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# Community Arts and Arts Education DEC Grant 2021 Guidelines

New York State Council on the Arts Decentralization Program



FOR ERIE & NIAGARA COUNTIES

**DEADLINE: Friday, December 11, 2020  
by 11:59pm**

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## OVERVIEW

### DECENTRALIZATION

NYSCA established the Decentralization Grant Program (DEC) in 1977 to ensure that New York State's cultural funding reaches every part of the state. The program forms the cornerstone of the Council's partnership with local arts agencies throughout the state (like ASI), providing a link between the Council and portions of the community that might not otherwise be able to access funding from NYSCA.

These grants are administered by Arts Services Inc. (ASI) and funded by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). **The grants are awarded for specific projects occurring between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.** NOTE: Due to limited New York State funding, these grants are extremely competitive.

**The COMMUNITY ARTS DEC GRANT** is a competitive grant that provides financial and technical assistance for community-based arts activities offered by eligible nonprofit organizations and/or individual artists with community partners in Erie or Niagara County.

#### COMMUNITY ARTS DEC CATEGORY

The goals of the Community Arts DEC\* grants:

- Provide quality arts/cultural programming in Erie or Niagara County.
- Assist emerging artists, arts/cultural organizations, and arts/cultural programming.
- Support cultural expression of our diverse ethnic groups.
- Make arts and cultural programming accessible to underserved or minority audiences, and economically disadvantaged communities.

*\*ALL requests must have a public component – one that is available and accessible to the entire community.*

**The ARTS EDUCATION DEC GRANT** is a competitive grant that provides financial and technical assistance to eligible organizations and/or individual artists to support arts education projects in K-12 public school and publicly funded charter school settings and after-school programs, including virtual. Funds can support arts education projects that take place as part of the school day and/or in after-school settings for youth.

#### ARTS EDUCATION DEC CATEGORY

The goals of the Arts Education DEC grants:

- Expand the rich artistic learning experiences of K-12 students.
- Develop arts integration and inter-curricular collaboration.
- Provide quality arts education in Erie or Niagara County.
- Assist emerging artists, arts/cultural organizations, and arts/cultural programming.
- Make arts education accessible to under-served or minority audiences, and economically disadvantaged communities.

Arts activities **MUST** be the primary driving force of project requests.

This funding is intended to expand, promote, and increase arts and cultural programming at the local level including, but not limited to, projects in the following areas: Dance, Design Arts, Folk Arts, Humanities, Literature/Poetry, Media (film, video, radio), Multi-Disciplinary, Music, Opera/Musical Theater, Photography, Skilled Crafts, Textile Arts, Theater, and Visual Arts.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

### COMMUNITY ARTS

Community Arts DEC applicants are required to make their projects accessible to all individuals and hold their events at accessible sites.

Eligible applications must meet the following requirements:

- Projects have, as their core, an arts based or cultural activity that takes place between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.
- **All programs must take place in Erie or Niagara County.**
- **Your program must take place in the same county in which you reside/are physically located.**
- Applicants must be an established nonprofit or 501c3 organization, a local government municipality, tribal organization, an individual representing a collective group, or an individual artist **legally located in Erie or Niagara County.**
- An individual artist or collective may apply if working in partnership with a community-based nonprofit organization that meets the above eligibility. In addition:
  - You must attach a letter of commitment from the partner organization that confirms the partnership with the applicant and outlines the scope of the partnership, including each partner's investment or contribution (in-kind and/or cash) toward the proposed project.
  - The applicant and the partner organization must both be based in the same county the event is taking place - either Erie or Niagara County.
- Projects **MUST** be open and accessible to the public.

### ARTS EDUCATION

Arts Education (AE) DEC applicants must meet the above requirements, as well as the following requirements:

- Project must provide sequential, skills-based study that incorporates one or more art forms and includes a minimum of **3 sequential hands-on learning sessions.**
- In-depth, age and skills appropriate learning opportunities.
- Hands-on participatory creation and/or learning opportunities in one or more art forms that may culminate in exhibitions, productions, or demonstrations.
- Stated learning goals, methodologies, and outcomes as well as an established means for evaluation.
- It is recommended that support materials include lesson plans, evaluation plans, video/photo of work samples from past arts education work, participant evaluation, and letters of recommendation.

