

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Contact

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Bay Area Funders, City of Oakland launch relief fund to support individual artists and arts workers in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

*\$625,000 is available for direct grants to artists, and cultural and nonprofit arts workers;
Deadline to apply June 5*

Oakland, CA – The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, working with the City of Oakland as well as a host of partner funds, foundations, and individuals, announced today that they have launched a relief fund with \$625,000 for artists and culture workers living in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties with at least \$300,000 dedicated specifically to residents of Oakland.

The [East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts](#) will make grants directly to artists, teaching artists, culture bearers, and nonprofit arts workers from historically underserved communities who are especially financially vulnerable due to the economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals may apply once for up to \$2,000. Funds are unrestricted and can be used in any way that alleviates financial hardship.

The East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts is a pooled fund led by Kenneth Rainin Foundation together with Akonadi Foundation; City of Oakland, Cultural Affairs Division; Richard Diebenkorn Foundation; Fleishhacker Foundation; Gerbode Foundation; William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Nion McEvoy and Leslie Berriman; Oakland COVID-19 Relief Fund; Shuler-Heimburger Family Fund at East Bay Community Foundation; Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation; and individual donors.

The fund will be administered by the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), a nonprofit organization that provides a wide range of services to people in the arts, culture, and creative labor sectors.

The fund provides a vital safety net for independent artists, teaching artists, culture bearers, and nonprofit arts workers across the East Bay who might otherwise not be able to receive emergency funds. Many artists and culture workers lack access to unemployment insurance, making them ineligible for unemployment benefits. Please note that applicants receiving CARES benefits through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program will be eligible for funding.

With the understanding that the financial need will continue for quite some time, the fund will continue to accept and seek donations from individuals and institutions who would like to contribute.

“With this Relief Fund, we’re investing directly in our most vulnerable artists and culture workers, who have been incredibly hard hit by the COVID-19 crisis,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. “Arts and culture are woven into the fabric of Oakland. And the work of these culture placekeepers is needed more than ever to help us make sense of these difficult times. I’m grateful to this public/private partnership of funders who’ve stepped forward to support our diverse artistic communities.”

“This collaborative response provides urgent support to the most vulnerable artists and creatives in the East Bay’s diverse cultural communities, who were experiencing significant economic uncertainty and displacement concerns even before this pandemic arrived,” said Shelley Trott, Kenneth Rainin Foundation’s Director of Arts Strategy and Ventures. “The value of our artists and cultural workers and the contributions they make to the health and well-being of our cities cannot be overstated.”

“Our artists and culture workers need our support but are all too often overlooked,” said Laura Poppiti, Center for Cultural Innovation’s Grants Program Director. “We are delighted to partner with the Rainin Foundation, the City of Oakland, and this extraordinary group of donors and funders who understand how important the arts are to the civic life of communities. Our goal is to get funds quickly to the artists and arts workers who need them most.”

“Artists play a unique role in inspiring and unifying communities,” said James Head, the East Bay Community Foundation’s (EBCF) President and CEO. “As the East Bay Community Foundation continues to respond to COVID-19-related community needs, thanks to the Shuler-Heimburger Family Fund at EBCF, we are excited to help direct resources to local artists as their work is a vital part of the culture here in the East Bay.”

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FUND

Please contact Laura Poppiti, CCI Grants Program Director, at laura@cciarts.org if you would like to support artists with a tax-deductible contribution.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Must be a current, full-time resident of Alameda County or Contra Costa County;
- Must not be eligible for or currently receiving CA-state unemployment benefits (applicants can be receiving CARES benefits through the PUA program); and
- Cannot have a conflict of interest (family or financial relationships) with the boards, staff, and directors of the Center for Cultural Innovation and funders of the Relief Fund.

REVIEW PROCESS & TURN-AROUND

Funding recommendations will be made by the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI). Notifications will then be sent to all applicants. Grantees will need to complete the CCI’s grant agreement and the online payment processing form through Tipalti.com. Payments will be made via direct deposit and may take three - five business days. Checks are available in lieu of direct deposit, if preferred.

- Monday, May 18, 9 a.m. PDT – Application Cycle Opens
- Friday, June 5, 5 p.m. PDT – Application Cycle Closes
- Friday, June 12 – Notifications Made

HOW TO APPLY

Applications will be accepted beginning May 18 at 9 a.m. PDT through June 5 at 5 p.m. PDT.

Completed applications must be submitted by the deadline—no exceptions will be made.

The East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts online application can be accessed at:
<https://www.cciarts.org/EastBayOaklandRelief.htm>

Applications will be accepted online ONLY through CCI's GO Smart™ system. All new applicants MUST register for an account with the GO Smart™ system before they will be able to access the grant application.

QUESTIONS

For questions about the Fund or the application process, contact CCI at grants@cciarts.org or 415-288-0530.

For media inquiries, please contact Katherine Zaremba, Full Court Press Communications, at 510-550-8173 or katherine@fcpcommunications.com.

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About the Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Kenneth Rainin Foundation is a family foundation that collaborates with creative thinkers in the Arts, Education and Health. The Foundation believes in taking smart risks to achieve breakthroughs. It supports visionary artists in the Bay Area, creates opportunities for Oakland's youngest learners, and funds researchers on the forefront of scientific discoveries. [More at krfoundation.org](http://krfoundation.org).

About the Center for Cultural Innovation

The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) was founded in 2001 as a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Its mission is to promote knowledge sharing, networking, and financial independence for individuals in the arts by providing business training, grants, and incubating innovative projects that create new program knowledge, tools and practices for artists in the field, and conditions that contribute to realizing financial self-determination. [More at cciarts.org](http://cciarts.org).