

**"Projects such as this one  
... ensure that increasing  
opportunities to involve  
and educate the public  
about the cultural  
heritage of the region can  
be realized."**

— FY24 Cultural Trust Grantee



*New Jersey*  
**Cultural Trust**

# Annual Report

**Fiscal Year  
2025**

**"This rehabilitation  
addressed longstanding  
infrastructure and  
capacity issues, making  
the museum more  
welcoming and  
accessible."**

— FY24 Cultural Trust Grantee





# ABOUT THE CULTURAL TRUST

The New Jersey Cultural Trust, an authority in but not of the Department of State, was created in July 2000 as a public/private partnership to help ensure a stable and healthy nonprofit cultural industry in New Jersey that would be sustainable for years to come and under fluctuating economic conditions.

The Trust provides grants that support the building of endowments, the improvement of institutional and financial stability, and the capital improvement of facilities at arts, history, and humanities organizations in New Jersey. Funding for the grants comes from interest earned on the Cultural Trust Fund, which is a permanent investment fund.

---

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

**Arts, history, and humanities contribute immeasurably to the quality of life in New Jersey**, to the tourism industry and the economy, to the health and vitality of our cities, towns, and neighborhoods, to sound education, to the advancement of inclusion and understanding, and to the celebration of our rich cultural diversity and identity. Nonprofit cultural organizations in New Jersey play an invaluable role in ensuring that the benefits of the arts, history, and humanities are extended to the people of New Jersey.

**Stable cultural organizations can contribute the most to their communities and to the state.** Investments in these organizations' institutional and financial resilience safeguard the future of New Jersey's cultural industry, which [constitutes 3.6% of the state's economy.](#)

---

## A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

The New Jersey Cultural Trust continued to grow and thrive in Fiscal Year 2025. **In the past year, the Trust has increased its grantmaking to record levels** and made numerous improvements to the agency's processes and outreach to enhance its service to the arts and culture sector. These advancements are highlighted throughout this report.

Steady Trust Fund principal growth, together with rising interest rates, allowed the Trust to successfully grow support for the cultural sector at a time of great need. **The Cultural Trust Board approved the largest total dollar amount in grant awards in a single fiscal year in the Trust's history as FY25 Institutional and Financial Stabilization Grants for Arts Organizations. Demand for the Cultural Trust's unique grants remains incredibly high, as evidenced by the nearly \$5 million in funds requested by FY25 applicants.** The need is great — according to Cultural Trust analyses, more than half of cultural organizations in New Jersey have less than six months of cash on hand. The Trust Board and staff remain convinced that building the Trust and its programs will create greater reserves and resilience for the next economic crisis, natural disaster, or pandemic, and will enable New Jersey's cultural organizations to sustainably educate, entertain, and enrich both current and future residents for years to come.

During FY25, the Trust also continued to manage the Capital Historic Preservation grants awarded in FY 2024, which provided essential funding for facilities improvements at cultural sites across the state. As FY24 grantees completed their projects and submitted reports, the Cultural Trust continued to gain insight into the impact of its unique programs. Some of these grantees' stories are highlighted in grantee features and photographs throughout this report.



**ABOVE:** Case-Dvoor Farmstead, Hunterdon Land Trust (Hunterdon County). Hunterdon Land Trust was awarded a \$40,000 CHP grant in FY24 for repointing and plaster repair.

# LT. GOV. TAHESHA WAY, SECRETARY OF STATE



I have the pleasure of overseeing the New Jersey Cultural Trust in my capacity as Secretary of State. New Jersey's creative economy is one of its greatest assets, distinguishing our state at the national level. For the second year running, [SMU DataArts ranked New Jersey the second-most arts vibrant state in the nation](#) on measures of supply, demand, and public support for the arts. Our cultural vibrancy is one of the many reasons New Jersey is the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

As an administration, we understand the immense value that arts and culture brings to our residents and visitors. In fact, when I recently interviewed Governor Murphy on my podcast, *The DOS Way*, and asked what he hoped his arts legacy would be, he responded, "Placing the arts at center stage in both our society and our economy." Indeed, Governor Murphy's administration has shown an unprecedented commitment to the arts and culture industry in New Jersey. Governor Murphy signed legislation that increased the statutory minimum appropriation to the State Council on the Arts, Historical Commission, and Cultural Trust to historic levels. As a result, the principal balance in the Cultural Trust Fund has grown by 20% over the course of the administration. This is the largest growth rate for the Trust Fund in nearly two decades, and part of the reason why the Trust has been able to make record-high grant awards in recent years.

These unique grants help to preserve the stability of our state's cherished cultural institutions, ensuring they will be able to deliver important social, economic, and educational benefits for many years to come. I am immensely proud of the growth and impact of the Cultural Trust.

## DR. CAROL CRONHEIM, BOARD CHAIR

It has been an honor this year to serve as Chair of the Cultural Trust's Board, and I thank my fellow Board members for entrusting me with this role in November 2024. I also want to acknowledge our new Board Secretary, Claire Knopf, and thank Jill Morton for her service on the Board, which concluded this year. It is humbling to witness the dedication of the Board members and staff of the Cultural Trust, alongside that of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Legislature, and Department of State, in pursuing the Trust's mandate.