#### In-School Projects

These projects must take place during the school day and in partnership with a public school.

In addition, please note the following:

- Private and parochial schools are ineligible for partnerships.

- AE funds must not replace, or appear to replace, the role of certified teachers in schools.
- Inter-curricular collaboration for in-school projects is encouraged but not required.
- A letter of commitment from the partner organization to the arts organization or artist must be included with the application to be eligible for funding. The letter of commitment must outline in detail the partner(s) support of the project (monetarily or otherwise) and anticipated roles and responsibilities for each partner involved. The letter of commitment should be on the partner(s) letterhead and signed by the principal and/or director.

### **After School**

AE projects may take place in a school or community-based setting, such as a library, school, community center, or arts organization.

Proposed projects must be provided to a close group of youth learners, meaning they are not open to the general public.

### **INELIGIBILITY**

The following are **NOT** eligible to apply for this funding:

- Programs taking place outside of Erie or Niagara counties.
- Activities and programs which cannot be completed between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.
- Direct applicants of New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) or Regional Economic Development Council (RED-C) regardless of funding status.
- Organizations or projects involving partners or fiscal sponsors that have applied to the NYSCA for funding for the 2021 fiscal year, regardless of funding status.\*
- Public universities and colleges; and public, private, or parochial schools, and their components (PTAs, etc.).
- New York State agencies and departments (including SUNY schools).
- Individuals or collectives that do not have an eligible sponsor or partner organization.
- Individual artists who are under the age of eighteen (18).
- Previously funded DEC recipients that have failed to provide final reports, use proper acknowledgement, or have failed to comply with previous contract terms.
- Non-incorporated chapters of organizations whose “parent” organization is not located in Erie or Niagara counties.
- Arts Services Inc., its employees, or board members.

#### **\*Considerations for direct NYSCA applicants acting as partners to a proposed DEC program**

A DEC applicant may hire or pay a NYSCA applicant for services and direct costs associated with use of a venue. However:

- The NYSCA applicant cannot handle box office or ticketing.
- The NYSCA applicant cannot profit or benefit from the DEC program (i.e. ticket sales, donations, etc.).
- The DEC program cannot be advertised as part of the NYSCA applicant’s regular season/programming, but may be included on the NYSCA applicant’s website and marketing as a “NYSCA DEC-supported project.”

## ALLOWABLE AND NON-FUNDABLE EXPENSES

### ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Allowable expenses for a proposed project include:

- Activities/Projects of local arts organizations
- Artist fees
- Marketing/Publicity costs
- Direct administrative expenses and/or planning and preparation expenses for a proposed event.
- Supplies and materials needed to execute the proposed project. Individual items may not exceed \$1,000. Examples include art supplies, sheet music, hardware, memory cards, and other consumable equipment.
- Equipment, software, subscriptions, and training needed to execute the proposed project. Individual items may not exceed \$1,000. Examples include cameras, lighting equipment, subscriptions associated with virtual programming, and training to utilize these tools.

### NON-FUNDABLE EXPENSES

The following items cannot be covered by DEC funding:

- Projects taking place outside of Erie or Niagara County.
- Activities and projects which cannot be completed between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.
- General operating expenses, administrative expenses not directly related to proposed project, and contingency funds.
- Project requests for deficit funding and capital expenditures, including purchase of property or permanent equipment.
- Start-up or seed funding for the establishment of new organizations.
- Operating expenses of privately owned facilities (e.g. homes and studios).
- Activities in venues that do not comply with all safety and accessibility standards.
- Programs in which the primary benefit is the financial gain by an individual.
- Artistic funds for university faculty and staff for work done through their position in their institutions.
- Projects where fees are paid to students of universities, high schools, middle or elementary schools, or use children as professional artists.
- Cash prizes, scholarships, juried shows, fellowships, and other monetary awards.
- Regrants by applicants to fund other activities.
- Entertainment costs, such as parties, openings, receptions, food, or **fundraising events**.
- Art programs that are recreational, rehabilitative, or therapeutic in nature (e.g. art therapy, religious, liturgical, or worship).
- Residency programs.
- Lobbying expenses.
- Acquisition of works of art.
- Creation of textbooks or classroom material.
- Activities that are not arts-related (e.g. balloon art, clowns, magic shows, bubble blowing, juggling) or with non-arts and culture related outcomes, such as at-risk/social service programs.

