Table of Contents

3 About the Relief Fund
4 About Us: Our Story So Far
5 Relief Fund Impact Numbers
7 What We've Learned
8 Our Next Steps
9 Quotes & Impact
12 Acknowledgement
About the Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund

The NYC Arts in Education Roundtable is proud to host the Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund. This fund awards one-time, unrestricted grants up to $1,000 to teaching artists and arts education administrators who are facing serious financial hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis.

In its first two rounds of funding in Fall 2020 and Winter 2021, the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable’s Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund awarded $673,500 in support to 677 arts-in-education professionals. This fund was originally made possible by the generous support of the New York Community Trust, including funding from the NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund in the New York Community Trust, and the Booth Ferris Foundation. The second cycle of this relief fund was supported by the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation.

In Winter 2022, the Roundtable received additional funding from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and The Emily Davie and Joseph S. Kornfeld Foundation, allowing the Roundtable to distribute an additional $338,000 in grants to 338 arts-in-education professionals in need of emergency relief. With their generous support, the Roundtable surpassed its goal of awarding over $1,000,000 in critical assistance to New York City’s arts education community.

The Roundtable estimates that there are approximately 4,000 to 5,000 teaching artists working in New York City. While similar relief funds may have included teaching artists as part of a broad list of those eligible for funding, the Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund was the largest fund of its kind specifically focused on teaching artists. Comparable teaching artist-focused funds in New Jersey and Maryland distributed approximately $43,000 and $35,000 respectively.

These unrestricted cash grants awarded by the Roundtable are intended to support teaching artists and arts education administrators with:

- Lost wages and earnings
- Medical and healthcare expenses
- Childcare and eldercare
- Rent and mortgage payments
- Food, utilities, and other living expenses

Each cycle, recipients were selected by a review panel of more than a dozen NYC-based teaching artists, based on a brief application.

Priority in grant selection was given to applicants from communities most impacted by COVID-19 including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, immunosuppressed, low-income, non-gender conforming, genderqueer, transgender-identifying practitioners, and practitioners with disabilities. In support of our work to dismantle white supremacy within our organizations, schools, and communities, we committed to granting at least $100,000 in each relief fund cycle to Black arts education practitioners.
Our Story So Far

Our Mission

The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable is a community of organizations and practitioners that shares information, provides professional development, and communicates with the public to promote our work in schools and beyond.

Our Purpose

The Roundtable began in 1992 as a cohort of young arts administrators who sought to professionalize arts education, allied around the goal of making arts essential to New York City education. Built on a model of collective earned wisdom, these future leaders formed a new community of practice, laying the groundwork for pervasive arts education advocacy and a shift toward comprehensive field building. Since then, our primary function is to ensure the sustainability of NYC’s diverse arts education community and promote a culture of continuous improvement from lessons learned in classrooms and through research. We build our efforts around the value that arts education should be a right for all NYC students.

Now in our 30th year in operation, the Roundtable provides professional development, strategic field leadership, community, resources, regranting opportunities, and advocacy for arts education throughout in NYC. As the main convening body for NYC’s arts in education community, we have become a critical resource for the field, and a model for community impact across the country. Now, at the peak of our membership and professionalization, we are in the middle of executing our five-year strategic plan to set a roadmap for a sustainable, innovative, and equitable future for the organization and field-at-large.
## Cycle 3 by the Numbers

**Applications Received in Cycle Three:** 539  
**Total Applicants Awarded in Cycle Three:** 338  
**Relief Funds Awarded in Cycle Three:** $338,000

