



NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FY27 PROGRAM AND OPERATIONS PLAN

(Based on adequate human and financial resources)

New Jersey is one of the most densely populated, diverse states in the nation, and home to a dynamic arts sector that fosters opportunities for self-expression, innovation, and inspiration. The sector offers inroads to address complex issues we all care about – quality education, healthy aging, thriving economies, booming tourism, cross-cultural understanding, and more.

This year marks six decades since the establishment of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Today, as the largest grant funder of the arts in New Jersey, the Council is responsible for the development and delivery of grant programs and public services that are equitable, accessible, and have the greatest possible benefit statewide.

OVERVIEW

The Program and Operations Plan is created within the context of the Council's [Strategic Plan \(2023-2028\)](#), and is intended to guide the work of the agency throughout Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027). The Plan is the result of ongoing self-assessment, measuring last year's progress and accounting for current circumstances and capacity.

The Council staff includes 16 full-time and one part-time employee. Staff work a hybrid schedule with three days per week from the office in Trenton and two days remote. The Council board has 13 voting seats filled and four vacancies, as well as three ex-officio members including Lt. Governor Dr. Dale G. Caldwell, Senator Holly T. Schepisi, and Assemblywoman Marisa Sweeney.

The staff is organized in four units with distinct but overlapping responsibilities: Grants & Strategies, Operations & Technical Assistance, Communications, and Community Partnerships & Artist Services. Each unit head reports to the Executive Director. The Executive Director reports to the Council Chair and, within the Department of State (DOS), to the Lt. Governor/Secretary of State. The Council's purchase of goods and services, personnel matters, processing of payments, system of accounting, and IT are all coordinated through the DOS.

Public funding for the arts through the State Arts Council comes from two main sources: the New Jersey State Budget and the federally funded National Endowment for the Arts.

- State Budget - Cultural Projects Appropriation: Annual funding for statewide arts grants derived from a portion of the revenue from the Hotel/Motel Occupancy Fee; a dedicated, renewable revenue source the sector helps to generate.
- National Endowment for the Arts: Every year, the Council applies for and receives a State

Partnership Agreement grant, helping to ensure the broadest reach of federal funds in service to and support for all citizens.

Millions of residents and visitors, hundreds of nonprofit arts organizations, hundreds of thousands of artists and arts sector workers, and countless related industries rely on the State Arts Council to responsibly steward and strategically invest public resources to help build a better New Jersey. The dollars distributed through the State Arts Council positively impact individuals, families, businesses, and communities in all 21 counties.

FY27 BUDGET

FY27 REVENUE SOURCES	
Cultural Projects Appropriation	\$ 31,900,000
National Endowment for the Arts	\$ 1,247,538
Administration Appropriation	<u>\$ 455,000</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 33,602,538
PROJECTED EXPENDITURES	
Administrative Budget	\$ 3,079,900
Available for Grants	\$ 30,522,638

The Council enters FY27 with a \$31,900,000 Cultural Projects Appropriation (CPA) and an Administrative Appropriation of \$455,000 from the state. State Budget language allows for up to 5% of the CPA to be spent on administrative costs, which helps the Council build internal operations and support non-grants services for the field. The FY27 Administrative Budget is \$3,079,900, which includes the DOS projection of salaries for Council staff, as well as non-salary costs and a roster of public services.

The Council has been awarded \$1,247,538 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This annual State Partnership Agreement grant supports Council operations and programs, with special focus on underserved communities, arts education, folk arts, and Poetry Out Loud. In FY27, the Council will apply for federal funding to support work in FY28.

In FY27 the Council will, as always, operate in multiple fiscal years at once, carrying out the administrative processes for various grant programs, upholding high standards of accountability, efficiency, and public service. This Plan, publicly approved by the Council on July 22, 2026 and posted online thereafter, as well as the list of FY27 grants and programs, together with the summary of FY26 revenue and expenditures, will constitute the Council's Annual Report to the Governor, Legislature, and the citizens of New Jersey.

