



Camden Repertory Theater  
(Camden County)



Vanguard Theater Company  
(Essex County)

*New Jersey*  
**Cultural Trust**

# Annual Report

**Fiscal Year  
2024**



The 1759 Vought House  
(Hunterdon County)



# About the Cultural Trust

The New Jersey Cultural Trust, an authority in but not of the Department of State, was created in July 2000 as a public/private partnership to help ensure a stable and healthy nonprofit cultural industry in New Jersey that is sustainable for years to come and under fluctuating economic conditions.

The Trust provides grants that support the building of endowments, the improvement of institutional and financial stability, and the capital improvement of facilities at arts, history, and humanities organizations in New Jersey. Funding for the grants comes from interest earned on the Cultural Trust Fund, which is a permanent investment fund.

## What We Believe

**Arts, history, and humanities contribute immeasurably to the quality of life in New Jersey,** to the tourism industry and the economy, to the health and vitality of our cities, towns, and neighborhoods, to sound education, to the advancement of inclusion and understanding, and to the celebration of our rich cultural diversity and identity. Nonprofit cultural organizations in New Jersey play an invaluable role in ensuring that the benefits of the arts, history, and humanities are extended to the people of New Jersey.

**Stable cultural organizations can contribute the most to their communities and to the state.** Investments in these organizations' institutional and financial resilience safeguard the future of New Jersey's cultural community.

Camden FireWorks  
(Camden County)



## FY 2024: A Historic Year

**Fiscal Year 2024 continued a trend of exciting growth and development at the New Jersey Cultural Trust,** which began with the restoration of the Trust's staff and administrative budget in 2022. In the past year, the Trust has grown its grantmaking and made numerous improvements to the agency's operations and outreach to enhance its service to the arts and culture sector. These advancements are highlighted throughout this report.

**In FY24, the Cultural Trust received a historic appropriation of over \$2 million — its largest in decades.** The Trust wholeheartedly thanks Governor Murphy and the Legislature for recognizing, with this investment, the importance of New Jersey's cultural industry as well as the distinct value that the Trust brings to the cultural sector.

**The increased appropriation, with rising interest rates, allowed the Trust to successfully grow support for the cultural sector at a time of great need.** Demand for the Cultural Trust's special grants remains incredibly high, as evidenced by the nearly \$1.4 million in funds requested by FY24 applicants. The Trust Board and staff remain convinced that building the Trust and its programs will create greater reserves and resilience for the next economic crisis, natural disaster, or pandemic, and will enable New Jersey's cultural organizations to sustainably educate, entertain, and enrich both current and future residents for years to come.



Symphony in C  
(Camden County)



## A Word From Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State

I have the pleasure of overseeing the New Jersey Cultural Trust in my capacity as Secretary of State. The Cultural Trust is one of fewer than a dozen state-level cultural endowments in the nation, and, in New Jersey, we are lucky to have the Cultural Trust as a permanent investment in the state's cultural community. Access to arts and culture is integral, essential even, to our lives as New Jerseyans. As Governor Murphy recently wrote, "Cultural projects contribute to the vibrancy of New Jersey's communities, serve as catalysts for broader economic development in our neighborhoods, and attract visitors and businesses to the State." Arts and culture institutions are the hearts of our communities. In the recent Americans for the Arts *Arts and Economic Prosperity* study, 87% of arts and culture attendees in New Jersey agreed that the activity or venue where they were surveyed was inspiring a sense of pride in the neighborhood or community. The Cultural Trust's innovative grant programs ensure that these cherished cultural institutions will not only be able to carry out their impactful activities from day-to-day, but also will be able to flourish long into the future. I am immensely proud of the impact of the Cultural Trust, detailed in this report, and of how our residents and visitors will reap the benefits of the Trust's investments for years to come.



## A Word From Bette Daniele, Chair, Board of Trustees

It is an honor to work with the Board members and staff of the Cultural Trust, alongside the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Legislature, and Department of State, to advance our vision of a thriving, financially healthy, and stable arts and culture industry in New Jersey. New Jersey's cultural life is a great treasure of our state, something of which all of us can be very proud. In fact, SMU DataArts recently ranked New Jersey the second-most arts vibrant state in the nation on measures of supply, demand, and public support for the arts. Yet, when times get tough, our vital cultural organizations are hit hard. According to Cultural Trust estimates, more than half of cultural organizations in New Jersey have less than six months of cash on hand, which makes them financially and institutionally vulnerable. On top of this, the arts and culture sector is managing a time of great change, including the rising cost of doing business and changing patterns of audience behavior. There has never been a more important moment for the Cultural Trust to deliver on its founding mission: making critical capital and infrastructural investments that build long-term resiliency at cultural organizations. I am so pleased with the great strides the Cultural Trust Board and staff made this year in executing this mission, with gratitude to Governor Murphy and the Legislature for their continued commitment to strengthening the arts and culture industry in New Jersey.



# Financial Report

The New Jersey Cultural Trust is funded by both public (State) dollars and by private contributions. Every year, the State of New Jersey appropriates a dedicated portion of the hotel/motel occupancy fee revenue to the Cultural Trust Fund, a permanent investment fund. These annual State appropriations are a 1:1 match leveraged by private donations to the endowments of cultural nonprofits as well as by private donations made directly to the Fund ("certified donations"). Through investment, the Trust Fund yields interest income to support the Cultural Trust's annual grant programs *in perpetuity*.

