The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) is pleased to launch the fiscal year 2027 (FY27) Cultural Development Fund (CDF) grant application for New York City nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. These are the guidelines for submitting an FY27 CDF application for panel review.

Note: The deadline listed below does not apply to organizations that received a three-year award in either FY25 or FY26. These organizations will submit an FY27 CDF renewal application at a later date.

DCLA is a mayoral agency charged with the administration of city funds in support of arts and culture throughout the five boroughs of New York City. CDF is DCLA's competitive, peer-evaluated grant process that supports a broad, multidisciplinary group of diverse NYC-based nonprofit organizations for their arts and cultural services and is managed by the agency's Programs Unit under supervision of the Commissioner.

A downloadable worksheet version of this application is available online for your reference. You must submit your application online.

The online CDF application can be accessed on the Applying page of our website.

Accessibility

For questions or requests regarding accessibility or accommodations please contact DCLA's Disability Service Facilitator at disabilityfacilitator@culture.nyc.gov.

DEADLINE: Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00PM (ET)

No exceptions.

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Contact your DCLA program officer via email with questions about the FY27 CDF application. New applicants may contact us at cdfhelpdesk@culture.nyc.gov. We strongly advise you to register to attend a public webinar. The first webinar will be recorded, captioned, and made available on our website. If you are experiencing technical difficulties with the online form, contact us online.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must:

- Be either (a) a nonprofit arts or cultural organization or (b) a nonprofit organization that has an arts or culture component in its broader mission.
- Demonstrate successful delivery of arts and cultural services in New York City for the last two consecutive years.
- Be based in New York City and able to demonstrate both administrative and programmatic operations within any of the five boroughs of New York City. Your administrative address is primarily determined by the address listed on your IRS 990 for the fiscal year ending in 2024, with the organization's 501(c)(3) letter and other publicly available information also taken into consideration.
- Possess a unique Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- Be certified as tax exempt under IRS Code § 501(c)(3); or be an incorporated nonprofit that uses a DCLA-approved, New York State incorporated tax-exempt fiscal sponsor. **Only nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply, regardless of whether they use a fiscal sponsor.** Limited Liability Companies, Benefit Corporations, Limited Partnerships, Unincorporated Organizations, S corporations, individual artists, and unincorporated artist collectives are not eligible to apply.
- Be incorporated in New York State as a nonprofit organization no later than the organization's fiscal year 2024.
- Be in compliance with annual State and Federal filing requirements for nonprofit organizations, including New York State Charities Bureau filings.

The following entities are not eligible to receive CDF funds:

- Individual artists or unincorporated artist collectives.
- Limited Liability Companies, Benefit Corporations, Limited Partnerships, S Corporations, or Unincorporated Organizations.
- Parent Teacher associations or organizations.
- Nonprofit organizations without IRS § 501(c)3 tax exempt status that do not utilize an eligible fiscal sponsor.
- Nonprofit organizations with chapters, offices, branches, or general activity in New York City but that are administratively based outside of New York City.
- Members of DCLA's Cultural Institutions Group.
- Programs of City, State, or Federal agencies (including Component Units of the City of New York).
- Programs of, or branches of, the New York Public Library system, the Brooklyn Public Library system, and the Queens Public Library system

- Colleges or universities—organizations that are affiliated with such institutions should contact DCLA prior to applying to determine eligibility.
- Public, private, and charter schools, including pre-k through grade 12 secondary schools.
- Organizations without a history of providing services in arts and culture as well as related income and expenses in the last two years.
- Organizations that have previously received CDF funds but have failed to comply with DCLA's grant reporting requirements at any time in the past five fiscal years.

We encourage you to contact the Programs Unit Help Desk at cdfhelpdesk@culture.nyc.gov with questions pertaining to eligibility well in advance of the application deadline.

SUBMITTING A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL

The fundamental requirement for all proposals is that they represent a cultural activity of acceptable quality that is offered to the public during the grant period. Awarded project proposals can be as different as the organizations offering them, but they will all have a common commitment to public service and public participation in arts and culture in New York City.

The CDF supports services in every cultural discipline. The audiences for these services—whether the general public or project-specific participants, such as students, arts professionals, older adults, or another group particular to your programs—must be able to access your proposed project in New York City during the FY27 grant period: July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

You must propose one project for support in your FY27 application. If awarded funds, your proposed project will form the scope of service in the agreement between you and DCLA.

