NYC COVID-19 RESPONSE & IMPACT FUND REPORT

RESILIENCE & RESOLVE

THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST
The NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund supported human services and arts and culture nonprofits, including (clockwise from top left) One Hundred Black Men of New York; Cypress Hills Child Care Corporation; Red Hook Initiative; Child Center of New York; Cumbe: Center for African and Diaspora Dance; New Alternatives for Children; Lenox Hill Neighborhood House; Hot Bread Kitchen; Groundswell; a Repertorio Español production of Courage, Betrayal and a Woman Scorned, by Ana Caro (1590-1646), featuring Luis Carlos de la Lombana and Sandor Juan (photo by Michael Palma Mir).
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New York’s philanthropic community acted decisively when COVID-19 began disrupting life in our city.

On March 20, 2020, a group of donors announced that they were launching the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund to provide emergency financial support to help small and mid-size nonprofits respond to emerging needs, cover losses associated with the disruption of their operations, and continue their critical work.

While the pandemic affected all nonprofits, the fund focused its grantmaking on supporting organizations that worked in two key areas: human services and arts and culture.

Human services organizations were working on the front lines of the crisis and needed emergency support to provide urgent services such as food delivery, home healthcare, housing, child care, and afterschool education.

Arts and culture groups, meanwhile, saw their venues close abruptly and faced the prospect of months, if not years, of lost revenues and disruption. Given their importance to the city’s economy and quality of life, arts and culture groups were embraced by the donors as essential recipients of the fund.

Through additional contributions, the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund grew to $110 million. Of that total, $73.1 million supported more than 750 nonprofits through a rapid-response grant program housed at The New York Community Trust. Another 45 nonprofits received $37 million in no-interest loans through a partnership with Nonprofit Finance Fund.

This report provides a closer look at the fund’s grant program, the nonprofits it supported, and the road ahead.
New York has faced its share of crises over the past two decades.

From the horrors of 9/11, to the heartbreak of the 2008 financial meltdown, to the havoc of superstorm Sandy, our city has weathered a series of devastating tragedies. Each time, we’ve come back stronger.

But when COVID-19 began gripping our city, we were facing a challenge unlike any we had seen before. This wasn’t a single event or an economic catastrophe. It was a pandemic that would threaten public safety and imperil the livelihoods of millions of New Yorkers for many months, if not years.

Given the enormity of this threat, quick action was needed to help nonprofits navigate the pandemic and provide critical services to our neighbors in need.

Initiated by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation joined forces on a local response to the crisis. The three foundations worked with The New York Community Trust and a core group of partners to establish the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund.

The value of this partnership cannot be overstated. In addition to making generous financial contributions, each of the founding partners acted with urgency, cooperation, and creativity. And new donors quickly joined the cause.

As a result, just days after launching the fund, review committees made their first grant recommendations. By July, the fund’s grant program raised and granted more than $73 million.

The challenge ahead remains daunting. But we are encouraged by the generosity of donors to this fund and the extraordinary work of a tireless team of philanthropic professionals that provided critical and timely support to New York’s nonprofits.

Lorie Slutsky
President, The New York Community Trust

Darren Walker
President, Ford Foundation

Left: Street Lab used funding from the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund to create a number of outdoor reading, writing and arts programs, including one with The Drawing Center.

Above: Lorie Slutsky (photo by Ari Mintz) and Darren Walker.
BUILDING SOLID PARTNERSHIPS WAS THE KEY TO PROVIDING VITAL SUPPORT.
When foundation leaders talk about collaboration, they often cite a well-known African proverb: If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

The NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund, however, proves that sometimes it is possible to go fast and far, together.

As COVID-19 began its rapid spread through New York in March 2020, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Ford Foundation approached The New York Community Trust about creating an emergency fund to help the city’s nonprofits respond to the pandemic.

Each of the four foundations had already started preparing for the growing threat—but they recognized that they could achieve more through collaboration than they could on their own.

