



New Jersey Cultural Trust Capital Facilities & Institutional/Financial Stabilization Grants for Arts Organizations Fiscal Year 2021 Grant Program Guidelines

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY CULTURAL TRUST

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

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

QUALIFICATION

In order to be eligible to apply for funds from this program, organizations must first be designated *qualified* by the Cultural Trust. An organization must be a New Jersey-incorporated, nonprofit arts organization (no schools, colleges, units of government, or religious organizations) that has been qualified by the Cultural Trust. Applications for qualification are available from the [Cultural Trust website](#) or from its office by calling 609-984-6767 and must be submitted by February 20, 2020 in order to be qualified by April 9, 2020.

To become qualified, an organization must demonstrate that it:

- fulfills a **primary arts mission** through active programs and services;
- has been in operation for a minimum of four years;
- is tax-exempt; and
- has a functioning board that provides financial oversight to the standards set by the Cultural Trust

FY21 GRANTS CYCLE: The grant period for successful projects is January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

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

GRANT SIZE: Grant awards will generally range between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

WHAT ARE CULTURAL TRUST PROJECTS

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

A qualified organization may submit an application for only one of the following two eligible projects:

1. **Accessibility Project:** a project that improves access to an arts organization's facility or services for people with disabilities.
2. **Institutional/Financial Stabilization Project:** a project that addresses financial and operational challenges or helps build greater operational capacity.

Priority: For this round, the Cultural Trust is placing a priority on applications for projects that improve a qualified arts organization's physical accessibility or patron services in support of its Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Plan.

MATCH AND FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

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

HOW TO APPLY FOR A FY21 CULTURAL TRUST GRANT

A Notice of Intent to Apply (NOI) is the first required step in the grant process. In order to access and submit the NOI form, an applicant must first be registered in the SAGE system. The Council will not accept an application that was not preceded by a NOI.

The purpose of the NOI is to provide Council staff with the opportunity to assess potential applicants by previewing proposals and ensuring eligibility requirements are met. The NOI form is not binding.

Each organization that submits a NOI is required to schedule a meeting with Program Staff. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that applicants meet all eligibility requirements and to screen for potential problems before an application is submitted. Organizations can expect to receive meeting requests from Program Staff in February/March.

SAGE System: The [System for Administering Grants Electronically \(SAGE\)](#) is the State of New Jersey's grant management system. This system requires authorization for access. If you do not have a username and password please click the [New User link](#) to request access to the site. Please contact Patricia Hamilton-Ross at patricia.hamilton-ross@sos.nj.gov or 609-633-1273 for technical assistance in SAGE.

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

Note: SAGE does not work properly with Google Chrome.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

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

1. Application webinar - please check the Council's [website](#) for details.

- Council staff - [Tammy Herman](#) (Institutional/Financial Stabilization Projects) and [Mary Eileen Fouratt](#) (Accessibility Projects) are available to help with questions specific to your application by telephone and email. You may also schedule an appointment for in-depth application questions. Applicants seeking assistance are advised to contact [Staff](#) well in advance of the application deadline.

Prior to contacting [Tammy Herman](#) or [Mary Eileen Fouratt](#), applicants should read the guidelines thoroughly.

DEADLINES AND SCHEDULE FOR THE FY21 CULTURAL TRUST GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS:

January 16, 2020	Notice of Intent (NOI) available in SAGE .
February 20, 2020	Notice of Intent is due (<u>required</u> but non-binding). The Council will not accept a Cultural Trust Application that was not preceded by a NOI.
February 20, 2020	Deadline for applications submitted to the Cultural Trust for Qualification.
March 12, 2020	Application available in SAGE for eligible applicants.
April 9, 2020	Applications due from eligible applicants.
May to June 2020	Council convenes peer panels, craft recommendations.
July 2020	Council votes on award recommendations
Fall 2020	Cultural Trust will take action on and announce grants.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