Competitive proposals may:

- Demonstrate cultural activity of recognized quality as determined by the panelists
- Take place in New York City during the fiscal year for which the applicant is seeking CDF funds
- Provide a high level of detail in the narrative sections that is descriptive and responsive to the evaluation criteria
- Demonstrate the organization's definition of and commitment to access, equity, and inclusion throughout the application
- Contain specific and measurable goals, objectives, and benchmarks
- Be within the organization's artistic/cultural, administrative, and fiscal capacity
- Demonstrate financial stability and accountability—as determined by the panelists—in previous, current, and projected fiscal years. This should include a budget that shows other funding streams in addition to CDF for the proposed project. The total CDF award cannot exceed 75% of the total project cost.
- Demonstrate artists' fees at a level that is fair and consistent for the organization's size and fiscal capacity as determined by the panelists

Ineligible proposed projects include:

- Non-arts activity; such as physical fitness, social services or general education services like college prep, language classes or homework help
- Activity occurring outside of the five boroughs of New York City or outside of the eligible grant period
- Programs that are essentially recreational, rehabilitative, or therapeutic
- Any activity funded by a City Council Initiative administered by DCLA (e.g., CASA, CTC, Cultural ImmigrantInitiative, SU-CASA, Violence Prevention)
- Activities that lack a public component
- Strategic planning, including capacity building
- Fundraising events and receptions
- Construction or renovation of facilities, including the purchase of equipment.
- Lobbying or government advocacy efforts

Single Project Proposal

A competitive project description has a leading idea or concept that organizes the elements within the proposal, regardless of the frequency or number of services proposed.

A single project can be as varied as the organizations applying for CDF funding. Proposed projects may be a single event or service, an entire season of events or services, a central service with related auxiliary services, or several related services.

The scope of the proposed project should be detailed and responsive to the evaluative criteria and reflect the budget and DCLA request amount. Your proposed project can be focused on one program or event that you plan to offer, or it can include multiple components. Familiarize yourself with the evaluative criteria and how panelists apply each criterion to an application in the sections below to create a competitive project proposal.

PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS

We have identified the following priority areas of focus for support. The proposed project must include an arts or cultural activity that aligns with at least one of the priority areas described below. Note that the examples given in bullet points are not all-inclusive.

Artistic Dialogue

- Creating a forum for new or previously created works for public presentation during the grant period
- Supporting informed cultural public discourse
- Works that engage multiple genres or disciplines

Arts Education

- Ongoing or sequential arts programs for children, youth, or other targeted audiences
- Cultural activities in schools, including programs that are related to curricula
- In-school artist residencies
- Arts programs for children and adult learners at cultural organizations

Services to an Artistic or Cultural Field or Creative Community

- Professional training within an artistic or cultural discipline
- Workforce development for cultural workers
- Supportive services to organizations serving a discipline

Preservation

- Of New York City's rich cultural heritage
- Of the cultures of New York City's diverse populations
- For public access to historic artifacts or sites relevant to New York City
- Of archival cultural materials for public access

Humanities

- Communication of cultural knowledge or practices to individuals or communities
- Exploration of environmental and natural sciences
- Promoting an ethnic heritage in New York City

PANEL REVIEW CRITERIA

CDF applications will go through a competitive panel review. Proposals are reviewed by peer panelists who have current expertise in arts and culture in New York City. CDF is a competitive panel process. Previous funding is not a guarantee of future funding.

Your application will be evaluated based on the following three weighted evaluative criteria. The bullet points below are examples of meeting the criteria and are offered only as a guide. You do not have to include each bullet in your application, nor should they limit the ways that your organization demonstrates each criterion.

Public Service & Impact (35% of score)

The organization provides arts and/or cultural programming in the five boroughs of New York City during the grant period with consideration toward accessibility, affordability, and equity, or addresses an important arts and cultural need in their defined community. The organization provides detail on the intentional effect of its cultural programming on the recipients of the service in alignment with its stated goals.

Evidence may include:

- A project that invests in the cultural ecosystem or increases arts and cultural exposure
- Explicit efforts to engage diverse audiences illustrative of the organization's community, such as:
  - Public programming that connects audiences from different cultures
  - Empowering historically underserved neighborhoods with resources
  - Building key program partners (such as partnering with organizations or artists in historically underserved neighborhoods to achieve mission-related activity)
- Reduced financial barriers with relative affordability by using discount programs, scholarships, sliding scale prices, or other subsidies
- Creating pathways for diverse community voices to have input by integrating or implementing tools such as: online platforms, community-led advisory committees, town hall meetings, community meetings, assessment and evaluation through surveys, and more
- Expanded accessibility such as providing reasonable accommodations, producing multilingual programs or materials, offering transportation or mobile projects, or providing other methods of equitable access to information, activities, and surroundings

Sections of the application panelists use to evaluate this criterion include, but are not limited to:

- *Section 2: Public Service and Impact*
- *Previous Activities in Section 3*
- *Attendance in Section 3*

Organizational Accountability (35% of score)

The organization demonstrates accountability, sustainability, and the capacity to provide cultural programs that are realistic and relevant to its mission, focus, and audiences served.