The chart below compares the impact of COVID-19 on those awarded with relief funds across the three relief fund cycles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CYCLE 3 RECIPIENTS (MARCH 2022)</th>
<th>CYCLE 2 RECIPIENTS (MARCH 2021)</th>
<th>CYCLE 1 RECIPIENTS (AUGUST 2020)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>88.2%</strong> (298 awardees) reported their 2021 income to be under $30,000.</td>
<td><strong>96.2%</strong> (327 awardees) reported their 2020 income to be under $30,000.</td>
<td><strong>92.9%</strong> (313 awardees) estimated their 2020 income to be under $30,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>84.9%</strong> (287 awardees) estimated their 2022 income to be under $30,000.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>95.0%</strong> (321 awardees) plan to pursue a career in arts education after the pandemic.</td>
<td><strong>95.3%</strong> (324 awardees) plan to pursue a career in arts education after the pandemic.</td>
<td><strong>96.4%</strong> (325 awardees) plan to pursue a career in arts education after the pandemic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>78.4%</strong> (265 awardees) were furloughed or laid off due to COVID-19.</td>
<td><strong>82.6%</strong> (281 awardees) were furloughed or laid off due to COVID-19.</td>
<td><strong>89.0%</strong> (300 awardees) were furloughed or laid off due to COVID-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>30.2%</strong> (102 awardees) lost 71% or more of their income in 2021 compared to 2019.</td>
<td><strong>52.9%</strong> (180 awardees) lost 71% or more of their income in 2020.</td>
<td><strong>72.7%</strong> (245 awardees) lost 71% or more of their income between March - August 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>53.8%</strong> (182 awardees) have work confirmed in the next three months in the field of arts education.</td>
<td><strong>37.4%</strong> (127 awardees) had work confirmed in the next three months in the field of arts education.</td>
<td><strong>10.9%</strong> (37 awardees) had work confirmed in the next three months in the field of arts education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While we are grateful to see more than half of grant recipients have work confirmed in the next three months (as of March 2022) compared to 1/10 of grant recipients in 2020, we acknowledge the long road ahead to rebuilding sustainable employment in arts education. Despite setbacks and economic hardships of the past two years, applicants overwhelmingly plan to pursue a career in arts education post-pandemic.

In line with our commitment, the Roundtable granted $119,000 to Black arts education practitioners in Cycle Three, totaling $337,000 across all three cycles.

Applicants identified needing emergency funding to support the following expenses:

- Monthly bills and utilities: 89.1%
- Loss of Income: 83.7%
- Rental Payments: 77.8%
- Groceries: 70.7%
- Medical / Healthcare allowances: 45.3%
- Childcare: 11.5%
- Eldercare: 11.5%
- Other: 8.6%
- Mortgage Payments: 5.3%

Total applications received in Cycles 1, 2, & 3: 2,005

Awarded to more than 1,000 arts in education professionals: $1,011,500
What We LEARNED

Providing critical services for the field

Thousands of NYC-based arts educators come to us annually seeking resources inclusive of and beyond professional development. Based on website traffic, we see highest engagement around arts education advocacy, regrant opportunities, job-seeking, and resources having to do with working with the Department of Education. Arts education workers are turning to the Roundtable for career supports and field-wide sustainability.

Value of research & data

The statistics we gathered during the relief fund were invaluable as limited data and research is available about teaching artists at the local, state, and national levels. While the Roundtable put together a survey on teaching artist compensation in 2017 (Paying for Professionalism), we believe more comprehensive research is needed around compensation, benefits, health insurance, and sustainability needs.

Rebuilding the workforce

NYCAIER is concerned that we have lost a portion of the teaching artist workforce due to limited job prospects, career instability, and cost of living increases in NYC. We noticed a 70% decrease in attendance in our annual job fair (hosted in May 2022, for the first time since 2019. Many organizations have also expressed difficulty hiring or scheduling teaching artists to meet the demands of schools returning to in-person instruction.

Need for employee benefits

A vast majority of organizations pay their teaching artists as part-time employees (71%) or independent contractors (29%). TAs classified as independent contractors and part-time employees, receive little to no employee benefits and protections despite the level of professional quality expected from them by cultural institutions and partner schools. Throughout the pandemic, thousands of NYC TAs and part-time arts workers have been left without paid sick leave, unemployment, and insurance.

Career sustainability

Throughout the three relief fund cycles, arts education workers showed an overwhelming dedication to continuing to work in this field. However, the pandemic only highlighted the fragility of this profession and the need for systems change towards sustainability. Despite their highly-specialized skills set and academic accomplishments, a majority of those awarded are earning well below the poverty-line in NYC.