- Organizations that have received Cultural Trust funding in two of the immediate past four rounds of application (FY17 through FY20) are not eligible to apply for the FY21 cycle. However, these organizations may participate as part of a collaborative application.
- An organization deemed ineligible through the Council’s NOI process will not be permitted to submit an application.
- Any materials submitted after the application deadline will not be accepted.
- Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible and will not advance to the panel process.
- Cultural Trust grants are extremely competitive given the number of applications submitted and the amount of funds available. Due to the significant interest in this program and the volume of applications received, applicants are encouraged to think strategically about proposed projects and consider the following to facilitate the development of a project:
 - Talk with your staff and board;
 - Review your organization’s strategic plan to identify relevant goals;
 - Define the challenges your organization is confronting with regard to achieving greater stability or access;
 - Examine organizational human and financial resource capacity to determine a feasible project that can be accomplished and sustained beyond the grant period.
- Grants may not replace other funds and must be in addition to funds originally and normally budgeted for or associated with the basic operations of an organization.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

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

Panel Category: This form identifies the applicant’s type of project.

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

Sample Statement: “This Cultural Trust grant will help support the Sample Theatre’s purchase of looping equipment to assist individuals with hearing loss, especially those who wear hearing aids and those with cochlear implants for its upcoming musical theatre productions.”

Narrative: This statement is limited to 3 pages or approximately 12,500 characters. It should clearly and concisely communicate your organization and project to the panel and provide context for the other materials in the application. The narrative should directly address the Evaluation Criteria through the Narrative Topics. For Accessibility Projects, see pages 5 and 6. For Institutional/Financial Stabilization projects, see pages 9 and 10.

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

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

Finance Charts: Provide two organizational charts (income and expenses) and one project chart. Use the Budget Notes section to describe or explain your organization’s finance charts. The panel expects accompanying notes to provide clear information about the organization’s financial picture in context of the project budget.

Required and Optional Support Materials: Support material requirements vary according to project type. Detailed information is found in each project’s support material section. For Accessibility Projects, see pages 6 and 7. For Institutional/Financial Stabilization projects, see pages 10 and 11.

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS

For FY21, priority will be given to projects that improve access to an arts organization's facility or services for people with disabilities. Organizations intent on proposing an Accessibility Project application should facilitate the development of the project in cooperation with its ADA Coordinator, staff and board:

- Define the challenges the organization is confronting with regard to providing access to people with disabilities;
- Review the organization's ADA Plan to identify accessibility goals;
- Examine facility and access services to determine a feasible project that can be accomplished in 18 months and sustained beyond the grant period.

Applicants must provide a completed three-year ADA Plan that includes the project for which the organization is applying to the Cultural Trust. The ADA Plan is required for the NOI application due on February 20, 2020. Current Council grantees must also include its most recent ADA Plan Evaluation. Organizations not current GOS/GPS grantees of the State Arts Council can access the ADA Plan template through the [ADA Planning](#) section on the [Cultural Access Network Project's](#) website.

Ineligible Accessibility Projects: Capital projects for buildings listed on the New Jersey and/or National Registers of Historic Places or that are a contributing resource to a listed Historic District are ineligible. Organizations with stewardship responsibility for such structures can apply for funding through the NJ Historic Trust in the years in which it reviews Cultural Trust Grants.

Reporting Requirements: Any construction projects requiring architectural plans, building permits, or certificates of occupancy, must provide an Architect Report (AIA Form verifying the satisfactory completion of all work and adherence to local building codes) as a requirement of the final report and reimbursement.

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS: EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

1. The ability of the project to significantly improve access for people with disabilities.
2. How the project fits into the organization's ADA Plan.
3. The ability and organizational commitment to successfully execute the project including adequate project planning and the extent to which the proposed project can be successfully accomplished with the grant and other resources (staff, consultants, etc.) available to the applicant (present a specific, realistic project budget).
4. The ability of the applicant to sustain or build upon the gains made through the project after project funds have been expended.

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS: NARRATIVE TOPICS

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

1. Briefly describe your organization, its mission, its major programs, and ADA services, and the audience to be served as context for the project, and the organization's major challenge(s) to providing access.

