Community Arts 2021 Guidelines

Intent to Apply Submission: Friday, November 27, 2020, 11:59pm EST
Final Application: Friday, December 18, 2020, 11:59pm EST
For Projects Taking Place April 1st 2021 – June 31st 2022

The Arts Center of the Capital Region offers Arts Education Grant opportunities for eligible individual artists, artists in schools, and arts organizations within Albany, Rensselaer, and Schenectady Counties

Table of Contents

About this Grant 2
Purpose
Local History
Important Dates and Deadlines
Eligibility and Applications Seminars 3
Eligibility Guidelines
Not Eligible to Apply 4
Funding Level
Budget
Evaluation Process 5
Evaluation Criteria
Supplemental Materials
Able to Fund/Unable to Fund 7
Post Award Responsibilities and Expectations
Appeals Process 8
Technical Assistance
Digital Application Assistance 9

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About this Grant | Community Arts Grants are available in Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties through a competitive re-grant program administered by The Arts Center of the Capital Region (ACCR). Funds are provided on a statewide basis through the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) Decentralization (DEC) Program to develop high quality arts projects and programming including performing, literary, media, and visual arts and to contribute to region’s communities by providing opportunities for the public to experience and engage with the arts. Emphasis is placed on the quality and artistic merit of proposed projects and the depth and authenticity of audience experience, participation and engagement. Community Arts programs may include, but are not limited to: exhibitions, workshop series, performances, festivals, screenings or readings.

The Arts Center of the Capital Region Grants are made possible with funding by the New York State Council on the Arts with support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.
**Purpose** | The NYSCA DEC Program was established in 1977 to reach out to communities that might not otherwise be able to access state funds. Local arts agencies, like the ACCR, help administer the DEC Program on a local level to make arts support available to geographically, economically, and ethnically diverse populations, and to increase the vitality of and livability in local communities and neighborhoods in every county in New York State.

**Local History** | The ACCR has been the official DEC Re-Grants site for Albany, Rensselaer, and Schenectady Counties since 1978. Our mission is to engage people in the creative experience. We are the region’s preeminent proponent of the arts and creative education, expression, and appreciation, serving people of all ages, abilities, and economic and cultural backgrounds. We are here to assist and coach you throughout the grant process and help aid in the success of your project proposal.

The Arts Center awarded 16 Community Arts Grants totaling over $59,850 in 2020. These awards were given throughout the Capital Region and you can find a program in your area by visiting: artscenteronline.org/2021-22-grantees/. Please contact your DEC Coordinator to audit any of these programs.
Important Dates and Deadlines

Intent to Apply Submission | Friday, November 27, 2020, 11:59pm EST

All applicants are required to submit an “Intent to Apply”, which may be found on our website, artscenteronline.org/grants/. The completion of this form will register your Intent to Apply and allow the DEC Coordinator to review key details and contact you with questions or concerns prior to your final submission.

Application Deadline | For projects in 2021-22, a completed application, with balanced project budget and all supporting materials, must be submitted online by Friday, December 18, 2020, 11:59pm EST.

Application and Intent to Apply information, paperwork and submissions are available online: www.artscenteronline.org/grants

Notification of Award | Following the panel review and board approval process, applicants will be notified of their grant award by email no later than March 13, 2021.

Eligibility and Application Seminars | In order to determine your eligibility, please review these grant guidelines carefully. The ACCR offers free training seminars to help individuals and organizations learn how to apply for Community Arts funding. These seminars contain important information about the grants process, any changes in rules since the previous year, and provide a valuable opportunity to network with other local artists and organizations. The workshops are held from August - November, in various locations around Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties. You can and must register in advance, online artscenteronline.org/grants/ or by calling 518.273.0552.
Eligibility Guidelines

- Community Arts Grants are available to organizations that are designated as a New York State non-profit and have an active board of trustees, have been established for at least one year (at the time of application) and who conduct all activities with non-discriminating practices regarding race, color, national origin, religion, gender or disability, including all programming activities, administration and board representation. Any one (1) of the following documents may serve as proof of non-profit status:
  - Letter of Determination from the IRS indicating tax exempt status under 501(c) (3).
  - Documentation of charter by the NY State Board of Regents under 216 of the NYS Education Law.
  - Documentation of incorporation under Section 402 of the NYS Not-For-Profit Corporation Law.
  - Current NY State Bureau of Charities (Office of the Attorney General) filing receipt
  - Official authorization as an arm of local government (i.e. formal letter on official stationary signed by appropriate county, city, town or village executive)
- Legal address of applicant organization must lie within Albany, Rensselaer or Schenectady County and the proposed project(s) must take place within the same county.
- An individual artist or collective may apply for decentralization funds through a fiscal sponsor providing the entity serving as the fiscal sponsor meets the same eligibility requirements listed above.
  - The fiscal sponsor must be based in the county that the proposed activity is taking place; however, the sponsored applicant does not necessarily have to reside in that county.
  - A decentralization grant applicant may serve as a fiscal sponsor and may sponsor more than one applicant as the sponsored requests do not count toward the three-request and $5,000 limits.
  - 3 request limit and $5,000 maximum apply to sponsored applicants. (See Funding Levels.)
- All new applicants must attend a seminar to apply for a grant. Previous applicants may attend a seminar, OR view the ACCR’s online video. Seminar dates will be posted in August.
- All applicants must submit an Intent to Apply. (see above)

