



New Jersey State Council on the Arts FY21 COVID Critical Needs Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

This document is also [available in Spanish](#). (Este documento también está disponible [en español](#).)

Below are some of the most frequently asked questions directed to the Council. Should your question not be addressed below, please contact the [appropriate staff member](#).

Q. My organization is incorporated and has been providing public programs for three years, but we just started the IRS Tax Exempt process. Are we eligible?

A. The track record in programming counts as long as your 501c3 status is complete at the time of filing the application, and you have achieved both incorporation and tax-exempt status at the time of application.

Q. Is multi-county impact a requirement for this program?

A. No, multi-county impact is not required for the COVID Critical Needs Program. Local and multi-county impact NJ nonprofit organizations with an arts-based mission are eligible to apply.

Q. What is considered COVID-19 PPE and safeguarding equipment?

A. COVID-19 PPE and safeguarding materials protect employees and customers. For the purpose of this grant program, *PPE* and *Safeguarding Equipment* is defined as supplies and equipment that have been identified to help prevent the hazards associated with COVID-19. Your grant narrative should address how the *PPE* and *Safeguarding Equipment* detailed in the project budget helps prevent the hazards associated with COVID-19 and if its use is recommended in any guidelines, executive orders, or safety recommendations.

Eligible supplies and equipment can include:

- Cloth face masks
- 3-ply surgical face mask
- Face shields and/or goggles
- Sanitizing gels
- Screening devices, e.g., touchless thermometers
- Disinfecting supplies
- Workplace safeguarding equipment, e.g.: plexiglass panels and dividers
- Signage, marking devices, and other social distancing tools
- Air filters
- Single room HEPA air purifiers
- Touch free equipment, e.g.: sinks, toilets, paper towels dispensers, sanitizer stations
- Disinfectant mist machines

- Additionally, the cost of a licensed contractor such as a plumber and electrician can be supported if the services are specifically for the installation of eligible equipment.

Capital improvement expenses, consultant fees, and cleaning services do not qualify as eligible expenses. This fund does not support on-going or multiple programs, or the general operations of an organization.

Q. What is a COVID-19 policy and procedure plan?

A. A COVID-19 policy and procedure plan is any type of document that details how your organization is addressing COVID-19 safety and prevention. Required elements of a plan for this program include:

- Details on how the policies and procedures address rules and regulations as specified in New Jersey Executive Orders.
- Details on how policies and procedures address guidelines as specified by the New Jersey Department of Health.
- *Details on how the policies and procedures follow guidelines and regulations from professional associations are recommended, but not required.*
- An eligible plan also details an employee training process on the policies and procedures.

Q. Does the Council fund capital renovation or construction projects?

A. No. In the COVID Critical Needs Grant application, organizations should only present their operating and project budgets as requested. Operating budgets should not include income and expenses related to major capital projects.

Q. How are grants being selected?

A. Program officers at the Arts Council will review applications for completion based on eligibility requirements. Applications that have been deemed eligible will be placed into a random number generator that will assign each applicant a number. Those applicants will then be sorted in numerical order. Grants will be awarded to applicants following numeric order until the fund is depleted. We anticipate more requests for funding than there are funds to distribute.

Q. What is the list of Categories to select from when writing the subject of my application email?

A. All applicants must identify the category that best applies to the organization. **This category must be included in the subject line of your application email.**

CCN-{insert category}-{insert county}-{insert name of organization}.

SAMPLE SUBJECT EXAMPLE: **CCN-Dance-Gloucester County-No Name Center.**

Consult the glossary for definitions of the following categories:

- Dance
- Music

- Opera/Musical Theatre
- Theatre
- Visual Arts
- Crafts
- Media
- Literature
- Folk Arts
- Multidisciplinary
- Performing Arts Presenters
- Arts Basic to Education

Q. My organization has a different fiscal year than the Council's. Does that affect the way I report information and financials?

A. Eligible expenses must take place between July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021. All information must be for the 12-month July-June period even if your organization's fiscal year ends at a time other than June 30. In this case, you would take your expenses by month for the July-June period that for your organization spans two fiscal years and complete the charts.

Q. Isn't the grants process really political and doesn't it depend on who you know?

A. Absolutely not. The Council maintains a conflict-free process that completely removes staff from the award decision process. The Grants Committee of the Council makes funding recommendations. Committee members recuse themselves and abstain from discussion and voting if there is an applicant with which they have even the perception of an affiliation, as does the full Council when it votes on the Committee's recommendations.

Q. How is it fair to compare my small organization to a major institution with a long history given that our applications are reviewed in the same way?

A. Applicants are not compared to one another. The Council recognizes that the needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic span the entire state. The need of organizations is not being assessed - if an applicant meets eligibility requirements, they will be placed into a randomized lottery process. This process eliminates any chance of human bias that can be associated with assessing need.

Q. Why are applications not funded, and what recourse does one have?

A. All applications will be reviewed based on eligibility requirements, applications that are missing required support materials, do not address each of the eligibility requirements, are requesting funding for ineligible expenses, are incomplete, or have incorrect subject lines will be deemed ineligible. Applicants that are deemed eligible will move to the next step in the approval process. Grants will be awarded to applicants selected by the lottery distribution order until the fund is depleted. Once funding is depleted, additional funding for this program is not available.

Q. What constitutes a half-time administrative staff person?

A. Your organization is supported administratively by at least ONE paid employee working, at minimum, 15-20 hours a week per employee.

Q. Is there any information about how to identify PPE needs?

A. The state of New Jersey planning tool to assist with identifying PPE needs can be [accessed here](#).

Q. Is there any information about the State of NJ Executive Orders and NJ Department of Health Guidelines?

A. The State of NJ has a COVID-19 information portal. Many details related to the arts can be [found here](#). Additionally, State of NJ Workplace Safety Standards can be [found here](#).

Q. Where do I go to update or learn more about my Charities Registration?

A. Update your charities registration here:
<https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/charities/Pages/charities-registration-information.aspx>

Q. Where do I go for my online renewal with the Division of Revenue?

A. <https://www.njportal.com/DOR/AnnualReports/Business?sessionType=AnnualReport>

Q. My organization is not registered in NJ Start. Is it required?

A. Yes. Registration with NJ Start is required in order to receive grant payments. You can register for NJ Start here: <https://www.njstart.gov/bsol/>. The Vendor Support Page has information to assist you with the registration process, and you can access the page here: <https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/vendor.shtml>. *All grantees are encouraged to select the ETF option in order to limit delays in receiving funds.*

Q. Does the NJ State Council on the Arts offer translation services?

A. Google Translate: <https://translate.google.com>.
The New Jersey State Council on the Arts website, pages, and documents may be translated for your convenience using translation software powered by Google Translate, a free online language translation service that can translate text and web pages into different languages. Reasonable efforts have been made to verify the reliability of the translation service, however, no automated translation is perfect nor is it intended to replace human translators. NJ State Council on the Arts does not guarantee the accuracy of the translated text. Some pages may not be accurately translated due to the limitations of the translation software. Text in images, PDF files, Word documents or other document types cannot be translated. The official text is the English version. Any discrepancies or differences created in the translation are not binding and have no legal effect for compliance or enforcement purposes. If any questions arise related to the accuracy of the information contained in the translation, please refer to the English version of the website which is the official version.