



## **NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FY25 PROGRAM AND OPERATIONS PLAN**

*(Based on adequate human and financial resources)*

### **FY25 OVERVIEW**

New Jersey is one of the most densely populated, diverse states in the nation, and home to a dynamic arts sector that contributes to quality of life in indispensable ways. Artists and arts organizations at the heart of our creative industries foster opportunities for self-expression, innovation, and inspiration that shape New Jersey's distinctive communities. From the smallest neighborhoods to the largest cities, the arts keep people connected, offering inroads to address complex issues we all care about – high quality education, healthy aging, thriving economies, booming tourism, cross-cultural understanding, and so much more.

As the largest funder of the arts in New Jersey, the State Arts Council is responsible for the development and delivery of grant programs and services that are equitable, accessible, and have the greatest possible impact statewide. This plan, created within the context of the Council's [Strategic Plan \(2023-2028\)](#), is the result of ongoing self-assessment, measuring last year's progress, and accounting for current circumstances and capacity. The plan broadly describes the areas of work to which staff and board have committed and becomes the guide for the individual work plans for the year.

As of this writing, the Department of State (DOS) has renewed the Telework Pilot Program, permitting Council staff to work remotely two days per week and from the office in Trenton three days. The Council currently employs a staff of 14 full-time employees, with continued efforts to build the team to adequately align with the growth of programs and services. The Council board has 14 voting seats filled and three vacancies, as well as three ex-officio members including Lt. Governor Tahesha Way, Senator Holly T. Schepisi, and Assemblyman James J. Kennedy.

The staff is organized in four units with distinct, but overlapping responsibilities: Grants & Strategies, Operations & Technical Assistance, Communications, and Community Partnerships & Artist Services. Each unit head reports to the Executive Director. The Executive Director reports to the Council Chair and, within the DOS, to the Lt. Governor/Secretary of State. The Council's purchase of goods and services, personnel matters, processing of payments, system of accounting, and IT are all coordinated through the DOS.

Public funding for the arts comes to the Council from the State Budget through a dedicated,

renewable revenue source - the Hotel/Motel Occupancy Fee. The Council also receives a multiyear grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Thanks to the continued belief in the importance of the arts sector, the Murphy Administration and the New Jersey Legislature have entrusted the Council with a historic level of funding to support the people of New Jersey.

The dollars distributed through the State Arts Council positively impact individuals, families, businesses, and communities in all 21 counties. Millions of residents and visitors, hundreds of nonprofit arts organizations, hundreds of thousands of artists and arts sector workers, and countless related industries rely on the State Arts Council to strategically, equitably, and responsibly invest public resources – human and financial – to help build a better New Jersey.

### FY25 BUDGET

<b>REVENUE SOURCES</b>	
Cultural Projects Appropriation	\$ 31,900,000
National Endowment for the Arts Grant	\$ 1,195,200
Administration Appropriation	\$ <u>455,000</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 33,550,200</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
<b>Administrative Budget</b>	<b>\$ 2,418,131</b>
<b>Available for Grants</b>	<b>\$ 31,132,069</b>

The Council enters FY25 with a \$31,900,000 Cultural Projects Appropriation from the State, and Administrative Appropriation of \$455,000. State Budget language allows for up to 5% of the Cultural Projects Appropriation to be spent on administrative costs, which enables the Council to build effective internal operations and invest in non-grants services for the field. The Administrative budget for FY25 is \$2,418,131, which includes the DOS projection of salaries and benefits for Council staff, as well as non-salary operations costs, and a roster of public services. In all, the administrative budget is 7% of the Council’s total projected spending for FY25.

The Council has been awarded \$1,195,200 in the third year of a three-year commitment of funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This State Partnership Agreement grant supports Council programs and services statewide, with special focus on underserved communities, arts education, folk and traditional arts, and Poetry Out Loud. The Council is required to reapply this year for a new multiyear grant from the NEA.

In FY25 the Council will, as always, operate in three fiscal years simultaneously, carrying out the administrative processes for multiple grant programs, upholding high standards of accountability, operational efficiency, and broad public support. We will continue to focus on improving access to information and resources, including through the refinement of field programs and services, as well as ongoing upgrades to SAGE (DOS electronic grants system) for

applicants and grantees.