As one of fewer than a dozen state-level cultural endowments in the nation, the Trust's unique structure and mission are feathers in the cap of our state's robust support for arts and culture. Since it was established in 2000, the Trust's mission has been to support the health of arts, history, and humanities organizations. Its unique programs fulfill needs that are not met by the State's other cultural agencies, targeting nonprofits' underlying financial infrastructure to make them stronger and more resilient. As a result, cultural organizations have been better able to weather the economic vicissitudes of the past 25 years.

Amid an especially challenging financial environment, now is a critical time for the Trust to ensure cultural organizations continue to be able to endure these storms and deliver their valuable programs and services for the benefit of all New Jerseyans. I am so proud of the accomplishments of the Trust and its grantees over this past year, and I am grateful to Governor Murphy and the Legislature for their continued commitment to ensuring the long-term strength of New Jersey's cultural institutions.



# FINANCIAL REPORT

The New Jersey Cultural Trust is funded by both public (State) dollars and by private contributions. Every year, the State of New Jersey appropriates a dedicated portion of the hotel/motel occupancy fee revenue to the Cultural Trust Fund, a permanent investment fund. These annual State appropriations are a 1:1 match leveraged by private donations to the endowments of cultural nonprofits as well as by private donations made directly to the Fund ("certified donations"). Through investment, the Trust Fund yields interest income to support the Cultural Trust's annual grant programs *in perpetuity*.

## RECORD INTEREST INCOME

Successful fund management efforts and historically high interest rates resulted in FY24 interest earnings of \$1,418,185 on the Cultural Trust Fund, reported at the November 18, 2024 Annual Meeting. This interest income is a nearly 80% increase over the FY23 interest income and represents **the most interest earned in a single fiscal year in the Cultural Trust's history**. Final FY25 interest income will be reported at the November 17, 2025 Annual Meeting.

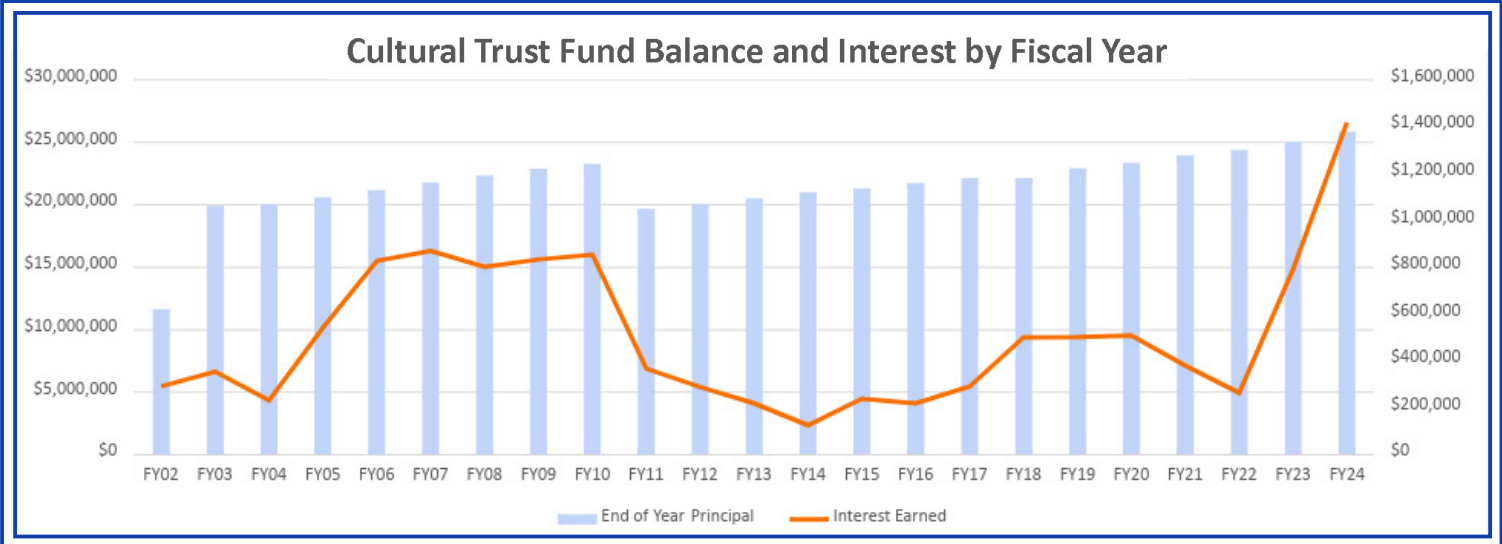
## STEADY TRUST FUND GROWTH

**The Cultural Trust received an appropriation of \$720,000 from the FY 2025 New Jersey State Budget.** The annual Legislative appropriations to the Trust are deposited into the Cultural Trust Fund as part of the 1:1 match for previously certified donations to the endowments of cultural nonprofits, growing the the Trust Fund's principal. From its founding through FY25, the Trust has certified \$41,483,703 in private donations and received \$33,491,000 in 1:1 State matching funds. As of the close of FY24, the Cultural Trust is owed \$7,992,703 to meet the required 1:1 match for previously certified donations.