## Historic \$2.189 Million Appropriation

**The Cultural Trust received a historic appropriation of \$2,189,000 from the FY 2024 New Jersey State Budget, its largest appropriation since FY03.** The annual Legislative appropriations to the Trust are deposited into the Cultural Trust Fund as part of the 1:1 match for previously certified donations to the endowments of cultural nonprofits, growing the the Trust Fund's principal. **Growing the principal of the Fund is of paramount importance to the Trust's Board, as larger principal increases the interest income available for making grants.** From its founding through FY24, the Trust certified \$41,483,703 in private donations and received \$32,771,000 in 1:1 State matching funds. As of the close of FY24, the Cultural Trust is owed \$8,712,703 to meet the required 1:1 match for previously certified donations.

## Steady Trust Fund Growth

The total principal balance of the Cultural Trust Fund at the beginning of FY24 was \$24,983,971. This represents growth of \$576,000 from the beginning of FY23. The end-of-year FY24 principal balance will be finalized and reported at the November 18, 2024 Annual Meeting.

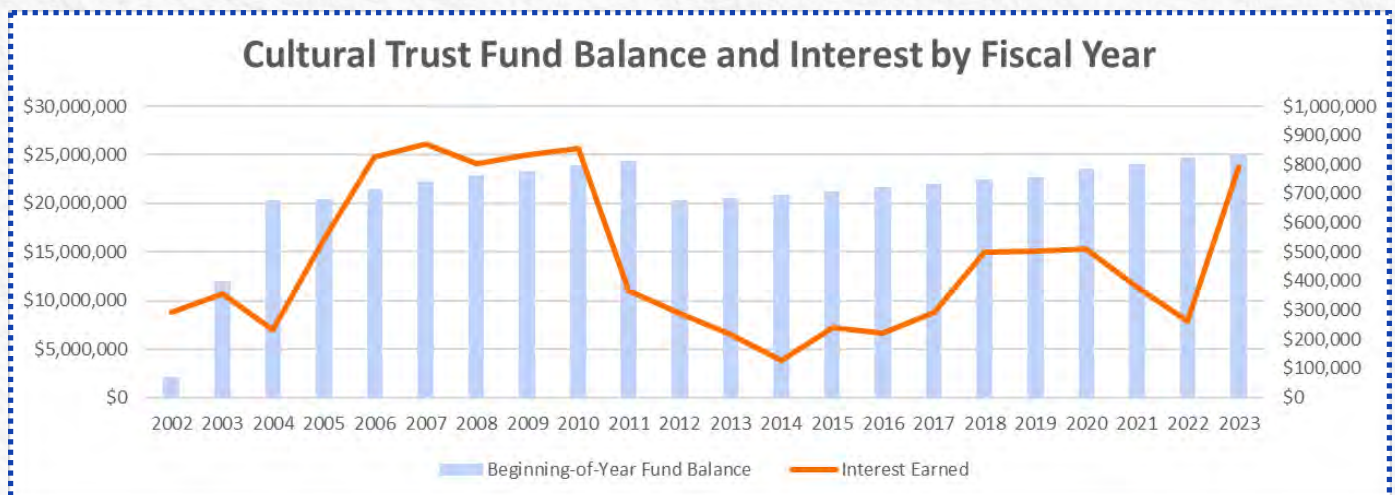
## Responsible Fund Management

In FY24, the Cultural Trust Board provided responsible, attentive, and timely stewardship of the Trust Fund, regularly convening to monitor its performance and consider allowable investments, which are limited to United States Treasury Notes and Bonds. Over FY24, the Trust and the Division of Investment purchased 16 different instruments with laddered maturities in order to maximize interest income available for grantmaking. At the close of FY24, the Trust's holdings had yield rates ranging from approximately 4.3% to 5.4%. Final FY24 interest income will be reported at the November 18, 2024 Annual Meeting.

## Increased Investment Income

Fund management efforts and high interest rates resulted in FY23 interest earnings of \$791,800, reported at the November 15, 2023 Annual Meeting. This interest income is triple the FY22 interest income and represents **the most interest earned in a single fiscal year since 2010.**

**\$791,800**  
in interest income  
earned to fund  
grant programs



**"It's thrilling to see our interest income grow, because that means our grantmaking capacity is growing as well — and more capacity means we can do even more to meet the critical stabilization needs of New Jersey's arts, history, and humanities organizations."**

— Bette Daniele, Cultural Trust Board Chair



**“You can make much more judicious decisions, better long-term decisions, when you’re not worried about what’s going to happen in the next five weeks.”**

— Pamela Ward,  
Algonquin Arts Theater  
Executive Director



## Featured Grantee : Algonquin Arts Theater

Based in Manasquan, Algonquin Arts Theatre is a regional performing arts center that presents eight mainstage productions of plays and musicals annually, as well as musical performances, film screenings, and classes and workshops for children and adults.

Algonquin received a \$40,000 grant in FY23 to grow its existing cash reserve/working capital fund through the Cultural Trust’s Institutional and Financial Stabilization Grants for Arts Organizations program.

The Cultural Trust was built on the belief that one of the biggest threats to New Jersey’s nonprofit cultural sector is undercapitalization. An organization without a financial safety net may find it difficult or even impossible to navigate programs that generate uneven cash flow, address unexpected expenses, weather economic downturns, and innovatively plan for the future.