This FY25 Program and Operations plan, the complete list of FY25 awards and programs, including funding principles, annual agency priorities and budget, along with the FY24 summary of revenue and expenditures — as approved by the Council on July 30, 2024—will constitute the Council’s Annual Report to the Governor, Legislature, and to the citizens of New Jersey.

## **FOR REFERENCE**

### **New Jersey State Council on the Arts Long-Range Strategic Plan (LRSP) Goals 2023-2028**

FY25 is the second year of the State Arts Council’s current [Strategic Plan](#). The carefully considered goals, with aligned objectives and strategies, were designed to be both clear and specific, while also allowing room for responsive evolution and adaptability. The goals (included below) establish the pathway for the Council to build on its foundation and achieve success in strategically supporting the arts sector in New Jersey.

#### **Goal 1:**

**Maximize public resources through grants and services for artists and arts organizations to support statewide sector vitality.**

#### **Goal 2:**

**Identify and capitalize on opportunities to engage with, connect, and support networking and partnership opportunities both within the field and across sectors.**

#### **Goal 3:**

**Enhance public awareness of the value of the arts and the importance of the State Arts Council through effective communication.**

#### **Goal 4:**

**Further embrace principles of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion in all aspects of our work.**

## **FY25 PRIORITIES SUMMARY**

The Council is a dynamic, multifaceted agency that administers several different grant programs, provides statewide service and leadership in multiple areas, fosters ongoing communication with the public, manages an active, multi-agency public art program, provides technical assistance, and plays a central role in promoting the value of the arts in New Jersey.

Every year, the State Arts Council invests in hundreds of nonprofit arts organizations, helping to employ and strengthen the careers of thousands of artists and culture workers across the state. Council dollars made possible more than 950 grants last year – a combination of 357 direct grants to artists and organizations and an additional 600 grants through our 21 County Arts

Agency partners. The number of grants projected for FY25 is similar, even as we see the Council's impact strategy continue to evolve.

FY25 is the "top of the cycle," or year one of the Council's largest, three-year General Operating Support and General Program Support (GOS/GPS) grant program, which provides multiyear, flexible support for the overall operations of eligible nonprofit organizations that come through the Council's fair and transparent application review process. Field input tells us this is the most challenging type of support to find from other funders and the most needed.

Last year, we launched the GOS/GPS guidelines, application, and all associated program and applicant support services. Due to the extension of the GOS/GPS program by two years during the pandemic, this was the first time the opportunity was available to applicants in five years, and the first time ever with the Council's historic funding level.

The last few years have brought great challenge and change in almost every industry, and the arts are no exception. We know that while New Jersey's arts industry continues to deliver – offering exciting destinations, programs, events, shows, classes, and more – in many cases, audience behavior continues to change, staffing levels are down, the cost of doing business has significantly increased, and revenue is less predictable than ever. For these reasons and more, funding requests received for FY25 reflect far greater need than the resources available.

For many funders, the Council included, building on lessons learned about need, impact, and equity means shifting strategies for grantmaking and service with compassion and clarity. The "business as usual" that arts businesses, artists, and arts workers cannot accept, is not an option for arts funders either.

With a focus on public input, learning, data, and accountability, the Council will continue to assess and challenge inequities in funding patterns, identify gaps in engagement and service, and focus on the actions that can affect positive change now and moving forward. The Council will also attempt to contribute to stability in the field and provide critical support that will foster creativity and innovation.

Working with local, state, and national partners in the arts and across sectors, the Council will focus on establishing new and strengthening existing relationships, advocacy efforts, and strategic connections that help leverage additional resources and support for the sector at large.

Creating a strategy of grants and services that is responsive to the needs and opportunities in the sector today is the highest priority as we look to capitalize on the momentum of positive change and achieve flexibility, stability, and resiliency, both internally and in the field. With state and federal dollars, the Council will invest in New Jersey communities, families, and individuals through targeted grant programs and professional services that help ensure access to meaningful arts experiences in trusted and new ways. For more information about the programs and services named below, please see the Programs and Services Summary appendix, which begins on page 8.

