



COVID-19 Impact on Cuyahoga County Arts & Culture Nonprofits & Creative Workers

2021 Update: March 2020 – June 30, 2021

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for local nonprofit arts organizations and creative workers. Despite the wider economy reopening, arts institutions are not making up lost ground.

After more than fifteen months, layoffs continue as organizations operate with less capacity. Federal funding is helping to make up some lost revenues and helping groups to adapt programming and connect with residents. But overall, the pandemic continues to negatively impact our economy and quality of life.

As of June 30, 2021, **65 Cuyahoga County-based arts and cultural nonprofits report:**

Total people laid off, furloughed, or hours reduced:	4,793
Total revenue loss:	\$146,025,012
Total federal funds received or drawn down to Cuyahoga County:	\$81,294,617
Total revenue loss not recouped:	\$64,730,395

Job Loss Continues

In 2021, **layoffs have not declined** but have continued at a steady rate consistent with that of 2020 in most arts organizations. **1,636 more jobs have been affected** by layoffs, reduced hours, or canceled contracts. This represents a **loss of compensation totaling \$13,184,144.**

Few organizations have begun re-hiring, with a total of **459 positions refilled** and **78 new job positions created** as a result of change of services due to the pandemic.

Revenue Loss is Slowing

In the first 6 months of 2021, **organizations lost \$27,023,358** in earned and contributed revenue (ticket sales, admissions, donations, etc). If revenue loss continues at this rate, 2021 losses will be half as much as in 2020, but still a second year of significantly reduced revenues.

What CAC Grantees Are Saying

“We are suffering significant earned revenue losses, and will continue to. We continue to operate with a lean staff and budget and seek additional funding to survive these losses.”

Programs and Services Transformed

1,270 programs and activities were canceled or put on hold in 2021. At the same time, 14,706 events or activities were amended to be online, outdoors, with lower capacity, or altered with other pandemic-era considerations. Despite less income and staffing capacity, organizations are continuing to connect with their communities in new ways.

Federal Funding Provides Stopgap

In total, since the beginning of the pandemic, **65 Cuyahoga County arts institutions have received \$81,294,617 in federal funding**, which covers roughly half of pandemic-related revenue loss during this timeframe.

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture's Response

CAC funds 65 nonprofits of varying sizes and disciplines through its General Operating Support (GOS) grant program. These arts organizations annual budgets range from \$50,000 to more than \$60 million. CAC's GOS program provides the largest, most flexible, and consistent local funding (\$10.2M in 2021) to arts nonprofits in our region.

In 2020, CAC awarded \$3 million, provided by Cuyahoga County through the CARES Act, to 94 arts and cultural nonprofits to help cover expenses incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, CAC has funded 27 projects with a total of \$62,500 through our matching grant with Neighborhood Connections to arts and culture projects developed in response to the pandemic.

In 2021 CAC has applied to receive ARP funding through the NEA, with the goal of sub-granting it to Cuyahoga County's nonprofit arts and culture community. We continue to offer technical assistance and have committed to steady funding in 2021.

Source: CAC general operating support year-end report submitted July 31, 2021.

What CAC Grantees Are Saying

"Like most other organizations, the threat of the Delta variant weighs heavily on our planning. Though we look forward to beginning to restore our levels of revenue and participation over the next year, we have plans in place in case we are forced to shut down and/or change our protocols if the situation gets worse."

COVID-19's Impact on the State & National Creative Economy

In Ohio:

- According to the June 2021 Ohio Labor Market Information, **Ohio's Creative Industry continues to suffer from the highest unemployment rate among all sectors.** Arts and entertainment have been the highest unemployed sector since May 2020. Before COVID-19, Ohio's creative economy was a \$41B industry, employing nearly 300,000 people.
- Johns Hopkins University reported that as of January 2021, **arts and entertainment nonprofit job loss is more than 36%.** This is the most extensive job loss of any nonprofit sector.

Source: Ohio Citizens for the Arts, August 2021.

Nationally:

- McKinsey & Company anticipates that it will **take the arts sector until 2025 to recover** to pre-COVID-level of contribution to national GDP.



