

A man and a woman are shown in a romantic pose, looking into each other's eyes. The man is on the left, wearing a dark, textured tunic with a red fur collar and a gold brooch. The woman is on the right, wearing a dark, shiny, metallic-looking dress with a gold brooch and a long, wavy blonde braid. They are holding hands. The background is dark and out of focus.

Year in Review

Fiscal Year 2025

About Us

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, created in 1966, is a division of the NJ Department of State and a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Council was established to encourage and foster public interest in the arts, enlarge public and private resources devoted to the arts, promote freedom of expression in the arts, and facilitate the inclusion of art in every public building in New Jersey. We believe the arts are central to every element we value most in a modern society including: human understanding, cultural and civic pride, strong communities, excellent schools, lifelong learning, creative expression, and economic opportunity.

Commitment to Public Benefit & Equity

In New Jersey, we know that diversity is one of our greatest strengths. The Arts Council embraces the principles of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. With a focus on learning, data, and accountability, we will continue to assess and challenge inequities, identify gaps in engagement and service, and focus on the details that shape change.

“In New Jersey we know that the arts are a major part of our heritage, our history, our legacy, and our identity. New Jersey is a place artists want to live and work. The arts sector creates jobs, fuels and grows our economy, and strengthens our communities in a way nothing else can. I am proud to work alongside my colleagues at the Arts Council in supporting the Garden State’s exemplary arts sector.”

Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State

“As you will see in our Year in Review, the Arts Council is marching forward, bringing the power of the arts to our communities, our schools, and our families. We are truly fortunate to live in a state so rich with arts and culture, and, in my first year as Chair, I am filled with pride and gratitude to be doing this work with my fellow Council members and the Council staff.”

Felicia Grant, Chair

“We’re proud to present this year’s report and hope you find it inspiring and informative. The Arts Council is dedicated to supporting and strengthening the arts sector, as well as serving the people of New Jersey. As this Year in Review shows, our team continues to be creative, strategic, and impactful through our programs and services for arts organizations and artists, guided by the belief that the arts make life better for everyone.”

Allison Tratner, Executive Director



FY25 Grants

Snapshot

State support for the arts through the State Arts Council comes from the Hotel/Motel Occupancy Fee, a renewable revenue source the arts industry helps to generate, as well as a partnership grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. With a combined \$33,550,200, a record 980 grants and customized services reached all 21 counties in support of NJ communities, families, and individuals.



Operating Grants

\$20,141,880

108 grants



Local Arts Program

\$6,233,800

626 grants



Project Grants

\$2,744,875

24 grants



Individual Artists

\$2,121,717

222 grants

► Operating Grants

Multiyear, flexible support to help nonprofit arts organizations pay for basic operations.

► Local Arts Program

New Jersey's network of 21 County Arts Agencies (CAAs) extended the reach of and access to Council dollars. CAAs support local arts development programs and regrant funds to community-based organizations and projects.

► Project Grants

Based on changing needs in the field, these programs focused on arts education, professional development, cultural access, public art, economic development, and more.

► Individual Artists

Individual Artist Fellowships provided the means to sustain and strengthen the careers of artists at the heart of our state's creative industries. The Folk & Traditional Arts Project helped ensure the survival of valued traditional art forms in NJ communities by investing in emerging and mid-career folk and traditional artists.



93% of FY25 revenue
provided grants reaching
all **21** counties.



Exceeded South Jersey funding
target by **\$261,012** for a total
investment of **\$7,935,990**.



FY25 marked the beginning of a new multiyear cycle for the Council's biggest grant programs - those providing operating support. As the largest funder of the arts in New Jersey, the Council took this opportunity to:

- ▶ challenge inequities in our own historic funding patterns
- ▶ focus on the actions that can affect positive change now and moving forward
- ▶ contribute to stability and resilience in the field
- ▶ provide support that will foster creativity and innovation.

"General Operating Support from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts has enabled the Institute of Music to grow our staff and invest in our future. Serving primarily low-income children with a subsidized tuition model, this funding is critical to helping us meet our goals of ensuring access and providing the depth and breadth of programming that makes our organization unique."

Alysia Souder, Executive Director | Institute of Music for Children

"As a Black, female-led arts organization, opportunities for general operating support are few and far between. The investment by the Council, by extension, by the citizens of New Jersey is an important indicator that our state sees all of its citizens and values their creative voices. This investment is stabilizing our programming and attracting new supporters. We are tremendously thankful and humbled."

Desi Shelton, Founding Artistic Director | Camden Repertory Theater

"Without the General Operating Support from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Artworks Trenton would be unable to provide exhibitions free to the public. Access to exhibitions such as these have an impact beyond measure to the community we serve."

