

Background

In 1998, the City adopted amendments to the Theater Subdistrict regulations of the New York City Zoning Resolution in order to establish new and modified regulatory incentives and controls aimed at the preservation and enhancement of the area as a cultural, theatrical and entertainment showcase.¹ The Theater Subdistrict Council, a not-for-profit corporation, has been established pursuant to the Theater Subdistrict regulations to help promote “theater and theater-related use and preservation” within the Subdistrict.

The Zoning Resolution further defines the Subdistrict Council’s goals as including: enhancing the long-term viability of Broadway by facilitating the production of plays and small musicals within the Theater Subdistrict; developing new audiences for all types of theatrical productions; and monitoring preservation and use covenants in certain specified Broadway theaters that lie within the Subdistrict boundaries.

With assistance from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and the Department of City Planning, the Theater Subdistrict Council is administering a new grant program available to NYC’s not-for-profit organizations. Programs made possible by funding from the Theater Subdistrict Council will seek to celebrate the live art form of theater and create and expand the audience base attending live theater, as well as enhance the body and quality of performance options. Funding for the grant program is provided through contributions to the Theater Subdistrict Fund made in connection with the transfer of development rights from listed theaters, pursuant to Section 81-744 of the Zoning Resolution.

The goals of the grant program were developed with recognition of the vital role that theater plays in the overall economic and social well-being of New York City. Broadway is a leading attraction for local residents and visitors from all over the world. In recent years, the definition and public face of Broadway has changed as not-for-profit organizations have contributed increasingly to the growth and development of the Broadway canon. For example, since 1998, 39% of all Tony Awards presented have been awarded to shows that were produced by or productions that transferred from New York City-based not-for-profit theaters.

The changing nature of theatrical options offers opportunities to expand the base of theatergoers attending live performances in New York City and to enhance the theatergoing experience. The Council’s grant program is intended to support this expansion.

¹ The Theater Subdistrict is bounded by West 57th Street, Avenue of the Americas, West 40th Street, Eighth Avenue, West 42nd Street, a line 150 feet west of Eighth Avenue, West 45th Street and Eighth Avenue. The Theater Subdistrict Core is bounded by West 50th Street, a line 200 feet west of Avenue of the Americas, West 43rd Street and a line 100 east of Eighth Avenue.

The Subdistrict Council consists of the Mayor, the Speaker of the New York City Council and his or her designee, three (3) representatives appointed by the Mayor from the performing arts, theatrical and related industries, the Director of the New York City Department of City Planning, and the Manhattan Borough President.

Grant Program

In keeping with the Council's objectives, the grant program is designed to stimulate and support new forms of theatrical productions, to enhance and encourage new audiences, and to promote historic district and theater preservation activities. The grant program is open to:

- not-for-profit organizations offering cultural programs based in and operating in the five boroughs,
- that are incorporated in New York State under IRS code 501(c)(3),
- have been in existence and providing public services for no less than two years and
- had an organizational operating income of \$100,000 or more in FY06.

The program will seek proposals that promote activities in the following three categories:

1. The creation, development and presentation of work for the theater including, but not limited to: playwright and director residencies, commissions, workshops of new work, presentation of workshop productions and staged readings. Preference will be given to proposals that develop new work and/or work that targets voices and visions currently under-represented in the Broadway canon. Creation and development programs must offer public access to the work during the specified grant period.
2. Audience development programs including, but not limited to, free/reduced price ticket distribution, education programs, and outreach initiatives. The purpose of these programs must be to enrich the audience members' access to understanding of or experience of live theater. Audience development programs need not be taking place within the Subdistrict itself, nor must the programs be geared specifically for current Broadway offerings; the intent is to prepare audience members for an enhanced experience of theatergoing.
 - Audience development programs may encourage participation from theatergoers of all ages from a variety of backgrounds and geographic locations. Preference will be given to proposals geared towards encouraging participation from groups currently under-represented in Broadway audiences.
 - Audience development can take the form of education programs offered to participants at all levels of skill and interests. Possible programs could explore theater skills and/or offer theater exposure.

- Funding from the Theater Subdistrict Council grant program can be utilized to provide additional support for existing educational programs, expand those programs, or create new programs and improve performance facilities in which activity takes place.
- Preference will be given to proposals that put a visit to live theater into context.