## **FY25 PRIORITIES**

### **1. Make grants to organizations and artists that strengthen the arts sector and contribute to statewide vitality in equitable and accessible ways. (LRSP Goal 1, 4)**

- Administer the first year of the Council’s largest, multiyear General Operating Support and General Program Support (GOS/GPS) grant program to fund basic operations for organizations in all counties and all artistic disciplines.
  - Achieve greater equity in grant support through methods including: a GOS/GPS distribution strategy that accounts for variables such as panel score, budget size, history of funding, and more; a decentralized approach to support for in-school artist residencies through the first-ever Long-Term Residency Supplement opportunity through GOS.
- Sustain increased investment in the final year of the multiyear Local Arts Program (LAP) to extend the reach of Council funding through the 21 County Arts Agencies (CAA) and improve service for neighborhoods, communities, and populations traditionally under-resourced.
- Launch the new FY26 LAP “top of cycle” grant guidelines and application, and implement all associated program support ranging from outreach and assistance to application intake, processing, and peer panel application review.
  - Capitalize on the opportunity to assess the changing needs of the 21 CAA partners and the hundreds of regrantees and the meaningful impact of the program overall.
- Maintain and evolve customized project grants that support priority areas including arts education and lifelong learning, sector equity and diversity, arts promotion, folk and traditional arts, and cultural access.
  - FY25 includes the launch and/or management of: Creative Aging Initiative (FY26), Poetry Out Loud, NJ Arts & Culture Administrators of Color Network, State of the Arts, NJ Folklife Centers Network, and Cultural Access Network.
- Maintain increased financial support for individual artists through the Fellowship program and continue to foster professional development, commission, and showcase opportunities.
  - FY25 includes the launch and/or management: the largest-ever investment in the Individual Artist Fellowship program, Arts Annual Exhibition, Senior Citizen Art Show, Folk & Traditional Arts Project grants, Heritage Fellowships (FY26), and Heritage Fellowship Features.
  - Assess the effectiveness of the longstanding Fellowship Showcase programs and determine the most optimal way forward.

### **2. Provide professional services for the field based on current needs and opportunities.**

*(LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)*

- Maximize opportunities to engage New Jersey artists in shaping our state’s public spaces:
  - Manage the artist selection process for State-financed construction projects as indicated in the Public Buildings Arts Inclusion Act, with a focus on fair and equitable practices. Public Building Arts Inclusion projects continue to increase.
  - Develop and partner on nationally recognized public art projects including the Public Art Archive, Community-Based Art Grant Program, the TRANSITional Art Project, and more.

- Continued service to the field beyond the dollar through technical assistance programs and professional services shaped through field input.
  - FY25 programs and services include: grant workshops and office hours for organizations and individuals, professional development for artists/teaching artists, Communities of Practice series, Critical Financial Services, Making It Public, Call for Entry (CaFE), ArtsPay NJ, The Business of Being an Artist, and the Arts Education Census Project.
  - In partnership with the Nonprofit Finance Fund, assess arts sector operational data to get a clear picture of the changes in sector financial health.
- Cultivate and participate in statewide and national cross-sector partnerships including those that focus on education, aging, community and economic development, disaster preparedness and recovery, health and wellness, access and equity, and civic engagement.
  - FY25 partnerships include: National Arts Education Working Group, Age-Friendly NJ Advisory Council, Transit Village Initiative, NJ Cultural Alliance for Response, Performing Arts Readiness, Council of NJ Grantmakers Culture Funders, NJ Arts & Culture Renewal Fund, Arts Where You Are, Families First Discovery Pass, and NJ Mayors Committee on Arts & Culture.
  - Serve as a connector, partner, and advocate to leverage additional resources and support for the arts sector and to address priority issues.
- Engage in multiphase development of best practices resource for serving justice-impacted youth through the arts, in partnership with the Juvenile Justice Commission and other stakeholders, as indicated in legislation.

**3. Grow the Council’s multifaceted communications strategy with enhanced tools, information, and materials. (LRSP Goal 3)**

- Maintain effective promotion, education, and communications about diverse arts opportunities, events, artists, and communities statewide.
  - FY25 resources include: Annual Year in Review, Long-Range Strategic Plan, Opportunities for the Field, and Passing It On.
- Evaluate and adapt communications assets and practices to serve changing trends and needs in the field, including web, social, and print content.
  - Working closely with the DOS, maintain efforts to improve clarity and access to information on the Council’s website.
- Continue to standardize data collection and use related to agency services, engagement, and impact, as well as national and statewide arts-impact data and information captured through various methods such as grant reports and field research.
  - Capitalize on the standardization progress made last year to help shape and share messages of sector impact and need.
  - Assess feasibility and timing of grant data collection and availability to compile regular information on the reach and impact of public arts funding.
- Provide high-quality constituent relations and assistance across all teams, and support opportunities for staff and board to publicly engage on the local, state, and national levels.
  - Increase opportunities for in-person field visits for staff and board as part of grants management, relationship-building, and sector support.

