



## **2020 COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Grant Opportunities, Resources, and Guides/FAQs for Nonprofit Organizations**

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### **Arts & Culture COVID-19 Grant Opportunities**

1. **[ArtsWave Emergency Response Grant \(Cincinnati, OH\)](#)**

ArtsWave Emergency Response for Arts & Culture Organizations will make fast-tracked grants of up to \$20,000 available to small and mid-sized organizations facing extreme threat to their viability and sustainability due to the coronavirus outbreak and resulting cancellation of events.

2. **[JP Morgan Chase](#)**

The firm will provide \$2 million to existing nonprofit partners who are facing new challenges supporting vulnerable populations in response to COVID-19. The funds will go towards helping these partners maintain operational capacity as they adjust their programming and provide resources to support their remote working capabilities, resiliency planning, fundraising and communications. No guidelines or deadlines are available yet.

3. **[Yellow Springs \(OH\) Community Foundation COVID-19 Community Support Fund](#)**

The Yellow Springs Community Foundation has created a community support fund for those affected by COVID-19. Visit the website for

information on impact and possible funding opportunities.

**4. Greater Cincinnati Foundation - COVID-19 Regional Response Fund**

Initially, over the next 1-2 weeks, all requests for funding will be triaged into the following categories with a priority of supporting 'Immediate' Funding requests:

\*\*'Immediate' needs – Funding necessary to support basic necessities and safety of families most impacted by COVID-19 (such as: food insecurity, housing/ shelter, childcare/ eldercare, and supports for medical response)

\*\*'Near term' needs – Funding to stabilize critical services and/or support community organizations in the 'near term' (i.e. within next 2-4 weeks)

\*\*'Longer term' or recovery needs for families and community organizations

**5. Cleveland Foundation Rapid Response Fund**

For organizations affected by COVID-19 in the Cleveland, OH area.

**6. Columbus Foundation Emergency Response Fund**

Emergency COVID-19 funding for organizations in the Columbus, OH area.

**7. Middletown Community Foundation Crisi Funding**

For organizations in Middletown, Madison, Franklin, and Trenton, OH. Please note that the Fund is only \$50k so awards will be smaller.

**8. The Dayton Foundation - COVID-19 Response Fund for Greater Dayton**

A partnership with the Dayton-based United Way to assist local organizations with supplying basics and maintaining operations in the Greater Dayton, OH area.

**NOTE: The above opportunities are focused on Ohio because that's where a majority of my clients are at the moment. For more grant opportunities in other states, please scroll to the bottom of this**

**document.**

**Non-Arts COVID-19 Grant Opportunities (depending upon your programming and partnerships, some of these may still be relevant to arts & culture orgs)**

1. [No Kid Hungry - COVID-19 Grants](#)
  2. [United Way COVID-19 Recovery & Response Fund](#) (Worldwide)
  3. [Greater Cincinnati United Way COVID-19 Regional Response Fund](#)
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**Non-Grant Informational Resources for Arts & Culture Orgs:**

1. [Americans for the Arts Coronavirus Resource & Response Center](#)
2. [National Assembly of State Arts Agencies - Coronavirus Resources](#)
3. [Association of Art Museum Directors - Museums & COVID-19](#)
4. [ArtsReady Coronavirus Impact Info](#)
5. [National Alliance for Musical Theater - COVID-19 Resources](#)
6. [League of American Orchestras \(LAO\) - Coronavirus Information](#)
7. [NEA COVID-19 Resources](#)

**Non-Grant Informational Resources for all Nonprofits:**

1. [Council of Nonprofits - Nonprofits & Coronavirus](#)
  2. [SBA Disaster Loans for Nonprofits](#) (these loans are usually for small businesses but have been made available for nonprofits dealing with the financial effects of COVID-19 as well).
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# Guides & FAQs for Arts & Culture Organizations Weathering the COVID-19 Pandemic

NOTE: I'm not a lawyer or a medical professional. None of the following advice should be construed as official legal or medical advice. It's just practical advice from a professional grant writer and from someone who spent many years working for arts & culture nonprofits.

## 1. Closing Facilities

Right now, non-essential organizations have been urged to close. Since many arts orgs run facilities that typically draw large crowds, it only makes sense that these have closed for the foreseeable future in an effort to stem the tide of infection. However, that's causing mass anxiety for arts & culture nonprofits who are now dealing with a host of other issues related to the closings. Here are some guidelines and advice on some common, closings-related issues:

- **To Close or not to close?** Unfortunately, we're past the point where we can responsibly argue that staying open is an option. If you run a facility like a concert hall, gallery, museum, or theater (or anything where crowds gather), you should close for now. Make sure that everyone knows this by posting about the closure or reduced hours to social media, on your org's website, and updating your Google Business hours listing.
- **Programming alternatives.** Although closing your physical doors right now is the right thing to do, it may not mean that you have no other options. If you have recordings, photos, or even staff who are available and willing, you may be able to offer pre-recorded materials, virtual concerts/tours, and even video lectures to your patrons. Many orgs are offering these for free, but you may be able to create tiered offerings, too: some free, some paid. If possible, you could also solicit gift card purchases that will give your org a welcome cash infusion now and still give tangible value to the buyer once this crisis has passed.

