



Coronavirus Florida: Gulf Coast grants \$474,000 to arts groups hit by pandemic



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Mark Pritchett, president and CEO of Gulf Coast Community Foundation. [Herald-Tribune archive / Dan Wagner]

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VENICE — The Gulf Coast Community Foundation has awarded \$470,000 in new Arts Appreciation Grants to 10 of the region’s cornerstone arts organizations.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our regional economy has hit arts and cultural organizations among the hardest, the foundation noted.

The emergency grants, approved by the foundation’s board on Tuesday, represent an unscheduled second round of the foundation’s arts grants program during its current fiscal year — effectively doubling its investment in the organizations.

“This pandemic hit at the very height of the performance and fundraising season, so the blow has been devastating for our region’s signature arts and cultural organizations,” said Mark S. Pritchett, president and CEO of Gulf Coast Community Foundation. “By advancing this funding now, the Gulf Coast Board aims to provide these beloved institutions with needed cash flow as well as help energize their donor bases to lean in too at a time when support is needed most.”

The foundation typically awards its Arts Appreciation Grants once a year to key arts and cultural partners. There is wide flexibility in how the funding may be used. Gulf Coast awarded the same amounts to the 10 grant recipients earlier in its fiscal year.

While [Gulf Coast’s joint COVID-19 Response Initiative with the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation](#) has prioritized funding for the health and human-service safety net, Pritchett said the foundation and its donors also recognize the acute needs across the entire nonprofit sector.

Organizations receiving Gulf Coast Community Foundation grants

Asolo Repertory Theatre: \$70,000

Sarasota Ballet: \$55,000

Sarasota Opera: \$50,000

Sarasota Orchestra: \$50,000

The Ringling Museum: \$50,000

Venice Theatre: \$50,000

Florida Studio Theatre: \$45,000

Embracing Our Differences: \$40,000

Venice Symphony: \$30,000

Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe: \$30,000

The Sarasota Ballet, for example, not only had to cancel major revenue-generating performances and events, but also was helping to support a group of international dancers stranded here by travel restrictions, Pritchett said.

“Since the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic increased dramatically a month ago, Gulf Coast and its donors have invested \$2.4 million in safety-net supports and vital nonprofit organizations,” he said. “Our donors’ gifts have gone to a variety of organizations, [ranging from All Faiths Food Bank and Suncoast Humane Society](#) to arts groups like Asolo Repertory Theatre.”