**Growing the principal of the Fund is of paramount importance to the Trust's Board, as larger principal increases the interest income available for making grants.** Thanks to the historic appropriation of \$2.189 million in FY24, which allowed the Trust to fulfill all outstanding matching payments to cultural organizations through the Certified Donation Program, the Trust was able to invest the entirety of the FY25 appropriation in the principal of the Trust Fund. **The total principal balance of the Cultural Trust Fund at the beginning of FY25 was \$25,848,231.** This represents growth of \$864,260 from the beginning of FY24. The end-of-year FY25 principal balance will be finalized and reported at the November 17, 2025 Annual Meeting.

## RESPONSIBLE FUND MANAGEMENT

In FY25, the Cultural Trust Board provided responsible, attentive, and timely stewardship of the Trust Fund, regularly convening to monitor its performance and consider allowable investments, which are limited to United States Treasury Notes and Bonds. Over FY25, the Trust and the Division of Investment purchased 17 different instruments with laddered maturities in order to maximize interest income available for grantmaking.





# FINANCIAL REPORT

## LONG-RANGE FISCAL PLAN

Pursuant to the Cultural Trust Act, the Trust's Board consults with the New Jersey Division of Investment regarding the investment strategies for moneys in the Trust Fund. With interest rates expected to be cut in the coming years, during FY25, the Trust and Division of Investment focused on establishing a longer-term position for its holdings, locking in high rates for longer durations. At the close of FY25, 5% of the Trust Fund's assets were held in the State of New Jersey Cash Management Fund (CMF) earning approximately 4.2%. The remaining 95% of the Trust Fund's assets were invested in Treasury securities with yield rates and expected maturities as follows:

| MATURITY YEAR | PERCENTAGE OF TREASURY SECURITIES | AVERAGE YIELD RATE |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2025          | 3.6%                              | 4.9%               |
| 2026          | 25.4%                             | 4.7%               |
| 2027          | 8.2%                              | 4.1%               |
| 2028          | 8.9%                              | 4.0%               |
| 2030          | 8.9%                              | 4.1%               |
| 2031          | 3.3%                              | 4.0%               |
| 2032          | 6.2%                              | 4.3%               |
| 2034          | 17.4%                             | 4.3%               |
| 2044          | 12.3%                             | 4.0%               |
| 2054          | 5.8%                              | 4.4%               |

The Trust typically holds Treasury securities until maturity. Laddering investments, as shown in the chart to the left, secures high yields well into the future while ensuring sufficient cash flow over time to support grantmaking. Laddering also enables the Trust to adjust and respond to changing interest rates as holdings regularly mature.

## SHORT-RANGE FISCAL PLAN

During FY26, approximately 18% of the Trust's invested assets will mature and become available for reinvestment. The Trust anticipates that their established laddering strategy will continue during FY26. The Trust's Board in consultation with the Division of Investment will continue to monitor the investment strategy in relation to the interest rate environment to make changes as needed.

# CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

The Cultural Trust Act passed in July 2000, and the Cultural Trust Board met for the first time in July 2001. As such, the Cultural Trust is celebrating its 25th anniversary year from July 2025 through July 2026.

The idea of a permanent endowment for New Jersey's cultural community emerged from several years of discussion among the arts, history, and humanities community, policymakers, experts, and supporters. The resulting Cultural Trust Act aimed to fill the gaps in arts, history, and humanities funding in three ways: by building endowments, financing capital projects, and improving organizational and financial stability.

Twenty-five years later, the Cultural Trust is proud to reflect on the many ways it has furthered its mission to ensure a stable and healthy nonprofit cultural industry in New Jersey that is sustainable under fluctuating economic conditions. **On Page 8 of this report, learn more about the Trust's lifetime impact on New Jersey's cultural sector.** And throughout this anniversary year, keep an eye out for more special communications from the Trust highlighting its grantees and partners, and looking ahead to the next 25 years.



**ABOVE:** Members of the Cultural Trust Board and staff in 2002; the Board first met in 2001. From left: Josh Weston, Judith Dawkins, Barbara Fulton Moran, Marc Mappen, Leonard Fisher, Judith Shaw, Barbara Mitnick, Dorothea Frank, and Carol Cronheim. **BELOW:** The Cultural Trust's special 25th anniversary logo.



# GRANT PROGRAMS

The Cultural Trust's grant programs further the Trust's mission of ensuring a stable and healthy nonprofit cultural industry in New Jersey by supporting projects that build organizations' financial and institutional stability and capacity, and by funding important capital projects. Grant programs are offered in partnership with the Cultural Trust's recommending agencies: the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Historical Commission, and the New Jersey Historic Trust. All Cultural Trust grants are funded by interest income earned on the Cultural Trust Fund.

## ABOUT THE CULTURAL TRUST'S GRANT PROGRAMS

The Cultural Trust offers two types of grants through its annual programs:

- 1. Institutional and Financial Stabilization (IFS) grants** address the financial and institutional challenges that threaten nonprofit organizations' stability and help them build greater operational capacity to manage and advance their work. Eligible projects include strategic planning, establishing or growing cash reserves and working capital funds, technology upgrades, capital equipment purchases, creating new staff positions, and more. These grants are offered to arts organizations and history/humanities organizations through two separate programs, and they are recommended to the Cultural Trust by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Historical Commission, respectively.
- 2. Capital Historic Preservation (CHP) grants** support capital projects at the state's historic sites, safeguarding and making them accessible for future generations. Eligible projects include structural stabilization, roof replacement, HVAC repair, ADA accessibility improvements, and more. These grants are recommended to the Cultural Trust by the New Jersey Historic Trust.

