2020 Request for Proposals to Advance the Pre-Professional Development of Young Artists from Historically Underrepresented Populations

Proposals may be submitted online between May 8 and May 15, 2020

Background

Two major goals of The Trust’s Arts & Culture and Arts Education programs are to promote diversity, equity, and access in and to the arts; and develop talented young artists from historically underrepresented populations. The Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund, created by a bequest from Sally Van Lier, gave The Trust the opportunity to establish a fellowship program for young artists that advances both of these goals. Sally Van Lier was a theatrical performer in 1920s New York and appeared in the original production of Showboat. Throughout their lives, Ms. Van Lier and her husband, Edward, were avid visitors to the City’s cultural institutions and introduced many young people to the arts. Today, to honor our donor’s intent, we make grants to arts groups to provide education, training, or other support at two stages of development:

- Pre-Professional—the period of training and self-development when artists of between 6 and 18 years old prepare for college, conservatory, or advanced professional training.
- Young Professional—the period when artists of between 18 and 30 years old seek to establish a professional career.

We issue a separate Request for Proposals (RFP) for each level of development, typically in alternating years. In 2020, we will exclusively consider proposals for efforts to serve artists in the pre-professional category.

Overview

The New York Community Trust’s Edward and Sally Van Lier Pre-Professional Fellowship Program helps New York City-based arts groups provide education and training through fellowships in all artistic disciplines. The Program’s fellowships exclusively support young artists aged 6 to 18 who live in New York City, and are intended to help recipients achieve a significant professional credit that leads to future career opportunities. This year, we will award grants of up to three years to a small number of arts groups, to sponsor two or more fellowships per organization. Grant amounts will depend on the number and size of fellowships and will not exceed $150,000 per organization.

Applicant Eligibility

Grants will be made to tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organizations in New York City administering educational or fellowship programs that promote the professional development of talented young artists. Grants will not be considered for groups with annual operating budgets below $250,000, nor for agencies with an accumulated deficit or negative fund balance.

Applicants must request support for at least two artists and may request more than this number. Fellowship activities may be conducted directly by the sponsoring organization or in
cooperation with another group. In all cases, the grantee will be responsible for recruiting and selecting fellowship recipients, assuring that support and resources are provided, monitoring the artists’ progress over the term of the fellowship, and tracking subsequent professional career developments.

Groups with active grants from The Trust’s arts program that conclude after October 2020 are not eligible to apply for this round. Additionally, The Trust will not support a Van Lier fellowship program for more than six consecutive years.

Fellowship Program Qualifications

We will consider programs that provide fellowships or equivalent support for young professional artists. Applications that focus solely on regranting will not be considered. Activities must take place in and help young artists who reside within New York City’s five boroughs. Fellowship recipients should be aged 6 to 18 and should not be enrolled in conservatory, college, or other degree-granting programs during the fellowship. Priority will be given to agencies that help young artists from historically underrepresented populations (e.g., as determined by race and ethnicity, disability, and/or gender).

Fellowship activities should be appropriate to both the art form and the development needs of the individual artists. Grants may support a broad range of activities and related costs, such as training, coaching, and mentoring; opportunities to create, produce, perform, or publish artistic work; and college preparation and visits.

Terms of Award

Grants awarded through the Edward and Sally Van Lier Pre-Professional Fellowship Program in 2020 will:

- Not exceed $150,000 ($75,000 per year for two years or $50,000 per year for three years) depending upon the number and size of fellowships offered;
- Extend for a period of two or three years; and
- Sponsor two or more fellowships (agencies may request up to $25,000 per fellow, per year, and may request less than this amount).

The purpose of the award is to provide support to young artists from historically underrepresented populations within a variety of arts disciplines (e.g., filmmaking, theater, music, visual arts). Requests to support graphic design, media post-production, or administrative roles will not be considered. Funds may be used to support or expand an existing effort or to begin a new program. Grants are intended to cover fellowship costs; however, a limited amount of administrative costs attributable to the program may be requested. The grant should primarily benefit fellowship recipients rather than the sponsoring organization. Supplemental grants and funds from other sources are encouraged.

Groups may choose to support either the same artists over the term of the grant, or different artists for shorter periods. The size and duration of each fellowship should be based on activities involved, and the resources and time needed for the artists to achieve a significant professional credit that will advance their careers. Organizations should ensure that selected artists are first-time Van Lier fellows.
The Trust will require grantees to submit periodic reports on the program as a whole and on the status of each fellowship recipient, report how grant monies are spent, and establish procedures for tracking recipients’ artistic achievement after the fellowship.

Proposal Specifications and Support Materials
Please include the following items in your application:

A. A proposal narrative that does not exceed five pages and includes information about:

- Your organization’s history and mission.
- The needs of young people from historically underrepresented populations in the arts, and how your program to advance talented young artists meets those needs.
- The training, resources, performance and exhibition opportunities, and supportive services to be provided to fellows, including any direct financial support.
- The role and qualifications of partnering organizations, if applicable.
- The methods you will use to identify fellowship recipients, including determination of need; the number of fellowships to be provided; and the names and brief profiles of intended recipients, if known.
- Your approach to helping fellowship recipients identify career goals and establish plans to achieve them.
- Your plan for tracking recipients’ progress and career development after the fellowship.
- A strategy for continuing the fellowship program after Trust support has concluded.
- Previous Van Lier grant recipients should also provide an assessment of how Trust support has affected the organization overall. For example, did the Van Lier program help attract new culturally diverse artists or advance the organization’s commitment to diversity among its staff and board? How have previous fellows’ careers progressed? Please provide specific examples.

B. A multi-year project budget. Include an itemization of the costs per artist (e.g., stipend, space rental, supplies, administration, etc.) and the total request from The Trust, specifying the amount requested for each fellowship. If applicable, please note other confirmed and projected funding sources.

C. An organizational operating budget for current year and projected operating budget(s) for the proposed grant period.

Submission Instructions
1. Merge items A-C listed above into a single PDF document, using the following file format: “Organization Name.pdf.”

2. Create a proposal coversheet in the “Respond to an RFP” tab of The Trust’s Grants Portal, which you can find here: https://proposals.nycommunitytrust.org/.

Important: Please make sure that “Van Lier Pre-Professional RFP” is noted at the top of the coversheet before proceeding. The proposal coversheet for the Van Lier Pre-Professional RFP will be posted online between May 8 and May 15, 2020.
You will not be able to submit an application for a grant prior to or following those dates.

3. Complete the proposal coversheet as instructed, attach the PDF of items A-C (see Step 1, above), and click on the “Submit this Request Now” button. You will receive an automated email from The Trust that confirms our receipt of your application and includes a PDF of the completed coversheet.

Proposals must be submitted online between May 8 and May 15, 2020. Applications that are incomplete or submitted after the due date will not be considered for funding. Grants will be announced in October 2020. Please direct questions to Leigh Ross at lcr@nyct-cfi.org.