

Relief, Recovery, and Reform



*Lessons from the COVID-19
pandemic for arts and culture*

LA County
**ARTS &
CULTURE**

November 2025

CONTENTS

■ INTRODUCTION	5
■ CONTEXT AND HISTORY	6
■ PANDEMIC RESPONSE	10
Government	10
Philanthropy	13
Individual artists, cultural workers, and arts administrators	17
■ CASE STUDY: LOS ANGELES COUNTY GOVERNMENT	20
How relief and recovery funding was distributed	21
How relief and recovery funds were used and communities were served	27
Grantee access to other relief and recovery funding	29
Adjustments to grantmaking policies	30
■ REFORMS TO STRENGTHEN THE SECTOR	32
Reform systems for funding arts and culture	32
Build robust arts and culture emergency response infrastructure	34
Engage with larger systems beyond arts and culture	35
Take the time to discover what worked	37
■ APPENDIX	39
■ ENDNOTES	51
■ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	58

**“Support from this grant
allows us to develop new arts
and education initiatives for
communities in central LA.”**

—Who Is Your Neighborhood

**“El apoyo de este premio nos
permite desarrollar nuevas
iniciativas artisticas y educativas
para las comunidades en el
centro de Los Ángeles.”**

—Quien Es Tu Vecindario



INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic led to “the deepest downturn in the US economy since the Great Depression,”¹ but its recovery was also the fastest in history. Government, philanthropy, grassroots organizations, and individuals responded quickly and in a variety of ways. Emergency funds were established, some of them experimenting with new models.² Grantmaking rules were eased.³ Government safety net programs were modified to prevent more people from falling through the cracks.⁴ Arts organizations adapted quickly, learning how to use online tools where they could provide free programming, often reaching new audiences in far-flung locations.⁵

By 2021 the federal government had responded with \$5 trillion in spending, significantly more than the \$1.5 trillion federal response to the 2007–09 Great Recession.⁶ As a result, the economic recovery from this crisis was much faster. In total, \$17 billion was distributed to nonprofit arts and cultural industries and independent cultural workers across the US.⁷

This report documents how the Los Angeles County government invested its portion of those federal funds — combined with other local resources — into arts and culture relief and recovery, primarily in the form of grants to nonprofit organizations designed and administered by the Department of Arts and Culture. It describes policy changes made to speed up the delivery of those funds into the hands of the artists and arts organizations that urgently needed them. This report places those investments and policy adaptations into the historical context of American relief and recovery from other economic crises.

It also places this funding into the wider context of pandemic relief and recovery. Top-down responses from government and philanthropy occurred simultaneously with myriad grassroots efforts by artists, cultural workers, and arts administrators who organized within and beyond their communities both to advocate and secure funding for the most vulnerable.

The report concludes by documenting lessons learned and with reforms that can strengthen the arts and culture sector and help to harden it against future emergencies.

CONTEXT AND HISTORY

As of the middle of 2025, nearly 778.5 million people worldwide are known to have been infected by COVID-19.⁸ Nearly 7.1 million have died from the disease and more succumb to it daily. Seventeen percent of those deaths (1.23 million) were in the United States; more than 33,000 in LA County alone.⁹ Some epidemiologists talk about COVID-19 as now being an endemic disease,¹⁰ an ordinary part of our daily lives that we are still learning to live with.

The impact of the pandemic on arts and culture was immediate, widespread, and devastating, with event postponements and cancellations already being announced even before the World Health Organization's official pandemic declaration on March 11. While the full extent of the financial and economic impact will probably never be fully calculated, we have strong indicators of how profound it has been:

- In the first month of the pandemic, one national survey found that 93 percent of arts nonprofits had suspended programs, 71 percent had seen an immediate decrease in donations, and 47 percent had furloughed or laid off staff.¹¹
- In a report from a national sample of CEOs conducted nearly one year later, 77 percent of arts and culture nonprofits reported their 2020 revenue as lower than in 2019, compared to 51 percent of all other types of nonprofit organizations.¹²

- At the height of the pandemic, unemployment in the arts and culture sector surpassed 28 percent, while unemployment across all sectors was only half that.¹³
- An online survey of 33,001 creative workers¹⁴ that closed on November 24, eight months after the global pandemic was declared, found that 95 percent of respondents had lost creative income. Their overall average income fell from \$33,000 in 2019 to \$13,500 in 2020.¹⁵ One out of every three had been threatened with eviction, and more than half experienced food insecurity.
- By 2022, the United Nations estimated 10 million job losses in the cultural sector worldwide as a result of the pandemic.¹⁶

Other studies dug deeper into the impact of the pandemic by subsectors within arts and culture. For example,

- Analysis of IRS 990 data by Dance/USA found that across 708 dance organizations nationwide, total revenue in FY2021 was 73 percent of what it had been in FY2018.¹⁷ While total revenue nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels in FY2022 in absolute dollars, it had not kept up with the rate of inflation.
- A survey of arts nonprofits in Washington State found median losses of 44 percent in earned revenue from 2019 to 2020.¹⁸ An increase in \$35.7 million in contributed revenue was not nearly enough to cover the loss of \$131.6 million in earned revenue.

In LA County, the pandemic brought to a sudden halt ten years of unprecedented growth in the creative industries.¹⁹ After years of growth, employment in the Fine and Performing Arts (as defined by the *Otis Report on the Creative Industries*) fell in 2020 to nearly the same level it had been in 2007.²⁰ By April 6 that year, MOCA,²¹ the Hammer Museum,²² and The Broad²³ had laid off a combined 377 workers, and more layoffs would soon follow.

Financial precarity was a norm for LA County arts and culture nonprofits even before the pandemic. Analysis of data from 512 arts nonprofits found they entered the pandemic with an average of 3.7 months of operating cash on hand, but the median was 1.9 months, meaning half of them had little more than eight weeks of funding to make it through a financial emergency.²⁴ In September 2020, nonprofit arts organizations applying for LA County COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund²⁵ reported total eligible losses and expenses of \$230.7 million.²⁶ Ninety percent said they had experienced revenue losses of 25 percent or greater, and 51 percent had laid off at least one employee.

The US economy as a whole recovered far more quickly than had been projected in the early days of the pandemic. By December 2023, the share of Americans with jobs had surpassed the pre-pandemic labor participation rate in February 2020.²⁷ Using the wider definition included in the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) Arts and Cultural Satellite Production Account, the arts and cultural industries²⁸ were in recovery too, as their combined contribution to the

American economy reached an all-time high of \$1.1 trillion in 2022.²⁹ However, the recovery was not consistent across the sector. In January 2022 when jobs were in recovery nationwide, unemployment the arts and culture sector as defined by SMU DataArts³⁰ actually increased.³¹ In 2023, one study found that theaters were not producing as many shows as they did before the pandemic, which was leading to lower revenue.³² A 2024 study found that visitor rates to nearly half of all US museums had not returned to pre-pandemic levels.³³

As the effect of pandemic closures surged through the economy, many people drew parallels to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Leaders across arts, culture, and the humanities called for the launch of relief and recovery programs like those from the New Deal's Works Progress Administration (WPA) that put painters, sculptors, musicians, actors, writers, and other creatives back to work.³⁴ While a handful of small COVID-era programs were funded that directly put artists to work, pandemic relief and recovery funding more commonly took the form of direct payments to individuals or organizations, as will be described below. Significant federal funds were distributed like block grants to state and local governments, which then decided how those dollars would be distributed.

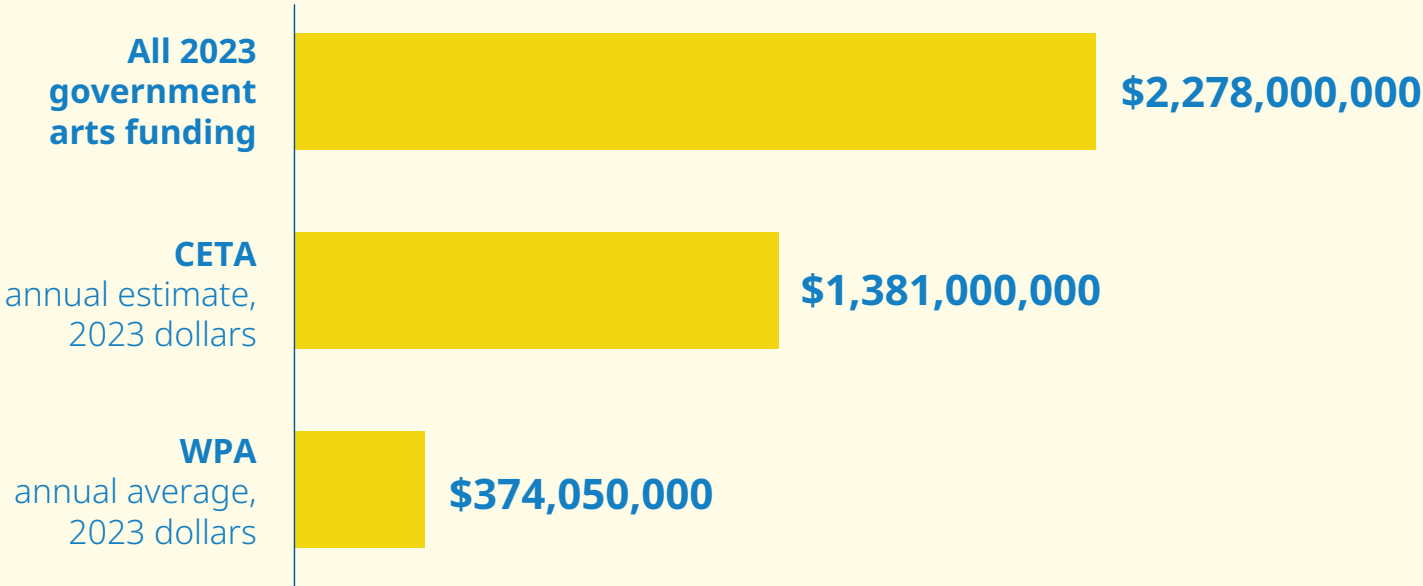
As many advocates noted, there have been two notable periods in American history when significant federal funds were invested in the arts and culture sector. The WPA is perhaps the better known of the two. The second is the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) signed into law in 1973 by President Richard Nixon during the worst global recession since World War II.³⁵ CETA funds were distributed directly to city and county governments to support local priorities. While no funds were set aside specifically for arts and culture, artists across the US applied for and successfully secured CETA grants.³⁶

At the height of pandemic relief and recovery funding in 2023, all government investments in the arts at the state, local, and federal levels — relief funding combined with regular ongoing funding — totaled nearly \$2.3 billion.³⁷

Figure 1 shows how that compares to WPA³⁸ and CETA³⁹ funds, adjusted to 2023 dollars.

Another major component of the New Deal was that it included legislation to prevent similar kinds of economic disasters in the future. It was not limited to providing relief and recovery funding. Between 1933 and 1939, as projects such as the WPA and Farm Security Administration were launched and Social Security established, laws were passed banning commercial banks from high-risk investment banking, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) was created to safeguard savings, child labor was banned, and American workers were given the legal right to organize.⁴⁰ Regulation of the systems that had led to economic collapse was an equal component of President Franklin Roosevelt’s plan for “relief, recovery, and reform.”⁴¹

Figure 1: WPA and CETA funding compared to government funding for the arts at the height of COVID-19 pandemic relief and recovery





00:00:06:24 1000 42500

1/200

Kart Yok 44dk

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Response to the economic and financial impact of the pandemic was complicated, multilayered, improvisational, and at times confusing, though not only within the arts and culture sector. A 2021 study in the three-county Bay Area region of California revealed how the complexity of relief funding was experienced by artists and arts organizations trying to navigate the waters as short-term programs emerged and disappeared, and as grantmaking rules were modified. While the study found 140 discrete funds available to artists and small-budget cultural organizations at some point during the pandemic, “An overwhelming number of relief funds, and scattershot communication, made finding and accessing the right funds difficult.”⁴² Moreover, those funds were unevenly distributed across the three-county region.

Relief and recovery funds for the arts and culture sector can be sorted into three main types of sources:

GOVERNMENT

PHILANTHROPY

**INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS,
CULTURAL WORKERS, AND
ARTS ADMINISTRATORS**

While government had the funding, capacity, and authority to reach the largest number of artists, arts nonprofits, and arts businesses, philanthropy had significantly more flexibility

to change existing funding rules or launch new programs. Individual artists, cultural workers, and arts administrators had the deepest experiential knowledge of how the pandemic was affecting themselves and their peers and they had the widest grassroots networks, but they had the fewest resources, including money, time, and infrastructure.

Government

On March 12, the day after WHO declared the pandemic, the city of Boston announced they had modified their Opportunity Fund and reopened it as the Boston Artist Relief Fund, designed to make grants of \$500 to individual artists “whose creative practices and incomes are being adversely impacted” by the pandemic.⁴³ The city government partnered with the Boston Center for the Arts to accept donations from the public, and the Mayor’s Office of Arts and Culture allocated additional funding.⁴⁴ Five days later, on March 17, the Mayor of Seattle announced the launch of an Arts Recovery Package that included \$100,000 in relief for artists and creative workers as well as a \$1 million Arts Stabilization Fund.⁴⁵

The largest share of arts and culture relief funding, however, came from the federal government. This was administered primarily through four mechanisms:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG)
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act

PPP and SVOG were administered by the US Small Business Administration. CARES and ARP funds were split: one portion of each set of funds was administered by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), while a much larger share was sent to state and local governments to be redistributed based on local priorities.⁴⁶ Of these four programs, SVOG was the only one designated exclusively for arts and culture.