Evidence may include:

- Responsible and stable fiscal planning—appropriate to the organization's budget size and age—with a demonstration of delivering the proposed project
- Strength of board and organizational leadership as demonstrated by organizational planning, participatory budgeting, board development, community engagement, or diverse outreach
- Equitable approaches and targets for fair compensation, staff empowerment, stakeholder feedback, and representation of the community in the organization
- Inclusive practices and policies, including evidence of efforts to recruit, retain, and advance the staff, leadership, board, and supportive network
- Accessible offerings and formats—developed for information distribution, organizational activities, and the workplace and project sites—that are communicated clearly to the staff, board, support team, and constituents

Sections of the application panelists use to evaluate this criterion include, but are not limited to:

- *Section 3: Organizational Accountability*
- *Section 4: Organizational Budget*
- *Mission, History, and Principal Activities in Section 2*
- *Audience Engagement in Section 2*
- *Project Budget in Section 2*

Quality (30% of score)

The organization demonstrates evidence of quality in the execution of its arts and cultural programs. Consideration is informed by a relative level of standard that is appropriate to the participants in those disciplines and genres and not in comparison to any single standard of excellence.

Evidence of this may include:

- A comprehensive proposal with supporting materials that demonstrate the project's relevance to its community and clarity in its commitment
- A track record that demonstrates likelihood of successful delivery (such as whether the program, or a similar program, has been executed by the applicant before)
- Supporting documentation of accomplished activities (such as press reviews, testimonials, photo documentation, or other demonstration of the quality of previous and similar activities)
- Expertise and experience of program providers, including artists, educators, speakers, and others
- Ongoing creative collaborations with organizational partners and cultural workers that foster community engagement and culture in New York City

- Activities that are open, create communal meaning, engage audience imaginations, and enhance participation
- Integrity in exploration and development of artistic discipline/genre/form, cultural preservation, or pedagogy
- Project design that aligns with the mission of the organization

Sections of the application panelists use to evaluate this criterion include, but are not limited to:

- *Mission, History, and Principal Activities in Section 2*
- *Audience Engagement in Section 2*
- *Project Proposal in Section 2*
- *Education Programs (if applicable) in Section 2*
- *Previous Activities in Section 3*
- *Attendance in Section 3*
- *Programmatic Background Materials in Section 5 that demonstrate the quality of all your cultural activity in the last three years*
- *Programmatic Work Samples (if included) in Section 5 that provide examples of creative output relevant to your proposed project*

Applications that do not provide optional work samples will not be penalized.

PANEL PROCESS

Overview

We hold peer review panels for competitive CDF proposals that are not in a multi-year renewal grant commitment. Complete and eligible CDF submissions are grouped first by budget size then organized into panels by three broad disciplines: performing, non-performing, and multi-disciplinary. Depending on the volume of submissions in each budget category, the broad disciplines may be further subdivided and grouped together for panel review. Each panel is expected to review an average of 15–20 applications.

We accept nominations for peer panelists to review competitive CDF proposals. Panelists are vetted for current expertise in arts and culture of New York City and designated to a panel accordingly. See Appendix A for more information on panelist selection.

Panelists are provided with a handbook and required to attend a live or recorded training session. Distributed information includes how to evaluate applications using the three weighted criteria: Public Service & Impact, Organizational Accountability, and Quality.

Our panel review process takes place over two rounds:

1. In Round 1, panelists prepare for the panel meeting on their own. They are required to read, provide comments, and score each application—including the background materials and any optional work samples.
2. In Round 2, panelists meet online over the course of a day with DCLA staff. They participate in comprehensive, facilitator-guided conversation, reviewing each application as a panel. After each discussion, each panelist re-scores each application on the three criteria guided by their conversation.

After reviewing and re-scoring every application in the panel, panelists are presented with a list of the average of their weighted scores for each application. The panel reviews each application's average score. If at least one panelist elects, an application can be re-discussed. Re-scoring requires the majority of the panel to elect to re-score any application that has been re-discussed. Once complete, the final scores are confirmed by the panelists.

