



Lackawanna County COVID-19 Creative Community Resources

FAQ on Guidance and Funding for our Creative Community



**We know this is a very scary
and uncertain time for our local
businesses, non-profits, artists,
and independent contractors.**

We are here for you.

Our creative community holds such importance to the quality of life here in Lackawanna County. Organizations are here to assist you during this crisis with developmental programs, guidance, and funding capabilities. We have compiled these resources for you in one convenient document to present these opportunities. The economic and social balance of home, work, and community are changing rapidly. We will make every effort to keep this document updated, but because information is changing sometimes daily, we do encourage you to stay current by clicking the “More Info” links at the end of each section.

Key Local Financial Partners

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and NEPA Alliance are two key organizations to help you regarding financial assistance.

» The Small Business Development Center

The SBDC provides confidential small business consulting at no cost and quality training programs to for-profit small businesses in Bradford, Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Tioga, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties. They can help navigate the ins and outs of funding during this time, including assisting with preparing loan applications. Their team of professional business consultants are hosting webinars and live chats offering personal assistance for individual businesses. Follow their Facebook and Twitter pages for updates on these opportunities.

[WEBSITE](#) | [FACEBOOK](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [570.941.7588](tel:570.941.7588) | SBDC@SCRANTON.EDU

» The Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance

The NEPA Alliance is regional community and economic development agency serving the seven counties of Northeastern Pennsylvania including Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Schuylkill and Wayne. It plays a big role in the administration of this funding and will also help guide you through this process. Contact their business and finance teams directly at anytime:

» **Stephen Ursich:** [570.891.4649](tel:570.891.4649) or SURSICH@NEPA-ALLIANCE.ORG

» **Kenneth Doolittle:** [570.891.4659](tel:570.891.4659) or KDOOLITTLE@NEPA-ALLIANCE.ORG

» **Donovan Klem:** [570.891.4668](tel:570.891.4668) or DKLEM@NEPA-ALLIANCE.ORG

» **Dave Nat:** [570.891.4651](tel:570.891.4651) or DNAT@NEPA-ALLIANCE.ORG

[WEBSITE](#) | [FACEBOOK](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [570.655.5581](tel:570.655.5581) | INFO@NEPA-ALLIANCE.ORG

» If you are a non-profit, an additional resource is the **Non-Profit Community Assistance Center (NCAC)**, the 501(c)(3) non-profit affiliate of NEPA Alliance. NCAC provides assistance to non-profit and community organizations throughout the region.

» **REMEMBER**, your bank is also a great resource. Whether you already have a loan officer or not, now is a good time to speak with your bank.

What is the CARES Act?

On March 25, 2020, the United States Senate released the final text of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (H.R. 748) to provide emergency economic assistance to those affected by COVID-19.

» In this guide, you will find information on:

1

Stimulus Checks, Taxes, Unemployment, and Debt Relief for Federal Loans

2

Paycheck Protection Program

3

COVID-19 Economic Injury and Disaster and Advance Loans (EIDL)

4

Local and State Grants and Bank Programs

5

Additional Resource Links

Stimulus Checks, Taxes, Unemployment and Debt Relief for Federal Loans

» Individual Stimulus Checks

- **Single:** \$1,200
- **Married:** \$2,400
- **Children:** \$500 per Child 17 and Under
- **Phasing Less Amounts:** \$98k, Single and \$198k, Married
- **Proposed Timeline:** Three weeks from March 25, but may be longer.

- **Tax filers with adjusted gross income up to \$75,000 for individuals and up to \$150,000 for married couples filing joint returns will receive the full payment.** For filers with income above those amounts, the payment amount is reduced by \$5 for each \$100 above the \$75,000/\$150,000 thresholds.

- **Single filers with income exceeding \$99,000 and \$198,000 for joint filers with no children are not eligible.** Social Security recipients and railroad retirees (who are otherwise not required to file a tax return) are also eligible and will not be required to file a return.