In total, \$75 million in CARES funding was allocated to the NEA to support the arts and culture sector.⁴⁷ After passage of the ARP, an additional \$135 million was allocated to the NEA, which regranted 40 percent of the funds to regional and state arts agencies, to be redistributed locally.

In its analysis of federal funding, SMU DataArts used three different definitions of arts and culture.⁴⁸ The broadest definition that includes both nonprofit and for-profit organizations and is used by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis⁴⁹ shows the industry received nearly \$53 billion in total relief funding from these four sources. The narrowest definition that focuses on the nonprofit arts and culture sector shows slightly over \$16 billion in federal relief, the equivalent of “twice [the amount] of funds awarded over 24 years (2000–2023) both to nonprofits and state and regional agencies by the NEA and IMLS, the main pre-pandemic sources of federal arts funding.”⁵⁰ It is important to note that these totals do not include CARES or ARP funds administered directly by local governments.

The share of those federal funds that went to LA County arts nonprofits (the narrowest definition) is estimated to total \$1.32 billion.⁵¹ Using the broader BEA definition of the arts and culture sector that includes for-profit entities, federal relief and recovery dollars received by LA County businesses, artists, and arts organizations was more than \$3.34 billion.

Beyond these totals, CARES set aside nearly \$340 billion for state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments, while ARP set aside \$350 billion. Those recipients then made decisions about how to invest the moneys, and many chose to invest at least a portion in arts and culture. The City of St. Louis, MO, for example, allocated \$10.6 million out of their nearly \$499 million in ARP funds (2.1 percent of the total) to the Regional Arts Commission.⁵² The City of Winston-Salem, NC, allocated \$1 million out of its nearly \$52 million in ARP funds (almost two percent) to its local arts agency⁵³ to participate in a National League of Cities’ arts and wellness project.⁵⁴

LA County received \$1.22 billion in CARES funds,⁵⁵ of which \$12 million (nearly one percent) was distributed to arts nonprofits by the Department of Arts and Culture. The County received \$1.9 billion in ARP funding,⁵⁶ of which \$31.4 million (about 1.7 percent) was distributed to arts nonprofits and other nonprofits that use the arts to meet their mission. Details about how these funds were distributed will be described in the Case Study section.

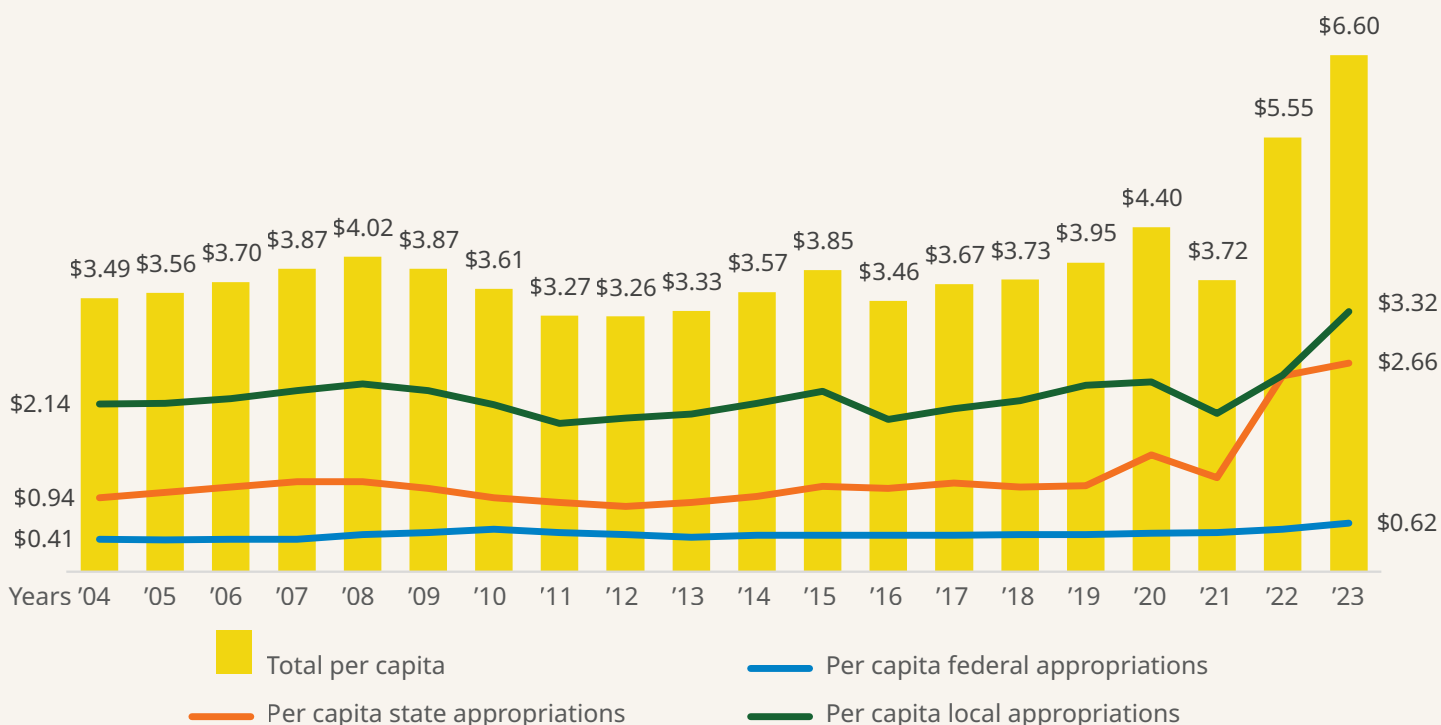
Of the total \$2.3 billion in 2023 arts funding shown earlier in Figure 1, the largest share (48 percent) was distributed by local governments. This included revenues from local sources as well as federal ARPA funds. Another 43 percent was distributed by state governments, and similarly included state sources and ARPA. A little over nine percent was distributed by the NEA directly.

The 2023 column in Figure 2 shows these same dollars but on a per capita basis, and how total government spending has changed over time. Total per capita government investments in the arts experienced a nearly 16 percent decline from 2020 to 2021, but

2022 and 2023 saw dramatic increases, with the total ultimately rising more than 50 percent from \$4.40 per capita in 2020 to \$6.60 in 2023⁵⁷. Much of this can be attributed to federal relief funds distributed at the state and local level. In that time, state arts allocations saw the largest increase, followed by local arts allocations, and a small increase at the national level.

While figures changed within each level of government, their rank order remained constant as they have since 2004, with local governments providing the greatest investment, state governments second, and federal investments well behind in third place.

Figure 2: Per capita spending on the arts by local, state, and federal appropriations, 2004–2023⁵⁸



Data source: *Public Funding for the Arts 2023*, Grantmakers in the Arts

Philanthropy

Soon after COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic and stay-at-home orders were announced across the US, the Council on Foundations (COF) issued an urgent call for philanthropic funders to take action to support nonprofit organizations and the people they serve.⁵⁹ Among their specific recommendations were the following:

- Loosen or eliminate restrictions on current and future grants,
- Postpone or eliminate reporting requirements,
- Contribute to community-based emergency response funds, and
- Take time to learn lessons from their emergency response that could become ongoing practices.

More than 800 organizations signed COF's pledge to take action. Many private foundations enacted these and other changes in an effort to increase the flow of funding and adjust funding channels to meet emergent needs. Later that summer as the racial justice movement accelerated after the murder of George Floyd, many funders focused their relief and recovery on communities of color, which, as has been well documented, experienced the greatest health and economic impacts of the pandemic.⁶⁰

In addition to adjusting rules and reallocating existing funds, new pandemic relief and recovery projects and initiatives were launched. What follows are short descriptions of five such notable, high-profile programs.

■ *Artist Relief*

Perhaps the very first philanthropic response to the pandemic in arts and culture began with a phone call a day or two after WHO declared a global pandemic, when Kristy Edmunds, Executive and Artistic Director of the Center for the Art of Performance at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), reached out to colleagues at United States Artists.⁶¹ They ultimately brought together seven partner organizations⁶² and by April 8 had secured \$10 million to establish Artist Relief. The Artist Relief partners built a new grantmaking ecosystem from scratch, mobilizing “scores of individual arts administrators, coders, application designers, communications mavericks, funders, network weavers, reviewers, compliance officers, resources gatherers, data collectors, grantmakers, donor stewards, evaluators, and thought partners around a single cause: to support artists in dire need.”⁶³

By June 2021, Artist Relief completed 13 rounds of funding, distributing a total of \$23.4 million in emergency grants of \$5,000 each to 4,682 practicing artists across US states and territories, and Tribal Nations.⁶⁴ Equity was built into the review process, as they prioritized applicants based on vulnerability categories designed to benefit artists from historically underrepresented communities. In the 15 months of its existence, more than 61 funding partners and an unnamed number of individual donors contributed funds, while some 52 vetting partners provided administrative support. Need for these emergency grants was as broad as it was urgent. Artist Relief received nearly 170,000 applications but was only able to fund 2.5 percent of them.⁶⁵

The significant amount of labor required to complete this entire project over nine months was accompanied by “the pains of having to decline 157,000 requests.”⁶⁶

■ ***Creatives Rebuild New York***

Launched in July 2021 by the Mellon Foundation (\$115 million) in partnership with the Ford Foundation (\$5 million) and Stavros Niarchos Foundation (\$5 million), the initiative emerged from a 2021 statewide convening organized to develop policy recommendations for a more equitable recovery.⁶⁷ CRNY supported individual artists and arts organizations through two mechanisms.

The Artist Employment Program (AEP) funded full-time employment for 300 artists at more than 100 community-based organizations across the state.⁶⁸ The Guaranteed Income for Artists (GIA) program provided \$1,000 monthly payments to 2,400 New York State artists and culture bearers for 18 months.⁶⁹ Both programs prioritized artists who were BIPOC, immigrant, LGBTQIAP+, Deaf or disabled, as well as those involved with the criminal legal system, living at or near poverty, or living in rural areas.⁷⁰ Demand for the GIA program well outstripped supply, with more than 19,000 applicants being turned away due to lack of funding.

“This impactful grant will help support our early education and youth apprenticeship programs creating more accessible employment pathways in entertainment, gaming, media, and tech for underrepresented groups.”

—BRIC Foundation

■ ***America's Cultural Treasures***

One of the largest single philanthropic responses in arts and culture was the Ford Foundation's "America's Cultural Treasures" (ACT), a nationwide two-part initiative launched in 2020 to provide capacity building and general operating support to organizations "that have been historically marginalized, underfunded, and under-represented in the narrative of American culture."⁷¹ Ford Foundation invested \$85 million from a social bond offering and raised more than \$276 million from at least 40 other foundations.⁷² With those funds, they made grants to regional partners across the US who in turn regranted the money to local organizations, along with matching funds.⁷³

■ ***NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund***

When Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Ford Foundation initiated this fund on March 20 with 15 other lead funding partners, they made the decision to fund both human services and arts and culture nonprofit organizations. By April 16 they announced \$44 million in grants and interest-free loans to 276 organizations in New York City.⁷⁴ As more donors contributed, additional funds were distributed, eventually totaling \$110 million.⁷⁵ \$73.1 million in grants were issued by The New York Community Trust to 750 nonprofits, while \$37 million in loans were issued by the Nonprofit Finance Fund to 45 nonprofits. The fund received \$77 million in requests from 837 arts and culture nonprofits. Of those, 381 organizations were funded, for a total of \$29.4 million.⁷⁶ Seventy-four percent of those funds were spent on personnel costs.

■ ***LA Arts Recovery Fund***

In 2020, the J. Paul Getty Trust brought together a group of local funders to jointly establish the LA Arts Recovery Fund, a "coordinated philanthropic response... to ensure the health and vitality of the arts and culture ecosystem across LA County during and beyond the pandemic."⁷⁷ In addition to contributions from local philanthropies, funds were secured from the Mellon Foundation, the Ford Foundation's ACT initiative, and 17 additional funders.⁷⁸ The LA County Department of Arts and Culture's \$500,000 contribution was from funds received from the Ford Theatre Foundation (unrelated to the Ford Foundation⁷⁹) as it closed operations. The Director of the Department served on the steering committee for this public-private partnership.

The LA Arts Recovery Fund was administered by the California Community Foundation. Grants staff at the Department of Arts and Culture provided technical assistance, supporting the development of guidelines, application, and panelist review criteria as well as review of applications. Nonprofit organizations or fiscally sponsored organizations with principal offices in LA County and whose primary mission was arts and culture programming were eligible to apply. Applications were reviewed by a community panel, based on five key criteria:

- Artistic impact;
- Community engagement;
- Diversity of cultural expression;
- Organizational leadership and vision; and
- Financial conditions.

3In May 2021, the LA Arts Recovery Fund announced grants totaling \$36.1 million to 90 small- and mid-sized cultural organizations. Fifteen of these grantees that identified as Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous organizations received three-year grants of between \$64,000 and \$2 million as part of Ford Foundation’s America’s Cultural Treasures initiative. The remaining 75 grantees received two-year grants of between \$5,000 and \$1.5 million. The Fund ultimately secured and regranted \$40.2 million in total funds.⁸⁰

Combined, pandemic era adjustments to funding practices and new initiatives translated into measurable changes in the distribution of philanthropic dollars at the national level. In 2020, philanthropic giving to *Arts, culture and humanities* organizations⁸¹ fell by an inflation-adjusted 3.6 percent from the prior year, though it bounced back with increases in each subsequent year (see Figure 3).⁸² By 2023, giving to the sector was more than one-quarter greater than it had been before the pandemic, though when inflation is taken into account, the value of the increase was 7.3 percent. The share of all giving that went to *Arts, culture and humanities* organizations rose to 1.0 percent in 2023, for a total of \$25.3 billion.