Applying Criteria to Assess and Score

A competitive application is comprehensive. The component parts should interrelate, creating a cohesive application that holistically and clearly describes the organization's project, mission, and connection to its audience.

FUND ALLOCATION

Your budget category for FY27 is determined by your FY24 operating income. The minimum and maximum awards determined by panel score in each budget category are in the table below. Award amounts are determined by panel score percentile. All awards will be adjusted to available funding.

Applicants that have not received a CDF baseline award in at least one of the last six fiscal years are only eligible for a one-year $10,000 baseline award.

FY24 Operating Income	FY27 Baseline Award Range
<$25,000	$10,000 only
$25,000–$99,999	$10,000–$20,000
$100,000–$249,999	$15,000–$30,000
$250,000–$499,999	$20,000–$40,000
$500,000–$1,499,999	$30,000–$60,000
$1,500,000–$2,999,999	$40,000–$80,000
≥$3,000,000	$50,000–$100,000

You must include a request amount as part of the proposed project budget. Request amounts should reflect a reasonable investment in the proposed project that makes sense within the context of your organizational budget. DCLA will not fund more than 75% of the total cost of a project.

If you request $0, your application will not be reviewed by a panel.

Organizations with the following conditions are eligible for a $10,000 baseline award only and should request $10,000 for their CDF baseline award.

- Organizations with an FY24 operating income under $25,000
- Organizations that have not received a CDF baseline award within the last six years

CDF awards may only be used for project expenses, including programmatic operating expenses, such as staff salaries, space rentals, insurance costs, or any other costs incurred to realize the organization's proposed project.

If you are also seeking City Council Member Item support, include your expected Member Item amount in your total CDF request amount. More information about Council funding can be found in Appendix D.

An organization's award will be determined as follows:

1. Each application will be assigned to a panel. Panelists will each score the application using the three weighted criteria described above. Panelists will generate a final average score for each application after review.
2. DCLA will convert the final average score into a percentile based on all of the panel-reviewed applications.
3. DCLA will determine the minimum percentile needed to receive an award based on the available CDF budget for FY27. Applicants assigned a percentile at or above the minimum percentile score

will receive the minimum award in their budget category in the baseline fund allocation chart above.

4. Organizations may be awarded additional funds up to the maximum award for their budget category based on how far above the minimum percentile they scored and the amount of funding available, as determined by DCLA.
5. Additional funds, such as safety net and equity awards, may be allocated at the Commissioner's discretion. Please see "Additional Fund Allocation" in Appendix A for more information.

Single and Multi-Year Awards

If you did not receive a CDF baseline award within any of the three prior fiscal years (FY24, FY25, or FY26), then you are only eligible for a single-year award.

If you received a CDF baseline award within any of the three prior fiscal years, you are eligible for a three-year award and will receive one if you are granted a baseline award in FY27. If you're awarded a three-year award, you must submit a complete and eligible renewal application for years two and three by the required renewal application date. Renewal applications are not subject to panel review.

CREATE NYC INITIATIVES

Funding may be allocated for Create NYC Initiatives in addition to CDF baseline awards for eligible applicants. In FY27, the initiatives are the Language Access Fund ("LAF") and the Disability Forward Fund ("DFF"). These Create NYC initiative-specific funds are limited and do not apply to every applicant. To be considered for either initiative, you must describe your initiative-related activities in your project proposal. Awards are subject to available funding.

Language Access Fund

LAF was created to expand opportunities for the cultural community to remove language barriers and support access to arts and culture for all New Yorkers. If you would like to be considered for LAF, you must describe the activities related to LAF in your project proposal. If your award includes LAF, the amount will be added to your total CDF award. The goals for LAF are to:

- Support substantive projects that deepen engagement with audiences whose primary language is not English as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
- Support work created and presented in other languages, including bilingual and multilingual projects.
- Expand K–12 arts education opportunities and cultural programs for ELL students.
- Motivate the cultural sector to be accessible to and inclusive of individuals who are non-English speakers as well as ELLs.
- Support the translation of cultural programming and communication into multiple languages.

Grant recipients will:

- Provide clear articulation of proposed activities related to LAF goals in their CDF project proposal.
- Demonstrate the capacity to realize the proposed activities during FY27.
- Include a thoughtful explanation of how the activities increase or deepen engagement with non-English speakers or ELLs.