In each grant round, the recommending agency administers the application acceptance and review process. The Cultural Trust then administers award disbursement and oversees grant management throughout the grant period. No match is required for any of the Cultural Trust's grant programs, and the grant programs are open to organizations of any size and geographic scope.

## QUALIFICATION APPLICATION DIGITIZATION

The Cultural Trust Board reviews applications from nonprofit cultural organizations to become designated "qualified," a process established by the Cultural Trust Act. The "qualified" designation means the organization is eligible to apply for Cultural Trust funding opportunities. To be designated qualified, organizations must meet compliance, financial, and mission requirements.

In FY25, Cultural Trust staff developed and launched a digitized version of the qualification application. The new online application replaced bulky hard-copy applications, eliminating printing and postage costs for constituents and incorporating automated completeness checks. The digital format has streamlined, standardized, and sped up the application submission, review, and revision process, benefiting both applicants and staff. The Trust accepted 81 applications in the new system after it launched in spring 2025.

**"The more thorough process actually helps my clients pull together their core information and documents, which some of them have not done before."**

—Feedback from New Jersey grantwriter



**ABOVE:** Fabrication of stained glass windows for Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church, Friends of Millstone Township Historic Registered Properties (Monmouth County). Friends of Millstone Township Historic Registered Properties was awarded a \$40,000 CHP grant in FY24 for window restoration.

# LIFETIME IMPACT OF THE TRUST

The Cultural Trust was designed to address the critical capital, infrastructure, and capacity needs of cultural nonprofits. Support for these investments is difficult to find, and the Cultural Trust often supports projects that are not eligible for funding from other State agencies. Since its establishment in 2000, the Cultural Trust has supported hundreds of organizations, large and small, from every county in New Jersey. **Trust grants are one-time investments whose benefits reverberate for years, or decades, to come.**

## PERMANENT ENDOWMENT SUPPORT THROUGH CERTIFIED DONATION PROGRAM

- Total endowment growth supported at cultural institutions: **\$48 million**, including:
  - \$40.5 million in private gifts incentivized and certified
  - \$7.9 million in State matching payments granted
- Estimated additional income for cultural institutions independently generated every year by Trust-supported endowment growth (through standard investment practices): **\$3 million**

## SPECIALIZED SUPPORT THROUGH ANNUAL GRANT PROGRAMS

- Total number of grants awarded: **453**
- Total amount awarded: **\$11.48 million**
- Number of organizations as grant recipients: **218**
- Percentage of total funding awarded to organizations in Southern New Jersey: **33.4%**



**48 long-term cash reserves and working capital funds**, totaling over \$1.3 million, so that cultural organizations have more cash on hand to prepare for risks and opportunities



**\$3.2 million in capital facilities improvements at 68 cultural facilities**, making cultural sites more functional and accessible for programs and operations



The development of **123 strategic plans**, allowing organizations to engage outside experts to plan for ways to improve their operations, programs, board engagement, fundraising, and more



**38 critical new staff positions**, expanding nonprofits' internal expertise and serving as proofs of concept for growth

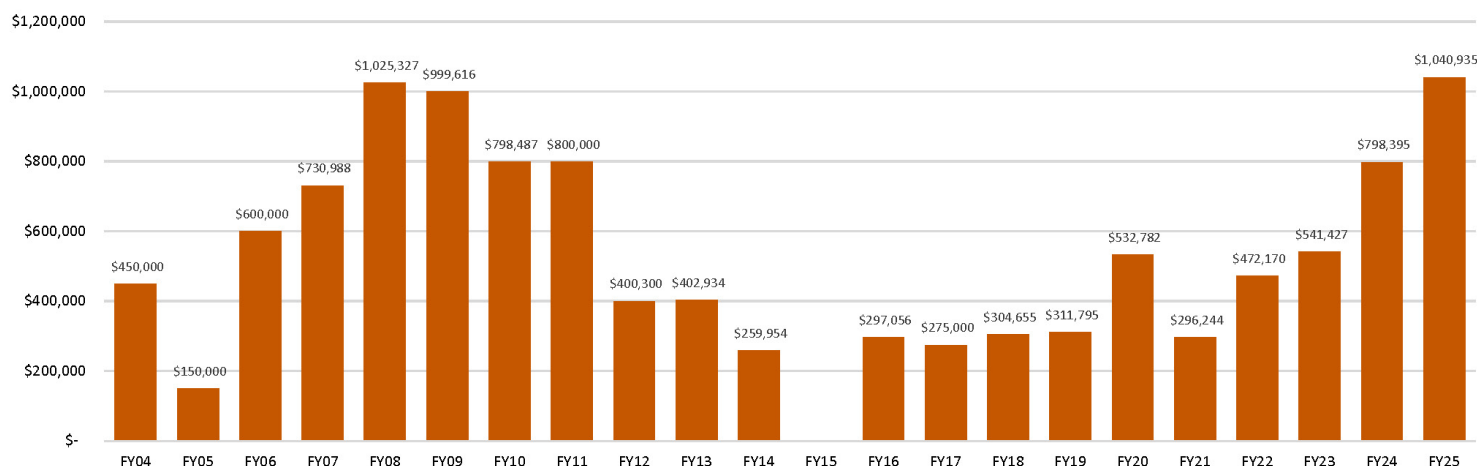


**23 new websites**, ensuring an accessible and effective online presence for outreach, ticketing, fundraising, and program delivery