According to Algonquin Executive Director Pamela Ward, the negative effects of undercapitalization extend beyond the balance sheet: “While cash on hand is a practical reality, the psychological impacts are just as important.” She added, “You can make much more judicious decisions, better long-term decisions, when you’re not worried about what’s going to happen in the next five weeks.”

The Cultural Trust’s cash reserve/working capital fund grants address undercapitalization directly. A working capital fund is a financial cushion used to improve an organization’s cash flow. It can serve as an internal line of credit to cover costs that fall at low points in an organization’s revenue cycle, and it is replenished with revenue as it is earned. Cash reserves are funds that are set aside to ensure stability when unplanned costs arise or revenue unexpectedly falls.

Algonquin’s fund functions as both a cash reserve and a working capital fund. The theatre taps into it on a routine basis to pay expenses in advance such as royalties for future shows and artist fee deposits for the upcoming season. This allowed Algonquin to make its full 2024-25 season announcement and begin marketing efforts earlier than it had in previous years, all without affecting cash flow. The fund will be replenished over the course of the season with ticket sale revenue. Meanwhile, the fund is also available to cover unexpected costs in the event of an emergency.

Algonquin’s fund has had ripple effects on the entire organization. Ward explained that the reserve not only improves cash flow management and provides a safety net in case of emergencies, but also generates additional revenue in the form of interest income. “The reserve has helped to provide both fiscal and programmatic maturity, providing the opportunity for ongoing institutional advancement,” she said. “The organization has never experienced this level of financial security.”

**Grant category:**  
Working capital  
fund/cash reserve

**Grant award:**  
\$40,000

**County:**  
Monmouth



# Grant Program Growth

## Largest Grant Year in Over a Decade

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Cultural Trust increased its support to the cultural sector through its grant programs. The Cultural Trust's FY24 Capital Historic Preservation grants represented the **largest amount of grant funding authorized in a single fiscal year since 2011**.

## Attentive Oversight of Existing Grants

The Trust continued to manage the FY23 Institutional and Financial Stabilization Grants for Arts Organizations, which provided key support for institutional stability and capacity to arts organizations throughout the state. As FY23 grantees completed their projects and submitted reports, the Cultural Trust continued to gain insight into the impact of its unique programs. Some of their stories are highlighted in grantee features throughout this report.



## About the Cultural Trust's Grant Programs

The Cultural Trust offers two types of grants through its annual programs:

- 1. Institutional and Financial Stabilization grants** address the financial and institutional challenges that threaten nonprofit organizations' stability and help them build greater operational capacity to manage and advance their work. Eligible projects include strategic planning, establishing or growing cash reserves and working capital funds, technology upgrades, creating new staff positions, and more. These grants are offered to arts organizations and to history/humanities organizations through two separate programs, and they are recommended to the Cultural Trust by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Historical Commission, respectively.
- 2. Capital Historic Preservation grants** support capital projects at the state's historic sites, safeguarding and making them accessible for future generations. Eligible projects include structural stabilization, roof replacement, HVAC repair, ADA accessibility improvements, and more. These grants are recommended to the Cultural Trust by the New Jersey Historic Trust.

In each grant round, the recommending agency administers the application acceptance and review process. The Cultural Trust then administers award disbursement and grant management throughout the grant period. **Grants are funded by interest income earned on the Cultural Trust Fund.**

## All Matching Payment Obligations Fulfilled to Nonprofit Endowments

**\$1.3 million**  
in matching  
payments authorized  
to the endowments  
of arts and culture  
nonprofits

**Matching Payments Authorized:** In addition to its annual grant programs, the Cultural Trust supports the cultural sector through its Certified Donation Program, which provides 20% matching payments to the permanent endowments of nonprofit arts and culture organizations.

In FY24, The Cultural Trust Board voted to use \$1,324,740 of the historic \$2.189 million appropriation to fulfill all matching payments owed to cultural organizations holding donations to their endowments that were previously certified by the Cultural Trust. The authorized matching payments are:

- \$1,079,140 to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center
- \$80,000 to the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra
- \$75,600 to the Morris Museum
- \$50,000 to McCarter Theatre Center
- \$40,000 to Liberty Science Center

**Permanent, Recurring Impact:** Once organizations demonstrate that they still meet the program's requirements, the matching payments will be deposited into the organizations' permanent endowments and will generate additional revenue for them every year in perpetuity. The five organizations stabilized by these endowment funds collectively serve over half a million people annually, conduct over \$100 million in total annual spending, and create nearly 500 jobs.



# Lifetime Impact of the Cultural Trust

The Cultural Trust was designed to address the critical capital, infrastructure, and capacity needs of cultural nonprofits. Support for these investments is difficult to find, and the Cultural Trust often supports projects that are not eligible for funding from other State agencies. Since its establishment in 2000, the Cultural Trust has supported hundreds of organizations, large and small, from every county in New Jersey. **Trust grants are one-time investments whose benefits reverberate for years, or decades, to come.**

## Permanent, Stabilizing Endowment Support through the Certified Donation Program:

- Total endowment growth supported at cultural institutions: **\$47 million**, including:
  - \$40.4 million in private gifts incentivized and certified
  - \$6.6 million in State matching payments granted
- Estimated additional income for cultural institutions independently generated every year by Trust-supported endowment growth (through standard investment practices): **\$3 million**

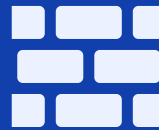
## Specialized Support through Annual Grant Programs:

- Total number of grants awarded: **424**
- Total amount awarded: **\$10.4 million**
- Number of organizations as grant recipients: **211**
- Percentage of total funding awarded to organizations in Southern New Jersey: **34%**

Since launching its grant programs in 2003, the Cultural Trust has funded:



**43 long-term cash reserves and working capital funds**, totaling over \$1.1 million, so that cultural organizations have more cash on hand to prepare for risks and opportunities.



