

# ARTS Covid-19 Response FAQ

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## VENUE QUESTIONS

Please note that a health order has been issued to curtail the amount of face-to-face interaction. This includes a prohibition on all events with 50 or more people and [health requirements to hold smaller gatherings](#). [Many social and recreational services must temporarily close and restaurants may not offer dine-in services](#).

\* Q: How long might the ban on events be in effect? What should we be planning for?

- A. Event prohibitions are in place until at least March 31. We will provide further information as soon as it is known.

Q: How do you make sure sick people don't come in your venue, either as patrons, employees, or volunteers?

A: Take specific steps to encourage older adults age 60 and above and those with underlying health conditions not to attend event. Note that [CDC recommends that individuals at risk of severe illness should stay at home](#), avoiding gatherings or other situations of potential exposures, including travel, church attendance, and social events with 10 or more people.

Monitor for illness in the workplace and encourage self-screening for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) (for example; ask staff to check temperature before coming to work, have no-touch thermometer onsite if needed)

Q: What to do if you are unable to meet the guidelines for staying open (either b/c all sanitizing supplies are sold out or in terms of choreographing social distancing or otherwise)? Best practices for compliance

- A. We are encouraging everybody who has the option to close their venue or cancel their events for the good of the community.
- B. All events with more than 50 people are prohibited until further notice
- C. All events with fewer than 50 people are discouraged and prohibited unless organizers observe COVID-19 prevention measure.

- D. All bars, dance clubs, fitness and health clubs, movie theaters, nightclubs, and other social and recreational establishments until at least March 31.
- E. All restaurants and food service establishments cannot provide dining room service. They may remain open for drive-through, takeout and delivery.
- F. All other retail – including banks, grocery stores, hardware stores and pharmacies – should and may remain open, provided they observe COVID-19 prevention measures.
- G. Under the order, events include: community, civic, public, leisure, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers; and similar activities.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS**

Q: I attend a lot of arts events but know that many orgs have had to cancel events. How can I continue to support artists and arts/cultural organizations during this time?

A: If you are unable to attend an arts or cultural event that you previously planned to attend for any reason, **consider donating your unused ticket back to the organization.** Transferring your ticket purchase to a donation supports arts organizations' futures in an uncertain time.

—If you have the resources, **consider making a financial donation to arts and cultural organizations.** If you'd like to help ArtsFund galvanize financial support for the sector, contact Sarah Friedman at [sarahfriedman@artsfund.org](mailto:sarahfriedman@artsfund.org).

—**Share a message of support** on social media, either sharing ArtsFund's posts or creating your own.

Also, check out [Resources for Organizations and Artists that we're compiling](#)

## **SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS**

\* Q: Where can I find information about city and statewide efforts to support individuals and organizations regarding things like a halt on evictions or utility shut offs, preservation of medical benefits, and emergency assistance?

A. [Resource for Community, including Healthcare Support, Utility Assistance, Food Support, Worker/Artist Support, Small Business/Nonprofit Support, Home Education Support and I Want to Volunteer.](#)

\* Q: Is ARTS offering direct support or mitigation for coronavirus impacts?

A: Building on the City's initial measures to provide financial relief for small businesses, Seattle Mayor Jenny A. Durkan announced \$1.1 million in City of Seattle funding to invest directly in creative workers and arts and cultural organizations financially impacted by COVID-19. The investment is a combination of funding strategies designed to help the arts and culture sector through direct grants to organizations and creative workers most impacted by this crisis. More info can be found [here](#).

\* Q: How do we support freelancers and hourly employees who are, in this immediate moment, most affected by the closures.

- A. We encourage creative thinking about the needs of this moment and where people may find emergent work in connection to community needs. Examples look like connecting laid off workers to those who need emergency childcare, meal delivery or other kinds of support; or connecting workers to organizations who are trying to live-stream their content – anything that connects people who need work to areas that need support.

\* Q. What are the unemployment resources? More specific guidance translated with artists/creative workers in mind would help.

- A. More information here for workers including Unemployment Benefits and Paid Sick and Safe Time <https://www.seattle.gov/mayor/covid-19#worker>
- B. Check out this [easy-to-read comparison guide](#) listing some of the most common scenarios that may occur and benefits that may apply.

\* Q: What to track, and how to track, in terms of losses, so we can leverage this data to find additional resources for support for Individuals

- A. We encourage individuals to track cancelled gigs, reduced hours, and the value of the lost income from these cancellations.

## **SUPPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS**

\* Q: How to access support for arts groups who are experiencing sudden and unexpected loss of income.

- A. The City is investing \$1 million in over 200 arts and cultural organizations through the new Arts Stabilization Fund. The focus of the funding will be on arts and cultural organizations that have been impacted by the moratorium on events and public gatherings. These organizations rely on ticket sales, attendance and fundraising efforts. The recent and necessary actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from State of Washington and Public Health – Seattle & King County have greatly impacted the arts and culture sector. Funds will be distributed through the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture’s grant programs.

