



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Milwaukee County Relief Supports Art and Culture Organizations Before CARES Act Funds Expire

MILWAUKEE, WI – Today, Milwaukee County, and partner Imagine MKE, announced recipients of pandemic relief aid for art and culture organizations. The announcement comes after last month’s action by the County Board to authorize an allocation of \$700,000 in CARES Act funding for arts and culture organizations adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The cultural and creative sectors of our County are important in terms of their economic impact and their employment, but they also spur innovation, contribute to the positive impact and marketing of the region, and make Milwaukee County a unique place to live, work, and play. Since the onset of the pandemic, they’ve also been among the hardest hit by an abrupt drop in revenue resulting in increased debts, reduced wages, and lay-offs,” said Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley. “I’m thrilled the County is taking steps forward to help mitigate the negative economic impact the pandemic has had on our county, but this is merely a drop in the bucket compared to the relief needed to make our region whole. The effects of the pandemic will carry well into 2021 and any delay in getting economic relief to local municipalities like Milwaukee County only exacerbates the need for help and hinders us from preventing potential long-term economic devastation.”

Applications for eligible arts and cultural organizations opened on December 4 and closed December 11th. Organizations could receive a maximum grant of \$125,000, and total relief received from all COVID-19 CARES Act programs cannot exceed total losses due to COVID-19. Following the County Executive’s goals to address racial and health equity in Milwaukee County, groups that are located in, or predominantly serve, minority communities had funding priority. Additional details on awards can be found at www.imaginemke.org/CARES.

“We are grateful for the incredible leadership from the County Executive, Board of Supervisors and the Parks Department to recognize this great need and take action to support our County’s vital arts and cultural infrastructure,” said David Lee, CEO of Imagine MKE. “Still, as evidenced by the demand, the need is still great and we must continue to call on the Federal government to ensure that there is state and local support in the next round of COVID19 relief and that our local municipalities continue to invest in Milwaukee’s arts and cultural sector.”



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Imagine MKE received applications for over 80 organizations, receiving documentation of over \$30 million in losses or expenses incurred by organizations due to the COVID-19 pandemic and over \$4.4 million in aid requests.

“The need from the culture and arts sector far out paces both the present and projected resources available to support them. The millions in documented losses underscore how the downsizing of this sector of our economy could have far-reaching, long-term effects if not addressed immediately.”

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