» [MORE INFO](#)

» Retirement Plan Relief

- Eliminates the 10% “early distribution” penalty that generally applies to distributions from retirement plans and IRAs before age 59½
- Exempts distributions from the 20% Federal tax withholding that normally applies to distributions (other than hardship distributions) that are paid directly to participants
- Allows participants to avoid taxation by repaying distributions within 3 years
- Allows participants to elect to spread the inclusion of income from distributions over 3 years

» [MORE INFO](#)

» Unemployment for Self-Employed Workers

The Pennsylvania Office of Unemployment Compensation has told self-employed individuals to wait to apply as a new form is being refined for this sector. (The regular form asks for W-2, for example.) There is no guidance on when it will be released, and there has also been conflicting information from the state office administration advising people to use the existing forms to start the process, as the only thing that will happen is they will be rejected. This is one option, but we also advise to check the website regularly for updates on the new process.

» [APPLY HERE](#)

» Tax Filing Deferment

Deadline for filing Federal and Pennsylvania taxes is extended to July 15.

» Tax Credits

Self-employed people are eligible for a refundable tax credit to cover the cost of any sick leave they had to take due to COVID-19 concerns (two weeks of sick time and up to 12 weeks to care for children whose schools have closed). Small businesses with employees may choose to take an Employee Retention Credit—a refundable tax credit up to \$10,000 per employee.

» [MORE INFO](#)

» Debt Deferral on Federal Loans

Loans backed by the federal government, including student loans, mortgages and SBA loans may be deferred. Payments, evictions, and foreclosures for those with federally-backed mortgage lenders and other businesses may be suspended or deferred by consumers affected by COVID-19 and allows them to defer or make partial payments from January 31 through 120 days after the coronavirus emergency ends.

» [MORE INFO](#)

» SBA Debt Relief and Express Bridge Loans

Businesses who have existing SBA(7)(a) loans can qualify for debt relief that will cover principal and interest and also offer bridge loans to for assistance while waiting for other loans.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Paycheck Protection Program

First Come, First Served

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) authorizes up to \$349 billion in forgivable loans to small businesses to pay their employees during the COVID-19 crisis. All loan terms will be the same for everyone.

PPP is administered through the Small Business Administration (SBA) via the CARES Act. It provides zero-fee loans to assist businesses with operating expenses.

» Starting April 3, 2020

Small businesses and **sole proprietorships** can apply for and receive loans to cover their payroll and other certain expenses through existing SBA lenders.

» Starting April 10, 2020

Independent contractors and **self-employed individuals** can apply for and receive loans to cover their payroll and other certain expenses through existing SBA lenders.

» The Timeline

Loans are available through June 30, 2020. Businesses may apply if they were harmed by COVID-19 between February 15, 2020 and June 30, 2020 to help bring workers (who may have already been laid off) back onto payrolls and is retroactive back to February 15.

» Where can I apply?

You can apply through any existing SBA lender, federally-insured depository institution, federally-insured credit union, or Farm Credit System institution. Other participating regulated lenders will be available to make these loans once they are approved and enrolled in the program.

» [APPLY HERE](#)

» [MORE INFO](#)

» SBA Approved Lenders

- Bank of America, Citizens Bank, ESSA Bank & Trust, Fidelity, First Liberty Bank & Trust, First National, FNCB, Honesdale National Bank, M&T Bank, NBT, Penn Star, People's Security Bank & Trust, PNC Bank, and Wayne Bank
- This is not a complete list. Please check with your bank.

» Criteria

- Small businesses, non-profits
- Max 2.5 average of monthly payroll up to \$100k per employee
- Loan to cover: payroll, benefits, rent, mortgage, utilities
- Loan up to \$10 million
- Repay up to 10 years, deferred 6-12 months
- Interest rates: up to 4% APY
- No cost to apply

» Eligibility

- Under 500 employees
- No personal guarantee required (unless fraud/misuse)

» Application Requirements

- Completed application » [**APPLY HERE**](#)
- 2019 IRS Quarterly 940, 941 or 944 payroll tax reports
- Last 12 months of Payroll Reports beginning with your last payroll date and going backwards 12 months (e.g. gross wages for each employee, paid time off for each employee, vacation pay for each employee)
- 1099s for 2019 for independent contractors that would otherwise be an employee of your business
- Documentation showing total of all health insurance premiums paid by the company owner under a group health plan
- Documentation showing the sum of all retirement plan funding that was paid by the company owner (do not include funding that came from the employee out of their paycheck deferrals)
- Attestation to sign

