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**FirstWorks to Receive \$60,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts
to Amplify Diverse Voices in the Performing Arts**

[Providence, RI]—National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Mary Anne Carter has approved more than \$84 million in grants as part of the Arts Endowment's second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2020. Included in this announcement is an Art Works award of \$60,000 to FirstWorks to lift Rhode Island through the arts for all in our community. This is one of 1,015 grants nationwide that the agency has approved in this category.

"These awards demonstrate the resilience of the arts in America, showcasing not only the creativity of their arts projects but the organizations' agility in the face of a national health crisis," said Mary Anne Carter, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. "We celebrate organizations like FirstWorks for providing opportunities for learning and engagement through the arts in these times."

"NEA support has been pivotal to FirstWorks' growth since our founding in 2004. FirstWorks is honored to receive this award to create inclusive cultural experiences around artistic performances of the highest level of excellence," said FirstWorks Executive Artistic Director, Kathleen Pletcher. "We are thrilled that our work to connect Rhode Island audiences with relevant, mind-opening arts experiences is recognized on a national scale and thank the NEA for their continuing investment and confidence in our mission."

FirstWorks' Art Works award will support FirstWorks in amplifying diverse voices and celebrating difference through both virtual and live programming. Responding to the changing needs of our students, teachers, audiences, and community during COVID-19, FirstWorks is swiftly pivoting to develop online initiatives, to continue offering world-class live arts experiences. One such program, the FirstWorks Virtual Stage, will feature special projects and new works by local and global artists, allowing Rhode Islanders to *Experience the Arts Wherever You Are*. The Art Works award will also support FirstWorks' education program including student matinees, workshops, creative conversations and film screenings. The organization's engagement model creates multiple access points for audiences of all backgrounds, for shared experiences of music, dance, and new media arts; FirstWorks is committed to encouraging all to Raise Your Voice.

For more information on this National Endowment for the Arts grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).

About FirstWorks

FirstWorks is a non-profit based in Providence, Rhode Island whose purpose is to build the cultural, educational and economic vitality of its community by engaging diverse audiences with world-class performing arts and education programs. Since 2004, FirstWorks festivals, performances and programs have attracted more than 600,000 participants. Last season, FirstWorks arts education programs reached over 5,500 students from public and charter schools across Rhode Island with transformative, arts-based learning experiences. FirstWorks is the founding partner of PVDfest, collaborating with the City of Providence to produce the City's free signature arts celebration held each June. Embracing collaboration, FirstWorks has fostered over 90 community partnerships across business, social service, government, arts, and education sectors. In response to the realities of COVID-19, FirstWorks has piloted online arts initiatives for students, teachers, and audiences. Visit first-works.org to learn more.

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