Craig Shofed, Managing Director | Artworks Trenton



Programs &

Services

Building partnerships across sectors to leverage investment in NJ's communities extends the reach of state dollars to serve hundreds of arts businesses, thousands of culture-workers, and millions of visitors and residents. The Fiscal Year 2025 Programs and Services sustained the Council's commitment to equitable, inclusive public service, centered on increasing quality of life for all people.

- ▶▶ **Artist Services**
- ▶▶ **Arts Education & Lifelong Learning**

- ▶▶ **Creative Communities**
- ▶▶ **Folk & Traditional Arts**



Artist

Services

►► At a Glance

Artists are the creative capital of our communities. The Council supports artists in several important ways, through programs that recognize, encourage, and showcase their talents. In addition to providing direct funding to individual artists, the Council supports initiatives such as professional development sessions, paid calls for art, and showcase opportunities.

956

applications from 21
counties received for
Individual Artist
Fellowship program.

1,863

artists engaged through
professional development programs.

1,026

artists featured in
Senior Citizen Art
Shows statewide.

►► New This Year!

The **Meet and Mingle Artist Networking** event was designed to connect artists, folk artists, and teaching artists from across the state. Participants engaged in speed networking, peer group discussion, and teaching artist-led workshops to spark connection and creativity.



Arts Education &

Lifelong Learning

► At a Glance

The Council has a longstanding goal to ensure all New Jerseyans have access to quality, lifelong arts experiences and education. The Council works with an array of partners to place teaching artists and arts programs in schools and community settings, supports training for educators and artists, and participates in regional and national affinity groups to ensure New Jersey remains at the forefront of arts education and lifelong learning.

12,314

NJ students from 71 schools participated in Poetry Out Loud, placing NJ 3rd in the nation for student participation.

701

teaching artists engaged in professional development specific to arts learning.

32

long-term residencies supported through dedicated funding.

► New This Year!

Furthering its commitment to bringing teaching artists into educational settings during the school day, the Council launched the **Long-Term Residency Supplement** for GOS grantees. This year's residencies included playwriting, theatre performance, dance, jazz music, mural arts, and more.

"Because of this vital funding, children in our most underserved communities had the chance to learn how to tell their own stories through the theatre arts. They build confidence, emotional resilience, and a sense of belonging."

Olga Levina, Co-Founder/Executive Producer | Jersey City Theater Center



Creative

Communities

► At a Glance

The Council prioritizes opportunities that encourage innovation, engage new voices, and foster collaboration. Working with public and private entities, the Council establishes and sustains cross-sector partnerships that strengthen New Jersey's arts industry and communities statewide. Initiatives focus on placemaking, economic development, arts access, equity and inclusion, and cultural tourism.

205

organizations from 20 counties participated in the Families First Discovery Pass, the arts access program's highest enrollment to date.

737

arts workers benefited from the Critical Financial Services professional development series.

510

individuals attended the Cultural Access Network's Access Thursday professional development series.

► New This Year!

Arts & Health Virtual Roundtables brought together over 440 arts organizations and community partners interested in understanding what's needed to strengthen and support arts and health initiatives statewide.



Folk &

Traditional Arts

►► At a Glance

New Jersey's many geographic and demographic settings are interwoven with ethnic, cultural, and occupational networks, creating a dynamic array of communities. In them, folk and traditional arts are valued ways of expressing identity and strengthening group ties. To support this cultural richness, the Council supports a multifaceted Folk & Traditional Arts Program, including the support of five regional folklife centers and project grants.

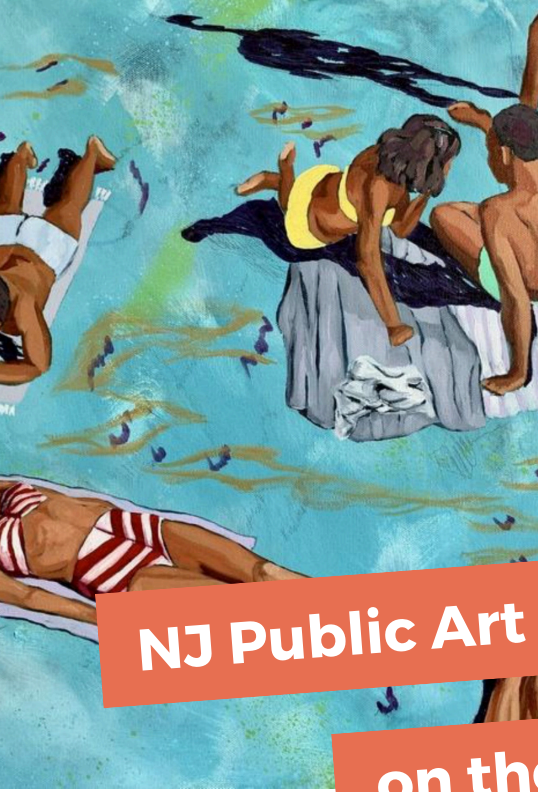
►► New This Year!