“There is no playbook for how to respond to a pandemic,” said Patricia E. Harris, chief executive officer of Bloomberg Philanthropies. “But we knew if we all got together, we could make a difference.”

Together, leaders of these four foundations reached out to their peers to begin enlisting partners who were willing to contribute resources.

Within days, a group of donors had provided $75 million to seed a response grant and loan fund. Nonprofit Finance Fund oversaw the loan fund. The New York Community Trust administered grants through the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund, while Nonprofit Finance Fund distributed more than $37 million in no-interest loans to provide critical support to 45 New York City nonprofits.

These nonprofits received timely loans ranging from $100,000 to $3 million to help cover delays in government payments, postponed fundraising events, and increased expenses to deliver services.

Supporters of the loan fund include the Ford Foundation, The Jennifer and Jonathan Allan Soros Foundation, the Altman Foundation, SeaChange Capital Partners, Trinity Church Wall Street, and The New York Community Trust.

Left: Afro Latin Jazz Alliance of NY used its NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund grant to pay personnel and artists, like those shown here during a pre-COVID performance “ALJO + Afrobeat=FELA!” (photo by David Garten).
York Community Trust managed the grant fund pro-bono – and ensured that the money was distributed quickly.

It was no small task.

Before announcing the fund publicly on March 20, the partners had already agreed to focus their grantmaking in two areas: human services and the arts. Grantmaking decisions were made by committees drawn from the diverse group of private, corporate, family, and community foundations and individual donors who created the fund.

**TIMELINE OF A RESPONSE**

**MARCH 11**
WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic (photo credit: creativeneko/Shutterstock.com)

**MARCH 20**
Gov. Andrew Cuomo declares “New York State on Pause”
Donors provide initial $75M for grants at The Trust and loans at Nonprofit Finance Fund
RFPs issued to nonprofits seeking funding

**APRIL 22**
Grant application portal closes
The two committees created simplified processes and criteria designed to limit the time needed for nonprofits to apply online – and for committee members to review the funding applications and make decisions. Applications were accepted on a rolling basis for a period of roughly five weeks. Each committee met weekly to review the applications and make funding decisions.

“This fund was created to provide emergency cash to nonprofits that were suffering,” said Lorie Slutsky, president of The New York Community Trust. “Everyone agreed to a streamlined process designed to get money out the door quickly.”
The funders aimed to reach smaller and mid-size nonprofits in recognition of their local expertise, and the possibility that they might not have access to relief geared toward larger, better resourced organizations. Nonprofits had the flexibility to use their funding to support new and emergency needs and meet community demands – which were changing daily.

The funders were trying to help nonprofits stay open and respond quickly to a community in crisis. While the number of applications received in a short window was heartening, some resource-strapped nonprofits did not have the bandwidth to submit applications in time to qualify. And in some cases, organizations struggled to apply specifically because COVID-19 had infected key staff members.

And while additional contributions ultimately provided $73 million for grants, that sum was still not large enough to meet the massive and continuing demand.

“There is so much need,” said Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. “It’s a remarkable pressure boiler that creates a heartbreaking dilemma. You cannot help everyone. You have to pick and choose.”

Ultimately, the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund received 1,621 applications. Of those, 764 grants were approved.

Most groups received funding just weeks after they applied – providing them with critical resources at a time when government funding was frozen.

“The Trust staff did a full year’s worth of grantmaking in five weeks,” Slutsky said.

And that heavy lift extended well beyond The Trust’s team. Members of the grant committees reviewed and scored applications as they were managing COVID-19 related disruptions and challenges in their own organizations and families.

Often, the choices were agonizing.

“I bet every committee member would tell you that there were one or two applications that broke their heart,” said Shawn Morehead, The Trust’s vice president of grantmaking. “That’s a huge part of working in philanthropy. We spend a lot of time saying ‘no’.”

But for nonprofits that received grants, the fund provided an important lifeline – one that undoubtedly helped ensure their survival.
ADDRESSING INEQUITIES

How the fund has aimed to help those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19

New York’s BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and immigrant communities already faced significant inequities prior to COVID-19.