\* Q: What to track, and how to track, in terms of losses, so we can leverage this data to find additional resources for support for Organizations

- A. We encourage orgs to track:
- # of days of cancelled programming
  - decreased # of hours/days closed
  - \$ amount of rental revenue related to cancelled programming
  - laid-off staff in FTE equivalent; # of artists, creative workers, contract labor that were let go
  - \$ amount of sunk costs for cancelled events
  - for cancelled fundraisers - \$ amount of revenue raised at annual fundraiser in 2019

- for virtual fundraisers – \$ amount differential between what was raised this year versus last year
  - other losses you feel capture the fullest picture of the need for recovery funds.
- B. The City of Seattle, Greater Seattle Partners, and the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce are also distributing an Economic Impact Survey ([www.greater-seattle.com/economic-impact-survey](http://www.greater-seattle.com/economic-impact-survey)) to further capture the effects of COVID-19, also known as the novel coronavirus, on businesses and non-profits in King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties. The Economic Impact Survey will identify early local and regional effects of COVID-19, inform strategies for regional economic recovery and development, and maximizing and allocating badly-needed federal and state recovery aid.

Q: Any recommendations for residency/small gathering/micro-presentation situations? E.G. groups of 10-20 artists or members of the public.

A. As of March 16, all gatherings with less than 50 participants are prohibited unless they meet the criteria for public health and social distancing as specified [here. Please meet virtually.](#)

Q: We have an event scheduled for later this year that we've already paid for. To get a refund, we would need to cancel 180 days in advance. What should we do?

A. Information is changing on a daily basis. At this point, we recommend making the most informed choice you can with the information available at this moment.

Q: How do the social distancing requirements relate to staff in my organization?

- A. Staff should comply with the same social distancing guidelines that are provided for events. Ensure that staff are able to remain 6 feet apart when they must work in the same physical space for more than 10 minutes.

Q: What resources are available for arts & cultural organizations?

### **A. For Arts Organizations**

#### **Emergency Preparedness**

The emergency preparedness service ArtsReady has assembled [resources specific to arts organizations.](#)

The American Alliance of Museums has shared [comprehensive guidelines and resources specific to museums.](#)

The [League of American Orchestras](#) has gathered resources for orchestras, including guidance on international travel and communicating during a time of crisis

Alliance of Artists Communities advises on [COVID-19 Preparedness for Residencies](#)

Finally, [Performing Arts Readiness](#) supports a variety of programs to increase the knowledge and ability of performing arts organizations to create and execute emergency recovery plans.

### **Webinars on COVID-19 preparations for theaters and events**

Theatre Communications Group's [Coronavirus Preparedness Webinar: General Preparedness Strategies, How to forecast budget shifts when productions are cancelled, how to navigate insurance, and how to work collectively with sensitivity to those who are the most vulnerable.](#)

Q: What resources will be available to mitigate organizational losses from having to cancel events?

A. The Office of Arts & Culture has a \$1 million arts stabilization fund for arts and cultural organizations. The city and [Puget Sound Energy](#) have also offered deferral plans for [utilities](#) and [B&O Tax deferral](#).

Q: What can we do to keep running but also be safe?

A. Please follow the Public Health King County Guidelines and be as conservative as you can in your public engagement. Cancel gatherings when possible, or find virtual ways to gather instead.

### **OFFICE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IMPACTS**

Q: How will this impact the Office of Arts & Culture's budget, which is based on Admissions Tax? Will the prohibition on events and gatherings negatively impact revenue? Will grant funding programs be cut?

A. While we know there will be a great economic impact to the City, we don't yet know the scope of it. Fortunately, the Office of Arts & Culture's budget is based on Admissions Tax collected two years prior, so we'll have a little bit of a grace period to adjust when we know more. Additionally, our budget was built to sustain peaks and valleys in Admissions Tax collection. This situation is unprecedented and we'll share more about our funding and budget projections when that information is available.

\* The Cultural Partnerships team will work with funded partners to work around cancelled events, programming, and services. 2020 funding is not impacted and processes have been streamlined to support grantees in getting their funding more swiftly and easily.

\* Q: How will I find out about opportunities and information coming from the Office of Arts & Culture?

A. Please sign up for our [Enews](#), and connect with us on social media to learn more about any programming and opportunities that are available.

\* Q: We need to cancel or postpone our event/program. Are we still eligible to receive our funding?

A. Program managers will work with our partners to support funding for organizations and projects that are canceled, temporarily closed or postponed to later in the year (within 2020). We will work with funded groups and individuals to help figure out ways that groups can still meet their scope through other means of sharing events (streaming, to-go kits, etc.)

Q: Will the Cultural Facilities Fund be available as planned later this year?

A. The Seattle Office of Arts & Culture has determined that the highest need at the moment is support for organizations and individuals who are experiencing Covid19

impacts. For that reason, we are reprioritizing the funding that had been anticipated for the Cultural Facilities Fund into recovery funds.

## **FUTURE**

Q: What happens next? How do we mitigate immediate issues and make plans for the next wave of issues that will come?

- A. This is an unprecedented time, and information changes on a daily basis. We encourage everybody to track updates from government agencies and make plans based on the latest information available. Until we believe that the pandemic is under control, additional measures may be undertaken to continue to tamp down on the spread, and flatten the curve. While we know there will be many challenges and hurdles to come, what we're already seeing, especially in our creative sector, is how much information and support people are sharing with each other collectively. We are only as strong as our weakest link, so it will be our ability to work together, to ensure that no one falls through the cracks, that will help us all get through this.

Q: How can the groups and the sector plan for recovery knowing the workforce may have dispersed?

- a. We must start to plan for Recovery now. We know this incident is going to have widespread impact across the region, the country and the world, and we believe that arts and culture are going to be a major means to jumpstart the community and the economy, once it is safe for us to gather together again. At this time we encourage everybody to plan for a visionary strategy that invites people to gather and support one another. The Office of Arts & Culture will have more information about this initiative in the coming months, in partnership with Philanthropy and Private Sector support.