

GUIDELINES

FY 2024 ♦ UNION COUNTY LOCAL ARTS GRANT (LAP)

January 01, 2024 – December 31, 2024

Overview

The Union County Local Arts Program Grant (“LAP”) is made possible by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Union County Board of County Commissioners, through the Cultural and Heritage Programs Advisory Board and the NJ State Council on the Arts, have made funds available to support local arts through a State/County block-grant partnership for non-profit arts organizations and non-arts organizations located in and serving the residents of Union County. LAP funds are awarded to organizations (“re-grantees”) that demonstrate a high degree of professionalism in producing arts activities, to promote the growth and expand the public impact of arts organizations and arts projects.

The Local Arts Grant Program operates on a 12-month fiscal period. Applications must reflect arts activities to take place from January 01 to December 31, 2024. Expenses using grant funds must be paid during 2024.

The LAP grant program is administered by the Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs (“OCHA”). These Guidelines outline the two types of LAP grants (General Operating Support and Special Project), and all requirements of the program. The application process is competitive.

How to Apply

Applications for 2024 LAP funding must be submitted online via the **OCHA Portal**, a platform from Foundant Technologies. The Portal will open **August 8, 2023**.

Returning applicants: If your organization already has an existing account, log in to begin. Select the correct LAP Application: GOS; Special Project; or 3-Year Cycle (if your organization is designated in the 3-Year Cycle, you will be sent an access code for this application form).

New applicants: Email a request for the link to the Portal to: msturm@ucnj.org and culturalinfo@ucnj.org, including the name of your organization. From the Portal, applicants must first create a new account before logging in and selecting the correct LAP Application: GOS or Special Project.

Applicants can log in and out of the system as often as needed to complete the application. Progress is saved during each session.

[Tutorials posted here](#) provide valuable guidance in using the Foundant platform.

Application period: August 8 – September 21, 2023

Deadline to submit application: September 21, 2023

Three-Year Funding Cycle

If your organization was notified by OCHA of having qualified for the three-year funding cycle (fiscal years 2022 - 2023 - 2024), you will complete an **Abbreviated Application Form** for 2024. Full Interim and Final Reports are required every year.

The three-year cycle designates a commitment from OCHA for funding over this three-year period, provided that the NJ State Council on the Arts provides funding to the County of Union through the Local Arts Program each year. Specific awards each year depend on the level of funding received by County of Union. After the first year in the cycle, awards may increase or decrease based on available funds, the number of worthy applicants and other factors.

Criteria to qualify for the 3-year cycle: Organization has received LAP funding for five (5) previous consecutive years; and has consistently demonstrated high standards of artistry, management, compliance and accountability, including timeliness in submitting reports.

Assistance

For clarification about this grant program, or for assistance, contact the LAP Coordinator at OCHA: Martha Sturm, email msturm@ucnj.org or tel 908-558-2550. Or email culturalinfo@ucnj.org.

Major Goals of LAP

LAP provides funds for arts programs in Union County to further these goals:

- create public recognition of the value of the arts
- strengthen local arts organizations, artistically and administratively
- foster and reward artistic excellence
- increase the availability of quality arts experiences to the general public
- increase accessibility to the arts through compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)
- broaden, deepen and diversify participation in the arts
- foster collaborations and partnership-building
- promote expanded public and private support of local arts activities

Applicants are encouraged to address any of these Special Areas of Interest:

- highlight the excellence of New Jersey artists and/or contemporary artists
- incorporate diverse programming and artists
- demonstrate effort to reach a diverse audience and/or underserved communities
- present programs that appeal to families
- promote high-quality, lifelong arts education

Eligibility Requirements

Applications are accepted from eligible organizations planning to provide the Union County public with a high-quality arts program or arts project.

- **Arts organizations** may apply for General Operating Support (GOS) or a Special Project grant (SP).
- **Non-arts organizations** may apply for a Special Project grant (SP) to fund an arts project or series.

Local Arts Grants will be awarded to **non-profit organizations** meeting* the following requirements:

- Is Union County-based; activities take place in Union County and benefit Union County residents
- Organization is incorporated in the State of New Jersey for a minimum of two years
- Has IRS tax-exempt status in accordance with Sections 501(c)3 or 501(c)4 or pending same

Local Arts Grants may also be awarded to **libraries, schools, and units of government** for a specific Arts project.

