

BALTIMORE
OFFICE OF PROMOTION & THE ARTS
Arts • Events • Film

March 10, 2021

Baltimore City Council
Education, Workforce, and Youth Committee
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore MD 21202

RE:Support 21-0022R

Dear Honorable Chair and Members of the Education, Workforce, and Youth Committee,

My name is Jackie Downs and I am the Arts Council Director, Baltimore City. The Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts is the designated Arts Council for the City of Baltimore. As Baltimore City's Arts Council, we provide funding to local artists and arts and culture organizations within Baltimore City in the form of grants, direct commissions, programs, and technical support.

Since the beginning of the pandemic BOPA has worked collaboratively with artists and organizations to ensure that the creative community is supported through this crisis. In April we served as the fiduciary agents for The Baltimore Artist Emergency Relief Fund, a coalition-led initiative designed to provide direct assistance to Baltimore-based artists and creative entrepreneurs who lost income due to the COVID-19 crisis. BOPA stepped forward with the initial seed money for the fund and fully funded the grant submission and distribution process. Ultimately, a combined total of \$161,000 was raised for the emergency relief fund from individual, corporate and philanthropic donors. Out of the 644 artists who applied, we were able to award 322 artists \$500 grants within a 3-month period. More than half of the individuals who applied identified as a person of color and grant recipients used the funds for a range of needs from food and childcare needs to medication and loss of revenue. Although this was a great step in serving artists in an emergency situation, we believe there is an opportunity to do more. Through our work and connection to artists and communities we know that individual artists continue to struggle as a result of this pandemic. This Resolution calls on the Administration, if it receives future COVID-19 relief funds from the United States Congress, to invest a minimum of \$1,000,000 to establish an emergency fund to assist Baltimore City artists. BOPA is in support of this bill.

I sincerely thank this committee and the Baltimore City Council for working to support artists and therefore ask for a favorable report on resolution 21-0022R.

Sincerely,



Jocquelyn Downs
Arts Council Director, Baltimore City

