

Queens Arts Fund: Arts Access Grant 2026 Guidelines

Application Deadline: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM ET

NYFA accepts applications submitted online at apply.nyfa.org/submit

Questions? Check out the [QAF homepage](#) for more information!

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Arts Access Grant supports community-based organizations and collectives in their efforts to produce public arts and cultural programs in all artistic disciplines that bolster the cultural vibrancy of the Queens communities and neighborhoods where they are located and operate. Applicants may submit grant requests ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

The 2026 Queens Arts Fund is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Greater New York Arts Development Fund, in partnership with the City Council.

GRANT TIMELINE

Application Opens: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 10:00 AM ET

Application Closes: Tuesday, November 16, 2025 at 5:00 PM ET*

Applicants Notified: Spring 2026

**Please note that the application form on Submittable will automatically close & stop accepting applications at this time.*

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants can only submit ONE application to QAF in the 2026 calendar year.

Who Can Apply

- Organizations that apply must be a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and must provide proof of nonprofit status with a 501(c)3 determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service.
- Collectives that apply must be unincorporated artist collectives.
- The organization or collective applying must have existed for at least one year.

- Applicants must have an operating budget of less than \$100,000 in at least two of the last three years.
- Applicants must be located/based in Queens and show proof of a Queens address in the application.
- Applicants can make only one project request per year that does not exceed \$5,000.
- Applicants must designate a “Lead Applicant” to complete the Arts Access application and act as the point person throughout the selection process.
- Lead applicants must be at least 18 years of age by December 31, 2025.

Who Cannot Apply

- Past recipients of any QAF grant who failed to submit a final report or are otherwise out of compliance with their QAF Grant Agreement.
- Applicants that received an Arts Access Grant consecutively for the past three years (2023, 2024, 2025).
- Applicants applying for DCLA funds in another county/borough for fiscal year 2026.
- Organizations that have applied for direct funding from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs for Fiscal Year 2026.
- NYC public school district, public, private or parochial schools, including public colleges or universities.
- For-profit organizations (such as corporations, limited liability companies, etc.) or New York City agencies, even with the use of a fiscal conduit/sponsor organization that is a 501(c)3.
- Lead applicants cannot be full-time students in a degree seeking program, either currently enrolled at the time of application or who will be enrolled in 2026.
- Organizations that directly apply for a 2026 Arts Access Grant cannot also fiscally sponsor a different applicant in the same year.
- Applicants of a 2026 QAF New Work Grant are not eligible for the 2026 Arts Access Grant."

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

All project activities must take place between January 1 and December 31, 2026.

Public Component Requirement

Proposed projects must include a public component that takes place in Queens* within the 2026 calendar year (January 1 – December 31, 2026) and provides Queens community members with the opportunity to experience dynamic, easily accessible arts and cultural events. Public Components can include, but are not limited to: exhibitions, performances, festivals, screenings, readings, and workshops. Projects may be in any artistic discipline. Preference is given to public programs that are free or have a sliding scale fee to participate, and are ADA accessible.

**Public components may be held in-person, virtually, or a combination of both. All presentations and events taking place virtually must include some type of live component (i.e. an artist talk, Q&A, listening, or viewing event) and must be targeted towards local Queens audiences or participants. Uploaded videos/media or online galleries alone are not sufficient. Applicants proposing virtual public components must still be based in Queens.*

Project Expenses

Funds must be used to complete the project outlined in the application form. Please review the list of eligible and ineligible project expenses below for more information on what the Arts Access Grant can and cannot fund.

