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FROM	NAME & TITLE	Robert Cename, Budget Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 432, City Hall (410) 396-4774		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 21-0022R – Assisting Baltimore City Artists		

DATE:

TO

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

March 9, 2021

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 21-0022R, Assisting Baltimore City Artists, the purpose of which is call on the City to invest at least \$1 million of any additional COVID-19 relief funds received from the federal government to the establishment of an emergency fund for Baltimore City artists.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically impacted the health and jobs of people across the country and the world. Artists of all mediums were impacted due factors such as event and performance cancellations, reduced retail opportunities, and postponed projects due to social distancing requirements. The Brookings Institute published a report in August 2020 estimating losses of 2.3 million jobs and \$74 billion in average monthly earnings for jobs in the arts. An Americans for the Arts survey of arts organizations and agencies estimates that Baltimore City’s arts sector has experienced a total financial loss of approximately \$8.2 million during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a median loss of \$29,500.

As a result of these economic impacts, federal and State funding has been allocated for the establishment of relief programs for artists and the arts industry, as well as programs organized by local organizations and mutual aid groups. The State has provided funding to from the Maryland States Arts Council Emergency Grant program and local artists and organizations have established The Baltimore Artist Emergency Relief Fund, which provides one-time grants to artists.

In March 2020, Baltimore City received \$103 million in funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which is provided as reimbursement COVID-related expenses that fall within federal regulations. The City allocated \$29.1 million of these funds to direct support programs for City residents and organizations, which were managed by the Baltimore Civic Foundation, Baltimore Development Corporation, Family League, and Mayor’s Office of Children and Family Success.

Program	Managing Office	Funding
Eviction Prevention	Mayor’s Office of Children and Family Success	\$10,000,000
Child Care Stabilization	Family League	\$4,000,000
Main Streets Grant	Baltimore Civic Foundation	\$300,000
Non-Profit Support	Baltimore Civic Foundation	\$5,000,000
Small Business/Restaurant Support	Baltimore Development Corporation	\$9,800,000
Total		\$29,100,000

Other Considerations

Restricting future funding to specific groups or projects is concerning to the Department of Finance due to the changing nature of the City’s COVID-19 response and uncertainty about federal funding amounts

and restrictions. In addition, the latest federal funding bill is targeted to State and local governments, due to the number of financial challenges these institutions are facing in the response to COVID-19. Maintaining flexibility with COVID-19 response funds allows the City to use funds as needed to respond to the shifting needs of City residents as the pandemic and vaccine distribution continue.

Conclusion

The Department of Finance will attend the hearing for this Resolution and respond to any fiscal inquiries.

cc: Henry Raymond
Natasha Mehu
Nina Themelis