**\$3.2 million in capital facilities improvements at 68 cultural facilities**, making cultural sites more functional and accessible for programs and operations



The development of **117 strategic plans**, so that organizations can engage outside experts to plan for ways to improve their operations, programs, board engagement, fundraising, and more



**37 critical new staff positions**, expanding nonprofits' internal expertise and serving as proofs of concept for growth



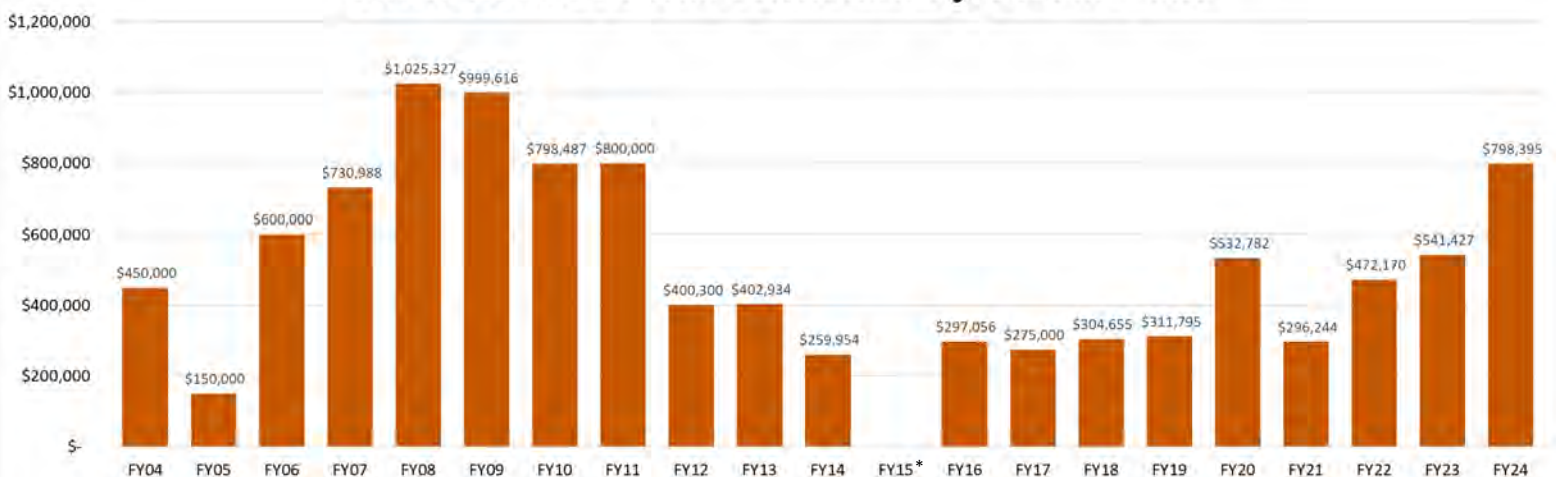
**22 new websites**, ensuring an accessible and effective online presence for outreach, ticketing, fundraising, and program delivery



**Technology worth over \$1.2 million at 48 organizations** to enhance the effectiveness of operations, sales, and fundraising

**AND MORE!**

## Total Grant Funds Awarded by Fiscal Year



\*Grants not awarded in FY15 due to insufficient interest income



# FY 2024 Capital Historic Preservation Grants

In FY24, the Cultural Trust awarded **\$798,395 in Capital Historic Preservation grants to 21 diverse nonprofit organizations across the state**. The Trust makes annual grant awards out of the interest income earned on the permanent investment fund in the prior fiscal year.

These awards utilized both interest earned in FY 2023 (\$791,800) as well as prior year carry-forward interest income, in order to meet demand for grants.

**\$798,395**  
in grants awarded,  
the **largest Capital  
Historic  
Preservation grant  
round ever**

The FY24 awards were recommended to the Cultural Trust by the New Jersey Historic Trust and are critical investments in the sustainability and visitor-readiness of the state's cherished historic sites. **Visitor-ready facilities enable cultural organizations to more consistently deliver their important community and economic impacts.**

An unprecedented 39 applications requesting a total of \$1,389,677 in support were received, nearly **double the amount requested in the most recent Capital Historic Preservation grant round**.

The maximum award amount for Fiscal Year 2024 grants was \$40,000 — a **60% increase over the maximum award amount** in Fiscal Year 2018, when the Capital Historic Preservation grant program was most recently offered. The Cultural Trust Board specifically approved this increase in response to inflation and the rising costs of materials and labor.