Figure 3: Change in total philanthropic giving to *Arts, culture and humanities* organizations

Year	Total giving to <i>Arts, culture and humanities</i>	Share of all giving	Change over previous year (current dollars)	Change over previous year (inflation adjusted)
2019	\$19.8 billion	0.8%	n/a	n/a
2020	\$19.3 billion	0.8%	-2.4%	-3.6%
2021	\$20.9 billion	0.8%	+8.3%	+3.5%
2022	\$22.8 billion	0.9%	+9.0	+0.9%
2023	\$25.3 billion	1.0%	+11.0	+6.6%

Data source: 2023 Giving Overview, Giving USA Foundation

Individual artists, cultural workers, and arts administrators

Many Americans were introduced to the concept of “mutual aid” in 2020 as individuals self-organized into groups to provide material support to one another, particularly in communities (geographic or demographic) where government was slower to act.⁸³ Mutual aid groups are generally made up of relative equals who join together on a basis of solidarity and cooperation rather than charity, to ensure that specific needs of all members of the group are met.

Artists, cultural workers, and arts administrators were no different. Most mutual aid efforts, in the arts and elsewhere, were never formally documented. Many were short term by design. A few examples that provide a sense of the range of projects include the following:

- LA-based performance artist Kristina Wong organized the Auntie Sewing Squad, a network made up primarily of women of color who eventually sewed 350,000 masks and distributed them to frontline workers. Wong’s Squad went on to distribute a wide range of personal protection equipment and supplies to the Navajo Nation.⁸⁴ A book written by and about the collective, *The Auntie Sewing Squad Guide to Mask Making, Radical Care, and Racial Justice*, was published in 2021.⁸⁵ Wong’s one-woman play about the experience, *Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord*, was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2022.

- A Washington, DC-based organization called POSTBINARY created an online directory of independent artists impacted by the pandemic, most of whom identified as Black, Indigenous, non-white, and Trans or Queer.⁸⁶ Their Instagram account encouraged people to support these artists by purchasing their work.
- DC Comics publisher Jim Lee and illustrator Rob Liefeld auctioned off drawings and donated the funds to comic bookstores that had to close due to the pandemic.⁸⁷
- Theatre artist Nick Green launched a Social Distancing Festival⁸⁸ to showcase the work of artists like him, whose performances and events had been shut down.
- Visual artist Lauren Halsey launched the Summaeverythang Cultural Center in South LA shortly before the pandemic was declared. While food distribution was not her original plan, she began gathering donated organic produce and making it available to the local community,⁸⁹ an area historically underserved by grocery stores selling healthy food.⁹⁰

Individual artists made work and sold it. Some donated the proceeds to mutual aid groups. Arts administrators bought art and masks made by artists, or donated their personal relief checks to artists who were unable to pay their bills. Crowdfunding appeals were created and money was donated. Grassroots responses to the economic and financial crisis were as varied as the arts ecology and the players in it.

■ ***Cultural Solidarity Fund***

One of the largest arts and culture mutual aid efforts nationally was the Cultural Solidarity Fund (CSF), founded in New York City in November 2020 by a group of arts administrators and cultural workers. Their goal was to redistribute cash to support individual artists and cultural workers.⁹¹ Spearheaded by artist Ximena Garnica and Randi Berry of IndieSpace, a coalition was quickly established that took the concept of mutual aid to scale. More than 20 administrators and cultural workers raised and redistributed funds, providing \$500 unrestricted grants to 2,030 people over a three-year period. This “money moving coalition” as they called it was created to transfer as much money to as many community members as possible. Foundations provided 83 percent of their budget.

CSF set the grant amount low enough that it would not trigger reporting to the IRS and therefore could go to a wider range of recipients including undocumented artists and cultural workers. CSF prioritized BIPOC, immigrant, disabled, and gender-nonconforming people. Recipients included the full range of people working in the arts: artists, administrators, production staff, custodians, ushers, guards, and others. Their goal was to give a grant to every individual who applied, and they came very close to achieving it. Over time, they discovered the amount of labor needed to administer and distribute these funds was far greater than they had planned for, which led the organization that housed the CSF (IndieSpace) to increase their administrative fee from two percent to ten percent.⁹²

■ ***Seattle Relief Fund***

Another mutual aid fund by and for artists that achieved scale was launched by Ijeoma Oluo, Ebony Arunga, and Gabriel Teodros in March 2020 through a GoFundMe. Within a week they had raised \$100,000 and partnered with a local nonprofit, LANGSTON, to formalize the program as the Seattle Relief Fund. They ultimately raised nearly \$1 million – some of which came from the City of Seattle – that was distributed to more than 2,000 artists.⁹³

Another model emerged in LA County when the leaders of several small- and mid-sized organizations presenting visual arts met in March 2020 to discuss how to cope with the closures and support each other.⁹⁴ Together, they founded the LA Visual Arts (LAVA) Coalition to raise money and redistribute it among their member organizations, in three distinct initiatives for health care, capacity building, and economic recovery. By 2023, the LAVA Coalition had grown to 33 member organizations that had raised and shared \$2.66 million.⁹⁵

At the same time, arts service organizations across all disciplines began offering heightened services and support to connect their constituents during the pandemic. While most were unable to provide financial resources to their members and constituents, they served as reliable sources of information about rapidly changing policy changes and grant opportunities. They sought to keep their networks connected and support their morale.



CASE STUDY: LOS ANGELES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Between 2020 and 2024, the government of Los Angeles County set aside more than \$43.4 million in federal relief and recovery funding to be redistributed by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture). Arts and Culture secured additional funding and ultimately distributed nearly

\$46.1 million, making 2,396 grants to 770 grantees, distributed through ten mechanisms that came from four sources, as seen in Figure 4. Funds that originated at the federal level are highlighted in yellow.

Figure 4: Relief and recovery funds distributed by Arts and Culture, by source

Fund title	Source	Year distributed	Total amount	Number of grantees
California Arts Council CARES Relief Funds	CARES Act (via California Arts Council)	2020	\$16,000	16
COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund	CARES Act	2020	\$12,000,000	337
2nd District Arts and Culture Recovery	LA County 2nd Supervisorial District Discretionary Funds	2022	\$920,000	80
CRLA Arts for Justice-Involved Youth	American Rescue Plan	2023	\$2,817,016	105
CRLA Creative Career Pathways for Youth	American Rescue Plan	2023	\$3,006,771	178
CRLA Creative Works and Jobs for Artists	American Rescue Plan	2023	\$4,714,565	440
CRLA Reopening Culture, Tourism, and Marketing	American Rescue Plan	2023 & 2024	\$6,677,146	537
CRLA Arts Relief and Recovery	American Rescue Plan	2023	\$14,202,310	652
LA County Performing Arts Recovery	Ford Theatre Foundation	2023	\$1,200,000	40
Recovery Grant for Arts Service Organizations	American Rescue Plan (via National Endowment for the Arts)	2024	\$500,000	11
TOTAL	All sources		\$46,053,807	770 (unduplicated count)

A more detailed summary of each grant program is provided in the appendix.

Beyond funds administered by the Department of Arts and Culture, the County supported the arts through two other ARP-funded programs.⁹⁶ \$750,000 was allocated to the LA County Museum of Art (LACMA) for *Arts Education Program for Vulnerable LA County Schools*, with LACMA using the funds to provide arts programming in partnership with schools, public libraries, community centers, and artists. The Department of Parks and Recreation included arts and crafts alongside children's sports and other out-of-school engagements as part of their \$1.7 million *Recreation Programming at County Parks* program.

In addition to these direct grants to organizations and artists, Arts and Culture presented the Free Concerts Program in 2021 as a way to provide financial support to musicians who were impacted by venue closures but are usually ineligible for the department's grant programs. Sixty bands were hired for a total of \$516,650 (excluding staff administrative costs) to provide 209 free summer concerts in LA County Parks and Libraries over an eight-week period. These concerts served the public by combatting isolation, allowing communities to safely gather to experience the arts.

How relief and recovery funding was distributed

The LA County Board of Supervisors allocated \$12 million in CARES funds to arts and culture, almost one percent of the total \$1.22 billion the County received. They allocated \$31.4 million in ARP funds to arts and culture, nearly 1.7 percent of total \$1.9 billion the

County received. CARES funds were only available to nonprofit organizations⁹⁷ whose primary mission was in arts and culture. ARP funds were also made available to non-arts nonprofits that utilize arts and culture to achieve their mission. ARP funds were administered through five different mechanisms, collectively referred to as Creative Recovery LA (CRLA).

Ensuring that CARES and ARP federal relief and recovery funds would be set aside for arts and culture occurred through internal advocacy led by the Director of the Department and Chief Deputy, which ultimately became an all-of-department endeavor. Staff from every division in the Department contributed to the development of proposals, responding to multiple rounds of questions and revisions to ensure they were aligned with both federal and County requirements. External advocacy from the arts and culture community also helped to ensure that these funds were allocated.

The LA County Department of Arts and Culture secured an additional \$16,000 in CARES funding through a competitive grant from the California Arts Council (CAC), all of which was re-granted to 16 arts nonprofits providing programming in struggling or precarious areas of LA, and who prioritized communities of color or underserved populations. Arts and Culture also secured an additional \$500,000 in ARP funding through a competitive grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), all of which was re-granted equally (\$45,455) to 11 arts service organizations.⁹⁸

In addition to one-time federal dollars, local funds contributed to relief and recovery. The Second District Arts and Culture Recovery Grant and the LA County Performing Arts Recovery Grant were not funded by federal sources but each by a separate local source. Funds for the Second District Arts and Culture Recovery Grant were provided by the office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas as he left County service, from his discretionary funds. Funds for the LA County Performing Arts Recovery Grant were provided by the Ford Theatre Foundation as it closed operations.

Each of the CRLA grant funds was designed in response to a different need or priority. The *Arts Relief and Recovery* fund was the most general, with arts organizations or non-arts organizations that provide arts and culture programming eligible. *Arts for Justice Involved Youth* and *Creative Career Pathways for Youth* were designed for organizations serving youth. *Creative Works and Jobs for Artists* funds were available to organizations that planned to engage artists for creative works and artist-led projects. *Reopening Culture, Tourism, and Marketing* funds went to eligible organizations that could demonstrate how they would use those funds for marketing and promotion of arts programming, both virtual and in-person. Applicant organizations could apply to as many of these funds as they were eligible for.

Administration of these one-time grant programs was time and labor intensive for Arts and Culture staff. For example, on the CRLA grant program alone, staff provided 14 application workshops and “virtual office hours” sessions, nine of them online and five

in person. A total of 998 individuals registered and 682 (68 percent) attended.

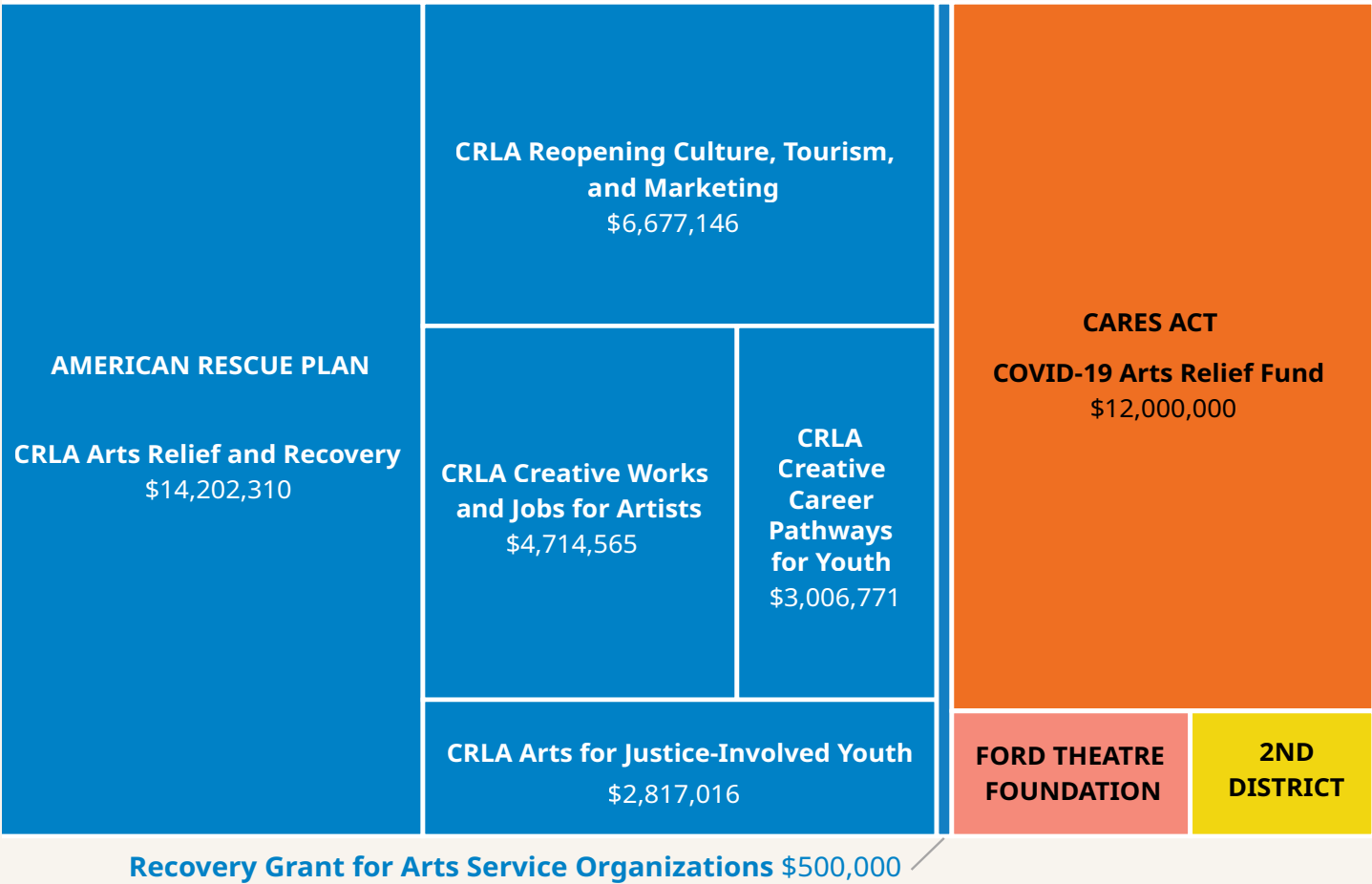
For each relief and recovery grant program, a unique set of eligibility guidelines, application forms, application review processes, funding distribution mechanisms, communications, data analysis, and reporting had to be developed. Staff in divisions across the department were called on to provide support to Grants staff, who led the process and did the bulk of the work. Those tasks were completed by staff on top of their existing workloads, and Arts and Culture’s long-standing core grant programs were also completed on schedule as they are every year. Therefore, while administrative costs cannot be quantified, high levels of stress and burnout must be recognized, as people sought to keep their loved ones and communities safe, educate children and care for elders, and meet basic needs, all while also responding to the impact of the pandemic on artists and arts nonprofits.

