

National Endowment for the Arts

Notice of Funding Opportunity: FY27 Grants for Arts Projects (GAP)

Program Guidelines

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Access for individuals with disabilities:

Contact accessibility@arts.gov to request an accommodation or an alternate format of the guidelines at least 2 weeks prior to the application deadline.

Grants for Arts Projects

Basic Information

Category	Information
Federal Agency Name	National Endowment for the Arts
Funding Opportunity Title	Grants for Arts Projects
Announcement Type	Modification of previous announcement
Funding Opportunity Number(s)	February: 2026NEA01GAP1 July: 2026NEA01GAP2
Assistance Listing Number(s)	45.024
Agency Contact Information	GAP Contacts Page

Funding Details	Estimated Amount (Contingent upon availability of funds)
Total amt of funding expected to award	\$XX,XXX,XXX
Anticipated number of applications	X,XXX
Anticipated number of awards	X,XXX
Expected dollar value of awards (range)	Challenge America Applicants: \$10,000 Other Applicants: \$10,000-\$100,000 Local Arts Agencies Subgranting Projects: \$30,000-\$150,000

Executive Summary

Grants for Arts Projects (GAP) provides project-based funding for organizations. Funded activities enable Americans throughout the nation to experience the arts, foster and celebrate America's artistic heritage and cultural legacy, provide opportunities for Americans throughout the nation to benefit from arts education at all stages of life, and support creative arts therapies and arts-in-health programs that advance the well-being of people and communities. Awards require a 1:1 cost share. Applications are evaluated based on the published [Review Criteria](#).

Eligible applicants include: nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organizations; units of state or local government; and federally recognized tribal communities or tribes. Funding in this category is *not available* for individuals, fiscally sponsored entities, commercial/for-profit enterprises, State Arts Agencies (SAA), or Regional Arts Organizations (RAO).

COMPONENTS OF THIS NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO):

- **GAP PROGRAM GUIDELINES (this document):** Information including a grant program description, unallowable activities and costs, eligibility, review criteria, award amount and cost sharing, and post-award requirements and administration, among others.
- **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:** Navigate to the Application Instructions section on the [GAP](#)

[webpage](#) for complete information on application requirements and instructions on how to apply. Select the discipline that is most relevant to your project activities. Each instructions document also includes a detailed description for the discipline area, and accepted project types.

KEY DATES:

We estimate that after completing the required registrations, which can take several weeks to finalize, the process to draft and submit an application will take approximately 24 hours.

Step	February Cycle (GAP1)	July Cycle (GAP2)
Program Guidelines and Application Instructions Published	Early December 2025	Early December 2025
Part 1 Application Package Available on Grants.gov	Early December 2025	Mid-May 2026
Part 1 Grants.gov Submission deadline	February 12, 2026 11:59 pm ET	July 9, 2026 11:59 pm ET
Part 2 NEA Applicant Portal Opens to applicants	February 18, 2026 9:00 am ET	July 14, 2026 9:00 am ET
Part 2 NEA Applicant Portal Submission deadline	February 25, 2026 11:59 pm ET	July 21, 2026 11:59 pm ET
Notification of recommended funding or rejection	November 2026	April 2027
Earliest project start date	January 1, 2027	June 1, 2027

Grants for Arts Projects Program Description

Program Goals and Objectives

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is committed to supporting excellent arts projects for the benefit of all Americans. Through project-based funding, Grants for Arts Projects (GAP) supports a range of arts activities to enable Americans throughout the nation to experience the arts, foster and celebrate America's artistic heritage and cultural legacy, provide opportunities for Americans throughout the nation to benefit from arts education at all stages of life, and support creative arts therapies and arts-in-health programs that advance the well-being of people and communities.

Projects

We fund arts projects with specific, definable activities. **We strongly encourage applications for arts projects that focus on one or more [agency funding priorities](#).** Applications will be assessed based on the [Review Criteria](#) of artistic excellence and artistic merit. However, priority for funding will be given to those projects that align with the identified agency funding priorities, though consideration is not limited exclusively to these areas.

Projects may be small, medium, or large, and may take place in any part of the nation's 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. jurisdictions. A project may consist of one or more specific events or activities; it may be a new initiative or part of your organization's regular season or activities. Organizations that undertake a single short-term program in a year may apply for that event, or may choose to identify certain components of that program as their project. Organizations may apply for any or all phases of a project, from planning through implementation. The NEA does not fund general operating support or a full season of programming; a project should not cover an organization's entire annual activities or costs.

Projects should have regional, national, or artistic field-wide significance. This includes local projects that can have significant impact within communities or are likely to demonstrate best practices for the artistic field.

We welcome applications from first-time and returning applicants; from organizations serving rural, urban, suburban, and tribal communities of all sizes; and from organizations with a range of operating budgets.

Artistic Disciplines

Projects are accepted in the areas listed below. Types of projects supported in each discipline are outlined in the application instructions PDFs found on the [GAP webpage](#). In limited cases, and in consultation with the applicant, NEA staff may transfer an application to a discipline other than the one selected by the applicant to ensure appropriate panel review. However, the NEA cannot guarantee that an application will be transferred in all cases where this might be desirable.