» Considerations

- Furloughed employees brought back will count towards baseline
- Reduced Hours employees made whole will also count towards baseline

» Loan Forgiveness Program (in Conjunction with Paycheck Protection Program)

- Apply through a federally-insured FDIC bank that you received the Paycheck Protection Program Loan
- No cost to apply

» Criteria

- 8 weeks after Paycheck Protection Program Loan given
- Loan origination and closing date TBD
- Submit eligible expenses to be forgiven including: payroll, benefits, rent, mortgage, utilities, etc.
- 60 days for loan forgiveness determination

» How It Works

- Head count payroll baseline is based on the average payroll during 8 weeks after loan received, or the average of your payroll in January/February 2020
- The lower of the two will become your baseline and used for determination of loan forgiveness
- For local help to fill out application or for questions, [CLICK HERE](#).

COVID-19 Economic Injury and Disaster and Advance Loans (EIDL)

This loan advance will provide up to \$10,000 of economic relief to businesses that are currently experiencing temporary difficulties. Funds will be made available within three days of a successful application. There is no fee to apply and this loan advance will not have to be repaid.

» **Criteria**

- Business entities with 500 or fewer employees, sole proprietorships with or without employees, independent contractors, cooperatives and employee-owned businesses, tribal small businesses, private non-profits of any size
- Loan to cover fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable, bills
- Not to replace profits or to be used for expansion
- Loan up to \$2 million, repay up to 30 years
- Interest rates: 3.75% for small business, 2.75% for non-profits
- Loans will be available until December 31, 2020

» **Eligibility**

- Acceptable credit history
- Ability to repay loan
- Suffering working capital losses
- Collateral preferred and prioritized for loans over \$25k
- Real estate can be used; pledge what is available

» **Application Requirements**

- Completed application » [APPLY HERE](#)
- IRS Form 4506 T, Request for Transcript of Tax Return
- Most Recent Tax Return
- SBA Form 2202, Schedule of Liabilities
- SBA Form 413, Personal Financial Statement
- Disaster Loan Assistance: **1.800.659.2955** or DISASTERCUSTOMERSERVICE@SBA.GOV
- For local help to fill out application or for questions, [CLICK HERE](#).

Local and State Grants

There are several loans and grants available for to emergency funds and to continue art making in our community.

» Pennsylvania Humanities Council Pop Up Grants for Cultural Producers

- Non-profit 501(c) may apply for between \$500-2000 for cultural events, programs, and projects during the Covid-19 shutdown through virtual or other forms of distance-based engagement with the public.
- **Application Deadline:** Will take applications through April with response time of 5-7 days.

» [MORE INFO](#)

» The Scranton Area Foundation (SAF) COVID-19 Response Fund

- A 501(c) non-profit can make an application to re-grant funds for “gig” workers such as independent artists of all disciplines, or other self-employed creative industry workers.
- **Application Deadline:** Rolling

» [MORE INFO](#)

» Scranton Fringe Festival Artists Emergency Funds

- To provide relief for individual professional artists and creative arts workers of Northeastern Pennsylvania who have had their work and income impacted by COVID-19.
- **Application Deadline:** Rolling

» [MORE INFO](#)

» The Giant Company Emergency Grants

- Any small business of 250 employees or less involved in growing, making, or processing food within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- **Application Deadline:** Will take applications from April 10 through April 24.

» [MORE INFO](#)

» SAF Women in Philanthropy

- **Business Relief Fund:** This fund provides ten (10) \$1,000 mini-grants to support women-owned small businesses in Lackawanna County for a bridge while waiting for Pay Check Protection loans.
- **COVID-19 Grants Program:** One grant will be awarded to nonprofit (501 c) organizations serving the needs of low-to-moderate-income women, girls to provide virtual learning in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) fields.
- **Application Deadline:** Applicants for both grants must apply online, through the online grants management portal. Questions about this process can be answered via email at GRANTS@SAFDN.ORG.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Local Bank Programs

» PA CARE Package Consumer Relief

State program providing various options, including deferring payments and waiver of certain fees and penalties to businesses and consumers who lost income due to pandemic-related issues. PNC Bank and Citizens Bank are two local banks that signed on.