Seeking to reduce the burden on staff, improve the speed at which funds could be distributed to grantees, allow multiple grant programs to take place concurrently, and increase grantmaking flexibility, Arts and Culture contracted with third-party providers to administer two of these funds. Creative Recovery LA (ARP funds) was administered by Community Partners⁹⁹ and the LA County Performing Arts Recovery Grant (Ford Theatre Foundation) was administered by the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI).¹⁰⁰ The total amount spent on external contracts and administrative costs beyond existing staff and administrative structures came to nearly \$950,000. In the end, this effort did succeed in increasing

flexibility that allowed for a small set of grants to individual artists (within the Performing Arts Recovery Grant), but the burden on staff to administer and oversee the work of contractors remained significant, and working through third-party providers did not significantly hasten the movement of funds to grantees.

More than 95 percent of all relief and recovery funds administered by Arts and Culture came from the federal government. As Figure 5 shows, nearly 70 percent of the total came through ARP and 26 percent through CARES.

Figure 5: Relief and recovery funds distributed by Arts and Culture



Not visible at this scale: California Arts Council CARES Relief Funds (\$16,000)

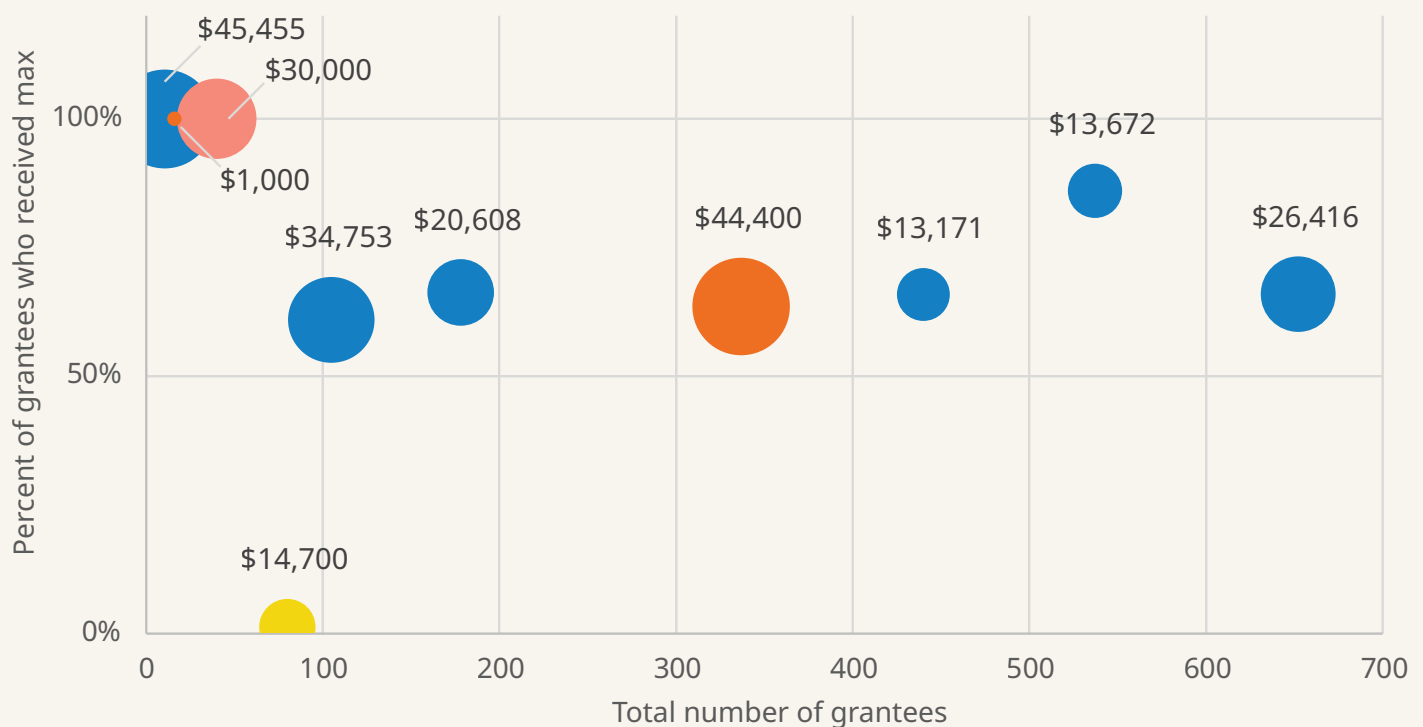
Legend

Creative Recovery LA
COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund
LA County Performing Arts Recovery
2nd District Arts and Culture Recovery

Each of these ten programs had different eligibility requirements (see the appendix for details for each program). For seven of these programs (CARES- and ARP-funded grant programs as well as the Second District program), once all applications had been received, a maximum grant amount was set based on total dollars available and number of eligible applicants. Funds were then allocated

based on the organization's budget size, as determined by revenue. For all but one of these programs, more than half of all grantees received the maximum possible (see Figure 6). For the remaining three programs, all grantees received equal funding. For all ten grant programs, every eligible organization received funding.

Figure 6: Maximum grant per program and percent of grantees who received the maximum



Bubble size represents average grant size

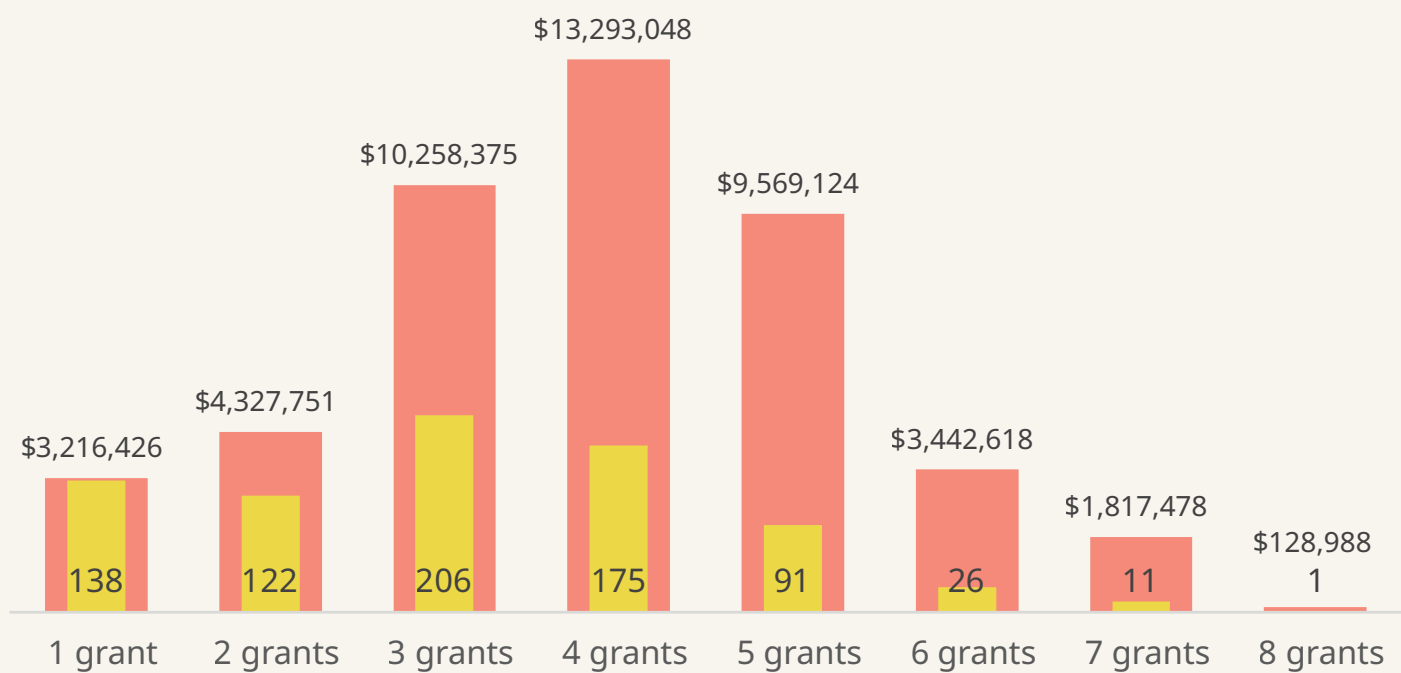
Legend

Creative Recovery LA
COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund
LA County Performing Arts Recovery
2nd District Arts and Culture Recovery

The LA County Performing Arts Recovery grant was the only grant where individual artists and producers as well as for-profit businesses were eligible to apply. Forty recipients were selected through a panel review process, each of which received the maximum award of \$30,000.

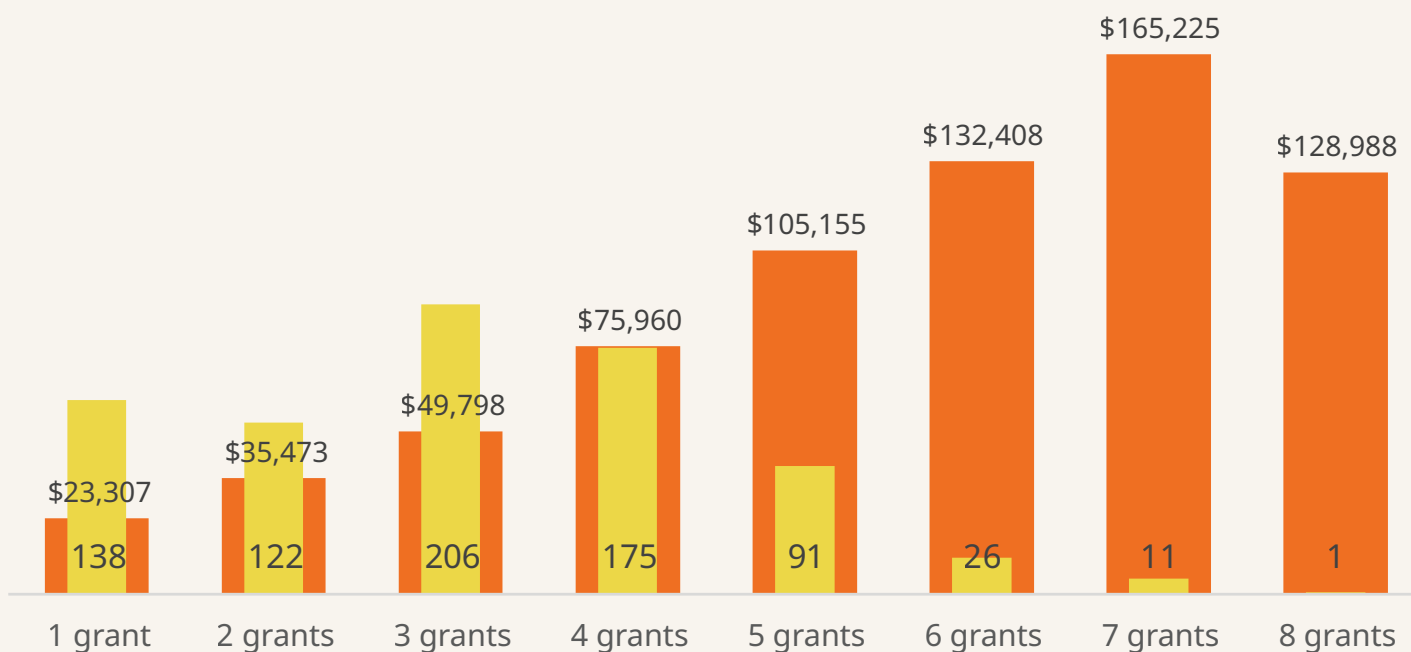
As Figure 7 shows, more than 82 percent of the total 770 grantees received more than one grant. Combined, they received nearly 93 percent of all dollars. While Figure 7 shows the total dollar amount received by each grouping, Figure 8 shows the average amount received by each grouping, organized by the number of grants they received.