2. Fully describe the proposed access project. Describe why you think this project addresses the major challenge as stated in your answer to question #1. Describe the property's use and accessibility. How will the proposed project benefit the user's use?
3. Discuss why the project is a high priority and how it fits into your organization's ADA Plan and patron services. How is this project a logical next strategic step for providing access? What was the self-assessment behind determining the need for the project?
4. How will the project be accomplished? What resources (staffing, other funds) will be used? What are the human resources necessary, both internal and external to the organization, such as staff time on the project and to work with consultants? Applicants may include in the application the cost of current staff resources dedicated to the project and pro-rated as such, however Trust funds requested cannot be used to cover these costs. If the project will cost more than the grant funds requested, how will the funds or additional resources be obtained and when will these resources be in place? Please be specific and provide documentation (account statements, letter of commitment from additional public or private funding source(s), or fundraising plan).
5. How will the improvements made through the project be sustained, independent of future Cultural Trust funds? What is the specific project outcome expected? How will the project lead to permanent improvement for patron access?
6. Organizations that received Cultural Trust grants in a FY09-FY20 round must provide a brief description of the accomplishments made or progress on the funded project and, if applicable, how the activities for which funding is now requested builds upon, but is different from, the previous grant-funded activity.

ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS: SUPPORT MATERIALS

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

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

Required Support Materials

1. Link to the organization's website.
2. Organization's most recently completed audit.
3. Current Council grantees must also include the most recent Audit Review Summary and answers to the Due Diligence Questions. Please combine and upload with the audit as one document.
4. Brief biography of the ADA Coordinator.
5. Credentials of a registered New Jersey architect or consultant. It is important to include the Request for Proposal (RFP) and/or the process used to select or to be used to select any architect or consultant so that the panel fully understands the process and/or the decision for selection of a proposed consultant.
Note: The credentials and experience of the project team and consultants are considered in relation to the scope of work. Architects must be licensed in the State of New Jersey. Consultants/contractors must demonstrate that they meet/exceed accepted professional qualifications and are licensed in their respective fields.
6. If available, a copy of the architect's scope of work including costs, timeline/construction schedule, and deliverables for payment.

7. For projects requesting funds for equipment, include vendor quotes.
8. Current ADA Plan (if available, include Evaluation). Organizations that are not Council GOS/GPS grantees must download, complete, and submit a three-year ADA Plan that includes the proposed project as one of its goals.
9. Deed or valid five-year lease to demonstrate control of the property.
10. Up to 5 images of the space or area to be renovated.

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

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The application deadline is **April 9, 2020** at 11:59 p.m. You will receive an e-mail confirmation from SAGE when your application is successfully submitted.

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

INSTITUTIONAL/FINANCIAL STABILIZATION PROJECTS

The Cultural Trust Act intentionally defines the term “Institutional and Financial Stabilization” very broadly. The goal is both to assist groups in addressing financial and operational challenges that threaten stability and to help build greater operational capacity to manage and advance their work and achieve their missions. The strategies and projects that can accomplish this are as diverse as the organizations themselves; however, this grant program does not provide support for public programs, productions, exhibitions, or other types of arts events or activities, or general operating support. Applicants must demonstrate that they have clearly identified a stabilization challenge or advancement issue, and that they are proposing an appropriate specific strategy to address it and achieve goals that will produce significant and sustainable results.

What follows are examples of some of the more common challenges to stability and capacity building and ways of addressing them. They do not define the range and nature of possible fundable projects and are offered only as general guidance for how the term “Institutional and Financial Stabilization” is commonly understood in the nonprofit field and how some organizations approach it. What is right for your organization will be determined by your circumstances, strategic thinking, and plans.

Deficits: Deficits can destabilize an organization. Ways to address a deficit could include paying it down, diagnosing the cause, and/or once diagnosed, addressing the root cause in a variety of ways such as marketing, sponsorship, expanded membership, fundraising, board development, business plans, and staff configurations. If funding to reduce or eliminate a deficit is requested, demonstration of a plan to avoid a recurring deficit problem is required.

Advancement and Capacity Building: The same strategies used to erase deficits can be applied to advancing an organization’s overall operating capacity by broadening and increasing income, attracting new audiences and forging new partnerships.

Regulating Cash Flow and Establishing Working Capital: Sometimes the cycle of activity requires significant and destabilizing outlays prior to receipts, sending groups to financial institutions for bridge loans and lines of credit that carry interest payments. Having a revolving fund can address the issue and pay the organization interest as well. Few emerging groups are able to appropriately budget for maintenance or have funds they can turn to in an emergency such as property damage or casualty loss. Creating working capital funds that can be replenished annually reduces operating risk and better secures an organization’s other income and assets. If requesting funding for a reserve or working capital fund, applicants must show that the board has instituted a policy and plan to replenish the cash reserve to the level described and outline the organization’s policies for managing the reserve.

