



COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDS

In response to the economic crisis, and the ensuing financial needs of individuals that resulted from the coronavirus pandemic, CCI administered ten relief funds from 2020 to 2022. These include (in chronological order) the San Francisco Arts & Artists Relief Fund, Relief Fund for L.A. County Visual Artists, East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts, California Relief Fund for Artists and Cultural Practitioners, Hardly Strictly Music Relief Fund: Bay Area, the City of San José Coronavirus Relief Fund: Artists, Oakland CARES Fund for Artists and Arts Nonprofits, East Bay Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts - 2021, Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants for Artists and Cultural Practitioners, and the East Bay Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts - 2022.

The combination of these efforts has resulted in over \$7.45M distributed to 4,170 recipients.

2022

East Bay Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts – 2022

The East Bay Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts – 2022 Round was a pooled fund led by Kenneth Rainin Foundation with support from the Hellman Foundation, Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, Gerbode Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, and San Francisco Foundation, and offered from September 7 to 28, 2022. The Fund was for artists, teaching artists, culture bearers, and nonprofit arts workers who needed financial help as a result of the COVID-19 federally recognized qualified disaster.

The Fund awarded \$500,645 to 402 artists, teaching artists, culture bearers, and nonprofit arts workers.

Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants for Artists and Cultural Practitioners

The Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants for Artists & Cultural Practitioners was a program led by the City of Berkeley's Civic Arts Program and was made possible by federal funding resulting from the American Rescue Plan Act. The Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants for Artists & Cultural Practitioners made available grants up to \$10,000 to help the City's artists and cultural practitioners.

The Fund distributed \$276,250 to 114 artists, culture bearers, cultural practitioners, makers, specialized arts workers, and teaching artists, who contribute to Berkeley's abundant cultural vitality.

2021

East Bay Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts – 2021

The East Bay Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts – 2021 Round was a pooled fund led by the Kenneth Rainin Foundation with support from the Walter & Elise Haas Fund and the Hellman Foundation from November 16 to December 8, 2021. The Fund was for artists, teaching artists, culture bearers, and nonprofit arts workers who needed financial help as a result of the COVID-19 federally recognized qualified disaster.

The Fund distributed \$380,304 to 223 artists, teaching artists, culture bearers, and nonprofit arts workers.

2020

San Francisco Arts & Artists Relief Fund

From March 23 to April 15, 2020, under the leadership of Mayor London N. Breed, San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) and Grants for the Arts (GFTA) supported artists and arts organizations that anchor our already vulnerable and vitally important cultural communities with the San Francisco Arts & Artists Relief Fund. The City made available an additional investment to re-open this Fund for individual artists, from May 3 - May 15. Additional support was provided by the John & Marcia Goldman Foundation, Nion McEvoy & Leslie Berriman, Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, and individual donors.

699 individual artists were supported along with 65 arts and culture organizations.

[List of Organization Recipients](#)

Relief Fund for L.A. County Visual Artists

From May 4 - 24, 2020, California Community Foundation (CCF) together with the J. Paul Getty Trust, the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, the Sam Francis Foundation, and the Shepard and Amanda Fairey Foundation, launched the Relief Fund for L.A. County Visual Artists to support the region's visual artists who are struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Relief Fund for L.A. County Visual Artists distributed \$700,000 to 400 visual artists.

East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts

The East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts was a pooled fund led by Kenneth Rainin Foundation together with Akonadi Foundation; City of Berkeley, Berkeley Civic Arts Program; City of Oakland, Cultural Affairs Division; Richard Diebenkorn Foundation; Fleishhacker Foundation; Gerbode Foundation; Hellman Foundation Fund; William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Nion McEvoy and Leslie Berriman; Oakland Covid-19 Relief Fund; San Francisco Foundation; Shuler-Heimbürger Family Fund at East Bay Community Foundation; Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation; and individual donors.

The Fund was offered from May 18 - June 5 to help artists, teaching artists, culture bearers, and nonprofit arts workers who reside in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, with dedicated support for those in the City of Oakland and the City of Berkeley.

The East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts distributed \$744,100 to 515 individuals in the arts across Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

California Relief Fund for Artists & Cultural Practitioners

The California Relief Fund for Artists & Cultural Practitioners was a partnership between the California Arts Council (CAC) and CCI. The Fund distributed \$920,000 from the CAC's general fund in the form of \$1,000 grants to help artists and cultural practitioners (including fine and performing artists, teaching artists, culture bearers, and maker-based sole or collective creative entrepreneurs.) An additional \$8K was contributed by individual donors during the open application cycle.