Discipline	Summary
Arts Education	Projects for pre-K-12 students, and the educators and artists who support them (<i>see below for more guidance on selecting the right discipline for educational projects</i>).
Challenge America	\$10,000 awards for projects from small organizations (less than \$250,000 in previous year operating expenses) that extend the reach of the arts to underserved groups/communities (<i>see below for more guidance on Challenge America</i>).
Dance	Projects in all genres of dance.
Design & Our Town	Projects including architecture, creative placemaking, communications and graphic design, fashion design, historic preservation, industrial and product design, interior design, landscape architecture, rural design, social impact design, and urban design.
Folk & Traditional Arts	Projects supporting culturally- or community-centered artistic traditions in genres including music, dance, crafts, foodways, dress/adornment, occupation, ceremony, and oral expression, such as stories, poetry, and language.
Literary Arts	Projects supporting publishing, distribution, and/or promotion of literary content, literary arts programming, and services to the literary field.
Local Arts Agencies	Projects by arts commissions, arts councils, or departments of cultural affairs; national or statewide service organizations partnering with local arts agencies; and arts projects by local government and special districts.
Museums	Museums projects supporting work by artists in all mediums and featuring contemporary and historic genres, styles, eras, and cultures.
Music	Music and music presentation projects in all genres including classical, contemporary, and jazz.
Opera	Opera and opera presentation projects.
Presenting & Multidisciplinary Works	Projects presenting work from multiple disciplines, multidisciplinary works, and/or interdisciplinary artists.
Theater & Musical Theater	Theater and musical theater projects, including presentation.
Visual & Media Arts	Projects in contemporary visual arts mediums such as painting, photography, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, fiber, and glass. Projects in the independent film and media arts sector for activities including film, audio, broadcast, and emergent practices at the intersection of arts and digital technology.

Choosing the Right Discipline for Educational Projects

All GAP disciplines welcome educational projects. The Arts Education discipline is specifically geared toward pre-K-12 students (Direct Learning), and the educators and artists who support them (Professional Development). Projects submitted to Arts Education must incorporate robust measures to assess student and/or teacher learning in arts education. Assessment of student learning should align with state or [national arts standards](#).

Projects for short-term arts enrichment or exposure to the arts for youth, adults, and intergenerational audiences are welcome in other disciplines, including Challenge America.

Select the **Arts Education** discipline for:

- Pre-K through 12th grade Direct Learning or Professional Development projects that **align with either national or state arts education standards, and include robust student and/or teacher assessment**.

Select one of the **other disciplines** for:

- Youth programs with a focus on exposure to or appreciation of the arts, including activities that take place in school, after school, during the summer, or in community settings. Such projects may include the work of professional artists and/or teaching artists.
- Youth programs that do not include robust student assessment.
- Programs serving adults and intergenerational groups.

Challenge America

Challenge America supports arts projects from small organizations that extend the reach of the arts to underserved groups/communities. Challenge America awards are limited to \$10,000.

Challenge America is restricted to applications that meet *all three* of the following criteria*:

- The applicant organization had an operating budget of less than \$250,000 in the most recently completed fiscal year, **and**
- The proposed project is *specifically* focused on activities for underserved groups/communities (defined as those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited relative to geography, ethnicity, economic status, or disability), **and**
- The requested award amount is \$10,000.

Organizations that meet the three criteria above are **not required** to choose Challenge America. They may choose one of the other GAP disciplines if that is their preference. Organizations that **do not meet all three** of the criteria above should apply to one of the other GAP disciplines.

*Exceptions:

- **Local arts agencies** (units of city, county, or federally recognized tribal government; non-arts departments of local government; and designated special districts), should apply through the Local Arts Agencies discipline, regardless of organization size or project focus.
- **Arts learning projects** that engage participants over an extended period of time to

deepen their learning in the arts, and incorporate robust measures to assess student and/or teacher learning should be submitted to the Arts Education discipline, regardless of organization size or project focus.

Period of Performance

NEA support of a project (i.e., “Earliest Start Date”) can begin no sooner than:

- January 1, 2027 (for applicants to the February cycle, GAP1), or
- June 1, 2027 (for applicants to the July cycle GAP2).

Awards in this program generally may cover a period of performance of up to two years. **The two-year period is intended to allow an applicant time to plan, execute, and close out its project, not to repeat a one-year project for a second year.** You are expected to complete your project during the requested period of performance.

A recipient may not receive more than one NEA award or other federal funding for the same activities/costs during the same period of performance.

Unallowable Activities/Costs

The activities and costs listed below are **not** allowable and must not be included as part of your project activities or budget. This includes activities/costs covered by cost share funds. Applicants should carefully review the [General Terms and Conditions](#) (GTC) for additional information about allowable and unallowable costs.

Unallowable Activities

- General operating support, or funding for a full season of programming.
- Direct grants to individuals.
- Direct grants to individual elementary or secondary schools - charter, private, or public, or booster clubs and similar organizations dedicated to supporting individual elementary or secondary schools.
- Projects that replace or supplant arts instruction provided by an arts specialist.
- Generally, courses/coursework in degree-granting institutions.
- Literary publishing that does not focus on contemporary literature and/or writers.
- Generally, publication of books, exhibition of works, or other projects by the applicant organization's board members, faculty, or trustees.
- Generally, exhibitions of, and other projects that primarily involve single, individually owned, private collections.
- Projects for which no curatorial, juried, or editorial judgment has been applied to the selection of artists or art works.
- Activities occurring outside of the U.S. or U.S. jurisdictions.

- Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities such as receptions, parties, galas, community dinners, picnics, and potlucks. Generally, this also includes activities at venues such as bars, wineries, and breweries where the consumption of alcohol/social activity is the primary purpose of the venue.
- Non-arts ancillary activities including but not limited to sporting events, non-arts focused field trips, mental health counseling (excluding certified arts therapy), and non-arts self-care activities including physical fitness classes, haircare, and skincare.
- Academic tutors, college admissions test preparation, and college admissions counseling are unallowable. Activities related to post-secondary arts education admissions such as portfolio preparation or audition preparation for college/university/conservatory are allowable.
- Awards to individuals or organizations to honor or recognize achievement.
- Commercial (for-profit) enterprises or activities, including arts markets, concessions, food, T-shirts, artwork, or other items for resale. This includes online or virtual sales/shops.
- Lobbying, including activities intended to influence the outcome of elections or influence government officials regarding pending legislation, either directly or through specific lobbying appeals to the public.
- Voter registration drives and related activities.
- Construction, purchase, or renovation of facilities or the purchase of land. Design fees, preparing space for an exhibit, installation or de-installation of art, and community planning are allowable.
- Projects for which the *only* expenses included in the budget are the purchase or rental of equipment.
- [Subgranting of regranting](#), except for local arts agencies that meet the NEA's eligibility criteria for subgranting. Local arts agencies may not subgrant NEA funds or cost share funds to individuals.

Certain Unallowable Costs

- Cash reserves and endowments.
- Costs for the creation of new organizations.
- Costs to bring a project into compliance with federal grant requirements. This includes environmental or historical assessments or reviews and the hiring of individuals to write assessments or reviews or to otherwise comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and/or the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Expenditures related to compensation to foreign nationals and/or travel to or from foreign countries when those expenditures are not in compliance with regulations issued by the [U.S. Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control](#). For further information, contact our [Office of Grants Management](#).
- Project costs supported by any other federal funding. This includes federal funding received either directly from a federal agency; or indirectly from a pass-through

organization such as a state arts agency, regional arts organization, or a grant made to another entity.

- Alcoholic beverages.
- Purchase and/or use of gift cards, gift certificates, or other cash equivalents to support project costs.
- Gifts and prizes, including cash prizes as well as other items (e.g., electronic devices, gift certificates) with monetary value.
- Stipends/fees to individuals who are incarcerated.
- Contributions and donations to other entities, including donation drives.
- General miscellaneous or contingency costs.
- Fines and penalties, bad debt costs, deficit reduction.
- Marketing and fundraising expenses not directly related to the project.
- Audit costs not directly related to a single audit.
- Rental costs for home office workspace owned by individuals or entities affiliated with the applicant organization.
- The purchase of vehicles.
- Visa costs paid to the U.S. government.
- Pursuant to federal law, individuals who are undocumented are not eligible recipients of NEA funding and cannot be supported by NEA funding or the cost share.
- Costs incurred outside of the approved period of performance.

Legal Requirements and Assurance of Compliance

The [Legal Requirements](#) section on our website provides information about key legal requirements that may apply to an applicant or recipient. It is not an exhaustive list, more details may be found in Appendix A of the [General Terms and Conditions](#).

By signing and submitting the application form on Grants.gov, the Applicant certifies that it is in compliance with the statutes outlined in the [Assurance of Compliance](#) and all related NEA regulations as well as all applicable executive orders, and that it will maintain records and submit the reports that are necessary to determine its compliance. For more information, review the [Assurance of Compliance FAQ](#).

It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that you are compliant with all legal, regulatory, and policy requirements applicable to your award.

Nondiscrimination Policies

Projects may reach a particular group or demographic (such as sex, disability, economic status, race, color, or national origin), however, projects may not be exclusionary under Federal civil rights laws and policies prohibiting discrimination. This nondiscrimination requirement extends

to hiring practices, artist selection processes, and audience engagement. Your application should make it clear that project activities are not exclusionary. Review the [Assurance of Compliance](#), which outlines the relevant federal statutes, NEA regulations, and executive orders.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act Section 504 Compliance

Federal regulations require that all NEA-funded projects be accessible to people with disabilities. If your project is recommended for funding, you will be asked to provide [detailed information](#) describing how the project will be physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities in compliance with the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Review the information under [Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#) for more details.

National Historic Preservation Act and National Environmental Policy Act Review

Recommended projects are subject to the [National Historic Preservation Act](#) (NHPA) and/or the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA) compliance review. See more information about NHPA/NEPA review under [Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#).

Subject Matter

Per the NEA's legislation, projects or programs that are determined to be obscene are without artistic merit and shall not be funded. 20 USC 952(j)-(l); 20 USC 954(d),(l).

Authorizing Statute

The NEA offers this funding opportunity under the authority of 20 U.S.C. § 954.

Eligibility

Applicants may be arts organizations, local arts agencies, arts service organizations, local education agencies (school districts), and other organizations that can help advance the NEA's mission. Organizations must apply directly on their own behalf.

ELIGIBLE

The following **are eligible** to apply:

- Nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organizations;
- Units of state or local government; and
- Federally recognized tribal communities or tribes.

To be eligible, **the applicant organization must:**

- Meet the NEA's [Legal Requirements](#) including non-profit, tax-exempt status at the time of application.
- Have an active registration with the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM), and have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), at the time of application. Applicants must maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and throughout the life of an award.
- Had an annual operating budget of \$20,000 or more in its most recently completed fiscal year.
- Have completed a five-year history of arts programming prior to the application deadline. Applicants will provide examples of previous arts programming in the application.
 - Arts programming may have taken place prior to when the organization incorporated or received non-profit, tax-exempt status.
 - Organizations that previously operated as a program of another institution may include arts programming it carried out while part of that institution.
 - February 2026 applicants: programming must have started in or before February 2021.
 - July 2026 applicants: programming must have started in or before July 2021.
 - If arts programming was suspended due to the pandemic, you may include examples that occurred in 2018 or 2019 to meet the five-year requirement.

NOT ELIGIBLE

The following are **not eligible** to apply:

- Individuals;
- Commercial and for-profit enterprises;
- Applications using a fiscal sponsor/agent; and
- State and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs), and Regional Arts Organizations (RAOs). SAAs and RAOs may serve as partners in projects; however, they may not receive NEA funds through GAP.

Elementary and Secondary Schools

Individual elementary or secondary schools - charter, private, or public, **are not eligible** to apply. Booster clubs and similar organizations dedicated to supporting individual elementary or secondary schools **are not eligible** to apply. Schools may participate as partners in an eligible organization's project.

Local education agencies (LEAs), school districts, and state and regional education agencies **are eligible to apply**. If a single school is also a local education agency, as is the case with some charter schools, the school may submit documentation that supports its status as a local education agency.

Tribes and Tribal Communities

Federally recognized tribes and tribal communities may apply. In keeping with federal policies of [Tribal Self Governance](#) and [Self-Determination](#), we may provide support for a project with a primary audience restricted to enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe.

Native Hawaiian and non-federally recognized tribes may apply if the applicant is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organization. Projects for Native Hawaiians and non-federally recognized tribes and indigenous groups may be supported, but project participation cannot be restricted to only Native Hawaiians and/or tribal members.

Subgranting

Subgranting or regranting is prohibited, except for local arts agencies that meet the NEA's eligibility criteria for subgranting. Designated local arts agencies applying for subgranting must meet additional eligibility requirements, provide additional documentation in the application, and follow additional reporting and compliance requirements. Review the Local Arts Agencies application instructions found on the [GAP webpage](#) for more information. Local arts agencies preparing a subgranting application should contact [NEA staff](#) to discuss eligibility and application requirements.

Subgranting is defined as regranting funds to another organization for activities that are conducted independently of your organization and for the benefit of the subrecipients' own program objectives. A subrecipient is not directly affiliated with your organization.

"Friends of" and Other Affiliated Fundraising Organizations

An organization whose primary purpose is to channel resources (financial, human, or other) to an affiliated organization may only apply if the affiliated organization does not submit its own application. This prohibition applies even if each organization has its own 501(c)(3) status. For example, the "Friends of ABC Museum" may not apply if the ABC Museum applies.

Fiscal Sponsorship

Fiscally sponsored organizations and projects are not eligible for NEA funding. An organization or individual **may not** use a fiscal sponsor/agent for the purpose of applying. Unincorporated or for-profit entities or individuals may not use eligible organizations to apply for grants on their behalf.

If your organization does not have its own non-profit status, you may participate in a project submitted by another eligible organization, but you may not submit your own application.

An organization that provides fiscal sponsor/agent services that otherwise meets the eligibility criteria may apply for its own programs and projects. In this case, the organization must clearly demonstrate that it is applying only for its own programmatic activities. The NEA may review your website and other materials in addition to your application to determine the eligibility of the application.

What is a fiscal sponsor/agent?

A fiscal sponsor/agent is an entity that oversees the fiscal activities of another organization, company, or group of independent artists or projects. These activities may include bookkeeping, filing of W2s or 1099s, daily banking, or grant preparation.

An application must demonstrate the active involvement of the applicant organization in the proposed project activities. This might include:

- Producing or co-producing.
- Partnering on creative direction or development.
- Organizing workshops, public showings, or distribution of work.

Cost Sharing Requirement

[A 1:1 cost share is required](#). Additionally, applications that do not include a project budget meeting the *minimum* requirements of at least a \$10,000 NEA funding request, a \$10,000 cost share, and \$20,000 in total project expenses will be deemed ineligible and not be reviewed.

Application Limits

An organization may submit only one application to the FY 2027 GAP program (i.e., one application per calendar year), with limited exceptions. Applications will not be transferred between NEA funding categories. Applications to GAP will not be transferred to Research Awards or vice versa.

Applications to other NEA funding categories:

An organization *may* apply to the NEA's [Research Awards](#) program in addition to Grants for Arts Projects. **If you submit applications to other funding categories, each request must be for a distinctly different project (with different activities and costs), or a distinctly different phase**

of the same project, with a different period of performance and costs. If you have other NEA awards with activities and/or periods of performance that will overlap with your proposed GAP project, contact NEA staff for guidance.

Project participants such as individuals (project staff or artists) or partner organizations may participate in more than one application if there is no overlap in proposed costs or activities.

Exception: Parent Organizations with Independent Components (IC)

Exceptions to the one-application rule are made only for parent organizations that have separately identifiable and independent components (e.g., a university campus that has a presenting organization and a radio station).

A parent organization may apply for each eligible component. In addition, a parent organization may also submit one application on its own behalf for a **project that is different from any project submitted in an application by its independent component(s).**

The application for the independent component must be for a project of the component. The component cannot be used as a passthrough entity for projects from other areas of the parent, nor can the parent's own application be a submission to support a second project for the component.

Independent Component (IC) Eligibility

An eligible IC must be a unit that is both programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization. To qualify it should be equivalent to a stand-alone institution. The independent status is demonstrated by the component's:

- Unique mission, separate and distinct from the parent entity;
- Separate, dedicated staff, with duties specific to the mission of the component;
- Independent board, mostly consisting of members not associated with the parent entity (the board should generally function with substantial oversight and management of the component);
- Separate budget, maintained by the component; and
- Five-year history of arts programming undertaken by the component.

A parent organization should consult with [NEA staff](#) to verify the eligibility of the component before preparing an application. An application submitted by a parent organization on behalf of a component that the NEA determines does not meet the IC eligibility criteria may be marked ineligible, unless the parent organization has not submitted any other applications in the same calendar year.

The parent organization must meet the eligibility requirements for all applicants. An affiliated organization that performs grant administration duties for a parent organization (e.g., a college foundation that administers grants awarded to a college and its components) may submit

applications for components and the parent organization in lieu of such applications being submitted by the parent. The affiliated organization must meet the eligibility requirements for all applicants.

