



New Jersey Cultural Trust Institutional/Financial Stabilization Grants for Arts Organizations Fiscal Year 2023 Grant Program Guidelines

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY CULTURAL TRUST

The New Jersey Cultural Trust was established by law in July 2000 to develop a permanent source of additional funding for arts, history, and humanities organizations to help them achieve greater financial and operational stability in order to improve their service to the public. The Cultural Trust Act created a Trust Fund, the interest earnings of which may be awarded as grants to support capital projects and institutional and financial stabilization projects of *qualified* organizations.

The Act directs the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Historical Commission, and the New Jersey Historic Trust to design and administer programs that recommend projects to the Cultural Trust for such grants. Alternating grant cycles with the Historical Commission and the Historic Trust, the Council collaborates with the Cultural Trust to further advance and strengthen New Jersey's arts community.

CULTURAL TRUST QUALIFICATION PROCESS

In order to be eligible to apply for funds from this program, organizations must first be designated *qualified* by the Cultural Trust. An organization must be a nonprofit arts organization (no schools, colleges, or units of government) that has been qualified by the Cultural Trust. Applications for qualification are available from the [Cultural Trust website](#) or from its office by calling 609-633-0522. Please note that the Qualification application is a paper form and must be postmarked no later than July 20, 2022.

To become qualified, an organization must demonstrate that it:

- fulfills a **primary arts, history, or humanities mission** through active programs and services;
- has been in operation for a minimum of four years;
- has a functioning board that provides financial oversight to the standards set by the Cultural Trust;
- is tax-exempt;
- is current with Charities Registration and Division of Revenue filings;
- and, is able to submit the required support material as described in the application.

FY23 GRANTS CYCLE: The grant period for successful projects is January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS: A qualified arts missioned organization may submit only one application.

GRANT FUNDS: Organizations may apply for grant funds up to \$40,000. Please note that final grant awards are subject to and pending available funds.

WHAT ARE CULTURAL TRUST GRANTS

The Cultural Trust provides grants to support institutional and financial stabilization of arts, history, and humanities organizations in New Jersey. Funding for grants comes from interest earned on the Cultural Trust Fund, which is a permanent investment fund.

Priority: For FY23, Institutional/Financial Stabilization project proposals must address the financial, operational and/or capacity challenges that have significant impact on the organization's ability to serve its community.

MATCH AND FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

There is **no** matching requirement. However, if an arts organization's project costs more than the amount requested, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the organization's ability to provide the additional required funds. Cultural Trust funds may not be used to match any other State of New Jersey grant.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A FY23 CULTURAL TRUST GRANT

In order to access and submit the application form, an applicant must first be registered in the SAGE system.

SAGE System: The [System for Administering Grants Electronically \(SAGE\)](#) is the State of New Jersey's grant management system. This system requires authorization for access. If you do not have a username and password please click the [New User link](#) to request access to the site. You may also contact Robert Worshinski at the Arts Council for technical SAGE assistance. Robert can be reached at robert.worshinski@sos.nj.gov or 609-633-1049.

How to access the application: Once you're logged into SAGE, go to the "View Available Opportunities" section. Click View Opportunities. Under the NJSCA section, you will find the Cultural Trust application.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

The following assistance is available to help you compose and submit your application:

1. Arts Council staff ([Tammy Rice Herman](#)) and Cultural Trust staff ([Isabel Kasdin](#)) are available to help with questions specific to your application by telephone and email. You may also schedule an appointment for in-depth application questions. Applicants seeking assistance are advised to do so well in advance of the application deadline.
2. ZOOM Office Hours: Applicants can participate in a Cultural Trust Office Hour to ask questions pertaining to the application. Participation is free however registration is required. Please check the Cultural Trust website for dates and times.

Prior to contacting [Tammy Rice Herman](#) or [Isabel Kasdin](#), applicants should read the guidelines thoroughly.

DEADLINES AND SCHEDULE FOR THE FY23 CULTURAL TRUST GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS:

Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason including technical/human error. Applicants are strongly urged to submit applications well before the deadline.

June 10, 2022

Cultural Trust guidelines released.

July 20, 2022

Deadline for Qualification applications postmarked to the Cultural Trust. Requests for extensions to the deadline will not be permitted.

July 28, 2022	Cultural Trust application available in SAGE .
August	Application Assistance: Webinar (pre-recorded) and ZOOM Office Hours
August/September	Cultural Trust Board Meeting to approve qualifications.
August 30, 2022	Cultural Trust applications due in SAGE by 4:00 p.m. Requests for extensions to the deadline will not be permitted.
October/November 2022	Arts Council convenes peer panel and crafts recommendations.
December 2022	Arts Council votes on grant recommendations to the Cultural Trust.
January 2023	Cultural Trust takes action on and announces grants.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. The applicant organization must be incorporated in the state of New Jersey. A foreign-nonprofit is not eligible to apply regardless of qualification status.
2. An organization that does not have a primary arts-focused mission, regardless of its qualification status, is not eligible to submit an application.
3. If an organization is deemed ineligible through the Cultural Trust’s qualification process, its application will not advance to the panel process.
4. No modifications to the application may be made after the application deadline.
5. Incomplete applications or applications from ineligible organizations will not advance to the panel process.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Organizational Profile Information Review Form: This form provides the essential information about the organization.

