



Arts for Community Engagement Project Grant

Projects occurring between December 1, 2025 – November 30, 2026

Deadline: June 27, 2025 | Applications must be submitted by 11:59 pm EST

All grant categories and amounts are subject to change, depending upon availability of state and federal funds in any fiscal year. NHSCA funds cannot be matched by other awards from the NHSCA or National Endowment for the Arts.

Arts for Community Engagement (ACE) project grants support community enrichment and public benefit by providing access to high quality arts events and activities presented by community-based organizations, Main Street programs, and municipalities. The ACE grant supports a wide range of activities across a range of disciplines. These may include performances, exhibits, workshops, community arts programming, and collaborative public art projects. The goals of this funding category are to engage and benefit New Hampshire residents and communities through the arts, especially people who are underserved or under-represented; encourage collaborative and cross-sector community partnerships; stimulate local economies through cultural tourism and the arts; and enhance the vibrancy of New Hampshire communities and quality of life for New Hampshire citizens.

GRANT AMOUNT

Funding requests may be made for \$1,000 - \$8,000. Matching funds will be **waived** for Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026). However, we encourage applicants to include in-kind and cash match as part of their budget to increase the strength of their application, deepen collaboration with community partners, and enhance the funding of their project. All grant categories and amounts are subject to change, depending upon availability of state and federal funds in any fiscal year.

WHO MAY APPLY

Any organization with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status from the IRS and not-for-profit incorporation in the State of New Hampshire; state, federal, county, municipal, or government agency; or unit of a post-secondary educational institution that meets the following conditions:

- Make all programs and facilities accessible to people with disabilities
- Have submitted all required reports on past State Arts Council grants
- Good standing with the NH Secretary of State's Office and the NH Attorney General's Office
- **Arts organizations only:** at least one-year of arts programming prior to the application deadline

Organizations incorporated in Maine, Vermont or Massachusetts may also be eligible if they meet all of the following conditions. Contact the grant coordinator with questions about eligibility.

- Physically headquartered within 50 miles of the New Hampshire border
- Can demonstrate that over 50% of the individuals who benefit from their work are NH residents
- Have a significant representation of NH residents on their Board

Note: As of April 4, 2022, all applicants must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) issued through SAM.GOV in

order to receive funding. If you need to apply for a free UEI, please visit [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). It is suggested that grant applicants begin the process of obtaining a UEI (if needed) as soon as possible, in order to avoid a delay in the release of funds should a grant be awarded.

Restrictions

To allow for broad and equitable distribution of public funds, organizations may receive **ONE** grant in the following categories. *An exception to this restriction may be made for organizations acting as a fiscal agent; please contact the coordinator for approval prior to applying.*

- Arts for Community Engagement Grant (ACE)
- Public Value Partnership
- Youth Arts Project Grant (YAP)
- Artist Residencies in Schools (AIR)

Please carefully consider your project and the grant category that best suits it. If you have any questions, contact the grant program coordinator.

Ineligible Costs

The following costs are not eligible for funding and should not be included in the application's budget:

- previously incurred debts or deficits;
- lobbying or fundraising expenses;
- non-consumable equipment;
- endowments, fellowships, scholarships, academic research financial aid to individual, or degree grant opportunities;
- capital projects;
- funding of a new, permanent position or replacement of lost funding for existing staff;
- contracted services of an organization's staff (unless contract pertains to duties explicitly outside of their current job description);
- contracted services of an organization's board member;
- regularly contracted services such as a grant writer, accountant, attorney, advertising firm, or district curriculum supervisor;
- revenue producing activities or commercially viable "for-profit" enterprises;
- cost of goods for resale (this includes the sale of concessions, promotional merchandise, including clothing, or items purchased for sale, even if related to your programming);
- Alcohol;
- Food and beverage expenses are ineligible using requested grant funds (if you have concerns, please contact the grant coordinator);
- Any expenses listed as miscellaneous, contingency funds, donations, prize money, other, additional expenses, discretionary expenses, slush fund, etc.;
- Activities that are principally recreational, therapeutic, or rehabilitative;
- Activities not open to the general public;
- Any cost item listed in the glossary under [ineligible expenses](#).

GRANT REQUIREMENTS

*Projects funded in this category are **required** to:*

- Clearly articulate a plan that centers community engagement and public benefit.
- Demonstrate artistic quality across all components of the project.
- Ensure that activities are accessible and provide an opportunity for meaningful participation for people of all abilities, and for [underserved](#) and marginalized populations.
- Foster deep connections and involvement between the community(ies), partner organizations, and artists in project conception, development, and execution.
- Incorporate the direct participation of an artist as a core element of the project.
- Compensate artists at a professional level.
- **IMPORTANT:** Projects that are youth-serving with a focus on educational goals should be submitted to the Youth Arts Project or Artists in Residence grants. Please contact the Program Coordinator for guidance.