The following **do not qualify** as eligible ICs:

- Academic departments of colleges and universities.
- Programs, initiatives, and projects of organizations.
- Collaboratives or consortiums of multiple organizations.

For example:

- **Eligible IC:** An art museum on a university campus serves the public and does not grant degrees. The museum board, not the university trustees, manages the museum's budget, staff, and programming. In this example, the art museum is essentially a stand-alone organization and qualifies as an independent component.
- **Ineligible IC:** A symphony association sponsors a youth orchestra in addition to its professional orchestra. Some symphony musicians serve as faculty for the youth orchestra; there is an overlap of membership between the symphony trustees and the youth orchestra's advisory board; and the executive director for the symphony association serves as CEO for both the professional and youth orchestras. In this case the youth orchestra is not equivalent to a separate institution and therefore does not qualify as an independent component.

Award Amounts & Cost Share

Familiarize yourself with the requirements of managing a federal grant by reviewing the [Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#) section of this document, as well as the General Terms and Conditions and reporting requirements found in [Manage Your Award](#).

Award Amounts

- **Challenge America** applicants may only request \$10,000. Applications submitted to Challenge America for an amount higher than \$10,000 will be marked ineligible.
- **Other GAP applicants** may request from \$10,000 to \$100,000.
- Eligible applicants for **Local Arts Agencies subgranting** may request from \$30,000 to \$150,000 for subgranting projects.

The NEA reserves the right to limit support of a project to a particular portion(s) or cost(s). No pre-award costs are allowable in the Project Budget.

Applicants should consider the funding level of [recent awards](#) and request a realistic award amount to carry out the project during the proposed period of performance. Applicants whose recommended funding amount is less than the amount requested in the application will have the opportunity to revise the project's budget and/or scope to reflect any changes to the project's activities.

Cost Share Funds

All awards require a nonfederal cost share of at least 1 to 1. For example, if an organization receives a \$10,000 award, the total project costs must be at least \$20,000, and the organization must provide at least \$10,000 toward the project costs from nonfederal sources. NEA funding cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the project.

Cost share funds do not need to be committed at the time of application, but applicants will be asked to provide potential sources of funding in the project budget section of the application.

Federal funds may not be used as cost share. This includes funding from other federal agencies, or an entity that receives federal appropriations or federal pass-through funds. Additionally, cost share funds cannot include subgranted federal funds through Regional Arts Organizations (RAO), State Arts Agencies (SAA), or Local Arts Agencies (LAA). Applicants may include cost-share funds from RAOs, SAAs, or LAAs *only if those funds did not originate at the federal level*. Applicants may contact their RAO, SAA, or LAA to confirm the source of funding.

Application Contents & Format

Application Instructions & Process

A detailed instructions PDF outlining how to complete and submit both parts of the application, including *all application questions and requirements*, can be found on the [GAP webpage](#), in the Application Instructions section.

Registration: Before applying, applicants must finalize required registrations detailed on the next page. **All three required registrations must be active to submit Part 1 of the application through Grants.gov.**

Application Part 1, Grants.gov

All applicants must submit the “Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organization Form” through Grants.gov. This is a brief form that will collect basic information about your organization. You must successfully submit Part 1 to continue to Part 2.

Application Part 2, NEA Applicant Portal

Part 2 of the application is submitted via the NEA’s [Applicant Portal](#). All applicants must complete the “Grant Application Form (GAF)” and upload items through the portal. This form collects information about your organization’s history and budget, and project details including a project description, timeline, budget information, and work samples.

Applications Recommended for Funding

Applicants whose projects are recommended for funding must submit additional information, which may include:

- A revised project budget and an activity update, including a list of participating artists and art works.
 - Unconfirmed artists or works at the time of offer acceptance may delay our ability to make an award, or result in revocation of a funding offer.
 - Changes from the original application to artists, works, or activities must be approved by NEA staff before an award is made. We reserve the right to revoke a funding offer if the substitutions do not align with the original proposal.
- ADA and Section 504 Compliance information; and
- If required by your project activities, information about compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and/or the National Environmental Policy Act.

See [Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#) for more information on ADA/Section 504 and NEPA/NHPA compliance, as well as other information about award management.

Submission Requirements & Deadlines

Pre-Application Required Registrations

Before applying, all applicants must register with [Login.gov](#), [Grants.gov](#), and the System for Award Management (SAM) at [SAM.gov](#). Applicants must provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in their application; and continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current entity information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal agency. **All three required registrations must be active to submit Part 1 of the application through Grants.gov.**

Returning applicants must renew or verify that their registrations are up to date prior to the application deadline.

The **Registration Guidance document** available on the [GAP webpage](#) provides detailed information about registration, including links to each site, and support resources. **Registering and maintaining accounts with Login.gov, SAM, and Grants.gov is FREE.**

Submission Methods

Application materials must be submitted electronically.

Contact Information

The [Contacts](#) page has information for reaching NEA staff, Login.gov, SAM, and Grants.gov.

Application Submission Dates & Times

Do not wait until the day of the deadline to submit. The NEA suggests setting an internal application deadline for your organization that is at minimum 24-48 hours before the actual application deadline. **Late, ineligible, and incomplete applications will not be reviewed.**

Step	February Cycle (GAP1)	July Cycle (GAP2)
Part 1 Application Package available on Grants.gov	Early December 2025	Mid-May 2026
Part 1 Grants.gov Submission deadline	February 12, 2026 11:59 pm ET	July 9, 2026 11:59 pm ET
Part 2 NEA Applicant Portal Opens to applicants	February 18, 2026 9:00 am ET	July 14, 2026 9:00 am ET
Part 2 NEA Applicant Portal Submission deadline	February 25, 2026 11:59 pm ET	July 21, 2026 11:59 pm ET
Notification of recommended funding or rejection	November 2026	April 2027
Earliest project start date	January 1, 2027	June 1, 2027

Extensions to the Submission Deadlines

Extensions to the submission deadlines will be considered **only** for registration or renewal issues, or technical malfunctions resulting from government technological systems failures (Login.gov, SAM.gov, Grants.gov, or NEA systems), as determined by the NEA. To be considered for this extension, you must provide documentation of a government systems failure that prevented your submission by the deadline.