The **Folk & Traditional Arts Project** helps ensure the survival of valued traditional art forms in NJ communities by investing in emerging and mid-career folk and traditional artists, fostering access to support for building their knowledge, skills, and training in the culturally specific art form.

Meet the FY25 Folk & Traditional Arts Project Grantees



- Mesma Belsaré, Indian Traditional Dance
- Andrew Shantz, Hindustani Vocal Music
- Charles M. Sporn, Irish Flute
- Michelle Wilson, Foodways – Storytelling & Food Demos
- Nicole Wines, Caribbean Drum & Dance



The State Arts Council is proud to lead the Newark Terminal A art selection committee, composed of members of the statewide arts community and local stakeholders. The committee is charged with reviewing all submissions for The Art of New Jersey, a digital exhibition featuring 20 artists that rotates annually. The Port Authority of NY/NJ and Munich Airport NJ LLC operate EWR Terminal A and sponsor the digital arts program.

388

**submissions were reviewed for
the 2025 exhibition.**

15 million

**people traveled through
Terminal A in 2024.**

► Meet the 2025 Featured Artists

Jeremy Ackman | Simone Anthony-Brown | Kathy Block | Manny Cabo
Nathanael Cox | Charles Crabb | Marilyn Espinoza | Matilda Forsberg
Matt Gosser | David James | Paul Lachenauer | Lauren Lopez
Dennis Maida | Joe Manzella | Joe Rabcow | Channele René
Dorrie Rifkin | Maite Rodriguez | Joshua Suri | Cynthia Vaughn

“The digital art program brings the state’s creative heartbeat to life, offering millions of travelers a glimpse into the artistry of our community. We’re excited to spotlight New Jersey’s talented artists, whose work captures the dynamic energy and rich culture of our state, telling New Jersey’s story through the eyes of its most innovative creators.”

Aidan O'Donnell, General Manager | New Jersey Airports



For more information:

artscouncil.nj.gov

FY25 Council Members

Felicia Grant, Chair | Elizabeth Mattson, 1st Vice Chair | Carol Ann Herbert, 2nd Vice Chair

Sharon Burton Turner, Ofelia Garcia, Lana Gold Walder, Joyce C. Goore, Jeremy Grunin, Gina Hulings, Dolores A. Kirk, Ruth Lipper, Kevin M. O'Brien, Dr. Michael Penna, Vivian Scott Chew

Ex Officio Members: Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State; Senator Holly T. Schepisi; Assemblyman James J. Kennedy

Council Staff

Allison Tratner, Executive Director | Stella Baldwin, Program Officer | Michelle Baxter-Schaffer, Director of Communications | Christopher Benincasa, Communications Manager | Andrew Binger, Program Officer | Danielle Bursk, Director of Community Partnerships & Artist Services | Samantha Clarke, Program Officer | Lindsay Dandeo, Program Officer, Access Coordinator | Diane Felcyn, Program Officer | Jessica Gaines, Program Officer | Tammy Rice Herman, Director of Grants & Strategies | Sally Van de Water, Program Officer | Stephanie Nerbak, Artist Services Manager | Doug West, Operations Specialist | Robert Worshinski, Director of Operations & Technical Assistance

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Pg 2: Roxey Ballet's "Viva Cultural!" Cinco De Mayo celebration. Photo credit: Sabrina Liddel.
Pg 3: Youth Orchestra of New Jersey's 2025 Winter Concert. Photo credit: Fabienne Calkins.
Pg 4: Theatre of Light at Mayo PAC. Photo credit: @katharineboylephotography.
Pg 5: New Jersey Ballet performing Harrison Ball's Purcell Suite. Photo credit: Elyse Mertz.
Pg 6: Mother's Day Date Night at GlassRoots. Photo credit: GlassRoots.
Pg 7: "Friends We Meet Along The Way" exhibition at Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts & Sciences. Photo credit: Katherine Whitlock. Featured sculpture by Natalia Shtybel.
Pg 8: Arts Fest at Appel Farm Arts & Music Center. Photo credit: Ella Quimby.
Pg 9: New Jersey Folklife at Perkins Center's World Stage series. Photo credit: Perkins Center for the Arts.
Pg 9: Rhythm India at Mayo PAC. Photo credit: @katharineboylephotography.
Pg 10: "Loungin'" by Chanelle René, "Sand and Sky" by Dennis Maida, and "Rhythm and Roots" by Simone Anthony-Brown.
Back Cover: Priscila de Carvalho's "Where We Belong" mural at the PATH Exchange Place Station in Jersey City. Photo credit: Priscila de Carvalho.