*Projects funded in this category are **strongly encouraged** to:*

- Foster cross-sector connections within the community by establishing partnerships and collaborations with artists, organizations, local businesses, government agencies, and others. Collaborations should deepen the content, reach, and impact of the project.
- Include New Hampshire artists.

Making the Project Accessible to All

Recipients of public funding are **required** to make reasonable efforts for projects to be accessible to the public. Applicants should consider physical and programmatic accessibility as an integral part of the planning and budgeting process. Accessibility involves both the location (the facility) and the content (the activity or product). Thinking about accessibility issues in the early design and planning stages of a project (e.g., accessible websites, sign language interpreters, recordings of printed materials, audio-description, or large-print labeling) is key to ensuring that persons with disabilities will be able to participate. Expenses for accessibility measures should be reflected in your project budget. For information and resources, see [Making Your Programs and Services Accessible](#) on the NHSCA website.

SAMPLE PROJECTS

The following are examples of eligible projects:

- A municipality partners with a performing arts nonprofit to offer a series of public performances at the farmers' market. The event enlivens the town and attracts patrons to downtown businesses.
- A chamber of commerce and a community arts organization collaborate to host a weekend "Arts Walk" featuring local artists and live music to attract out-of-town visitors to the downtown area and increase walk-in traffic to local businesses.
- A Main Street program, library, and historical society engage an artist to host public workshops at the library and local schools to inform the creation of a community mural. The artist seeks multi-generational public input and participation to ensure the mural authentically reflects the identity, history, cultural heritage and/or landscape of the town.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposals with the appropriate grant coordinator before writing and submitting applications. Applicants should also review the [legal and reporting requirements](#) relevant to State Arts Council grants. Drafts of narrative questions and budgets may be reviewed if submitted **by email at least two weeks prior to the application deadline**. First time applicants are especially encouraged to submit drafts. Do not use the online system to submit drafts. Email drafts directly to the grant coordinator with “Draft for Review” as the email subject. *The NHSCA grants team prioritizes one-on-one support during the grant application process.*

Submitting the Application

NHSCA uses an online application system, [Submittable](#). Please visit the grant page for instructions. **The online system cannot be used to submit drafts.** Errors and omissions may affect a panel's evaluation of the application, so please follow instructions and prepare the application carefully. We recommend you **keep a copy for your files.**

- Watch [instructional videos](#).
- [Click here](#) to start the online application.
- [Click here](#) to download the Budget Form in MS Excel or PDF format.

Deadline

Applications must be completed online by 11:59 pm on **June 27, 2025**. Late applications will not be accepted. The Council cannot accept applications transmitted by email and is not responsible for uncompleted online applications.

REVIEW PROCESS

A panel with expertise in the field meets to review applications, joined by a State Arts Councilor whenever possible. After discussion and review of work samples submitted, applications are ranked by the panel according to the funding criteria listed. Funding recommendations are forwarded to the State Arts Council for review and approval. If the organization’s cumulative total of grants received from the State Arts Council for that fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) is \$10,000 or more, the grant recommendation must also be submitted to the Governor and Executive Council for approval. Errors and omissions may affect a panel's evaluation of your application, so please follow instructions and prepare your application carefully.

RECEIVING AN AWARD

Notification of Award

No formal announcement regarding a funding decision and/or grant amount will be sent to any applicant until after the Council meeting (meeting dates are listed on the NHSCA website). At that time applicants will receive official notification of the Council’s action. This notification may take up to 10 weeks or longer after the application deadline. Panel comments will be available from the grant coordinator, upon written request.

Please note if you are awarded and accept this grant, the applicant and grant details will be listed in the relevant Fiscal Year Grant Report in order for us to be transparent about how public grant funds were expended. If you have any questions, please reach out to the grant coordinator.

Payment

The NHSCA disburses funds appropriated from public sources, both federal and state. Checks are issued by Administrative Services of the State of NH, not the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources or the NHSCA. Upon receipt of properly executed grant forms, the State of New Hampshire generally pays grants under \$10,000 to grantees within four to six weeks. If an organization is awarded \$10,000 or more or has received other NHSCA funds which bring the cumulative total received for that fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) to \$10,000 or above, grants must be approved by Governor and Executive Council; consequently, payment can take up to 10 weeks or longer. All awards are subject to availability of state and federal funds. Please plan cash flow accordingly.

Recipients of grant awards will be required to provide the following along with the signed grants paperwork:

- Proof of general liability insurance
- Proof of worker's compensation insurance (unless recipient organization is all volunteer)
- Current Certificate of Good Standing from the NH Secretary of State (*For 501(c)3 non-profits only*)
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov)
- Alternate W-9 form
- Certificate of Board Resolution
- Resume and Annual Salary of Administrator
- Geographic Areas Served by Organization
- A one-page financial statement of organization's most recently completed fiscal year
- List of Board of Directors (*For 501(c)3 non-profits only*)

False Information

Any grant award made based on false information in the application may be cancelled by NHSCA at any time.