Figure 7: Distribution of funds by number of grants received



This chart is indexed to organizations who received one grant. Yellow columns represent the number of organizations who received that number of grants, while the pink columns represent the total dollar amount received by those organizations.

Figure 8: Average amount of funding received by number of grants received



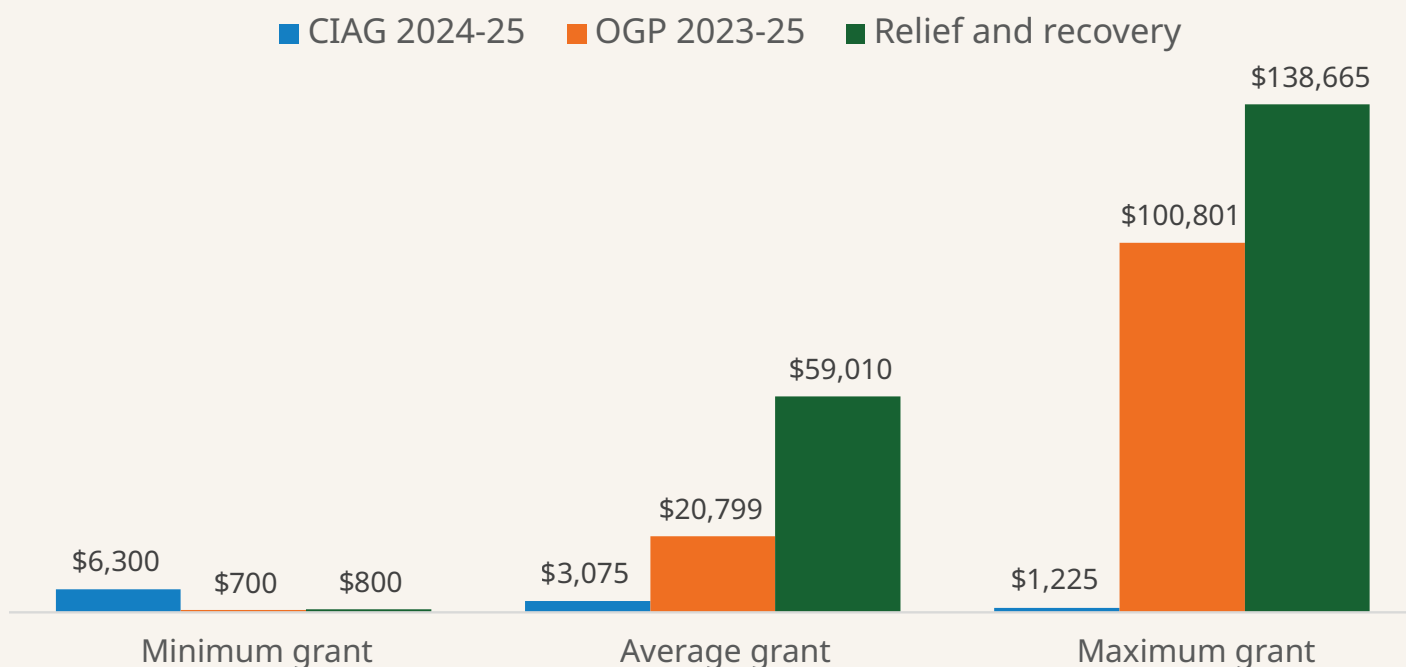
This chart is indexed to organizations who received four grants. Yellow columns represent the number of organizations who received that number of grants, while the orange columns represent the average amount of relief and recovery funding received by each of those organizations.

While the largest share of grantees received three grants (26.8 percent), the largest share of funds went to grantees who received four grants (28.9 percent).

The smallest total amount of relief and recovery funding received by a single organization was \$800 while the largest amount was \$198,475. The average total amount of relief and recovery funding per grantee was \$59,810.

The combined total dollar amount of relief and recovery funding administered across the four years — \$46 million — was seven times greater than Arts and Culture’s annual grant funding to nonprofit organizations (\$6,418,000 in FY2024–25). Figure 9 shows how relief and recovery funding compares to LA County’s ongoing arts and culture grants programs.

Figure 9: Relief and recovery funds compared to existing LA County arts and culture grant programs

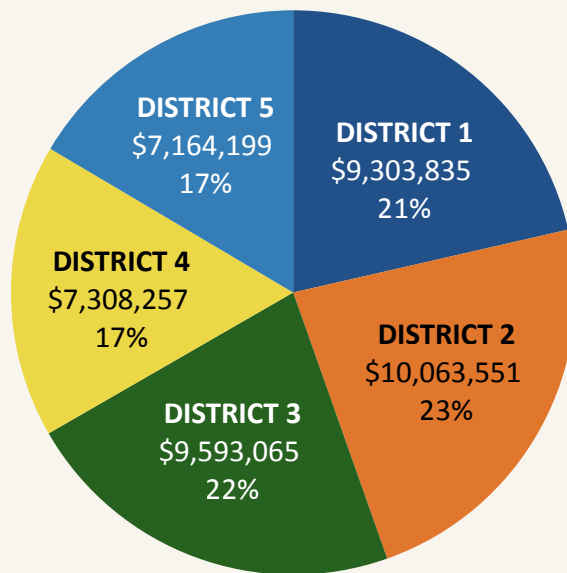


How relief and recovery funds were used and communities were served

As part of relief and recovery applications, grantees reported which of the five County Board of Supervisors districts they serve.¹⁰¹ Twenty percent reported that they serve only one district, while 47 percent reported they

serve all five.¹⁰² Figure 10 shows how total dollars of funding were distributed to the five LA County supervisorial districts, based on grantee reporting.¹⁰³ The district that received the largest share, District 2, was the only one that provided a special grant program for organizations with headquarters located in their district.

Figure 10: Distribution of relief and recovery funding, by all County Supervisorial Districts served



The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been unequal, with low-income communities and communities of color hit hardest.¹⁰⁴ When ARP regulations were written at the federal level and when LA County was developing local-level guidelines for spending, both set priorities to ensure that funds were disbursed in proportion to impact on communities. Each census tract in LA County was designated by level of need on a five-point scale.¹⁰⁵ Arts and Culture established eligibility requirements to reflect these priorities. As a result, more than 80 percent of all CRLA funds went to organizations located in or providing services in high or highest need census tracts, or within a one-mile radius of those tracts.

CRLA grantees were asked to identify the primary community they serve. While 40 percent reported that they served a general audience, 15 percent primarily served children

and youth (ages 0–17), 13 percent primarily served Black, Indigenous, or people of color communities, six percent primarily served low-income communities, and three percent primarily served individuals with disabilities. Other communities primarily served by more than two percent of grantees included young adults (age 18–24), LGBTQ+ individuals, and justice-impacted youth.

Uses for the funds remained fairly consistent throughout the period of relief and recovery funding. In 2020, the top three uses for funding reported by the 337 recipients of CARES-funded COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund were

- Payroll (83 percent)
- Insurance (57 percent)
- Rent (56 percent)

Two years later, the 652 recipients of ARP-funded CRLA Relief and Recovery funding reported they would use the moneys as follows:

- Payroll and benefits (74 percent)
- Rent (50 percent)
- Maintenance of existing equipment or facilities (41 percent)

The CRLA grant program had the further effect of expanding the creative community served by Arts and Culture. Thirty-nine percent of CRLA grantees were not already grantees of LA County's Organizational Grant Program (OGP) or Community Impact Arts Grants (CIAG) program. Twenty-nine percent had never received a grant from Arts and Culture before. Subsequently, many of them have successfully applied to one of these programs, bringing the total number of grantees across these two programs to 684 as of the 2024–25 fiscal year.

Grantee access to other relief and recovery funding

The funding provided for arts and culture by LA County, while significant, was dwarfed by the needs of the sector. As early as mid-2020, applicants for CARES funding reported they had already experienced \$230.7 million in eligible losses and expenses. These losses and expenses would continue into subsequent years.

Most grantees of LA County relief and recovery funding also received funds from other sources. Nearly half (47 percent) of CRLA grantees reported they had received Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans and nearly a quarter (24 percent) had received a small business grant from LA County. A wide range of other sources of relief and recovery support were also reported:

- Local cities, including Culver City, Glendale, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Santa Clarita, Santa Monica, and Sierra Madre
- State sources, including California Arts Council, California Humanities, California Small Business Relief Grants, California Nonprofit Performing Arts Grants, and the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
- Federal sources, including the Federal Emergency Management Administration, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Small Business Administration, and Employee Retention Tax Credit

Grantees also named relief and recovery funding sources that included philanthropic foundations, individual donations, corporate donations, in-kind support, and insurance claims. The range and number of different sources listed further highlights the scattered and improvised nature of pandemic relief and recovery funding.

Adjustments to grantmaking policies

In distributing relief and recovery funding, Arts and Culture intentionally designed processes that would reduce barriers to applying and make the application process as simple as possible. The goals were to maximize both the number of organizations eligible and the percentage of eligible applicants who were successful. These efforts appear to have paid off, as 91 percent of applicants to all ARP-funded CRLA programs and 98 percent of applicants to the CARES-funded COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund received grants. Among the practices adopted by the Department of Arts and Culture:

- All relief and recovery grants were for general operating support.
- No post-grant reporting was required.
- For all programs except the LA County Performing Arts Recovery Grant, staff reviewed each application and contacted applicants who had errors, providing guidance on how to correct them.
- CRLA's five grant opportunities were merged into a single application where applicants could apply for all where they were eligible.
- Technical assistance webinars that Arts and Culture holds each year to help potential applicants succeed were moved online. Holding them online rather than in person allowed the department to reach far more people than in-person workshops, and at a lower cost.
- Office hours were offered to potential applicants, offering individualized support to help them succeed. This is an ongoing practice for all grant programs and was included for relief and recovery grants.
- Where evaluations were required by the funder, data collection was incorporated into the application process.
- Arts and Culture shared information about relief and recovery programs for the field, in an effort to make it easier for artists and organizations to find and determine their eligibility.

One unexpected benefit to the Department of Arts and Culture that came from collaborating with private philanthropies on some of these programs was gaining deeper understanding of how different foundations approach grantmaking and consensus-building.



REFORMS TO STRENGTHEN THE SECTOR

While the US economy as a whole had largely recovered from the pandemic by late 2024, and the contribution of arts and culture industries to America's gross domestic product continued to rise, the sector is still struggling. Major disasters including hurricanes in the Southeast, tornadoes in the Midwest, and wildfires in the Western US, have destroyed cultural facilities, artist studios, and artworks while displacing and disrupting artists and arts organizations across all disciplines. While relief and recovery funding are necessary tools to respond to emergencies, they are not adequate to address underlying structural problems. In fact, the nature of emergency funding can contribute to boom-and-bust cycles and thereby generate greater instability. As President Roosevelt knew for the American economy in 1929, long-term security for the arts and culture sector requires fundamental reforms.

In her study of disasters across history, Rebecca Solnit writes about many people who, in the wake of the causal event, respond by providing aid and support to the people in their communities.¹⁰⁶ She concludes that moments of crisis are a window onto a world that is possible, one driven by human desires for a sense of inclusion, purpose, and power. They offer an opportunity, she argues, to build new systems based on solidarity, altruism, and improvisation. Many conversations and much writing among artists and arts administrators in the early months of the pandemic reflect similar views, as people vowed not to return to the old ways, but to rebuild better than before.¹⁰⁷ This intensified in the summer of 2020 when calls for racial justice began to translate into action across the arts and culture ecology.¹⁰⁸

The clearer view of what worked in pandemic **relief and recovery** funding offered by this and other reports provides an opportunity to consider strategic **reforms** that can strengthen the arts and culture sector for the long term, even in a time of economic, political, and environmental uncertainty. These lessons are organized into four main categories:

1. Reform systems for funding arts and culture
2. Build robust arts and culture emergency response infrastructure
3. Engage with larger systems beyond arts and culture
4. Take the time to discover what works

Reform systems for funding arts and culture

Financial precarity has long been a reality for the arts and culture sector, some of it driven by long-standing practices that were temporarily changed in response to the pandemic. Arts and culture revenue models are complex, which means that in addition to direct impacts on organizations and their people, there will also be indirect impacts on participation. Many of those new practices could become new norms, reforms of the funding system that lead to greater stability.

Simplify grantmaking in arts and culture

In 2020, the Council on Foundations, Grantmakers in the Arts, and others urged philanthropy to make long-term changes to ongoing practices based on lessons learned from their pandemic emergency response. This call could be a key reform for all arts funders including government, business, and individual donors. Application and reporting requirements can be viewed as driving up opportunity costs. Every hour and every dollar an arts nonprofit spends on these tasks is taken away from creating art and providing programs. Reducing administrative burdens in the form of simplified application and reporting requirements is a mechanism to increase resources available to grantees without spending any additional money.