FY27 PRIORITIES SUMMARY

Our highest priority is creating a strategy of grants and services that is responsive to the current needs and opportunities within the sector. To ensure our approach remains relevant, we commit to providing consistent avenues for communication and feedback throughout the year.

For most in the arts, audience behavior is changing, funder priorities are shifting, revenue is less predictable than ever, and the cost of doing business continues to rise. Designed in direct response to field input, the majority of Council grants provide the type of funding most challenging for nonprofits to find: multiyear, flexible support to help organizations pay for basic operations in service to their missions.

The Council remains focused on being a reliable source not only of funding, but also partnership and leadership. Customized opportunities for professional learning, resource development, and relationship building – in the arts and across sectors – contribute to innovation and resilience for the arts sector statewide.

The following priorities describe the areas of work to which staff and board have committed for this year. Detailed work plans are created within each staff unit, using these priorities as our guide. More information about the programs and services named below can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 8.

1. Make grants to organizations and artists that strengthen the arts sector and contribute to statewide vitality. (*Goals 1, 4*)

Every year, the Council provides grants to hundreds of nonprofit arts organizations and individual artists, helping to employ and strengthen the careers of thousands of culture workers and serving millions of visitors and residents across the state. Additionally, in FY27 the Council will serve as the recommending agency to the [New Jersey Cultural Trust](#) in their distribution of Institutional/Financial Stabilization grants for arts organizations.

Operating Grants

- Administer year three of three of the Council's largest programs, General Operating Support (GOS) and General Program Support (GPS).
 - Year three of three for GOS organizations also receiving Long-Term Residency Supplement funding, to support teaching artist residencies in educational settings.
- Based on public feedback and a comprehensive, systematic review of the GOS and GPS grant programs, the Council will launch the GOS and GPS grant guidelines and applications in FY27 for a three-year cycle of funding beginning in FY28.
 - Implement all associated guidelines and application support, including system development, public outreach, technical assistance, application intake and processing, peer panel development, and peer panel application review.

Local Arts Program

- Administer year two of three of the Local Arts Program (LAP) to extend the reach of

Council funds through the officially designated 21 County Arts Agencies (CAA), increasing access for organizations beyond the borders of the Council's GOS and GPS eligibility, while also contributing to local arts development within each county.

- Prioritize understanding of challenges and opportunities with LAP and the CAA network ahead of the launch of the next multiyear LAP grant cycle in FY29.

Project Grants

- Maintain and evolve strategic local, regional, and national partnerships across sectors to support customized project grants created in response to changing needs in the field.
 - FY27 priority areas include arts education and lifelong learning, creative aging, accessibility and inclusion, capacity building, public art, folk and traditional arts, artist services, and arts promotion.
- Based on review of the first multiyear cycle of the Creative Aging Initiative grant (CAI), the Council will launch CAI in FY27 for a two-year cycle of funding beginning in FY28.
 - Implement all associated program support, including system development, public outreach, technical assistance, application intake, and peer panel review.
- Support a new cross-departmental partnership with the New Jersey Department of Veterans Affairs through a multiyear Creative Aging Initiative grant.
- Launch *NJ's Arts Council at 60* oral history project.
 - Begin documentation of over 60 years of Council support for the arts through community events, key interviews, and training of community scholars.
 - Catalyze others to document their own organizational histories to ensure existing institutional memory is kept, valued, and contributes to the future.

Individual Artists

- Recognizing the unique position of our state's artists as a force for positive change, the Council will continue to provide financial support for individual artists.
 - Administer the 2027 Individual Artist Fellowship (IAF) program in partnership with Mid Atlantic Arts.
 - Begin work with a new partner in FY27 to reimagine the Individual Artist Fellowship program and launch the 2028 IAF application.
 - Implement year one of three with a new partner to explore the feasibility of a statewide service organization dedicated solely to supporting New Jersey artists.
 - Administer the FY27 Folk & Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Project grant.
 - Launch an application in FY27 for nominations for the New Jersey Heritage Fellowship program for FY28 funding.