Eligible Grant Expenses

- Artists' Fees and compensation
- Please note: QAF encourages all of its applicants to include artist fees for themselves and their collaborators within their submitted project budget!
- Technical Assistance fees (i.e. videographer, audio editor, translators and interpreters, etc.)
- Planning and preparation expenses for a proposed event
- Supplies and materials needed to execute the proposed project (individual items may not exceed \$1,000)
 - This can include but is not limited to: art supplies, sheet music, hardware, and memory cards
- Equipment, software, subscriptions, and training related to the creation and promotion of virtual programming (individual items may not exceed \$1,000)
 - This can include: cameras, lighting equipment, subscriptions associated with virtual programming, and training to utilize these tools
- Venue rental for the project (general home/studio rent is not eligible)

- In-state travel expenses
- Marketing and publicity costs

Ineligible Grant Expenses

- Public programs that exclude the general public, including members-only access workshops or programs
- Recreational, religious, or therapeutic art programs or commercial art or entertainment– this includes clowning, magic, culinary arts, and cosmetology
- Fellowships, scholarships, and/or residency fees
- Start-up costs for new collectives/organizations
- In-school arts education activities and programs exclusively serving a school’s student body (after school activities that are open to the general public are eligible)
- Direct living or general operating expenses (residential or studio rent)
- Equipment costs or capital goods whose total exceeds \$1,000
- Acquisitions
- Entertainment costs including openings, receptions, catering (food and drink), fundraising
- Out-of-state travel expenses
- Programs in which children (under 18) are paid

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

What to Submit

- **Lead Applicant Information**
 - Name and contact details for the lead applicant
- **Organization/Collective Information**
 - Collective name (if applicable) and roles of core team members
 - Artist Statement/Mission
- **Project Information**
 - **Project Title**
 - **Project Description:** Overview of your overall New Work project (max 250 words)
 - **Artistic Discipline:** Select the discipline that best reflects your project proposal.
 - **Public Program Neighborhood and Location**
 - **Project Artists and Partners**

- **Target Audience & Community Impact:** Describe the project's target audience, and intended community impact within Queens specifically. (max 250 words)
- **Marketing & Outreach Strategy:** Describe your plans for promotion and marketing. (max 150 words)
- **Project Timeline:** Detailed production and presentation steps, including public engagement (max 250 words)
- **Project Budget**
 - Use the provided template to outline project expenses (including artist fees, equipment, marketing, etc), income and in-kind donations.
 - NYFA cannot be the sole funder for proposed projects. Please make sure to show that you can cover at least 10% of your project's expenses with funds or support from other sources.
- **Work Samples**
 - Formats accepted: images, manuscripts, audio files, and/or short video clips.
 - Work samples must be representative of your proposed grant project. This can include works-in-process, preliminary sketches and project plans, documentation of events, and/or past completed works.
 - Include titles, dates, timestamps (if applicable for video and audio files), and short descriptions of your work in the metadata field within the application.
- **Supplemental Materials (Optional)**
 - **Resumes of Project Lead and Artistic Personnel:** Submit bios/resumes for the project director and principal artistic personnel involved in one document.
 - **Letter of Commitment or Interest / Permits:** If applicable, upload a letter of support from a partnering organization or required permits for public spaces.
 - **Past Publicity Materials:** Include any brochures, programs, press clippings, catalogs, or other printed or web materials.
- **Financial Information**
 - **Total Operating Budgets for FY23, FY24 and FY25:** Include all organizational expenses in total for the year, including programming expenses.
 - Organization Financial Statement
- **Eligibility Documents**
 - Documentation of Non-Profit Status
 - List of Board of Directors
 - Proof of Queens Residency

REVIEW PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria

Applications should accurately describe the project, target audience, and plans for community engagement. Eligible applications are scored by peer review panels based on the following evaluation criteria:

1. **Creativity and Artistic Merit** – A competitive application’s artistic or organizational mission is highly aligned with the proposed project or program’s goals, and is reflected in the quality of their submitted work samples.
2. **Clarity of Project Proposal** – A competitive application is cohesive and both the project concept and logistics are clearly described. Key participating artists and collaborators are identified and their roles are clearly defined.
3. **Community Engagement** – A competitive application clearly identifies the project’s intended Queens-based audience and provides an engaging, culturally-relevant arts or cultural experience that is reflective of the diversity of Queens. Competitive applications demonstrate evidence of long-lasting, sustainable relationships between the applicant and members of their target audience.
4. **Project Feasibility** – A competitive application is able to clearly demonstrate its ability to successfully complete the proposed project. The timeline and budget are clear and realistic in relation to the project’s scope.