3. Programs designed to strengthen or showcase the unique historic character of the Broadway Theater Subdistrict, including, but not limited to, education initiatives, archival projects, and publications/documentaries. Preference will be given to programs that showcase the singular role of Broadway in the history of American theater and the historic character of theater buildings within the Theater Subdistrict.

In addition to meeting eligibility criteria and presenting programs that fall within the above-stated categories of activity, applications will be reviewed for programmatic criteria. These are standards that will be kept in mind by all readers of the application and will contribute to the outcome of the funding decision.

Program Criteria:

- The proposed project must include as a principal goal a demonstrable cultural activity of recognized quality accessible to the public.
- The proposal must be clearly stated and contain measurable goals that can be evaluated during and at the end of the term of the award.
- Proposals must be within the organization's artistic/cultural, administrative and fiscal capabilities. Applicants will be expected to describe how the project relates to the organization's short and long-term operations.
- The proposal should reflect the applicant's demonstrated history of providing cultural programming.
- The application and support materials should reflect a level of effectiveness achieved by previous cultural programming.
- The proposed project should demonstrate a level of innovation that will diversify and/or enhance the applicant organization's current operations.
- Organizations whose primary mission is not arts and culture but who offer cultural programs for which they seek funding must demonstrate a proven track record of cultural programming.

Partnerships between cultural organizations are encouraged. In order to create a competitive application, participants in a partnership applying for a TSC grant should be clear in indicating the following:

- the existing relationship between the partners
- if a new relationship is being created, why and how it came about
- which organization is the lead applicant
- which organization will handle the finances for the proposed projects and how funds will be distributed among the partners, if applicable

In addition, financial information for all partner organizations should be submitted.

Applicants may submit a total of three (3) projects per application. Projects may be proposed in any or all of the three categories proscribed by this grant program.

Applicants are advised that, because the funding available for the first year of the program is \$1 million, the TSC does not expect to fund more than 20 projects.

Program Administration

The Theater Subdistrict Council has voted to retain the services of a consultant who will, in consultation with DCA, draft the grant application, oversee application review and funding recommendations, and administer at least the first part of the grant program. While the Council has authorized an expenditure of up to \$50,000 to retain the consultant, the exact expenditure will be determined by the Council after assessing the volume of applications received.

Application review

Depending upon the volume of applications, the TSC might find it helpful for the consultant to pre-screen applications for eligibility and for meeting basic programmatic or other criteria, as established by the Council. The members of the Council might find it difficult to meet the demands of reviewing a substantial volume of applications without some form of pre-screening.

If the volume of proposals is low (below 25), the consultant could assess the proposals to assure that the applicants meet the basic eligibility criteria, assemble the necessary materials, and pass all eligible applications along to the Council for deliberation.

However, if the volume of applications exceeds that amount, the Council may wish to have the applications pre-screened, not only for determining the applicant's eligibility, but also for ranking the proposals according to the degree each meets established programmatic criteria. As a means of prioritizing the material to be presented to the Council, the consultant would either individually review all applications, or convene a panel to assist with application review. Peer panels are the standard in the field, and are a process that is used by DCA in determining its grants. In this instance, the panel would provide an initial assessment for the Council, ranking the relative strengths and merits of the proposals. The Council would have access to all applications, including those that did not meet the eligibility standards, but would also have the benefit of an initial pass that would allow them to determine from among the strongest applicants which it would fund and at what level.

Alternatively, the Council may wish to do all stages of review, with organizational assistance from the consultant.

Funding

Phased funding:

The amount of funding available in this first grant cycle is up to \$1 Million. This represents a substantial infusion of funds to organizations that meet the grant criteria while allowing the program to be assessed and redesigned depending upon the outcome of the initial phase. An analysis of the success of the first phase will allow for a reconsideration of categories, funding levels, eligibility and other benchmarks of the program in subsequent phases. It will not be necessary to wait until the conclusion of the initial phase for a subsequent grant period; the basic information necessary to determine future grants could be determined by an interim assessment of the initial phase.

Funding Awards:

In the first cycle of grants, the minimum award is \$25,000 per project, and the maximum amount available will be \$250,000 per project. Within that range, funding thresholds will be set at increments of \$25,000 from the \$25,000 minimum.

A minimum award of \$25,000 is a significant sum (for example, DCA's minimum award is \$5,000, and more than 125 organizations received that amount this year) and will have a substantial impact on the recipient, leading to a meaningful outcome. For organizations with smaller budgets, it allows groups to participate at a level that they can absorb into their existing programs and infrastructure. It will also help to limit requests from organizations without the capacity to take on projects such as those intended by these funds.

