

PRESS RELEASE: August 17, 2020

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www.charlottestreet.org

For immediate release



Charlotte Street, Spencer Museum of Art, and ArtsKC announce another cycle of Rocket Relief grants for Kansas City area artists

KANSAS CITY, Mo, August 17, 2020: As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to impact local economies and individuals in the Kansas City region, local arts organizations Charlotte Street Foundation, Spencer Museum of Art, and ArtsKC Regional Arts Council have **announced another round of open applications for Rocket Relief emergency grants**. Another cycle of Rocket Relief grants is now available for individual artists who find themselves needing financial assistance as they navigate their way through the Coronavirus pandemic. Artists who apply have a chance to be selected through a weighted lottery system that could provide them with a \$1,000 unrestricted cash grant. Artists living within an 80-mile radius of Kansas City, Mo. can learn how to apply now for Rocket Relief on Charlotte Street's [website](#).



Kansas City-area artists in need of financial assistance due to the COVID-19 pandemic are strongly encouraged to enter by the first lottery drawing, which takes place on September 18, 2020 to be eligible for each round of drawings. The first 10 recipients will be notified on September 25, 2020, and every subsequent week 10 artists will be drawn from the lottery and notified until the funds are depleted. \$50,000 is currently available for distribution. Applications may continue to be submitted after September 18 and eligible applicants will be added to the pool until funds are depleted.

Artists who have already applied for the Rocket Relief grant from the summer cycle and did not receive a grant will have their application automatically re-entered into the pool for the second cycle. Artists will have the opportunity to revise their application based upon their circumstances between August 27 and September 8.

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Christine Boutros, Charlotte Street's recently hired Grants and Awards Manager, oversees the Rocket Relief program and knows that emergency aid programs like Rocket Relief are needed but not enough to sustain individual artists in the Kansas City metro area. "Cycle 2 of Rocket Relief is here because we have seen gigs gone, exhibitions cancelled, theatres closed, and projected losses of 2.7 million jobs in the artistic creative industries in the United States due to COVID-19," says Christine. "Imagine trying to get through the pandemic without our actors and musicians streaming through our screens or the art on our walls and storytellers on our shelves. We want a post pandemic world with art and artists to strengthen and motivate us."

The Rocket Relief program will continue to provide emergency support to individual artists in the Kansas City regional bi-state (or Missouri/Kansas bi-state) region within 80 miles of Kansas City. The grant is intended to help artists whose income has been impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic and who need assistance with basic expenses such as food, housing, medical costs, and child care. This fund is open to all self-identifying visual, multi-disciplinary, and performing artists in the Rocket Relief Region. Grant amounts are available as flat stipends of \$1,000.

Heather Beffa, Grants Manager at ArtsKC Regional Arts Council urged the necessity of the grants program stating, "Artists have been hit hard by the pandemic. Beyond the impact on the arts industry itself, artists are also essential workers, teachers, parents, small business owners, and staff at theaters, galleries and venues. We need the magic these creative people make, and they need us. These funds help at a crucial time."

Rocket Relief utilizes a lottery method that is weighted to prioritize applications based on indicators of financial need. In recognition of the disproportionate impact on Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC) from COVID-19 as reported by the CDC, cycle 2 will see the addition of using demographic information to also prioritize artists who self-identify as BIPOC. Adina Duke, associate director for public engagement at the Spencer Museum of Art affirms Rocket Relief's commitment to equitable funding explaining, "The arts are not immune from the inequities resulting from systemic racism. By ensuring that at least 60% of the grants go to artists who self-identify as BIPOC, Cycle 2 recognizes the compounding effects of COVID-19 on BIPOC artists in our community and represents a step toward redressing those effects." Eligible artists will be included in a distribution pool, from which ten artists per week will be chosen by lottery until all funds are exhausted. At least 60% of the grants will be awarded to BIPOC artists. Once an artist has entered the pool and is confirmed as eligible, they will remain in the pool and weekly selection process until funds are fully depleted.

Funds are for individual artists specifically and nonprofit entities are not eligible for funding. Applicants who have already received a Rocket Relief grant are no longer eligible.

Eligibility is not impacted by prior or current engagements, awards, or programming affiliations with the Charlotte Street Foundation, Spencer Museum of Art, or ArtsKC.. There is no restriction



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on usage of funds. Once granted, artists may use the award however they see fit. There will be no final report required.



Due to the potentially sensitive nature of circumstances regarding eligibility for this grant, grantees for this award will not be announced publicly. The information provided in applications is confidential and may be used to report demographic details without identifying information. Testimonials that were voluntarily entered into the application may also be shared privately with funders, without identifying information.

ABOUT THE SPENCER MUSEUM OF ART

[The Spencer Museum of Art](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/), located on the University of Kansas Lawrence campus, explores the intersection of art, ideas, and experience. With a diverse collection of more than 45,000 works, the Spencer is the only museum in Kansas with contemporary and historic artwork in all mediums from cultures across six continents. The Spencer Museum facilitates arts engagement and research through exhibitions, artist commissions and residencies, conferences, performances, lectures, children's art activities, and arts and culture festivals. Admission to the Spencer Museum of Art is free. To learn more about the museum and its programs you can visit <http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/>.

ABOUT ARTS KC – REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL:

ArtsKC is a regional nonprofit arts council that promotes, supports and advocates for the arts across a five-county region. We promote the arts for their individual, community and economic benefits, and we create initiatives that drive audience engagement in the arts. We provide arts organizations, artists, and arts programs with professional support and investment, including grants that we award annually. We serve as the voice of the arts regionally by building relationships with government officials and advocating for the development of public funding, all in support of the arts as an economic and social driver. Please visit www.ArtsKC.org for more information and visit www.ArtsKCGo.com, a local arts and cultural events calendar brought to you by ArtsKC.

ABOUT CHARLOTTE STREET

Charlotte Street identifies the needs and fuels the evolution of an ever-changing multidisciplinary arts ecosystem, acting as its primary provocateur. Charlotte Street cultivates the contemporary, the exceptional, and the unexpected in the practice of artists working in and engaging with the Kansas City art community. Since 1997, Charlotte Street has distributed over \$1.1 million in awards and grants to artists and their innovative projects, and connected individual artists to each other and to the greater Kansas City community. For more information about Charlotte Street, its awards, programs, and initiatives, visit www.charlottestreet.org.

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