**Technology worth over \$1.4 million at 52 organizations** to enhance the effectiveness of operations, sales, and fundraising

### Total Grant Funds Awarded by Fiscal Year



\*Grants not awarded in FY15 due to insufficient interest income



# FY 2025 IFS ARTS GRANTS

## FY25 GRANTS AT A GLANCE

Total number of grants awarded: 29

Total amount awarded: \$1,040,935

Maximum award amount: \$40,000

Average award amount: \$35,894

Total number of counties represented by awardees: 14

Percentage of funding awarded to organizations in Southern New Jersey: 25%

Total annual spending driven by FY25 grantees: Over \$100 million

Total jobs supported by FY25 grantees: Over 1,000

## LARGEST GRANT YEAR EVER

In Fiscal Year 2025, the Cultural Trust increased its support to the cultural sector through its impactful grant programs. The Cultural Trust's FY25 Institutional and Financial Stabilization Grants for Arts Organizations (IFS Arts) represented the **largest amount of grant funding authorized in a single fiscal year in the Trust's history**. The \$1,040,935 in grant awards also represents nearly twice the total amount awarded in the most recent IFS Arts grant round in 2023.

The FY25 awards were recommended to the Cultural Trust by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and are critical investments in the sustainability and capacity of the state's cultural organizations.

An unprecedented 148 applications requesting a total of \$4,811,212 were received, more than a 20% increase over the amount requested in the most recent IFS Arts grant round.

The FY25 grant awards are supporting the creation of cash reserves and working capital funds; upgrades to critical technology including websites, computers, and financial management software; the purchase of important capital equipment such as theatrical lighting, musical instruments, and HVAC equipment; the creation of strategic planning documents that will set the course to improve long-term organizational health; and more.

**"The record 148 applications for stabilization funding in Fiscal Year 2025 demonstrate that the state's nonprofit cultural sector continues to rely on the Trust for critical capitalization support. We are thrilled that this year we could respond to that demand with a record amount of funding."**

— Carol Cronheim, Cultural Trust Board Chair



**ABOVE:** Mayo Performing Arts Center (Morris County) Operations Director Lee Kaloidis works on a Cultural Trust-funded computer. MPAC was awarded a \$40,000 FY25 IFS Arts grant to support the replacement of outdated computers.



# FY 2025 IFS ARTS GRANTEES

| Organization                                      | County     | City/Town     | Project Category              | Award Amount |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| South Jersey Cultural Alliance                    | Atlantic   | Galloway      | Technology upgrade            | \$35,200     |
| Arts Horizons, Inc.                               | Bergen     | Englewood     | Working capital/cash reserve  | \$40,000     |
| CavanKerry Press Ltd                              | Bergen     | Fort Lee      | Working capital/cash reserve  | \$40,000     |
| Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company                         | Bergen     | Fort Lee      | Strategic planning/assessment | \$35,000     |
| North Jersey Concert Band                         | Bergen     | Oakland       | Capital equipment purchase    | \$39,625     |
| Arts Ed NJ                                        | Burlington | Burlington    | New staff position            | \$40,000     |
| Levoy Theatre Preservation Society                | Cumberland | Millville     | Working capital/cash reserve  | \$40,000     |
| Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center                  | Cumberland | Millville     | Capital equipment purchase    | \$36,924     |
| Luna Stage Company                                | Essex      | West Orange   | Working capital/cash reserve  | \$40,000     |
| New Jersey Performing Arts Center                 | Essex      | Newark        | Technology upgrade            | \$40,000     |
| Paper Mill Playhouse                              | Essex      | Millburn      | Strategic planning/assessment | \$40,000     |
| Pushcart Players                                  | Essex      | Verona        | Working capital/cash reserve  | \$40,000     |
| Nimbus Dance Company                              | Hudson     | Jersey City   | Strategic planning/assessment | \$ 35,550    |
| Grounds for Sculpture, Inc.                       | Mercer     | Hamilton      | Technology upgrade            | \$25,726     |
| McCarter Theatre Center                           | Mercer     | Princeton     | Capital equipment purchase    | \$40,000     |
| Young Audiences New Jersey & Eastern Pennsylvania | Mercer     | Princeton     | Technology upgrade            | \$21,578     |
| coLAB Arts                                        | Middlesex  | New Brunswick | Capital equipment purchase    | \$40,000     |

