

2025 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Arts & Culture Initiative

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

Basic Information

Project Name*

Character Limit: 100

Nonprofit Status*

What status are you utilizing to submit this application?

Choices

Our organization is submitting as an independent 501c(3) organization.

Our organization is submitting through our fiscal sponsor.

Eligible Counties*

Please check the eligible county(ies) in which your organization is physically located and/or operates from.

Choices

Allegany

Cattaraugus

Chautauqua

Erie

Genesee

Monroe

Niagara

Orleans

Wyoming

Type of Arts and Cultural Organization*

Select the category that best describes your primary focus.

Choices

Architecture

Artist Community

Arts Education Organization

Dance

Design

Folk & Traditional

Literary Arts

Local Arts Agency

Media Arts

Museums

Music
Musical Theater
Opera
Presenting & Multidisciplinary Work Organization
Theater
Visual Arts
Other

Type of Arts & Cultural Programming (Other)

If you selected Other for the type of Arts & Cultural Programming, please detail that below.

Character Limit: 250

Operating Budget*

What is your total operating budget for your most recently completed fiscal year?

To be eligible for this application, the organization must have a total operating budget of \$500,000 or less in its most recently completed fiscal year. We will also refer to your most recently completed 990 to verify this information.

NOTE: 2024 Capacity Building + General Operating grantees applying for Year 2 funding are exempt from this budget restriction.

Character Limit: 20

Grant Type*

Which grant are you applying for?

You may apply for one only.

Choices

Micro Grant
Capacity Building and General Operations Grant
Year 2 Capacity Building & General Operations Grant (for 2024 Capacity Building grantees ONLY)

Fiscal Sponsor

Fiscal Sponsor Details*

Provide the name of the organization you are applying on behalf of. Briefly describe the nature of your relationship with the sponsored organization.

This field should be completed by the fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor is formally considered 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.

Character Limit: 1000

Monroe County

Monroe County arts organizations should apply through the Rochester Area Community Foundation's grant portal, which can be found [here](#).

Please do not complete this application.

Capacity Building + General Operations Grant

Administrative Staff Structure

For the staffing questions below, staff are defined as individuals who are primarily dedicated to the strategic and/or administrative operations of an organization. For more details on staffing, please review this document.

Number of full-time or full-time equivalent staff*

Full-time staff are paid individuals who are working at least 35 hours/week.

Please note: To be eligible for this Capacity Grant application, the organization must have **AT LEAST** 1 full-time or full-time equivalent staff member.

Character Limit: 2

Number of part-time or part-time equivalent staff*

Part-time staff are paid individuals who are working less than 35 hours/week.

Character Limit: 2

Number of seasonal staff*

Seasonal staff are paid individuals who have temporary work during certain times of the year.

Character Limit: 2

Number of volunteer staff*

Volunteer staff are unpaid individuals.

Character Limit: 2

Mission*

What is your organization's mission statement?

Ideally, this is your board-approved mission that is no longer than 3 sentences.

Character Limit: 1000

Exception Approval

If the mission of your organization is not focused on arts and culture and you have been granted an exception by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo to apply, please explain how your organization advances arts and culture in your community.

Be sure to upload exception approval as an attachment.

Character Limit: 2000 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Community Need*

Why is your organization needed in the community? How do you know this?

Frame your answer within the context of the community you serve. Only if appropriate, your answer may reference your organizational values of equity around accessibility, race and ethnicity, income levels, gender, etc.

Character Limit: 3000

Program*

Provide a brief description of your programs. How do your programs address the need you have identified in your community?

Character Limit: 3000

Community Served*

Provide the number of people and any demographic information you collect about the people you serve on an annual basis. If you do not track demographics of the people you serve, please share the reason why, describe any barriers you experience in collecting this information, and tell us what assistance or guidance would help you do so.

You are welcome to answer in bullet point form.

For example:

- In 2023, 200 students served
- Ages 5-18
- 60% identify as African American
- 28% identify as White
- 12% identify as Latinx
- 95% come from a low-income household or community

What are we looking for? Your answer should include age, gender and ethnicity/race, as well as any other important demographics you track.