Build more robust reserve policies and funds

Arts and culture nonprofits need to maintain a reserve fund for use in emergencies. While the exact amount will depend on the specific organization, experts commonly recommend a reserve fund to cover at least three to six months of expenses.¹⁰⁹ Reserve funds of this size can be built up over a longer time, and they have the potential to reduce the urgent need for relief and recovery funding in an emergency. Responsibility for this should not fall to individual organizations, however, as this is a structural issue across the nonprofit sector. This change requires a cultural shift. Staff leaders and board members need to make it a priority, but equally critical, grantmakers and donors have to allow their funds to be set aside for this purpose.

Strengthen regional, state, and local arts agencies

Historically, the largest share of government investment in arts and culture has been at the state and local level. While federal support is necessary for short-term emergency relief and recovery funding, efforts to reform the sector for long-term stability might be more effective if focused on policies, funding, and other supports that strengthen local, state, and regional arts agencies. This could include policy changes that allow them greater flexibility to respond quickly to emerging crises, as well as increased resources. These agencies often have the best understanding of the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve, and how the arts can help meet them.

“This grant helps us produce the 30th Festival of Philippine Arts and Culture to continue the legacy of the largest and longest running Filipino festival in Southern California.”

—FilAm Arts

Build robust arts and culture emergency response infrastructure

Disasters and emergencies will continue to occur. Their long-term effects are shaped by how individuals and communities respond. The arts and culture sector can improve its ability to weather both the crisis and its long tail by instigating new practices and systems in advance.

Establish emergency funding mechanisms that can be rolled out immediately

Partnerships and collaborations can be established now, ready to be mobilized within days if not hours of the next emergency, building on the relative strengths of each type of partner. Philanthropy has the greatest flexibility; government has the largest dollars available and the widest reach; individual artists, cultural workers, and arts administrators, as well as arts service organizations, have the deepest knowledge of impact as well as the fullest networks. Rapid relief and recovery funding are critical to stabilizing the sector while longer-term, larger responses are developed.

Key tasks to undertake **before the next crisis** include the following:

- Resolve legal issues that could be barriers to flows of funds between government, philanthropy, and grassroots organizations or individuals.

- Negotiate contract templates now so they are ready to fill in the details, sign, and implement immediately.
- Collaborate and consolidate processes as much as possible to reduce confusion and minimize the number of applications artists, arts nonprofits, and creative businesses are required to complete.
- Build online applications, design workflows, and create distribution tools so they are ready to move. Include robust mechanisms to weed out fraudulent applications without excluding qualified applicants.
- Establish robust centralized communications hubs, channels, and systems that can be deployed quickly, to ensure critical information reaches those who need it most.

Include support for the people administering relief and recovery

The people perhaps best positioned to administer arts relief and recovery funds for arts and culture are likely to be themselves coping with the impact of the crisis. They will already be employed, most likely in demanding jobs that already had inadequate resources. They will have families to care for and needs to meet. Planning for the next emergency requires establishing funds to hire the additional people needed to do the work and providing them with the physical and emotional supports they need to do it without burning themselves out.

Prepare for misdirected generosity

When disaster strikes, people want to help but often do not know the best way to do it. While cash donations are the most effective and fungible form of help, people will want to offer their time and labor, and they will offer in-kind donations. Most volunteers will not have the specialized skills needed for disaster recovery, and many will donate objects that are not particularly useful.

Partner with groups now that organize short-term volunteers to create plans for how they can be put to work for arts and culture. Build relationships now with organizations that accept in-kind donations, so those donations can be more efficiently moved to the people who need them when the crisis occurs. This includes working with them to identify donations of particular use to arts and culture organizations and individuals. Develop an emergency communications plan to advise people on the best ways to direct their generosity, so the plan can be activated quickly. Disaster response will be more effective if systems are already in place in advance that can

- Get cash to the people and organizations that need it most as quickly as possible,
- Put volunteers to work, including people who lack specific skills, and
- Move useful in-kind donations to where they are needed.

Engage with larger systems beyond arts and culture

The arts and culture sector does not operate in a vacuum. Many of the economic issues faced by artists, arts organizations, and creative workers are the same issues faced by other workers, nonprofits, and small businesses. Why face uphill battles alone, when we can work with allies in other industries toward shared goals?

Integrate arts and culture into larger struggles for economic stability

While governments set aside unprecedented pandemic relief and recovery funding specifically for arts and culture, these dollar amounts paled in comparison to the funding artists, arts nonprofits, and creative businesses received as a result of temporary changes to unemployment law and financial support for small businesses. Other resources were available through private insurance coverage. Tools to help arts and culture organizations apply for government support and file insurance claims can ensure the sector has access to all the relief and recovery tools available. It is also critical that governments at all levels incorporate arts, culture, and the creative economy as a core element in their emergency and disaster relief planning. Beyond this, long-term efforts to expand access to unemployment for all gig workers and increasing funds to support all small and micro businesses could translate into greater resources rather than advocating for special regulations, funding set-asides, or carve-outs for arts and culture.

Build stronger connections to the nonprofit sector

Arts nonprofits — especially small-budget organizations and community-based organizations — face many of the same challenges as other nonprofits. Like other nonprofits, arts organizations stepped up to provide free programming and other support to their communities during the pandemic, even as they experienced reductions in both earned and contributed revenue. The unique role of nonprofits in American life offers an opportunity for arts nonprofits to partner with other nonprofits at a variety of levels, from administration and fundraising to programs and leadership. Developing long-term relationships with nonprofits in other industries can support stability in the everyday while preparing for work together in moments of crisis.



“This grant helps CAC to keep going. Lifting our continued arts education endeavors and work to make the CAC collection more accessible through digitization.”

—Corita Art Center

Build stronger connections to the small business sector

Individual artists and gig workers are functionally micro businesses, and many arts nonprofits have operating models very similar to those of small businesses. However, the small business sector and government agencies that support it did not recognize this during the pandemic without significant advocacy.¹¹⁰ Building relationships now with the agencies that support small businesses, as well as advocacy and membership organizations, can help ensure that the needs of artists and arts organizations are incorporated into small business disaster response systems and resources.

Fund advocacy work

Private philanthropies provided critical support to the nonprofit arts and culture sector, opening up additional dollars, reducing administrative burdens, and experimenting with innovative ways to support the sector. However, the sheer volume of government relief and recovery funds was far greater. Philanthropy has long been organized on a model of funding experimental programs to develop a “proof of concept,” that government or other funders are encouraged to pick up and take to scale.¹¹¹ What is missing in this equation is the advocacy work required to convince elected officials to take on new models. Similarly, the work of integrating arts and culture into larger struggles to create a more stable economy will require significant advocacy labor. If philanthropies increase their investments in this kind of advocacy across all the sectors they fund, this could have exponentially larger benefits in the long run.

Engage with the root causes of emergencies and crises

While individual economic, climate, health, and other emergencies arise quickly, their underlying structural causes are usually visible well in advance. The arts and culture sector is not exempt from the impact of those emergencies, which means it cannot consider itself exempt from addressing their causes. As this report has shown, key stakeholders in arts and culture are able to react quickly. It is time to move from being reactive to proactive, addressing issues that create

instability and emergencies, such as income inequality, regressive tax structures, climate change, housing affordability, underfunding of public health systems, disinvestment in infrastructure, fracturing of public trust, and breakdown of democratic norms.

Take the time to discover what worked

This document, the reports cited in it, and many other publications, constitute a rich body of knowledge gained from experience during the tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals and organizations across the arts and culture sector gained the wisdom that comes from learning lessons the hard way. Five years after the pandemic was declared, people and organizations in the arts and culture sector should set aside time to reflect on what was learned. This can be as large and formal as a major national initiative or as intimate and informal as conversations over coffee among colleagues. Taking the time to reflect on the difficult years behind us can help us prepare and strengthen the sector for whatever lies ahead.

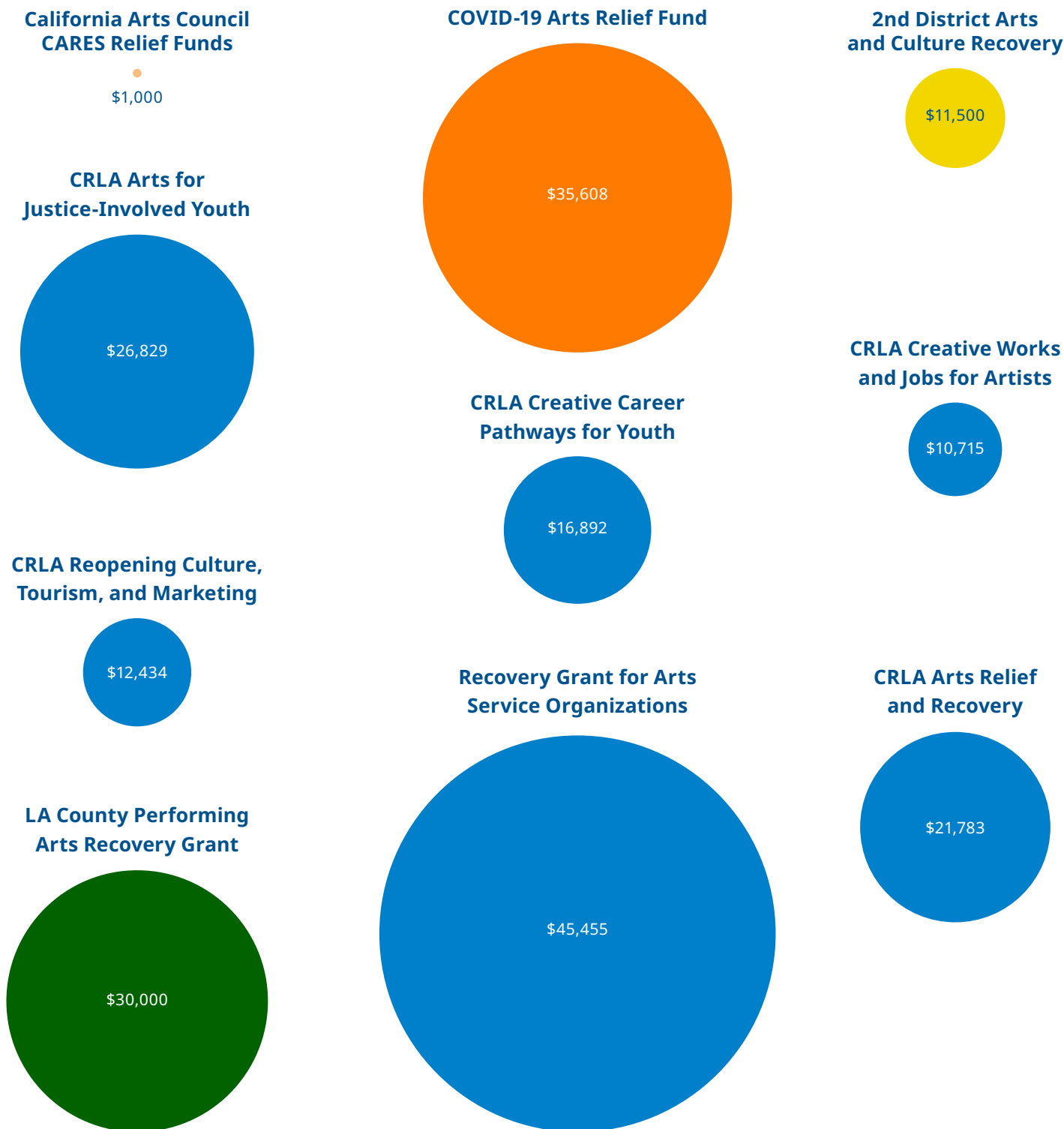


APPENDIX

All LA County arts and culture pandemic relief and recovery funds, *in alphabetical order*

Proportional representation of average grant sizes

More details about each fund on the following pages



California Arts Council CARES Relief Funds

Funding source

Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, via California Arts Council.

Purpose

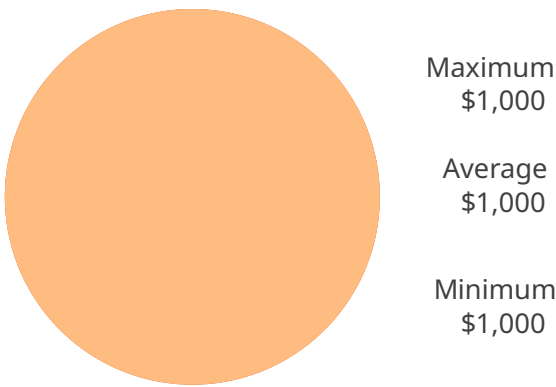
Pandemic relief funding, technical assistance, reopening requirements, and recovery.

Eligibility

Must be a current grantee of LA County’s Organizational Grants Program (OGP) providing programming in “Struggling” or “Precarious” LA, as defined by **A Portrait of Los Angeles County**.¹ Core programming prioritizes communities of color/underserved populations, that programming is ongoing, and the organization has strong ties to the communities they serve.

