



March Board Cycle

Milwaukee County Parks

9480 Watertown Plank Rd.

Wauwatosa, WI 53226

(414) 257-PARK

Date: February 19, 2021
To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors
From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks
Subject: **Milwaukee County CARES Funding for Arts & Cultural Groups (INFO)**

Issue

Informational report on the results of allocated funding to assist Milwaukee County arts and cultural groups adversely impacted by COVID-19 in 2020.

Background

The non-profit arts and culture sector in Milwaukee, which includes performing arts organizations, cultural institutions, education organizations, and independent artists, is an important facet of our region's ability to compete with other regions for talent, investment, and visitors. It is a sector that generates \$225 million in annual expenditures in Milwaukee County, employs tens of thousands, and reaches hundreds of thousands throughout the region with its plays, concerts, exhibits, and educational programming.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit this sector hard. The cancellation of live events, the closure of gathering places and the elimination of education programs as a necessary response to COVID-19 left our city's artists and cultural organizations with unprecedented, unexpected, earned revenue losses.

In November of 2020, Milwaukee County File #20-809 allocated \$700,000 in Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding to arts and culture organizations in Milwaukee County which were adversely impacted by the pandemic. Staff from Milwaukee County Parks, in conjunction with local non-profit Imagine MKE, developed criteria and programmatic guidelines modeled after the State of Wisconsin COVID-19 Cultural Organization Grant Program. Eligible organizations were non-profit, non-governmental organizations with 501c3 exempt status located in Milwaukee County that fulfilled the following criteria:

- Operate for the benefit of the public



- Be an eligible organization with a primary mission for production, presentation, or exhibition of cultural disciplines such as music, dance, theater, literature, and the visual arts, including organizations that provide arts-centered education and community development.
- Be in operation since March 2019

Grant awards from the program were capped at \$125,000. Applications for the program were opened on December 4, 2020 and closed on December 11, 2020. The program received applications from 82 organizations requesting over \$4.5 million in eligible aid.

Eligible organizations were requested to provide background on any COVID related aid received at the time of their application. Organizations reported receiving \$19.8 million in aid and incurring over \$50.3 million dollars in COVID related losses. To ensure that all eligible organizations could receive a share of the grant, all eligible organizations were approved at 13.4% of their eligible grant amount. Organizations were then scored through the Racial Equity criteria utilized the Capital Improvement Committee by their headquartered location and reported populations served. This framework yielded a score between 1-10. Organizations that scored seven or higher received additional grant award funding. Additional grant funding was awarded as follows:

- Organizations that scored a 7 received an additional \$1,000
- Organizations that scored an 8 received an additional \$2,350
- Organizations that scored a 9 received an additional \$5,000
- Organizations that scored a 10 received an additional \$10,000

Thirty-five organizations were awarded additional grant award funding based on racial equity criteria. In totality, awards were distributed to 76 organization totaling \$679,124.

Imagine MKE and Milwaukee County partnered to provide the program through a service agreement. Imagine MKE created & posted the applications, publicized the program with Milwaukee County, received applications and verified eligibility, and distributed payment to all awardees. Compensation for Imagine MKE was \$20,876 and based on the number of applications received.

Timely cooperation from Imagine MKE, Milwaukee County Parks, Department of Administration, Office of Corporation Counsel, and the Office of the Comptroller were required to implement this program prior to 12/30/2020 to satisfy CARES Act requirements.

Recommendation

This item is for informational purposes and no action is required.



Prepared By: Jeremy Lucas, Director of Administration & Planning, Milwaukee County Parks

Approved By: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks Guy Smith

Attachments

- Imagine MKE CARES Act Technical Brief
- Application – Milwaukee County CARES Act Arts & Culture Grant Application

Copy

- David Crowley, County Executive
- Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
- Sheldon Wasserman, Parks, Energy & Environment Chair, Supervisor District 3
- Steven Shea, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Vice-Chair, Supervisor District 8
- Felesia Martin, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 7
- Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 12
- Liz Sumner, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 1
- Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board
- Julie Landry, Director, Department of Administrative Services
- Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS
- Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
- Emily Peterson, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
- Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB

