



Mutual Aid Resource

This is a list of organizations who do mutual aid work. Instagram handles for the organizations are also included. Please email resources@nycmer.org to add to this list!

Why Mutual Aid?

In March 2020, most US museums began shutting down indefinitely and making layoffs in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Often, these cuts affected the lowest-paid employees: front-of-house workers and part-time staff. To help those hardest hit, former employees from different museums have banded together to start mutual-aid funds. The need for these measures illustrates deep structural problems in the museum sector.

At NYCMER, we want to recognize these efforts by sharing information about their purpose, how they intend to help, and how anyone can support them.

Examples of Museum-Specific Funds

Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Mutual Aid Fund

BAM furloughed or laid off 85% of its workforce and has reduced the remaining staff's pay and hours between 20-80%. Workers at BAM, including members of the staff-initiated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) task force and members of the union bargaining committee, have set up the DEI Mutual Aid Fund for BAM Staff, which people can donate to in support of former and current BAM staff including teaching artists, seasonal employees, administrators (artists, box office staff, building maintainers, security, etc.) who have been financially impacted due to the pandemic.

Data shows that Black and brown communities are being hit hardest by COVID-19. Because of this, they are prioritizing the needs of Black, Indigenous, and POC staff. The Mutual Aid intends to help at least 350 individuals who have been financially impacted. All money raised will be distributed to individuals to help cover expenses like rent, food, and beyond. To this day, they have raised \$29,450 of the \$35,000 goal.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/dei-mutual-aid-fund-for-bam-staff>



Brooklyn Museum Mutual Aid

At the Brooklyn Museum, current and former employees started a GoFundme campaign to assist those in need. They are no longer accepting donations as of last week, after distributing more than \$80,000 to 120 current and former staff of all levels.

Mutual Aid For the Met Museum Staff

Mutual Aid for the Met Museum Staff is a community-based effort organized for and by employees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art ("The Met"). They aim to raise \$200,000 and redistribute funds to members or their community facing financial hardship, food, and housing insecurity due to the impact of the pandemic. They are committed to providing support to all current and former employees, prioritizing those directly affected by the 400+ layoffs, furloughs, retirements, unrenewed contracts, and reductions of hours resulting from the pandemic. This effort is intended to provide tangible support for those who need it the most. They believe in mutual aid as an expression of solidarity, care, and respect. From September 16, 2020 to December 31, 2020, they raised and redistributed \$111,415 to 207 members of our community facing financial hardship, food insecurity, and housing insecurity due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://metmutualaid.org>

MOCA's Mutual Aid-In-Hardship Fund

On Friday, March 13, 2020 the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles closed its galleries in the interest of protecting staff and visitors from the coronavirus pandemic. On Tuesday, March 24, MOCA laid off all 97 of the museum's part-time employees, including gallery attendants, exhibition installers, audio-visual technicians, retail and education staff.

MOCA's newly established union had fostered a deep sense of community and mutual support. In continuation of this spirit, they created the Mutual Aid-In-Hardship Fund. To this day, they have raised \$20,000 of the \$50,000 goal. The money is intended to provide each of the museum's 97 laid-off employees at least \$500. For some members, that's the equivalent of 1 paycheck from MOCA. Most of MOCA's staff live paycheck

to paycheck and without health insurance. This aid would go a long way towards helping impacted employees with their rent and other bills, like medical expenses.

<https://gf.me/u/ykzftv>



The Tenement Museum Union Mutual Aid In Hardship Fund

At The Tenement Museum, where workers had unionized last year and were still negotiating their first contract, the job cuts came early. On March 13, management announced they would be closing indefinitely and that 70 part-time workers would only be paid through March 20. Additionally, 30 full-time staff members were furloughed, and 13 employees were laid-off entirely.

Since the administration was not committed to supporting employees during this time, the union organized [a fund](#) on March 14, quickly raising over \$25,000 to support furloughed staff. The initiative was inspired in part by the museum's historic residents, who were known to have supported fellow immigrants in their communities in times of hardship through landsmanshaftn, or mutual-aid societies. At this time, the fund has raised \$34,124. The money has been used to help employees pay bills, debt (such as student loans), medical expenses, and rent.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/tenement-museum-union-mutual-aid-in-hardship-fund>

Guggenheim Mutual Aid

The Guggenheim Mutual Aid Fund aims to provide much-needed financial assistance to employees of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York who have been negatively impacted as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Check out [@GuggMutualAid](#), or head to www.guggmutualaid.org to learn more, request aid, or donate!

