

SAVE OUR SCREENS: ARKANSAS

SUPPORT GRANTS FOR ARKANSAS CINEMAS

Arkansas movie theater owners and operators thank our lawmakers for their leadership throughout the COVID-19 crisis. But they need help reaching the finish line. That's why movie theater companies operating across Arkansas urge state and local lawmakers to support establishment of grant programs through the *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*, established by the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*. Under this federal funding, our state, county, and local governments are eligible to receive more than \$1.5 billion to respond to acute pandemic-response needs—including assistance to businesses that were disproportionately hit by the COVID-19 public health emergency. And almost no other industry has experienced more disruption than the state's cinemas.

CINEMAS ARE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ENGINES. From Main Street to the state's urban centers, cinemas are business anchors and economic multipliers in the communities they serve. Cinemas **(1)** invigorate and revitalize neighborhoods, **(2)** drive foot traffic to local small businesses, **(3)** foster cultural vibrancy, and **(4)** create employment opportunities in communities across the state where jobs can be few and far between.

CINEMAS EXPERIENCED UNPRECEDENTED DISRUPTION. Prior to the pandemic, the state had a robust movie theater market that generated more than \$90 million in revenue in 2019. Necessary capacity limitations combined with a lack of new movie releases, however, have caused industry revenues to plunge by 80% across the nation. It was no different for Arkansas cinemas, which are still down by more than 80% this year.

CINEMAS NEED HELP. There are around 35 cinema companies operating more than 350 screens at over 50 locations across the state. Grant programs would throw critical lifelines to help these movie theaters bridge the pandemic and contribute to the region's broader economic recovery when blockbuster movies return to our screens later this year!

The following states recognized our industry's economic and cultural importance and established grant programs to help cinema owners:

- **Iowa:** [The Iowa Movie Theatre Relief Fund](#) allocated \$5.5 million to provide up to \$10,000 per screen to assist the state's cinemas.
- **Kansas:** The state's \$5 million [SPARK grant program](#) provided \$10,000 per screen to movie theaters operating in Kansas.
- **Minnesota:** The state's [Movie Theater Relief Grant Program](#) provided grants of up to \$150,000 for eligible Minnesota cinemas.
- **Nebraska:** The \$3.2 million [Movie Theater Stabilization Program](#) awarded \$10,000 per screen for cinemas operating in Nebraska.
- **Wisconsin:** The state, which designated \$10 million for its [COVID-19 Movie Theater Grant Program](#), provided cinemas awards averaging \$14,600 per screen.