NOT Eligible to Apply

- New York State agencies and departments (including SUNY schools)
- Public universities and colleges; private and parochial schools
  - Note: private universities may serve as fiscal sponsors
- The Arts Center Staff of Board Members
- Individuals or organizations applying directly to NYSCA within the same fiscal year, regardless of that application’s status or outcome
- Individuals or organizations not based in Albany, Rensselaer or Schenectady County, including unincorporated chapters of organizations whose “parent” is incorporated outside this region
- Previous recipients of this grant who have failed to provide final reports or other documentation, or have failed to comply with previous contracts
- Direct NYSCA applicants can not apply for DEC funding, nor can they act as fiscal sponsors or benefit from ticket sales or revenue from a DEC project.
Funding Level | The maximum allowable project request is $5,000 and the minimum is $500. Applicants may submit up to three (3) separate project requests in a grant cycle. The total of all requests may not exceed $5,000 across all three grant types (fiscally sponsored applications are exempt from the 3-request limit). There is no limit on the amount which may be spent on a project – only on the amount which may be requested from this grant to help meet project expenses.

Funding Break | Effective as of 2018 cycle A mandatory 1-year break in funding will be implemented for all organizations receiving funding for programs in 3 sequential grant cycles. This is to encourage successful programs to seek alternative funding sources as well as enable access to DEC funding.

Budget | The Community Arts Grant can fund up to 75% of your total proposal budget. The remaining budget must consist of at least 15% In-Kind Contributions (defined as donated goods or services). No cash match is required. Requests cannot be greater than project expense minus total project income.

Evaluation Process | A peer panel of artists, arts administrators and educators, and community leaders reviews grant applications. They study the applications, review artistic samples and other documentation for several weeks before convening as a panel to discuss each one and make funding recommendations based on local Evaluation Criteria and Funding Priorities. The DEC Coordinator ensures the panel process stays consistent with grant guidelines and procedures. Following this meeting, the Regrant Panel’s funding recommendations are submitted to The Arts Center’s Board of Directors for review and ratification. Panelists may serve up to three consecutive years but one-third of the panel is compiled of new panelists each year.
Evaluation Criteria | NOTE: Previously funded projects and organizations are reviewed anew in the context of current grant panel policies and are judged within the pool of current applications. These applications must clearly exhibit expansion, improvement and intention to evolve.

Required Supplemental Materials

- Proof of non-profit status (for applicant organizations only) – see Eligibility Guidelines
- Board of Directors Roster (for applicant organizations only)
- Resumes of key program personnel
- Artistic sample(s)
  - Should represent work from the last 3 years
  - Visual Arts Projects: No more than 10 labeled images in JPEG format uploaded through application site
  - Performing Arts, Film, Media, etc.: Web links to clips hosted on external sites no more than 3 minutes in length
  - Literary Projects: No more than 20 pages
- Letter of support (as needed)

Artistic Merit

- Quality of artistic samples and credentials of the artists involved in the project
- Innovation of arts experiences
- Diversity of arts experiences

Community Benefit

- Service to an under-served area/audience
- Accessibility (financial + physical)
- Cultural diversity in programming
- Consideration and inclusion of community needs + interest
- Cooperation with local artists and organizations
- Non-duplication of comparable existing services/programs

Capacity to Conduct the Project

- Clearly defined objectives and robust plan for implementation, management and promotion
- Record of programmatic success
- Reasonable cost-benefit ratio for number of audience/participant members
- Reasonable estimation of expenses

Local Funding Priorities

- Actively engaging and impacting community members in arts experiences (not simply passive observers)
- Support for new and emerging artists and arts organizations of high quality and creative scope
- Artists and organizations that serve rural areas and culturally diverse audiences and areas in our region

Able to Fund:

