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## 5 WAYS TO SUPPORT INDY ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS IMPACTED BY COVID-19

The Arts Council of Indianapolis has been closely monitoring local, state, and national government restrictions to slow the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus). Public health and safety is our top priority and the Indy arts and cultural sector is committed to doing our part. This includes compliance with all government guidance and demonstrating an abundance of caution while also doing our best to continue access to arts and cultural content and experiences that are so essential to help us cope during these unprecedented times.

Up until today, more than 130 performances, exhibitions, and events were scheduled in Indianapolis through the last half of March and April. Our arts and cultural organizations are taking every precaution to ensure the health and safety of patrons, participants, and staff. Based on current [state](#) and [city](#) guidelines, some organizations have decided to keep their doors open and modify their programming. Others have decided to close temporarily or cancel/postpone events.

The Arts Council's No. 1 priority is the health, safety, and wellness of all patrons, artists, volunteers, audience members, and organizations. We encourage everyone to take the urgent and necessary steps to slow the epidemic, by practicing good public health and protecting the most vulnerable among us.

As Indianapolis collaborates to respond, we encourage our community to support artists and arts and cultural organizations as they navigate potentially dire economic impacts. Indy's nonprofit arts and culture sector supports 15,000 full-time employees and thousands of other part-time contributors who work every day to strengthen our community. Our nonprofit arts sector also contributes \$400 million annually in economic impact to our region, serving more than 8 million residents and visitors each year. It is critical that we come together to assist those who are losing work and security during this epidemic.

At this challenging time, our arts and cultural partners are all working to build responsible continuity into our arts offerings. Everyone is making the best decisions they can based on available information. Here are five ways we can all support #IndyArts and fuel hope and healing during this difficult time for our community, country, and the world:

- 1. Stay informed.** If you plan to attend an arts and cultural activity, check that organization's social media and website for updates. Each organization and individual must observe all policies and guidelines and make decisions that are right for their situation. Most importantly, if you don't feel well, or are at greater risk of illness, follow the guidelines and stay home. We all need to respect and support these decisions with empathy, flexibility, and understanding.
- 2. Donate your ticket.** Organizations are being as flexible as possible based on their ticketing policies. Many are honoring tickets for a new, postponed date. If performances are canceled and/or you choose to stay home from events that you purchased tickets for, consider donating your unused ticket back to the organization rather than requesting a refund. Ask about the organization's specific policy. Transferring your ticket purchase to a donation supports arts organizations' futures in an uncertain time.

3. **Donate financially.** If you have the ability, please consider purchasing a membership or subscription and making a financial donation. Ticket sales rarely cover more than a third or half of the actual cost of delivering arts and cultural experiences. It is important that sponsors, patrons, and donors all stay engaged and remain unwavering in their support. We are actively working on additional solutions and hope to provide updates soon on recommended ways to support coordinated emergency relief efforts for individual artists and organizations.

4. **Advocate.** Ask how you can help the artists and arts organizations in your network, then take action and invite your friends to do the same. The Arts Council is conducting a survey and facilitating conversations to understand the magnitude of the impact and immediate/long-term needs. The results will help inform more local solutions and support as soon as possible. Again, we are also actively working on options to support coordinated emergency relief efforts for individual artists and organizations and will share that information as soon as possible.

5. **Offer artists and musicians the option to postpone but pay now.** For those who own a venue or other business that hires musicians and creatives, consider paying them for postponed or cancelled events now with the understanding efforts will be made to reschedule later. The Arts Council has made it our policy to pay musicians their full rate for all cancelled Artsgarden performances due to COVID-19 with the potential to reschedule at a later date. This plan will lessen the effects on freelance artists who rely on the gig economy.

During uncertain times, the arts offer hope, inspiration, courage, and a vision for how to move forward. We must ensure equitable and empathetic treatment for all who are affected. Specifically, the arts will continue to lead by example to combat the spread of any stigma and discrimination fueled by fear and misinformation.

The Arts Council will continue to provide updates as the situation evolves. Information is available at [www.indyarts.org](http://www.indyarts.org) and our social media channels.

Thank you for your support.