



Dear Municipal Leader,

Throughout the darkness of the past year, local arts organizations have provided rays of hope and even joy for residents across our state. They were there when we needed them, but now they need your help.

When Covid-19 hit, the creative sector was the first to be shut down and they will be among the last to fully reopen. Most arts organizations are struggling to survive. Employment in the sector has been cut in half – to levels not seen for 30 years. Unemployment claims are up 468% compared to one year earlier. Theatres are closed. Art festivals canceled. Community music programs are silent.

Quick action is needed. Reviving the arts is critical to recovery in our state and in our cities and towns. Larger, established arts institutions not only provide entertainment, they serve as economic engines through direct employment, indirect spending from visitors and attract tourists from across the state and the region. Smaller arts organizations and festivals fuel creativity in our neighborhoods and unite a community, especially in times of trouble. More importantly, the arts have the power to transform our towns and neighborhoods into lively places with thriving local businesses where home values are strong and residents are proud to live.

Without your help, the arts will go away. However, every city and town has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help. Through the American Recovery Plan, the federal government is sending hundreds of millions of dollars to our cities and towns. **As you consider how to best use ARP funding in your municipality, we ask that you commit 1% of it to the arts and creative sector. That's only one penny from every dollar. These funds will be large enough to make a substantial impact in the creative sector, while still allowing that other pressing needs are fully met.**

There are many ways to distribute funds to the creative sector quickly, but you may want to consider these suggestions:

-Partner with your regional arts council which can identify local needs and re-grant funds directly to your town. More information can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Arts-and-Culture/Our-Regional-and-State-wide-Partners/Designated-Regional-Service-Organizations>

-Work with a local Community Foundation which can also re-grant funds directly to your town. A list of community foundations can be found here: <https://www.ctphilanthropy.org/directory-community-foundations-serving-connecticut>

-Offer direct grants to assist your local arts organizations with safe reopening, rehiring staff, sustaining operations and marketing to rebuild audiences.

The impact of supporting the arts right now cannot be underestimated. **Your town's investment in arts institutions, arts-related businesses, artists and arts workers will be a large step toward repairing the deep economic damage caused by the pandemic and ensuring a robust recovery for your town and your residents.**

At the Connecticut Arts Alliance, we believe the arts can heal, create unity, address community health, drive recovery and ignite the imagination. If we can be of any assistance to you or your other municipal leaders, please be in touch. The arts have enormous power. Let them help your town.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Calida A. Jones'.

Calida Jones
President, Connecticut Arts Alliance
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