**Organizations not meeting the three criteria may apply as the Special Project of an "umbrella organization" for one year only.*

Grantees under this program must comply with Labor Standards under Section 5(1) of the National Foundation of Arts and Humanities Act of 1965; the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education and Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (which addresses accessibility issues); and may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sexual preference or disability.

Two Categories of Support

Eligible organizations may apply for funding in one of two categories:

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT (GOS): This category is exclusively for arts organizations. Requests cannot exceed **40%** of the organization's total annual operating budget. This grant is not project-specific. Applicants should present the full range of their organization's operations and must demonstrate high standards of artistry and management.

SPECIAL PROJECT (SP): This category is open to both arts and non-arts organizations, to fund an arts project or arts series. Examples of Special Projects are:

- Series of performances or films
- Programs for youth, senior citizens, or people with disabilities
- Poetry readings by New Jersey poets
- Culturally specific work
- Arts education
- Enhanced costuming, orchestration, choreography or marketing
- Board development
- Staff training
- Strategic planning
- Marketing and fundraising
- ADA assistive services
- Arts education
- Technical Assistance (*see below*)

For arts organizations only, a Special Project may be a **Technical Assistance** project — a one-time consultancy by qualified professional(s) to strengthen the administration of an arts organization or the quality of programs presented to the public. Organization must demonstrate a genuine need for assistance in one of these areas: administration, marketing, long-range planning, ADA services, or artistic development. Consultant's proposal must be uploaded with application.

Artistic Disciplines

- Music
- Dance
- Theatre
- Opera / Musical Theatre
- Visual Art
- Design Arts
- Crafts
- Photography
- Media Arts / Film
- Literature
- Folklife / Traditional Arts
- Multi-disciplinary
- Interdisciplinary
- Presenters

Levels of Support

Minimum Request: \$1,500

Maximum Request:

General Operating Support (arts organizations only): The maximum request is **\$14,000**. Requested amount for GOS cannot exceed **40%** of an organization's total annual operating budget.

Special Project: The maximum request is **\$5,000**.

No Cash Match is required for LAP 2024, however organizations seeking a Special Project grant are encouraged to seek other funding sources.

Restrictions

Organizations may apply for 2024 funding from EITHER the Union County Local Arts Grant Program OR the Union County HEART Grant Program, but **may NOT apply to BOTH** grant programs. For guidance, contact the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs.

Applicant organizations cannot be funded in the same fiscal year by both the Union County Local Arts Program AND directly by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Use of LAP Funds

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT (GOS)

ELIGIBLE Use of Funds

This grant is for arts organizations only, and is not project-specific. Budget expenditures may include, but are not limited to:

- Staff salaries
- Consultants
- Professional development
- Internet, phone or other utilities
- Printing and postage
- Marketing, publicity and advertising
- Materials or supplies
- Leased equipment
- Fundraising and development
- Assistive services or equipment (ADA)
- Insurance and audit expenses
- Domestic travel and transportation

INELIGIBLE Use of Funds

LAP funds **cannot** be used for:

- Capital improvements or capital equipment purchases
- Hospitality / refreshments
- Previous program deficits
- Fellowships, endowments or scholarships
- Foreign travel

SPECIAL PROJECT (SP)

ELIGIBLE Use of Funds

This grant is project-specific, for either arts organizations or non-arts organizations. Funds must be used to pay expenses for the arts project only, including:

- Fees for outside professional artists
- Fees for other outside Professionals
- Printing & postage
- Materials or supplies
- Rented space or equipment
- Maintenance costs
- Marketing, publicity and advertising
- Staff training
- Board development
- Strategic planning
- Marketing and fundraising
- ADA assistive services
- Arts education

INELIGIBLE Use of Funds

LAP funds **cannot** be used for:

- Normal administrative staff salaries
- Projects that serve as a fundraiser
- Capital improvements or capital equipment purchases
- Hospitality / refreshments
- Previous program deficits
- Fellowships, endowments or scholarships
- Foreign travel
- Projects by religious institutions that do not actively seek a wide general audience

Funding Requirements

Organizations funded by LAP are required to spend the grant funds awarded on eligible expenses during 2024 and to properly document the expenses.

For a Special Project, the total cost often exceeds the maximum grant amount. Using funds from other sources is encouraged and may be needed.