Disability Forward Fund

DFF was created to promote new and ongoing programs that meaningfully engage people with disabilities. It is also for the creation and presentation of work that directly or indirectly reflects the disability experience by or with artists with disabilities. If you would like to be considered for DFF, you must describe the activities related to DFF in your project proposal. If your award includes DFF, the amount will be added to your total CDF award. The goals for DFF are to:

- Support substantive projects that deepen cultural engagement for people with disabilities.
- Support new work created by or with people with disabilities.
- Advance the employment of people with disabilities working as artists or cultural workers.
- Motivate the cultural sector to be equitable for and inclusive of individuals with disabilities.

- Promote exemplary models of diverse and creative approaches to engaging disability communities through cultural programming.

Grant recipients will:

- Provide clear articulation of proposed activities related to DFF goals in their project proposal.
- Demonstrate the capacity to realize the proposed activities during FY27.
- Include a thoughtful explanation of how the activities increase or deepen a commitment to the inclusion of people with disabilities.

SUBMITTING A COMPLETE APPLICATION

The CDF application is accessible via the Applying page on our website. You must submit your application by the deadline: **Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00PM (ET)**. Late submissions are not eligible for funding. We do not accept any hard-copy supplemental materials. In exceptional circumstances, you may contact the Department regarding a request to file a paper application.

Gather the documents below to submit as part of your CDF application.

Programmatic Background Materials

Applicant must submit programmatic background materials in a single PDF file of no more than ten (10) pages.

Your programmatic background materials should establish your arts and cultural activity and public engagement over the last two to three years. **Materials should relate to your proposed project as much as possible.** Your submission will be shared with panelists and will contribute to the evaluation of your proposal.

Programmatic background materials should provide a sense of your proposed project and the people involved, including audiences. You may include, but are not limited to, materials that demonstrate:

- **Programmatic Activity**: Artist bios, images, publications, participant testimonials
- **Marketing and Audience Engagement**: Brochures/postcards/catalogue pages, email blasts/website pages, press/publicity, programs/playbills
- **Educational Activity**: Teaching artist bios, list of schools visited or projected for the upcoming year, Curriculum materials/study guides, letters of support from school

Do not include hyperlinks; panelists are instructed to only review what is in the PDF.

Programmatic Work Samples

You may additionally share up to two (2) work samples. Providing a work sample is optional and you will not be penalized if you do not include one. The benefits of providing a work sample include demonstrating to panelists the mission-based work that you do. **Work samples should be documentation of your arts and cultural programming that best represents your proposed project.** Work samples give panelists additional insight into the experience of attending or participating in your programs. They may include past works in process.

Items such as press reviews, promotional videos, letters of recommendation, or similar records are not considered work samples. The type of work sample that you submit should be based on your proposed project discipline. Work samples may be:

- Audio/visual recordings for cultural programming that is time-based
- Photo documentation
- Manuscripts and writing samples

Time-based cultural programming is defined here as:

- Durational activities such as lectures, workshops, classes, and performances or presentations
- Arts disciplines such as dance, film/video/audio, music, and theater

Panelists will be instructed to review up to two (2) minutes of each submitted audio/video work sample.

Panelists will be instructed not to peruse general organizational websites or social media pages. Do not include URLs that are not work samples.

Links to materials must be publicly accessible and not password protected through 2026.

Work Sample Formats

Work samples may only include:

- A two-page PDF (for photographic documentation or writing sample submissions)
- A URL link to an audio/visual recording for time-based submissions

For recordings, your cue time should be embedded into the URL link, included on the URL landing page, and/or included in your Work Sample Description.

You may submit either:

- Up to two (2) PDFs,
- Up to two (2) URL links, or
- One (1) PDF and one (1) URL link.

Do not include folders or files for download on cloud-based storage platforms such as Dropbox or Google Drive. Panelists are instructed not to review these.

Physical work samples sent to the DCLA offices and/or links that require log in or password will not be considered for panel review.

IRS § 501(c)(3) Letter

A copy of your IRS § 501(c)(3) determination letter.

If your letter lists an address outside New York City, append a letter of explanation and any other relevant documentation to illustrate your eligibility.

If you are applying with a fiscal sponsor/conduit, provide your fiscal sponsor's 501(c)(3) determination letter.

Filing and Financial Documents

A copy of each of the applicable financial documents listed in the table below for your organization's fiscal year ending in 2024.

The addresses on your documents will also be used to determine your New York City residency status.