Funding Priority

Priority will be given to individual artists and nonprofit arts organizations whose primary mission is to provide arts and cultural programs at the community level in Queens as well as (in no particular order):

- Artist-driven projects that are collaborative between artists and/or organizations
- Cultural activities that provide cultural access for under-resourced communities
- Cultural traditions and/or contemporary creative expression of cultural ethnicity
- Projects that demonstrate uniqueness/non-duplication of comparable existing programs in the same geographical area
- Geographic diversity and distribution across neighborhoods throughout Queens

NYFA defines “community” as a group defined by any of the following: geographic area, culture, art form, race, sexuality and/or socio-economic status.

Panel Review Timeline

November 18, 2025

Deadline to submit an application for the 2026 grant cycle.

November-December

NYFA staff will review all applications for eligibility and completeness following the application deadline. Ineligible or incomplete applications will be eliminated from consideration and will not be reviewed by panelists.

December - February

Panelists will carefully review and pre-score assigned applications based on their artistic discipline. Panelists will then participate in virtual panel review sessions to discuss each application they have reviewed as a group, assembled by artistic discipline. This peer review process determines the distribution of grant funds to QAF applicants.

Please note: Only the information and materials contained within the application will be considered during review. Any additional information presented after the application deadline will not be accepted or considered.

March

All applicants will receive a notification regardless of the outcome.

April - May

Recipient contracting, payments, and public announcement. An exact payment and announcement timeline will be provided after recipient notification.

January 1 - December 31, 2026

2026 recipient projects can take place at any point within the 2026 calendar year.

If awarded, grant recipients are required to submit an Event Confirmation Form at least four weeks before the public component is scheduled to take place and submit a Final Report within one month of completing all project activities.

Appeals

Denied applicants will have 10 days from the date of notification to make an administrative appeal of the funding decision.

The three grounds for appeal are:

- Non-presentation of information
- Misrepresentation of information
- Improper procedure: Contention by the applicant that: 1) the review of the funding request by the appropriate panel was biased; 2) the decision by the selection panel was arbitrary and capricious.

NOTE: Dissatisfaction with a denial of an award or with the grant amount is not eligible grounds for appeal.

To begin the appeals process, the applicant must first speak with NYFA staff to receive application feedback and panel notes. Once the applicant has received application feedback and grounds for appeal are valid, a formal letter to the CEO of NYFA must be submitted. The formal letter must specifically cite the ground(s) for the appeal, and must request that the decision be appealed.

HOW TO APPLY

Submit your application

We only accept applications via Submittable. First-time users will need to register with Submittable to access the application portal.

[Apply for the 2026 Queens Arts Fund](#)

Applications must be submitted in English. To view the application in a different language, [please view instructions for Chrome here](#), and [instructions for Microsoft Edge here](#).

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted and no exceptions will be made. We strongly recommend that applicants complete their applications in advance of the deadline to allow time for work samples to upload and to avoid potential technical problems.

Applicants will receive an automatic response from Submittable once their application has been successfully received.

INFORMATION SESSIONS

The NYFA Grants team will host a series of virtual information sessions designed to help artists build a strong application. Each live session will have a Q&A section where artists can ask the Grants team questions about the application process.

It is highly recommended that all QAF applicants attend a live info session or watch a recorded info session. Recorded information sessions have subtitles available in Spanish and Chinese.

Registration is required for live info sessions. Please sign up below.

All sessions listed below are held virtually over Zoom and are in English. Registration is required and on a first-come, first-served basis for each live session.

- Friday, September 26 at 2PM EST, [Register here](#).
- Wednesday, October 22 at 2PM EST, [Register here](#).

Recorded Info Sessions

Recorded info sessions will be available for viewing on [NYFA's Youtube Channel](#) approximately one week after the live session. Recorded information sessions have subtitles available in Spanish and Chinese.

1-on-1 Draft Review Sessions

The NYFA Grants team offers 25-minute appointments to provide feedback on your draft application and answer any questions you may have. A draft of your application must be started prior to your review appointment in order for us to provide the most helpful feedback.

[1-on-1 sign-ups are available through this link](#). Sessions are available from October 20, 2025 through-November 7, 2025. All appointments will be available on a first come, first served basis and will be held virtually over Zoom in English.