Deadlines & Schedule for Application Process

Aug. 08 Portal opens to applicants to apply

Sep. 21 Application deadline – portal closes at 11:59 pm

Applications are evaluated by a Panel of Arts Professionals. The OCHA Advisory Board must approve all funding decisions and grant awards.

Applicants will be notified of the funding decision and award amount (if funded) by **Dec. 29, 2023**.

Application Components

The application must be completed online using the Foundant Technologies platform. Applicants may log on and off as often as needed. Work is automatically saved when content is entered. Once submitted, the application cannot be changed.

The Application consists of these sections:

- Introduction & Eligibility
- Application Summary (or Special Project Summary)
- Organizational Background
- Arts Program / Project Management & Details
- Financial Plan
- Publicity & Marketing
- Accessibility & ADA
- Authorization & Certification

Certain support materials must be **uploaded**. For example, applicants may upload Word or Excel files, images, or scanned documents. Ensure that scanned documents are fully legible. File-size limits apply. In some cases, applicant can opt to either enter text OR upload a document. In some cases, applicant may combine entering text AND uploading a document.

Support materials include resumes, budget and publicity samples. Materials representing the arts program should document artistic quality, and should not be more than two (2) years old.

Special Project applicants must complete the Special Project Budget, outlining the expenses planned by category. Operating expenses, such as printing and supplies, should only reflect costs spent on the Project. Maintenance costs are usually in-kind, unless specifically charged to the Project. Income and expenses should produce a balanced budget. If not, explain any differences.

All applicants should demonstrate:

Artistic Excellence – Demonstrate specifically what the arts organization does and/or what the artists being hired do, reflecting professionalism.

Administrative Capacity – Answer all questions thoroughly and succinctly. Furnish all materials requested, and submit accurately calculated budget(s). Proofread before submitting.

Community Outreach & Participation – Demonstrate outreach to specific populations.

Review Process & Evaluation Criteria

Each application will be carefully read, evaluated and discussed by an independent Panel of Arts Professionals. Evaluations are based on these criteria:

Artistic Merit

- Quality of program and artists, demonstrated by support material and resumes
- Activities that further applicant's artistic goals and objectives
- Programming that enhances or stretches participants' artistic potential

Administrative Ability

- Strong management and a realistic plan for executing project
- Demonstrates ability to deliver program effectively
- Promotes greater public awareness of the importance and value of the arts
- Demonstrates effective marketing/PR plan with tactics to promote activities widely
- Quality of evaluation tools shown

Public Participation - Accessibility & ADA

- Demonstrates efforts to involve people of diverse ethnicities
- In compliance with ADA, or making substantial progress and effort to make programming accessible in accordance with ADA
- Demonstrates commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Collaborates with other group(s) to expand impact

Financial Management

- Demonstrates fiscal responsibility
- Presents a realistic budget
- Shows diverse funding sources

Overall Impression

- Overall impression of grant application and program in totality
- Significant strengths or weaknesses

Evaluations will also consider whether application addresses any Special Area of Interest:

- Program highlights New Jersey artists and/or contemporary artists
- Incorporates diverse programming and artists
- Program appeals to families
- Efforts to reach diverse and/or underserved communities
- Promotes high-quality, lifelong arts education

Funding Decisions

Specific grant award amounts are based on factors including: the total funds granted to Union County by the state of NJ, the number of applicants, and the Panel's Evaluations. **Prior-year reporting and compliance** can affect decisions and awards for applicants previously funded.

Appeals Process

Appeals to the LAP decision will be entertained only if an applicant is not funded and can specifically demonstrate that the application was misinterpreted or misunderstood during the evaluation process. An appeal must be made only on the basis of the information contained in the initial application. The specific amount of an award is not grounds for an appeal.

Applicants may submit a written appeal up to 30 days after notification of the OCHA decision. Such an appeal should be initiated by email to culturalinfo@ucnj.org as well as a hard copy letter sent by US mail to: Office Administrator, Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, 633 Pearl St., Elizabeth, NJ 07202.

OCHA staff will clarify the appeals procedure for any applicant requiring further information.