In the event of a major emergency (e.g., a hurricane or government systems technological failure), the NEA Chair may adjust application deadlines for affected applicants. If a deadline is extended, an announcement will be posted on our website.

Extensions to the deadline **will not be considered** for reasons such as:

- User error, including but not limited to, failing to register or apply on time, or failure to verify that your application was successfully submitted to Grants.gov and/or the Applicant Portal.
- Problems with computer systems or Internet access at the applicant organization.

Please note:

- Permission for late application submission cannot be granted in advance. If you feel you have a case for an exception, contact staff as soon as possible **after** the deadline with documentation of the issues you encountered. Extensions are not guaranteed.
- Applications submitted late or outside the Grants.gov system (e.g., an emailed SF-424) will not be processed, reviewed, or considered for funding.

Incomplete Applications

Due to the volume of applications NEA staff will not contact applicants to request missing material. For your application to be considered complete, every required item **MUST** be included in your application, and submitted on time. An organization cannot add missing items and resubmit the application after the application deadline.

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs Executive Order 12372.

Application Review

All applications will be assessed based on artistic excellence and artistic merit. However, priority for funding will be given to those projects that align with the identified [agency funding priorities](#), though consideration is not limited exclusively to those areas.

Proposals must be for arts projects with specific, definable activities. The application may be rejected if it does not sufficiently describe the project activities.

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed based on the criteria below, with equal weight assigned to artistic excellence and artistic merit. While proposals need not address each criterion marked “as applicable,” applicants may consider all the criteria when developing their proposals.

Artistic Excellence

The **artistic excellence** of the project includes:

- The quality of the artists and other key individuals, works of art, organizations, arts education providers, artistic partners, and/or services involved in the project.

Artistic Merit

The **artistic merit** of the project includes:

- The value and appropriateness of the project to the organization’s mission, artistic field, artists, audience, community, and/or constituency.
- The ability to carry out the project based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, clarity of the project activities, resources involved, and the qualifications of the project's personnel and/or partnerships.
- The potential for the project to have regional, national, or artistic field-wide significance. This includes local projects that can have significant impact within communities or are likely to demonstrate best practices for the artistic field.
- Clearly defined goals and/or proposed outcomes and an appropriate plan to determine if those goals and/or outcomes are met.
 - This includes, where relevant in arts education, measures to assess student and/or teacher learning, and alignment with national core or state arts standards.
- Evidence of direct compensation to artists, makers, art collectives, and/or art workers.
- As applicable:
 - Engagement with individuals whose opportunities to experience and participate in the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economic status, or disability.
 - Alignment with one or more agency funding priorities.

Review & Selection Process

Applications are checked for completeness and eligibility by NEA staff. Eligible applications are evaluated according to the Review Criteria above, in closed session, by advisory panelists. Each panel comprises a group of arts experts and other individuals, including at least one knowledgeable layperson, with broad knowledge in the areas under review. Panel membership changes regularly. The panel recommends the projects to be supported, and the staff reconciles panel recommendations with the funds that are available. These recommendations are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts, where they are voted on in an open public session. The National Council on the Arts makes recommendations to the NEA Chair. The NEA Chair reviews the recommendations for grants in all funding categories and makes the final decision on all grant awards.

Application Status Updates

Applicants will receive a tentative funding offer or a notice of rejection via email. Refer to the [Application Calendar](#) for expected notification dates. Do not request the status of your application before the listed notification date. Applicants tentatively recommended for funding will receive a preliminary congratulatory message, with a request for required [project and budget updates](#).

Award Notices

The official award notification (i.e., a notice of action authorized by the NEA Office of Grants Management) is the only legal and valid confirmation of award. Receipt of your official award notification may take several months depending on factors such as changes to your project, the number of awards to be processed, whether the NEA has its funding appropriation from Congress, etc.

All NEA awards are contingent on active SAM registration and compliance with 2 CFR 200, NEA's legislation 20 U.S.C. § 954 and 955, along with other federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders that apply to federal financial assistance awards and established NEA policies. The NEA will not be able to issue an award if you have an expired SAM.gov registration on September 1 of the fiscal year listed on this funding opportunity or if the project is not compliant with applicable statutes, regulations, or executive orders.

Risk Review

All recommended applications undergo a review to evaluate risk posed by the applicant prior to making a federal award. This may include past performance on grants, meeting reporting deadlines, compliance with terms and conditions, audit findings, etc.

Final Reports for Previous Awards

Before the NEA issues any award, organizations must have submitted acceptable Final Report packages by the due date(s) for all previous NEA award(s).

Post-Award Requirements and Administration

General Terms & Conditions

Federal government-wide and agency-specific requirements that relate to NEA awards are highlighted in our [General Terms & Conditions](#) (GTCs). The GTCs incorporate the adoption of 2 CFR Part 200 by reference. The document also explicitly identifies where the NEA has selected options offered in the regulation, such as budget waivers and requirements for use of program income. It also includes requirements for cost share funds, reporting requirements, amendment processes, and termination actions. **Recipients must review, understand, and comply with these requirements.** Failure to comply with the GTCs for an award may result in termination of an award, and/or returning funds to the NEA, among other consequences.

