

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Providing \$15 Million in Aid to Arts and Cultural Venues

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Legislation is Part of a \$100 Million Relief Package for New Jersey Small Businesses

LONG BRANCH – Governor Phil Murphy today signed into law S-3521, which provides \$15 million in federal COVID-19 relief aid for arts and cultural venues throughout New Jersey. The bill – sponsored by Senators Joseph Lagana, Dawn Marie Addiego, and Vin Gopal and Assembly Members Linda Carter, Angela McKnight, and Eric Houghtaling – focuses on providing aid to arts and cultural organizations in need of support as a result of the public health emergency. The bill is part of a five-bill, \$100 million relief effort aimed at helping New Jersey’s small businesses recover from the year-long pandemic.

“Our arts and cultural establishments are among the best in the nation, but they have faced difficult challenges over the past year,” said Governor Murphy. “It’s time we lifted up these organizations and venues to ensure they are still with us as we emerge from the pandemic and look to once again experience the joy they offer.”

“We are grateful that Governor Murphy and our state legislature value the arts and are entrusting the Arts Council to make these critical investments in a comprehensive, equitable statewide recovery,” said Secretary of State Tahesha Way, whose department includes the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. “These relief dollars will put thousands back to work, boost the economy, and help ensure New Jersey’s arts industry survives to safely do what they do best – bring people together to dream, learn, heal and create.”

“One of the greatest sacrifices the COVID-19 pandemic has required is the significant scaling back of in-person art events and performances. This has been a loss for our communities, our culture, and most of all performers and the venues that host them,” said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan. “The bill Governor Murphy has signed today will be crucial to ensuring we maintain and grow the thriving creative communities that make New Jersey special as we recover from the pandemic.”

“Arts and culture organizations are at the cornerstone of our communities. They give residents a space to gather, express themselves creatively and explore their passions,” said Senator Addiego. “Without the presence of these organizations, we would lose a large part of what makes a community a home. With this funding, we can save many of these organizations on the brink of closing for good, allowing them to thrive during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“We all know that in difficult times, the arts, and cultural organizations that support the arts, are among the first parts of society to suffer,” said Senator Gopal. “One need look no further than the Theater District in New York City to see the devastating effect the pandemic had on those who produce, work and perform in Broadway shows. We have many wonderful arts and cultural programs in the Garden State, as well, and we need to do all we can to lift them up as they struggle to regain their footing in what is still a difficult and logistically trying time.”

“New Jersey has long been a leader in the arts and culturally significant work,” said Senator Lagana. “Without local organizations who support the arts, we would lose so much of what gives our communities character and makes them great places to live. Through this bill, we can save many of these organizations from shutting down forever, and set them up to thrive again after the pandemic.”

“New Jersey prides itself on a rich arts and culture scene, with more than 700 organizations calling our state home. Over the years, our museums, theaters, galleries and music venues have showcased true talent, launched the careers of successful artists, preserved history and provided entertainment to visitors, said Assembly Members Carter, McKnight and Houghtaling. “We must show our support now, while many are struggling to remain open, to ensure arts and culture can continue to play an important role in our state. This funding lets us look forward to the unforgettable experiences these organizations will once again provide after the pandemic has ended.”

The relief aid will be administered by both the New Jersey Economic Development Authority and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Specifically, the bill makes available \$7.5 million to the EDA for for-profit organizations and \$7.5 million to the State Council on the Arts for non-profit organizations. To date, the NJEDA has distributed more than \$250 million in aid to some 55,000 businesses across the state.

The signing was held at the West End Arts Center in Long branch and hosted by the New Jersey Repertory Company, which was founded in 1997 in an effort to develop and produce new plays and to make a lasting contribution to the American stage.

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