FY24 Operating Income	Federal Documentation	Financial Statement	Notes
Under $50,000	FY24 IRS 990-N (postcard)	Signed Treasurer's Statement*	The NYS Charities Bureau does not accept 990-N for annual reporting purposes. Organizations should consider filing Form 990-EZ with the IRS to comply with Charities Bureau requirements.
$50,000–$249,999	FY24 IRS 990	not required	
$250,000–$999,999	FY24 IRS 990	FY24 Independent Accountant Review	
≥$1,000,000	FY24 IRS 990	FY24 Audited Statement	

*You may submit the Signed Treasurer's statement by using our template found on the Applying page of our website. Or you may use one of your own choosing that provides the same basic financial information. The signed Treasurer's statement must be signed by your board's chair or treasurer. If you submitted an IRS 990-EZ, you may upload that document again in lieu of a Treasurer's Statement.

Organizations Applying with a Fiscal Sponsor or Conduit

For these organizations the following documentation is also required:

1. A copy of proof of incorporation as a nonprofit organization in New York State. Acceptable forms of documentation include NYS incorporation certificate and Board of Regents Charter under 216 of the State Education Law.
2. A letter from the fiscal sponsor indicating that it has agreed to act as a fiscal sponsor for DCLA's Fiscal 2027 CDF application. This letter must be dated January 1, 2026 or later.
3. A copy of the fiscal sponsor's IRS § 501(c)(3) determination letter in lieu of the applicant organization's IRS § 501(c)(3) letter.

Organizations with a Primary Mission Beyond Arts and Culture

These include social/multi-service, religious, city park affiliated or general educational organizations. These organizations should self-identify as Non Arts and Culture organization types in the online application.

For these organizations, where arts and culture is not their primary focus, the following documentation is also required:

1. A full organizational budget on DCLA's template, found in the Applying page of our website. This will further illustrate the scope of your activities for the panel.
2. A three-year budget in the CDF application that provides income and expenses **for your cultural activities only**.

APPENDIX A: CDF PROCESSES

Panelist Selection

Panelists must be practicing artists in New York City or administrators in the fields of arts and culture, or individuals with experience in arts and culture, including New York City community leaders, civic leaders, educators, or government officials or their staff.

Only panelists may assign scores to the applications. Scores determined by panelists, including final average scores, are not subject to change by DCLA. Employees of DCLA may not serve as panelists but may consult and administer the evaluation of projects by the panelists.

Panelists are required to disclose any conflicts of interest before they serve on the panel.

During the FY27 panel process, four to six panelists will serve on each panel. In the event that a panelist is unable to score an application, such as a conflict of interest, no application will be scored by fewer than three panelists.

Additional Fund Allocation

Additional funds may be available to applicants if allocated to the Department in the City's budget. Such additional funds, if available, may be disbursed to applicants in accordance with Department rules and pursuant to the following categories:

A. Additions Based on Panel Percentile
Funds may be awarded to applicants with FY24 operating budgets above $25,000 that have received a baseline award in the previous six fiscal years according to the following formula:

- Dividing the applicant's baseline award by the total pool of baseline funding (which will determine the applicant's percentage rank)
- Then multiplying this percentage by the total amount of money DCLA has for the adds by score (this methodology is by definition reliant on the final panel score, since scores determine the baseline award)
- Additional funds in this category are added to an applicant's CDF baseline award for FY27 only.

B. Create NYC Initiatives
Funds may be awarded to applicants with projects that support the goals of the Language Access Fund or the Disability Forward Fund, as described above.

- Additional funds in this category are added to an applicant's CDF baseline award for FY27 only.

C. Safety Net Funding
Consistent with Department rules, Safety Net Funding may be available to applicants that received CDF baseline awards in consecutive prior fiscal years and submitted an eligible and complete FY27 application but did not achieve the minimum percentile needed to receive FY27 baseline funding.

D. CDF Equity Funds

Funds may also be awarded at the discretion of the Commissioner consistent with Department rules and in consideration of at least one of the following factors:

- Whether additional funds would provide critical support for arts or cultural organizations serving vulnerable populations or areas of the City with fewer community resources;
- Whether additional funds would provide critical support for arts or cultural organizations located in cultural deserts, defined as geographic areas with limited arts and cultural resources;
- Whether the applicants experienced a temporary increase in programmatic expenses associated with the completion of a City-funded capital investment for such applicant organization; or
- Whether the applicant would be significantly impacted by a proposed decrease in CDF funding compared to funding awarded to such applicant in prior fiscal years.