2. Develop and maintain partnerships and services that strengthen the sector, leverage additional resources, and incentivize investment in the industry. (*Goals 1, 2, 3, 4*)

The Council currently works with more than 40 government agencies and nearly 30 non-government organizations in the arts and across sectors – locally, regionally, and nationally – to provide services and opportunities to the field. Priority areas are determined based on public input and staff insight.

Creative Communities

- Leverage the Council's roles as an advocate, connector, and partner to provide opportunities for the field to network within the arts as well as across sectors.
 - Identify connections to public and private funding sources.
 - Create pathways for addressing challenges related to sustainability.
- Prioritize opportunities that encourage innovation, engage new voices, and foster collaboration, with a focus on arts and health, creative placemaking, economic development, arts access, equity and inclusion, and cultural tourism.
 - FY27 programs and partnerships include: Arts and Health Roundtables, ArtsPay NJ, Communities of Practice, Council of NJ Grantmakers, Critical Financial Services, Cultural Access Network Project, Families First Discovery Pass, NJ Arts & Culture Administrators of Color, State of the Arts, and Transit Village Initiative.
 - Continued analysis of a decade of work with the Nonprofit Finance Fund toward gaining an understanding of the financial trends in the industry and maximizing the opportunities for field learning, planning, and sustainability.

Artist Services

- Support artists through relevant programs that recognize and encourage their talents, with a focus on professional development, paid calls for art, and showcase opportunities.
 - FY27 programs and partnerships include: Artist Fellowship Catalog, Arts Inclusion Program, Arts Annual, Community-Based Art Grant Program, Making It Public, Public Art Archive, Revolutionary Acts, Senior Citizen Art Show, The Business of Being an Artist, and TRANSITional Art Project.
- Facilitate and support opportunities to engage New Jersey artists in shaping our state's public spaces through increased staff capacity focused on public art.

Arts Education and Lifelong Learning

- Serve teaching artists, educators, and arts providers with resources and professional development for networking and continued learning.
 - FY27 programs and partnerships include: Creative Aging, Creative Futures; Creative Aging Initiative; Poetry Out Loud; National Association of State Arts Agencies Arts Education Working Group; *The Transformative Power of Art* guide; Teaching Artist Community of Practice; Teaching Artist Training; and Teen Arts Festival.

Folk and Traditional Arts

- Support a multifaceted Folk and Traditional Arts Program that includes the four regional folklife centers and project grants that uplift New Jersey's cultural richness, leverage stronger communities, and provide continued learning for cultural practitioners and heritage professionals.
 - FY27 programs and partnerships include: Folk Arts NJ Gathering, Folk Arts Roundtable, Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Project, Folklife Centers Network, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Folk Arts Preconference Steering Committee, and Paved with Promise.

3. Enhance communications through new tools, information, and materials. (Goal 3)

The Council's communications strategy is designed to increase awareness about the value of the arts, amplify the work of the Council and grantees, and highlight the importance of public support for the arts in New Jersey.

- Maintain effective promotion, education, and communications about diverse arts opportunities, events, artists, and communities statewide.
 - FY27 resources include: 60th Anniversary Public Value video series, general information assets, Long-Range Strategic Plan, Opportunities for the Field, and Year in Review.
- Evaluate and adapt communications assets and practices to serve changing needs in the field, including web, social, and print content.
 - Continue to build out the Council's website as a relevant and robust tool for the field, expanding the library of resources, artist showcase videos, and 24/7 technical assistance tools.
 - Explore expansion of social media to leverage the Council's roles as an advocate, connector, and partner, increasing access to Council opportunities and providing greater visibility for overall resources for the field.
- Continue to standardize data collection and use related to agency services, engagement, and impact, as well as national and statewide arts-impact data captured through various methods such as grant reports and field research.
 - Assess feasibility and timing of grant and service data collection and availability to compile regular information on the reach and impact of public arts funding.
- Provide high-quality constituent relations and assistance across all teams and support opportunities for staff and board to engage on the local, state, and national levels.
 - Maintain support for in-person field visits for staff and board as part of grants management, relationship building, and sector support.

