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**REGIONAL ARTS COMMISSION OF ST. LOUIS LAUNCHES EMERGENCY ARTIST RELIEF FUND
IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 CRISIS**

\$100,000 fund aims to address critical needs for local artists impacted by the global pandemic

ST. LOUIS (March 26, 2020) – The Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis (RAC), the area’s largest public funder of the arts, has joined with the St. Louis Community Foundation, to help drive funding to local artists who have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus crisis and its economic fallout.

RAC is establishing the RAC Artist Relief Fund with a donation of \$100,000 to help artists whose creative practices and incomes have been directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. RAC plans to also solicit contributions from others in the community who recognize the severity and scope of the need to support our local artists.

“This is a collaborative effort to respond to the global crisis affecting our communities, and a push for RAC to respond to critical issues that affect the arts and culture sector in our region,” said Mont Levy, chair of the board of commissioners at RAC. “As the largest funder of individual artists in the area, we felt it was RAC’s responsibility to provide emergency support during this time of great need.”

The fund, which allows applicants to submit a one-time request of either \$500 or \$1,000, will help deliver critical relief by providing financial assistance to artists whose livelihoods have been disrupted by the COVID-19 crisis.

RAC expects applications to open the week of March 30. Artists will then be invited to review eligibility criteria and apply online. The organization will use a simple, expedited process to administer funds with applications considered and awarded until April 30 or a complete depletion of funds.

“We know this is a difficult time for our community and for those who are experiencing direct financial hits,” Levy said. “We are moving through this process as quickly as possible. Working in partnership with the St. Louis Community Foundation will allow us to expedite this process.”

To learn more about RAC's response to COVID-19 and its effects on St. Louis artists and arts organizations, visit www.racstl.org/covid19/.

About the Regional Arts Commission

The Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis (RAC) supports artists and arts organizations through grantmaking, strategic initiatives and other programs that build capacity, improve quality and advance diversity, equity and inclusion within the region's arts and culture sector. Celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2020, RAC has been pivotal in nurturing the vibrant art scene throughout St. Louis, awarding more than 7,000 grants totaling over \$100 million since its inception in 1985. Directed by a board of 15 commissioners appointed by the chief executives of St. Louis City and St. Louis County, RAC prioritizes quality in its support of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, individual artists, and programs and promotes partnerships that strengthen the sector and drive progress throughout the region. RAC receives its funding from hotel/motel room sales tax revenue from St. Louis City and County. Visit www.racstl.org for more information, or follow us on Facebook at [Regional Arts Commission](https://www.facebook.com/RegionalArtsCommission) or Twitter [@RACStLouis](https://twitter.com/RACStLouis).

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