



January 12, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders Schumer, McCarthy, and McConnell:

As leaders of museums from across the United States, we write to you today to thank you for your support for our institutions and to ask for your continued partnership as you consider additional COVID-19 relief. Specifically, we request additional relief funds be provided for the Small Business Administration’s (SBA’s) Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program. In addition, we request relief funds also be provided through SBA’s Paycheck Protection Program, because the majority of museums are ineligible for SVOG due to its requirement that only museums with “fixed seating” qualify.

The museum field is already facing a slow recovery that will take years to come back from due to the dire financial impacts of the pandemic. Another wave of reduced capacity and potential closures, without further federal assistance, could prove devastating for museums and museum professionals already struggling to recover.

During the pandemic, one-third of museums were at risk of permanent closure without federal support. Because of the influx of financial assistance from federal, state, and local governments, this number reduced dramatically. However, the continuing impact of the pandemic, including the dramatic surge of the Omicron variant, threatens dire consequences once again.

Over the past few weeks, a number of museums across the country have announced temporary closures or reduced hours in response to the recent surge of COVID-19 cases driven by the highly contagious Omicron variant. In addition, as institutions that rely upon in-person visits, museums are struggling with the same unprecedented staff shortages that have impacted many industries. Such adaptations may continue to be necessary throughout some portion of this year as we continue to fight the pandemic.

As essential community infrastructure, museums have proved crucial to their communities’ resiliency during the pandemic—from supporting vaccination to hosting food distribution—and deserve this critical support to survive this precarious time. During the COVID-19 pandemic, museums across the

country are contributing to the ongoing education of our country's children by providing lesson plans, online learning opportunities, and drop-off learning kits to teachers and families. They are using their outdoor spaces to grow and donate produce to area food banks, as well as maintaining these spaces for individuals to safely relax, enjoy nature, and recover from the mental health impacts of social isolation. They provided access to childcare and meals to families of health care workers and first responders, have donated their PPE and scientific equipment to fight COVID-19, and are serving as vaccination centers.

Thank you for your continued support for our nation's museums. We encourage Congress to provide museums and museum professionals this critical relief, and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

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cc: Senator Ben L. Cardin
Senator Roger F. Wicker