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This appendix provides information on how the Department of Cultural Affairs defines key terms related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, as well as other terms relevant to our CDF application. You may also include your organization's definitions of terms related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in your application for panelists to consider during their review. This appendix also includes information about processes related to the determination of CDF grant awards.

Improving Access

Improving access means reducing economic, social, communication, and physical barriers to inclusive participation. Accessibility describes the degree to which an environment, service, product, or program allows access and eliminates barriers to participation by diverse or underrepresented communities, especially people with disabilities.

Audience

Audience includes any people who benefit from your programs and activities. This can include audience members who are spectators. It can also include individuals or groups of people—such as students, artist cohorts, cultural professionals, older adults, or another specific group—who are participants within a program or project. Direct recipients are individuals who directly benefit from your project proposal. Indirect recipients are secondary audiences. For example, an arts education project might have direct recipients who are high school students participating in making art. The indirect recipients might be their friends and family who attend the culminating exhibition of their artwork.

Baseline Award

A baseline award is the portion of an applicant's CDF award that is sourced from the Department's baseline budget and determined by their percentile. This includes the minimum award in an applicant's budget category plus any additional funds added by DCLA based on their percentile, as applicable, as set forth in the baseline fund allocation chart. It is also the amount of money that is committed to be renewed should the applicant receive a multi-year award. A baseline award does not include Additional Fund Allocations, including: Additions Based on Panel Percentile, Create NYC Initiatives funding, Safety Net Funding, or CDF Equity Funds.

Diversity

Diversity is broadly defined as inclusive of communities representing categories of identity. The definition of diverse communities includes those marginalized groups that have historically experienced a lack of access to financial resources and/or social and organizational mobility. We note the significant and vital interconnection, overlap, and intersectionality between these communities.

Inclusion

Inclusion refers to the degree to which all people, including people with disabilities, with diverse perspectives and backgrounds are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes of an organization or group and in all elements of an organization, performance, event, or programs. While a truly inclusive group is necessarily diverse, a diverse group may or may not be "inclusive."

People with Disabilities

The New York City Human Rights Law defines disability as any physical, medical, mental, or psychological impairment, or a history or record of such impairment, and includes a full range of sensory, mental, physical, mobility, developmental, learning, and psychological disabilities—whether they are visible and apparent or not.

Percentile

A percentile is a comparison score between a particular score and the scores of the rest of a group. Percentiles are a normalized ranking. For example, if your percentile is 65% that means that you scored higher than 65% of all other applicants.

People of Color (POC)

DCLA recognizes that there is much diversity within Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and all other People of Color. We also understand that each group's historical and current experience with racial inequality is different. The CDF application uses the term People of Color (POC) as a unifier and to call attention to the collective solidarity efforts made to push against racial systemic injustices felt within each of our communities (with thanks to HueArts NYC for this language).

Primary Language Other than English

With more than 3 million foreign-born residents from more than 200 different countries, New York is home to one of the most diverse populations in the world. New Yorkers come from every corner of the globe and speak over 200 different languages. Nearly one-half of all New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home, and almost 25%, or 1.8 million persons, are not English proficient.

APPENDIX C: GRANT ADMINISTRATION AND LEGAL GUIDELINES

If you are awarded funds, we will prepare a grant agreement based on your application project proposal. Someone from your organization who has signatory authority on behalf of the organization must sign the grant agreement. All funded groups must comply with all pertinent city, state, and federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the New York State and New York City Human Rights Laws. In addition, every funded organization must comply with the following requirements.

Insurance

All funded organizations are required to maintain appropriate insurance policies, including:

- Commercial General Liability ("CGL")
- Workers' Compensation
- Disability and Paid Family Leave Benefits insurance

Funded organizations that receive grants of $100,000 or more are required to submit certificates of insurance for such policies, a certification of insurance broker or agent (CGL policy only), and an additional insured endorsement (CGL policy only).

Certificates of Insurance must specifically name "the City of New York, including its officials and employees" as an additional insured (CGL policy and Additional Insured Endorsement only).

Note: Such a funded organization's CGL policy naming "The City of New York, including its officials and employees" as an additional insured must be in effect for the entire grant term, July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

Additional specific information on insurance requirements will be provided if you are awarded CDF funding.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance and other Legal Compliance

Every funded organization is expected to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), New York State Human Rights Law, and New York City Human Rights Law and all other applicable laws.