# FY 2025 IFS ARTS GRANTEES

| Organization                                          | County    | City/Town     | Project Category              | Award Amount |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Rise Up Community Arts                                | Middlesex | Edison        | Capital equipment purchase    | \$23,964     |
| Axelrod Performing Arts Center                        | Monmouth  | Deal Park     | Capital equipment purchase    | \$37,450     |
| Monmouth County Arts Council                          | Monmouth  | Red Bank      | Strategic planning/assessment | \$40,000     |
| Harmonium A Classical Choral Society                  | Morris    | Morristown    | Strategic planning/assessment | \$24,750     |
| Morris Museum                                         | Morris    | Morristown    | Capital equipment purchase    | \$40,000     |
| Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey                     | Morris    | Florham Park  | Technology upgrade            | \$30,968     |
| Mayo Performing Arts Center                           | Morris    | Morristown    | Technology upgrade            | \$40,000     |
| Long Beach Island Foundation of the Arts and Sciences | Ocean     | Loveladies    | Technology upgrade            | \$40,000     |
| Surflight Theatre                                     | Ocean     | Beach Haven   | Capital equipment purchase    | \$30,000     |
| Appel Farm Arts and Music Center                      | Salem     | Elmer         | Capital equipment purchase    | \$40,000     |
| Farmstead Arts                                        | Somerset  | Basking Ridge | Strategic planning/assessment | \$24,200     |
| Union County Performing Arts Center                   | Union     | Rahway        | Capital equipment purchase    | \$40,000     |
| Total Award Amount                                    |           |               |                               | \$1,040,935  |

**"A lot of funders are excited to support our Arts Education programming, but it can be harder to find one eager to replace a finance system. This upgrade, however, will make a huge difference for the behind-the-scenes staff doing crucial work — making it possible for NJPAC to offer free programming to the community because we've planned and budgeted for it."**

— Heather Olsen, Senior Director of Platform Operations, New Jersey Performing Arts Center





**Project:** Wagon  
Shed roof  
replacement

**Grant award:**  
\$40,000

**County:** Union

FEATURED  
GRANTEE

## LIBERTY HALL MUSEUM

Liberty Hall in Union was built in 1772 by William Livingston, who went on to serve as New Jersey's first elected governor. In more than two centuries as a private residence, it was visited by revolutionaries, statesmen, and leaders of industry, and it witnessed the many complexities and changes of everyday life. In 2000, the home opened as Liberty Hall Museum, which shares New Jersey history with over 20,000 visitors each year.

In addition to the main house, Liberty Hall Museum includes 12 acres, gardens, and multiple outbuildings. In FY24, Liberty Hall Museum was awarded a \$40,000 grant to replace the Wagon Shed's deteriorating 40-year-old roof through the Cultural Trust's Capital Historic Preservation Grant Program. The Capital Historic Preservation Program, operated in partnership with the New Jersey Historic Trust, supports capital facilities projects at historic sites listed on the New Jersey and/or National Register of Historic Places.

Liberty Hall's outbuildings are critical to the museum's operations, and the organization "continually works to ensure the safety and preservation of all buildings on the museum campus," according to Liberty Hall Museum Grants Coordinator Maryellen McVeigh. In particular, as one of three fully accessible buildings on the museum campus, the Wagon Shed (c. 1900) is used extensively for educational programming and special events. It also houses a portion of the museum's farm equipment collection — an echo of the building's original purpose. McVeigh described the need for a new roof on the Wagon Shed as "a central concern" for the organization. "The Wagon Shed is ... one of the integral buildings on the museum campus, and it gets used on a daily basis," she said.

While the roof replacement was a straightforward project, its effect was significant — and Cultural Trust support was critical to its timely execution. **"Funds to replace the roof were not available in the museum's operating budget,"** Liberty Hall wrote in their final report. **"The grant funding received enabled Liberty Hall to tackle the project immediately and prevent leakage that would have had a catastrophic effect on the collection pieces that are housed within the Wagon Shed as well as on day-to-day museum operations."**



**TOP:** Liberty Hall Museum Executive Director Rachael Goldberg leads a tour of the site after the Cultural Trust Board's 2024 Annual Meeting.

**ABOVE:** The Wagon Shed, pictured with its completed roof.



# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In FY25, the Trust built transparency through greater technical assistance and clearer processes. These efforts increased and diversified access to public dollars, as demonstrated by the fact that 24% of the Trust's FY25 grantees were organizations that had never before received a Cultural Trust grant.

## RESPONSIVE, ACCESSIBLE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

**In-Demand Workshops:** In FY25, Trust staff updated the agency's qualification technical assistance workshop, which provides a detailed overview of the new, digitized application and addresses common misunderstandings in the qualification process. Trust staff held two live Zoom qualification workshops, which garnered 62 live attendees. A recorded version has received 142 views on YouTube as of July 2025. A new relationship with the team at the Charities Registration Section of the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs enabled Charities Registration staff to present at one of the Trust's live qualification workshops in order to clarify and increase awareness of a required aspect of qualification compliance.

Live grant application workshops and office hours welcomed 136 participants and recorded grant workshops received more than 450 views. Trust staff also held detailed contract workshops for FY25 grantees, which shared information on grant requirements and will enable successful completion of projects and more effective grant reporting.

**Surge in Individual Technical Assistance Sessions:** During FY25, Trust staff responded to 647 individual technical assistance inquiries about the Cultural Trust in general, qualification, grants management, and the FY25 and FY26 grant programs — a more than 150% increase in individual technical assistance inquiries from FY24. The inquiries were from organizations in 20 counties, demonstrating the extent of increased awareness about the Cultural Trust and the breadth of interest in its programs. Trust staff comprehensively track and analyze technical assistance inquiries to learn about who is aware of the Trust — and who is not — and also to identify opportunities for improvement or increased clarity in its programs.

