



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, DCASE, AND CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT ANNOUNCE "ARTS 77"**

*Chicago's citywide arts recovery plan represents \$60M in current investments to support artists and organizations in every community.*

**CHICAGO, IL** — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), the Chicago Park District, and other City of Chicago departments today announced "Arts 77" — a citywide arts recovery and reopening plan for all of Chicago's 77 community areas, representing an initial investment of over \$60 million to support local artists and organizations. Additional updates regarding financial grants and programs to support arts recovery will follow in the upcoming weeks.

"Before the pandemic struck, our arts and culture sector was a significant employer and economic driver that generated thousands of jobs and billions of dollars for our city," said Mayor Lightfoot. "With this incredible program, we will not only be able to revitalize this critical sector and provide support to our artists, creative workers and organizations, but also place the arts at the center of our city's recovery efforts."

"Arts 77" signals a new direction for Chicago's cultural policy, in which the arts are embedded in initiatives and strategies across City government. This plan seeks to expand access and participation in the arts citywide, prioritize employment of creative workers through City programs and services, and deepen public sector investment in the creative sector through financial support and cultural policy. Today's announcement launches new and expanded programs including the **Neighborhood Access Program**, the **Chicago Band Roster** and **Chicago Presents** grant programs, **Culture in My Neighborhood** (a \$40 million collaboration by DCASE, the Chicago Park District, and Chicago Public Library), **Individual Artists Program** grants, **Artist Response Program** grants, and \$18.5 million in art and infrastructure investments. For details and upcoming Arts 77 webinars for the cultural community, visit [Chicago.gov/Arts77](http://Chicago.gov/Arts77).



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“Chicago’s arts sector has been decimated by the global pandemic. We have assembled an unprecedented array of resources to bolster our vital arts sector, and today’s announcement is the first of several to follow,” said DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly. “These new programs will strengthen the arts and culture landscape, support the City’s reopening, and advance Chicago’s economic recovery. DCASE will lead these comprehensive citywide efforts as we animate our neighborhoods with cultural life and position the arts as central to Chicago’s future.”

“The arts are uniquely positioned to aid in Chicago’s recovery efforts, and creative workers stand ready,” said Amina J. Dickerson and Alison Cuddy, Cultural Advisory Council Chair and Vice Chair. “To thrive post-pandemic, the City must leverage the power of its arts and culture sector, putting artists to work rebuilding, reimagining, unifying, and healing our neighborhoods.”

### **Expanding Access and Participation in the Arts**

- Beginning this summer, the City will rollout new guidelines, funding opportunities, and programs to increase access and reopen the cultural sector. DCASE is currently accepting idea submissions for its new **Neighborhood Access Program**, representing \$1 million in financial grants (up to 40 grants ranging from \$5,000 – \$50,000) designed to be responsive to the complex needs of individual communities. The program was created to support the cultural vitality in neighborhoods with a focus on those that have traditionally not received funding through the City’s Cultural Grants Program —and to collaborate with other City departments to make a collective impact in INVEST South/West communities. The application opens April 20 at [ChicagoCulturalGrants.org](http://ChicagoCulturalGrants.org).
- Through **Chicago Presents**, DCASE will provide up to 100 grants (ranging from \$5,000 – \$30,000) to activate cultural programs that comply with public health guidelines in neighborhoods throughout Chicago in Summer 2021. Emerging and established cultural presenters are invited to submit proposals for free live, in-person concerts and events, spanning all music genres, performance, and dance that activate Chicago’s streets, plazas, and parks. Additionally, presenters may select up to two solo musicians and/or bands from the **Chicago Band Roster** to play at their event. The Band Roster is a new resource listing over 200 Chicago-based musicians of all genres — created as part of the 2021 Year of Chicago Music. Application opens April 20 at [chicago.gov/music](http://chicago.gov/music).
- **Culture in My Neighborhood** is a new collaborative initiative that supports cultural programming at the Chicago Cultural Center, 18 Chicago Park District neighborhood cultural centers, and the Chicago Public Library



regional libraries — through grants and commission opportunities for artists and organizations. It seeks to expand access and participation in South and West Side neighborhoods that have lacked traditional cultural infrastructure such as museums and theaters. This program complements an over \$40 million capital investment that will break ground in 2021 in the City’s network of cultural centers to upgrade theater, music, dance, and visual art presentation capabilities at these facilities. Artists and organizations will receive financial support — including those who were displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic — and community residents will enjoy free and affordable, high-quality cultural experiences in their own neighborhoods.

“Chicago parks have long provided affordable access to the arts,” said Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Michael Kelly. “We are excited to partner with our sister agencies to expand existing resources. Culture in My Neighborhood and the broader Arts 77 plan will celebrate Chicago’s vibrant culture while fueling public engagement in our communities. From Austin to West Pullman, our 18 neighborhood cultural centers will continue to serve as important cultural assets for years to come.”

