



PRESS RELEASE

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Vermont Arts Council Provides COVID-19 Emergency Relief Funding to Artists

MONTPELIER, VT—The New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) has awarded \$47,000 to the Vermont Arts Council to support emergency relief for Vermont artists hit hard by the economic impact of COVID-19.

The funding is part of \$282,000 in emergency relief from NEFA to be divided equally among the six New England state art agencies in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The funds will supplement the VAC's Rapid Response Artist Relief Fund, which was established March 24 to provide grants of up to \$500 to artists who are experiencing financial hardship due to the loss of a job or cancellation of concerts, festivals, theatrical performances and other arts events because of COVID-19.

Private donations to the Fund are also accepted and can be made at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/get-involved/giving>.

In one week after the fund opened, the VAC received 183 requests for emergency relief funding from artists across Vermont. Thus far, the VAC has awarded 164 grants totaling \$64,435 to artists.

The crisis has significantly affected individual artists in Vermont, many of whom are self-employed. Arts and culture are vital anchors for many of Vermont's communities, providing more than 40,000 creative-sector jobs and comprising 9.3% of all employment in Vermont, higher than the national average.

"We were floored by the number of applications we received and the breadth and depth of the financial losses already incurred. From touring musicians who have lost all gigs for the foreseeable future to teaching artists whose residencies have been canceled this semester, Vermont's working artists are hurting. These artists are vital to the identity, the cultural fabric, and the economy of our state," said Vermont Arts Council Executive Director Karen Mittelman.

While applications temporarily closed in order to process requests and ramp up fundraising efforts, the application will re-open for a new round of funding requests on April 22. Guidelines and the application are posted at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/artists/rapid-response-artist-relief>

The VAC Board of Directors seeded the establishment of the Rapid Response Artist Relief Fund on March 31 with \$95,000. Nearly \$2,000 in private donations has been made to the fund.

The Rapid Response Artist Relief Fund is the first of several relief efforts aimed at strengthening the capacity of Vermont's arts and culture sector to survive the economic impact of COVID-19 and to help Vermont communities recover and heal in the months ahead. Other funding will come from a new Arts Recovery Fund philanthropic partnership between the Vermont Arts Council and the Vermont Community Foundation as well as from the National Endowment for the Arts CARES Act funds.

About the Vermont Arts Council

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a Vermont where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. Learn more at www.vermontartscouncil.org

About the New England Foundation for the Arts

The New England Foundation for the Arts invests in artists and communities and fosters equitable access to the arts, enriching the cultural landscape in New England and the nation. NEFA accomplishes this by granting funds to artists and cultural organizations; connecting them to each other and their audiences; and analyzing their economic contributions. NEFA serves as a regional partner for the National Endowment for the Arts, New England's state arts agencies, and private foundations. Learn more at www.nefa.org

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