- Continue ongoing, proactive communication with stakeholders at all levels and capture feedback for sharing.

**4. Further embrace principles of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion in grantmaking and services.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)*

- Continue to assess and challenge inequities in existing grant programs, services, and processes, focusing on the details that shape change.
  - Continue evaluation of the GOS/GPS program with the goal to systematically address core elements and shape the next “top of cycle” program to best align with agency values and field needs.
- Support ongoing staff and board learning, and create opportunities to share knowledge with one another.
- Communicate publicly about agency goals in this work, and establish accountability measures and timelines for action.
  - Articulate the impact of learning and change on Council programs and services, both internally and for the public, to create awareness, transparency, and accountability.
- Use readily available data and information to better understand agency reach, identify gaps in engagement and service.
  - Incorporate information and data gained last year into the ongoing and new assessments of grant programs and services to ensure alignment and awareness across the agency.

**5. Build internal capacity, streamline operations, and capitalize on expertise.**

*(LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)*

- Continue to improve technical tools, including SAGE, to increase public access, simplify processes, and more effectively organize and use data.
  - Build on the progress made last year to align agency data gathering capabilities and timeline with field and stakeholder needs.
- In concert with the DOS, successfully upgrade to the new SAGE system.
- Capitalize on the refined internal policies, procedures, and timelines developed last year to support realistic agency change, growth, and sustainability. Remain committed to increased clarity in workflow and expectations across the staff and board.
- Continue to assess and align staff capacity and workflow.
- Build on the progress made to streamline internal communications, and foster a culture of creativity, clarity, and collaboration.

## APPENDIX



### **New Jersey State Council on the Arts FY25 Programs and Services Summary**

*The information below is current as of July 2024, and updates will be made throughout the year. [Staff contacts](#) for each item are noted below.*

#### **Grants for Organizations**

##### **Creative Aging Initiative (CAI)** (Samantha Clarke)

The Creative Aging Initiative is a grant program designed to support lifelong learning initiatives for older adults. Creative Aging Initiative grants provide \$10,000 to eligible arts organizations, libraries, veterans homes, and senior and community centers to cover costs for arts learning experiences for NJ older adults (aged 55 and over). This program is expected to be released in FY25 for funding the following year.

##### **General Operating Support (GOS)** (Tammy Herman)

GOS grants provide support for the overall operations of organizations with missions exclusively devoted to the arts and which meet the Council's eligibility criteria. Review and consideration of GOS requests occur every three years. GOS grants are typically awarded with a three-year commitment, subject to available funds and contract stipulations.

##### **General Program Support (GPS)** (Tammy Herman)

GPS grants provide support for the operating costs of full-time, ongoing, public arts programs that meet the Council's eligibility criteria. Review and consideration of GPS requests occur every three years. GPS grants are typically awarded with a three-year commitment, subject to available funds and contract stipulations. This grant is matched 1:1.

##### **Local Arts Program (LAP)** (Andrew Binger)

Since 1979, the Council has worked in collaboration with the network of 21 officially designated County Arts Agencies (CAAs) to extend the reach of State resources and increase access to the arts in communities in all corners of the state. LAP grants are typically awarded with a three-year commitment to CAAs to support their local arts development programs, planning and administration, and to regrant funds to community-based arts organizations and projects, which have local impact.

More than 500 such grants are made annually under grant programs designed and administered by the respective CAA. Any funds received by the CAA that are not regranted are matched 1:1.



## **Grants for Artists**

### **Folk & Traditional Arts Project** (TBD)

Formerly known as the Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship program, this redesigned project-focused grant program will help ensure the survival of valued traditional art forms in New Jersey communities by investing in emerging and mid-career folk and traditional artists, fostering access to support for building their knowledge, skills, and training in their culturally specific art form.

### **Heritage Fellowships** (TBD)

To honor and preserve our state's highly diverse cultural heritage, the Council will award Heritage Fellowships to master folk and traditional artists. These fellowships recognize artistic excellence, lifetime achievement, and contributions to our state's cultural heritage. Heritage Fellowship Awards are one-time, \$20,000 awards to New Jersey folk and traditional artists to help them pursue their artistic goals. This program is expected to be released in FY25 for funding the following year.