Important: All grant agreements must be returned no later than January 15 of the fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) in which they are awarded. Failure to return the grant agreement by that date could result in cancellation of the grant and reallocation of funds. *Payment of a grant will be withheld if final reports for previous grants are not in compliance with policies below.*

Project Changes and/or Amendment(s)

You are required to carry out a project consistent with the application that was submitted and approved for funding. Changes must be submitted to the grant coordinator for review and approval; this includes changes to dates, budgets, project scope or content, personnel or artists involved, or other changes that differ from the original application. Changes must be approved prior to implementation.

Amendments or change requests are considered on a case-by-case basis, and approval is not guaranteed. Until you receive written approval from the grant coordinator, you may only incur costs

consistent with the terms and conditions of the awards in effect at the time of your request. The Arts Council has the right to request additional information, such as an update on specific activities including a revised budget or itemized list of actual expenditures, as needed. All financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other non-federal entity records pertinent to your grant award must be retained for a period of four years.

GRANT PERIOD AND REPORTING

A [final report](#) is due 30 days after the completion of your project, but no later than December 31, 2026. An extension of up to one month may be requested. The request for extension must be made *in an email* to the grant coordinator *before* the deadline for filing has passed and should briefly note why the extension is necessary and the date the report will be submitted. Failure to submit the final report by the required date will result in the organization becoming ineligible to apply for NHSCA funding for two years. Additionally, failure to submit the final report may result in a withholding of funds from any currently awarded NHSCA grant.

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FUNDING CRITERIA

Reviewers will use these criteria to rank and recommend applications for funding.

Quality of Arts Programming (30 pts.)

- Thoughtfully conceived and well-developed project concept and goals, with the capacity to deliver appreciable public benefit.
- Commitment to providing high-quality artistic content and engagement.
- Community engagement is centered in the project design and goals and provides opportunity for meaningful arts experiences.
- Project aligns with and supports the organization's mission and goals.
- Identified artists are experienced and appropriate for the proposed project; if artists are not yet identified and confirmed, selection criteria are described and in place to assure that appropriate artists will be selected.
- Level of artistic quality is appropriate for the project.
- If NHSCA has funded this project in past years: evidence of project evolution driven by incorporation of input, outcomes, and learning from previous iterations.

Public Access, Engagement and Benefit (30 pts.)

- Strong potential for public benefit and value to the audience/community served.
- Project plan anticipates and removes barriers to provide physical and programmatic access to individuals of all abilities and to underserved populations.
- Intent to identify and meaningfully engage individuals who may face tangible or perceived barriers to participation is a clear focus across all aspects of the project.
- Project budget includes appropriate funding for physical and programmatic accessibility measures.
- Community partnerships are integral to the project and amplify the potential for benefit.
- Evidence of support for this project from project partners and the community(ies) served.

Administrative Capacity (20 pts.)

- Well-designed and actionable plan to implement the project, with a realistic timeline.
- Project leadership presents appropriate experience and skills.
- Lead organization demonstrates relevant experience and administrative capacity to successfully implement the project.
- Appropriate partners are in place as needed to support project capacity.
- Realistic budgetary projections, with a demonstrated plan for securing additional funding and/or in-kind support (if applicable), and that compensates artists at a professional level.
- Well-developed promotion/publicity plan that utilizes appropriate resources and strategies to effectively reach the target audience(s).

Project Measurements/Outcomes (20 pts.)

- Clear and appropriate method and inclusion of tool(s) for evaluating project effectiveness and impact, with particular focus on how well the project meets stated goals and provides public benefit.
- Clear and appropriate plan to document project activities and share project outcomes.

REQUIRED UPLOADS

Upload required documents to the [online system](#). Please keep a copy for your files.