The pandemic only exacerbated the inequities.

Multiple studies have shown BIPOC communities are experiencing a disproportionate share of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. Other analyses have found that BIPOC communities are more likely to face unemployment, food and housing insecurity, and loss of health insurance. What’s more, BIPOC children are more likely to be on the wrong side of the digital divide – which is putting an increasing number of children behind their white peers.

Share of grantees who have both board and staff who are majority BIPOC

27.5%

Above: Lenox Hill Neighborhood House purchased emergency equipment and supplies and hired temporary staff to respond to increased demand.
Against this backdrop, the donors to the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund sought to create a process that would help distribute funds more equitably.

“It was less about standard due diligence and putting up barriers and more about getting this right,” said Darren Walker, Ford Foundation president and fund co-chair.

**STAFF MAJORITY: APPLICANTS VS. GRANTEES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FUND APPLICANTS, BY STAFF MAJORITY</th>
<th>GRANTEES, BY STAFF MAJORITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIPOC</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Population*</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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**BOARD MAJORITY: APPLICANTS VS. GRANTEES**

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<th>FUND APPLICANTS, BY BOARD MAJORITY</th>
<th>GRANTEES, BY BOARD MAJORITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>BIPOC</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Population*</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Did not have a 51%+ majority
To ensure that funding reached BIPOC-led organizations, the donors needed to aggressively communicate about the fund in new ways to reach nonprofits that might have otherwise been missed.

Additionally, because many groups are smaller, they were often less equipped to submit grant applications on the fund’s short timeline.

Kerry McCarthy, The Trust’s vice president for philanthropic initiatives and co-chair of the fund’s arts and culture grantmaking committee, said funders made special efforts to communicate with BIPOC-led nonprofits, such as through The Trust’s Mosaic Network and Fund, which directs resources to arts groups that are led by, created for, and accountable to African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American communities.

The fund also aimed to give added weight to applications from nonprofits that had BIPOC-led boards and staff.

**Organizations that have both a board and staff majority**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Grantees</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both board and staff are majority white</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both board and staff are majority BIPOC</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Top left to right: Socrates Sculpture Park partnered with community organizations to coordinate food distribution for people in need. Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation helped residents in the Far Rockaways.
During the best of times, New Yorkers rely heavily on human services organizations that provide food, healthcare, housing, care for children and the elderly, and more. When the city became the world’s COVID-19 epicenter in March and April 2020, demand for many of these services skyrocketed.

At the same time, human services nonprofits faced unprecedented disruptions. For many groups, government funding was halted, facilities were closed, and staff needed personal protective equipment (PPE) and technology upgrades to work safely and effectively in a new and dangerous environment.

The situation threatened to paralyze many nonprofits, even as the community needed them more than ever. The NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund gave human services groups a chance to bridge the gap and respond to new pandemic-driven needs until other funding could be restored.

“We wanted to minimize nonprofits having to run from one place to another to get emergency support,” said human services grantmaking committee co-chair Irfan Hasan, The Trust’s program director for health and behavioral health.

Human services organizations submitted 784 proposals requesting nearly $114.3 million. The fund awarded more than $43.7 million – or 38 percent of the amount requested – through 383 grants.

**HUMAN SERVICES GRANTMAKING: HOW THE MONEY WAS SPENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPE</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct cash assistance</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard/bonus pay</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program expenses</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional fees</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
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Left: AlRnyc ensured its community health workers continued to serve clients in the face of COVID-19.
Sapna NYC provided groceries and case management to South Asian immigrants in the Bronx. INCLUDEnyc’s grant supported personnel and technology costs.

More than a third of the funds – 37 percent – paid for personnel. Another 17 percent was used for critical investments in technology.

Ultimately, the fund helped organizations like the Queens-based Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC) – which provides support to immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and child abuse – continue to offer critical services during a perilous time.

“These survivors and their children are among the most vulnerable in crises,” KAFSC executive director Jeehae Fischer said. “[The fund] empowered many nonprofits like KAFSC to care for those who need it most.”