Implementation of Title 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

The guidance under 2 CFR Part 200 from the federal government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) establishes clarity and consistency for pre- and post-award requirements applicable to federal award recipients. The NEA has adopted the OMB Guidance in [2 CFR part 200 under §3255.1 Adoption of 2 CFR Part 200](#). The NEA's adoption of 2 CFR Part 200 gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance, including any updates to it.

Crediting Requirement

Recipients must clearly acknowledge NEA support of the project in their programs and related promotional material, including publications and websites. Additional acknowledgment requirements or guidance may be provided later (e.g., provision of America250-specific NEA logos). The NEA does not fund general operating support, so you must ensure that the NEA is only credited with funding the specific project, and not your entire organization or its operations.

Changes in Projects

Pre-Award: Applicants must notify the NEA of any significant changes in their project that occur after applying. If the project or the organization's capacity to carry out the project changes significantly before an award is made, the NEA may revise or withdraw the funding recommendation.

Post-Award: Recipients are expected to carry out a project consistent with the project approved for funding by the NEA. If changes to the project are required, the recipient must request written approval from the Office of Grants Management, **which is the only office authorized to amend or change an NEA award. Written and/or verbal approval of proposed project changes from any other NEA office does not constitute an approved change to an award.** Detailed information is included in the NEA's [General Terms & Conditions for Federal Financial Assistance to Organizations](#) and the [General Terms & Conditions for Federal Financial Assistance to Pass-Through Entities](#) (for local arts agencies with subgranting projects.)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act Section 504

As outlined in the [Assurance of Compliance](#) all NEA-funded projects must be accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities may include artists, performers, audiences, visitors, teaching artists, students, staff, and volunteers, among others. Funded activities must be held in a physically-accessible venue. Program access and effective communication must also be provided for participants and audience members with disabilities. For technical assistance on how to make your project accessible, contact accessibility@arts.gov or see [Accessibility Resources](#).

In accordance with the General Terms & Conditions, your organization must have a Section 504 self-evaluation on file and a designated 504/accessibility coordinator on staff.

If your project is recommended for funding, you will be asked to provide detailed information describing how the project will be physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities:

- Buildings and facilities (including projects held in historic facilities) must be physically accessible. The following are some examples, though this is not an exhaustive list:
 - Ground-level/no-step entry, ramped access, and/or elevators to project facilities and outdoor spaces, including paths of travel;
 - Wheelchair-accessible box office, stage/backstage, restrooms, water fountains, meeting and dressing rooms;
 - Directional signage for accessible entrances, restrooms, and other facilities; and
 - Accessible workspaces for employees.
- Programmatic activities must be accessible either as part of the funded activity or upon request. The following are some examples, but your examples should be relevant to your proposed activities:
 - Accommodations for performances, tours, virtually streamed events, conferences, and lectures, such as sign language interpretation, real-time captioning, and audio description;
 - Print materials in alternative formats, such as large-print brochures/labels/programs, braille, and electronic/digital formats;
 - Accessible and screen reader-compatible electronic materials, documents, websites, and virtual platforms, and alternative text for images;
 - Closed/open captioning and audio/visual description for video, film, television broadcasts, and virtual events;
 - Auxiliary aids and devices, such as assistive listening devices.

Costs associated with project-related programmatic accommodations, such as those listed above, may be included in an NEA grant budget. Physical construction or renovation expenses may not be included in the grant budget.

National Historic Preservation Act and/or the National Environmental Policy Act Review

All awards are subject to review and compliance with the [National Historic Preservation Act](#) (NHPA) and the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA). The NEA will conduct a review of your project to ensure that it is in compliance with NHPA/NEPA and other Federal environmental laws. **If you are recommended for an award which may have historic preservation or environmental concerns (NHPA/NEPA), you will be notified and asked to provide [additional information](#).** The NEA cannot release award funds until the NHPA/NEPA review is complete. Please ensure you submit all of the information requested, as incomplete information may delay the release of funds.

To expedite the NHPA/NEPA review, be sure to include thorough and complete information for all project activities and locations. If project activities and locations are not yet finalized, you must provide the timeline for determining project activities and locations as these details are required to complete the NHPA/NEPA review.

For projects requiring ground disturbance or impacting properties over 50 years old, you may be instructed to continue the NHPA review with the appropriate State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Some project types that may require additional information or SHPO review include:

- Projects involving a property over 50 years old. This includes buildings; structures such as bridges; objects such as sculptures; or a landscape that is historically significant.
- The installation of temporary or permanent outdoor artworks or structures, such as sculptures, statues, murals, or permanent signs.
- Outdoor arts/music festivals or activities requiring ground disturbance.
- Maintenance or rehabilitation of landscapes and gardens.
- Design services and planning for projects that may affect historic properties.

Project Reporting and Evaluation

Before applying, carefully review the reporting requirements for the NEA's [Final Reports](#). If you have any questions about the NEA's objectives or the required final reports, contact NEA staff.

All recipients are required at minimum to submit a Final Descriptive Report (FDR), a Federal Financial Report (FFR), and a Geographic Location of Project Activity Report (GEO) within 120 days of the end of the award's period of performance. The estimated time burden for completing final reports is 5 hours. Local Arts Agencies with awards for Subgranting projects are also required to submit a Subgrants report, with an additional time burden of 4.5 hours. Recipients of Arts Education Direct Learning awards will be required to describe the methods used to assess student learning.

You are required to maintain project source documentation, including financial records, for three years following submission of your final reports.

Beyond the required final reports for all recipients, some recipients may be asked to assist in the collection of additional information to help the NEA determine the degree to which agency objectives were achieved. You may be asked to share project accomplishments such as work samples, community action plans, cultural asset studies, programs, reviews, relevant news clippings, and playbills.