4. Further integrate principles of equity and inclusion in policy and practice for public benefit. (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)

With an emphasis on learning, data, and accountability, we will continue to assess and challenge inequities, identify gaps in engagement and service, and focus on the details that shape change.

- Implement changes to grantmaking and service to increase access to Council resources. The two largest grant programs were comprehensively assessed through the lenses of national research; applicant, grantee, and panelist feedback; and an analysis of internal workflow resulting in opportunities for change.
 - Simplified administrative requirements, streamlined processes, longer timelines, diversified communications, and robust public assistance.
- Follow up on lessons learned and questions revealed through grant program assessments to inform continued change and development.
- Evolve programs with clarity, ensuring modifications are rooted in an understanding of

the realities in the sector and agency capacity.

- Continue work to understand agency reach and identify gaps in engagement.
 - Incorporate information and data from FY26 into ongoing assessments of grant programs and services.
- Increase accessibility to the arts and to the Arts Council.
 - Maintain and build on the work through the Cultural Access Network Project.
 - Articulate internal short- and long-term goals related to accessibility practices to ensure Council opportunities, information, materials, and spaces are accessible and welcoming for all people.

5. Align internal capacity, streamline operations, and capitalize on expertise. (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)

Aligning internal capacity and expertise with workflow and demand of the field is critical to the delivery of high-quality public services.

- Improve access to information and resources externally and internally.
 - Make all possible updates to SAGE (State electronic grants administration system), to improve the experience for applicants and grantees.
 - Align SAGE functionality with internal needs to streamline all phases of grants administration.
 - Build on the progress made last year to align agency data gathering capabilities from internal and external systems.
- Capitalize on refined internal procedures to support agency planning, productivity, and accountability.
 - Continue to assess and align staff capacity.
 - Increase workflow clarity across the board.
 - Meet and exceed Council, State, and Federal compliance requirements.
- Prioritize ongoing staff learning and recognize growing and established expertise.
 - Acknowledge and encourage leadership at every level.
- Build on the progress made to improve internal communications and foster a positive culture of creativity, clarity, and collaboration.

APPENDIX



FY27 Programs and Services Summary

Current as of July 2026. [Staff contacts](#) for each item are noted below.

Grants for Organizations

Creative Aging, Creative Futures (Samantha Patel Clarke)

The Council was one of 28 state arts agencies to be awarded funds through the program led by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and E.A. Michelson Philanthropy: Creative Aging, Creative Futures. These funds make possible an expansion of the Council's existing Creative Aging Initiative through a new partnership with the NJ Department of Veterans Affairs.

Creative Aging Initiative (CAI) (Samantha Patel Clarke)

The Creative Aging Initiative is a grant program designed to support lifelong learning initiatives for older adults. Creative Aging Initiative grants provide \$10,000 each year, for two years, to eligible arts organizations, libraries, veterans homes, senior and community centers, colleges/universities, and units of government to cover costs for arts learning experiences for New Jersey older adults (aged 55 and over). The next application is expected to open in FY27.

General Operating Support (GOS) (Tammy Rice Herman)

GOS grants provide support for the overall operations of organizations with missions exclusively devoted to the arts and which meet the Council's eligibility criteria. Review and consideration of GOS applications occur every three years. GOS grants are typically awarded with a three-year commitment, subject to available funds and contract stipulations.