## DEVELOPED NEW SELF-ASSESSMENT RESOURCE

In consultation with the Cultural Trust's recommending agencies, Trust staff developed a new recorded webinar that provides a framework for organizations to conduct a basic self-assessment to identify stability and capacity challenges that might be addressed through the IFS grant programs. The workshop, which is based on a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) model, offers questions to consider as part of a self-assessment process, and provides examples of past and potential Cultural Trust projects that can address some common organizational challenges. Trust staff also developed a handout to accompany this workshop, which includes reflection questions and a simple SWOT worksheet. The workshop helps IFS applicants develop stronger projects and applications and serves as a general institutional health resource for the field at large.

**"Working with [Cultural Trust staff] over the years is always very easy. They're very helpful, very receptive. They answer questions very quickly and it's always great to work with them."**

—John Ryan, Chief Operating Officer, Historic Cold Spring Village



**ABOVE:** InfoAge Trustee Tom Sedegran, center, leads Cultural Trust Executive Director Izzy Kasdin, left, and New Jersey Historic Trust Historic Preservation Specialist Shannon Bremer, right, on a tour of InfoAge Science and History Museums (Monmouth County). InfoAge received a \$40,000 FY24 CHP grant to support the replacement of the furnace in the site's historic Marconi Hotel.



**Project:** Chimney repairs

**Grant award:**  
\$30,000

**County:**  
Cumberland

FEATURED  
GRANTEE

## MILLVILLE ARMY AIRFIELD MUSEUM

Millville Army Air Field in Millville was established in 1941 as “America’s First Defense Airport,” months before the United States entered World War II. It was completed in 1943, and in its three years of operation as a gunnery range and alert field, 10,000 men and women served at the air field and 1,500 pilots received advanced fighter training there. Today, Millville Army Air Field Museum stewards four historic buildings, including the original Link Trainer Building, which contains one of five fully operational WWII flight simulators in the world. Additionally, the museum collects and displays artifacts, documents the lives of veterans, and shares the story of the site in the context of American military aviation history with more than 12,500 visitors a year.

The original buildings at Millville Army Air Field were constructed quickly and were intended to be temporary, which today presents unique maintenance challenges to preserving the museum site. In their grant application, MAAFM identified four chimneys on the Base Headquarters building that were in need of repair — two masonry chimneys with decaying mortar that posed a threat of leaks, and two metal chimneys that had reached the end of their useful life. In FY24, Millville Army Air Field Museum (MAAFM) was awarded a \$30,000 grant to repair all four chimneys through the Cultural Trust’s Capital Historic Preservation Grant Program. The Capital Historic Preservation Program, operated in partnership with the New Jersey Historic Trust, supports capital facilities projects at historic sites listed on the New Jersey and/or National Register of Historic Places.

In discussing the importance of the grant-funded repairs, **MAAFM Executive Director Lisa Jester described the historic buildings as “the backbone of the museum” and “fundamental to Museum stability.”** Base Headquarters houses MAAFM’s main museum, and preventing water infiltration was a priority to avoid further deterioration of the building and protect the museum’s collections, “the very essence of MAAFM that visitors come to explore every day.” For Jester, the chimney repair project is a small piece of the organization’s overall focus on proactive maintenance of its historic structures, which she said “helps bring credibility to the museum.” She added, “We stay on top of things, and we’re proud of that.”



**TOP:** Millville Army Airfield Museum.  
**ABOVE:** Scaffolding stands at Base Headquarters amid work on the museum’s chimneys in summer 2024.



# COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

In FY25, the Cultural Trust worked to reach all corners of the state with information about opportunities, expanding access to programs and directly interfacing with constituents.

## UPDATED WEBSITE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The Cultural Trust overhauled its website structure, increasing the site's navigability. Content that was originally divided between four text-heavy pages was redistributed between 10 topic-specific pages, making information easier for constituents to find. The Trust added a new “Resources” page, which highlights other State agencies relevant to the Cultural Trust’s audiences, as well as county-, state-, and national-level funders and service providers. Trust staff also updated the site’s graphics to feature many recent grantees.

## DIGITAL AUDIENCE GROWTH

Over the course of FY25, the Trust’s email list grew by over 15%, from 888 contacts to 1028 contacts. Cultural Trust emails have an average open rate of 61%, which is well above the industry benchmark for government entities. This demonstrates the high level of interest and enthusiasm for the Trust’s programs. The Trust also continued to cultivate the social media channels it launched at the end of FY24; as of July 2025, the Trust’s Facebook and X accounts had a combined 117 followers.

## DEVELOPED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT GUIDANCE FOR GRANTEES

The Trust developed specific guidance for organizations regarding how to fulfill the Cultural Trust’s contractual acknowledgement requirements. The guidance document not only offers clarity to grantees but also helps make acknowledgement of State investments more consistent and, therefore, recognizable to the general public.

## STAYED ACTIVE IN THE FIELD

Trust staff were featured speakers at events presented by the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey and the South Jersey Cultural Alliance, providing the opportunity to share information about the Trust in general as well as upcoming grant opportunities. The Trust also shared resources at a table in the marketplace of the 2025 New Jersey History and Historic Preservation Conference, introducing the agency and its programs to interested constituents.

Additionally, Trust staff attended the annual conferences of the American Association for State and Local History and Grantmakers in the Arts. These events allow staff to uplift Trust programs and services at a national level as well as to stay current with best practices in the field.



