



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

Press And Communications

\$5 Million in ARPA Funding Invested in Arts and Cultural Organizations

September 5, 2023 -- Four months following approval by Houston City Council, 62 Houston Arts & Cultural organizations from across the City learned that their requested funding, up to \$100,000, was approved. The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) was able to accomplish this effort in collaboration with Mid-America Arts Alliance, a trusted partner with a track record of helping the city efficiently distribute federal funds within the creative economy.

"The City of Houston is vibrant and renowned because of the diversity of our artists, arts nonprofits, and cultural centers rooted in deep traditions," stated Mayor Sylvester Turner. "The cultural sector is not just one of our defining features and economic drivers, it is the soul of our city. This funding will help restore our arts ecosystem and reinvigorate our travel and tourism industry."

Funded through the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), these grants provide immediate and short-term financial assistance to organizations impacted by the global coronavirus (COVID-19). The grants awarded ranged from \$8,500 to \$100,000 and can support artist contracts, marketing in support of the activities in the artist contracts, and staff expenses incurred between July 1, 2021, through the end of this calendar year.

To assist the arts and cultural sector in a strong and equitable recovery, MOCA collaborated with Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) to distribute federal ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds via an open application. M-AAA is a regional arts organization that empowers community through art for the six-state region that includes Texas. In its administrative role, M-AAA created an open application process for Houston arts organizations, provided information sessions, one-on-one support, and extensive outreach. This led to a total of 115 applicants documenting over \$10M in requested funding submitted during the open application process from June 1 through July 10, 2023.

"Leadership that not only supports but advances the arts in Houston is what we have in Mayor Sylvester Turner," stated MOCA Director Necole S. Irvin. "Ensuring that the arts are an integral part of City

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structure and opportunities, like this stabilization funding, are equitable continue to strengthen the entire community.”

The following grantees were selected following the stated objective review criteria and four areas of emphasis including organizations that represent or are in service to under-resourced populations and communities.

Apollo Chamber Players
Art League of Houston
Asia Society Texas Center
Aurora Picture Show
Blue Triangle Multicultural Association, Inc.
Broadway Bound Youth Musical Theatre Company
Children’s Museum Houston
Classical Theatre Company
Community Music Center of Houston
Dance of Asian America
Dance Source Houston
Diaz Music Institute
Discovery Green Conservancy
The Ensemble Theatre
Exalted Arts Theatre Company
Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation
Filipino Young Professionals
The Foundation for Black Heritage and Culture
Fresh Arts
Friends of River Oaks Theatre, Inc.
The Garden Theatre
Gordon Education Initiatives for the Performing Arts
Harris County Cultural Arts Council
Hispanic Alliance for Performing and Audiovisual Arts, Inc.
HITS Theatre
The Hobby Center Foundation
Houston Ballet Foundation
Houston Center for Contemporary Craft
Houston Center for Photography
Houston Contemporary Dance Company
Houston Grand Opera Association, Inc.
Houston Metropolitan Dance Center, Inc.
Houston Youth Symphony
Indian Performing Arts Samskriti
Indo-American Association
Ishida Dance Company, Inc.
Jazz Houston
Kinetic Ensemble
Main Street Theater Houston
Musiqqa
Nameless Sound
Nigerian American Multicultural Center (NAMC)
Opera Leggera, Inc.
Performing Arts Houston
The Pilot Dance Project
Public Poetry

Re-Education Project
Rivkah French Choreography
Rothko Chapel
RSA of Dance & Performing Arts
Russian Cultural Center - Our Texas
Shabach Enterprise
SHAPE Community Center
Silambam Houston
Society for Africans in the Diaspora
Society for Indo-American Arts
Stages
Texas Medical Center Orchestra
Theatre Under the Stars
WindSync
Writespace
Young Audiences, Inc. of Houston

The COVID-19 public health crisis wreaked havoc on the creative economy. According to the Texas Comptroller, Texas' arts and entertainment industries were among the hardest hit by the pandemic with \$1.6 billion in cumulative losses for the creative industries in Houston along with a loss of more than 42,000 creative jobs.

"Supporting our arts and cultural organizations and helping them recover from the strain of the pandemic not only strengthens our economy, it strengthens our sense of community," said Todd Stein, M-AAA's president and CEO. "We are honored to partner with the MOCA on this grant opportunity to help arts organizations preserve our collective history and amplify artistic voices."

Previously, the City of Houston via the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) successfully engaged M-AAA in late 2020 to manage and distribute the [City of Houston Musicians and Music Venues Economic Relief Program](#) funded through the Federal CARES Act.

For further information on the Houston Arts and Cultural Stabilization Grant Program, visit maaa.org.



City of Houston's skyline as viewed from the Houston Police Officers Memorial by Jesús Bautista Morales. Photo by Alex Barber.

About the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs

The City of Houston Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs guides the City's cultural investments with policies and initiatives that expand access to arts and cultural programs in the community, attract visitors, and leverage private investment. Learn more at www.houstontx.gov/culturalaffairs and follow us on Facebook and Instagram @HoustonMOCA.

About Mid-America Arts Alliance

Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) strengthens and supports artists, cultural organizations, and communities throughout Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and beyond. To learn more about M-AAA grants, programs, exhibitions, and fellowships, visit www.maaa.org and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.