General Program Support (GPS) (Tammy Rice Herman)

GPS grants provide support for the operating costs of full-time, ongoing, public arts programs that meet the Council's eligibility criteria. Review and consideration of GPS applications occur every three years. GPS grants are typically awarded with a three-year commitment, subject to available funds and contract stipulations. This grant is matched 1:1.

Local Arts Program (LAP) (Andrew Binger)

Since 1979, the Council has worked in collaboration with the network of 21 officially designated County Arts Agencies (CAAs) to extend the reach of State resources and increase access to the arts in communities in all corners of the state. LAP grants are typically awarded with a three-year commitment to CAAs to support local arts development, planning and administration, and to regrant funds to community-based arts organizations and projects with local impact. More

than 600 such grants are made annually under grant programs designed and administered by the respective CAA. Any funds received by the CAA that are not regranted are matched 1:1.

Long-Term Residency Supplement (LTRS) (Samantha Patel Clarke)

LTRS funding of \$10,000 supports one long-term residency each year of the three-year General Operating Support cycle. GOS/LTRS grantees engage a core group of youth for an arts residency of ten days or longer, held during the school day in an educational setting with a teaching artist. Residencies supported by LTRS are provided by the grantee at no cost to the education provider, which can include public, private, parochial, and charter schools engaging with K through 12th grade students, juvenile justice centers, and alternative secondary school services.

Grants for Artists

Folk & Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Project (Sally Van de Water)

This project-focused grant program aims to help ensure the survival of valued traditional art forms in New Jersey communities by investing in emerging and mid-career folk and traditional artists, fostering access to support for building knowledge, skills, and training in their art form. This opportunity is offered every other year (next application expected to open in FY28).

Individual Artist Fellowships (IAF) (Stephanie Nerbak)

Fellowships provide financial support to New Jersey artists in 13 artistic disciplines to help them produce new work and advance their careers. The anonymous review process is focused solely on artistic quality as determined by independent review panels. In FY27, the program will be carried out in partnership with Mid Atlantic Arts, and work will begin with a new administrative partner. Awards are typically announced every February and follow a calendar year.

New Jersey Heritage Fellowships (Sally Van de Water)

To honor and preserve our state's highly diverse cultural heritage, the Council will award New Jersey Heritage Fellowships to exemplary folk and traditional artists. These fellowships recognize artistic excellence, lifetime achievement, and contributions to our state's cultural heritage. Heritage Fellowship Awards are one-time, \$20,000 awards to New Jersey folk and traditional artists to help them pursue their artistic goals. This opportunity is offered every other year (next application expected to open in FY27).

Cosponsored Projects (CSP)

One vitally important way that the Council achieves its goals of service to the entire state is through a docket of annual and multiyear projects carried out through partnerships. Cosponsored Project support focuses on priority areas, such as arts access, arts education, artist services, and economic and community development.

Artist Service Organization Feasibility Study (Stephanie Nerbak)

Recognizing the need for ongoing, comprehensive services for artists living and working in New Jersey, the Council will begin a multiyear feasibility study to explore the possibility of establishing an organization/entity with the mission to support individual artists working at all

career stages and in all artistic disciplines, statewide. The study will be carried out in partnership with NY Foundation for the Arts.

Arts Annual (Stephanie Nerbak)

Since 1985, the Council has cosponsored this series of exhibitions highlighting the work of artists living or working in New Jersey. One exhibition takes place each year at one of seven major New Jersey museums and is curated by the host. The participating museums include Montclair Art Museum, Morris Museum, The Newark Museum of Art, NJ State Museum, Noyes Museum of Art, Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art, and Zimmerli Art Museum.

The Business of Being an Artist (Stephanie Nerbak, Samantha Patel Clarke, Sally Van de Water)
BOBA is a series of free, virtual workshops open to any artist who lives and/or works in New Jersey. Shaped by public input, sessions are designed to engage artists interested in regular, relevant, and accessible learning opportunities on issues critical to building their careers. Artists in all disciplines receive practical guidance from industry experts on topics like insurance, financial management, networking, commission opportunities, and more.

