

Date: 2020-11-20

Subject: **COVID-19 Relief Fund for Artist and Arts Organizations Update**

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Report Number: Corporate Support Services-2020-436

Recommendations:

1. That the report titled **COVID-19 Relief Fund for Artist and Arts Organizations Update** to the Committee of Council meeting of December 2, 2020, be received; and
2. That Council approve the additional disbursement of \$165,990 to the 21 arts organizations named in Appendix A, effectively depleting the one-time budget for the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Artists and Arts Organizations.

Overview:

- On June 24, 2020, Council approved an innovative new funding program, the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Artists and Arts Organizations, which was created to help offset a portion of losses and expenses related to COVID-19 (CW149-2020).
- Of the \$500,000 program budget:
 - \$289,998 has been disbursed to 21 approval arts organizations
 - \$29,012 has been disbursed to 30 approved individual artists
 - \$180,990 remains in available relief funds
- It is imperative that these remaining funds, earmarked for arts sector support, are invested in 2020. Relief funding will not be available past 2020, as the Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Development Agency is set to launch in Q1 2021 and will require the full scope of its proposed 2021 operating budget.

- It is recommended that \$165,990 of the remaining relief funds be issued as a second disbursement to the 21 approved arts organizations (approximately \$7,900 each). While the first disbursement contributed to immediate organizational stabilization, a second disbursement would support ongoing recovery and transition into 2021.
- The other \$15,000 of the remaining relief funds will be reserved for applications from individual artists, which are ongoing to program close on December 4, 2020.
- Pending Council approval of this report's recommendation, staff will proceed with the disbursement of remaining funds as outlined. Staff will return to Council in 2021 with a fulsome report on the outputs, outcomes, and overall impact of this timely and responsive one-time program.

Background:

On June 24, 2020, Council approved a one-time funding program, the COVID-19 Relief Fund for Artists and Arts Organizations, to help offset a portion of losses and expenses related to COVID-19 and assist Brampton's arts sector in stabilizing, strengthening, and contributing to the city's economic recovery from the pandemic. Brampton-based non-profit arts organizations could apply for up to \$15,000 in relief funds, and Brampton-based individual artists could apply for up to \$1,000 in relief funds. Applications for relief funding were approved under the authority of the Director, Strategic Communications, Culture and Events (CW149-2020).

The program was funded through a one-time re-allocation of \$260,000 from the 2020 operating budget approved for the Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Development Agency, and a one-time re-allocation of \$240,000 from the 2020 Cultural Services operating budget, for a total 2020 program budget of \$500,000. These funds were already earmarked for artist engagement and are appropriately re-prioritized during this significant time of need.

Current Situation:

In an information report received by the October 7, 2020 Committee of Council, staff reported that 21 Brampton-based non-profit arts organizations had met the eligibility criteria and been approved for relief funding in the total amount of \$289,998.

At the time of authoring this report, 30 Brampton-based individual artists have been approved for relief funding in the total amount of \$29,012.

Disbursements to date yield the following remaining program budget:

Description	Value
COVID-19 Relief Fund Budget Approved	\$500,000
Disbursed to 21 Approved Arts Organizations	-\$289,998
Disbursed to 30 Approved Individual Artists	-\$29,012
Total Remaining:	\$180,990

Given that these funds were earmarked for artist engagement and subsequently re-prioritized for artist support, it is imperative that the remaining funds be invested in Brampton’s arts sector this budget year. It is important to note that relief funding will not be available past 2020, as the Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Development Agency is set to launch in Q1 2021 and will require the full scope of its proposed 2021 operating budget.

The following chart recommends how the remaining funds can be fully invested by year-end 2020, effectively depleting the program budget.

Description	Value
Total Remaining Funds	\$180,990
Reserve for Individual Artist Applications to Program End on December 4, 2020 (maintain value of maximum \$1,000 each)	-\$15,000
Additional Disbursement to 21 Approved Arts Organizations (approximately \$7,900 each)	-\$165,990
Total Remaining:	\$0.00

The initial disbursement to the 21 approved arts organizations contributed directly to their immediate stabilization during the pandemic, and the positive impact was significant, as demonstrated by these sample excerpts from recipient testimonials:

- “You do not know how much relief [our organization] feel[s] at the moment. Please let [the City] know that we are eternally grateful and will be delighted to let you know how we are doing in a few months’ time as we adapt to the new safety measures...”
- “The COVID-19 Relief Fund for Artists and Arts Organizations was a wonderful initiative taken by the City of Brampton and it helped our organization get through these testing times. The arts industry was one of the hardest hit during this pandemic with almost all of our work getting cancelled and we quickly had to think of alternate ways to engage with our audiences. The fund provided us the necessary cushion to keep going without having to shut down completely. We were able to utilize the funding to support a scaled-down version of our programs and keep going in a virtual environment.”
- “[Our organization] has survived COVID-19 thanks to the relief fund.”

An additional recommended disbursement of \$165,990 (approximately \$7,900 each) to the 21 approved arts organizations would compound these positive effects and support their ongoing recovery and transition into 2021. For several organizations, this second disbursement would exceed the \$15,000 relief funding maximum outlined in the program guidelines, which why Council approval for this staff recommendation is being sought.

Please refer to Appendix A for the list of 21 approved arts organizations, with the details of the initial approved disbursements and the additional recommended disbursements.

Next Steps:

Pending Council approval of this report's recommendation, staff will proceed with the disbursement of remaining funds as outlined. Staff will return to Council in 2021 with a report on the outputs, outcomes, and overall impact of this timely and responsive one-time program.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Sufficient funding is available within Strategic Communications, Culture and Events 2020 Operating Budget to address the additional disbursement of \$165,990 to the 21 arts organizations, pending Council approval.

Other Implications:

There are no other implications associated with this report.

Term of Council Priorities:

This report supports the Term of Council Priorities of Brampton is a Well-Run City, Brampton is a City of Opportunities, and Brampton is a Mosaic by effectively managing municipal resources, improving livability and prosperity, and supporting the sustainability of the arts, culture and creative sector.

Culture Master Plan:

This report aligns with the vision and definition of culture in Brampton and the strategic themes of Supporting Success, Developing a Creative Community of Practice, and Building Brampton's Identity.

Conclusion:

This report recommends a responsive approach to supporting the arts sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pending Council approval of the recommendations in this report, staff will proceed with disbursing the remaining funds as outlined, by year end 2020.

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Attachments:

Appendix A: COVID-19 Relief Fund for Artists and Arts Organizations - List of Approved Arts Organization Recipients