Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL?

COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL is an emergency support fund focused on the arts and culture sector in the Philadelphia region. It provides relief funding for individual artists, small arts and culture organizations (annual budgets no greater than $250,000) and mid-sized organizations (annual budgets of $250,000-$15 million) whose operations, work and livelihood have been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this fund is to get as much financial support into the arts and culture sector as fast as possible. Applications have been designed to have a low administrative burden, meaning a minimal number of questions in the application, little documentation, no reporting requirements and a high level of trust with those who are applying. While the applications and process are slightly different for each track, this purpose remains the same.

Who has led the effort?

COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL first came together as a collaboration of three arts service organizations: the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy; the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance; and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. The William Penn Foundation and The Barra Foundation expanded the effort significantly and brought additional funders to the effort.

Who has contributed to this relief fund?


Who is managing COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL?

The Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance is managing COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL. The program for individual artists and small arts organizations is overseen by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. The mid-sized grant program is guided, directed and
Can you give me an update on the program for Individual Artists and Small Arts Organizations?

As of May 13, COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL had awarded 1,054 grants: 181 to small arts organizations (up to $1,000) and 873 to individual artists (up to $500). More than 330 organizations and 1,800 artists have applied. Once determined to be eligible, grants are awarded on a first-come-first-served basis. Additional grants will be made as additional funding is received; however, the application portal is closed as of May 21.

How was the Mid-Sized Grant Program developed?

The Arts Aid PHL Advisory Committee recognizes that mid-sized organizations represent a wide range of artistic and cultural expression and many different missions. While all have been deeply affected by COVID-19, their business models and constituents vary widely. The Arts Aid PHL Advisory Committee developed the eligibility criteria and application process with that in mind. The Committee felt strongly that this application process should have a low administrative burden, have the widest reach possible and distribute the funds as quickly as possible. The Committee also noted that a panel review would slow down the process too much in a time of crisis.

How do I apply for the mid-sized grant program?

Eligible organizations may apply through Submittable, a free online application system, at this link: artsaidphl.submittable.com/submit.

There are three sections of the mid-sized grant application:

1. General organizational information (artistic discipline, location, etc.)
2. Financial need: This section asks for your original budgeted expenses for FY2020, projected revenue and expense changes due to COVID-19 (through September 2020), and accessible cash reserves.
3. Audiences/constituents served: This section asks for information about who your audiences/constituents are, the total number served in FY2019 and their demographics.

This application should take no more than 1-2 hours to complete. A PDF of the entire application is available on our website.
What is the process for awarding mid-sized grants?

The deadline to apply is Friday, June 5 at 5 p.m. Because the goal is to provide relief funding quickly, the eligibility guidelines and application criteria have been kept as simple as possible. The review and granting process is as follows:

1. Applications are initially screened for eligibility by staff of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. Applicants will be contacted by staff if additional documentation or clarity is needed.
2. All applicants will be grouped into six budget tiers, so that organizations will be considered in a pool of applicants of similar size and complexity.
3. Scores will be assigned to each application, based on their level of financial need and the breadth and/or depth of their audiences/constituencies served.
4. The Arts Aid PHL Advisory Committee will then evaluate the need within each of the six budget tiers and adjust funding allocations between tiers to reflect the applicant pool and to ensure the widest reach possible. If the need in a budget category is larger than the funding available, a lottery will be applied to those who have scored the highest (Step #3) to determine the final grants.

Applicants will be notified by mid-July 2020, depending on the volume of applications received. Funding will be distributed via a mailed check or ACH direct bank deposit.

Who is on the Arts Aid PHL Advisory Committee for the mid-sized grant program and what is their role?

Advisory committee members represent funders that have supported COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL and persons with a broad understanding of Greater Philadelphia’s arts and culture community. The committee guided and approved the eligibility criteria, application and funding process and timeline for the mid-sized program. This group will also review grant recommendations, offer counsel and track the performance of the fund to ensure timely and well-functioning implementation.

The committee includes:
- Kathy Christiano, The William Penn Foundation
- Tim Durkin, The Connelly Foundation
- Valerie Gay, Artist and The Barnes Foundation
- Dominique Goss, The TD Bank Foundation
- Kelly Lee, Office of Arts, Cultural and the Creative Economy
- Maud Lyon, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
- Kristi Poling, The Barra Foundation
- Nadya Schmavonian, The Repositioning Fund
The committee also includes three ex-officio members:

- Jennifer Crowther, PIDC
- Kelli Paul, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
- Judilee Reed, The William Penn Foundation