

SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT CULTURAL COALITION

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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.

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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