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Association of Performing Arts Professionals receives landmark funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support the reopening of the performing arts industry.

APAP to distribute more than \$2 million in grants to the field as part of its *ArtsForward* program.

September 15, 2021: The Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) is pleased to announce that it received \$3 million from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for **APAP ArtsForward**, a new program to support the performing arts field's safe, vibrant, and equitable reopening and recovery. The program will focus primarily on providing grants to APAP presenter members and their artist/ensemble partners as venues reopen, tours resume, and audiences reconnect. It will also offer services and resources to the field-at-large around reopening, booking, and touring through the pandemic.

ArtsForward will distribute more than \$2 million in early 2022 through grants of up to \$50,000 to APAP member presenting organizations, working in partnership with an artist or ensemble, for engagements that may take place virtually, in-person, or through a hybrid approach. Priority will be placed on funding small and mid-sized presenting organizations with operating budgets of less than \$5M. Applications will be co-submitted by presenters and artists, and at least half of each grant will directly support artists/ensembles over the course of their engagement. Grantees will receive technical assistance and participate in gatherings with fellow grantees throughout the grant period.

In addition to direct grants, **APAP ArtsForward** will provide a range of services to support the performing arts field's transition toward reopening its venues safely. This will include professional development webinars, conference sessions, and the development of national tools such as real-time vaccination policy and safety protocol data from presenting organizations; resource documents addressing COVID-19 issues for staff, artists, and patrons; and reports on the state of reopening and touring that track presenter, agent, and artist booking/rescheduling activity.

ArtsForward was inspired by the intensive exchanges that emerged during the pandemic among professional peers and working groups in the performing arts field, including dialogues led by APAP in sessions at its annual convening APAP|NYC and practices promoted by APAP's Building Ethical and Equitable Partnership Working Group. The program aims to build and reinforce a sustainable arts ecosystem with business practices that respect artists, support presenters, and underscore the interdependence and safety of all those involved in performance engagements. Building on APAP's long history of regranting initiatives, *ArtsForward's* design and activities are informed by a team of

multidisciplinary and culturally diverse advisors and peers, including artists, agents, presenters, and administrators.

“We are grateful to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its partnership in delivering timely and essential support to our members and artists,” said Lisa Richards Toney, President and CEO of APAP. “APAP views this program as a critical first step in a long process to restart the performing arts, while fueling a more collaborative, more equitable, and less transactional approach to our presenter-artist relationships.”

“We are committed to building momentum around collaborations and practices that help our field resume programming and adopt protocols that support the safety of artists, staff and patrons,” said Krista Bradley, Director of Programs and Resources of APAP, who will oversee the program. “At this unique moment, when our field is grappling with how and when to reopen, APAP looks forward to supporting artists, agents and managers, and presenters and to sharing information and emerging practices for the field.”

Funding guidelines for the **APAP ArtsForward** grants program will be announced in early October. Interested applicants will submit a short form in late fall 2021. Select applicants will then be invited to submit additional information by early 2022. Beginning in February 2022, APAP will grant up to 50 awards of up to \$50,000 to support engagements throughout the remainder of 2022. More information is available [here](#).

ABOUT THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation’s largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom to be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive.

ABOUT APAP, ASSOCIATION OF PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS

APAP, the Association of Performing Arts Professionals, based in Washington, D.C., is the national service, advocacy and membership organization dedicated to developing and supporting a robust, performing arts presenting, booking, and touring field and the professionals who work within it. Our 1,700 national and international members represent leading performing arts centers, municipal and university performance facilities, nonprofit performing arts centers, culturally specific organizations, foreign governments, as well as artist agencies, managers, touring companies, and national consulting practices that serve the field, and a growing roster of self-presenting artists. APAP works to effect change through advocacy, professional development, resource sharing and civic engagement. APAP is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization governed by a volunteer board of directors and led by President and CEO Lisa Richards Toney. In addition to presenting the annual APAP|NYC conference—the world’s leading gathering and marketplace for the performing arts—APAP continues to be the industry’s leading resource, knowledge and networking destination for the advancement of performing arts presenting, booking and touring.

For more information, visit apap365.org.

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