ArtsOhio Blog

The ArtsOhio Blog is the Ohio Arts Council's way to share stories that highlight the arts in Ohio, feedback from the field, interviews with artists and staff, and more. Sign up for the ArtsOhio newsletter to receive a curated selection of posts each month.

3 September

4 Ohio Arts Organizations Receive COVID-19 Relief Grants Totaling $205K

September 3, 2020

For Organizations, For the Public, News, Organizations, Public

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Arts Midwest, Cleveland Public Theatre, coronavirus, COVID-19, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, funding, grants, Karamu House, Ohio Arts Council, relief fund, Stuart's Opera House, U.S. Regional Arts Resilience Fund

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Funds Provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Will Help Historically Under-Resourced Arts and Culture Organizations Weather the COVID-19 Crisis

Thirty Midwestern arts and culture organizations, including Ohio-based organizations Cleveland Public Theatre, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Karamu House, and Stuart's Opera House, have received COVID-19 relief grants from Arts Midwest through the United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund.

Karamu House. (Photo Credit: Kayla Lupean)

The Resilience Fund's goal is to invest in historically under-resourced arts and culture organizations across the United States as they work to weather the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with these priorities, 22 of the funded organizations are led by and serving people of color and/or Indigenous communities, and 11 are based in rural areas.

The 30 selected organizations will each receive $50,000 – $55,000 as a one-time investment with no matching funds required. Recipients may direct United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund grants to their most pressing needs and opportunities, from response activities to investments that build resiliency and sustainability.

A list of Ohio recipients of Resilience Fund grants and their award amounts follows:

- Cleveland Public Theatre (Cleveland) - $50,000
- Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (Dayton) - $55,000
- Karamu House (Cleveland) - $50,000
- Stuart's Opera House (Nelsonville) - $50,000

Ohio Arts Council Executive Director Donna S. Collins thanked the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Arts Midwest for their support of arts organizations that provide crucial access to the arts in Ohio communities.

"We are grateful that four Ohio arts organizations were able to receive support through this national funding initiative generously offered by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Arts Midwest," she said. "We know so many of our colleagues in the arts are facing unprecedented challenges and uncertainties in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, especially those serving under-resourced communities. We commend their strength,

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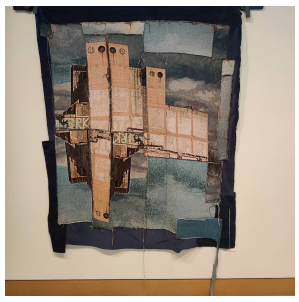
Cleveland Public Theatre. (Photo Credit: Steve Wagner)

innovation, and perseverance as they continue to work each day to provide transformative arts experiences accessible to all audiences."



The impact of COVID-19 has created incredible financial obstacles for the arts, with Americans for the Arts estimating current losses for the creative sector at more than $12.5 billion and counting. These losses exacerbate deep, existing inequities present across the Midwest and the nation. Historically under-resourced communities and organizations now face an additional lack of access to critical support, investment, and capitalization to weather the pandemic, putting their work acutely at risk.

The United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund began in June 2020, when each of America's six Regional Arts Organizations, a national collective of place-based nonprofit arts service organizations, received allocations of a $10 million emergency grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. To distribute its $1.5 million share, Arts Midwest shaped an equity-focused trust-based philanthropic investment model to ensure that rural communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color were integral voices in the funding process. Decision making on how to allocate Resilience Funds was guided by rural culture makers and arts leaders of color from across the Midwest as well as representatives from Arts Midwest's nine partner State Arts Agencies.

Stuart's Opera House. (Photo Credit: Scotty Hall)

In total, more than 500 Midwestern organizations were nominated by community members to receive money through the Resilience Fund.

Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. (Photo Credit: Jeff Sabo)

"These organizations play a critical role in the civic and economic vitality of our communities and are core to our quality of life in the Midwest," said Torrie Allen, president and CEO of Arts Midwest. "We are proud to be partnering with our state arts agencies, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and our fellow U.S. Regional Arts Organizations on this recovery effort and are humbled by the continued need for support within and beyond these communities."

The United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund will continue to support organizations across the Midwest beyond this first wave of funding. Thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor, an additional $1.5 million in support will be invested in Midwest organizations that are small, rural, and/or led by and serving people of color and Indigenous communities. Recipients of this second round of funding will be announced in late November 2020.

For more information on all the United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund recipients, visit the Arts Midwest website.

ABOUT ARTS MIDWEST

Arts Midwest believes that creativity has the power to inspire and unite humanity. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest grows, gathers, and invests in creative organizations and communities throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six nonprofit United States regional arts organizations, Arts Midwest's history spans more than 30 years. For more information, visit artsmidwest.org.

ABOUT THE UNITED STATES REGIONAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

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Arts Midwest, Mid-America Arts Alliance, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, South Arts, and Western States Arts Federation—occupy a unique niche in the U.S. cultural ecosystem. RAOs partner with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, State Arts Agencies, and others to develop and deliver programs, services and products that support and advance the arts. Learn more at usregionalarts.org.

ABOUT THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

Founded in 1969, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the largest national supporter of the arts and humanities, endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the well-being of diverse and democratic societies by supporting exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work. Additional information is available at mellon.org.

ABOUT THE OHIO ARTS COUNCIL

The Ohio Arts Council is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically. Connect with the OAC on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or visit our website at oac.ohio.gov.

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