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## MILWAUKEE'S **FIRST STAGE** RECEIVES COVID-19 CULTURAL ORGANIZATION GRANT AWARD

**Milwaukee, WI – November 16, 2020** — Governor Tony Evers recently announced that \$15 million in COVID-19 Cultural Organization Grants has been awarded to 385 cultural organizations across Wisconsin. First Stage, one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families, was awarded \$137,712.39 through this grant program.

"Just like small businesses, cultural organizations have taken a major financial hit," said DOA Secretary **Joel Brennan**. "We're all in this together. We hope that these funds will make it possible for us to be able to enjoy the museums, theaters and music from these organizations once it is safe to do so again."

Administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), the COVID-19 Cultural Organizations Grant program provides grants to nonprofit organizations whose primary missions are to produce, present or exhibit cultural disciplines such as music, dance, theater, literature and the visual arts, or items of environmental or scientific interest. Grant awards can be used to cover pandemic-related impacts such as lost revenue, increased workers' compensation costs, cleaning and sanitization and purchases of services or equipment to facilitate telework by employees.

"This significant support from the State of Wisconsin will allow First Stage to continue to pay staff to fulfill our mission," stated First Stage Managing Director **Betsy Corry**. "Our organization has not backed down from its mission to 'transform lives through theater,' but the ways in which we accomplish that goal now are very different from normal practice. And most of the ways in which we have 'pivoted' in order to serve young people, their families and their educators, does not generate the types of revenue with which we are used to operating." Corry added, "This Cultural Organization Grant funding also ensures that we can invest in the technology, safety protocols and practices that allow First Stage to stay connected with our students, families and schools."

More information regarding the COVID-19 Cultural Organization Grant Program is available [HERE](#). A full list of grant winners is available [HERE](#).

To learn more about First Stage, **Through Our Lens – A First Stage Virtual Performance Series**, First Stage's Virtual 2020/21 Season of Plays and their other educational offerings, please visit [www.firststage.org](http://www.firststage.org) or call **(414) 267-2961**.

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### **About First Stage**

First Stage is one of the nation's leading theaters for young people and families. First Stage touches hearts, engages minds and transforms lives by creating extraordinary theater experiences through professional theater productions that inspire, enlighten and entertain. Its Theater Academy, the nation's largest high-impact theater training program for young people, fosters life skills through stage skills and serves nearly 2,000 students each year. As Wisconsin's leader in arts-integrated education in schools, First Stage's dynamic Theater in Education programs promote literacy, character building and experiential learning throughout the curriculum, serving over 20,000 students each year. First Stage was selected to participate in the Partners in Education program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (2012), and was the recipient of the *Milwaukee Business Journal's* Eureka Award, recognizing creativity and innovation in business, education and the arts for its Next Steps program for students on the autism spectrum (2013, 2015). First Stage is a member of TYA/USA, the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, the Wisconsin Alliance for Arts Education, Milwaukee Arts Partners and is a cornerstone member of the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF). [www.firststage.org](http://www.firststage.org)