### HUMAN SERVICES
**PROGRAM ACTIVITIES PROVIDED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDED SERVICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counseling case management</td>
<td>164</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food &amp; supply delivery</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct cash assistance</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remote learning</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>Telehealth</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; shelter</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal services</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workforce development</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regranting</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ORGANIZATION: VISION URBANA

FOCUS: Human Services

LOCATION: Manhattan

MISSION: Assists low-income seniors, families, and at-risk youth on the Lower East Side

GRANT SIZE: $55,000

Before COVID-19, Vision Urbana’s food pantry was a small component of its work helping seniors, families, and at-risk youth on the Lower East Side.

But when the pandemic hit, the pantry became a central – and necessary – neighborhood service.

Vision Urbana director Eric Diaz knew that his organization had to ramp up its ability to distribute food – and it needed to devise a way to deliver it safely to those who were now forced to isolate at home.

“COVID made us think about the pantry from a different model,” Diaz said. “It was almost a knee-jerk response to move to home delivery.”

However, delivering food to more than 2,000 older individuals per week is no easy task, especially for a small nonprofit working during a pandemic.

The NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund provided a timely lifeline. With its grant, Vision Urbana hired a pantry coordinator to manage the increased demand, supervise volunteers, and oversee the program’s logistics.

Vision Urbana also invested in tablet computers for Lower East Side senior citizens to provide them with access to virtual trainings on healthy eating and much-needed human connection.

“How it was spent:

- **Personnel**: 19%
- **Administration**: 12%
- **Technology**: 11%
- **Program expenses**: 33%
- **PPE**: 5%

“Fifty seniors are now able to stay in touch with us during COVID,” Diaz says. “Many of them were experiencing social isolation, so this gives them a virtual connection during a tough time.”
HUMAN SERVICES
GRANTMAKING BY BOROUGH*

MANHATTAN
FUNDS GRANTED
$26,200,000
NUMBER OF GRANTS
219

STATEN ISLAND
FUNDS GRANTED
$1,036,000
NUMBER OF GRANTS
10

BROOKLYN
FUNDS GRANTED
$7,649,000
NUMBER OF GRANTS
72

QUEENS
FUNDS GRANTED
$3,654,000
NUMBER OF GRANTS
34

OUTSIDE OF NEW YORK CITY
FUNDS GRANTED
$838,000
NUMBER OF GRANTS
9

* Based on nonprofits’ headquarters locations; many operate in multiple locations or provide services citywide.

© Groups with headquarters outside New York City provided services in the city prior to COVID-19. Grants to these groups focused on their city services.

GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE

Lola Adedokun
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

Veyom Bahl
Robin Hood

Louisa Chaffee
UJA-Federation of New York

Linda Gibbs
Bloomberg Philanthropies

Irfan Hasan
The New York Community Trust, Co-Chair

Alexandra Herzan
Lily Auchincloss Foundation

Tam Ho
Estée Lauder Companies Charitable Foundation

Betsy Krebs
The JPB Foundation

Rick Luftglass
Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund

Rachael Pine
Altmann Foundation

Julia Quinn
Kenneth C. Griffin Charitable Fund

Julie Sandorf
Charles H. Revson Foundation

Deborah Smith
Wells Fargo Foundation

Jennifer Allan Soros
LaVerne Srinivasan Carnegie Corporation of New York

Maria Torres-Springer
Ford Foundation, Co-Chair
Seamen's Society for Children and Families’ work requires a personal touch.

As an organization that works to place and support children in foster homes, ongoing contact with children and foster families is critical.

When COVID-19 shut down New York, Seamen’s Society needed to figure out how it could continue to support 350 children and their families while keeping its staff connected and safe.

It needed to equip its staff with laptops so they could work remotely and with personal protective equipment so they could continue to visit and support foster families.

“We didn’t have surplus funding to go out and get a bunch of laptops or PPE,” said David Gaskin, Seamen’s Society’s president and CEO. “We were trying to figure out how we were going to go remote.”

The NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund helped solve that challenge.