Holding the maximum award in this initial round to \$250,000 allows for large projects of substantial scope and comprehensive impact, but still permits a number of excellent projects to be funded.

Matching funds:

The Council may wish to maximize the scope of the projects funded and the seriousness of intent of the applicants by requiring matching funds towards the project costs, or favoring applicants that bring additional resources to the programs they propose. This might also encourage participation of other funding sources in the initiatives of the grant program.

If the TSC elects to either favor or require matching funds, it may wish to establish a sliding scale for the match, so that requests at the highest level require the largest match, such as a 1:1 match, decreasing to a requirement at the lowest level that does not require a match, or requires perhaps \$.25 on the dollar. The TSC funds would then be supporting programs ranging from over \$500,000 to \$25,000 or \$31,250.

Disbursement of Funding:

Every Grant Agreement includes a payment schedule that is based on the services provided and associated costs. Funds will be released according to that schedule. Because of the time required to prepare funding for distribution, some awardees will begin the proposed services before receiving the first payment. Organizations that have been designated to receive funds are expected to move forward on their projects according to their project timetable, which may be in advance of receipt of funding.

The proportions for payment will be an initial payment of 80% upon execution of the contract and a second or final payment of 20%. Second payments will be awarded at the completion of a final report.

Post-Award Funding

Once grant amounts have been determined, there will still be a number of activities to be carried out in order to ensure proper payment and compliance as well as provision for maintenance of a relationship between the awardees and the TSC. These activities include the creation of the awardee's contract, the processing of grant agreements and payments, follow-up site visits to ascertain the quality of programming, and providing assistance should problems arise during the grant contract (including inability to provide services as described in the application).

The process of developing grant agreements with the award recipients could be time-intensive. Having the option to retain the Consultant during the post-award phase will enable the Consultant to draft and tailor the agreements as well as monitor grant activities, read and approve interim or final reporting, and approve continued payments.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

1. Basic Application Information:

Applicant organization name (legal and aka), mailing and street address,
Applicant's community board and council district
Contact information (telephone and email) for CEO and principal contact person
Applicant organization's date of incorporation

2. Synopsis of Proposed Projects:

Project title, cost, requested amount, and brief summary

3. Organizational Background:

Applicant's mission statement as well as organizational history and current activities
Description of applicant's outreach/marketing efforts for project
Staffing information

4. Proposed Project:

Detailed description of proposed activities including intended audience, dates of activities, anticipated # of recipients, where activities will take place
Applicant should address what if any costs will be incurred by participants.
Applicants should describe how their project fulfills the goals of the Theater Subdistrict Council grant program.
For projects requesting funding for the creation and development of new work, applicants will be expected to describe the process by which they choose and work with writers.

5. Budget page:

Operating budgets for 3 fiscal years including current and projected year
Detailed project budget

6. Budget notes including:

Projections of anticipated income greater than 20%
Explanation of current surplus or deficit
Other funding sources for proposed project
Information regarding any in-kind support

7. Organization General Information: include from current DCA application:

Information about the facility in which the project will take place, if relevant
Accessibility
Current attendance figures

8. staff list

9. board list

10. certification and release

11. Sampling of background materials, as relevant, such as:
 - Marketing brochures, postcards, email blasts, publication listings
 - Press and publicity
 - CDs, DVDs
 - List of programs with which applicant is currently engaged
 - Bios of artists and teaching artists
 - Curriculum or study guides developed for current programs

GRANT TIMETABLE

	<u>Consultant</u>	<u>Theater Subdistrict Council</u>
Through March 19, 2008	DCA recommended program and eligibility criteria and refines administration document.	
March 19, 2008		TSC met to approve expenditure of consultant, approve criteria and establish framework for grant program.
March 19-mid-April, 2008	Consultant identified and selected to coordinate grant program. TSC feedback and public comment incorporated into grant administration document.	Grant administration document made available to the public for written comment.
Mid-April, 2008	Next meeting of TSC.	Review of public written comment and final adoption of grant-making framework.
Through May 15, 2008	Consultant, under guidance of DCA staff, drafts grant application.	Review and finalization of criteria and application.
May 15 , 2008	Grant application is disseminated broadly to arts and cultural organizations.	
May 15 -June 30, 2008	Four application seminars held and tech assistance provided by consultant.	
June 30, 2008	Applications returned.	
June 30-September, 2008	Consultant catalogues and prepares applications for review. Dependent upon volume and TSC determination, application goes through pre-review to rank application strengths or all applications go to TSC.	