## FY24 GRANTS AT A GLANCE

Total number of grants awarded: **21**

Total amount awarded: **\$798,395**

Total amount requested: **\$1,389,677**

Maximum award amount: **\$40,000**

Average award amount: **\$38,019**

Total number of counties represented by awardees: **12**

Percentage of funding awarded to organizations in Southern New Jersey: **34%**

Total annual spending driven by FY24 grantees: **Over \$30 million**

Total jobs supported by FY24 grantees: **Over 300**

**"The projects that come before the Cultural Trust are critical to the operations and missions of these historic sites and cultural organizations, and they're only getting more expensive. It's important to the Board that the ... program takes into account the on-the-ground realities facing the nonprofit organizations stewarding New Jersey's historic places."**

— Bette Daniele, Cultural Trust Board Chair





## FY 2024 Capital Historic Preservation Awardees

Organization	Project Name	City/Town	County	Amount Awarded
Camden County Historical Society	Pomona Hall	Camden	Camden	\$40,000
Home Port Alliance for the USS New Jersey, Inc.	USS New Jersey (BB-62)	Camden	Camden	\$40,000
Historic Cold Spring Village	Historic Cold Spring Village Historic District	Lower Township	Cape May	\$40,000
Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts & Humanities (Cape May MAC)	Emlen Physick Estate	Cape May	Cape May	\$40,000
Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum	Hangar No. 1	Rio Grande	Cape May	\$40,000
Millville Army Air Field Museum	Base Headquarters, Millville Army Air Field Historic District	Millville	Cumberland	\$30,000
Montclair Historical Society	Nathaniel Crane House and Clark House	Montclair	Essex	\$40,000
Gloucester County Historical Society	Hunter-Lawrence-Jessup House	Woodbury	Gloucester	\$39,997
Save Ellis Island, Inc.	Statue of Liberty National Monument, Ellis Island and Liberty Island	Jersey City	Hudson	\$40,000
The 1759 Vought House, Inc.	Christoffel Vought Homestead	Clinton Township	Hunterdon	\$33,000
Delaware River Mill Society	Prallsville Mills	Stockton Borough	Hunterdon	\$40,000
Hunterdon Land Trust	Case-Dvoor Farmstead	Flemington	Hunterdon	\$39,200
Historic Morven, Inc.	Morven	Princeton	Mercer	\$40,000
Old Barracks Museum	Old Barracks	Trenton	Mercer	\$40,000
Friends of Millstone Township Historic Registered Properties	Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church	Millstone Township	Monmouth	\$40,000
InfoAge Science History Center	Camp Evans National Historic Landmark	Wall	Monmouth	\$40,000
South Street Theatre/The Community Theatre (Mayo Performing Arts Center)	Community Theatre, Morristown Historic District	Morristown	Morris	\$40,000
American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark	Botto House	Haledon	Passaic	\$39,975
Liberty Hall Museum	Liberty Hall Museum	Union	Union	\$40,000
Merchants and Drovers Tavern Museum Association	Merchants and Drovers Tavern	Rahway	Union	\$40,000
Reeves-Reed Arboretum	Wisner House	Summit	Union	\$16,223
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$798,395</b>



# Enhanced Grantmaking and Increased Technical Assistance

The Trust built transparency through greater technical assistance and clearer processes. These efforts increased and diversified access to public dollars, as demonstrated by the fact that about 20% of the Trust's FY24 grantees were organizations that had never before received a Cultural Trust grant.

## Responsive, Accessible Technical Assistance

**Updated Workshops and Videos:** In FY24, Trust staff updated the agency's existing qualification technical assistance workshop, which provides a detailed overview of the application and addresses common misunderstandings in the qualification process. Trust staff held two live Zoom workshops, which garnered 72 live attendees. A recorded version has received 203 views on YouTube as of July 2024. Additionally, Trust staff held detailed Zoom contract workshops for FY24 grantees, which provided information on grant requirements and reporting. This will enable successful completion of projects and more effective grant reporting.

**Increased Individual Technical Assistance:** During FY24, Trust staff also responded to 257 individual technical assistance inquiries about the Cultural Trust in general, qualification, grants management, and the FY25 grant program — a 7% increase in individual technical assistance inquiries from FY23. The inquiries were from organizations in all 21 counties, demonstrating the extent of increased awareness about the Cultural Trust and the breadth of interest in its programs.

Staff responded to  
**257**  
technical assistance  
inquiries from  
organizations in all  
**21 counties**



## Improved Grant Guidelines

The Cultural Trust organized a Grant Guidelines Working Group consisting of Cultural Trust staff and staff from each of the Cultural Trust's three recommending agencies. Informed by grantee and panelist feedback, past application data, and frequently asked questions, the Working Group focused on standardizing and refining eligibility, project categories, and application requirements for the Trust's Institutional and Financial Stabilization grants. The resulting template, used for the first time in the development of the FY25 grant guidelines, will create greater consistency and clarity for applicants and staff.

## Valuable Grantee Site Visits

Throughout FY24, Trust staff conducted sixteen interim check-in meetings with each of the Trust's FY23 grantees. These in-person site visits and virtual meetings, a new oversight procedure, provided opportunities to hear about grantees' progress, connect organizations to other relevant State resources, and discover new ways the Cultural Trust can support New Jersey's cultural sector. In these meetings, staff heard extremely positive feedback regarding the experience of working with the Trust.



On site visits, grantees described the grant process as "welcoming," "very easy," and "very transparent."



