



**Los Angeles Arts and Culture field and COVID-19:
Open Letter to Policymakers and Grant Makers**

March 20, 2020

Artists and arts and cultural organizations play a vital role in the local and state economy. The sector generates \$203.2 billion in annual output and one in six -- or 797,075 -- of all jobs in Los Angeles County are in creative fields.

Despite the enormity of this contribution to the overall economy, the chronic undercapitalization of our creative infrastructure means that artists and arts organizations operate in extreme precariousness. All too often, survival can depend on a single paycheck or donation and COVID-19 has compounded this dire reality by bringing the industry to a complete standstill. Creative sector workers have been faced with unemployment for weeks longer than the general population; the postponement or cancellation of festivals such as Coachella, Stagecoach, and South by Southwest had ripple effects well-beyond the scheduled performers, extending to local artists and businesses catering to festival-goers.

At this very moment, creative industry workers, many of whom rely on "survival jobs" in service or teaching, are fighting to keep food on their tables, while small arts organizations are doing their best to keep their doors open. Emergency funding is needed for artists and arts and cultural organizations, prioritizing our most vulnerable.

We call on city, county and state policymakers and public and private funders to support these vital drivers of LA's creative economy by taking the following actions immediately:

- **Include artists and arts organizations in relief and recovery funds**
- **Provide publicly-backed emergency grants and interest free loans to artists and nonprofit arts organizations**
- **Create protections & provide immediate support for the contract workers that make up over half of Southern California's creative sector**
- **Pool relief funds for artists and arts organizations among philanthropic foundations**
- **Relax grantee requirements/deliverables now unmeetable due to outbreak**
- **Increase *unrestricted, flexible* funding by public and private grantmakers to allow small & mid sized organizations to adapt to evolving situations.**

As the COVID-19 crisis reshapes the reality of life in LA and communities across the world, Arts for LA understands that artists and arts and cultural organizations have a key role to play in meeting the challenges of this moment. The arts are not optional - they are vital to our region's economy and the wellbeing of our families. We must take swift action in support of a sector so vital in these troubled times.

Sincerely,

Arts for LA