

# COVID-19 Arts Aid PHL

## 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 organizations (annual budgets below \$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?**

The William Penn Foundation is the lead funder with a gift of \$2.5 million. Other early funders included The Barra Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the Connelly, Independence, Lenfest and Victory Foundations. View a complete list of the fund's institutional donors at <https://philaculture.org/covid-19-arts-aid-phl-supporters>.

### **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 overseen by the Arts Aid PHL Advisory Committee (listed below) with administrative support from PIDC.

**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 through a blind review process, 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 Shmavonian, 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

**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](https://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 to preview 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 based on the eligibility requirements stated in the guidelines.
2. Once deemed eligible, Cultural Alliance staff will facilitate the scoring of each application using an automated data entry system. (see more details on the scoring criteria below).
3. All eligible applicants will be grouped into six budget tiers, so that organizations will be considered in a pool of applicants of similar size and complexity.
4. The Advisory Committee will perform an identity-blind review to 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. The Committee will not see the names of the applicants, only their budgets and scores.
5. If the need in a budget tier is greater than the funding available, the Advisory Committee will determine a cut-off score, and all applications above that score will be placed into an automated digital lottery system 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.

### **Why is a lottery appropriate for a relief fund?**

The automated lottery is a final contingency that will be used only if there are more applications submitted than there are funds available. This is a new, temporary grant program providing unprecedented emergency relief; therefore it is impossible to anticipate the volume of applications. The purpose of an automated lottery is to avoid bias and to give every eligible applicant a fair and equal opportunity to be funded. The Advisory Committee did not feel it was appropriate to introduce subjective or opinion-based review into the process of a relief fund. This also allows the process to be much faster and less subjective. For that reason, a lottery will serve as a final step in the process, only if needed. If a lottery is needed within a budget tier, the process will be automated and identity-blind. All applications above the score cut-off will be digitally assigned a random number and sorted in numerical order. Grants will be distributed in order until all the funds are expended.

This process was informed by a number of other cities and grant programs that have used lottery systems in their relief funds, such as the national Artist Relief fund, Arizona Commission on the Arts Emergency Relief Fund, and the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Arts Emergency Relief Fund.

### **How are applicants scored in the mid-sized grant program?**

Applicants are scored by two criteria: financial need and audiences/constituencies served. Using the scoring system developed by the Advisory Committee, Cultural Alliance Staff will facilitate the scoring of each application using an automated data entry system.

**Financial Need:** Immediate financial relief is the primary purpose of Arts Aid PHL. The Advisory Committee dismissed the idea that this program should, or even could, make awards based on the likelihood of a nonprofit surviving this crisis. It is simply too soon to know and too many factors will come into play. Arts Aid PHL is about providing some financial assistance when it is most needed. Therefore, applicants who show the greatest financial need and/or most severe loss of revenue in the short term will be scored highest.

**Audiences/Constituencies Served:** All arts and culture nonprofits serve the public, but there are many ways in which programs impact different constituencies. Applicants can receive high scores for either serving a broad number of constituents and/or serving more targeted audiences.