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Atlanta arts organizations receive \$580,000 in grants



Maria Saporta (https://saportareport.com/author/maria_saporta/) • May 19, 2020 1:40 pm



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By Maria Saporta

The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta – through its Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund – announced a total of \$580,000 in grants to 11 metro arts organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Arts Fund, founded in 1993, has focused its giving on small to midsize arts organizations with annual operating budgets under \$2 million within the 23-county metro region.

Most arts groups are experiencing significant revenue losses from the impacts of COVID-19 due to event cancellations, shuttered performances and venue closures during the stay-at-home order. Many organizations also have channeled their creative, innovative energies to online performances and virtual programming.

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contributions to fortify the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund and boost support for arts organizations dealing with the pandemic.



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These contributions, combined with annual giving, total nearly \$2 million in funding for the year, according to a press release from the Community Foundation.

“We have many donors and other funding partners who are passionate about maintaining a thriving arts sector and especially bolstering smaller arts organizations,” said Alicia Philipp, president of Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, in a statement. “At this moment these donors are going all-in on tying passion to purpose for these grants, enabling us to multiply our impact several times over this year as compared to previous annual grant awards.”

Grant applications were reviewed by Community Foundation staff, and grants were then decided with a panel of arts industry veterans.

“With these grants we’re investing in leadership from both organization staff and their boards of directors, recognizing that strong vision, leadership and innovation are essential to keeping our arts sector exhibiting and performing in new ways through this crisis,” said Virginia Hepner, former president and CEO of the Woodruff Arts Center and member of the Arts Fund advisory committee.

Grants are made for general operating support, allowing the receiving organizations to immediately put resources where they are needed most.

Organizations receiving grants from the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund, and individual grant amounts, in this first round are:

1. Actor’s Express (<https://www.actors-express.com/>)(\$100,000) Since 1988, Actor’s Express has challenged and reflected contemporary human experiences in an inclusive environment. It seeks to jumpstart individual transformations through the shared adventure of live performances which range from daringly provocative to audaciously hilarious. Due to COVID-19, Actor’s Express halted its fourth production for 2020 after only five shows and canceled an upcoming fundraising event. Programming has shifted to virtual platforms and it anticipates that productions may not be back to full capacity until as late as mid-2021. The theatre has received strong financial support from its board



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Moving in the Spirit received a \$100,000 grant from the Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund. Here is the dance company’s tribute to Stevie Wonder (Special: Moving in the Spirit)

allowing it to meet financial obligations in the face of reduced revenue. It has also been part of a peer cohort of arts organizations that provides coaching, shares best practices and cross-promotes online programming.



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2. Atlanta Celebrates Photography (<https://acpinfo.org/>)(\$50,000) Atlanta Celebrates Photography (ACP) launched in 1997 and aims to create experiences that enrich, inspire and transform. ACP has had to cancel all programming, performances and fundraisers due to COVID-19. The organization traditionally offers all programming at no cost to patrons. Recognizing that moving to online platforms can reduce current costs, it now offers online camera classes for youth, social Zoom gatherings to stay connected to patrons and it is planning an upcoming online exhibition. ACP is also developing new partnerships for collaboration moving forward.

3. Burnaway (<https://burnaway.org/>)(\$25,000) Launched as a digital platform in 2008, Burnaway's mission is to promote contemporary art and writing in the south to enrich the region's cultural life and connect its diverse creative communities. Burnaway has had to cancel key events and has also seen losses in advertising revenue which accounts for much of its annual revenue. During the pandemic it is providing online resources and news about how closures are affecting the art world, in the midst of increased demand for articles and decreased revenue.

4. Dad's Garage (<https://dadsgarage.com/>)(\$100,000) Since 1995, Dad's Garage has transformed people, communities and perspectives through laughter. Dad's Garage relies on a diversity of income streams and almost all of them have come to a halt because of COVID-19, including regularly-scheduled improv shows, an annual fundraiser, the premiere of a scripted show, corporate workshops and improv classes for the general public. Dad's Garage anticipates a slow build back to live programming and is planning for logistical changes that will need to be made once live performances resume. The organization continues to experiment with innovative ways to pivot programming while exhibiting strong leadership in the Atlanta arts community.

5. Horizon Theatre Company (<https://www.horizontheatre.com/>)(\$75,000) Horizon is Atlanta's award-winning home for the best in contemporary theatre, producing outstanding plays from around the world, never-before seen in Atlanta. Due to COVID-19, Horizon had to postpone a spring play that was in production as well as two summer plays and the theatre anticipates moving two or more plays from the 2020 season to the 2021 season. The organization has also launched Horizon at Home including livestreamed and video performances, the New South Play Festival with free, livestreamed readings of new plays by southern writers, women or writers of color, artist events including interviews and classes and education programs that are free for young artists. Horizon has also taken a leading role collaborating with other theatre groups.