With the grant, the group acquired 134 laptops – enough to sustain the 180 staff members who needed to stay connected while working remotely.

It also invested in PPE for its team and for foster families, and purchased sanitizing equipment, hand sanitizing dispensers, and cleaning supplies for use at its facilities in Brooklyn and Staten Island.

As a result, case workers were able to coordinate virtual meetings with children, youth, birth parents, and foster parents – and make safe home visits, when appropriate.

“Without this funding, I’m not sure what we would have done,” Gaskin said.
COVID-19 has been especially tough for New York’s arts and culture organizations. According to Americans for the Arts, the median amount lost by New York City arts and culture organizations due to the pandemic was $67,000, as they were forced to cancel live events and fundraising activities. The same survey estimates arts and culture groups nationally have lost $14.1 billion due to the pandemic.

But COVID-19’s impact cannot be measured strictly in dollars. New York’s arts and culture nonprofits are responsible for providing educational programs, platforms and income for artists, safe spaces for children and families, and connections for the city’s diverse population.

“The nonprofit cultural sector underpins almost everything positive in this city,” said Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Kate D. Levin, co-chair of the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund’s arts and culture grantmaking committee. “It’s grounded in every neighborhood.”

When these organizations’ revenue streams were abruptly cut off due to the pandemic, the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund provided resources to help them stay afloat. The need was urgent – particularly among smaller, community-based organizations.

During the five-week grant application period, 837 arts and culture organizations submitted proposals requesting more than $77 million. Fifty-five percent of

**ARTS & CULTURE GRANTMAKING: HOW THE MONEY WAS SPENT**

- **Personnel**: 74%
- **Program expenses**: 11%
- **Technology**: 6%
- **Professional fees**: 3%
- **Administration**: 3%
- **Communications**: 1%
- **PPE**: 1%
- **Other**: 1%
- **Median amount awarded**: $50,000

"SPEED TO MARKET WAS REALLY IMPORTANT. FOR MANY GRANTEES, SURVIVAL WAS SUCCESS."
Kate D. Levin
Bloomberg Philanthropies

**Number of grant applications**: 837

**Number of grants awarded**: 381

**Left**: Roulette Intermedium made more than 50 live performances available through digital platforms, television, and radio (pictured: Brandon Lopez).
Top left to right: The Martha Graham Dance Company took technique classes online (pictured: Laurel Dalley Smith). Musicians staged socially distant livestreamed shows for The Jazz Gallery.

proposals came from nonprofits with operating budgets of less than $1 million.

Ultimately, 381 grants were awarded to nonprofits in all five boroughs, totaling nearly $29.4 million.

For the vast majority of grantees, the funding helped them move programs online. With their performance spaces closed to the public, many nonprofits pivoted to livestreaming events online and hosting outdoor programs. Others focused on providing remote learning and showcasing archival material on digital platforms.

In turn, staff were able to continue receiving paychecks – and artists could find paid venues to perform, teach, and connect with audiences.

**ARTS & CULTURE**

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES PROVIDED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital events</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote learning</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival material</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor programs</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, PPE &amp; supply delivery</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct cash assistance</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granting</td>
<td>5</td>
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Before COVID-19, a sold-out run at Ma-Yi Theater Company’s small Garment District theater would draw 8,000 patrons.

Today, even as its stage has gone dark, Ma-Yi is reaching a massive worldwide audience online.

“By going digital, we’ve been able to bring the works of our artists to people who would never be able to access them before,” said Ralph Peña, Ma-Yi’s producing artistic director. “That’s a game changer.”

When it became clear that Ma-Yi would not be able to continue staging live events, Peña wanted to ensure that it could continue to provide income and venues for Asian American artists who were affected by the pandemic.

The NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund gave Ma-Yi the tools to do that. It bought five mobile cameras and lighting kits and created a studio. It also commissioned six playwrights and 55 directors, performers, designers, editors, and crew.

The artists have, in turn, created a number of inspiring works, including Sophocles in Staten Island – a 30-minute film that imagines Oedipus Rex and Antigone as a home movie.