Administered by

Department of Arts and Culture’s Grants and Professional Development Division



Year distributed

2020

Total amount granted

\$16,000

Total number of grantees

16

Grantees who received the maximum grant

16 (100 percent)

1 <https://measureofamerica.org/los-angeles-county>

COVID-19 Arts Relief Fund

Funding source

Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act

Purpose

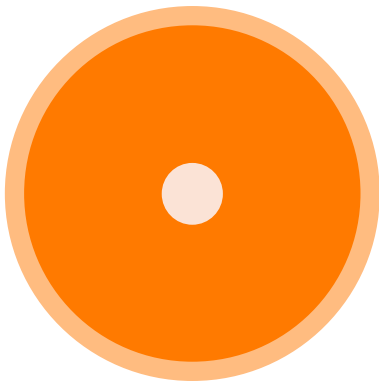
Assist LA County nonprofit arts organizations that have been affected by COVID-19 due to business losses or business interruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eligibility

Must be a FY2019-20 or FY2020-21 grantee of the LA County Department of Arts and Culture Organizational Grant Program (OGP); and/or FY2020-21 grantee of one of the seven municipal local arts agencies with grantmaking programs, limited to the City of Los Angeles, City of Pasadena, City of West Hollywood, City of Culver City, City of Santa Clarita, City of Santa Monica, and City of Long Beach through the Long Beach Arts Council.

Administered by

Department of Arts and Culture’s Grants and Professional Development Division



Maximum
\$44,400

Average
\$35,608

Minimum
\$1,200

Year distributed

2020

Total amount granted

\$12,000,000

Total number of grantees

337

Grantees who received the maximum grant

214 (64 percent)

2nd District Arts and Culture Recovery

Funding source

Discretionary funds provided by outgoing LA County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas.

Purpose

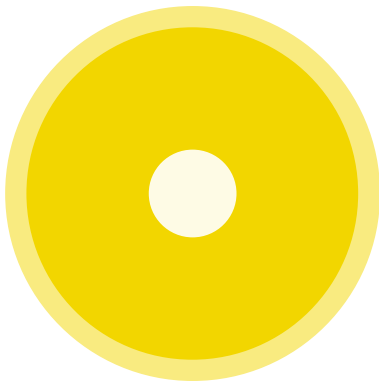
Deepen investment in community-based organizations that contribute to the cultural fabric of the Second District, whether through their programming, cultural spaces, or arts-based strategies to effect positive social change, through a lens of cultural and racial equity and the needs of organizations given the impact of COVID-19.

Eligibility

Nonprofit or fiscally sponsored organizations physically located and operating within the Second Supervisorial District and primarily serving Second Supervisorial District residents.

Administered by

Department of Arts and Culture’s Grants and Professional Development Division



Maximum
\$14,700

Average
\$11,500

Minimum
\$800

Year distributed

2022

Total amount granted

\$920,000

Total number of grantees

80

Grantees who received the maximum grant

1 (1 percent)

CRLA Arts for Justice-Involved Youth

Funding source

Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Purpose

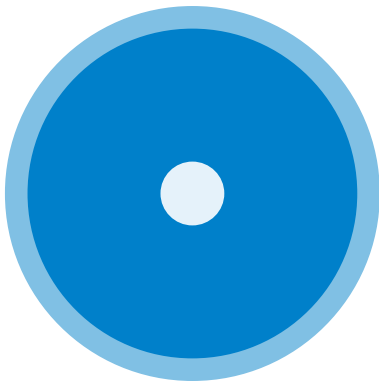
To fund arts and justice programs as well as capacity building and fiscal sustainability

Eligibility

Nonprofit arts organizations or nonprofit non-arts organizations that provide arts and culture programs (or fiscally sponsored organizations that meet either definition), with a demonstrated history of providing programs that use the arts to support justice system-involved youth, justice system-impacted youth and communities, and youth at greater risk of becoming justice system-involved.

Administered by

Community Partners



Maximum
\$34,753

Average
\$26,829

Minimum
\$1,000

Year distributed

2023

Total amount granted

\$2,817,016

Total number of grantees

105

Grantees who received the maximum grant

64 (61 percent)

CRLA Creative Career Pathways for Youth

Funding source

Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Purpose

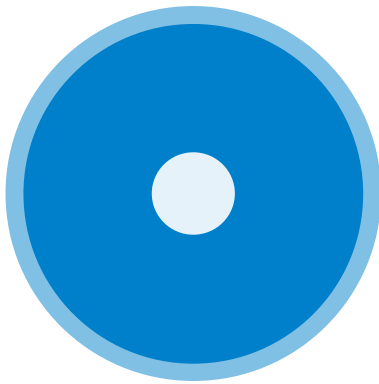
Support career pathways and training programs in the arts and creative fields for youth, early career and emerging professionals underrepresented in the arts and creative sector.

Eligibility

Nonprofit arts organizations or nonprofit non-arts organizations that provide arts and culture programs (or fiscally sponsored organizations that meet either definition), who have a demonstrated history of providing creative career pathways and training programs in the arts and creative fields for youth underrepresented in the arts and creative sector.

Administered by

Community Partners



Maximum
\$20,608

Average
\$16,892

Minimum
\$1,000

Year distributed

2023

Total amount granted

\$3,006,771

Total number of grantees

178

Grantees who received the maximum grant

118 (68 percent)

CRLA Creative Works and Jobs for Artists

Funding source

Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Purpose

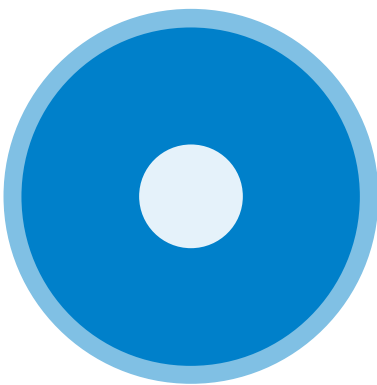
Support employment for artists for creative works, artist-led projects and public programs.

Eligibility

Nonprofit arts organizations or nonprofit non-arts organizations that provide arts and culture programs (or fiscally sponsored organizations that meet either definition), with a demonstrated history of programs or projects that engage artists for creative works, artist-led projects and public programs.

Administered by

Community Partners



Maximum
\$13,171

Average
\$10,715

Minimum
\$1,000

Year distributed

2023

Total amount granted

\$4,714,565

Total number of grantees

440

Grantees who received the maximum grant

290 (66 percent)

CRLA Reopening Culture, Tourism, and Marketing

Funding source

Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Purpose

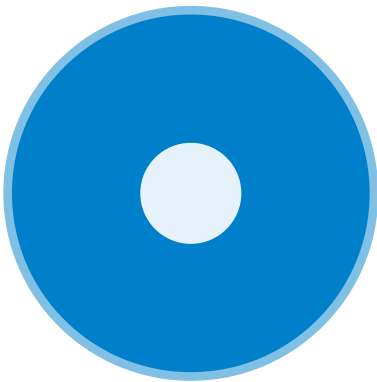
Amplify re-openings in the cultural sector and encourage arts and cultural tourism by local communities and visitors.

Eligibility

Nonprofit arts organizations or nonprofit non-arts organizations that provide arts and culture programs (or fiscally sponsored organizations that meet either definition) who can indicate how they will use funding to support marketing and promotion of arts programming and encourage diverse audiences and program participants to return to virtual or in-person programs.

Administered by

Community Partners



Maximum
\$13,672

Average
\$12,434

Minimum
\$1,000

Year distributed

2023 and 2024

Total amount granted

\$6,677,146

Total number of grantees

537

Grantees who received the maximum grant

462 (86 percent)

CRLA Arts Relief and Recovery

Funding source

Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Purpose

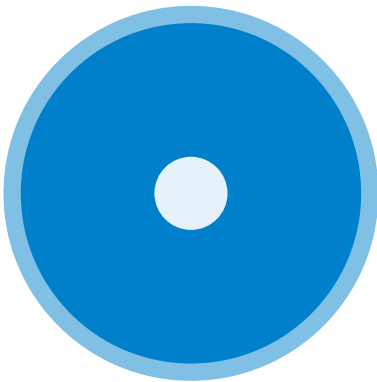
Support the recovery of the arts and creative economy sector of LA County.

Eligibility

Nonprofit arts organizations or nonprofit non-arts organizations that provide arts and culture programming (or fiscally sponsored organizations that meet either definition).

Administered by

Community Partners



Maximum
\$26,416

Average
\$21,783

Minimum
\$1,000

Year distributed

2023

Total amount granted

\$14,202,310

Total number of grantees

652

Grantees who received the maximum grant

430 (66 percent)

LA County Performing Arts Recovery Grant

Funding source

Ford Theatre Foundation

Purpose

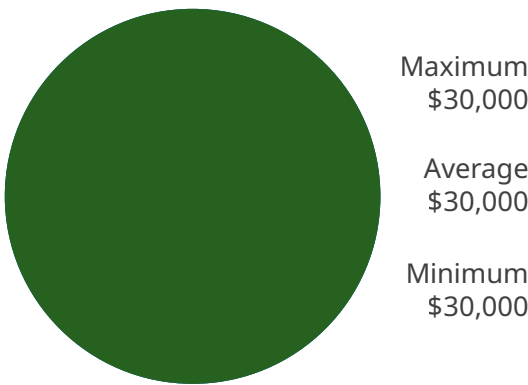
Support the region’s dynamic performing arts sector.

Eligibility

LA County-based individual artists, independent producers, and small and mid-size performing arts organizations (including nonprofits, for-profits, fiscally sponsored organizations, and producing collectives) that are part of the cultural community that perform regularly throughout the region.

Administered by

Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI)



Year distributed

2023

Total amount granted

\$1,200,000

Total number of grantees

40

Grantees who received the maximum grant

40 (100 percent)

Recovery Grant for Arts Service Organizations

Funding source

Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) via National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

Purpose

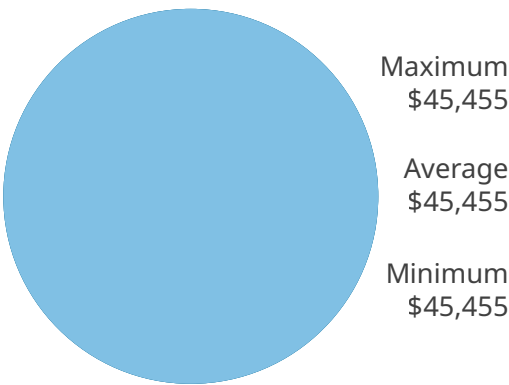
To increase investment in and provide economic relief to arts services organizations, to help them support the arts sector.

Eligibility

Must be an arts service organization that is a grantee of LA County’s Organizational Grants Program (OGP) that was affected by the pandemic.

Administered by

Department of Arts and Culture’s Grants and Professional Development Division



Year distributed

2024

Total amount granted

\$500,000

Total number of grantees

10

Grantees who received the maximum grant

10 (100 percent)



ENDNOTES

- 1 Erik Hembre, Robert A. Moffitt, and James P. Ziliak, *Is This Time Different? The safety net response to the pandemic recession* (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, February 13, 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 2 See, for example, Artist Relief: [artistrelief.org](#).
- 3 Council on Foundations, *A Call to Action: Philanthropy's commitment during COVID-19* (2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 4 Katherine Baicker, "How much safety did the social safety net provide during the COVID-19 pandemic?" *JAMA Health Forum* 4, no. 10 (October 23, 2023), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 5 Rachel Moore, *COVID-19 impacted the technology and performing arts relationship. Are the arts ready?* (CSQ, 2021), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 6 Hembre, Moffitt, and Ziliak, *Is This Time Different?*
- 7 Daniel Fonner, Glenn Voss, and Zannie Voss, *Distribution of Federal COVID-19 Funds for the Arts and Culture Sector* (SMU DataArts, December 2023), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 8 World Health Organization, "SARS-CoV-2 Circulation, World," Accessed August 15, [\[LINK\]](#).
- 9 Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, "RespWatch: Respiratory illness surveillance," Accessed August 15, 2025, [\[LINK\]](#).
- 10 Rob Stein, *Is COVID endemic yet? Yep, says the CDC. Here's what that means* (National Public Radio, August 9, 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 11 Mirae Kim and Dyana P. Mason. "Are You Ready: Financial Management, Operating Reserves, and the Immediate Impact of COVID-19 on Nonprofits." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 49, no. 6 (October 2020): 1191-1209. [\[LINK\]](#).
- 12 Hannah Martin, Kate Gehling, and Ellie Buteau, *Persevering Through Crisis: The state of nonprofits* (The Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2021), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 13 Daniel Fonner and Rebecca Roscoe, *Pandemic Priorities* (SMU DataArts, March 2022), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 14 Americans for the Arts defines a creative worker as "an individual earning income from creative, cultural, or artistic-based pursuits."
- 15 Isaac Fitzsimons and Clay Lord, *So Far Past the Brink: COVID-19 and the ongoing conditions that keep creative workers in free fall* (Americans for the Arts, accessed July 24, 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 16 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism, *Culture in Times of COVID-19: Resilience, recovery and revival* (2022), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 17 Sarah R. Morris, *Dancing Through the Pandemic: Financial changes in the US nonprofit dance ecosystem, 2018-2022* (Dance/USA, May 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 18 ArtsFund, *COVID Cultural Impact Study: Charting the state of Washington's cultural nonprofits* (accessed July 18, 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).