Why are we asking? This information helps us understand more about who your organization serves and the impact that it has on the community.

Character Limit: 2000

Capacity Building Priorities

Please arrange the following focus areas in order of priority with 1 being the most crucial and 8 being the least crucial into the chart below. Examples of each are provided in parentheses though these examples are not exhaustive.

- **Organizational Planning**
(ex. strategic planning, succession planning, etc.)
- **Board and Leadership Development**
(ex. trainings and workshops, developing board policies and handbooks, etc.)
- **Strategic Relationships/Collaboration**
(ex. shared staffing, researching and developing program partnerships, etc.)
- **Internal Operations**
(ex. establishing organizational policies, building administrative systems, etc.)
- **Technology Improvements**
(ex. purchasing equipment, addressing IT needs, etc.)
- **Building Evaluation Capacity**
(ex. building an evaluation plan, developing evaluation processes, etc.)
- **Program Adaptation or Implementation**
(ex. building curriculum, deepening program content, etc.)
- **Other**
(Enter description under appropriate level)

| Priority Level (1 through 8) | Capacity Building Priority |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
|------------------------------|----------------------------|

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |
| 6 | |
| 7 | |
| 8 | |

Capacity Building Focus Area*

Select the 1 area that you will focus on for this grant opportunity.

Choices

Organizational Planning

Board and Leadership Development

Strategic Relationships/Collaboration

Internal Operations

Technology Improvements

Building Evaluation Capacity

Program Adaptation or Implementation

Other

Capacity Building Focus Area (Other)

If you selected Other for the Capacity Building Focus Area, please detail that below.

Character Limit: 250

Problem Statement*

What problem are you solving with this Capacity-Building focus? How do you know this focus area is in need of Capacity-Building support?

Please provide enough detail to assist us in understanding the problem you hope to solve.

Character Limit: 3000

Organizational Priorities and Timing*

Why is it a priority for your organization to take on this Capacity-Building project at this time?

What steps have you already taken to prepare for or lay the groundwork for this project?

Character Limit: 3000

Solutions*

What activities do you plan to use to strengthen your organization's ability to achieve this capacity-building project?

Please select up to 2 activities that best describe your proposed solutions. One is required, but you may select two if applicable to your project.

Choices

Board training and education

Critical equipment needs

Staff training

Strategic planning

Succession planning

Technology/software needs

Other assessment, consulting, or facilitation

Other

Solutions (Other)

If you selected Other for the Solutions, please detail below.

Character Limit: 250

Objective(s)*

What are your objectives in this focus area?

Use the SMART goal framework to answer this question. Complete and upload 1 SMART goal template for EACH activity you select above. If the 2 activities are closely related, you may combine them into 1 single template.

Click here to download an example and template.

File Size Limit: 5 MB

Project Leads*

Which Staff Member will lead this capacity-building work?

Provide the Lead Staff Member's name and title.

Character Limit: 250

Project Leads*

How many hours does the Lead Staff Member work each week?

Character Limit: 50

Project Leads*

On average, how many hours will the Lead Staff Member dedicate to this capacity-building work each week?

Character Limit: 50

Project Leads*

How will the Lead Staff Member be supported in this capacity-building work?

Character Limit: 2000

Project Leads*

Which Board Member will partner with the Lead Staff Member in this capacity-building work? Provide the Board Member's name and board title, if any.

Character Limit: 250

Board Commitment*

Please upload a letter from your Board indicating specific support for the Capacity-Building focus area(s) you have identified in your application. This letter should include the following:

- demonstrate a deep understanding of the focus area(s)
- Indicate full support from all Board members
- Identify the Board member(s) who will work directly with the Lead staff member(s) in the Capacity-Building focus area(s).

This letter should be signed by the Board President and the named Board Members above.

Why is Board Commitment such an important part of this Capacity-Building application?

Through BoardSource's 10 Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards, it is clear that Capacity-Building work can only be truly successful if there is intentional partnership between the Board and the leadership Staff. We define capacity-building to be "the continual investment in the ability of a nonprofit to strategically achieve its mission - now and into its future." This mission-based strategy work is the shared responsibility of the Board and Staff, therefore, we want to be sure that both leadership entities are set up for success when taking on the Capacity-Building work proposed in this application.