Critical Financial Services (Tammy Rice Herman)

Cosponsored with the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF), this program is aimed at gaining a comprehensive understanding of the financial health and trends of the nonprofit arts industry and assisting organizations in achieving greater financial health. NFF provides Audit Review & Financial Summaries (ARFS) based on a thorough assessment of grantee financial health, as well as workshops, webinars, and small group financial leadership clinics for grantees to build foundational knowledge around financial management tools.

Cultural Access Network Project (CAN) (Lindsay Dandeo)

In 1992, the Council joined with the NJ Theatre Alliance to create what is now called the Cultural Access Network to serve organizations and individuals statewide. Since its inception, CAN has been a multifaceted resource for the cultural sector in making programs, opportunities, and facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities and in being compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Making It Public (MIP) (Stephanie Nerbak)

In partnership with Forecast Public Art, the Council hosts free, virtual workshops open to New Jersey artists at all career levels and of all disciplines who are interested in expanding their art-making practice into public spaces.

New Jersey Arts & Culture Administrators of Color (NJACAC) (Jessica Gaines)

Established in 2019 and led by the NJ Theatre Alliance, the NJACAC is a network created to provide self-identified people of color working in the state's arts organizations a safe space to connect, and a platform to share their expertise, experiences, and creativity. The Council is a founding partner of the initiative, working with the Alliance and ArtPride NJ to build a community that affords members the opportunity to develop personal and professional connections, share resources, and foster emerging leaders.

New Jersey Folklife Centers Network (Sally Van de Water)

The network of regional folklife centers conduct regional fieldwork, present programs to strengthen and celebrate the diversity of folk and traditional arts practiced statewide, and offer professional development for folk and traditional artists. The Council works with the State's four Folklife Centers: Folklife Center of Northern NJ (Paterson), The Regional Folklife Center at the Arts Institute of Middlesex County (New Brunswick), Down Jersey Folklife Center (Millville), and New Jersey Folklife at Perkins Center (Collingswood, Evesham, and Moorestown).

NJ's Arts Council at 60 (Sally Van de Water)

In recognition of the Council's 60th anniversary, the Council will work in partnership with the NJ Council for the Humanities to document and explore the impact of state funding for the arts through the Council over the last 60 years. The project will include community events as well as interviews with individuals who played important roles in the Council's history. The final collection will offer a valuable record of the agency's long-term impact and public value.

Paved with Promise (Sally Van de Water)

Paved with Promise is a multimedia project that explores the experiences of residents who immigrated to NJ after the passing of the Hart-Celler Act of 1965. The project includes a series of video interviews and a traveling exhibition, concluding in FY27, that visualize these stories.

Poetry Out Loud (POL) (Samantha Patel Clarke)

POL is a national poetry recitation program sponsored by the NEA and implemented by state and jurisdictional arts councils nationwide. The Council sponsors NJPOL and works with Count Basie Center for the Arts and a network of partners statewide. POL encourages youth to learn about poetry through memorization and performance, while gaining public speaking skills, building self-confidence, and learning about their literary heritage. The opportunity is available to all youth currently enrolled in grades 9-12 or 8th-grade students participating in high school level-curriculum. NJPOL can be facilitated in school classrooms, after school, through community organizations, and libraries by a teacher, teaching artist, or program facilitator.

Revolutionary Acts (Danielle Bursk)

In partnership with Monument Lab, NJ Historical Commission, and RevolutionNJ, the Council will support a new performance series – *Revolutionary Acts* – that will animate stories of the American Revolution in time for the 250th anniversary in 2026. Artists Nandi Jordan and Anika Grant (Idlewild Experiential) will create performances that will unfold across historically significant sites in Camden, Trenton, and Fort Lee. With local community partners, the artists will activate these locations, weaving together stories of our past, present, and future.

