New Jersey State Council on the Arts Approves Over $16.3 Million in Grants, Establishes COVID Relief Programs

Investment Supports Jobs, Arts Nonprofits, and Services in Every County during COVID Crisis

TRENTON, NJ - The New Jersey State Council on the Arts awarded more than $16.3 million in grants to more than 700 arts organizations, projects, and artists throughout the state. The awards were announced at the Arts Council's 54th Annual Meeting, which was held virtually due to ongoing COVID restrictions.

"I am in awe of the innovation our arts community has shown in the face of the tremendous struggles of these last several months, and I am incredibly proud of the State Arts Council for their responsive grants and services to help the sector every step of the way," said Secretary of State Tahesha Way. “Today’s awards will support tens of thousands of arts professionals, and hundreds of organizations at work in communities statewide. Especially as we build toward a full recovery, the arts are critical to New Jersey’s economy and overall quality of life.”

According to a recent collaborative study of the arts sector, led by ArtPride NJ, New Jersey nonprofit arts organizations have lost more than $100 million and counting due to pandemic related closures, cancellations, and lost contributed and earned revenue. And the work force of artists, technicians, and administrators at the heart of it all have been laid off or furloughed, many without affordable healthcare coverage.

“The situation is dire for many, and we are grateful to Governor Murphy and the legislature for recognizing the need for robust public support of the arts right now,” said Council Chair Elizabeth Mattson. “We’re witnessing some of the most innovative and successful adaptations of artistic engagement – necessitated by crisis and fueled by skill and passion. But passion doesn’t keep the lights on or put food on the table. New Jersey’s creative industries are at risk.”

When the arts sector is open and thriving, it generates more than $660 million in economic activity statewide, employs nearly 22,000 workers, and engages more than 8.3 million people who stay in hotels, and eat and shop locally. For more on the important role the arts play in recovery, visit KeepJerseyArtsAlive.org.

While $16.3 million of the Council’s $19.6 million FY21 budget was voted on today, a remaining $3.3 million will be granted out later this year as part of new COVID critical needs grant programs for artists and organizations. Details about these recovery grants will be shared in the coming weeks.

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In line with the Council's priority to dedicate all available dollars toward helping achieve field-wide stability and recovery, most annual project grants have been suspended, multi-year commitments sustained, and statewide service initiatives increased. To lessen the administrative burden for grantees, requirements have been temporarily amended, as feasible.

View a list of FY21 Grants by County.
View a list of FY21 Grants by Category/Discipline.

As always, grant program guidelines are shaped by field needs, and applications are evaluated by independent panels to eliminate the possibility for conflict of interest. Funding decisions are made through a process designed to assure transparency, fairness, and access.

About the New Jersey State Council on the Arts

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, created in 1966, is a division of the NJ Department of State. The Council was established to encourage and foster public interest in the arts; enlarge public and private resources devoted to the arts; promote freedom of expression in the arts; and facilitate the inclusion of art in every public building in New Jersey. The Council receives direct appropriations from the State of New Jersey through a dedicated, renewable Hotel/Motel Occupancy fee, as well as competitive grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. To learn more about the Council, please visit www.artscouncil.nj.gov.

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Trenton, NJ 08625
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