

2020 Cultural STAR Program

Grant to Springboard for the Arts – Emergency Relief Fund

Cultural STAR Board Recommendation

Approve a 2020 Cultural STAR grant award of \$40,000 to Springboard for the Arts for its Emergency Relief Fund that will support 80 St. Paul artists with individual \$500.00 grants. This grant would draw from the 20% of Cultural STAR funding not restricted to the Cultural District in order to offer flexibility to where artists live within Saint Paul.

Background

The Cultural STAR Board met virtually several times from June to August 2020 to discuss how to best distribute the 2020 Cultural STAR funds in a way to meet the most urgent needs of hard-hit artists and arts and cultural organizations through the pandemic. The Board's top priorities were to distribute funds as flexibly as possible to both artists and non-profit arts and cultural organizations in the form of general operating and emergency funds. The Board expressed its commitment to racial equity and to awarding Cultural STAR funds as equitably as possible.

The Round One application deadline was February 28, 2020, and 78 eligible proposals were submitted for projects occurring between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, by Resolution 20-1194, the Saint Paul City Council voted to replace both regular Round One and Round Two Cultural STAR programs with a General Operating Fund to support Saint Paul arts and cultural organizations (See RES 20-1194).

Background on Springboard for the Arts and its Emergency Relief Fund

Springboard for the Arts' mission is to cultivate vibrant communities by connecting artists with the skills, information, and services they need to make a living and a life. While they serve artists across Minnesota, they were founded in Saint Paul, with a long-standing office location in Lowertown, and recently moved to a building they purchased on University Avenue.

In 2005, Springboard for the Arts created an Emergency Relief Fund ("Emergency Fund") to help artists in times of an emergency. The Emergency Fund gives artists a grant of \$500.00 for emergency use. In March 2020, the Emergency Fund was quickly expanded to include a Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund ("Coronavirus Emergency Fund") to meet the needs of artists impacted by COVID-19. The Coronavirus Emergency Fund raised over one million dollars and supported over 2,000 artists throughout Minnesota. Between March and July 1, 2020, the Coronavirus Emergency Fund supported 293 Saint Paul artists. See an additional overview of the fund provided by Springboard for the Arts attached to this report on pages 4-5.

Cultural STAR Board Recommendation

The Cultural STAR Board recommends awarding a \$40,000 grant to Springboard for the Arts for its Coronavirus Emergency Fund to support 80 Saint Paul artists affected by COVID-19 with \$500.00 individual grants.

Attachments

- 2020 Cultural STAR Budget Breakdown
- Springboard for the Arts' Personal Emergency Relief Fund Overview, provided by Springboard for the Arts

2020 Cultural STAR Budget Breakdown

2020 Funds Available		\$1,522,825*	
	In DT Cultural District (80%)	Out of District (20%)	TOTAL
Total Budgeted	1,218,260	304,565	1,522,825
City Budget-Approved Grants			
Children's Museum Year 6 of 6 (RES 20-581)	(209,500)	0	(209,500)
Library Materials (RES 20-xxxx)	(175,000)	0	(175,000)
Events for Neighborhood Cultural Orgs in Downtown (RES 20-1194 reallocated to General Operating Fund)	(100,000)	0	(100,000)
Subtotal of Pre-approved	(384,500)	0	(484,500)
Total Available for Grants	833,760	304,565	1,138,325

Remaining Fund Distribution	In Cultural District	Out of District	TOTAL
General Operating Fund (RES 20-1194)	833,760	264,565	1,098,325
Recommended Springboard for the Arts' Emergency Relief Fund	0	40,000	40,000

*Total amount of 2020 Cultural STAR Funds Available noted here takes into account an estimated \$245,552 projected reduction in sales tax revenue toward the Cultural STAR program, or a 12.8% reduction, as estimated by Office of Financial Services in a memo dated 6/30/2020

Springboard for the Arts' Personal Emergency Relief Fund Overview

Springboard for the Arts' Personal Emergency Relief Fund (P-ERF) is a program Springboard has offered to artists who faced any emergency and needed quick relief. In March, we pivoted this program to serve artists who had lost income due to COVID-19 related cancellations. In the process, we scaled up from serving around 2-4 artists a month on average to serving 130 artists a week. City of Saint Paul funding will help support the needs of 80 Saint Paul artists, culture bearers, and creative workers who have seen the bottom drop out of their employment during the pandemic.

Since March 13, Springboard has provided \$500 emergency relief grants to 2,143 Minnesotans. We have documented and tracked recipients on a monthly basis based on how they self-identified on their applications, and our most recent tracking indicates that this group includes the following demographics:

- 42% BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Color)
- 20% from outside the Twin Cities 7 county Metro
- 10% from the disability community
- 18% LBGTQ+

From March 13 – June 24, we supported 293 recipients from the City of Saint Paul.

As part of our application process, we also asked recipients to identify how they intended to use the funds. Based on their responses and our internal tracking, we know that respondents are using their relief funding for the following:

- 46% Basic Needs (Food, Utilities, Bills, Childcare)
- 42% Housing (Rent, Mortgage)
- 8% Health Insurance/Medical Bills
- 4% To Pay Other Artists

In addition to paying out over \$1M to over 2,000 MN artists through our Emergency Relief Fund, Springboard wrote and shared a guide for How to Start an Emergency Relief Fund. We hosted regular online convenings for organizations across North America who had started emergency funds, providing space for connection, brainstorming, and sharing resources. We know of at least three organizations who started their own funds based on what they learned from this network.

In response to other emerging needs during this time, Springboard has also launched: 1. One-on-one career counseling and support for artists and artist-led businesses and projects, conducted via phone or online through Springboard's roster of professional career coaches, who are all practicing artists themselves while referrals will be made to relevant legal, accounting and other experts. 2. Online technical assistance: Q&As, workshops, group calls on topics relevant to creative businesses dealing with the Covid-19 crisis, including legal resources on topics like

unemployment insurance, e-commerce, and financial planning. We will continue to develop and adapt additional programming to meet the ongoing needs of artists.

Here are a few stories of P-ERF recipients to illustrate the needs of artists during this time:

“Receiving the grant allowed me to pay bills and also allowed me to purchase authentic African wax print fabric to make masks and sell them. This has continued to be a source of income for me during this hardship. I’m truly grateful for the grant.”

- Keiona Cooke, fashion designer

“I was soon to be launching my lipstick line and I have not been able to get my orders fulfilled for my lipsticks. I have been able to use some of the funds to purchase materials to make masks for women and children in transitional housing.”

- Tameka Jones, makeup artist

“The Emergency Relief Fund came in when I needed the most. Because of this support, I was able to pay and keep my insurance. I felt unsafe during this pandemic because I am an Asian American immigrant and did not dare to go out at all, but this Emergency Relief Fund made me feel like Springboard and the Minnesota arts community cares about us vulnerable artists.”

- Yan Pang, composer