The Fund was offered from July 22 - August 18. A total of \$928,000 was awarded to 928 grantees across 54 of California's 58 counties.

Hardly Strictly Music Relief Fund: Bay Area

The Hardly Strictly Music Relief Fund: Bay Area was made possible by Hardly Strictly Bluegrass. CCI, in partnership with the Alliance for California Traditional Arts, administered the Fund which supported individual roots musicians in the Bay Area counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Sonoma.

Applications were accepted August 24 - September 24, 2020. A total of 330 roots musicians received \$2,000 grants each totaling \$660,000.

City of San José Coronavirus Relief Fund: Artists

The City of San José Coronavirus Relief Fund: Artists was a response to the financial impact on professional artists caused by the COVID-19 economic shutdown. In response to this dire time of need, the City of San José made available \$208,000 to individual artists in their city. This amount was distributed by the federal government through the United States CARES Act, which was allocated by the State of California to the City of San José. Because CARES Act support is restricted to costs incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the San José Fund was structured as a reimbursement-based fund to mitigate COVID-19-related financial impacts suffered by individual artists residing in San José who work as freelancers or sole proprietors primarily in the arts sector.

Applications were accepted September 15 - 29, 2020. A total of \$208,007 was awarded to 94 artists, who received grants of up to \$2,342. Grant amounts were determined according to the total amount of reimbursable expenses submitted by the applicant.

Oakland CARES Fund for Artists and Arts Nonprofits

The City of Oakland launched the Oakland CARES Fund for Artists and Arts Nonprofits [CARES Arts Fund], a reimbursement-based fund to mitigate COVID-19 related financial impacts suffered by individual artists and small nonprofit arts and culture organizations. The CARES Arts Fund was made possible by federal funding from the United States CARES Act, which was allocated by the State of California to the City of Oakland. Distribution of the Fund was through a partnership between the City of Oakland's Economic & Workforce Development Department, Cultural Affairs Division, and CCI. Applications were accepted from September 21 – October 23, 2020.

A total of \$1,425,025 was distributed to 349 individual artists and 51 small arts organizations to help with costs related to COVID-19, and to prevent displacement among artists and closures of arts nonprofits.

[List of Organization Recipients](#)

Grantmakers' Relief Funding of Individuals during a "Qualified Disaster" (2020. 5 pages.)

Angie Kim shares CCI's learnings and recommendations regarding relief funding during the COVID crisis.

CENTER FOR CULTURAL INNOVATION APRIL 2020

Grantmakers' Relief Funding of Individuals During a "Qualified Disaster"

BY ANGIE KIM
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In response to the coronavirus pandemic (i.e., COVID-19), the President declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020 and invoked the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988. The COVID-19 pandemic is recognized as both a health and economic crisis, and by invoking this Act, it is considered to be a federally recognized "qualified disaster." For private foundations and registering nonprofit intermediaries, this declaration has implications for how to do relief funding for individuals.

Although Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) is an experienced grantmaker, relief funding in response to a "qualified disaster" is new and different. We are sharing what we learned as a way to help grantmaking peers. This information is based on our own work of implementing the [San Francisco Arts and Artists Relief Fund](#) and is informed by numerous conversations with nonprofit colleagues and labor, tax, and charitable sector attorneys. Every situation, and every fund, is different, so nothing herein is meant to be definitive. Check with your local tax and legal counsel regarding your specific circumstances. This document is shared to inform your own set of questions and encourage support of individuals during this time.

What's the Big Deal about a "Qualified Disaster"?

By invoking the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, the Presidential declaration qualifies the coronavirus pandemic as a "qualified disaster" under federal law, Title 26 Section 139 on "Disaster Relief Payments." A "qualified disaster" can be invoked not only by a Presidential declaration but also by terrorist or military actions, an accident involving a common carrier, and an event that the Secretary of the Treasury deems catastrophic. A "qualified disaster," as is the circumstances of COVID-19, means that "qualified disaster relief payments" to individuals are not considered to be taxable income and also not subject to employment taxes or withholding. This is a big deal as every penny counts toward alleviating people's financial hardship during an economic disaster. (The focus herein is on giving to individuals as giving to nonprofit organizations is already tax exempt.)

Take Away: The economic recession caused by coronavirus is a federally recognized "qualified disaster," and related financial relief payments to individuals are exempt from taxation.

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