### **Individual Artist Fellowships (IAF)** (Stephanie Nerbak)

Fellowship awards provide financial support to NJ artists in 13 different artistic disciplines to help them produce new work and advance their careers. The anonymous review process is focused solely on artistic quality as determined by independent review panels. This program is carried out in partnership with Mid Atlantic Arts. The awards are made in the winter and follow a calendar year.

### **Cosponsored Projects (CSP)**

One vitally important way that the Council achieves its goals of service to the entire state is through a docket of annual and multiyear, cosponsored projects and initiatives. Cosponsored Project Support focuses on a number of priority areas, such as arts access, arts education, artist services, and economic and community development. By partnering with organizations that share the same goals, the Council is able to widen the resources applied to the issue and build a statewide infrastructure of support. These grant funds leverage others and make for more efficient and cost effective use of public funds.

### **Arts Annual** (Stephanie Nerbak)

Since 1984, the Council has cosponsored this unique series of exhibitions highlighting the work of artists living or working in New Jersey. One exhibition takes place each year at major New Jersey museums and galleries.

### **Critical Financial Services** (Tammy Herman)

Cosponsored with the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF), this program is aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding of the financial health and trends of the nonprofit arts industry in NJ and assisting organizations in achieving greater financial health. NFF provides Audit Review & Financial Summaries (ARFS), which highlight NFF's unique and thorough assessment of grantee financial health through historical trend analysis, introductory financial workshops, webinars, and small group financial leadership clinics for grantees to build foundational

knowledge around financial management tools; as well as staff professional development related to best practices in nonprofit management.

**Cultural Access Network Project (CAN)** (Lindsay Dandeo)

In 1992, the Council joined with the New Jersey Theatre Alliance to create what is now called the Cultural Access Network to serve organizations and individuals statewide. Since its inception, the Cultural Access Network has been a multifaceted resource for cultural organizations in making their programs, opportunities, and facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities, and in being compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Making It Public (MIP)** (Stephanie Nerbak)

In partnership with Forecast Public Art, the Council hosts free, virtual workshops focused on public art. One track is offered to NJ artists (at all career levels) and is designed to support artists of all disciplines in exploring their art making practice and expanding into public spaces. The second track is offered to nonprofit organizations, local and regional arts councils, arts and entertainment districts, arts administrators, and units of government, and is designed to help these professionals build support for the addition of public art in their communities.

**New Jersey Arts & Culture Administrators of Color (NJACAC)** (Jessica Gaines)

Established in 2019 and led by the New Jersey Theatre Alliance, the New Jersey Arts & Culture Administrators of Color is a network of professional arts administrators of color created to advance efforts related to equity, diversity, and inclusion within New Jersey's arts community. The Council is a founding partner of the initiative, working with the Alliance and ArtPride New Jersey to build a community that affords members the opportunity to develop personal and professional connections, share resources, and foster emerging leaders.

**New Jersey Folklife Centers Network** (TBD)

Folk and traditional arts development in NJ is guided by a plan created with input from folk cultural specialists, folk and traditional artists and practitioners, and diverse communities throughout the state. Core to the work is the network of regional folklife centers that conduct regional fieldwork and present programs to preserve and highlight the diversity of folk and traditional arts practiced statewide. The Council works closely with the State's five Folklife Centers: Folklife Center of Northern NJ (Passaic), Folklife Program for NJ (New Brunswick), Jersey Shore Folklife Center (Tuckerton), Down Jersey Folklife Center (Millville), and Perkins Folklife Center (Collingswood and Moorestown).

**Poetry Out Loud (POL)** (Samantha Clarke)

Poetry Out Loud is a national poetry recitation program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation and implemented by state arts councils across the country. The Council sponsors NJPOL and works closely with a network of partners to maximize the impact of the program. POL encourages the nation's youth to learn about poetry through memorization and performance, while gaining public speaking skills, building self-confidence, and learning about their literary heritage. All NJ public, charter, private and parochial high schools, and home school associations are invited to participate. NJPOL can be facilitated in school classrooms, after school, through community organizations, and libraries by a teacher,

teaching artist, or program facilitator.

