofits, including arts organizations;
- Extends SBA and Paycheck Protection Program assistance for artists and arts professionals; provides additional forgivable SBA loans to nonprofit arts and cultural

organizations, self-employed workers, sole proprietors, and small LLCs; eliminates the 500-employee cap for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations; and provides further flexibility regarding the percentage of loan forgiveness for payroll versus rent;

- Provides additional funding to the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services;
- Helps to incentivize contributed support for the arts and culture sector through removing the cap on charitable deductions and maintain the removal of the Adjusted Gross Income limits for the current and future tax seasons;
- Supports the U.S. creative economy by enabling inclusion of the nonprofits arts and culture industry in federal workforce development opportunities for creative businesses and creative workers;
- Enacts policies that will ensure rapid processing of the artist visas and consular appointments that are essential to supporting international cultural activity;
- Enables equitable participation in artistic, educational and cultural online activity through ensuring our most vulnerable population have access to free or low-cost high-speed broadband program offerings.
- Ensures that dedicated funding is provided to the arts and culture industry to help build out its health and safety infrastructure and that they are included in the legislative discussions related to business disruption insurance and liability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, mayors see all too clearly that we cannot survive without connection. More than ever, we must restore the power of the arts and culture using it to connect our residents to each other, to build social cohesion and belonging, and reinstate our shared sense of hope.