**“This project dramatically improved JAZZ HOUSE KIDS’ financial, operational and institutional stability and advancement.”**

— JAZZ HOUSE KIDS grant report



**Featured  
Grantee**

## JAZZ HOUSE KIDS

Based in Montclair, JAZZ HOUSE KIDS offers music education programs for youth in partnership with New Jersey school districts and independently at their New Jersey and New York locations. JAZZ HOUSE KIDS also presents the annual Montclair Jazz Festival, the region’s largest free jazz festival.

JAZZ HOUSE KIDS received a \$36,000 grant in FY23 for a strategic planning/assessment project through the Cultural Trust’s Institutional and Financial Stabilization Grants for Arts Organizations program.

Strategic planning and assessment are key elements of an organization’s long-term sustainability. The Cultural Trust supports a wide range of planning and assessment activities through its Institutional and Financial Stabilization grant programs, including broad organizational strategic plans, DEAI plans, climate vulnerability assessments, technology assessments, and more. In particular, planning and assessment projects can provide access to consultants whose specialized expertise and recommendations can uniquely advance organizations’ work.

In their grant application, JAZZ HOUSE KIDS identified an opportunity to increase staff capacity and expertise to support the development of a new major gifts program and the launch their 20th Anniversary Capital Campaign. Their Cultural Trust grant allowed them to hire a consultant to lead planning efforts for the capital campaign, assess and advise on their major gifts strategy, and provide additional support and staff training related to development in areas including board engagement and outreach.

JAZZ HOUSE KIDS called the consultant’s role in launching the capital campaign “instrumental” and more broadly described the project as transformational: “This project dramatically improved JAZZ HOUSE KIDS’ financial, operational and institutional stability and advancement,” they wrote in their grant report.

While JAZZ HOUSE KIDS’ grant project lasted one year, the knowledge and tools gained through the project will continue to serve the organization far beyond the grant period. In the short term, the project contributed significantly to the capital campaign’s success and directly resulted in several multi-year gifts. In the long term, it produced a strategy for securing major gifts well into the future, allowed JAZZ HOUSE KIDS to continuously invest in its infrastructure, and achieved the increased staff capacity and expertise that was envisioned in the grant application. Staff described the Cultural Trust grant as “a gift that keeps on giving; it taught us to fish, so to speak, and has set us up for continued fundraising success.”

**Grant category:**  
Strategic planning/  
assessment

**Grant award:**  
\$36,000

**County:** Essex



# Developments in Communications and Outreach

In FY24, the Cultural Trust increased its focus on communications and directly interfaced with constituents in order to expand awareness of its programs in all corners of the state.

## Created Agency Communications Plan

Cultural Trust staff developed a formal communications plan for the agency, which identified key goals, audiences, and communications partners; codified the types and frequency of communications; and outlined plans for enhancing the Trust's existing communications. This core agency document will guide communications goals and tactics for years to come.

## Established and Grew Essential Channels

**First-Ever Social Media Channels:** In May 2024, the Cultural Trust launched its own Facebook page and X (Twitter) account. By the end of June, the Cultural Trust had 54 followers on Facebook and 98 on X.

**Digital audience for Trust communications grew by 38%**

**Continued Growth in Email Communications:** The Trust continued to grow its email list, which was established in FY23. Over the course of FY24, the Trust's email list grew by nearly 38%, from 644 contacts to 888 contacts. Cultural Trust emails have an average open rate of 61%, which is well above the industry benchmark for government entities. This demonstrates the high level of interest and enthusiasm for the Trust's programs.

## Developed First-Ever Agency Logo

In FY24, the Cultural Trust designed and adopted its first-ever logo. The logo is an important tool in communicating the Trust's work and increasing recognition of its investments all over the state.

Staff also created a uniform color palette and style for Cultural Trust online and print communications, creating a cohesive and recognizable brand.



## Debuted New Print Collateral

Trust staff developed an updated agency brochure, the Trust's first since the mid-2000s, which will serve as a template for future messaging and outreach. Staff also created a rack card and flyers about Trust grant opportunities for distribution at events.

## Strengthened Website Content

On the Cultural Trust's website, staff replaced outdated articles with profiles of recent grant projects. These features serve as a technical assistance resource for applicants as well as highlight the public value of the Trust's programs. Staff also added general information about the Trust's grant programs that aligns with the Trust's new print collateral.

## Stayed Active in the Field

### Developing Fruitful Relationships With Peer Funders:

Cultural Trust staff and staff from the Department of State held several virtual "meet and greet" sessions with peer funders and communication partners, including the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers, the New Jersey Arts and Culture Renewal Fund, and county arts and heritage agencies, as well as other state-level cultural endowments. Meetings between the Trust and industry partners help the Trust build a deeper understanding of the field and consider new ways of doing work in the state.

**Frequent Attendance at Outside Events:** The Trust was represented at a variety of statewide events, including events presented by: ArtPride New Jersey, the New Jersey Association of Museums, Council of New Jersey Grantmakers, and the Friends of New Jersey Heritage. Trust staff also attended the American Alliance of Museums' in-person annual conference and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's virtual annual conference. These events allow staff to uplift Trust programs and services as well as to stay current with best practices in the field.







