



Creative Impact Fund

General Operating Grant Guidelines for Arts & Culture Nonprofits

For Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara
counties

DEADLINE: Friday, March 8, 2024

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Table of Contents

Overview.....	2
Eligibility Requirements.....	2
Grant Review and Determination.....	3
Information Sessions.....	4
Application Deadline.....	5
Common Questions.....	5
Application Check List.....	6

OVERVIEW

GENERAL OPERATING GRANT

Nonprofits provide vital services, programs, and resources to the communities they exist in. We know that micro, small, and mid-sized arts and culture nonprofits make up more than 85% of Western New York’s arts and culture industry. They also tend to be the most under-resourced organizations.

ASI’s 2024 General Operating grants are designed to provide much-needed unrestricted operating support to Western New York’s small and mid-sized arts and culture nonprofits.

This funding comes from a New York State Senate initiative designed to provide equitable arts support to all regions across New York State. It is anticipated that this fund will only be available in 2024.

Application deadline **March 8, 2024.**

Grants are available in the following amounts:

- \$10,000 for organizations with operating budgets between \$100,000-\$499,999
- \$20,000 for organizations with operating budgets between \$500,000-\$1 million

These grants are available to 501c3 nonprofits in Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara counties that are in good standing and have arts or culture as their primary mission or purpose, or nonprofits in rural communities who are the primary provider of arts and culture for their community.

Organizations selected to receive a grant through this fund are not eligible to apply for ASI’s 2024 Arts Programming grant, which will open in March 2024.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible applications must meet all of the following requirements:

- Applicants must be a nonprofit 501c3 organization in good standing.
- Must have arts or culture as their primary mission or purpose. *
- Must be legally incorporated and operating in Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, or Niagara counties.

- Must have an operating budget of at least \$100,000 and no larger than \$1 million in their most recently completed fiscal year. *NOTE: We look at the operating expenses when determining the operating budget size of an organization.*

INELIGIBILITY

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

- Organizations whose 501c3 status is not in good standing with the IRS.
- Fiscal sponsors, collectives, and other unincorporated groups.
- LLC's and other for-profit business designations.
- Nonprofits with a primary mission or purpose of something other than arts or culture.*
- Nonprofits not located in Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, or Niagara counties.
- Organizations whose operating budget is less than \$100,000 or greater than \$1 million.
- Arts Services Inc., its employees, and board members.

*ASI understands that in some rural communities, arts and culture programming is primarily provided by nonprofit organizations whose primary mission is not arts and culture. Non-arts or culture organizations that are the sole or primary provider of arts and culture activity for their community are eligible to apply to this fund. To clarify if your organization is eligible for this fund, contact Holly Grant at holly@asiwny.org to confirm.

GRANT REVIEW AND DETERMINATION

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

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

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

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

- 1. Mission Alignment & Quality of Programming** – including:
 - a. All programs and work of the organization align with their mission and vision.
 - b. Programs and services are created with intentionality, integrity, and rigor.
 - c. Organization's work and programming distinguishes itself from other similar programming/organizations in the region.
- 2. Community Centering** – including:
 - a. Applicant can clearly articulate the community they serve.
 - b. Work and programs reflect and represent the community they serve.
 - c. Work and programs are responsive to the needs of the community.
 - d. Organization continually works to remove barriers and create equitable access for the community.
- 3. Managerial & Financial Stability** – including:

- a. Staff and board have the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully lead the organization.
- b. Organization’s governance practices meet all legal requirements and ensure best practice in the industry.
- c. Organization demonstrates sound financial practices and health.

Panelists will use the following rating scale to evaluate each criterion:

5 – Outstanding	4 – Good	3 – Average	2 – Below Average	1 – Poor
Meets or exceed all benchmarks Can clearly articulate all they do and everything aligns with charitable purpose Work is the gold standard for the industry	Meets most benchmarks Has appropriate answers for most questions Work centers the community better than most charitable organizations	Meets some benchmarks Attempted to identify community served There appears to be some effort being made but more is needed	Meets few benchmarks Charitable work and/or community centering is not being done Work appears organization-centered or focused internally	Work does not meet legal or ethical standards Questions left unanswered Insufficient detail provided to address the questions

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The following will be prioritized:

- Organizations that are not receiving direct NYSCA support in the 2024 calendar year.
- Organizations that demonstrate a community-centered approach to carrying out their mission-driven work.
- Organizations that prioritize the needs of under-represented, under-resourced, or marginalized communities.
- Organizations that demonstrate consistent production of high quality* programs and services.

*ASI defines “high quality” as work that is created with intentionality, integrity, and rigor. Since art and artistic practice are subjective, our panelists do not rate whether or not they like the work you are doing.

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Since this is technically a new fund, attendance at information sessions is strongly encouraged for all applicants. These sessions are meant to help ensure applicants fully understand the process and priorities of this grant and to assist with a successful grant application.

These sessions, led by ASI staff, offer assistance in navigating the grant process, as well as provide tips, program guidelines, and best practices for submitting a successful project proposal. RSVPs are not required but help us plan for set up.

INFORMATION SESSION DATES

Visit <https://www.asiwny.org/creative-impact-fund/> for the complete schedule.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Friday, March 8, 2024 by 11:59 pm

- 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 Grant at 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>

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

COMMON QUESTIONS

CAN I CHOOSE HOW MUCH FUNDING I REQUEST?

NO. Grants are set amounts. Applicants can only request the amount they are eligible for based on the size of their operating expenses.

WILL PARTIAL FUNDING BE CONSIDERED?

NO. Grants will be awarded all or nothing in the set amounts.

CAN I USE A FISCAL SPONSOR TO APPLY TO THIS GRANT?

NO. We are not accepting fiscal sponsors to this fund. Applicants must meet all of the eligibility criteria to apply. If you are not sure if your organization is eligible, contact Holly Grant at holly@asiwny.org for clarification.

HOW MUCH TOTAL FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

ASI has \$500,000 available to distribute through this General Operating grant fund.

HOW MANY APPLICATIONS CAN I SUBMIT?

Eligible organizations can only submit one (1) application to this fund.

IF I/MY ORGANIZATION RECEIVED A DEC/SCR GRANT IN THE PAST, CAN I STILL APPLY?

YES. If you have received an SCR grant from ASI in the past, you are eligible to apply for this fund. However, previous recipients that did not meet the contract requirements or failed to complete a final report by the due date are not eligible.

I RECEIVED FUNDING DIRECTLY FROM NYSICA FOR FY2024, CAN I APPLY TO THIS FUND?

YES. Organizations that received a grant directly from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSICA) as part of their FY2024 funding cycle are eligible to apply for this grant if they meet the

rest of the eligibility criteria. However, priority will be placed on organizations that did not receive funding directly from NYSCA for the 2024 calendar year.

APPLICATION CHECK LIST:

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

Application Packet Includes:

- **One completed online application.** Available at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=artsofwesternny>
- **Financial Documents**, including:
 - Most recently filed IRS 990 form or audited/reviewed financials.
 - If you aren't required to submit a 990, you can attach your most recently completed operating budget with actuals or P&L.
- **Current Board of Directors List & Affiliations.**
- **Two (2) optional additional attachments.**