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Arts & Culture Initiative
At the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Capacity-Building & General Operating Grant Process

Why is the Capacity-Building & General Operating grant process not open this year?

2025 was the pilot year of the Capacity-Building & General Operating grant program which included cohort activities. While we hoped that the cohort work would be successful, we needed to experience the full year in order to truly assess its efficacy. The good news is that in general, we had very positive feedback from the pilot year and the participants had a strong desire to build on what they started in 2025. To meet this need, we took the necessary steps to evolve the Capacity-Building & General Operating grant process to a 2-year cohort, in recognition of how important multi-year funding is.

What does this mean?

This means that grantees who applied in 2024 are part of the 2025-26 cohort. Grantees who applied in 2025 are deferred to the 2027-28 cohort. The next time we will open the Capacity-Building & General Operating grant process will be in 2028 for the 2029-30 cohort.

Eligibility FAQ's

I have an open grant with funds at one or both of the Rochester Area Community Foundation and Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. Can I apply for a grant from this process?

Yes, if you meet the eligibility requirements. Please refer to the Eligibility section of the Arts & Culture Initiative grants page for these details.

I've received an Arts & Culture Initiative grant in the past. Can I apply for a grant again?

Yes, if you meet the eligibility requirements. Please refer to the Eligibility section of the Arts & Culture Initiative grants page for these details.

How does the Arts & Culture Initiative define small to mid-sized organization?

Applicant organizations must have had an operating budget of no more than \$500,000 in their most recently completed fiscal year. NOTE: We look at the operating expenses when determining the operating budget size of an organization. Please see below for more details on operating budgets.

Arts and cultural programs within larger nonprofit institutions, for example, an art gallery with a <\$500,000 budget within a university setting, may be eligible. Please email wilsonarts@cfgb.org to explain your unique circumstances by the last day of August. If eligibility is granted, please upload the email approval with your application.

Why does the application specify operating expenses when determining budget size?

We recognize that an organization's revenue is only one piece of an operating budget. For example, an organization may have undertaken a large capital project in 2024 which may imply a larger, organizational capacity but without that capital project, the operational budget is much smaller. In this situation, the organization's operating expenses – without the capital expenses - are more indicative of an organization's true capacity.

I'm working in a rural community with a limited number of independent arts and cultural organizations. What should I know?

Generally, these grant opportunities are only open to organizations that have arts and culture as core to their mission. We recognize that in some rural communities, there are a limited number of dedicated arts and culture organizations. In these cases, 501(c)(3) organizations whose missions extend far beyond arts and culture may be the primary source of quality arts programming. In these situations, organizations may request an exception to the mission requirement. To request an exception, please email wilsonarts@cfgb.org to explain the unique circumstances in your rural community by the end of August. If an exception is granted, please upload the email approval with your application.

My organization is a library serving rural communities with a limited number of independent arts and cultural organizations. What should I know?

We recognize that many libraries, particularly those serving rural communities, can be a crucial source of arts and culture programming. Libraries that meet all other eligibility criteria AND are NOT funded annually through municipal budgets, are eligible to apply.

Libraries that ARE funded through municipal budgets are NOT eligible. Please refer to the Eligibility section of the Arts & Culture Initiative grants page for these details.

I have a fiscal sponsor. What should I know?

This grant opportunity accepts applications submitted by a fiscal sponsor on behalf of an organization. The fiscal sponsor does not have to meet the eligibility requirements, however, the sponsored organization does.

- **For the 8-counties submitting via CFGB:** The application should be submitted by the fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor is the applicant and legally responsible for grant fulfillment, including reporting. The remainder of the grant application should be completed with the information for the sponsored organization.
- **For Monroe County orgs submitting via RACF:** The application should be submitted by the sponsored organization.

Are municipalities or schools eligible to apply for funding?

No, municipalities and schools that are not registered with the NYS Education Department are not eligible.

Evaluation and Awards FAQ's

Who will evaluate the grant application?

A group of panelists representing peer arts and culture organizations within each of the 9 counties will review applications and make funding recommendations.

For arts organizations based in the 8 counties (excludes Monroe County): Panelists and Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo staff will work together to allocate funding.

For Monroe County arts organizations: Panelists and Rochester Area Community Foundation staff will work together to allocate funding.

How is the grant application evaluated?

Please refer to Detailed Guidelines/Additional Information section of the Arts & Culture Initiative grants page.

How much funding is available for the 2026 Micro Grant cycle?

\$85,000 has been allotted towards Micro Grants. As we continue to develop a dedicated strategy around arts and culture, there is potential for this amount to increase.

Will the Fund consider a multi-year request?

While the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo acknowledges the importance of

consistent funding sources for organizations, the current administration of this fund does not include consecutive years of Micro Grant funding to any one organization.

Will partial funding be considered?

Yes

When are funds available?

We expect funds to be available by January 2027.

Is there an allocation of funding by geographic region or by type of art and cultural organization?

Each county will be awarded a minimum of 2 Micro Grants, assuming eligible applications have been received in each county.

Monroe County FAQ's

What's the relationship between the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and the Rochester Area Community Foundation?

We have been longtime partners and we continue to collaborate on many initiatives including the arts and beyond. By working together on the Arts & Culture Initiative, we hope that we can continue – and deepen - our commitment to arts organizations across the nine counties of Western NY.

I'm a Monroe County organization. How do I apply?

The entire process will be executed through the RACF grant portal. This includes application submission, funding notifications, grant agreements, and reporting. No paper, emailed, or PDF applications will be accepted. If your organization is awarded a grant, the funds will come directly from RACF.

I'm a Monroe County organization. If I have questions about the grant application, who should I be reaching out to?

For specific inquiries about the application and application logistics, please reach out to Annette Jiménez Gleason at ajimenezgleason@racf.org.

General FAQ's

If I have further questions, who do I contact?

Please attend an Information Session. For a list of dates, times, and locations, please refer to the Information Session section of the Arts & Culture Initiative grants page. If you continue to have questions, please email wilsonarts@cfgb.org.

Will this process remain the same in future years?

The Arts & Culture Initiative commits to responding to the evolving needs of the arts sector, therefore, we are not currently in the position to anticipate what this application will look like beyond 2027. We will continue to hone the focus of this grant opportunity based on data, learnings, and community feedback.