

American Rescue Plan (ARP) for the Arts: Rebuilding America's Arts and Culture Sector

In March 2021, on the first anniversary of the World Health Organization's declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) into law, which included an investment of \$135 million to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Pre-pandemic economic data (2019) shows that the arts contribute almost \$1 trillion dollars to the nation's gross domestic product, supporting the jobs of more than 5 million artists and arts workers. The NEA's allocation in this historic legislation represents a significant commitment to the arts by President Biden and Congress, and a recognition of the value of art workers and businesses to the nation's creative economy.

This investment followed the passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act in 2020, which allocated \$75 million to the National Endowment for the Arts to support the arts and culture sector across the country.

The NEA's ARP program provided funding through state and jurisdictional arts agencies, regional arts organizations, and local arts agencies – as well as directly to organizations across the country – to help the arts and culture sector recover, rebuild, and reopen. In doing so, the arts can continue to educate, inspire, and help heal individuals and our nation.

ARP FUNDING PHASES

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| I | \$52 million Distributed to 62 state and jurisdictional arts agencies and regional arts organizations for subgranting |
| II | \$20.2 million Distributed to 66 local arts agencies in 38 states for subgranting |
| III | \$57.75 million Recommended to 567 arts organizations in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, D.C. |

Grant recipients may use this funding for the preservation of jobs, facility support, costs associated with health and safety supplies, and marketing and promotion.

**figures above exclude administrative costs*

PHASE ONE

APRIL 2021 - STATE AND JURISDICTIONAL ARTS AGENCIES AND REGIONAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS FOR SUBGRANTING

In April 2021, the NEA announced the allocation of 40 percent, or \$52 million of its \$135 million in ARP funding, to 62 state and jurisdictional arts agencies and regional arts organizations for subgranting.

Regional arts organizations and state arts agencies are well-equipped to identify areas of investment that will make a significant impact at the local level, and the NEA has relied on them as trusted partners and experts to subgrant funds to best serve their communities. These subgrants reach deeper into communities big and small throughout the United States.

JUNE - AUGUST 2021 - SUMMER OF ENGAGEMENT

With the release of the ARP grant guidelines in June 2021 for Grants to Organizations and Grants to Local Arts Agencies for Subgranting, the NEA organized a bold public engagement effort. The NEA incorporated principles of equity, access, and inclusion into the implementation of this grant program. This included engaging and educating arts and culture organizations about this opportunity, particularly those that would be new to federal and NEA funding.

JUNE - AUGUST 2021 - SUMMER OF ENGAGEMENT

The engagement efforts included:

- Thirty-four ARP funding and guidelines webinars/workshops were hosted by arts and culture organizations and members of Congress, which represented a wide diversity of regions, artistic disciplines, ethnicities, and budget sizes. Select workshops were offered with ASL and Spanish translation. More than 3,000 potential applicants participated in these events.
- For the first time in its history, the NEA translated the application guidelines into Spanish and Chinese. (Corresponding translated press releases were made available on the NEA website.)
- Social media content about NEA ARP funding was directed to reach underserved populations, with tweets garnering more than 300,000 impressions and Facebook posts over 1.4 million impressions.

These engagement efforts resulted in more than 7,500 applications – of which 41 percent had not applied to the NEA within the last ten years – an unprecedented number of applications for a single NEA grant program.

PHASE TWO

NOVEMBER 2021 - LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES FOR SUBGRANTING

In November 2021, the NEA announced grants totaling \$20.2 million to 66 local arts agencies (LAAs) in 38 states for subgranting to help the arts and cultural sector recover from the pandemic.

The Arts Endowment relied on local arts agencies for their understanding of the needs of arts organizations in their communities and ability to distribute relief funding. The agency decided to support LAAs within the framework of its ARP allocation specifically for subgranting to cover operating costs that would save jobs in the arts sector, keep the doors open to arts organizations, and assist the field in its response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

PHASE THREE

JANUARY 2022 - ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

In January 2022, the NEA announced recommended grants totaling \$57.75 million to 567 arts organizations in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, D.C. to fund the preservation of jobs, facility support, costs associated with health and safety supplies, and marketing and promotion. Grant award recommendations are for \$50,000, \$100,000, or \$150,000 and do not require cost share/matching funds.

ARP FUNDING WILL REACH COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY



Latino Arts Inc. was recommended for an American Rescue Plan grant to support personnel. This Wisconsin fine arts institution is dedicated to showing the works of Hispanic and Latinx artists.



Kids in Concert was recommended for an American Rescue Plan grant to support personnel. This organization is a first-time grantee serving youth in Washington.



African Voices Communications Inc. was recommended for an American Rescue Plan grant. As African Voices celebrates its 30th Anniversary, this grant will support staff salaries for those developing public programs serving young people and adults living in New York City's low-income communities.



African Voices Scriptwriting Workshop, Spring 2020
Photo courtesy of African Voices Archives

ARP RECOMMENDED GRANTS TO ORGANIZATIONS

RECOMMENDED ARTS ORGANIZATIONS BY THE NUMBERS

79%

of the recommended applicants
are small to medium-sized organizations
(annual budget less than \$2 million)

27%

of the recommended applicants were
new to funding from the NEA

IMPACT

The arts are not only economic engines, they also provide comfort, resilience, wisdom, and a means for self-expression and connection, perhaps even more so during these challenging times.

The NEA's ARP program offers critical relief to the arts and culture field. Though the sector's needs far outweigh the available ARP funds, the NEA's \$135 million represents only a piece of the Biden Administration's significant COVID assistance relief, which also includes the Small Business Administration's Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) and Save Our Stages programs.

With a sustained focus on the inclusion of underserved communities, the NEA will pursue robust engagement to encourage eligible organizations to explore the agency's grant and educational opportunities (available on arts.gov).

As the nation's arts agency, the NEA will continue to help the arts and culture sector recover as we also lift up the roles of the arts in advancing racial equity and in healing and uniting our communities and our nation.



(Top) The local arts agency Wilson Arts in North Carolina received an ARP grant of \$150,000 for subgranting. Photo courtesy of Wilson Arts



(Above) The local arts agency Creative Waco in Texas received an ARP grant of \$250,000 for subgranting. Photo courtesy of Creative Waco



(Right) The local arts agency the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo in Ohio received an ARP grant of \$500,000 for subgranting. Photo by Swatch Studios