**Senior Citizen Art Show** (Stephanie Nerbak)

For more than 50 years, the Council has administered the Senior Citizen Art Show because the arts and creative expression are important throughout a lifetime. The Show includes artists from all 21 counties, made possible by a multiagency partnership, coordinated since 2014 by the Mercer County Division of Culture & Heritage. The winners from each county show are exhibited at the Meadow Lakes Senior Living Community and on the program website.

**State of the Arts** (Michelle Baxter-Schaffer)

*State of the Arts*, the Emmy Award-winning weekly, half-hour television show, debuted on NJN Public Television in 1981, and aired as a coproduction of NJN and the Council until 2011. Now airing as a cornerstone program of NJTV Public Media NJ, the new episodes are coproduced by the Arts Council and Stockton University, in partnership with PCK Media. *State of the Arts* goes on location with creative personalities and productions and is recognized as one of the premier arts and culture programs on public television, with more than 30 Mid-Atlantic and New York Emmys to its credit.

**TRANSITional Art Project (TAP)** (Danielle Bursk)

In partnership with NJ TRANSIT, the Arts Council created the TRANSITional Art Project, a temporary public art program specifically for transportation centers in New Jersey. The goals of TAP are to connect NJ TRANSIT customers and the surrounding community by bringing new, exciting, and inspiring experiences to the spaces customers pass through every day, as well as providing New Jersey artists both exhibition opportunities and a supportive environment in which to create public art.

## **Services**

**Arts Inclusion Program** (Danielle Bursk)

Since the passage of the Public Building Arts Inclusion Act in 1978, this program has led to the commissioning and installation of hundreds of artworks in state-financed construction projects of state buildings. Up to 1.5% of the construction budget is set aside for this purpose. The Council assists state agencies and state universities in the selection of artists for all projects including those for NJ TRANSIT's Transit Arts Program and such major projects as the WWII Memorial. Announcements of New Jersey Arts Inclusion Projects are publicized through [CaFE](#) and listed under the "Public Art" category when available.

**ArtsPay NJ** (Lindsay Dandeo and Diane Felcyn)

The Council supported a first-ever statewide survey and resulting public dashboard of salaries, benefits, job satisfaction, and demographics of full-time, part-time, and contracted arts workers in NJ. The data report uplifts key findings such as information on pay gaps among gender and race, access to health insurance, and more. ArtsPay aims to address issues of pay equity, staff retention, and sector sustainability. This project is coordinated in partnership with the arts service organizations of New Jersey: ArtPride NJ, Arts Ed NJ, Dance NJ, NJ Theatre Alliance, NJ

Association of Museums, and South Jersey Cultural Alliance.

**Arts Where You Are** (Samantha Clarke)

This pilot project will help the State Arts Council learn and develop best practices for serving individuals who, for a variety of reasons, cannot leave their residence to participate in arts experiences. The Council will work with nonprofit, service, and artistic partners with expertise in fostering meaningful arts experiences and engagement for specialized populations to build a program over time.

**Communities of Practice (COP)** (Tammy Herman)

The Council's roster includes organizations with diverse areas of focus and a wide range of organizational capacity. Recognizing this diversity and the organic cohorts that come together, the Council created "Communities of Practice" to help organizations with similar traits or missions share best practices, concerns, and tools, in order to build opportunities and strengthen the field as a whole. To date, COPs have been developed around high-capacity organizations, arts education organizations, teaching artists, service organizations, and organizations seeking to build financial capacity. Each COP designs its meeting frequency and agenda and is supported by Council staff.

**Families First Discovery Pass (FFDP)** (Chris Benincasa)

In 2018, the Council and the NJ Historical Commission partnered with the NJ Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Health (DOH) to launch NJ's first Families First Discovery Pass program. This program provides families and individuals enrolled in state assistance programs with free or highly discounted admission to arts and history organizations, venues, and programs. FFDP offers broad access to cultural experiences for residents and helps cultural organizations engage new audiences with the goal of building long-lasting relationships. Residents who receive benefits through SNAP, WFNJ, Child Care Subsidy, and/or WIC are eligible for free or discounted cultural programs statewide.

**Folk Arts Roundtable** (TBD)

A multiday professional development convening for individuals working in the folk and traditional arts in New York and New Jersey. Training and discussion topics include programming formats, arts education, folk art and community health, place-based folklife, archiving and fieldwork, and access and inclusion. The event is sponsored, in part, by the Council as well as the NY State Council on the Arts, NY Folklore, and the NEA.