New York Transit Museum Mutual Aid

In the first week of March 2021, the New York Transit Museum eliminated the positions of at least 24 employees - full-time and part-time - effective immediately, without notice. As a result, many of the laid-off employees lost their main source of income and health insurance during a pandemic.

The New York Transit Museum Mutual Aid Fund aims to help employees affected by the recent lay-offs. Funds will help cover rent, ease the impact of medical bills, and help those with reduced cash flow. Our initial goal of \$5,000 is meant to support colleagues as they navigate the challenges of unemployment. Increased goals will provide additional assistance. If there are funds remaining after all needs are met, those funds will be donated to [Transportation Alternatives], as a part of our love for transit history and the people who create it.

<https://opencollective.com/nytmma>



Mutual Aid on Instagram

- Mutual Aid NYC (@mutualaidnyc)
- Mutual Aid Disaster Relief (@mutualaiddisasterrelief)
- North Brooklyn Mutual Aid (@northbrooklynmutualaid)
- Flatbush United Mutual Aid (@flatbushunited)
- Astoria Mutual Aid (@astoria_mutual_aid)
- Bushwick Mutual Aid (@bushwickaid)
- East Village Mutual Aid (@eastvillagemutualaid)
- Crown Heights Mutual Aid (@crownheightsaid)
- South Brooklyn Mutual Aid (@southbrooklynmutualaid)
- Harlem Mutual Aid (@harlem_mutual_aid)
- Central Jersey DSA Mutual Aid (@cnj_dsa_mutual_aid)
- Queens DSA Mutual Aid (@queens.dsa.mutualaid)
- East Brooklyn Mutual Aid (@eastbrooklynmutualaid)
- Bronx Mutual Aid Network (@bxmutualaidnetwork)
- M.A.P. NYC (@mutualaidforparents)
- Queens Mutual Aid Network (@queensmutualaid)
- Upper Manhattan Mutual Aid NYC (@ummanyc)
- Guggenheim Mutual Aid (@guggmutualaid)
- New York Transit Museum Mutual Aid (@nytmmutualaid)



NYC museum-specific organizations

- NYC Museum Workers Happy Hour, Arts Educator Emergency Relief Fund (@nycmuseumworkershh)
- Museum Workers Speak, Museum Workers Relief Fund (@museumworkersspeak)
- Tenement Museum Union, Tenement Museum Union Mutual Aid in Hardship Fund (@tenementmuseum_union)
- New Museum Union (@newmuseumunion)
- Brooklyn Museum Mutual Aid Fund <https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-brooklyn-museum-mutual-aid-fund>
- Met Museum <https://donate.metmutualaid.org/>
- BAM Mutual Aid Fund <https://www.gofundme.com/f/dei-mutual-aid-fund-for-bam-staff>
- Guggenheim Mutual Aid <https://www.guggmutualaid.org/>
- New York Transit Museum Mutual Aid <https://opencollective.com/nytmma>



Readings on Mutual Aid

- [“How Museum Workers Are Rallying to Launch Mutual-Aid Funds in Support of Colleagues Who Have Lost Their Jobs”](#) by Sarah Cascone from artnet (July 23, 2020)
- [Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution](#) by Pëtr Kropotkin (1902)
 - Note: This study popularized the term “mutual aid”. The intro on its own is a great look into the origins of the concept of Mutual Aid.
- [“Mutual Aid in a Time of Crisis”](#) written by Elizabeth Merritt from American Alliance of Museums (August 12, 2020)
- [“Mutual aid zine”](#) written by Regan De Loggans (2020)
- [“So You Want to Get Involved In Mutual Aid”](#) by Amanda Arnold from *The Cut* (September 30, 2020)
- [“Statement”](#) by *Museum Workers Speak* (May 12, 2020)
- [“What is Mutual Aid? A Primer by the Climate Justice Alliance”](#) (May 13, 2020)
- [“What Is Mutual Aid, and How Can it Help with Coronavirus?”](#) by Lexi McMenamin from *Vice* (March 20, 2020)
- [“What Mutual Aid Can Co During a Pandemic”](#) by Jia Tolentino from *The New Yorker* (May 18, 2020)
- [“Open Source Solidarity: Starting a Mutual Aid Fund at Your Museum”](#) via the Center for the Future of Museums blog at AAM (August 25, 2020)