



United Arts Fund Monthly Network Call

July 27, 2021

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Call recording available upon request.

UAF/Community Arts Funders Sharing Document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mXbbNePr4Hk6oqDPj9DS3xf9-FU-sxTllaCDlasba88/edit?usp=sharing>

I. Updates

Memphis – working on NEA/ARP application this week. Looking for insight. Requesting the full amount of \$500k. Did 381 grants last FY, which is about 200 more than a typical year. Meeting with city and county officials. No word on funding from ARP yet. There's the LAA version and the 'organization' one. Have the official LAA designation. Got money through the CARES Act.

Seattle requesting the same amount as well. Re-opening call with City of Seattle – was a challenging call. Seattle is recommending everyone mask once inside. Museums are open, opera and ballet are looking at socially distanced until January. Theatre groups aren't doing anything until January.

Is Memphis talking with other sectors to try and pool resources? Focused on the unrestricted arts support.

Just now seeing performing spaces open up. Folks doing 'enclosures' inside a theatre.

Museums and music venues are starting to see SVOG coming through. Trying to get more detail about which grantees are getting those funds. Learned that some orgs have received funds, but only a small amount went to really small organizations. Focus will need to be on smaller budgeted organizations. Looking to serve the people with budgets less than \$500k.

Seen a few theatre productions that are going inside – seating the house as regular, but socially distanced seating in the back. Still requiring staff to wear a mask when unable to socially distance.

Folks are trying to figure out how to do hybrid programming. There's a feeling like 'it's over' but people are not going back yet. What is the arts' role – what happens when a cast member gets sick or a show goes down. How long are the arts plugging gaps. What about the for-profit arts who have more capital to re-open. There are enormous gaps in terms of readiness based on budget size and capacity. Planning for back to business grants, sector resiliency.

What happens if the split between earned and contributed income widens? Where will the arts need to step in as advocates for unrestricted funds? Does it come from a shrinking of the sector? How do we support a sector that needs 20-30% more funding?

Contributing revenue decreased at the same rate as earned revenue in 2020, but it was also spotty depending on how folks were operating. Some small groups were able to go dark and save cash, but the next year seems scary. They will be able to mount projects, but will the audience come?

Bringing students back and doing digital, and am down 30% of staff.

People are fatigued and tired. There was momentum to reopen, but there's a fatigue of uncertainty. We don't know how to plan for what may come next.

2022 looks hard. Seeing the burnout in hiring and resignations. Staffing is a huge issue across the country, from service industry, and also at the executive level.

Focus on equity in hiring and across the board is a function of society events, but we also need new audiences. Where do they come from and will they fill seats? People are making efforts. Hiring shortages are showing that people don't have to put up with low pay and poor experiences.

Saved Notes from Chat Box:

- From michael : id love to hear about reopening, vax stuff, etc.
- From liza : Hi Tracy, Liza from Knoxville here -- my microphone isn't working. We are requesting NEA ARP LAA money at the \$150,000 level.
- From Tracy / ArtsMemphis : thanks Liza
- From Jessica Stern : Adding the resources page to the Arts Action Fund here: <https://www.artsactionfund.org/StateLocalBlockGrants>
- From liza : I've heard that the Tennessee General Assembly is making it difficult for local cities and counties to disburse their ARP money.
- From Colleen Chandler, ArtsMemphis : I just read that the CDC is expected to suggest those guidelines (mask inside vaccinated or not)
- From liza : Our county mayor has flatly stated that he will never again approve any restrictions whatsoever which will make it difficult for our performing arts organizations. We are moving forward at this point with few restrictions.
- From Jessica Stern : Here's the full AAF resource page -including daily SVOG updates: <https://www.artsactionfund.org/COVID19Resources>
- 15:46:09 From Susan Mendenhall : Liza I agree. Its really tough when they can't align with public health guidelines.
- From liza : Our venues have been wildly successful with svog
- From Michael Greer (he/him) - ArtsFund : us too
- From Michael Greer (he/him) - ArtsFund : about svog
- From Maury Sparrow : Off topic...I'm interested in ARPA funding in your cities/counties. If you have the info, what is the size of your city/county? what is the amount of ARPA funding coming to your city/county? what percentage of that funding is being requested by arts orgs?
- From liza : We are worried, Michael, that our audiences and support community will not be as generous to the arts next time around if we have another big pandemic shut-down.
- From Maury Sparrow : Agree, Liza.
- From Michael Greer (he/him) - ArtsFund : Liza

- From liza : Maury, our county is getting \$91M in ARP \$ and we are asking them for \$1.3M, which is 10% of our net losses. Our city is getting \$43M and we have asked them for \$1.5M for the arts to help orgs and individual artists here in Knoxville.
- From Maury Sparrow : Thank you! Great information.
- From Michael Greer (he/him) - ArtsFund : in Seattle - city got about 226MM and arts and culture got about 3MM and county got 650 and we got 30ish
- From liza : We are cautioning our member organizations to hold on to their cash reserves and we are advocating with our largest arts donors here to hold onto money for the next pandemic round.
- From Colleen Chandler, ArtsMemphis : Yes event insurance has become very exclusionary about pandemic affecting an event
- From Maury Sparrow : Thanks, Michael.
- From Michael Greer (he/him) - ArtsFund : we saw a 23% increase here in contributed
- From liza : I agree Maury. My orgs are not ready to believe in times as hard as that await us.
- From liza : TN vaccination rates are 44% -- the sixth lowest in the nation.
- From Colleen Chandler, ArtsMemphis : Yes - Finally getting some momentum only to re-plan again
- From Maury Sparrow : Are any of you applying for direct ARPA funding available to local arts agencies?
- From liza : The job market is very tight right now. Entry level positions are going unfilled as well as management positions.