A specific example of how the Board and staff are intertwined is in fund development capacity work. Leadership staff will be limited in implementing a successful fund development strategy without Board members' willingness to:

- "Determine mission and purposes, and advocate for them" (Responsibility #1)

- *Ex. Clearly articulate to current and potential donors why the organization is needed in the community*
- “Ensure effective planning” (Responsibility #4)
 - *Ex. Create and implement a fund development strategy with clearly-articulated responsibilities for Board and staff*
- “Enhance the organization’s public standing” (Responsibility #10)
 - *Ex. Increase and deepen the organization’s donor pool through each Board member’s network*

Board commitment to Capacity-Building work extends far beyond fund development - this is simply one example of how leadership Staff and Board work in tandem to ensure the organization fully realizes its Mission in service of the community.

File Size Limit: 5 MB

Project Support*

Has your organization identified a specific consultant or intermediary to help you with this Capacity-Building project?

- If yes, please indicate the consultant and/or business name below.
- If yes, briefly detail the commitment indicated by the consultant or intermediary

Ex. We have had a conversation with Sally and she has indicated her interest in supporting our needs. She has provided us with a scope of work and estimate for her services.

Ex. We have talked with Sally and she understands our needs. She might be a good fit for us but we do not yet have a contract.
- If yes, please consider attaching a letter of support from the consultant or intermediary.
- If no, would you like the Arts & Culture Initiative to help you identify a potential resource?

Character Limit: 2000

Consultant/Intermediary Letter of Support

If you have indicated that you have a consultant or intermediary identified, please upload a letter of support here.

File Size Limit: 5 MB

Financial Context

Budget*

Please submit a budget detailing the anticipated costs of your capacity-building project.

The total Arts & Culture Initiative request of Capacity Building expenses + General Operating must equal \$15,000.

Be sure to include the following:

- Type of expense and cost
- Revenue sources. If the organization is seeking or has received funding specific to the capacity-building focus area, provide the source and amount awarded/pending.
- Allocation of Arts & Culture Initiative (ACI) request

Organizations are encouraged to include unrestricted, general operating dollars in the budget to build in your own flexibility. The maximum amount allowed for unrestricted use is 50% of the request. The remainder must be allocated towards the identified capacity building strategy.

If you are proposing 2 capacity-building focus areas, please submit a separate budget for each focus area. Each budget should total \$15,000. Only 1 focus area will be funded through this grant opportunity.

[Click here to download an example and optional template.](#)

Budget Narrative

If necessary, provide a budget narrative elaborating on your budget lines below. (Please enter N/A if not necessary.)

Character Limit: 2000 | File Size Limit: 5 MB

990

The Community Foundation will be reviewing your most recent IRS Form 990 online at the GuideStar website. Should there be none listed, we will request a copy of your most recent audit and its accompanying management letter. We use the 990 to reconfirm your eligibility.

If you prefer, you are welcome to upload your 990 for your most recently completed fiscal year here.

File Size Limit: 3 MB

Certification of Grant Eligibility

The Community Foundation will be reviewing your most recent IRS Form 990 online at the GuideStar website. Should there be none listed, we will request a copy of your most recent audit and its accompanying management letter.

Certification*

Do you certify that the executive director and a board officer have approved of this grant request and that all information provided is accurate to the best of your knowledge?

Choices

Yes

No

Conflict of Interest*

Does your organization have a Conflict of Interest policy in accordance with New York State Law?

Choices

Yes

No

Optional

Additional Learning on Arts Sector Needs

Your response below will not be shared with panelists or used as a factor in the review of your application.

The Arts & Culture Initiative commits to responding to the evolving needs of the arts sector and we will continue to hone the focus of this grant opportunity based on data, learnings, and community feedback. To help further our learning, please consider responding to the questions below.

What keeps you up at night?

What do you wish your organization could do even better than it does now?

Character Limit: 3000