

Coordinating Capital Funding for a Resilient Arts and Culture Sector

Initiative Summary Statement:

The Arts and Culture sector within Lee County seeks to establish sustainable funding to implement capital improvements and the rehabilitation of cultural and historic sites that were damaged by Hurricane Ian to increase the vitality of these sites that enrich the County through tourist attraction and contributions to the local economy.

Initiative Description:

Objective: The partnership of arts and culture organizations to create a more resilient sector seeks to secure long-term sustainable funding to rehabilitate and improve cultural and historic sites, in addition to obtaining funding to bolster arts and cultural organizations that provide services and enrich the County, community members, and visitors. The successful receipt of funding and the establishment and expansion of grant programs will achieve sustainable and impactful investments in the arts and culture sector and grow the contributions of the sector to the County's economy.

To effectively improve arts and cultural sites, the Regional Arts and Culture Partnership, once established, will work to secure funding, and identify and prioritize facilities that require rehabilitation and hardening. Both entities will engage stakeholders to develop funding guidelines, scopes of work, process applications, and determine awards. To the extent that the facilities are non-profit and otherwise qualify for federal programs, consideration as part of the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) could be considered.

To augment the availability of sustainable services, the Regional Arts and Culture Partnership will work with stakeholders to identify needs and gaps in arts and cultural services to prioritize resources and funding for critical services and programs that should be expanded. The Regional Arts and Culture Partnership will work with stakeholders to assess sustainable funding solutions from established grant programs, private foundations, and new investors.

Programs and services provided by arts and cultural organizations may include, but are not limited to:

- Shared office and rehearsal spaces.
- Revolving loan funds for capital improvements.
- Technical assistance programs for emerging theatres and galleries.
- Direct administrative support.

- Training in fundraising and the visa process.
- Tax and legal assistance.
- Mentorships.
- A reuse center to provide opportunities for companies and individuals to donate unneeded supplies to nonprofit organizations with arts programming and public schools.

Funding shall first invest in rehabilitation and recovery efforts so that the arts and culture institutions and organizations can contribute to economic recovery and community resilience, and then stakeholders shall seek to invest in supporting the arts and culture community's services and address gaps to further long-term strategic goals.

Need: More than one dozen historic and cultural assets in the County were impacted and/or severely damaged by Hurricane Ian leading to reduced access to resources and the inhibited connection and enrichment that community members receive through the various services programs provided by these sites. Exemplifying this, numerous theatres experienced damage, closures, and significant revenue loss, in addition to the personal impacts felt by the cast and production staff that compounded the reopening of programs. The iconic Sanibel Lighthouse, a historic cornerstone of the area, was impacted by severe damage from the hurricane and required repairs. Museums and gardens were also adversely impacted resulting in the loss of unique plant and animal species they were home to.

Arts, historic, and cultural sites promote tourism and advance economic growth in alignment with long-term objectives of the County following Hurricane Ian. Moreover, assets, like libraries, deliver necessary services to community members that enhance individual and community recovery (i.e., supporting job application review, learning programs, and programs for children). Further underscoring the importance of these assets to the community's resilience to future disasters, libraries support access for residents to Lee County's emergency services. Following Hurricane Ian, libraries relayed critical recovery updates and hosted access to local resources available to community members. Bolstering funding for the Arts and Culture Community will augment and sustain access to these sites and services that are critical to advancing individual and community recovery objectives.

Regional Approach: Arts, historic, and cultural assets deliver meaningful impacts to all, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. Common best practices prove that implementing a broad base of leaders and stakeholders to oversee arts, historical, and cultural resources is vital to success. No singular funding stream is likely to fund the entirety of identified needs. Strategic planning and collaboration among jurisdictions and stakeholders can benefit and

support larger community needs in addition to encouraging economic development and government and philanthropic funding for future services and infrastructure resilience.

Several Countywide strategic plans (e.g., Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Joint Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS)) identify the importance of cultural resources to the community. The plans outline opportunities to protect existing assets and foster new cultural and arts institutions and attractions. It is recommended the Department review the strategic frameworks included in these plans to align future opportunities with previously identified objectives, explore a meaningful scope of work for the Regional Arts and Culture Partnership in collaboration with municipal jurisdictions and stakeholder groups, and pinpoint critical stakeholders to support funding opportunity pursuit to benefit rehabilitation of Arts and Culture Community assets and programs.

Impact: Securing long-term funding to rehabilitate and expand arts and cultural assets, including the various service programming they provide, will allow these assets to flourish and contribute to the economic growth and resilience of Lee County and local municipalities.

Key Considerations:

- Harden arts and culture facilities that are part of Resilience Hub System (providing necessary services).
- Poll arts organizations for their deferred maintenance needs
- Utilize Federal, state, and local coordination and resources to preserve historical buildings, artifacts, and archives.
- Review existing funding/grant mechanisms and consider expanding programs to include recovery and resilience program options:
 - Amount of funding provided to arts and cultural institutional facilities through public and private sources for repairs (both short-term repairs and permanent and mitigation repairs).
 - Number of arts and cultural institutional facilities that have undertaken recent capital repairs.
 - Funding programs and amounts provided to the arts and culture community for arts-related social services and programs.

Co-Sponsoring Branches:

Cultural Resources, Health & Social Services, Economic Recovery and Education & Workforce.

Stakeholders:

- Arts and cultural institutions and organizations in Lee County.
- Historic preservation organizations in Lee County.
- Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau.
- Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs.
- Municipal governments in Lee County.
- Nonprofit organizations in the Arts and Culture Sector.

Potential Funding Sources:

- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Federal Emergency Management Agency - Cora Brown Fund
- United States Department of Education
- United States Department of Health and Human Services
- United States Department of Veterans Affairs
- National Endowment for the Arts
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- The Smithsonian Cultural Research Initiative Heritage Emergency National Task Force
- United States Small Business Administration
- Florida Division of Arts and Culture
- Lee County Arts Council Grassroots Grants Program
- Lee County Tourism Development Council
- Private and Nonprofit Organizations:
 - Bloomberg Philanthropies, Arts Innovation and Management
 - Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+)
 - Alliance for the Arts

Resources:

- ArtsReady: [Landing Page - dPlan](#)
- [CERF+ | The Artist's Safety Net \(cerfplus.org\)](#)
- [HENTF - Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative \(si.edu\)](#)
 - [Response and Recovery Resources - Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative \(si.edu\)](#)
- Lee County Library System
 - [Lee County Library System \(leegov.com\)](#)