Strategic Planning: Possessing a sound strategic plan is the first step toward success, whether the key to your stabilization and advancement is in marketing, fundraising, board development, facilities, operational and program expansion or greater membership and outreach. A sound plan includes specific goals, assignment of tasks to achieve goals, a timeline and attention to resources necessary to reaching goals. A good strategic plan: outlines a planning process; includes who will be involved in the process and how public input will be obtained; outlines the steps of the process and its timeline; includes benchmarks for how and when the plan is revisited and progress measured; and, addresses all fundamental aspects of both programming and management functions of your organization.

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

Technology Assessment and Upgrade: Effective use of technology can increase an organization’s ability to build organizational capacity and/or enable it to connect its programs and services to the public leading to greater financial

and operational stability. To be most effective, it is important for an organization to look strategically at its technological capabilities, and determine a specific plan for achieving identified goals, such as reducing costs, improving accountability, tracking consumers, advancing marketing and educational efforts, or increasing overall productivity.

Ineligible Institutional/Financial Stabilization Projects: Grants may not replace other funds and must be in addition to funds originally and normally budgeted for or associated with the basic operations of an organization. The following types of projects are ineligible:

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

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

INSTITUTIONAL/FINANCIAL STABILIZATION PROJECTS: EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

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

INSTITUTIONAL/FINANCIAL STABILIZATION PROJECTS: NARRATIVE TOPICS

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

1. Briefly describe your organization, its mission, its major programs and services, and its audience as context for the project, and the organization's major challenge(s) to institutional or financial stability or future operational capacity.

2. Fully articulate the proposed stabilization project. Discuss why the project is a high priority and how it fits into your organization's strategic planning and overall financial health.
3. How is this project a logical next strategic step for the organization? What was the self-assessment behind determining the need for the project?
4. How will the project be accomplished? What resources, including human and financial, will be used? What are the human resources necessary, both internal and external to the organization, such as staff time on the project and to work with consultants? Applicants may include in the application the cost of current staff resources dedicated to the project and pro-rated as such, however Trust funds requested cannot be used to cover these costs. Trust funds can be requested for new staff resources as part of the project. If the project will cost more than the grant funds requested, how will the funds or additional resources be obtained and when will these resources be in place? Please be specific and provide documentation.
5. How will the gains made through the project be sustained, independent of future Cultural Trust funds? What is the specific project outcome expected? How will the project lead to permanent improvement in the financial, operational, or institutional stability or advancement of the organization?

Note: If the project includes the acquisition of new staff resources, how will the position(s) be sustained after the year of Trust funding through other means? Provide a specific detailed plan.
6. Organizations that received Cultural Trust grants in a FY09-FY20 round must provide a brief description of the accomplishments made or progress on the funded project and, if applicable, how the activities for which funding is now requested builds upon, but is different from, the previous grant-funded activity.

INSTITUTIONAL/FINANCIAL STABILIZATION PROJECTS: SUPPORT MATERIALS

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

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

Required Support Materials

1. Link to the organization's website.
2. Organization's most recently completed audit.
3. Current Council grantees must also include the most recent Audit Review Summary and answers to the Due Diligence Questions. Please combine and upload with the audit as one document.
4. Brief biographies of the key individuals (staff, board) participating in the project. Be sure the information provided is relative to their role in the project.
5. Credentials and copy of the actual proposal of any consultant including detailed costs, timelines, action steps and deliverables; it is important to include the Request for Proposal and/or the process used to select or to be used to select any consultants so that the panel fully understands the process and/or the decision for selection of a proposed consultant.
6. Brief background on **all** outside organizations, agencies, or institutions that are projected to provide services in support of this project.

7. For projects requesting funds for equipment: vendor quotes.
8. For projects requesting funds for a staff position: resume of candidate or detailed job description for the proposed position, as well as a clear plan for how the position will be sustained after the single year of Cultural Trust funding.
9. For projects requesting funds for a cash reserve: organizational policies for managing and replenishing the reserve.
10. For projects requesting funds to address a deficit: a plan to avoid a recurring deficit.

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

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