» PA CARE Banks Provide

- Expansion of small and medium business loan availability
- 90-day grace period for mortgages
- 90-day grace period for other consumer loans such as auto loans;
- 90-day window for relief from fees and charges such as late, overdraft fees; foreclosure and eviction
- Motor vehicle repossession moratorium for 60 days
- No adverse credit reporting for accessing relief on consumer loans

» [MORE INFO](#)

» PNC Also Offers

- Option of postponing payments on loans with no late fees including auto, home equity lines of credit, credit cards and mortgages
- Short-term loans

» First National Community Bank Also Offers

- Although not a part of the PA CARE Package, First National Community Bank offers **unsecured personal loans of \$1,500 to \$5,000 with a 36-month fixed rate as low as 3.99%**
- This is a loan that is issued and supported only by the borrower's creditworthiness, rather than by any type of collateral
- Rates may be higher dependent upon credit score
- No payment is due for 90 days
- No application fee (as posted on the bank's website)

» **Talk to your bank about other opportunities they may be offering.**

Additional Resources for Creative Workers

Americans for the Arts

Resources and information on COVID-19 and an impact survey of arts organizations and creatives to provide data and stories.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Artist Fellowship List of Emergency Funding for Artists

The Artists' Fellowship, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation that financially assists professional visual artists and their families in times of emergency, disability or bereavement. They provide link to organizations and funders providing emergency funds.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Arts Leaders of Color Emergency Fund

Managed by the Arts Administrators of Color Network this fund provides funding for artists of color in all disciplines as well as providing other resource links.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Artist Relief

Distributing \$5,000 grants to artists of all disciplines facing dire financial emergencies due to COVID-19 and providing other resources.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania

Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania advocates for funding and public policies that ensure the practice of, access to, and the appreciation of arts and culture for all citizens in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This PA state advocacy provides a list of COVID-19 resources.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Craft Emergency Relief Fund (A Program of CERF+)

General resources, advocacy links, webinars, online teaching help, and a growing list of funding opportunities.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Pennsylvania Association of Non-Profits

PANO is the statewide membership organization serving the community benefit sector through advocacy, education, and support to improve the quality of life in Pennsylvania.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

The PCA is our state arts agency, providing a list of resource links for artists, organizations, creative entrepreneurs, arts workers, and arts.

» [MORE INFO](#)

PA Care Partnership

The PA Care Partnership brings youth, families, systems, and supports together to find effective and efficient strategies that improve outcomes.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Pennsylvania Downtown Center

PDC provides outreach, technical assistance, and educational services in order to assist community business districts.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Scranton Tomorrow

Scranton Tomorrow provides resources for downtown Scranton small businesses. They are a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan community and economic development organization working to establish Scranton as the premier urban center of NEPA.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Creative Capital

Creative Capital supports innovative and adventurous artists across the country through funding, counsel, gatherings, and career development services. They provide a variety of resource links for artists and creatives in all disciplines.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Etsy

Etsy is a creative marketplace for sellers. They provide a listing for new and modified assistance programs available to sellers within the United States.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Foundation for Contemporary Arts

Fund to meet the needs of experimental artists who have been impacted by the economic fallout from postponed or canceled performances and exhibitions.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Lackawanna County Covid-19 Resource Directory

Information about the COVID-19 crisis in Lackawanna County.

» [MORE INFO](#)

National Endowment for the Arts

Information on federal government arts-related responses to COVID-19 as well as information for current grantees or those applying for federal funding.

» [MORE INFO](#)

Non-Profit Finance Fund®

NFF promotes the success of nonprofits by providing capital, strategic consulting, and using our knowledge and influence to transform the funding and financing landscape.

» [MORE INFO](#)

New Information as of April 2020

Unemployment for Independent Contractors

For the first time ever self-employed individuals including independent contractors, gig economy workers, can now apply for unemployment under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PAU). The following list are examples of what you may use to show proof of self-employment can include, but is not limited to:

- Copies of recent paycheck stubs;
- Bank receipts showing deposits;
- 1099s;
- Billing notices provided to your customers;
- Recent advertisements for your business or services;
- Statements from recent customers;

