



## Creatives Rebuild New York Distributes Direct Cash to Artists in Need

2,400 New York State Artists Receive a Total of \$43M in Guaranteed Income

**November 17, 2022, New York, NY**—Creatives Rebuild New York (CRNY) today announced that it has begun distribution of monthly payments to 2,400 artists, culture bearers, and culture makers across New York State. A total of \$43.2M will be distributed to artist participants in \$1,000 monthly, no-strings-attached installments for 18 consecutive months. CRNY's Guaranteed Income for Artists is the largest statewide guaranteed income program in the United States.

Though widely acknowledged as key drivers of the social and economic health of New York State – contributing over \$126 billion to the state's economy in 2020 alone – artists are often severely under-resourced, relying on sparse and competitive grants, fellowships, and residencies to support their practice. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the precarity of making a living as an artist: in 2020, New York State lost 50 percent of its performing arts jobs, and in New York City, the figure is 72 percent—more than any other industry. CRNY's Guaranteed Income for Artists program is built on the premise that all artists are deserving of financial security, and was designed to help artists meet their basic needs.

"Since beginning to receive payments, my artistic practice has been affected in a million ways, the most significant of which perhaps is room to breathe," says **Guaranteed Income for Artists Participant Kristen Brooks Sandler**, a dancer and choreographer based in Queens. "Some months are lucrative and others are not. Scrambling at the end of the month to make rent because a gig's check hasn't come in the mail yet has become my reality. I didn't realize how stressful that was until I received this funding. The relief isn't just financial; it's emotional, physical, mental, and artistic."

CRNY received over 22,000 applications for this funding. Artists were selected through a weighted randomized process that ensured equitable funding distribution throughout New York State and prioritized those who face systemic barriers to financial security. Of the 2,400 artists selected for the guaranteed income program:

### Demographic Data

- 62% (1,488) identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color
- 51% (1,214) identify as LGBTQIAP+
- 34% (816) identify as caregivers

- 34% (806) identify as transgender, nonbinary, two-spirit, or other
- 21% (497) identify as immigrants
- 15% (366) identify as Deaf / Disabled
- 5% (123) identify as criminal legal system-involved

### Geographic Distribution

- The artists hail from 60 of New York State's 62 counties
- 65% (1,556) are based in New York City; 35% (844) are based outside of New York City
- 14% (326) live in rural or tribal communities

### Financial Stability

- 62% (1,494) reported that they have no financial safety net
- 56% (1,333) reported they were unsure when they would make income again
- 55% (1,311) reported that they carry unmanageable debt
- 41% (972) reported being vulnerable to a medical emergency
- 33% (783) reported that they were enrolled in public benefits

### Artistic Discipline

- When asked to identify up to three artistic disciplines in which they are engaged, they selected:
  - 19% Visual Arts
  - 17% Music
  - 11% Theater
  - 11% Film
  - 7% Literary Arts
  - 6% Dance
  - 6% Craft
  - 6% Design
  - 5% Media Arts
  - 12% Other (Traditional Arts, Performance Art, Oral Traditions, Interdisciplinary Arts)
- 20% (480) selected two or more disciplines
- 66% (1,584) selected three or more disciplines

Additional aggregate data about Guaranteed Income for Artists participants can be found at <https://www.creativesrebuildny.org/participants/guaranteed-income-for-artists/>.

"The data from the many Guaranteed Income pilots across the country demonstrate that even full employment does not promise a living wage to those in need, including artists who are often excluded from critical workforce discussions due to the invisible and oftentimes uncompensated labor that supports their practice," said **Emil Kang, CRNY Leadership Council Chair and Mellon Foundation Program Director for Arts and Culture**. "We're thrilled that this program helps artists meet their basic needs, and we are hopeful that Guaranteed Income for Artists serves as a model for larger scale, policy-based solutions in the future."

Building on the 1960s New Jersey Graduated Income Work Experiment and, more recently, Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, CRNY joins national and international guaranteed income programs—from San Francisco to St. Paul, Minnesota to Ireland—that center and support artists.

“In addition to these programs, Black women movement leaders have, for decades, propelled the simple and powerful idea that all people are deserving of an income floor especially when as a society we have more than enough to go around,” says **Maura Cuffie-Peterson, CRNY’s Director of Strategic Initiatives, Guaranteed Income**. “Our program is honored to follow visionaries from the Civil Rights and Black Power movements like Johnnie Tillmon and Ruby Duncan, to contemporary leaders in the Guaranteed Income movement like Aisha Nyandoro, Mia Birdsong, and many more.”

Distribution of CRNY’s Guaranteed Income for Artists funds was made possible in collaboration with SteadyApp and Community Financial Resources. SteadyApp’s mission to support workers excluded from the benefits associated with W-2 employment, alongside Community Financial Resource’s long-standing commitment to economic justice, have allowed all participants to receive their funds, including those who are excluded by the banking industry.

Before receiving payments and for the duration of the program, participants who are enrolled in local, state, and/or federal benefits may opt-in to benefits counseling. CRNY has partnered with Henry Street Settlement and Work Without Limits to provide this service, both of which have decades of deep experience helping people connect to resources and navigate their benefits. Work Without Limits is a program of Commonwealth Medicine, a health care consulting division of UMass Chan Medical School. In the coming months, CRNY will partner with Guaranteed Income for Artists participants to conduct a range of research, advocacy, and narrative change efforts with a strong commitment to equitable evaluation practices and artist-centered storytelling.

Media inquiries may be directed to [press@creativesrebuildny.org](mailto:press@creativesrebuildny.org).

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### **About Creatives Rebuild New York**

Creatives Rebuild New York (CRNY) is a three-year, \$125 million initiative that provides guaranteed income and employment opportunities to artists across New York State. CRNY believes that artists are workers who deserve equitable, sustainable support structures, and that improving the lives of artists is paramount to the vitality of New York State’s collective social and economic wellbeing. Fiscally sponsored by Tides Center, CRNY represents a \$125 million funding commitment, anchored by \$115 million from the Mellon Foundation and \$5 million each from the Ford Foundation and Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF). Learn more at [creativesrebuildny.org](https://creativesrebuildny.org).