## **2. Working Remotely**

Many folks are working remotely these days and if you can, I would suggest that you do so, too. Take advantage of technology and automation software to make this easier.

Vital files that you need to work on can be stored in the cloud (Google Drive, Dropbox, Microsoft OneDrive, etc.). You can still meet via video conferencing software such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, and Microsoft Teams. You can share files and discuss projects over software such as Slack, Asana, BaseCamp, Trello, or Microsoft Teams. And you can still manage your social media communications with your audience via software like HootSuite, Buffer, and Sprout Social.

## **3. Communicating with Patrons & Donors**

Now is not the time to go silent. Even though you may be closed and things may be uncertain, you want to stay top-of-mind with patrons and donors and be in a good position to rally others to your cause when this crisis ends. Here's what you should focus on doing now in terms of communication:

- If you have a crisis communication plan, dig it up and refer to it. Update it if needed.
- Keep posting to social media, your org's website, your blog, email newsletters, etc.
- Make sure everyone knows what's happening with your organization, what decisions are being made and why, how that impacts your organization and those you serve, and how this will cause struggle or instability going forward. By being transparent about these issues, you let people know what's going on and also make them aware that their help is needed now or in the future.

## **4. How to communicate with funders about programming and events that were funded with grant awards but have now been canceled or postponed**

This is the biggest concern I'm hearing from my clients right now. Most nonprofits have already secured funding and grant awards for programming and projects which have now been either postponed or

canceled altogether. So what happens to that funding? Do you have to give it back? Do you hide under a blanket and hope the grantmaker doesn't call and ask what's going on?

No. Do what you should always do in any emergency: make a list of all the funders, sponsors, and restricted donors who have given to affected programs and projects. If the list is long, consider breaking it up and enlisting other staff and board members for help in making the calls. (If you ask for help, creating a script may be helpful to ease others into the process of making these difficult calls.) Then, start calling. I would also suggest keeping a spreadsheet or other document where you can make notes and keep a record of everyone who's been called, who called them, and what the outcome of the call was.

When talking to funders, sponsors, and restricted donors be 100% transparent about what's happening. Honesty is always the best policy, and since pretty much everyone on Earth is going through the same stuff right now, they should all be fairly understanding. Ask how they would like your organization to handle their gift/grant award. They may decide to allocate it to a different purpose, roll over that funding into the next year, or yes - they may ask you to return it. You will get a spectrum of different responses depending on the policies and priorities of that funder/company/family.

I would also suggest having a 'Plan B' to propose, too. This way if you reach out to a funder, sponsor, or donor who does not have a template for how to deal with funding issues like this, you can make a recommendation which may save your org from losing that money altogether.

Possible 'Plan B' recommendations:

- Change your grant award/gift/sponsorship to unrestricted or operating funds
- Press "pause" and let's reconvene in 4 weeks to make a decision
- Allocate the money to virtual programming alternatives

## **5. Locating emergency funding and assistance**

Right now many nonprofits are looking for sources of emergency funding to help them stay afloat during this indefinite disruption to

their normal work. Thankfully, many funders are starting to offer up COVID-19 related assistance and emergency funding. Much of it is meant to help organizations offering critical services like housing, food, and medical care. Arts & culture nonprofits are likely not going to be eligible for these funds. However, that doesn't mean there won't be *any* funding for which you are eligible.

I am maintaining a list of funding opportunities related to the pandemic which you can find at the very top of this document. I will continue to update it as I become aware of more opportunities. I also urge you to actively seek out funding. A daily Google search will help. You can also sign up for emails from your local community foundation and other funding entities as they may also release grant opportunities in the days ahead.

I would also suggest proactively contacting funders and donors with whom you have a pre-existing relationship. You can call or contact them, explain any emergent needs your org is experiencing, and ask if they have any available funding for which you could apply. Some funders, especially smaller family foundations, may be able to help out even if they aren't actively advertising funding opportunities.

This is where the importance of relationships really shines. Also, the more you can demonstrate that your organization has a plan in place to weather the storm the better position you'll be in to receive assistance of some kind.

## **6. Other resources for paying employees**

This is a tough one and the answer will be highly dependent upon your individual organization's workforce size, needs, and structure. For actual employees (not contractors), you can evaluate the following approaches:

- **Pay for as long as you can**

If you are able, pay your employees and contractors for as long as you are able. However, it would also be wise at this point to complete an analysis of how long you can reasonably continue to pay before you'll have to move to some sort of 'Pay Plan B'. You

should also outline what this Plan B might look like.

- **Reduced pay**

One possibility may be to continue paying employees at a reduced rate. It's not ideal. It's not great. But it's pay and if this pandemic drags on long enough, it may be a better option for your org and its employees than the alternatives. Make sure you discuss this with your board and look at ways in which the missed pay could be made up once operations return to normal.