If you have any eligibility-related questions, contact the DEC coordinator for clarification before starting your application.

## INFORMATION SESSIONS

Attendance at an information session is mandatory for all applicants due to some changes because of COVID.

These sessions, led by ASI staff, offer assistance in understanding the grant process, as well as provide tips, program guidelines, and a copy of the grant application. RSVPs are not required, but attendance is tracked as attendance at an info session is required to apply.

### INFORMATION SESSION DATES

Visit <https://www.asiwny.org/dec-grants/> for the complete schedule.

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

**Friday, December 11, 2020 by 11:59pm**

- One (1) electronic submission of the application with ALL required attachments must be submitted by this date and time through your online grant portal profile. Please contact Holly at [holly@asiwny.org](mailto:holly@asiwny.org) if you have trouble accessing the online grant portal.
- Link to online grant portal - <https://www.grantinterface.com/Process/Apply?urlkey=artsofwesternny>

A draft application can be submitted by **Wednesday, November 18, 2020 (12:00pm)** for staff review and feedback before submitting a final application.

Late or incomplete applications WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please double check and proofread your work before hitting submit.

## GRANT REVIEW AND DETERMINATION

ASI staff reviews all applications for eligibility and completeness. Ineligible or incomplete applications will be eliminated from consideration.

A peer panel of area artists, arts administrators, and community leaders evaluates each application and recommends a level of funding based on the evaluation criteria and funding priorities set by NYSCA. Deliberations are based only on the information and materials contained in the application; additional information after the deadline will not be accepted or considered.

Upon request, panelists will have access to final and interim reports, audit information, and previous panel deliberation notes (where available). **Please note: Impact of COVID-19 on 2020 funded projects will not influence funding decisions for 2021.**

Once funding decisions are made by the panel, a separate Advisory Committee will review the decisions. Then, the ASI Board of Directors will review the funding recommendations and has the final authority for all funding decisions.

## **EVALUATIVE CRITERIA**

The panel will make funding recommendations based primarily on the following criteria:

- Artistic merit and quality of ongoing arts and cultural-based programs with year round activities or multiple events in underserved communities.
- Caliber and credentials of professional artists and other project personnel supported by resumes and work samples.
- Public arts and cultural programs which build an arts foundation by addressing community needs and interests, and demonstrate that they benefit the community.
- Project budgets that are accurate, realistic, demonstrate a need, and feature diverse sources of funding.
- Clearly defined plan for implementation, management, and promotion of the project.
- Organizational history, stability, and a diverse board representative of the community served.
- Evidence of responsibility and compliance with past DEC Grant guidelines and procedures.
- Clarity and conciseness of written application and supporting materials.

## **FUNDING PRIORITIES**

The review panel is tasked with taking the following items into consideration:

- **Projects from first time applicants or new initiatives from past applicants.**
- Projects that request funds for the payment of artist fees, teaching artist fees, and technical production services.
- Projects which employ high quality artists.
- Projects serving traditionally underrepresented communities and/or include these communities as participants or artists in their projects.
- Collaborative projects that support ongoing arts and cultural development.
- Projects that provide free participation or admission to individuals who are economically disadvantaged.
- Organizations developing new projects specifically geared towards reaching new and underserved audiences.

Additionally, the following are **LOW** funding priorities:

- Travel, space, and equipment rental costs associated with the project.
- Repeated programs with no enhancements by past applicants.

## **APPEALS PROCESS**

Once funding determinations have been made, ASI staff will notify applicants of their status. Applicants who are denied funding may file an appeal for the decision. All applicants, regardless of funding status, may request feedback from the review panel to strengthen future applications.