More than 1.2 million people watched its streaming productions during one recent three-month period – a number of whom are already choosing to make donations to support the theater.

“The hope is that we can cultivate these new relationships so they will contribute when everyone has a little more breathing room to be philanthropic,” Peña said.
ARTS & CULTURE
GRANTMAKING BY BOROUGH*

**MANHATTAN**
FUNDS GRANTED $19,394,710
NUMBER OF GRANTS 225

**STATEN ISLAND**
FUNDS GRANTED $732,000
NUMBER OF GRANTS 14

**BROOKLYN**
FUNDS GRANTED $5,724,800
NUMBER OF GRANTS 88

**BRONX**
FUNDS GRANTED $1,465,940
NUMBER OF GRANTS 18

**QUEENS**
FUNDS GRANTED $2,051,500
NUMBER OF GRANTS 36

* Based on nonprofits’ headquarters locations; many operate in multiple locations or provide services citywide.

GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lynne Harlow</th>
<th>Kate D. Levin</th>
<th>Kerry McCarthy</th>
<th>Bahia Ramos</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lily Auchincloss</td>
<td>Bloomberg Philanthropies, Co-Chair</td>
<td>The New York Community Trust, Co-Chair</td>
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<td>Emil Kang</td>
<td>Rick Luftglass Laurie M. Tisch</td>
<td>Margaret Morton Ford Foundation</td>
<td>Ben Rodriguez-Cubeñas Rockefeller Brothers Fund</td>
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<td>The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation</td>
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<td>Deborah T. Velazquez Altman Foundation</td>
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<td>Maurine Knighton Doris Duke Charitable Foundation</td>
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<td>Laura Packer Howard Gilman Foundation</td>
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In February 2020, the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute (CCCADI) in Harlem finalized a strategic plan that included adding virtual programs by 2023.

COVID-19 compressed that three-year timeline into weeks.

“With COVID, virtual went from the back burner to the front burner,” said CCCADI director Melody Capote, who moved quickly to reimagine the Harlem nonprofit’s programs.

Its grant from the NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund helped CCCADI set up and launch a number of virtual projects aimed at keeping artists of color working.

One project, Digital Evolution and Artist Retention (DEAR), focused on recruiting artists of color to “learn and earn” during the pandemic. With CCCADI’s help, artists learned how to showcase, market, and sell their work in virtual spaces.

As CCCADI reshaped its programs in the face of COVID-19, another event – the murder of George Floyd – pushed the organization to consider its role in New York’s arts and culture community.

Recognizing that many of its peers lacked understanding about race, CCCADI embarked on creating a virtual training program to help arts and culture groups address systemic racism.

More than 60 arts leaders from 40 arts and culture institutions applied for the program’s first cohort, which began in August 2020. The project’s initial success has led to the creation of the larger and permanent Institute for Racial and Social Justice in Arts and Culture.
The NYC COVID-19 Response & Impact Fund was created to provide short-term emergency funding. While it achieved this goal, the journey is far from over.

COVID-19 has widened and highlighted inequities across the city with no immediate end in sight. As we move into 2021, the virus continues its spread—and nonprofits face tough times ahead. Consider:

- The city and state face multi-billion-dollar deficits.
- The city’s arts and culture sector will continue to struggle as emergency funding programs expire and physical distancing mandates continue.
- Human services nonprofits will continue to face increased demand, even as waning government and private support strain their budgets.

These challenges are daunting. They will require more investment and creativity to ensure that nonprofits can continue to adapt and provide critical services.

There are, however, rays of hope. Many groups have already made significant changes to their operations by investing in technology, reaching new audiences, and building relationships with supporters and volunteers.

Many nonprofits will emerge stronger—and help lead the city into the future.

“New York City is an incredibly resilient place,” said Patricia E. Harris, chief executive officer of Bloomberg Philanthropies. “It’s been knocked down before and has come back for more.”

If past is prologue, then collaboration and working together will be the key to the comeback.
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