

Overview and Purpose

Recognizing that reviving the arts is integral to the state's recovery, New York State Legislature's Westchester and Rockland delegations have secured funding for ArtsWestchester's new **ReStart the Arts** grant program. This funding opportunity is a legislative priority to fuel the cultural industry - to help arts and cultural organizations engage the talented individuals who are essential to the recovery of the nonprofit cultural sector. Bringing artists and other creative professionals back into the workforce is of great importance to our Legislators and for ArtsWestchester because the recovery of the cultural community depends on it.

The ReStart the Arts grant provides direct programmatic support for organizations to apply for funds to engage creative professionals to work on a specific program or initiative. In providing this support, ReStart the Arts fills a gap left by other COVID-related funding opportunities. We hope this program, therefore, will add momentum to the recovery of the cultural sector, and at the same time providing employment for our talented colleagues.

ArtsWestchester is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and fostering mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all individuals and groups. Proposals may focus on reaching a particular constituency; however, they may not be exclusionary under national civil rights laws and policies prohibiting discrimination. This extends to hiring practices and audience engagement activities.

Is My Organization Eligible?

To be eligible to apply for Restart the Arts funds, your organization must meet all of the following criteria:

- Have an operating budget revenue of at least \$50,000 in FY2021.
- Been in operation and offering public programs since at least 2019, with a primary focus on arts and culture programming.
- Been previously funded by in any one of the following categories in at least two of the last three years (2019, 2020, 2021):

- ArtsWestchester funding - Basic Program Support, Project Support, Yonkers Arts Initiative, Mount Vernon Arts Initiative, or Arts Alive.
- Rockland County funding – County Tourism Office, or Office of the County Executive
- (Please note – libraries will not be eligible)

What Types of Activities Can Restart the Arts Funds Support?

- Contracted artist fees for exhibiting, performing, and teaching artists; curators, directors, set designers, and other creative workers (e.g. graphic designer); faculty and instructors.
- Fees for artists to develop and present programs that enhance either a new or previously-planned activity or program.
- Staff expenses for creative professionals engaged in the project.
- Commissioning new works.

Are there specific funding priorities within ReStart?

Yes. Lead priority will be given to proposals that emphasize the hiring of creative professionals in the realization of the project, and those that incorporate a community engagement component. Secondary priority is given towards projects that engage creative professionals in efforts to rebuild audiences, but may not feature a direct community engagement element.

Organizations are encouraged to evaluate their respective needs, capacity, and programming in order to form an appropriate funding request that prioritizes projects that provide work opportunities for creative individuals. While this grant seeks to fund as broad a range of organizations as possible, we anticipate that the requests will exceed the funding available.

What is the funding period?

Funded projects must take place between September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022.

This funding is intended for a discrete project or initiative, awarded funds must be fully expended by or before the end of the funding period.

What award amounts are available?

Restart the Arts grants are set at fixed amounts, there is no predetermined number of awards available at each funding level. Organizations may apply for \$2,500; \$5,000; \$10,000; \$15,000; or \$25,000. ArtsWestchester reserves the ability to award funding at a different level than what was requested.

This grant is intended to reach as many organizations as possible. Applicants are encouraged to think strategically and request the funding level that is appropriate for the project, the organization's size, and short-term and long-term goals. Matching funds are allowable but not required.

When will applications be available?

Applications will be available on Submittable beginning in November 2021.

How do I submit an application?

Applications must be submitted only via the Submittable portal; emailed or hard copy materials will not be considered. All submissions must be received by or before **11:59pm on Thursday, December 16, 2021** in order to be eligible for consideration.

If you would like feedback on your application from ArtsWestchester Grants Staff, please submit your application **by or before December 9, 2021**. If you submit by this date, ArtsWestchester staff will review and provide feedback as appropriate.

What is the review process?

Restart the Arts is designed as a rapid response to the extraordinary challenges resulting from the pandemic, and the awards process is streamlined accordingly. The application itself is short and straightforward, primarily requesting information about how the organization plans to use the funds. Along with ArtsWestchester staff, a group of highly qualified panelists will read and evaluate the applications. Funding recommendations will be presented by the Grants Committee of ArtsWestchester's Board of Directors. Final approval on funding will be made by the Board of Directors. Funding decisions will be announced in February 2022.

Is Application Assistance available?

Yes. ArtsWestchester Grants staff will host information sessions in Fall 2021 and conduct ongoing technical assistance sessions, by appointment, to facilitate the application and review process. Visit <https://artswestchester.org/restart-the-arts/> for more information, and to register.

Evaluation Criteria – Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that address some, if not all, of the following:

- **Objectives** - Clarity of proposal to provide work opportunities for creatives in an effort to resume the organization's programs and services comparable to or exceeding pre-pandemic levels.
- **Impact** - Extent to which the proposed project relates to the organization's mission and its strategic goals (for example: rebuilding audiences, reaching new audience members, promoting diversity/inclusiveness, supporting innovation).
- **Artist Qualifications** - Accomplishments, experience, and/or demonstrated abilities of the artist(s). Note: Organizations are encouraged, but not required, to engage artists based in Westchester County and/or Rockland County.
- **Community Benefit** - Potential benefit to the community from the proposed project, and depth of engagement.
- **Inclusivity Efforts** - Demonstrated efforts towards equity, inclusion, diversity, and access within the proposed project, and/or the recruitment of the participating artist(s).

FAQ

Can this funding be used to compensate existing staff?

No. ReStart the Arts is meant to fund new engagements for artists, or new creative staff.

Do I need to have secured an artist prior to the application?

No, the artist does not need to be selected prior to the application. However, if the artist has been identified, please include resume/CV and work samples as a supporting document with the application.