October-November, 2008		Consultant facilitates TSC review/assessment of proposals and list of awardees is determined.
November-December, 2008		Announcement of grant awards.
January 2009-June 2010: recipients operate programs for which funds were received.		

Timeline

Through May 15, 2008: DCA identifies and hires a Consultant to coordinate the TSC grant program. Working with DCA staff, the Consultant refines eligibility requirements, works with TSC to develop criteria for application review, and drafts a grant application intended for May 15 release.

May 15, 2008: TSC issues grant application, posting the announcement on DCA's website and on other key arts-related websites. Outreach includes emails sent to all organizations on DCA's mailing list.

May 15 -June 30, 2008: Grant application is available. Four application seminars explaining the application process will be held.

June 30, 2008: Completed applications are due.

June 30-September, 2008: Consultant catalogues and prepares applications for review.

October-November, 2008: Consultant facilitates TSC review/assessment of proposals. TSC determines final roster of award recipients.

November-December, 2008: TSC announces list of grantees.

January 2009-June 2010: Programs in operation.

Winter 2008-2009: Announcement of second cycle of grantmaking process.

SCOPE OF WORK FOR CONSULTANT ADMINISTERING TSC GRANT PROGRAM

It is anticipated that at least 150 organizations from DCA's applicant pool will be eligible, though more applications are expected. In order to provide specialized and expedient service for the TSC grant program, DCA advocates the hiring of a Consultant to develop and administer the program. Doing so will enable the Council to make the application process and funding available sooner than would be possible without outside support. Until September 2008, DCA's Programs Staff will be involved daily in the review of applications and dissemination of funds for its FY09 Cultural Development Fund. This process prohibits or limits the active participation of DCA Programs Staff on a day-to-day basis. A Consultant whose sole purpose is to facilitate the TSC grant program could, by contrast, work intensively with both the applicants/awardees and the Council itself to administer the application and award process.

Responsibilities of the Consultant include but are not limited to:

- Working with members of the Council to finalize eligibility requirements
- Developing criteria for application review
- Writing grant application
 - Using DCA's application for Cultural Development Fund as model
 - Taking into account needs of other potential applicants
- Working with DCA's IT staff to make online form available
- Working with DCA's Communications and Programs staff to disseminate application
 - Posting application, guidelines and instructions on DCA and nyc.gov websites
 - Contacting arts service organizations about availability of application
- Conducting four application seminars in Theater Subdistrict
 - Determine accessible facility according to accessibility for applicants
 - Work with site on technical set-up
 - Present application seminar, including Q&A session
- Setting up database to log in applications
 - Using DCA's IT staff as support?
- Tracking applications upon receipt, including:
 - Checking applications for completeness (completeness notification to applicants?)
 - Reviewing each application, making note of any eligibility issues or other irregularities
 - Creating files for each application and its accompanying background materials and/or media
 - Notifying late applicants of ineligibility
- Convening peer review panel for initial application review
 - Coordination of scheduling
 - Hold discussion with TSC about possible remuneration to panelists
 - Soliciting recommendations
 - Drawing up list of recommendations
 - Receiving approval of panelists from TSC
- Preparing applications for review by panelists
 - Scanning or Xeroxing individual applications
 - Dissemination to panelists via mail or email

- Presiding over peer review panel
 - Summarizing criteria
 - Taking notes on discussion
 - Moderating funding round
- Summarizing panel proceedings and recommendations for TSC review
- Presenting panel outcome to TSC
- Coordinating TSC application review meetings
 - Disseminate applications to Council members
 - Coordinate scheduling of review sessions
- Moderating TSC application review
 - Summarizing criteria
 - Taking notes on discussion
 - Moderating funding round
- Finalizing and summarizing Council's funding decisions
- Drafting letter of notification to awardees
- Work with City Planning to draft written contract (Agreement) to be made between TSC and awardees
- Tailor each contract for individual grantees
 - Add scope of services to each contract
- Get approval for written contract
- Mail out contracts
- Receive and track returned, signed contracts
- Coordinating payment requisitions sent to TSC from DCA
- Tracking payments
 - Following up with organizations who did not receive payments or have had other problems with receipt of funds
- Conducting site visits to evaluate the quality of programs receiving funding through the TSC grant program.
- Working with organizations if/when difficulties arise, such as change in scope of services