Grant Payments

An organization awarded a Local Arts grant is a “re-grantee,” since funds are granted to Union County, then re-granted to organizations. Funds are paid to re-grantees in two installments:

- Initial payment (75%) is paid after the LAP contract is signed and executed, and state funds for 2024 have been allocated by Union County.
- Final payment (25%) is paid after the re-grantee’s Final Report is submitted, reviewed and approved by OCHA and confirmed in good standing.

The Final payment **reimburses** funds already expended and documented in the Final Report, which should show that the project was completed in good form, and must document that grant funds were spent during 2024 on eligible expenses.

Expenditures Using Grant Funds

All grant funds must be fully expended (spent and fully paid) by **November 30, 2024**.

Reporting

At grant-funded events, re-grantee shall record attendance and demographics for the purpose of reporting. Taking photos and compiling publicity materials regularly will facilitate eventual reporting.

Reports will be submitted online using the Foundant Technologies platform, via the OCHA Portal.

An Interim Report will be due by **July 16, 2024**.

A Final Report will be due by **December 15, 2024**. Final Report must include support materials including documentation of paid expenses.

Qualifying forms of documented expenses: paid itemized receipts, cancelled checks, or Accounting / bookkeeping output (such as QuickBooks ledger or bank statement). Expenses should be categorized and itemized clearly, according to the organization’s budget for the grant. The purpose of expenses submitted must be clearly indicated.

Re-grantees should record all **In-Kind donations** (defined as any donated goods or services, including volunteers’ time). The Final Report requires assigning all In-Kind donations a fair-cash value.

Non-compliance with terms of the grant may affect current or future funding.

ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 (Federal law), requires that **all public programs and services be made accessible to all people**, regardless of an individual’s physical or developmental disability. ADA applies to all providers of public programs, whether an organization applying owns the site of programming, rents it, or uses donated space.

Full participation in your program by people with disabilities is facilitated by physical accessibility (such as a wheelchair-accessible venue); by program accessibility (such as using large type, audio devices or captioning, and accessible web design); and by training staff to implement policies and practices.

Organizations are strongly encouraged to send at least one Board Member to attend an ADA workshop annually. To learn about ADA, visit the Cultural Access Network Project at www.njtheatrealliance.org. (click on “Industry Services,” then click “The Cultural Access Network”); or call 973-250-6661 ext. 1; or email Beth Prevor, Access Coordinator, at bprevor@njtheatrealliance.org.

To consult about **outreach** to people in Union County with disabilities, call the Union County Office for Persons with Disabilities & Special Needs at 908-527-4781.

Other Requirements for Grant Recipients

Workshop Attendance

During each year funded, grant recipients are expected to attend at least one Technical Assistance Workshop hosted by OCHA. To fulfill this requirement, grant recipients may also attend a *comparable* professional development event or workshop that suits their organization’s specific needs. Any Board member or multiple people can attend.

Funding Credit – Publicity Requirements

Funding support must be acknowledged, with credit given to the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs on all publicity and published materials, including press releases, ads, programs, flyers and web pages, regarding public activities for which funds from this grant are used. In publicizing programs supported by the grant, the State Council **logo must appear as shown below, with the credit statement** on 3 lines to the right of logo.



Made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

For various file formats of the logo & funding credit, contact the Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, or download them at http://www.nj.gov/state/njsca/dos_njsca_grants-manage.html#graphics

Statement must display the following language **exactly** and legibly, in Helvetica or Arial font:

Made possible by funds from the Union County
Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner
of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

If *spoken* by a re-grant representative, funding credit must be to the same effect.

Print materials: Minimum size of logo with embedded statement is set by the height of the circle portion of the logo, which cannot be shorter than 0.5 inches.

Website and email blasts: Minimum size of logo with statement is also set by the height of the circle portion of the logo, which can be no shorter than 75 pixels. If necessary, the statement may appear as fine print (not embedded), separated slightly from the Council logo.

Digital ads: Circle part of logo cannot be shorter than 50 pixels. Credit statement may be omitted if necessary. For ads with a width smaller than 225 pixels, it is not necessary to include the Council logo or credit statement.

Programs & Evaluation

Once per year, a re-grantee shall furnish OCHA with two complimentary tickets (or announcement of a free event; or a link to a virtual event), so that an OCHA Board member or staff can attend for evaluation purposes. Contact culturalinfo@ucnj.org with event details and admission information.

New applicants are encouraged to request an on-site evaluation for a program that is presented prior to Nov. 15, 2023.