Panel Category: This form identifies the applicant’s type of project. All applicants must select the Institutional/Financial Stabilization category on this form. Please do not select any other option or it could result in processing delays.

Application Detail Summary: This statement is limited to approximately 50 words or 300 characters. It will be used in press releases and for other public inquiries. It should contain the basic “who, what, where, and when” information.

- Sample Statement: “This Cultural Trust grant will help support the Sample Theatre’s ability to replenish, in part, its cash reserves as a result of paying its contractual obligations to 10 teaching artists where school-based residency services were not rendered due to school closures.”

Narrative: This statement is limited to 3 pages or approximately 12,500 characters. It should clearly and concisely communicate your organization and project to the panel and provide context for the other materials in the application. The narrative should directly address the Evaluation Criteria through the Narrative Topics.

Board Chart: This chart identifies who is on the organization’s current board and advisory board. Current Arts Council grantees should check for accuracy if the chart is already completed in SAGE.

Staff Chart: This chart identifies the organization’s current staff.

Finance Charts: Provide two organizational charts (income and expenses) and one project chart. Use the Budget Notes section to detail line items that comprise each of your organization's finance charts. The panel expects accompanying notes to provide clear information about the organization's financial picture in context of the project budget.

Required and Optional Support Materials: Support materials play a significant part in the evaluation process by reinforcing what is presented in the narrative. They are important tools that provide the panel with a complete picture and basis for evaluation.

INSTITUTIONAL/FINANCIAL STABILIZATION PROJECTS

The purpose of Cultural Trust funding is to provide financial support to assist qualified organizations in addressing the financial and operational challenges that threaten stability and resiliency.

The strategies and projects that can accomplish this are as diverse as the organizations themselves. Below are broad categories of eligible institutional/financial stabilization projects. Applicants must articulate that they have clearly identified a stabilization challenge or advancement issue, and that they are proposing an appropriate specific strategy to address it and achieve goals that will produce significant and sustainable results.

Awards may support a wide variety of expenses, ranging from immediate response activities or costs associated with planning or investment strategies that reimagine work and build resiliency and sustainability. Stabilization challenges/advancement issues are limited to the following categories:

- Deficits
- Advancement and Capacity Building
- Working Capital Fund
- Cash Reserve
- Strategic Planning
- Professional Development for Staff and/or Board
- Technology Assessment/Upgrade

Deficits: If funding to reduce or eliminate a deficit is requested, demonstration of a plan to avoid a recurring deficit and help build resiliency is required.

Advancement and Capacity Building: Examples of advancing an organization's overall operating capacity by broadening and increasing income may include forging new partnerships and/or collaborations.

Regulating Cash Flow by Establishing a Working Capital Fund or a Cash Reserve: If requesting funding for a reserve or working capital fund, applicants must show that the board has instituted a policy and plan to replenish the capital fund/cash reserve to the level described and outlined the organization's policies for managing the reserve.

Strategic Planning: Possessing a sound strategic plan is a key step in building resiliency, whether the key to your stabilization and advancement is in marketing, fundraising, board development, facilities, operational and program expansion or greater membership and outreach. Panelists will expect to review a plan that: outlines a planning process; includes who will be involved in the process and how public input will be obtained; outlines the steps of the process and its timeline; includes benchmarks for how and when the plan is revisited and progress measured; and, addresses all fundamental aspects of both programming and management functions of your organization.

Professional Development for Staff or Board: A new skill set may be required in order to perform essential or new business functions for which board and/or staff can be trained. This idea may extend to business systems and services as well as things that help organizations reduce costs, improve accountability, or increase productivity.

Technology Assessment and Upgrade: Effective use of technology can increase an organization's ability to build organizational capacity and/or enable it to connect its programs and services to the public leading to greater financial and operational stability. To be most effective, it is important for an organization to look strategically at its technological capabilities, and determine a specific plan for achieving identified goals, such as reducing costs, improving accountability, tracking consumers, advancing marketing and educational efforts, or increasing overall productivity.

Ineligible Institutional/Financial Stabilization Projects: The following types of projects are ineligible:

- Fundraising events (galas, receptions, etc.)
- Contributions to endowments
- International travel
- Education in a matriculating course of study
- Public programs, projects, and services (performances, exhibitions, educational programs, readings, etc.)

Note Regarding Requests for Increased Staffing: While support for new staff resources is possible under this program, it must be justified in terms of and in the context of the specific operational or financial challenge being addressed by the applicant. Most important, the applicant must provide a detailed, specific plan for fully sustaining the cost of the position beyond the grant period. If a position will be shared by more than one organization please articulate this in the application, as well as demonstrate how the position will have an impact on all of the collaborating organizations. A resume of the candidate or a detailed job description must accompany applications seeking support for a staff position.