**Opportunities for the Field** (Chris Benincasa)

Opportunities for the Field is a biweekly newsletter sent by the Council. It is a compilation of opportunities for artists and arts organizations that are available in New Jersey or benefit those working in the arts in New Jersey. Listings include professional development workshops, grant announcements, calls for artists, and more.

**NJ Cultural Alliance for Response (NJCAR)** (Andrew Binger)

NJCAR is a network of organizations, agencies, and individuals dedicated to safeguarding NJ's cultural community, its assets, and people. Through communication and training about

emergency preparedness, risk assessment and disaster mitigation, NJCAR helps NJ's arts, history, and cultural sectors preserve assets and sustain operations before, during, and after disasters. The Council is a founding member of NJCAR.

**Passing It On** (TBD)

*Passing It On* is a quarterly newsletter that highlights the work of folk and traditional artists who have been awarded project or fellowship grants from the Council. Each issue is designed to share the unique perspectives and stories of New Jersey folk and traditional artists, reflecting the diverse communities, aesthetics, and values of the cultures their art forms represent.

**Performing Arts Readiness (PAR)** (Andrew Binger)

PAR was launched in January 2017 through a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Council was one of the founding partners. The project was formed in the recognition that performing arts organizations are especially vulnerable to disasters and emergencies which can halt performances, sometimes indefinitely, and can put an organization out of business overnight. The project includes: outreach and community engagement, information resources, mentoring programs, and grants.

**Public Art Archive** (Danielle Bursk)

By undertaking this online archive of public art from across the state, the Council aims to make New Jersey's vast collection of art in public spaces easy to find, connect with, and enjoy. This online tool provides open access to public art for anyone visiting, studying, or simply passing by, and helps residents locate art in their own communities. This archive will continue to grow, as will New Jersey's collection of inspiring works of art.

## **Partnerships**

**Age-Friendly NJ Advisory Council** (Samantha Clarke)

Created by Executive Order 227, the Age-Friendly NJ Advisory Council works to identify opportunities for creating livable communities for people of all ages in NJ, recommend best practices for age-friendly work, and promote community inclusion across the state.

**Community-Based Art Grant Program** (Danielle Bursk)

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection was awarded funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to partner with the Council to develop and implement the Community-Based Art Grant Program. The program addresses the need to involve and inform the public about coastal hazard impacts and risk reduction, by offering grants to community-based organizations to work with artists to create temporary public art projects that engage the community in new ways.

**Council of NJ Grantmakers Culture Funders** (Tammy Herman)

The CNJG Culture Funders Affinity Group includes private and public grantmakers working in the arts and humanities across NJ. It aims to maximize the leadership potential and grantmaking abilities of those interested in developing a strong and thriving arts community in New Jersey.

As of FY24, the Council's Director of Grants & Strategies acts as the Co-Chair of the Culture Funders Affinity Group.

**National Arts Education Working Group** (Samantha Clarke)

Facilitated by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, New Jersey serves a leadership role in the Working Group which brings together arts education managers from each region of the country. Together, the group develops and implements ongoing learning and networking opportunities throughout the year (both virtual and in-person), including the annual Arts Education Professional Development Institute, the Mid-Atlantic regional monthly meetings, and the Mid-Atlantic Teaching Artist Retreat.

**New Jersey Arts & Culture Renewal Fund** (Tammy Herman)

Originally named the NJ Arts and Culture Recovery Fund, NJACRF was established in 2020 to ensure the survival and strength of the state's arts and history sectors during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund changed its name in 2022 to reflect its focus on supporting the arts and history sectors through sustained, equitable grantmaking to nonprofit organizations most vulnerable to sector disruptions. The Council is a cofounder of NJACRF.

**New Jersey Mayors Committee on Arts & Culture** (Andrew Binger)

The NJ Mayors Committee on Arts & Culture is a statewide initiative to increase communication and share information with municipal leaders about the many ways arts and culture improve community life. The Committee extends the collaborative relationship that ArtPride New Jersey and the Arts Council continues to foster with municipal leaders through their participation in the NJ League of Municipalities Conference.

**Transit Village Initiative** (Andrew Binger)

The NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and NJ TRANSIT lead a multi-agency Smart Growth partnership known as the Transit Village Initiative. The Transit Village Initiative creates incentives for municipalities to redevelop or revitalize the areas around transit stations using design standards of transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD helps municipalities create attractive, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods where people can live, shop, work, and play without relying on automobiles.