

COVID-19 Stimulus Package Relief for Venue Operators

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When Congress passed its second COVID-19 relief package on December 21, it was welcome news to countless individuals throughout the country who have struggled in the wake of the ongoing pandemic. Within the package was the Grants for Shuttered Venue Operators Bill—also known as the Save Our Stages Bill—which earmarked \$15 billion for entertainment venues. The arts community was uniquely hit by the pandemic, as stay-at-home orders and other restrictions prevented venues from opening to the public. However, with this new bill, a number of these venues will be able to apply for loans through the Small Business Administration so that they can hopefully see some form of much needed financial relief.

The bill, which was signed into law by the President last week, was originally introduced in July by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN). In a recent interview with *Rolling Stone*, Sen. Klobuchar noted that the importance of the arts, especially during these difficult times, was a driving force to help gain bipartisan support for the bill. “I think that through the horror of this pandemic and all the tears and tragedy, people embraced music and culture more and more,” she said. “But they were just alone doing it on their computers and their phones, and they want it back. They want that sense of community.”

Under the bill, operators of live venues, live performing arts organizations, movie theatres, and museums—as well as theatrical producers and talent representatives—are among those eligible to apply for relief. Applicants need to have been fully operational as of February 29, 2020. Additionally, applicants need to have gross earned revenue from “the first, second, third, or, only, with respect to an application submitted on or after January 1, 2021, fourth quarter in 2020” that shows no less than a 25 percent decrease from their gross earned revenue for the same quarter in 2019. Larger companies that sell tickets for these venues are not eligible for relief grants as part of the bill.

The bill states that the initial amounts for the grants is the lesser of either \$10 million or “the amount equal to 45 percent of the gross earned revenue of the eligible person or entity during 2019” for applicants who were in operation on January 1, 2019—or, for those venues that operated after that date, “the amount equal to the product obtained by multiplying...the average monthly gross earned revenue for each full month during which the eligible person or entity was in operation during 2019...by 6.” According to the bill, the money that is received can be used for costs that were incurred from March 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021. [To Read the Full Bill Click Here.](#)

As Sen. Klobuchar notes, this bill is geared at standing with performing arts venues and keeping them strong as they move into 2021, noting that they are an important part of the nation’s economy.

“We want them to be a vibrant part of our economy,” she said. “And that’s why we’re putting the full faith and credit of the U.S. government behind them.”

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