

The arts and culture are critical at this time, and will continue to be

To the Editor:

Cultural organizations in Massachusetts have lost tens of millions of dollars. Thousands of teaching artists and cultural workers are out of work. The cultural sector is not the only part of our economy that has been devastated by the Coronavirus, but it is central to our well-being and way of life and it will be an important driver in returning prosperity to the Commonwealth.

The Mass Cultural Council has just announced two COVID-19 Relief programs to help individuals who make their living in the cultural sector and organizations struggling to make it through this crisis. The COVID-19 Relief Fund for Individuals (<https://massculturalcouncil.org/artists-art/covid-19-relief-fund-for-individuals/>) provides direct grants of \$1,000 to Massachusetts' artists. The Safe Harbors COVID-19 Initiative (<https://massculturalcouncil.org/blog/covid-19->

relief-effort-for-organizations/) provides help for cultural organizations seeking funding from the federal stimulus program, along with direct grants.

We know how crucial our museums, theaters, historic sites and science centers are to our community and how much our artists and cultural workers contribute to the education of our children. Their survival and vitality depend on support at the federal, state, and local level, and on the continued generosity of all of us.

When the virus is defeated, and we can return to an un-sequestered life, it is the arts and culture that will lead the recovery and rebuild the community and social bonds that we have so sorely missed.

Rep. Paul McMurry and Anita Walker

Rep. Paul McMurry (D-Dedham) represents the 11th Norfolk District in the Mass. House of Representatives and serves as the chair of the Committee on Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development. Anita Walker is the Executive Director of the Mass Cultural Council.