**LEFT:** Cultural Trust Grants and Operations Coordinator Avery Wehrs, left, represents New Jersey at the annual conference of the American Association for State and Local History in Mobile, Alabama, in 2024.



**RIGHT:** Kasdin speaks about the Cultural Trust’s FY26 grant opportunity at the Spring 2025 meeting of the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey at the Bayshore Center at Bivalve in Port Norris.





**Project:** Cold  
frame  
reconstruction

**Grant award:**  
\$39,975

**County:** Passaic

FEATURED  
GRANTEE

## AMERICAN LABOR MUSEUM

The Pietro and Maria Botto House in Haledon was built in 1908 by Italian immigrants who worked in the area's silk industry. During the 1913 Paterson Silk Strike, the house served a critical role as a meeting place for 25,000 silk mill workers. Reflecting this history, the house is now the home of the American Labor Museum, which explores the history and contemporary issues of work, workers, and the labor movement in America and throughout the world.

In addition to the Botto House itself, the property has a root cellar, garage, chicken coop, and gardens — which originally included 14 cold frames, transparent outdoor frames that protected plants from cold weather. Over time, the cold frames deteriorated and were removed. In FY24, the American Labor Museum was awarded a \$39,975 grant to restore the cold frames through the Cultural Trust's Capital Historic Preservation Grant Program. The Capital Historic Preservation Program, operated in partnership with the New Jersey Historic Trust, supports capital facilities projects at historic sites listed on the New Jersey and/or National Register of Historic Places.

The project involved working with a carpenter to replicate the 1908 cold frames, then installing them in the same location as the originals. Some changes had to be made — like using Spanish oak instead of the now-endangered redwood that the original cold frames were constructed from — but the resulting frames are near-perfect matches in look and function.

In addition to contributing to the site's preservation and the garden's beauty, the cold frame restoration also serves as an important educational and community resource. Together with the restoration of the garden's grape arbor in 2022, **the cold frames project brings the historic garden much closer to its original design. For students and visitors, it is now a more effective window into the lifestyle of an early twentieth-century immigrant family, for whom the garden provided both food and medicine. It also lends itself to new curriculum opportunities,** American Labor Museum Executive Director Angelica Santomauro explained, serving as a starting point for conversations that weave together sustainability and the culture of the Botto family. And finally, the cold frames work as the originals did in the early 1900s, producing abundant vegetables and herbs for students and their families to enjoy.



**TOP:** Restored cold frames at Botto House.  
**ABOVE:** The historic site of the cold frames prior to reconstruction.



## BOARD

**Carol Cronheim**, Chair  
**Bette C. Daniele**, Vice Chair  
**John Paul Nicolaides**, Vice Chair for Finance  
**Claire Knopf**, Secretary  
**Deborah R. Bozarth**, Board Member  
**Tom Carroll**, Board Member  
**S. Nadia Hussain**, Board Member  
**Rabiya S. Kader Esq.**, Board Member

*Ex officio members:*

**Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way**,  
Secretary of State  
**Elizabeth Maher Muoio**, State Treasurer  
**Felicia Grant**, Chair, NJ State Council on the Arts  
**Peter Lindsay**, Chair, NJ Historic Trust  
**Maxine Lurie**, Chair, NJ Historical Commission

## STAFF

**Isabel (Izzy) Kasdin**, Executive Director  
**Avery Wehrs**, Grants and Operations Coordinator

## CONTACT US

**Website:** [nj.gov/state/culturaltrust/](http://nj.gov/state/culturaltrust/)  
**Phone:** 609-292-6403  
**Email:** [cultural.trust@sos.nj.gov](mailto:cultural.trust@sos.nj.gov)  
**Facebook and X:** @NJCulturalTrust



The Cultural Trust was established in 2000  
as an authority in but not of  
the New Jersey Department of State.



**ABOVE:** Prallsville Mills, Delaware River Mill Society (Hunterdon County). The Delaware River Mill Society was awarded a \$40,000 CHP grant in FY24 for the installation of an upgraded HVAC system at S. Stover Mill, Prallsville Mills. **BELOW:** Naval Air Station Wildwood (Cape May County). Naval Air Station Wildwood was awarded a \$40,000 CHP grant in FY24 for rehabilitating the primary public restroom in Hangar No. 1.

## PHOTOS COURTESY OF:

Page 1: Clockwise from top left —  
Hunterdon Land Trust; Cape May MAC;  
Cultural Trust; Merchants and Drovers  
Tavern Museum Association; Save Ellis  
Island.

Page 2: Hunterdon Land Trust.

Page 3: New Jersey Cultural Trust.

Page 5: New Jersey Cultural Trust.

Page 6: Top — New Jersey Cultural  
Trust; Bottom — Liberty Hall Museum.

Page 7: Friends of Millstone Township  
Historic Registered Properties.

Page 9: Mayo Performing Arts Center.

Page 12: New Jersey Cultural Trust.

Page 13: Millville Army Airfield  
Museum.

Page 14: Left — American Association  
for State and Local History; Right —  
Cape May County History Coalition.

Page 15: American Labor Museum.

Page 16: Delaware River Mill Society;  
Bottom — Naval Air Station Wildwood.