- Artist Fees
- Direct Administrative Expenses (should compose no more than one-half of grant request)
- Project-related Travel Expenses
- Marketing/Publicity Costs
- Expendable Project-related Supplies + Materials
- Project-related Rentals of Space + Equipment
- Planning and preparation expenses for proposed project
• Materials and expendable equipment that does not exceed $1000

• Equipment, including required software, digital subscriptions, and training related to the creation and promotion of virtual programming

Unable to Fund:
• Activities that take place in a county other than the applicant’s
• Non-arts related activities
  o Includes galas, benefits or fundraising events, entertainment (i.e. balloons, clowns, etc.)
• Projects that limit public participation to performances or exhibitions after the work has been executed
• Awards: competitions or contests
  o Includes cash prizes, juried shows, fellowships, scholarships, and other awards or regrants by applicants to fund other activities
• Non-ADA compliant venues
• Activities that take place in private or parochial schools or in private homes
• Activities not open to the general public
  o Includes camps, clubs, college associations, etc.; in-school activities and programs; lobbying expenses
• Projects that are recreational, therapeutic, or rehabilitative or religious in nature
  o Includes at-risk/social service programs when the purpose is primarily rehabilitation, therapy or worship
• Entertainment costs
  o Includes receptions and food (includes “paint + sip” or equivalent)
• Permanent things
  o Includes permanent equipment, capital improvements (land, buildings, renovations, etc.), anything which extends the life of or improves the value of privately-owned property, acquisition of works of art, creation of textbooks or classroom materials
• Organizational or Personal Finances
  o Includes general operating expenses, operating expenses of privately owned facilities (homes, studios, etc.), start-up or seed funding for the establishment of a new organization, contingency funds (funds reserved for emergencies or unexpected outflows, mainly economic crises), requests which, when added to other income sources, will equal more than the total project
• Programs in which children are used as professional artists (paid a fee), projects which are part of a liturgy, or which intend to proselytize
• Student projects
Post-award Responsibilities and Expectations | This section outlines the responsibilities of grant recipients.

- The following three items must be completed before receiving grant funds:
  - Submit a W-9 for the applicant
  - Sign and adhere to the terms of the project contract
  - Submit a revised budget for any project that is not fully funded

- Conduct all funded activities as described in your Project Narrative and application
- Prominently and correctly credit the grant funding as follows:
  “Made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and administered by The Arts Center of the Capital Region.”
*Must include The Arts Center’s logo. Both are available online at artscenteronline.org/awardeeinfo/

- Provide ACCR with an advance schedule of all funded events and copies of promotional materials.
- Immediately notify the ACCR in writing regarding any changes to your project including: times, dates, locations, admission fees, artists hired, or activities conducted. **All changes to funded projects are subject to approval by ACCR.**
- Submit a final report within 30 days of the completion of the last funded event of the project
- Provide ACCR with four (4) complimentary tickets for all funded events that require tickets

FAILURE TO ADHERE TO THESE RESPONSIBILITIES COULD IMPACT YOUR ABILITY TO RECEIVE FUTURE FUNDING

Post-award Important updates for 2021-2022 Grant Cycle | This section outlines specific details regarding funded projects

- Virtual audiences can be included in attendance tracking for each project
- Funded projects can prioritize program quality over quantity of viewers
- FY2020 grantees projects or project changes in program delivery will not negatively affect FY2021 funding decisions

Appeals Process

An applicant may only make an appeal based on the following three grounds:

1. Non-presentation of **significant and pertinent** information by staff or panelist
2. Misrepresentation of **significant and pertinent** information by staff or panelist
3. Improper procedure (bias or arbitrary/capricious)

Dissatisfaction with a funding decision is not sufficient justification for an appeal. Appeals are appropriate when an organization is denied a grant and feels that the denial falls within one or more grounds for appeal listed above within ten (10) days of receiving an award notification. Applicants must call the Grants Coordinator to discuss the funding decision before submitting a letter of appeal to the Arts Center CEO, which clearly outlines the reasons for appeal based on the grounds listed above. Upon receipt of this letter, a new peer panel will be convened to evaluate if the appeal has merit.

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance sessions allow for you to ask specific questions about your proposal and have a draft version of your application and budget reviewed prior to submission. Sessions can be conducted via email, over the phone or in person and are available by appointment in 30 minute time slots on a first-come, first-served basis. Using this service will assist you in submitting an effective application. Booking instructions will be made available once your Intent to Apply has been received.

Digital Application Assistance

Digital Application Assistance is available at The ACCR’s Digital Arts Studio if you need direct assistance with the electronic application process, or if you do not have access to a computer.

**Please direct all questions to your Grants Coordinator 518.273.0552 or Joseph@artscenteronline.org. Thank you.**