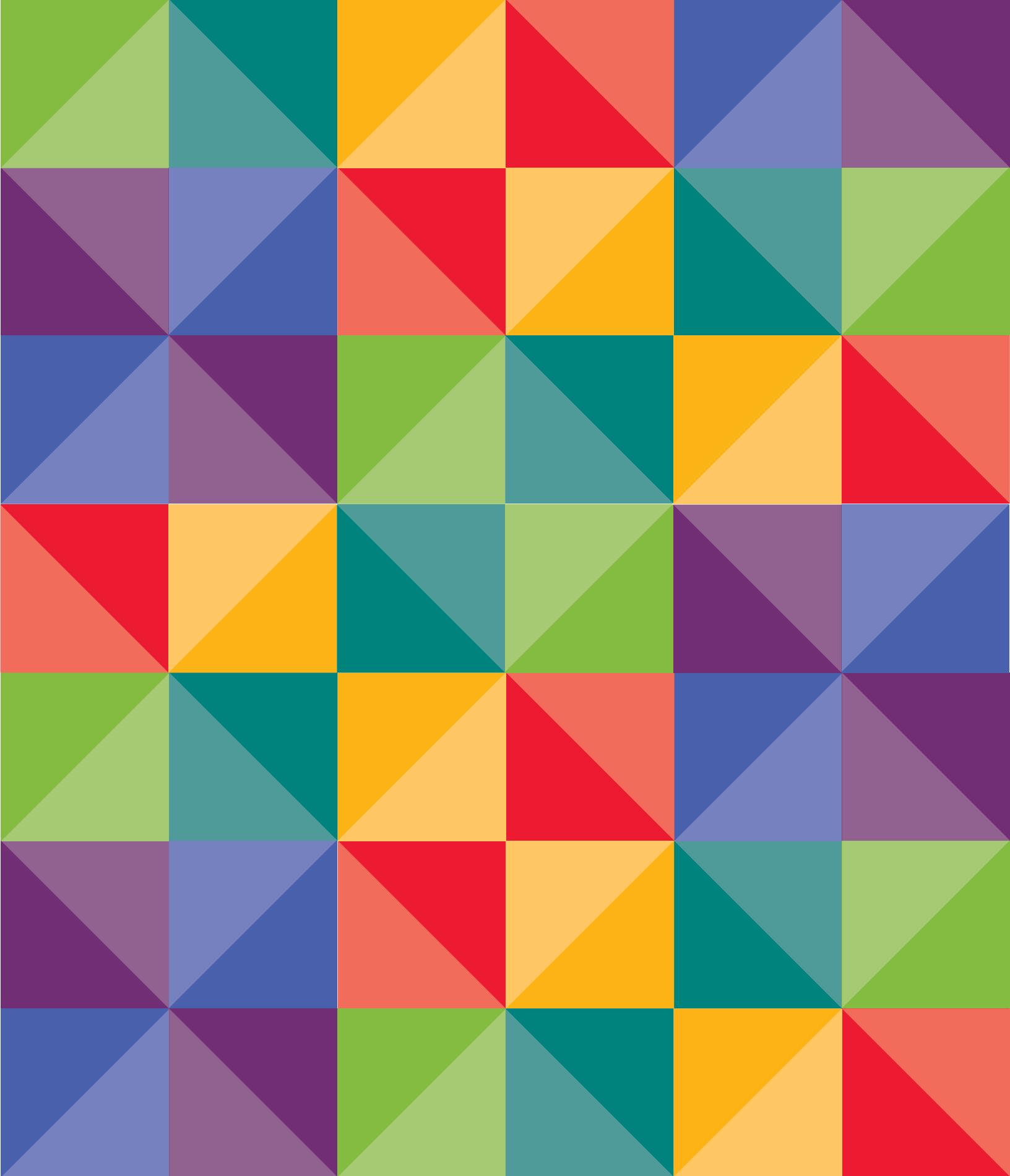
» [APPLY HERE](#)

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) CARES Grants

(NEH) CARES will provide funding up to \$300,000 to cultural nonprofits, higher education institutions and state and local government agencies and federally recognized Native American tribal governments affected by the Coronavirus pandemic through December 31, 2020 to sustain humanities organizations and preserve jobs in the cultural sector.

Deadline to apply through the government website system is May 11, 2020. You will have to apply through the federal government system so allow yourself enough time for this process which has several steps.

» [APPLY HERE](#)



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