Spotlighting Success in Trying Times: CAC-funded projects help residents manage through the pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, artists and neighbors have used CAC funding to respond creatively to challenges, inspire, and give hope. See below for a sampling of projects that demonstrate how our community is finding success in trying times.

ioby-CAC Match Fund

CAC funded more than **26 arts and culture projects** led by Cuyahoga County residents during the pandemic through ioby’s (in our backyards) CAC Match Fund. CAC invested \$70,000 in 2021 to provide dollar-for-dollar matching up to \$3,000 for creative crowdfunding projects led by neighbors. Many residents used funds to provide safer programming or respond to pandemic-specific challenges.

Drive-In concert by Moises Borges and Mo'Mojo Bands

In May 2021, to bring Clevelanders back together after a long period of social isolation, quarantining and hardships, Moises Borges and Mo’Mojo Bands came together to state a safe “drive-in” concert in Shaker Heights. The goals of the project were twofold:



First, to financially support side musicians, like drummers, bass players, wind instrument players, etc. who could not do a live show on their own and have faced the worst and long-lasting economic impact of COVID-19. Second, the event aimed to celebrate the return of live music to outdoor concerts in Cleveland.

Make Your Mark E. 130th St. Mural

This project grew out of the E. 130th Working Group planning for the 2020 Soul of Buckeye summer festival. Since the pandemic limited public gatherings, project leader Josiah B. chose to continue the momentum of previous festivals by bringing together youths and artists from the community in a collaborative project known as Make Your Mark.



The E. 130th Make Your Mark project brought to life the experiences and imagination of youth facilitated by professional muralists to install a vibrant mural on E. 130th St. between Buckeye Road and Shaker Square. Eight youth participants worked with local muralists Lauren Pearce and Brandon Graves to express their ideas about their neighborhood and community artistically. The muralists will now transform the youths’ ideas into a permanent mural covering the enclosed ground floor parking area at the Shaker Square Towers.



Neighbor Up Rapid Response Grants

CAC funded **14 arts and culture projects** directly related to the impact of COVID-19 through Neighborhood Connections' 2021 COVID-19 Rapid Response Grants, with a total investment of \$24,459 in matching funds.

Literary Cleveland – Voices from the Edge

This spring, Literary Cleveland ran a series of 8-week writing courses for 60 essential workers. Participants worked in healthcare, critical retail, food production, and education.

The project gave essential workers the opportunity to process their experiences in the pandemic through writing. Additionally, participants connected and bonded with others on the frontlines, completing a writing project of their choice.

After the workshops, one participant wrote:

"I did not completely realize how much this pandemic had affected me until I started writing and sharing it with the group. I thank our instructor...and the supportive class that made me feel safe and allowed me to be vulnerable."

Literary Cleveland is producing an online anthology, published later this fall, based on the essential workers' writings during the project.

Neighborhoods in Action - COVID Cares Program

Neighborhoods in Action provided outreach to individuals that were 'shut-in' during the pandemic to help combat depression and other mental health issues. The program also provided an outlet for creative expression and experiences at home.

They partnered with Life Exchange Center to conduct the screenings, Boys and Girls of King Kennedy to reach younger children and East Technical High School Staff, as well as the Alumni Association to reach high school students. Grant funds were used to build pandemic recovery kits, including markers, craft supplies, and other at-home activities.

Support for Artists Grants

In 2021, CAC invested in **10 collaborative "civic practice" projects** between Cuyahoga County artists and nonprofits who were trained in a shared approach through the Learning Lab program by Center for Performance and Civic Practice. Many of the resulting projects responded directly to nonprofit or community needs during the evolving pandemic.

La Capsula del Tiempo Podcast – Julia Rosa Sosa and Esperanza Inc

A group of Latin American students living in the United States put their opinions of Romance, Education, Lifestyle, Family, Identity, Hobbies, Passions and what it is to live in a pandemic in a podcast that at the same time is a Time Capsule.

The project was led by Esperanza Inc and Julia Rosa Sosa, a theatre and performance artist, based in Cleveland. After rerouting plans of creating an original play for the Thomas Jefferson High School students, Sosa landed on an idea that could keep the students safe from COVID-19 exposure and could be a space for self-expression. The result was a ten-episode podcast that also serves as a Time Capsule to gather all their opinions and life experiences.

