

For Immediate Release  
March 20, 2020

Information: Sarah Sidman | 206-788-3051 | [sarahsidman@artsfund.org](mailto:sarahsidman@artsfund.org)  
ArtsFund, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives & Communications

## EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDS ANNOUNCED FOR LOCAL ARTS

*ArtsFund establishes fund to help arts organizations during public health crisis*

**SEATTLE, WA**—A coalition of arts organizations, led by ArtsFund, is working to launch the **COVID-19 Arts Emergency Relief Fund**. To date, the group has raised \$1.5 million and is currently working to raise additional funds to stabilize the sector with immediate relief grants for arts organizations negatively impacted by COVID-19 and its corresponding economic effects. Arts organizations are bracing for worst case scenarios which could include closure, bankruptcy and insolvency. The goal of ArtsFund’s COVID-19 Arts Emergency Relief Fund is to enable arts and cultural organizations to maintain essential functions and retain core staff throughout the current public health crisis so that they are positioned to reopen when possible.

The coalition helping this effort with ArtsFund includes organizations that have volunteered to help generate private sector support to offer relief to the arts sector in this moment of crisis. King County nonprofits in ArtsFund’s Cultural Partners Network of 118 arts organizations will be eligible to receive funds. ArtsFund will serve as the hub for the COVID-19 Arts Emergency Relief Fund, developing information, conducting fundraising, receiving contributions, and distributing grants.

“I am grateful to ArtsFund for leading the nonprofit arts and cultural sector by building this Emergency Arts Relief Fund. Arts and cultural leaders recognize the importance of helping to support the entire sector—there are huge needs at organizations of all sizes. More simply put, we are stronger together. This Emergency Relief Fund will provide critical financial support to the entire sector. Thank you ArtsFund for raising this flag!” said Josh LaBelle, Executive Director of Seattle Theatre Group.

“Now and in the future, the health of our community relies on the health of our arts organizations and the livelihoods of the people behind them,” said ArtsFund Interim President & CEO Sue Coliton. “We need to take immediate and bold action to support and sustain the arts sector during this crisis.”

ArtsFund is working in close collaboration with **Artist Trust**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping Washington State artists of all disciplines thrive by providing direct cash grants, educational programs, resources, connections, and advocacy. **The COVID-19 Artist Trust Relief Fund** is working to put rapid response grants directly into the hands of individual Washington State artists for immediate and vital needs. Artist Trust is launching this Relief Fund with \$292,000 on Friday, March 20 with a goal to continue to raise funds to support artists throughout this crisis, and also stay with artists during recovery and rebuilding.

“Washington State’s artists are among the first to experience severe income loss from the COVID-19 crisis,” said Artist Trust CEO Shannon Halberstadt. “At Artist Trust, we’ve pressed pause on business as usual so our team can respond to artists’ immediate and vital need, including the COVID-19 Artist Trust Relief Fund and online artist relief and recovery resources. We are actively listening to artists, and it’s up to all of us to show up with support for artists at this critical time.”

ArtsFund and Artist Trust’s campaigns to engage individuals and the private sector in arts relief efforts complement public sector initiatives launched earlier this week. 4Culture committed \$1 million and the City of Seattle committed \$1.5 million. Together, these public and private efforts will direct over \$4.29 million in funding to our region’s cultural institutions and cultural workers.

“Short-term relief is essential to ensure our beloved arts and cultural institutions are able to weather this turbulent period and reopen to the public when the time is right,” Coliton said. “These organizations bring joy, meaning, and connection to the lives of Washingtonians, and are essential to our lives”

To contribute to **ArtsFund’s COVID-19 Arts Emergency Relief Fund** visit [www.artsfund.org/CovidRelief](http://www.artsfund.org/CovidRelief), call 206-281-9050, or mail a check made out to ArtsFund to PO Box 19780, Seattle, WA 98109.

To contribute to **the COVID-19 Artist Trust Relief Fund** at [www.artisttrust.org/donate](http://www.artisttrust.org/donate), call 206-467-8734 x21, or mail a check to Artist Trust, 1835 12th Ave, Seattle, WA 98122.

###

#### About ArtsFund:

ArtsFund strengthens the community by supporting the arts through leadership, advocacy, and grant making. Founded in October 1969, the Seattle-based nonprofit has been building community through the arts for 50 years and is one of the nation’s leading United Arts Funds. ArtsFund was originally founded as the United Arts Council of Puget Sound to bring corporate and civic leaders together to help establish and sustain our region’s arts and cultural institutions. 50 years later, ArtsFund has supported nearly 240 arts nonprofits with more than \$84 million in grants, and by providing valuable leadership and advocacy. For more on ArtsFund visit [www.artsfund.org](http://www.artsfund.org).