- Answers to Narrative Questions (see below)
- Completed Budget Form- **use the notes column to detail how funds will be used**
- Work plan outlining major planning and project activities and associated timeline (1-2 pages)
- For 501 (c) 3 non-profits only:* Board-approved financial statement for applicant's most recently completed fiscal year
- For arts organizations embedded within an institution (e.g., an art gallery in a university):* Financial statement for the past two years, approved by a financial officer of the supervisory institution. Statement should detail financial support to the arts organization from internal and external sources, as well as expenditure of those funds. These organizations should also submit a balance sheet, if available.
- For 501 (c) 3 non-profits only:* List of current Board or arts advisory committee members, including their place of residence (Please do not include their home addresses; please just include their city/town, state)
- One-page resume or biography of project leader(s)
- A brief description of any outside contractors who will assist with the project and their experience to undertake their designated role (if applicable)
- Current Letters of Support by community members and key partners; Letters of Support should be relevant to the proposed project (up to three recommended)
- Samples of relevant evaluation forms, assessments or rubrics (*note: while it is important to evaluate the financial success of projects, e.g. number of tickets sold, NHSCA is particularly interested in learning how projects will assess their community impact and achieve project goals*)
- Selected program materials from previous programming such as reviews, season performance schedule, exhibition catalogues, etc.; please title all program materials so they are easily identifiable or, alternatively, provide an index sheet
- Artist bio/resume and work samples. If possible, we prefer that you include a links to the artist's website and/or [CreativeGround](#) profile in the narrative. If links are not an option, please upload artist bio/resume and work samples with a work sample index sheet that identifies the artist and describes their artistic content. See [Preparation of Work Samples](#) for more information. If the project employs multiple artists, please provide bios/resumes and work samples for no more than 12 participating artists. **Applications will be deemed ineligible if submitted without work samples.** Work samples should be relevant to the artistic disciplines being proposed in the project and must be provided in an appropriate format (i.e., audio files for musical artists, video files for theatre artists). *Note: CreativeGround is a free resource and provides a web presence for artists who do not have a website.*
- National Endowment for the Arts [Brief Accessibility Checklist](#)

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

The total narrative portion of the application *should not exceed five typed pages*. Margins (not less than 1 inch), fonts (not smaller than 12 point), and spacing should provide easy reading for the panelists. Please number and respond to the questions in the order in which they appear.

1. INTRODUCTION

Provide a brief profile of your organization including its mission and goals. *Please keep in mind that panelists may not be familiar with your organization or its importance to the arts in New Hampshire.*

2. MAJOR PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Describe your project, including:

- Major project activities, including those activities that specifically engage the public.
- Your intended or target audience.
- Project goals. If your project addresses an identified community need, please explain.
- Participating artist(s). Identify all participating artist(s). What experience and skills do your artist(s) contribute to uphold artistic quality? Why are they appropriate for this project? Are they confirmed or proposed? If artists are not yet identified, describe your artist selection process and criteria. Indicate whether artists are from New Hampshire. If possible, provide links to artist website and [CreativeGround](#) profile (a free online resource) to share artist bio and work samples. These materials must be uploaded per instructions if links are not available.
- *For projects previously funded by an NHSCA grant ONLY:* Explain how your project has evolved in response to community input, evaluation outcomes, and organizational learning since it was last funded by NHSCA.

3. PUBLIC ACCESS, ENGAGEMENT, AND BENEFIT

- How will your project engage your target audience and community(ies)?
- What public benefit outcomes does your project seek to deliver? *Note: project benefits should be specific and directly relevant to your project.*
- *Accessibility and [equity](#) should be an integral consideration in your project.* How will your project be programmatically and physically accessible to ensure that individuals with disabilities (developmental, cognitive, physical, and sensory) and other underserved populations are able to participate in a meaningful way? This may be reflected in your project design, artist selection, artistic content, project materials, physical location, and budget.
- Explain how your project is designed to reach, welcome, and engage individuals who face barriers to participation due to race, ethnicity, country of origin, language, economic capacity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or geography.

4. KEY ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

An organizational partner is an outside entity that will provide resources (other than money) to support the project. Who are your community partners? Describe their role and how their partnership will strengthen the project and help you meet your project goals. Indicate if they are committed or proposed.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

Describe the strengths in your organization, project leadership, and past project experience that demonstrate your organization's capacity to undertake this project. Who are your lead project coordinator(s) and key project team members? What qualifications and experience do they bring to this project, and who will they report to? Indicate whether project leaders/team members are committed or proposed. How will your board members support this project? Briefly describe the role of volunteers in implementing this project, if applicable.

6. PROMOTION & PUBLICITY

Describe the promotion/publicity plan to attract and build audiences for this project. This may include engaging community partners or other organizations to help promote the project to a wider audience.

7. PERFORMATIVE MEASUREMENT & OUTCOMES

- Describe your plan to measure the project's short-term and long-term outcomes and impact. *These should align with your project goals and demonstrate the project's public benefit/impact.* What method(s) will you use to gather the data? What information will you collect, and from whom, to evaluate your project? You have the option to upload any evaluation materials you will be using, to support and strengthen your response.
- How will you document and share project information and outcomes?

QUESTIONS

Questions about the grant program?

Contact Lisa Burk-McCoy, Program Coordinator
Lisa.M.Burk-McCoy@dncr.nh.gov | 603-271-0794

Questions about the online application system at Submittable?

Submittable Technical Support support@submittable.com
<https://submittable.help/>

Questions about alternative application methods?

Contact Emily Killinger, NHSCA Accessibility Coordinator
Emily.R.Killinger@dncr.nh.gov | 603-271-0790