Responsible Conduct of Program Evaluation and Research

NEA grant recipients should comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing the responsible conduct of research in the United States.

NEA PROGRAM EVALUATION ETHICS REVIEW: In limited cases, the NEA may conduct a review of your project prior to making an award if your project activities include *formal program evaluation*, *research that involves directly collecting personal information from program participants*, and/or *activities involving vulnerable populations*. Examples include activities that require program participants to provide sensitive and/or confidential information about themselves, and/or that involve systematic studies to assess a program's benefits for participants.

INFORMAL PROGRAM EVALUATION AND DATA COLLECTION FOR FINAL REPORTING: Many NEA-funded projects include informal evaluation, such as conducting *anonymized surveys* of program participants about their satisfaction with a program, or *basic field observations* of program participants such as counting the number of audience members or tickets sold. **These types of activities are typically exempt from a program evaluation ethics review.** Data collection activities related to completion of the [Final Descriptive Report \(FDR\)](#) are exempt from a program evaluation ethics review.

Questions: Contact our [Office of Research and Analysis](#) (ORA). ORA has compiled [Resources on Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement](#) to help applicants and awardees document the effectiveness and impact of their arts programs.

Legal Requirements and Assurance of Compliance

The [Legal Requirements](#) section on our website provides information about key legal requirements that may apply to an applicant or recipient. It is not an exhaustive list; more details may be found in Appendix A of the [General Terms & Conditions](#).

By signing and submitting the application form on Grants.gov, the Applicant certifies that it is in compliance with the statutes outlined in the [Assurance of Compliance](#) and all related National Endowment for the Arts regulations as well as all applicable executive orders, and that it will

maintain records and submit the reports that are necessary to determine its compliance. For more information, review the [Assurance of Compliance FAQ](#).

It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that you are compliant with all legal, regulatory, and policy requirements applicable to your award.

Civil Rights

Projects may reach a particular group or demographic (such as sex, disability, economic status, race, color, or national origin); however, projects may not be exclusionary under Federal civil rights laws and policies prohibiting discrimination. This nondiscrimination requirement extends to hiring practices, artist selection processes, and audience engagement. Your application should make it clear that project activities are not exclusionary. Review the [Assurance of Compliance](#), which outlines the relevant federal statutes, NEA regulations, and executive orders.

The NEA's Office of Civil Rights investigates complaints about compliance with accessibility standards as well as other federal civil rights statutes. For further information and copies of the nondiscrimination regulations identified above, contact civilrights@arts.gov or 202-682-5454.

Laws Relating to Lobbying (31 U.S.C. 1352)

For organizations applying for more than \$100,000 (31 U.S.C. 1352).

The applicant certifies that:

- a) It has not and will not use federal appropriated funds or cost share/matching funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of a National Endowment for the Arts advisory panel or the National Council on the Arts, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of or modification to any federal grant or contract.
- b) If it has used or will use any funds other than federal appropriated funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence any of the individuals specified above, the applicant:
 - i) Is not required to disclose that activity if that person is regularly employed by the applicant. (Regularly employed means working for at least 130 days within the year immediately preceding the submission of this application.)
 - ii) Will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," if that person is not regularly employed by the applicant.
 - iii) Will require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards of more than \$100,000 and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Notice

Disclosure Notice: Where required or permitted by law, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) may share with the public or other third parties a copy of applicants' awarded applications and/or related materials submitted to the NEA.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at an average of 24 hours per response. This includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We welcome any suggestions that you might have on improving the guidelines and making them as easy to use as possible. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: webmgr@arts.gov, attention: Reporting Burden. Note: Applicants are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.

ALN 45.024

OMB No. 3135-0112 Expires TBD

Frequently Asked Questions

Can my partner organizations also apply for NEA funds to support our collaborative work?

Yes, but there can be no overlapping project costs or activities between the applications. For example, if you are a dance company applying for the development of a new work, and a presenting organization is also applying for the presentation of the new work, you must keep costs separate. If the presenter includes your artist fees as an expense in their budget, you cannot use that as income in your own budget. Communicate closely with your partners to be sure that you are clear on the division of costs and activity between the applications.

My organization has applied to Artist Communities in the past, are we still able to apply?

Yes, we welcome projects for artist residencies where the primary activity is the creation or development of new work. Choose the discipline that best aligns with your project activities, for example, if the residency is for artists working in the field of music, you should apply under the Music discipline. Residencies may include various forms of support for artists, including but not limited to stipends, temporary living accommodations, access to rehearsal space, studio space, and technical facilities.

Does my project have to be outside the scope of my regular programming?

No. A project can be a part of an applicant's regular season or activity.

Can I apply for more NEA funding for a project supported by an earlier grant?

Yes. If you have previously received a grant to support an earlier phase of a project, you *may* re-apply to the NEA for additional funding to support a later phase. However, each application must clearly describe the specific phase of work to be supported, and there can be NO overlapping project costs or activity between the awards.

Can my project start before the "Earliest Start Date" for my deadline?

No. Proposed project activities for which you are requesting support cannot take place before this date. You may only request that the NEA fund the portion of your project that will take place after the "Earliest Start Date."

May I apply for another project if I have an open award?

Generally, an organization may apply to the NEA for another project (with totally different project costs) the following year even if a previous NEA-supported project is still underway. You are responsible for ensuring that there are no overlapping costs or activities between the projects. Note that this may affect when you can start your new proposed project.

How many work samples do I need to submit? Should I submit every kind listed?

Submit as few work samples as you need to adequately convey the artistic excellence and artistic merit of your proposed project. Review time is limited, and submitting the maximum allowable number of work samples will not give your application an advantage. Do not submit extra items that are not relevant to your project.