

**Arts Commission Recommendations for
American Rescue Plan Funds Allocation for the Creative Arts
(Clarification/Expansion of Arts Commission Resolution of March 2021)
TALKING POINTS (Adopted May 17, 2021)**

The Arts Commission Recommends the Allocation of \$10 Million per year for 2 years from the American Rescue Plan for Creative Arts as follows:

FY 21*:

- **Amount Requested: \$10 Million**

Rationale: Original amount Commission requested in March 2021 Resolution; feel that this is a minimum amount to assist the already desperately under-funded Arts Sector

- **Use all funds (\$10M) for recovery and relief program funding; not for HOT backfill**

Rationale: FY 21 Contracts were approved by Council; funding amount was guaranteed prior to passage of the American Rescue Plan. No need to pay for these contracts with new ARP funds.

- **Specifically, do not use any of the \$10M ARP funds to pay off the \$4M deficit in FY21 HOT; rather, pay off the deficit utilizing Reserves or General Revenue Funds**

Rationale: The Creative Sector was already in crisis. The pandemic further impacted the HOT fund in FY 21; they should not have to bear the impact of the reductions in funding by utilizing new ARP funds to close this gap.

- **All funds (\$10 M) to be allocated through existing relief program “buckets” developed for CARES funding – as refined and expanded to be more inclusive – and to be distributed through a framework that leads with equity and that addresses needs of all sectors of the creative community equitably. Specifically, recommend expansion of the Creative Worker Relief Fund to improve equity, expansion of the Non-profit Relief grant to include creative non-profits, and recreate the Legacy Business program specifically tailored to serve non-profit legacy businesses**

Rationale: No need to waste time re-creating the wheel; money can be allocated more quickly (hopefully in the months remaining in FY 21) through the existing, but improved/expanded “buckets”.

- **Ensure that other existing recovery/relief funding program “buckets” allow creatives to apply in any and all other categories such as Legacy Venue Relief Funding, Small Business Relief Funding, Non-Profit Relief Funding, etc., as eligible**

Rationale: While we have recommended specific “buckets” or programs for dedicated relief for the Arts Sector to be funded through the \$10 M requested, this amount is still not enough to fulfill all the needs of the Arts and thus other categories or programs should not exclude creatives. This was readily seen with the amounts requested vs received under the previous CARES funding; the need greatly surpassed the amounts available to grant.

- **Continue to prioritize Equity in all relief and recovery funding Distribution**
- **Provide a single, streamlined point of information for all City emergency funding programs that are easily accessible**
- **Simplify the Application process**

****IMPORTANT NOTE: IF FUNDING UNDER ARP CANNOT BE REALIZED/GRANTED IN FY 21, THEN WE RECOMMEND SHIFTING FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY 21 TO FY 22 AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY 22 TO FY 23.***

FY 22*

- **Amount Requested: \$10 Million**

Rationale: Original amount AC requested in March 2021 Resolution; feel that this is a minimum amount to assist the already desperately under-funded Arts Sector

- **Use \$10M for recovery and relief program funding and for HOT backfill as dictated by need. Continue to prioritize relief and recovery and secondary use for cultural arts funding as needed**

Rationale: Money can be used for both immediate relief through recovery/relief programs as well as to supplement HOT funds for Cultural Arts Programs funding. It is difficult to predict how recovery will unfold, so retaining flexibility is a priority. Also, the cultural funding process is under review and it will take time to finalize and launch new programs leading with an equity lens.

- **Continue to fund recovery/relief programs according to buckets/programs established in FY 21 or those newly created and for backfilling HOT funds for Cultural Arts Programs Funding**

Rationale: Money can be used for both immediate funding through recovery/relief programs as well as to supplement HOT funds for Cultural Arts Programs. Since the HOT funds available for FY 22, while not carrying over a deficit, will likely not increase enough to fund Cultural Arts at pre-COVID levels; some ARP funds could be used to supplement the amount available.

- **Continue to allow creatives to access to any and all other categories for recovery and relief funding under ARP**

Rationale: While we have specific “buckets” or programs for relief for Arts Sector to be funded through the \$10 M requested, this amount is still not enough to fulfill all the needs of the Arts Sector and thus other categories or programs should not exclude creatives. This was readily seen with the amounts requested vs received under the previous CARES funding; the need greatly surpassed the amounts available to grant.

- **Continue to prioritize Equity in all relief/recovery funding distribution, as well as in Cultural Art Funding**

Additional Funding Recommendations outside of the American Rescue Program Funds:

- **Continue to fund CSAP (Austin Creative Space Disaster Relief Program) through use of General Revenue or other funds as previously funded but not through ARP funds.**