6. MINT (<https://www.mintatl.org/>)(\$20,000) MINT's mission is to make Atlanta a destination for the arts – a cultural hub where artists thrive, patrons experience transformative work and communities are activated and engaged. Due to COVID-19, MINT has canceled collaborations with multiple partners,

experienced loss of rental revenue and has shifted to provide innovative virtual programming. It has waived rental fees for studio artists and developed an Artist Emergency Resource Guide to remain highly engaged with artists' needs and those of small and mid-sized galleries in efforts to continue to provide programming.



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7. Moving in the Spirit (<http://www.movinginthespirit.org/>)(\$100,000) Moving in the Spirit (MITS), founded in 1986, is an award-winning creative youth development program that uses the discipline of dance to help children and teens develop the social, emotional and cognitive skills they need to thrive. During COVID-19, MITS has lost revenue due to canceled performance and educational programming as well as multiple canceled fundraisers. The organization has shifted to providing therapy for students virtually and plans to continue existing programs for youth-serving organizations and schools. The organization is experimenting with innovative ways to pivot programming while exhibiting strong leadership in the Atlanta arts community and continuing to prioritize youth development.

8. Roswell Arts Fund (<https://roswellartsfund.org/>)(\$10,000) Roswell Arts Fund (RAF) was founded to strengthen the scope of arts in the city of Roswell and to champion the ability of the arts to excite the imagination, strengthen public places and encourage conversation. RAF has had to cancel two performances that were meant to drive excitement and support for the development of a new performing arts center in Roswell. It is hosting virtual events on Facebook and launched an innovative project, RosWELL, in direct response to COVID-19. RosWELL is an online, photographic archive of the city's collective response to the crisis as well as other resources and inspiration.

9. 7 Stages (<https://www.7stages.org/>)(\$50,000) Founded in 1979, 7 Stages is a professional nonprofit theatre company devoted to engaging artists and audiences by focusing on the social, political and spiritual values of contemporary culture. 7 Stages gives primary emphasis to international work and the support and development of new plays, new playwrights and new methods of collaboration. During the COVID-19 crisis the theatre has had to cancel performances, residencies and rentals, though it has been able to pivot several programs to virtual platforms. 7 Stages has set up an Artist Relief Fund to support approximately 100 artists. It is currently engaged in conversations around shared pre-production costs across multiple organizations as well as regional tours in the future.

10. The Creatives Project (<https://www.thecreativesproject.org/>)(\$10,000) The Creatives Project's (TCP) mission is to enrich and strengthen local communities through quality arts-based education and outreach while celebrating and elevating the city's creative talents through local artist residency programs. TCP has had programs and projects either canceled or postponed due to COVID-19, including the Artist-in-Studio cohort in Vine City and English Avenue, summer outreach programs with Columbia Residential and Future Foundation and the Alumni Studio Program in Southwest Atlanta. TCP is also launching Drive Thru ATL, which will be a drive-through gallery experience where artists can display their works outside of TCP studios and the public can purchase the works safely. It

has also created a digital platform where residents continue to engage the community through art education workshops online which has enabled them to reach a broader audience locally, regionally and nationally.



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11. **Voices of Note** (<https://www.voicesofnote.org/>) (\$40,000) Voices of Note has inspired dialogue and driven social equity through artistic excellence. It first emerged in 1981 as the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus and has since launched the Atlanta Women's Chorus. Voices of Note has had to cancel all programming, performances and fundraisers in the wake of COVID-19 and has refunded a significant number of ticket sales due. The organization has moved to virtual rehearsals and is exploring additional virtual programming. It has remained strongly engaged with queer artists to support them through the current crisis and plans to partner with other queer arts organizations for collective fundraising.

Arts organizations are encouraged to apply for funding on the Community Foundation's website (<https://cfgreateratlanta.org/nonprofits/available-grants/metropolitan-atlanta-arts-fund/>). Decisions will be made on a rolling basis. Community Foundation experts are working closely with arts organizations to ensure that their applications are complete with all necessary details provided.

The Community Foundation has a second program for arts grants, A Place to Perform (<https://cfgreateratlanta.org/nonprofits/available-grants/a-place-to-perform/>), which is providing grants of up to \$5,000 per organization for lost revenue due to canceled performances this year. Organizations can view eligibility requirements and apply for that program here (<https://cfgreateratlanta.org/nonprofits/available-grants/a-place-to-perform/>).

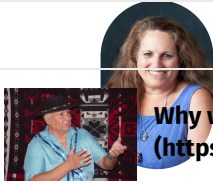
A Place to Perform grants will also be awarded on a rolling basis, and the application window will close when funds are depleted.

In its history, MAAF has awarded nearly \$15 million to arts organizations. It was established by more than 100 contributors, including Fulton County Arts & Culture, and it currently has an endowment of \$10 million.

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Maria Saporta (https://saportareport.com/author/maria_saporta/)

Maria Saporta, Editor, is a longtime Atlanta business, civic and urban affairs journalist with a deep knowledge of our city, our region and state. Since 2008, she has written a weekly column and news stories for the Atlanta Business Chronicle. Prior to that, she spent 27 years with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, becoming its business columnist in 1991. Maria received her Master's degree in urban studies from Georgia State and her Bachelor's degree in journalism from Boston University. Maria was born in Atlanta to European parents and has two young adult children.

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