To: Southeastern CT Council of Governments  
Re: Liaison Report  
For: SCCOG meeting Wednesday, April 15  
From: Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition

The Cultural Coalition serves 500 + partners, including museums, performing arts centers, small and large creative businesses and individual artists/performers.

Based on our Arts & Economic Prosperity study, New London County’s nonprofit arts & cultural organizations

- generate $168M annually, which includes $87M in organizational expenditures
- support 4,500 FTE jobs
- collectively facing upwards of $7 - $8M in monthly economic losses.

(The Day Article: Local arts and cultural organizations facing financial fallout from covid-19 closures, March 24)

With the current COVID pandemic:

- arts & cultural venues are currently closed to the public
- cancelled/postponed all public events - NO REVENUE for past month or foreseeable future
- cancelled/postponed fundraisers that provide vital support – challenge to fundraise during national economic crisis for individuals and families, and stock market losses
- must maintain facility utilities even when not in use
- pivoting to online strategies to maintain audiences, but free programming is not sustainable

Our partners are:

- applying for as many relief opportunities as possible as eligibility permits (Paycheck Protection Program, SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan, DECD Bridge Loan program, unemployment, etc.)

Economic recovery impacts:

- public health crisis extending into summer and peak seasons
- large indoor venues will likely be the last to open and will have to navigate impact of social distancing post-covid
- arts & cultural organizations with outdoor spaces will likely be first to re-open
- gig workers have no work and no income from cancelled/postponed events
- Tourism Fund, CT’s public funding of arts & culture & tourism in the state budget, is derived from hotel lodging tax, which is currently being decimated

How the Cultural Coalition is helping:

- conducting quick surveys to capture vital economic data for local, state and federal response
- convening arts & culture leaders on regular conference calls, including 15 CEOs and calling our partners individually
- participating in local, regional and statewide conference calls with elected officials
- sent local and state grant makers and funders data and information to request:
  - Immediate Relief – general operating support grants
  - Release from restricted grants
  - Quick Grants
  - Recovery Accelerators
- working with the Community Foundation of Eastern CT to consider establishing a relief fund for SECT’s arts and cultural organizations as part of a broader, statewide economic recovery plan

Our mission is to improve the economy, vitality and quality of life in Southeastern Connecticut by supporting the arts, cultural and creative community.
CARES Act Funding for Arts & Culture

$75M National Endowment for the Arts
- 60% ($45M) to direct grants to eligible nonprofit arts organization (must have received NEA funding in past 4 yrs)
  - only 42 organizations are eligible in CT
  - only 4 organizations eligible in SECCOG area, including Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, Florence Griswold Museum, Connecticut College/OnStage Series, CT Lyric Opera
- 40% ($35M) to State Arts Agencies, including CT Office of the Arts
  - total of $447k to be re-granted across entire state in small grants to eligible nonprofits

Additional funding in CARES Act for arts & culture across nation
- $75M to National Endowment for the Humanities (to be distributed similarly to NEA above)
- $50M to Institute of Library and Museum Services

Arts and cultural organizations, businesses, and artists are currently:

- Making decisions on a day-to-day basis regarding employees, events, relief options, cash flow, cash projections, facilities/maintenance, memberships
- Closed temporarily with no revenue coming in from admissions, fundraisers, ticket sales, events
- Postponing events and re-scheduling for tentative dates in summer months
- Artists, gig workers, arts educators and 1099 contractors have limited relief options and are seeking support for their lost work and income
- Communicating with audiences & ticket holders to provide various options (keep tickets until new date announced, refund with a request to consider donating instead, “we’ll be back” and “invest in future” messaging)
- Making changes to staff with businesses beginning layoffs, furloughs, reduction of hours, remote working, virtual meetings, creation of short-term program content, uncertainty of summer season programming
- Tapping into reserves and endowments where and when available
- Thinking about ways to be nimble, pivot, experiment and innovate to help sustain during shutdown
- Increasing social media, digital experiences, live streams and pop-up arts
- Awaiting federal and state response about loans and relief
- Creating financial projections utilizing 2, 3 and 4 month shutdown scenarios and various mitigation options

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