**The Cultural Trust project “significantly improved Appel Farm’s operational stability” and allowed us to “focus on supporting Appel Farm’s mission rather than wrestling with outdated or inefficient technology.”**

— Appel Farm staff

## **Featured Grantee** : **Appel Farm Arts and Music Center**

Based in Elmer, Appel Farm Arts and Music Center is a multidisciplinary regional arts center. Founded in 1960 as a private summer arts camp for children, it now offers a wide variety of short- and long-term arts and learning opportunities on its 176-acre campus and in the community, including camps, residencies, school programs, festivals.

Appel Farm was awarded a \$40,000 grant in FY23 for a technology upgrade project through the Cultural Trust’s Institutional and Financial Stabilization Grants for Arts Organizations program.

Technology changes quickly and is essential to organizational operations. By investing in new software, equipment, and strategies, arts and culture nonprofits can adapt to changing circumstances, grow their capacity, align with evolving industry standards, and better meet the needs of their audiences. The Cultural Trust supports the one-time purchases of software and equipment, as well as the engagement of experts to support technology upgrades through consultation and training.

As Appel Farm relaunched its operations after the COVID-19 shutdown, the increase in on-site activity and a growing staff highlighted the need for new IT infrastructure. Reliable internet access emerged as a key priority — “especially in rural Salem County where cellphone service is spotty at best,” according to Appel Farm staff. Staff rely on digital resources and cloud-based storage for both operations and programming, and the majority work a hybrid schedule, making internet access crucial for efficient collaboration between on-site and remote staff members. Additionally, Appel Farm’s campus also houses two other nonprofit tenants, and by 2022, the three organizations’ demands on the network’s limited bandwidth resulted in frequent internet downtime.

Using the Cultural Trust grant, Appel Farm staff worked with an IT consultant to identify, purchase, and install the necessary upgrades to the campus’s network hardware, including network switches, routers, and wireless access points. They also purchased new MacBooks and a smartboard that, in combination with the network upgrades, enable effective internal operations and program delivery.

The project “significantly improved Appel Farm’s operational stability,” staff said, and allowed them to “focus on supporting Appel Farm’s mission rather than wrestling with outdated or inefficient technology.” Now, instructors can reliably access internet-based resources in buildings throughout the expansive campus, and vendors at Appel Farm’s community festivals can connect to the wireless network from anywhere to access online payment platforms. The bandwidth ensures staff can work productively and without interruption, and the new smartboard, in addition to supporting classroom instruction, helps ensure that staff members working remotely can fully participate in meetings with on-site staff. In an increasingly digitized world, the Cultural Trust grant gave Appel Farm the tools necessary to “support programmatic and administrative growth,” and to “meet the needs and interests of 21st-century artmakers.”

**Grant category:**  
Technology  
upgrade

**Grant award:**  
\$40,000

**County:** Salem



# Operational Enhancements

In FY24, the Cultural Trust continued to make improvements to its internal and grantmaking processes that will ensure consistency, transparency, efficiency, and continuity of operations.

## Improved Monitoring and Understanding of Cash Reserve/Working Capital Fund Grants

The Cultural Trust offers funding for cash reserves and working capital funds through its Institutional and Financial Stabilization (IFS) grant programs for arts and history/humanities organizations. Cash reserves and working capital funds are essential to addressing undercapitalization at cultural organizations, a key challenge identified in the Cultural Trust Act. While working capital funds and cash reserves are used differently, both provide much-needed liquidity for organizations and serve as a financial cushion to help manage risk.

Every grantee receiving Cultural Trust support for a cash reserve or working capital fund is required to report on their fund for four years. These reports illustrate how the Cultural Trust-supported funds are used and replenished over time — critical information that helps the Cultural Trust and its recommending agencies to ensure the effectiveness of its grants and tailor the Trust's programs to best address the conditions of the sector.

Due to the lack of dedicated staff, the Cultural Trust had not been able to collect these reports in the past. In FY24, Cultural Trust staff made great strides in collecting overdue reports and created a database for report information. This work has strengthened grantee accountability, and it has yielded qualitative and quantitative data that underscores the need for and value of the Cultural Trust's unique support for cash reserves and working capital funds.

**"Your grant definitely changed the mindset of our board in recognizing that there are ways to...create financial cushions to remedy a known need."**

— Sparta Historical Society (Sussex County) in recent later-year report

## Enhanced Clarity and Awareness of Qualification

As of June 30, 2024, 265 organizations were designated qualified by the Cultural Trust. In FY24, the Cultural Trust implemented enhancements to qualification that serve the Cultural Trust and its constituents:

- **Enhanced Tracking of Qualified Organizations:** Staff added all previously qualified organizations to the cloud-based database of qualified organizations created in FY23. This addition of nearly 100 previously excluded organizations has allowed for better historical analysis and understanding of agency precedent, as well as renewed outreach to previously qualified groups. This resulted in some organizations applying for qualification after being expired for more than a decade.
- **Emphasizing Communications:** Staff standardized and increased the frequency of email notifications related to the receipt and processing of qualification applications, and of email and postal mail notifications related to the expiration of qualified status.
- **Increasing Clarity and Ensuring Consistency:** In November 2023, the Cultural Trust Board established the Ad-Hoc Committee on Qualification Requirements, which continues to meet and advise on enhancements to the qualification process.



