$13.5 Billion in Shuttered Venue Grants Awarded

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced the SBA has almost completed awarding initial and supplemental grants to all eligible applicants through the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program. Thus far, the SBA has awarded over $13.5 billion in economic relief to more than 12,000 venues, providing a critical lifeline for theaters, live venues, and other entertainment and cultural hubs as they recover from the pandemic, re-open and continue contributing to local economies. More than 90% of the grants have supported venues with less than 50 employees.

Per the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, those who received an initial grant and illustrate a 70% loss when comparing 2021’s first-quarter revenues to the same in 2019 are eligible to receive a supplemental grant.

“America’s performing arts venues and related businesses have been among the hardest-hit during this pandemic. Our SBA team has helped approximately 12,000 of these treasured community institutions secure a combined $13.5 billion to weather this crisis and build back better,” SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman said. “The majority of the Shuttered Venue Operators Grants have gone to businesses with 50 employees or less – which means we’re reaching our smallest businesses, who suffered disproportionate impacts from the pandemic and were often left out of early rounds of relief. My vision for the SBA is that we make all of America’s small businesses, including the smallest venues and entertainment businesses, feel like the giants they are in our economy.”

Biden Appoints NEA Chair

Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD, of Los Angeles, California, was nominated to chair the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). She will be the nation’s first African American and Mexican American to serve as NEA chair. For more than 25 years, Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson’s has made arts, culture, and design studies at the forefront of her work, especially how they uplift and better communities. Her work makes her the perfect NEA chair as she combines a social science, arts, and humanities-based perspective to community development, systems change, program and policy evaluation, and applied research. Dr. Jackson’s career has been filled working closely with organizations of all kinds, including philanthropic, governmental, and nonprofit. Dr. Jackson is a tenured Institute Professor in the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts (HIDA) at Arizona State University.

“It is an honor to be nominated to serve as head of the National Endowment for the Arts by President Biden, who has a demonstrated deep commitment to the arts,” said Dr. Jackson. “Our art, culture, and creativity are some of our country’s most valuable resources. They are evidence of our humanity, our ability to learn from our examined experience, and our ability to imagine and innovate. The arts are critical to our well-being, to robust economies, and to healthy communities where all people can thrive.”

This appointment, along with the nomination of Shelly Lowe to Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, must be approved by the U.S. Senate. On December 2, 2021, both nominations were advanced by unanimous voice vote by the authorizing Senate Committee. The full Senate confirmed Dr. Jackson on December 18, 2021.
Message from Executive Director Nina Ozlu Tunceli

Dear Arts Action Fund Member,

We are in the midst of our Year-End fundraising campaign. Please consider a contribution to support our 2022 activities:

- Continue the highly popular Office Hours with Nina on Zoom to provide customized answers to your questions.
- Present an arts webinar series on the Fundamentals of Best Business and Advocacy Practices.
- Update our State Arts Factsheets with the newest facts and figures to arm you with research-based arts talking points.
- Focus our lobbying efforts on passing increased funding and policies for the arts, arts education, and a jobs bill.
- Customize and update one-pager State Voter Factsheets with all election law changes.
- Produce our 2022 Congressional Arts Report Card to provide you a scorecard on how Members of Congress voted on the arts.
- Make strategic Arts Action Fund Political Action Committee (PAC) contributions to only federal pro-arts candidates.

Best, Nina Ozlu Tunceli

2021 Election Impact Foreshadows Changes

As most political eyes are already turned towards next year’s Congressional and Senate midterm elections, two states and several municipalities conducted their off-year elections in 2021 with contrasting results.

In New Jersey, Democrats narrowed their majority control over the state legislature and the incumbent Democratic Governor barely won his re-election. However, the real sea change happened in Virginia. Republicans ran on local issues such as education, vaccines, and lower taxes while Democrats focused on former President Trump. In a stunning reversal of Virginia politics, voters soundly rejected the Democrats message by electing a full suite of Republicans to power with the election of Glen Youngkin as Governor, Winsome Sears as Lt. Governor, and Jason Miyares as Attorney General. Republicans also flipped control of the Virginia House of Delegates.

On the local level, many cities held mayoral elections this year with progressive Democrats winning their races. In NYC, Eric Adams became the second African-American elected mayor. In Boston, Michelle Wu became the first woman and Asian-American to be elected mayor. Bruce Harrell became the first Asian-American mayor of Seattle. In Pittsburgh, Ed Gainey is the first African-American to be elected mayor.

2021 Legislative & Political Timeline

See the full timeline at www.ArtsActionFund.org/Timeline

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National Arts And Humanities Month

EDUCATIONAL ACTION
NEA announces two grant program guidelines to distribute approximately $80 million in ARP funds directly to nonprofit arts and culture organizations to subgrant deeper into communities and artists. The Arts Action Fund hosts two webinars, one for local arts agencies and another for arts organizations to help them understand the new programs.

bit.ly/NEAprograms

POLITICAL ACTION
President Biden proclaims that the White House will be celebrating October as National Arts and Humanities Month. He says, “My Administration recognizes the essential role the arts and humanities play in our Nation’s economy, democracy, health, and vitality and is committed to supporting the arts community.” This celebration resumes after a four-year hiatus during the Trump Administration.

bit.ly/NAHM10-21

Americans for the Arts collaborated with Alora Young, the 2021 Youth Poet Laureate for the Southern United States, as their 2021 Ambassador for National Arts & Humanities Month. Alora used her platform throughout the month of October to share her love of the humanities and arts with the public as we celebrated the power of culture in communities across the nation.

In high school, Alora advocated for greater equity in education. Her mentorship program AboveGround aims to increase accessibility of advanced academics to students of color. “I hope I can help children of color to believe they can be exceptional,” Alora has received both the Princeton Prize in Race Relations and the Rising Advocate Award from Tennessee United for Human Rights.

2021 ambassador, Alora Young, courtesy Ambriehl Crutchfield.
Read our 2021 Year-End Letter and please contribute to the Arts Action Fund!

ArtsActionFund.org/2021YearEndLetter