Building benefits in arts organizations

In acknowledging the inequities and barriers that exist in arts education employment, many organizations are eager to reimagine how they can support sustainability in the field of arts education. Many have approached the Roundtable seeking information on how to provide benefits like healthcare, and how to build models for full-time teaching artists.
Our Next Steps...

Over the past two years, NYCAIER’s programs and services proved itself essential to our community of arts educators. As a result, NYCAIER not only survived but thrived during the COVID-19 pandemic, seamlessly transitioning our programs from analog to virtual, remitting over $1M to support our community, publishing an ambitious five-year Strategic Plan that broadens the scope of our organizational priorities, and significantly growing our programs and services. This unusual position among nonprofit organizations in the arts and education space underscores our organizational agility and most importantly, our value to the field.

As we enter this milestone year, we seek to apply the lessons learned from the relief fund in the following ways:

As this cultural workforce struggles with job security in an already underfunded ecosystem, we are actively seeking to support practitioners’ survival in our city by providing future regranting opportunities to individuals and organizations beyond emergency relief. We believe regranting efforts would successfully fund projects to:

- Help teaching artists sustain their practice and engage the public.
- Offset healthcare and medical expenses for part-time or independent contractors who lack access to company health care programs.
- Support teaching artists in starting their own arts education small business.

Research is needed to understand the barriers for sustainability, proximity to healthcare benefits, and updated information on fair compensation. Knowing that many organizations raised their pay rates following our 2017 “Paying for Professionalism” survey, we seek to equip organizations with a tool they can use to advocate for increased wages and benefits for staff and teaching artists.

In 2022, NYCAIER launched the NYS Teaching Artist Mentorship Program. This paid program helps mid-career NY Teaching Artists develop the networks, skills, and increased capacities necessary to support career advancement and sustainability as artists, arts educators, and future cultural leaders. Our initial cohort pairs 14 participants from historically underrepresented communities with a mentor educator or arts leader. With funds confirmed through FY23, we are currently seeking funding to make this a permanent program within the Roundtable program portfolio.
We were overwhelmed at the outpouring of support and gratitude from those awarded with the Relief Fund. We've included a few of the 245+ statements we received below.

Please click here for a document with a full list of statements from Relief Fund recipients: https://bit.ly/3xlOO81

"I love being a teaching artist in New York City, it's the most exciting, diverse, electric place to teach and it's reflected in the incredible work students create. However, being able to stay in New York has gotten more and more difficult. As I get my financials back in order after the school shutdown and city budget cuts, this grant is going towards my rent to ensure I can stay in and stay teaching in the city I love."

"An easy, democratic, and accessible grant process. $1000 is *significant* aid. This makes all the difference in Teaching Artist's lives."

“There are times as an artist where you’re free falling. Too often people like me don’t have a safety net to catch them. This grant is my safety net."

“This grant has been fundamental in helping me pay rent and cover medical expenses. As a muralist who has long-covid it has been increasingly harder to work like I did pre-pandemic due to the physical demands of the job and unlike other art forms we cannot paint community murals remotely which resulted in significant loss of income during the pandemic. Grants like this make it possible to continue to pursue arts and art education."

“The 'pandemic years' have been both incredibly stressful and full of silver linings. THIS IS A SILVER LINING: Investing in artists/educators at this time in our history is an investment in our present and our future, impacting more than the life of the person you are helping here today. THOSE WHO CAN, DO. THOSE WHO CAN DO MORE, TEACH!"

“NYC Arts in Education Roundtable has not forgotten the impact of the pandemic on artists, teachers, and teaching artists. Their continued support has made a great difference in bridging the gap between depleted unemployment benefits and new work opportunities.”

"On top of the gracious monetary gift I was given, receiving a free NYC Arts in Education Roundtable Annual Individual Membership is the cherry on top! Moving towards my professional development, this is really a priceless stepping stone and a catalyst that will help me with my dreams."