Senior Citizen Art Show (Stephanie Nerbak)

The New Jersey Senior Citizen Art Show has celebrated the creative power of NJ's older artists for more than 50 years. Since 1998, the Council has administered the program, and since 2014 has done so through a partnership with the Mercer County Division of Culture & Heritage. The show includes artists from all 21 counties.

State of the Arts (Michelle Baxter-Schaffer)

State of the Arts, the Emmy Award-winning weekly, half-hour television show, debuted on NJN Public Television in 1981, and aired as a coproduction of NJN and the Council until 2011. Now airing as a cornerstone program of NJTV Public Media NJ, the new episodes are coproduced by the Council and Stockton University, in partnership with PCK Media. *State of the Arts* goes on location with creative personalities and productions and is recognized as one of the premier arts programs on public television, with more than 30 Mid-Atlantic and NY Emmys to its credit.

TRANSITional Art Project (TAP) (Danielle Bursk)

In partnership with NJ TRANSIT, the Council created the TRANSITional Art Project, a temporary public art program specifically for transportation centers in New Jersey. The goals of TAP are to connect NJ TRANSIT customers and the surrounding community by bringing new and exciting experiences to the spaces customers pass through every day, as well as providing New Jersey artists exhibition opportunities and a supportive environment in which to create public art.

Services

Arts and Health (Andrew Binger, Samantha Patel Clarke)

As a convener, the Council will continue to invest time and expertise in the growing field of arts and health in New Jersey; learning alongside our colleagues in the field and serving as a conduit to incentivize cross-sector collaboration and investment.

Arts Inclusion Program (Danielle Bursk)

Since the passage of the Public Buildings Arts Inclusion Act in 1978, this program has led to the commissioning and installation of hundreds of artworks in state-financed construction projects. Up to 1.5% of the construction budget is set aside for this purpose. The Council assists state agencies and universities in the selection of artists for all projects including those for NJ TRANSIT's Transit Arts Program. Announcements of Arts Inclusion Projects are publicized through [CaFE](#) and listed under the "Public Art" category when available.

ArtsPay NJ (Lindsay Dandeo, Diane Felcyn)

ArtsPay NJ is a collaborative project which addresses issues of pay equity, staff retention, and sector sustainability in the New Jersey arts community. The Council supported the initiative's first and second round of data collection, reports, and tools, including a public, interactive dashboard of compensation, benefits, job satisfaction, and demographics of arts workers in NJ. This project is done in partnership with the arts service organizations of NJ: ArtPride NJ, Arts Ed NJ, Dance NJ, NJ Theatre Alliance, NJ Assoc. of Museums, and South Jersey Cultural Alliance.

Communities of Practice (COP) (Tammy Rice Herman)

The Council's roster includes organizations with diverse areas of focus and capacity. Recognizing this diversity and the organic cohorts that come together, the Council created "Communities of Practice" to help those with similar traits share ideas in order to strengthen the field as a whole. COPs have been developed for high-capacity organizations, arts education

organizations, teaching artists, service organizations, County Arts Agencies, and more.

Families First Discovery Pass (FFDP) (Ashley Gomez-Jimenez)

In 2018, the Council and the NJ Historical Commission worked with the NJ Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Health (DOH) to launch NJ's first FFDP program. This program provides families and individuals enrolled in state assistance programs (SNAP, WFNJ, and/or WIC) with free or highly discounted admission to arts and history venues and programs statewide. FFDP offers broad access to cultural experiences for residents and helps cultural organizations engage and build new audiences.

Folk Arts Gatherings (Sally Van de Water)

A multiday professional development convening for individuals working in the folk and traditional arts in the region. Training and discussion topics include programming formats, arts education, community health, place-based folklife, archiving and fieldwork, and access and inclusion. The events are made possible by partnerships with the NY State Council on the Arts, NY Folklore, National Endowment for the Arts, NJ Council for the Humanities, and others.