An applicant may **ONLY** appeal if they do not receive **ANY** (\$0) funding and when any of the following grounds apply to the application that was submitted at the time of deadline:

- Non-presentation of information
- 2021 Community Arts & Arts Education DEC Grant Application Guidelines

- Information known to the panel or staff prior to the panel’s decision that was not presented and that might have altered the decision.
- Misrepresentation of information
  - Information known to the panel or staff prior to the panel’s decision that changed in its presentation and that, if presented differently, might have altered the decision.
- Improper procedure
  - Contention by the applicant that: 1.) the review of the funding request by the appropriate panel was biased; 2.) the decision by the panel was arbitrary and capricious.

**Dissatisfaction with the funding decision is not justification for an appeal.**

**You cannot submit new information that was left out of your application. All funding decisions are based on the content you provide when submitting your application.**

Applicants not recommended for funding and wishing to appeal must initiate a formal appeal to the DEC Coordinator **within five (5) business days of receiving an e-mail of decline.** A separate Appeals Panel will meet to examine the appeal and make any recommendations.

ASI reserves the right not to expend all available grant funds.

## COMMON QUESTIONS

### **IS THERE MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM REQUEST FOR FUNDING?**

**YES.** Requests should be no less than \$500. Maximum funding support to any one applicant cannot exceed \$5,000. Grants are not intended to cover the complete cost of the proposed project. DEC grant requests also should not exceed more than **50%** of the proposed project budget or program’s expenses. **Matching funds and other revenue from the applicant are required.** This match can consist of a combination of cash and in-kind revenue.

*Your project budget in the application must demonstrate other funding sources are being secured to fund the balance of the project and meet the match requirement.*

### **HOW MANY FUNDING REQUESTS CAN BE SUBMITTED?**

Applicants may submit up to three (3) project requests in any combination of DEC categories (Community Arts, Arts Education, or Individual Artist Commission) as long as the total requested is **no more than \$5,000.** Fiscally sponsored requests are exempt from the three (3) request limit. Each project requires the submission of a separate, completed application through the grants portal by the application deadline.



## IF MY ORGANIZATION RECEIVED A DEC GRANT IN THE PAST, CAN WE STILL APPLY?

**YES.** If you have received funding in the past, you are eligible to apply again. However, previous projects that did not meet the contract requirements or failed to complete a final report by the due date are not eligible for funding.

Also, keep in mind prior DEC funding does not guarantee continued support in any succeeding year. Each application is reviewed in the context of the current program guidelines, funding priorities, and evaluative criteria. Priority will be given to those applicants who submit requests for new initiatives or existing ones that demonstrate growth, artistic expansion, and support of underserved communities.

## DEC APPLICATION CHECK LIST:

**DO NOT SUBMIT HARD COPIES OF YOUR APPLICATION.** Applications will ONLY be accepted through our online grants management portal. Please contact the DEC Coordinator if you need assistance with the grants portal.

### ALL APPLICANTS:

- One completed online application.** Available at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=artsofwesternny>
- Support Documentation - Tentative Agreements**  
Letters of support or contracts from other artists, other organizations, other agencies, or schools that are necessary for a successful project. *\*NOTE: Arts Education grants require partnership with a public or publicly-funded charter school if proposing an in-school program. Individual artists and collectives require a partner organization. These letters of commitment MUST be submitted with the application before the deadline to be considered for funding.*
- Promotional Materials/Marketing Samples (Optional)**  
Examples: posters, flyers, brochures, press, programs, newsletters, marketing samples, etc. These are highly encouraged, but not required. Materials should be examples of your best work and, if possible, relate to the topic of the project you are applying for.
- Artistic Sample (Optional)**  
Examples: audio files; video files; photographs; writing samples (up to 3 pages); and other media/digital files. These are highly encouraged, but not required.

### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ORGANIZATION APPLICANTS:

- Current Board of Directors List & Affiliations**
- Current Organizational Budget**
- Previous Year Financial Statements** (from most recently completed fiscal year)