## What is Qualification?

The Cultural Trust Board reviews applications from nonprofit cultural organizations to become designated "qualified," a process established by the Cultural Trust Act. The "qualified" designation means the organization is eligible to participate in Cultural Trust funding opportunities. Qualification ensures that organizations are in compliance with the New Jersey Charities Registration and Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services filings and have incorporated as non-profit entities. It requires them to prioritize their institutional health, motivating them to operate more efficiently and enabling them to pursue additional sources of funding to reach their potential.



# Operational Enhancements

In FY24, the Cultural Trust continued to make improvements to its internal and grantmaking processes that will ensure consistency, transparency, efficiency, and continuity of operations.

## Readopted Rules

In March 2024, after a year-long rulemaking process, the Cultural Trust adopted its expired rules as new rules without amendments, with an expiration date in March 2031. These rules will provide a consistent framework for program operations for years to come.

## Established General Contact Information

In FY24, the Cultural Trust created a general phone line and email account to triage communications, enhance the reachability of Cultural Trust staff, and develop effective office infrastructure for multiple staff members.

## Ensured Appropriate Records Retention

Staff worked the Division of Records Management to make important updates to the Cultural Trust's records retention schedule, which now better aligns with agency operations and policies.

## Grew Board Access, Capacity, and Engagement

**Re-Established In-Person Board Meetings and Events:** In November 2023, the Trust held its first in-person Annual Meeting since 2019. This was an important step to bolster Board member connections and offered an opportunity for the public to interface with Cultural Trust Board and staff members. Board members were also invited to join staff on site visits to FY23 grantees, providing a new opportunity for the Cultural Trust Board to engage with the field.

**Enhanced Board Structure:** In FY24, the Cultural Trust also established two new Board committees, the Public Value Committee and the Ad-Hoc Committee on Qualification Requirements, which will boost Board engagement and provide further advisory counsel to Cultural Trust programs and operations.

**Board Development:** Cultural Trust staff developed a new and improved Board Manual to ensure equity in institutional knowledge among all Trustees, particularly in light of recent appointments to the Board.

**Held first  
in-person  
Annual  
Meeting  
since 2019**



**“The growth of our team and the reinstatement of our administrative budget have allowed us to make incredible strides. The Cultural Trust’s staff is working to increase our outreach and broaden access to our grants, improve our grant workflows and expand technical assistance, collaborate effectively with our partner agencies, and proactively engage with and support the needs of the cultural sector.”**

**— Izzy Kasdin, Cultural Trust Executive Director**



## Photo Captions & Credits

Page 1, top: Camden Repertory Theater (Camden County) presents *Seven Spools*, 2023. Photo by Kamile Kuntz Photography.

Page 1, middle: Vanguard Theater Company (Essex County) presents *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*. Photo by David Heguy for Vanguard Theater Company.

Page 1, bottom: Cultural Trust site visit to the 1759 Vought House (Hunterdon County). Photo by Cultural Trust staff.

Page 2, top: Broom-making workshop at Camden FireWorks (Camden County). Photo by Camden FireWorks.

Page 2, bottom: Symphony in C (Camden County)'s Catholic Partnership Schools String Ensemble. Photo by Symphony in C.

Page 3, top: Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way. Photo by New Jersey Department of State.

Page 3, bottom: Cultural Trust Board Chair Bette Daniele. Photo by New Jersey Department of State.

Page 5: Algonquin Arts Theater (Monmouth County) presents *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 2023. Photo by John Posada.

Page 6: Arts Ed NJ (Burlington County)'s Arts Education Call to Collaboration, 2023. Photo by Laura Pedrick.

Page 8: Cultural Trust site visit to Camden County Historical Society (Camden County). Photo by Cultural Trust staff.

Page 10: Cultural Trust site visit to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (Essex County). Photo by Cultural Trust staff.

Page 11: JAZZ HOUSE KiDS (Essex County)'s Spring 2024 ChiCA Power Residency. Photo by JAZZ HOUSE KiDS.

Page 12: Cultural Trust Executive Director Isabel Kasdin at the American Association of Museums Annual Meeting. Cultural Trust photo.

Page 13: Appel Farm Music and Arts Center (Salem County). Photo by Kristina Hill.

Page 14: Students at the Oswald J. Nitschke House living history museum, operated by the Kenilworth Historical Society (Union County). Photo by Kenilworth Historical Society.

Page 15: Cultural Trust Annual Meeting, 2023. Photo by New Jersey Department of State

Page 16: Cultural Trust site visit to the North Jersey Concert Band (Bergen County). Cultural Trust photo.



## Board

**Bette C. Daniele**, Chair

**Carol Cronheim**, Vice Chair

**John Paul Nicolaides**, Vice Chair for Finance

**Jill Morton**, Secretary

**Deborah R. Bozarth**, Board Member

**Tom Carroll**, Board Member

**S. Nadia Hussain**, Board Member

**Rabiya S. Kader Esq.**, Board Member

**Claire Knopf**, Board Member

*Ex officio members:*

**Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way**, Secretary of State

**Elizabeth Maher Muoio**, State Treasurer

**Elizabeth Mattson**, Chair, NJ State Council on the Arts

**Peter Lindsay**, Chair, NJ Historic Trust

**Maxine Lurie**, Chair, NJ Historical Commission

## Staff

**Isabel (Izzy) Kasdin**, Executive Director

**Avery Wehrs**, Grants and Operations Coordinator



The Cultural Trust was established in 2000  
as an authority in but not of  
the New Jersey Department of State.



## Contact Us

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