### **Supporting Artists and Creative Workers**

Recognizing that artists have always played an important role in advancing the causes of justice and racial equity, DCASE will support artists in developing projects that engage the public in a constructive, civic dialogue that will propel our collective action, facilitate progress, and make Chicago a model city for the nation as it faces the difficult work ahead.

- Through its new **Artist Response Program**, DCASE has awarded five artists and artist teams \$100,000 grants. Artist awardees announced today are: **Tonika Lewis Johnson; Santiago X; Kirsten Leenaars with Circles and Ciphers; Pilsen Housing Cooperative with Hector Duarte, Nicole Marroquin, and Gabriel Villa; and an artist team with Aquil Charlton, William Estrada, Andrés Lemus-Spont, and Marya Spont-Lemus.** In addition to individual artist grants, seven arts organizations will receive grants ranging from \$50,000 – \$100,000 to re-grant funds to approximately 60 artists. Re-granting partners announced today are: **ConTextos, Folded Map Project/Englewood Arts Collective, Full Spectrum Features, Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Jazz Institute of Chicago, Kartemquin Films, and the National Museum of Mexican Art.** The Artist Response Program represents a \$1.2 million investment, including over \$600,000 in support available soon through re-granting partners.



DCASE is also pleased to announce the 2021 recipients of its annual **Individual Artists Program** grants, supporting Chicago's practicing artists in creating work that develops their craft and elevates their careers while adding to the cultural vitality of the city of Chicago. This year, 162 project-based grants between \$800 to \$5,000 will be awarded to resident Chicago artists over the age of 18 across all artistic disciplines including film & media arts, literary arts, performing arts (theatre/dance), music and visual arts/design. In addition to the Individual Artists Program project grants, 13 high-qualified artists will receive the Esteemed Artist Award, a special \$10,000 grant for expenses associated with an artist's practice within the 2021 grant period, including studio rental, supplies, travel and equipment. In celebration of 2021 as the Year of Chicago Music, half of the Esteemed Artist Awards are going to local musicians – **Afinca'o, Jeff Baraka, Billy Branch, Joelle Lamarre, Vivian McConnell, Matt Ulery, and Wanees Zarour**. Award recipients in other disciplines are **Colette Ghunim** (Film & Media Arts), **Anuradha Rana** (Film & Media Arts), **Natasha Tarpley** (Literary Arts), **Cat Mahari** (Performing Arts), **Daris Jasper** (Visual Art & Design) and **Anke Loh** (Visual Art & Design).

### **Investing in Arts and Infrastructure**

- The following programs recognize the talents of artists as creative problem solvers who can help inform, enhance, and support the work of City departments. They will also be significant jobs generators.
- Under the leadership of Mayor Lightfoot, the Chicago Department of Transportation and the Department of Assets, Information, and Services, the new multi-year, needs-based Capital Plan will not only leverage capital improvements to spur local economic development and job creation, but also mark a major advancement in the standard of public asset maintenance, and, consequently, the quality of life and livability of all Chicago communities.
- Public art will be integrated into the Capital Plan to turn the everyday into the extraordinary, physically, and symbolically communicating connections between neighborhoods, histories, people, and futures. Public art projects will become major destinations and cultural landmarks, contributing to the city's economic development. For the first time, the City incorporated public art into the Capital Plan, investing at least \$15 million in public art over the next five years .
- Additionally, DCASE and the Chicago Department of Aviation today announce a \$3.5 million public art plan as part of the Terminal 5 expansion project at O'Hare International Airport. The project presents a unique opportunity to celebrate the work of Chicagoland artists through large-scale commissions and acquisitions, and to provide international visitors a dynamic and welcoming first impression of our city. Up to 30 Chicago-area artists will



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participate in this program — the largest single acquisition of works by Chicago artists by the City in the last 30 years.

In the coming weeks, the City will launch more programs to aid Chicago's creative recovery, including a new program to support arts education providers and students; additional grant programs to increase arts access for people with disabilities, older adults, veterans, and people living in institutions; workforce development programs to help stabilize and grow Chicago's creative economy, including recommendations outlined in the report produced by the Chicago COVID-19 Recovery Task Force to support employment in the film industry; additional direct financial relief programs for individuals and organizations; artist engagement in We Will Chicago — the first citywide plan where artists will play a central role in creating public policy; and a public awareness and advocacy campaign reiterating the importance of the local arts sector, developed with global communications agency FleishmanHillard and the Cultural Advisory Council.

### **Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events**

The [Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events](#) is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists, and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the city's future cultural and economic growth; marketing the city's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free, and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.

### **Chicago Park District**

The Chicago Park District has served Chicago residents for more than 85 years. It is a Gold Medal Award-winning organization, which recognizes excellence in park and recreation management across the nation. For more information about the Chicago Park District's more than 8,800 acres of parkland, more than 600 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, 12 museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertainment programs, please visit [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com) or contact the Chicago Park District at 312/742.PLAY or 312/747.2001 (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, 312/742.PLAY. Follow us at facebook/chicagoparkdistrict, on Instagram/chicagoparks and on Twitter @chicagoparks.

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