“This award has been a major relief for me and my business during this time. As a NYC artist and entrepreneur receiving support impacts not only my ability to thrive in business but it affirms my belief that what I am doing is important. Thank You!”
"This grant is very meaningful, as it keeps on giving us, teaching artists, the confidence that we are somehow taken care of. After more than 20 years teaching in different public schools, I realized during the pandemic how fragile our situation is, as we were the first ones to be out of work for a long time. The idea of knowing there are relief funds to mitigate this uncertainty, makes me believe in my job, as a spreader of creativity among our children, as something vital for their development as human beings. I dearly thank the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable for this opportunity and recognition."

"Uncertainty and limited viable opportunities persists, casting a bleak reflection on many teaching artists’ day to day existence. Although I am, as are many of my Teaching Artist colleagues, anxious about our future, it’s reassuring to know that NYC Arts in Education Roundtable is trying to reassure our community that our creative work is an essential component of the communities we service. Teaching Artists must have faith that the importance of our art will be valued and honored anew."

"I am so grateful to receive this grant which allows me to keep faith in the path I chose to serve my communities as a teaching artist. Offering performances, workshops and art based community classes and events has been my life, at this point, I am mostly paid by the warmth and gratefulness of the people I serve, and the dream that from treating each other, people to people, heart to heart with care and creativity, is the only sustainable path for us through the Future. Financial support such as this grant allows me to persist in this path."

"The Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund has been my lifesaver since the pandemic started. As most teaching artists are part-time employees and, in most cases, depend on non-profit organizations and independent funding, we were some of the most financially affected people. The help that NYC Arts in Education is providing is crucial to deal with the issues of our times and keep doing what we do with love. Thanks so much."

"In a time where the challenges of the pandemic continue and aid has pretty much stopped, I'm encouraged by the presence of this grant opportunity - even two years later, I'm not alone, thank you for showing me and my family that.”

"This award allows me food security, which I would not have otherwise. Having this basic need met removes stress, allows me to accomplish more artistically, and be a more present member of my community."

"Teaching Artists across the US are still being affected by the pandemic. Budget cuts loom over heads constantly and we never know if we are next. I am so grateful for this grant because it provides a light in the midst of uncertainty and lets me know that people still care about an artist’s well being."

“In these challenging times as empathetic educators and human beings in the arts, this gesture by the Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund is giving hope and encouragement to so many that have seemingly lost faith in the fact that good people do good things. It has been a long time of playing catch up economically for most of us. We are eternally grateful to you.”
"As an artist, sometimes it is hard to stay motivated to create art when there are so many financial factors around you providing undue stress. Even having this one time award will greatly alleviate so many financial burdens. Even just seeing the email, I was able to finish 2 pieces of art that I put off due to stress!"

"With covid, all of my pandemic relief funds now evaporated, and freelance teaching artist gigs only just beginning to be assigned, but not at all secure, my financial and emotional stress has been excessive. I am very grateful for the bit of relief that this grant brings."

"Programs like this are extremely crucial, especially right now, to keep the arts alive and thriving in the Mecca of so many different artistic mediums: New York City. This grant will help me cover my basic expenses so that I can get back on my feet in terms of my career; performing and teaching as much as pre-pandemic times."

"My family and I are very grateful for this support from the Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund and the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable. In these uncertain times this grant will help keep our family stable, and will help me to continue my work as a teaching artist."

Applicants used these words to describe the impact of this Relief Fund.
As the convening body for NYC’s arts in education community, the Roundtable is grateful for the opportunity to support hundreds of teaching artists and cultural workers through our Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund. In this critical moment, we thank our relief fund partners who have enabled us to prioritize and invest in these essential members of our schools and communities.

**Cycle One**
- New York Community Trust
- Booth Ferris Foundation

**Cycle Two**
- NYC Department of Cultural Affairs
- The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation

**Cycle Three**
- NYC Department of Cultural Affairs
- The Emily Davie and Joseph S. Kornfeld Foundation

**New York City Arts in Education Roundtable**
Times Square Station
PO Box 2094
New York, NY 10108
www.nycaieroundtable.org

*Questions? Contact Executive Director, Kimberly Olsen at kolsen@nycaieroundtable.org.*

*We thank you for your continued support teaching artists*