

Request For Proposals
To Build Capacity For City-Based Nonprofit Arts & Cultural Groups
With Budgets Between \$250,000 And \$1.5 Million

Opportunity

New York City is an international hub for arts and culture. While the largest institutions tend to draw the most attention from tourists, donors, and the press, small arts and cultural groups nourish and develop artists while serving as the research and development lab for more mainstream culture. Playwrights first hear their works read out loud and tomorrow's stars of Broadway and film speak their first lines on small stages. Community galleries mount exhibitions of emerging artists and become a critical pathway for future commercially successful visual artists. And, young students are often guided through their first arts experiences with these small arts groups in community centers and schools.

These unheralded community anchors bring arts and culture into every neighborhood. Artists, audiences, parents, and children depend upon small arts and cultural groups to:

- Mount performances and exhibitions that showcase the work of emerging and master artists, traditional and cutting-edge talent, mainstream and culturally-specific work.
- Make art that entertains, transforms, and celebrates our humanity.
- Offer workspace for artists to develop, rehearse, and make new creations.
- Teach art making and appreciation to children and adults both in- and out-of-school.
- Create a pipeline of diverse artistic talent who will become tomorrow's leaders.
- Provide a safe gathering space for a community.

Despite their important role in nurturing and sustaining a healthy arts ecosystem, small groups struggle. They may have difficulty raising adequate funds, securing high profile board members, retaining and sufficiently compensating staff, marketing their programs to ensure broad participation, systematizing operating procedures, or managing cash flow.

In 2017, The New York Community Trust will make 5 - 10 grants to help increase the capacity of City arts groups with operating budgets between \$250,000 and \$1.5 million. Priority will be given to agencies led by African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native Americans and to groups located in neighborhoods outside of Manhattan that have historically had access to fewer resources. Grants will **help groups facing a critical juncture**, such as generational or leadership change, mergers, sale or purchase of a facility, or other rare but significant challenges. Grants will help groups carry out a specific capacity-building project designed to sustain the organization over the long term. Grants are expected to help groups resolve administrative challenges, increase efficiency, start a new program, or explore innovative or adaptive responses to extraordinary challenges. *Proposals seeking assistance with fundraising, capital projects, presentations of specific exhibitions or performances, equipment purchase or general operating support will not be considered.*

Proposal deadline receipt: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Eligibility

- Applicants should be organizations with 501(c)(3) status. Unincorporated organizations may only apply using a fiscal sponsor.
- Grantees or fiscal agents should meet the [governance and financial standards](#) of the Better Business Bureau, including a board of directors with at least five members, and no more than one paid board member.
- Applicants will have an annual cash (not including in-kind) operating budget ranging from \$250,000 to \$1.5 million. An audit, CPA review, or IRS 990 tax filing will confirm organizational size. If a group is working with a fiscal sponsor, the annual operating budget of the applicant (not the fiscal sponsor) will be in the \$250,000 to \$1.5 million range.
- An organization may submit only one project proposal through this request for proposals.
- Groups that already have open active grants with The Trust (excluding grants from funder collaboratives) that conclude after June 2018 will not be considered for this opportunity.
- Priority will be given to groups whose board and/or staff are led by African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native Americans, and to groups located outside Manhattan.
- *Proposals seeking assistance with fundraising, capital projects, equipment purchase, presentations of specific exhibitions or performances, or general operating support will not be considered.*

Review Criteria

Grant proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis using the following criteria:

- Clarity of project description including the need and anticipated goal or outcome given the critical juncture faced.
- Articulation of organizational readiness and capacity for change.
- Realistic timeline with achievable outcomes in the time period.
- Financial capacity to achieve the expected results.

Proposal Specifications

Proposals should not exceed 5 pages exclusive of budget and support materials, and should cover at least the following topics:

1. Brief description of the organization's history, background, artistic significance, current programs, and commitment to equity.
2. Population served by annual programs, including demographics.
3. A detailed description of the need for this project and the critical juncture the organization faces.
4. Explanation of the organization's financial position and how it arrived at this moment. What is the biggest financial challenge the group faces?
5. An accounting of the organization's readiness and capacity for change. What will change? How will change be managed?
6. Description of the activities undertaken to meet the challenge of this critical juncture. If a consultant is needed for assistance, a bid from that consultant must be included as a supporting attachment to confirm scope of work and project cost.
7. Timeline for completed activities throughout the requested grant period.

8. Explanation of how the proposed changes will transform the organization and be sustained over the long term. Please enumerate the indicators you will use to determine if the project has succeeded.

A complete proposal also will include the following:

- New York Community Trust proposal cover sheet available via the Grantee Portal on The Trust's website:
<https://proposals.nycommunitytrust.org/proposal/create/?loiRespKey=0&rfpld=7>
- Proposal narrative (five pages)
- Project budget that includes expenses and income, indicates The Trust's contribution, and other sources of support, if applicable. Please distinguish confirmed and pending funding.
- Bid from a project consultant confirming fee for services rendered, if the need for one is specified in the proposal
- Organization's Board of Directors list, including Board Member professional affiliations
- Organization's current year operating budget and projected budget(s) for the period of the grant request.
- Organization's most current audited financial statement, or if not available, IRS Form 990. For organizations with budgets of \$750,000 and up, submit latest audited financial statements; organizations with budgets between \$250,000 and \$750,000 should submit a CPA review report.
- List of current funders

Application Process

To submit a proposal, applicants must mail or hand-deliver a complete proposal to:

Arts Program RFP

The New York Community Trust

909 Third Avenue, 22nd Floor

New York, NY 10022

All proposals must be received on January 10, 2018 by 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time. No late or incomplete proposals will be considered. Please note: this is NOT a postmark deadline.

Questions about the proposal process should be directed to The New York Community Trust at (212) 686-2578 or kem@nyct-cfi.org.

Award Information

The Trust expects to make grants totaling \$750,000. Grant periods may be for two or three years. Grants are expected to range between \$50,000 and \$150,000. No grant will exceed a total of \$150,000 (e.g., \$50,000 each year for three years or \$75,000 each year for two years). Grants do not require matching funds; however, they are encouraged.

Timeline

Proposal Deadline: 12 noon, Eastern Time, January 10, 2018

Grant Notification: June 30, 2018

Background

The New York Community Trust connects past, present, and future generous New Yorkers with vital nonprofits working to make a healthy, equitable, and thriving community for all. It is a public grantmaking foundation dedicated to improving the lives of residents of New York City, Westchester, and Long Island. We bring together individuals, families, foundations, and businesses to build a more equitable community and support the effective nonprofits that make a difference. We apply knowledge, creativity, and resources to the most challenging issues in an effort to ensure meaningful opportunities and a better quality of life for all New Yorkers, today and tomorrow. Visit us at nycommunitytrust.org