- 19 The 2022 *Otis College Report on the Creative Economy* defined the creative industries as made up of 90 six-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes organized into five sectors: Architecture and Related Services, Creative Goods and Products, Entertainment and Digital Media, Fashion, and Fine and Performing Arts. More information can be found in the 2022 Otis Report on the Creative Economy.
- 20 Otis College of Art and Design, *2022 Otis College Report on the Creative Economy* (2022).
- 21 Craig Nakano and Deborah Vankin, "MOCA lays off all 97 part-time employees in expectation of long coronavirus closure," *Los Angeles Times* (March 24, 2020): [\[LINK\]](#).
- 22 Deborah Vankin, "Hammer lays off 150 student employees. Are more coronavirus job losses coming?" *Los Angeles Times* (March 25, 2020): [\[LINK\]](#).
- 23 Carolina Miranda, "Broad lays of 130 in visitor services and retail because of coronavirus," *Los Angeles Times* (April 21, 2020): [\[LINK\]](#).
- 24 Financial data is from SMU DataArts' Cultural Data Project, analyzed by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture.
- 25 Funded with federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding.
- 26 Data gathered by the LA County Department of Arts and Culture from CARES Act grant applicants.
- 27 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Chart Book: Tracking the recovery from the pandemic recession* (updated April 3, 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 28 The National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account created in partnership with the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis is made up of 283 six-digit NAICS codes divided into core, supporting, and government sectors. More information is at [\[LINK\]](#).
- 29 National Endowment for the Arts, *The US Arts Economy in 2022: A national summary brief* (accessed March 27, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 30 To align with the NEA's list of Artistic Occupations, SMU DataArts used eleven six-digit Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) in their analysis. For more information, see Fonner and Roscoe, *Pandemic Priorities*.
- 31 Fonner and Roscoe, *Pandemic Priorities*.
- 32 Jennifer Sowinski Nemeth, *Trends in Audience Behavior: Have theatre audiences rebounded?* (Jacobson Consulting Applications, May, 16, 2023), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 33 American Alliance of Museums, *National Snapshot of United States Museums* (2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 34 See, for example *Why We Need a New WPA* by Paula Krebs at [\[LINK\]](#); and U.S. Department of Arts and Culture launches "A People's WPA" calling for a publicly funded artist works program at [\[LINK\]](#).
- 35 Arlene Goldbard, *New Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development* (Oakland, CA: New Village Press, 2006).
- 36 Linda Frye Burnham and Steven Durland. "Looking for CETA," *Public Art Review* 27, no. 2 (2016): 66-70, [\[LINK\]](#).

- 37 Mohja Rhoads, Nakyung Rhee, and Ryan Stubbs, *Public Funding for the Arts 2023* (Grantmakers in the Arts, 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 38 United States Work Projects Administration. *Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-43*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 39 Burnham and Durland. "Looking for CETA."
- 40 William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Domestic Affairs* (University of Virginia Miller Center, accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 41 Price V. Fishback, Shawn Kantor, and John Joseph Wallis, "Can the New Deal's Three Rs be Rehabilitated? A program-by-program, county-by-county analysis," *Explorations in Economic History* 40, no 3 (July 2003): 278-307, [\[LINK\]](#).
- 42 Kelly Varian and Marc Vogl, *Pandemic Relief and Recovery: Emergency funding and the Bay Area arts community* (Vogl Consulting, July 2021), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 43 City of Boston, *Boston Establishes Artist Relief Fund in Response to Coronavirus* (Last updated June 4, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 44 City of Boston, *Artist Relief Fund Surpasses \$100,000 in Donations, New Goal of \$250,000 Set* (Last updated June 4, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 45 City of Seattle, *Mayor Durkan Announces Initial \$1.1 Million Arts Recovery Package to Support Creative Workers and Arts and Cultural Organizations Impacted by COVID-19* (March 17, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 46 Fonner, Voss, and Voss, *Distribution of Federal COVID-19 Funds*.
- 47 National Endowment for the Arts, *American Rescue Plan (ARP) for the Arts: Rebuilding America's Arts and Culture Sector* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 48 Fonner, Voss, and Voss, *Distribution of Federal COVID-19 Funds*.
- 49 US Bureau of Economic Analysis, *Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account, US and States, 2023* (April 2, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 50 Fonner, Voss, and Voss, *Distribution of Federal COVID-19 Funds*.
- 51 SMU DataArts, *Overall Distribution of Federal Relief Funds, by County* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 52 City of St. Louis, Missouri, *All ARPA Projects* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 53 City of Winston-Salem, *American Rescue Plan Act: Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 54 National League of Cities, *NLC Selects Nine Cities to Participate in One Nation/One Project, a National Arts and Wellness Initiative* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 55 County of Los Angeles, *LA County CARES: Report to the Board of Supervisors on CARES Act funding allocations and outcomes* (March 2021), [\[LINK\]](#).

- 56 County of Los Angeles, *LA County Recovers: Better than before* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 57 Rhoads, Rhee, and Stubbs, *Public Funding for the Arts*.
- 58 Data in this chart is from Rhoads, Rhee, and Stubbs, *Public Funding for the Arts*.
- 59 Council on Foundations, *A Call to Action*.
- 60 Shruti Magesh, Daniel John, Wei Tse Li, Yuxiang Li, Aidan Mattingly-app, Sharad Jain, Eric Y. Chang, and Weg M. Ongkeko, "Disparities in COVID-19 Outcomes by Race, Ethnicity, and Socioeconomic Status: A systematic review and meta-analysis," *JAMA Network Open* 4, no. 11 (November 11, 2021), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 61 Lisa Yancey, Kelli Lane, and Candace Reyes, *We Are Bound: Excavating the story of artist relief 2020*, (Yancey Consulting, July 2022), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 62 Academy of American Poets, Artadia, Creative Capital, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, MAP Fund, YoungArts, and United States Artists.
- 63 Yancey, Lane, and Reyes, *We Are Bound*.
- 64 Artist Relief, *Frequently Asked Questions*, (Updated June 24, 2021), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 65 Artist Relief, *Frequently Asked Questions*.
- 66 Yancey, Lane, and Reyes, *We Are Bound*, page 4.
- 67 Alexis Frasz, *Creatives Rebuild New York: Guaranteed Income for Artists process evaluation*, (February 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 68 Danya Sherman and Deidra Montgomery, *Creatives Rebuild New York: Artist Employment Program Process Evaluation*, (February 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 69 Creatives Rebuild New York, *Guaranteed Income for Artists: Preliminary Findings* (2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 70 Mark Treskon, Ofronama Biu, Marokey Sawo, Madeleine Sirois, Christina Prinvil, and Camilla Kraft, *Empowering Artists Through Employment: Impacts of the Creatives Rebuild New York Artist Employment Program*, (November 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 71 Ford Foundation, *Sixteen Major Donors and Foundations Commit Unprecedented \$156 Million to Support Black, Latinx, Asian and Indigenous Arts Organizations* (September 24, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 72 Ford Foundation, *FAQs: America's Cultural Treasures* (September 24, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 73 Ford Foundation, *Sixteen Major Donors*.
- 74 The New York Community Trust, *NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund Issues \$44 Million in Grants and Loans to New York City-Based Social Services and Arts Nonprofits* (May 15, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 75 The New York Community Trust, *Resilience & Resolve: NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund Report* (2021), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 76 The New York Community Trust, *Resilience & Resolve*.
- 77 California Community Fund, *LA Arts Recovery Fund: Fund overview* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).

- 78 For the full list of funders, see getty.edu/projects/la-arts-recovery-fund.
- 79 The Ford Foundation is a charitable philanthropy founded in 1936 by the family of Henry Ford. The Ford Theater Foundation was a Los Angeles-based organization founded in 1995 to provide financial support to the mission of the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre. The two organizations have no relationship to each other.
- 80 California Community Foundation, LA Arts Recovery Fund (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 81 When completing IRS Form 1023, the Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, organizations must select the three-digit National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) code that best describes their type of organization. Arts, culture and humanities is one of 26 major groupings of NTEE codes. See irs.gov/instructions/i1023.
- 82 Giving USA, *2023 Giving Overview* (Updated June 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 83 Jack Rendall, Maeve Curtin, Michael J. Roy, and Simon Teasdale, "Relationships between community-led mutual aid groups and the state during the COVID-19 pandemic: complementary, supplementary, or adversarial?" *Public Management Review* 26, no. 2 (June 6, 2022): 313-333. [\[LINK\]](#).
- 84 Kristina Wong, *Auntie Sewing Squad* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 85 Mai-Linh K. Hong, Chrissy Yee Lau, and Preeti Sharma (eds.) *The Auntie Sewing Squad Guide to Mask Making, Radical Care, and Racial Justice* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2021).
- 86 POSTBINARY, *COVID-19 Mutual Aid Directory: Hire independent artists* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 87 Clayton Schuster, "Legendary Marvel and DC Illustrators are Auctioning Off Drawings to Help Comic Book Stores," *Observer* (April 4, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 88 The Social Distancing Festival, *Home* (Accessed April 30, 2025), socialdistancingfestival.com.
- 89 Summaeverythang Community Center, *Home* (Accessed April 30, 2025), summaeverythang.org.
- 90 Dominic Borrelli, Ryan Gunn, and Andrew Leung, *Food Deserts in South LA: A geodesign intervention* (November 9, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 91 Sruti Suryanarayanan and Emma Werowinski, *From Regranting to Redistribution: How the Cultural Solidarity Fund moved money and why we need community-centered coalitions* (March 2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 92 Suryanarayanan and Werowinski, *From Regranting to Redistribution*.
- 93 Ijeoma Oluo, Ebony Arunga, and Gabriel Teodros, *Seattle Relief Fund Amid COVID-19* (Updated September 10, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 94 LAVA Coalition, *FAQs* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 95 LAVA Coalition, *Los Angeles Visual Arts Coalition* (March 27, 2023), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 96 Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office, *American Rescue Plan Phase Two Spending Plan: \$1.95 billion* (September 13, 2022), [\[LINK\]](#).

- 97 Fiscally sponsored organizations were eligible for both CARES Act and ARP grants.
- 98 The Department of Arts and Culture defines arts service organizations as providing specialized services to the arts and cultural community, which can include professional development and technical assistance such as marketing, legal and financial assistance, networking opportunities, educational forums and workshops, and printed/online materials including calendars, newsletters, and other resources.
- 99 See communitypartners.org.
- 100 See cciarts.org.
- 101 Individual artists who received LA County Performing Arts Recovery grants were exempt.
- 102 Excludes 95 grantees where data is missing or not applicable.
- 103 Los Angeles County is governed by a five-member elected Board of Supervisors, each Supervisor serving a district with approximately two million residents. Each applicant was required to report the County Supervisor District where their main office is located, the County Supervisor District where most of their programming takes place, and list all the County Supervisor Districts they serve. For grantees serving more than one district, for the purposes of analysis, all grant funds the organization received were equally allocated to all districts they served.
- 104 Don Bambino Geno Tai, Irene G. Sia, Chyke A. Doubeni, and Mark L. Wieland, "Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19 on Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups in the United States: a 2021 update," *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* 9, no. 6 (October 13, 2021): 2334-2339, [\[LINK\]](#).
- 105 County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office, *American Rescue Plan Act: Explore the data* (Accessed April 30, 2025), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 106 Rebecca Solnit, *A Paradise Built in Hell: The extraordinary communities that arise in disaster* (New York: Penguin, 2009).
- 107 See, for example, Zannie Voss and Jill Robinson, *How Arts and Cultural Organizations can Consider Adapting* (May 18, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#); Jim Warren, *You Say You Want a Revolution* (October 29, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#); and Daniel F. Runde, Margarita R. Seminario, and Margaret Thompson, *Rebuilding a More Resilient Cultural and Creative Economy after COVID-19* (November 20, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 108 See, for example, Maxwell L. Anderson, Expressions of Empathy Are Not Enough — It's Time for Museums to Act, *Apollo* (June 4, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#); and Chioma Uwagwu, Tiaryn Daniels, and David Todd Lawrence, How the Death of George Floyd Sparked a Street Art Movement, *Smithsonian Magazine* (September 3, 2020), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 109 Propel Nonprofits, *Operating Reserves with Nonprofit Policy Examples* (2024), [\[LINK\]](#).
- 110 Sarah Weber, Email to the author, June 30, 2025.
- 111 James M. Ferris and Nicholas P.O. Williams, *Philanthropy and Government Working Together: The role of offices of strategic partnerships in public problem solving* (The Center of Philanthropy and Public Policy, 2012), [\[LINK\]](#).



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Hilda L. Solis
Holly J. Mitchell
Lindsey P. Horvath
Janice Hahn
Kathryn Barger

Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture

Kristin Sakoda
Director

Researched and Written by

Bronwyn Mauldin
Director of Research and Evaluation

Our thanks to our external reviewers for their
very helpful comments on a previous version
of this report:

Dr. Jennifer Benoit-Bryan,
Director, SMU DataArts
Daniel Fonner, Associate Director
or Research, SMU DataArts
Leslie A. Ito, Executive Director,
Armory Center for the Arts
Sarah Weber, Executive Director,
Association of California Symphony
Orchestras

Designed by

Place and Page

Los Angeles County Arts Commissioners

Pamela Bright-Moon
Leticia Buckley
Rogerio Carvalheiro
Alis Clausen Odenthal
Diana Diaz
Eric Eisenberg
Brad Gluckstein
Sandra Hahn
Helen Hernandez
Constance Jolcuvar
Anita Ortiz
Jennifer Price-Letscher
Randi Tahara
Tara Taylor
Liane Weintraub

Image Credits

cover: Angels Gate Cultural Center
p. 4: Friends of the Brentwood Art Center
p. 9: The Outwords Archive
p. 19: Materials and Applications
p. 31: Dance Arts Foundation
p. 36: Bob Baker Marionette Theater
p. 38: Film Independent
p. 50: Santa Cecilia Orchestra
p. 57: Arts and Services for the Disabled

lacountyarts.org