



**Office of the Governor  
JB Pritzker**



**Office of the Mayor  
Lori Lightfoot**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 1, 2020

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

Emily Osborne, Jasculca Terman

414.841.5273

[Emily.Osborne@jtpr.com](mailto:Emily.Osborne@jtpr.com)

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT JOINS GOVERNOR PRITZKER TO ANNOUNCE  
ARTS FOR ILLINOIS RELIEF FUND TO SUPPORT ARTISTS, ARTISANS AND CULTURAL  
ORGANIZATIONS IMPACTED BY COVID-19**

*More than \$4M Already Raised for 'Arts for Illinois Relief Fund,' a Partnership Between the  
City of Chicago, State of Illinois and the Philanthropic Community*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today joined Governor JB Pritzker to announce a new 'Arts for Illinois Relief Fund' to provide financial assistance to artists, artisans and cultural organizations impacted by COVID-19. The fund is a partnership between the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois and the broader philanthropic community. Arts for Illinois Relief Fund is administered by Arts Alliance Illinois in partnership with 3Arts and Arts Work Fund. To date, more than \$4M has been committed from public and private sources to seed an upcoming statewide campaign that will provide additional funding to meet the growing and critical needs of the state's creative sector.

Grant applications for artists, artisans and cultural organizations open today. The City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) has contributed \$1 million to the relief effort, along with leadership gifts from Walder Foundation and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Fundraising activities will be co-chaired by First Lady MK Pritzker and First Lady Amy Eshleman, with support from other civic leaders. Individuals, corporations and charitable foundations are encouraged to donate to the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund by visiting [www.artsforillinois.org](http://www.artsforillinois.org).

This statewide initiative comes at a time of unprecedented strain on the arts and cultural community. In a statewide survey by Arts Alliance Illinois assessing the financial impact of COVID-related closures, 320 respondents estimated that their organizations will lose more than \$84 million in revenue due to a suspension of public-facing programs or exhibitions until the end of April. This closure impacts 24,124 individual events or performances, 3,563 full-time jobs, 13,144 part-time/contract jobs, and nearly 2.5 million audience members or participants including young people and children.

“The arts and cultural community is deeply embedded in the fabric of Chicago. Our cultural institutions – from the one-room artist studio to the 1,500-seat theater – employ artists, back office staff, ushers, curators, ticket takers and others. Many artists supplement their work by providing arts education in our schools. All of these individuals contribute to the City’s vibrant arts and cultural sector, which has been temporarily halted,” said Mayor Lori Lightfoot and First Lady Amy Eshleman.

Realizing the immediate and critical need, a group of funders came together to offer support, including leadership gifts by the City of Chicago, Walder Foundation, and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, as well as funding contributions by The Albert Pick, Jr. Fund, The Chicago Community Trust, The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust, Exelon, The Field Foundation, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Irving Harris Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, Kassie Davis, Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, State of Illinois, and Terra Foundation for American Art.

Through the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund, individual artists and artisans – including stage and production members and part-time cultural workers – experiencing an urgent need will be able to apply for one-time grants of \$1,500 distributed by 3Arts. Grants will be awarded through a lottery system and will be disseminated quickly. Additionally, nonprofit arts and cultural organizations of any size will be able to apply for relief through the Arts Work Fund. Based on their demonstrated financial need, organizations will be awarded grants from \$6,000 – \$30,000. Artists, artisans and cultural organizations impacted by COVID-19 are urged to apply for grants through [www.artsforillinois.org](http://www.artsforillinois.org).

“The arts and cultural community have proven that despite devastation caused by COVID-19, we can all come together to support each other and provide Illinoisans this incredible resource to experience so many different forms of art while at home,” said Governor JB Pritzker and First Lady MK Pritzker. “When the time comes for us to once again gather in person – and that time will come – we must remember this amazing community of creative individuals who have graciously made available their work to entertain us. Until then, we

encourage everyone to support this incredible community by appreciating their art in new ways.”

“The nonprofit arts and culture sector in Illinois contributes at least \$4 billion annually to the state’s economy. The impact of COVID-19 will have a long-term impact on the health of the industry and its economic role in the city and state,” said Claire Rice, executive director, Arts Alliance Illinois. “It’s critical that when we get back to the business of in-person engagement, the arts and cultural community is able to resume operations and fully employ its talent. Unfortunately, during this time, we’re already seeing theaters and studios closing. Grants provided through the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund will support individual artists, part-time cultural staff and arts organizations to help sustain them during this temporary shut-down.”

### **ADDITIONAL COVID-19 RESPONSE EFFORTS**

The Arts for Illinois Relief Fund follows the City of Chicago’s recent announcement of the Chicago Small Business Resiliency Fund which, combined with other forthcoming regulatory and support measures, will provide needed support for Chicago’s for-profit creative businesses.

The State of Illinois has partnered with business leaders across the state to create the Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund to swiftly deploy additional financial resources to local community foundations and nonprofits to support residents in need. For more information visit, [www.ilcovidresponsefund.org](http://www.ilcovidresponsefund.org).

### **ABOUT ARTS FOR ILLINOIS PROGRAM AND GRANT MANAGERS**

#### **About Arts Alliance Illinois**

*Arts Alliance Illinois fights for arts resources and policies that benefit our members and all Illinois residents. With 25,000 active subscribers and hundreds of members, we connect the people and ideas that are shaping the future of the creative sector. As the only multidisciplinary organization concentrated on the strength of arts and culture across the state, the Alliance takes on challenges that no single organization or artist can fight alone. Our work in civic engagement, arts education, and cultural equity positively impacts every community across the state. Visit [artsalliance.org](http://artsalliance.org) to learn more.*

#### **About 3Arts**

*3Arts is a nonprofit organization that advocates for Chicago’s women artists, artists of color, and artists with disabilities who work in the performing, teaching, and visual arts. By providing cash awards, project funding, residency fellowships, professional development, and*

*promotion, 3Arts helps artists take risks, experiment, and build momentum in their careers.*

**About Arts Work Fund**

*The Arts Work Fund is a collaborative fund launched a group of foundations in January 2007. Through grantmaking and creating opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, the Arts Work Fund seeks to help small arts and culture organizations develop sustainable structures so that they can better meet their artistic missions.*

# # #