INSTITUTIONAL/FINANCIAL STABILIZATION PROJECTS: EVALUATION CRITERIA

Review and reference the Evaluation Criteria in preparation of the narrative. Successful narratives are clear and convincing and are supported by budgets and links to support materials. Panels look for evidence of solid program planning and implementation in accordance with the following criteria:

1. The ability of the project to significantly improve long-term financial stability and/or expand operational capacity of the applicant.
2. How the project fits into the organization's strategic planning and current financial context as a logical next step towards stabilization and/or advancement.
3. The ability and organizational commitment to successfully execute the project including adequate project planning and the extent to which the proposed project can be successfully accomplished with the grant and other resources (staff, consultants, etc.) available to the applicant (present a specific, realistic project budget).
4. The ability of the applicant to sustain or build upon the gains made through the project after project funds have been expended.

INSTITUTIONAL/FINANCIAL STABILIZATION PROJECTS: NARRATIVE TOPICS

The Narrative Topics are the framework for writing the narrative. Compose a narrative that will provide a panelist, who does not know your organization or your community, the ability to understand them in relation to the Evaluation Criteria. Use the required and optional support materials to reinforce specific narrative topics. Please refrain from the excessive use of acronyms. It is a good idea to craft the narrative in a Word document and copy and paste it into the SAGE narrative screen.

1. Briefly describe your organization, its mission, its major programs and services, and clearly identify its audience/community served as it relates to the Trust's priority as context for the project. Detail the organization's major challenge(s) to institutional or financial stability or future operational capacity.
2. Fully articulate the proposed stabilization project. How is this project a strategic step for the organization to establish resiliency or to help mitigate the losses associated with mandated closures? What was the self-assessment behind determining the need for the project?
3. How will the project be accomplished? What resources, including human and financial, will be used? What are the human resources necessary, both internal and external to the organization, such as staff time on the project and to work with consultants?

Note: Applicants may include in the budget the cost of current staff resources dedicated to the project and prorated as such. However, Trust funds cannot be allocated to cover these costs. Trust funds can only be requested for new staff resources as part of the project.

4. If the project will cost more than the grant funds requested, how will the funds or additional resources be obtained and when will these resources be in place? Please be specific and provide documentation.
5. Discuss how the project springboards the organization's strategic planning and goal to achieve overall financial health and reduce operating risk? How does it allow the organization to redesign, realign, and/or advance its work in order to effectively achieve mission-based success in the post-pandemic environment?
6. How will the gains made through the project be sustained, independent of future Cultural Trust funds? What is the specific project outcome expected? How will the project lead to permanent improvement in the financial, operational, or institutional stability or advancement of the organization?

Note: If the project includes the acquisition of new staff resources, how will the position(s) be sustained after the year of Trust funding through other means? Provide a specific detailed plan.

7. Organizations that received Cultural Trust grants in a FY09-FY22 round must provide a brief description of the accomplishments made or progress on the funded project and, if applicable, how the activities for which funding is now requested builds upon, but is different from, the previous grant-funded activity.

INSTITUTIONAL/FINANCIAL STABILIZATION PROJECTS: SUPPORT MATERIALS

Required and optional support materials play a significant part in the evaluation process by reinforcing what is presented in the narrative. The support materials are important tools that provide the panel with a complete picture and basis for evaluation.

All support materials are uploaded or linked in SAGE. The maximum file size that can be uploaded is 13 MB. There is no size restriction for linked work samples. Do not submit links to password protected sites or pages.

Required Support Materials

1. Link to the organization's website.
2. Organization's two most recently completed audist/Form 990s. Please note: submission of documents prepared prior to FY20 will not satisfy the requirement.

3. Brief biographies of the key individuals (staff/board) participating in the project. Be sure the information provided is relative to their role in the project.
4. Credentials and copy of the actual proposal of any consultant including detailed costs, timelines, action steps and deliverables; it is important to include the Request for Proposal and/or the process used to select or to be used to select any consultants so that the panel fully understands the process and/or the decision for selection of a proposed consultant.
5. Brief background on **all** outside organizations, agencies, or institutions that are projected to provide services in support of this project.
6. For projects requesting funds for equipment: vendor quotes.
7. For projects requesting funds for a staff position: resume of candidate or detailed job description for the proposed position, as well as a clear plan for how the position will be sustained after the single year of Cultural Trust funding.
8. For projects requesting funds for a cash reserve: organizational policies for managing and replenishing the reserve.
9. For projects requesting funds to address a deficit: a plan to avoid a recurring deficit.

Optional Support Materials: In addition to the required support materials, applicants may provide up to three additional items of support material. Each item is counted as one piece of support material. For example, a multi-page program is considered one piece; each photograph or article is considered one piece, as is each letter of support, etc.

IMPORTANT: Applications that contain missing materials and/or contain corrupted/password protected files will be deemed ineligible and will not move to the panel process.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The application deadline is **August 30, 2022** at 4:00 p.m. You will receive an e-mail confirmation from SAGE when your Cultural Trust application is successfully submitted. Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason including technical/human error. Applicants are strongly urged to submit applications well before the deadline.

IMPORTANT: Due the high volume of submissions, applications that are incomplete will be deemed ineligible and will not move to the panel process.