



R-52

Mayor Robert Garcia
City of Long Beach

November 17, 2020

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Robert Garcia
Councilwoman Mary Zendejas
Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce
Vice Mayor Dee Andrews
Councilman Al Austin

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to direct the City Manager to report back to the City Council on establishing an Artists Fund that would provide emergency \$500 direct or other financial support for a period of six months to cover cost of basic needs, for qualifying artists who live in Long Beach and have been impacted by COVID-19. These funds would be paid through CARES Act Community Block Grant Funds. We should look towards funding up to 150 artists who qualify across the city.

DISCUSSION:

On March 4, 2020, the City of Long Beach (City) declared local health and City emergencies to strengthen the City's preparedness and ability to respond to COVID-19 pandemic. This was followed on March 16, 2020 by a "Safer at Home Order for Control of COVID-19" (Health Order) issued by the City's Health Officer to enact protective measures to slow the spread of COVID-19. These actions have saved lives but have also created significant economic hardships to many families, businesses, and government operations.

Artists are a crucial part of our City's economy, bringing color, culture and a vibrant spirit to our City's urban fabric. Over the last five years, hundreds of murals have been painted on walls throughout Long Beach, music played at theaters throughout the City and dance and other forms of art displayed rich diversity within our communities. The pandemic upended much of this artistic expression. Of all the industries affected most severely by COVID-19, the arts are near the top. With special events and live music cancelled, and museums and galleries closed, artists have had their livelihoods upended.

As the City has leaned in to support small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and landlords and tenants, it is important we also support artists. It is essential we do everything that we can to protect the people and organizations that make Long Beach the unique, growing and exciting city that we are. Despite the global pandemic, the cost of

housing in Southern California has remained stable, if not increased. We have seen families struggle to secure basic needs such as food and utility payments, and without financial support, these families move closer and closer to homelessness.

This matter has been reviewed by Budget Manager Grace H. Yoon on November 8, 2020.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on November 17, 2020, to provide artists who need financial assistance with support they need for basic needs.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This recommendation requests the City Manager to report back on the feasibility of setting up a one-time Artist Fund. Preparing this report is anticipated to require a minimum to moderate level of staff hours beyond normal budgeted scope of duties and is expected to have a minimum impact on existing City Council priorities. Any additional fiscal impact associated with establishing and implementing an Artist Fund will be noted in the requested report, including the use and requirements of potential one-time sources such as the Community Development Block Grant COVID third allocation (CDBG CV3) funds.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.