- **Layoffs/unemployment**

If your org is small or short on resources, it may be that the best thing you can do for your employees is to lay them off so that they can collect unemployment and at least have some money coming in. If you decide to go down this path, try to outline a plan for how you will stay in touch with your employees during the layoff, how you will keep them up-to-date on what's happening with your org, and how you will begin the process of bringing them back on board when its time.

- **Emergency grant funding and donations for operations and personnel costs**

This bullet point is admittedly a bit nebulous. Many funders and major donors are starting to talk about offering emergency grant funding to nonprofits. However, as of this date (March 21, 2020), there aren't a lot of hard details about how to apply or what specifically they will or will not fund.

My best advice is to keep checking in with local funders, donors, and government bodies to see if there are opportunities available for you. Things will continue to change so what is available next week may be very different than what's available today.

- **ENDOWMENT**

If your organization has an endowment this may very well be the time to look at taking an emergency disbursement to keep your basic operations afloat and your personnel paid. Talk with your board members to see if this is an option.



**NOTE:**

Keep in mind, I am not a lawyer, an accountant, or anything other than a grant writer so definitely make sure that your board and any relevant legal and financial professionals have looked at your options and made sure that they are workable solutions for *your* organization.

**7. Resources for your org's contractors, artists, musicians, and other performers**

- a. [A full listing of artist relief funding available in the New England area](#)
- b. [New City Arts Emergency Relief Fund for Artists \(VA\)](#)
- c. [Actors Fund](#)
- d. [Arts Administrators of Color Network - BIPOC Artist Relief Fund](#)
- e. [Artwork Archives Emergency Grants](#)
- f. [Boston Artist Relief Fund](#)
- g. [EqualSound Musician Relief Fund](#)
- h. [Musicians Foundation Aid Request](#)
- i. [Spokane Arts Artist Relief Fund](#)
- j. [WomenArts Full Listing of Emergency Funding for Artists in All Disciplines](#)
- k. [New Music USA - New Music Solidarity Fund](#) (\$500 emergency grants to musicians through April 30)

**8. Preparing for future crises and emergencies**

It's hard to be 100% prepared for a crisis, especially when you can't predict specifics ahead of time. But what you *can* do is create a crisis communications plan to help guide you through your response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as future crises.

Your plan should include some of the following elements:

- How you will communicate with staff and contractors
- Under what circumstances you will have staff start working remotely and what the procedure is for doing so
- Under what circumstances you will close your office/facilities and/or cancel events
- How and what you will communicate with patrons and the general community

- How and what you will communicate to donors, sponsors, and grantmakers
- How you will communicate with board members (also, how frequently will you communicate)
- How you will communicate with volunteers
- What will your approach be to social media
- What will your approach be to email/email marketing
- Create a detailed, tiered plan for how you will deal with any financial ramifications of a crisis
- What is your recovery plan for getting back to normal once the crisis has ended?

These are just a few suggestions. I would also suggest convening with your board via video conference now (or as quickly as possible) to discuss your short-term plan. You may also want to consider scheduling a retreat to create a *long-term* strategy once the pandemic has lifted. Create a plan that is individualized to the needs and capabilities of *your* organization.

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## **Grantmakers Offering Grant Opportunities for COVID-19 Assistance Across the United States:**

1. [Community Foundation for Southern Arizona](#)
2. [California Community Foundation](#)
3. [The California Endowment](#)
4. [Weingart Foundation \(CA\)](#)
5. [Silicon Valley \(CA\) Community Foundation](#)
6. [Community Foundation for Monterey County & Monterey Peninsula \(CA\)](#)
7. [Community Foundation of Tampa Bay \(FL\)](#)
8. [Idaho Community Foundation](#)
9. [Iowa West Foundation](#)
10. [Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines \(IA\)](#)
11. [Jewish United Fund \(Chicago, IL\)](#)
12. [Lilly Endowment \(IN\)](#)

13. [Community Foundation of Louisville \(KY\)](#)
14. [The Boston Foundation \(MA\)](#)
15. [The Minneapolis Foundation \(MN\)](#)
16. [The Otto Bremer Trust \(MO, MN, WI, ND\)](#)
17. [Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation](#)
18. [Brooklyn Community Foundation \(NY\)](#)
19. [The New York Community Trust \(NY\)](#)
20. [The West Chester Community Foundation \(NY\)](#)
21. [The Foundation for Delaware County \(PA\)](#)
22. [The William Penn Foundation \(PA\)](#)
23. [The Pittsburgh Foundation \(PA\)](#)
24. [The Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina \(SC\)](#)
25. [Community Foundation of Greater Memphis \(TN\)](#)
26. [Communities Foundation of Texas \(TX\)](#)
27. [The Dallas Foundation \(TX\)](#)
28. [Greater Washington Community Foundation \(Washington DC\)](#)
29. [Seattle Foundation \(WA\)](#)