The Transformative Power of Art: A Guide to Arts Learning for Systems-Impacted Youth in New Jersey (Samantha Patel Clarke)

Driven by the understanding that the arts are a powerful tool for youth development, the New Jersey legislature charged the Council and a host of partners to create a shareable resource that could help bring the arts to all young people, including those furthest from opportunity. Released in 2026, *The Transformative Power of Art* is a guide for using community-based arts learning programming to support systems-impacted youth in New Jersey. The Council worked in coordination with The Learning Agenda, the Youth Justice Commission, and the Division of Child and Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families.

Opportunities for the Field (Ashley Gomez-Jimenez)

Opportunities for the Field is a monthly newsletter. It is a compilation of opportunities for artists and arts organizations that benefit those working in the arts in New Jersey. Listings include professional development workshops, grant announcements, calls for artists, and more.

Public Art Archive (Danielle Bursk)

By undertaking this online archive of public art from across the state, the Council aims to make New Jersey's vast collection of art in public spaces easy to find and enjoy. This [online tool](#) provides open access to public art for anyone visiting, studying, or passing by, and helps residents locate art in their own communities.

Teaching Artist Training: Creative Aging (Samantha Patel Clarke, Andrew Binger)

The Council will engage with experts in the field to provide training for teaching artists and organizations interested in working with older adults through the arts. Over the course of 16 months, the Council will offer seminar-style training as well as peer-to-peer learning for those new to the work, with options for in-depth study for those looking to expand their practice.

Partnerships

Community-Based Art Grant Program (Danielle Bursk)

With funds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Council partners with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection to develop and implement the Community-Based Art Grant Program. The program addresses the need to involve and inform the public about coastal hazard impacts and risk reduction by offering grants to organizations to work with artists to create temporary public art projects that engage the community.

Council of NJ Grantmakers Culture Funders (Tammy Rice Herman)

The CNJG Culture Funders Affinity Group includes private and public grantmakers working in the arts and humanities across New Jersey. It aims to maximize the leadership potential and grantmaking abilities of those interested in developing a strong and thriving arts community in New Jersey. The Council's Director of Grants & Strategies is the Co-Chair of the Affinity Group.

Nat. Assembly of State Arts Agencies Arts Education Working Group (Samantha Patel Clarke)

New Jersey will serve as the chair in FY27 for NASAA's Arts Education Working Group. The group is responsible for the planning and implementation of the annual Professional Development Institute, which gathers arts education managers from all 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies for leadership development. The chair will also gather the Mid-Atlantic region bi-monthly to support arts education managers and implement field services.

New Jersey Arts & Culture Renewal Fund (Tammy Rice Herman)

Originally named the New Jersey Arts and Culture Recovery Fund, NJACRF was established in 2020 to ensure the survival and strength of the state's arts and history sectors during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund changed its name in 2022 to reflect its focus on supporting the arts and history sectors through sustained, equitable grantmaking to nonprofit organizations most vulnerable to sector disruptions. The Council is a cofounder of NJACRF.

New Jersey Cultural Trust (Tammy Rice Herman)

The Cultural Trust is a public/private partnership to help ensure a healthy nonprofit cultural industry in New Jersey. The Trust provides grants to support institutional and financial stabilization projects of arts, history and humanities organizations. Funding for grants comes from interest earned on the Cultural Trust Fund. Alternating every other year (with the NJ Historic Trust/NJ Historical Commission) the Council accepts applications and makes recommendations to the Trust for grants to arts organizations. FY27 is an arts round.

Transit Village Initiative (TVI) (Andrew Binger)

The NJ Department of Transportation and NJ TRANSIT lead the TVI, a multiagency Smart Growth partnership. The TVI creates incentives for municipalities to redevelop or revitalize the areas around transit stations using design standards of transit-oriented development (TOD). TOD helps municipalities create attractive, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods where people can live, work, shop, and play without relying on automobiles.