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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND DCASE ANNOUNCE \$2.5 MILLION IN ARTIST COMMISSIONS AND ARTS ORGANIZATION GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Funding includes new "Artist Response Program" providing \$750,000 to artists to create art that responds to recent health, economic and humanitarian crises

CHICAGO, IL — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) today announced \$2.5 million in funding opportunities for Chicago artists and arts organizations. A new "Artist Response Program," opening January 11, will provide \$750,000 to support art that respond to the recent health, economic and humanitarian crises. The program includes \$500,000 to commission up to 10 ambitious public art projects and an additional \$250,000 for three to five regranting partners to distribute for smaller local projects. The annual "CityArts Program" opening January 19 will also award an additional \$1.7 million in grants to nonprofit arts organizations throughout Chicago.

"Our city is facing a critical moment in its history, as the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified systemic racism and disinvestment on our South and West sides and caused us to rethink and reignite our efforts to address these issues," said Mayor Lightfoot. "This has presented us with a unique opportunity to not only rebuild our city with the values of equity and inclusion in mind, but also document this journey with art projects designed to engage residents in dialogue, reflection and action. I look forward to seeing these projects come to life and illustrate the work we've done as a city to step up to the health, economic, and humanitarian crises we've faced over this past year."

DCASE is currently seeking artist proposals for up to 10 public art commissions ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Artist projects can range from a physical artwork, to the transformation/repurposing of spaces or objects, to a happening or cultural event focused on any artistic discipline including architecture, culinary arts, curatorial arts, dance, design, film, literary arts, media arts, music, performance art, photography, public art, social practice, theater or visual arts. Projects will be prioritized that address public safety, equity and access through art; activate, repair or rebuild spaces on the South and West sides of Chicago; or activate Chicago communities and institutions to address broader social issues, opportunities and



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challenges. The guidelines and application, opening January 11, is available at chicagoculturalgrants.org. Registration is available for an application webinar on Friday, January 15, at 11 a.m. The application closes on February 5, at 5 p.m., CST.

“Chicago has a renowned public art collection, but that work has too often been focused on the central district of the city,” said DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly. “With this initiative and more to come, we will bring more great public art to our neighborhoods, with a focus on the South and West Sides of the city, and we will encourage our artists to grapple with the difficult social issues that we collectively face.”

The Artist Response Program also provides \$250,000 for three to five regranting partners to distribute grants of \$1,000 to \$10,000 to artists to create projects designed to engage residents in dialogue, reflection and action. This follows the successful re-granting model that allowed DCASE in 2020 to partner with Arts Alliance Illinois, 3Arts, Arts Work Fund and the broader philanthropic community to create the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund. These partners, better positioned to respond quickly to crises and the complex needs of individual communities and neighborhoods, distributed financial relief to workers, organizations and businesses in the creative industries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations interested in becoming Artist Response Program re-granting partners can learn more and apply at chicagoculturalgrants.org. The application closes on February 5, at 5 p.m., CST.

DCASE will also soon release the guidelines and open the application for the annual CityArts grant program on January 19. Offering \$1.7M in grants to nonprofit arts and culture organizations of all sizes, this year’s program will include opportunities to apply for general operating grants and project grants focused on rebuilding and recovery across all artistic disciplines. Project grants will support initiatives that have the potential to impact the Chicago arts sector at large. The application deadline is March 3, 2021, at 5 p.m. For eligibility requirements, grant calendar and more information please visit chicagoculturalgrants.org.

DCASE’s Cultural Grants Program plays an active role in the development of Chicago’s arts and culture community by funding artists and arts organizations that have the potential to meaningfully contribute to the city’s cultural vitality. Last year, the grant program’s budget increased from \$1.7M to \$4.5M, reflecting a \$1M increase in annual funding and additional funding for the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund and the Performing Arts Venue Relief Program to address the devastating impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the arts community. For more information, please visit chicagoculturalgrants.org.



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Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

The [Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events](#) is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City's future cultural and economic growth, via the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.