Conflicts of Interest

The New York City Charter requires persons doing business with the City to report personal and financial relationships between an organization that receives a Cultural Development Fund award, and the organization's staff, and any City Elected Official or DCLA employee or person or firm associated with a City Elected Official or DCLA employee, that could give rise to an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a possible conflict of interest. These may include individuals, consultants, or independent contractors, and personal interests may include:

- The spouse, domestic partner, or family member of a director, officer, or employee of the organization
- A person who has a financial relationship with a director, officer or employee of the organization
- An elected official or other officer or employee of the City of New York

- The spouse, domestic partner or family member of an elected official that allocated funding to the organization
- A person who has a financial relationship with the elected official that allocated funding to the organization
- Any other relationship that gives rise to an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a possible conflict of interest.

An organization receiving a Cultural Development Fund grant is responsible for its compliance with the New York City Conflicts of Interest laws.

Credit

All programs, brochures, flyers, posters, announcements or similar printed or electronic matter relating to services funded by DCLA are also required to include, in a legible manner, in appropriate type size and without abbreviation, the following statement:

"This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council."

All funded organizations are required to use DCLA's logo consistent with DCLA's terms and conditions; upon notification of an award, groups may request the logo on DCLA's website.

DCLA's logo was last updated in 2017. Funded organizations are required to use the current logo.

In addition to the logo and credit line stipulated, any printed list of contributors to a program or service funded by DCLA is required to include the "New York City Department of Cultural Affairs" in the applicable alphabetical and/or contribution category list.

Payment and Reporting

Every grant agreement includes a payment schedule that is based on the services provided and associated costs. Most organizations will receive up to 80% of the total award as an initial payment once compliant with City funding requirements.

Funds will not be available until after the adoption of the city's budget for FY27. Notification of final award amounts will be sent after the start of the grant period. All funded organizations are expected to move forward with their projects regardless of the dates of notification and first disbursement of funds.

Final payment is contingent on submission and DCLA approval of a final report demonstrating that the project was completed. The final report must be submitted on a form provided by DCLA.

If modifications to the city budget require awards be reduced, such reductions may be taken against any outstanding payments. Final payment is also contingent upon completion of any other reporting required by the grant agreement. Applicants that do not comply with final reporting by the deadlines required by DCLA may have their award rescinded and be ineligible for future funding.

While applications may only apply for funds for project-related public services (rather than general operating support), funds received can be allocated to any project-related operating costs of the grantee organization (such as staff salaries, space rentals, etc.) other than capital expenditures, fundraisers, or government advocacy efforts, provided the projected services have been delivered as described.

Performance Evaluation

Because DCLA awards public funds, the expenditure of those funds is required by law to be monitored to assure funds are being spent in accordance with the terms of the grant agreement. Information regarding upcoming activities of each applicant awarded a grant must be provided to the Programs Unit on a regular basis, and Programs staff should be extended an invitation to view the funded activities. Organizations may also be required to provide additional information after the application has been submitted. The organization's prior performance record may be a determining factor when considering future funding.

Legislative Notification

We encourage each organization to keep elected officials in City government that represent the organization informed of its activities. The City Council, the Borough Presidents, and other elected officials are critically important to the process of funding cultural organizations. DCLA suggests that copies of this proposal be given to the Council Members, Borough Presidents, and District Managers of the Community Boards representing the districts and boroughs that the organization serves. Contact information for all elected officials can be found on the City's website: www.nyc.gov.

Appeals

Appealing the Panel Outcome

If an applicant does not receive a baseline award through the CDF process, they will be eligible to appeal that decision to the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs in writing within the required timeframe and after receiving a feedback call with a program officer. Appeals may only be made on three grounds:

- Misrepresentation or non-presentation of information: To support this position, you must describe what application information was not appropriately presented to panelists by DCLA staff and, if presented differently, might have altered the evaluation of your application.
- Evaluation by a panelist who failed to disclose conflicts of interest: To support this position, you must provide specifics such as the name or names of the person(s) who had the conflict of interest, the nature of the conflict, and how you believe that impacted the evaluation of your application.
- Application was reviewed on a basis that was inconsistent with the published guidelines for the grant: To support this position, you must identify which aspects of the guidelines were not properly applied.

An applicant may request a feedback call within 21 days of receipt of a notification letter from the Department, which includes the determination of the applicant's CDF award. Following a feedback call, the Department will provide the applicant with the Department's appeal form. Applicants must submit the appeal form within 14 days of receipt of the appeal form. The commissioner will determine any such appeal within 60 days. The determination of the commissioner will be a final agency determination.

Recission of a CDF Award

A grantee can appeal a recission of an award pursuant to the rules of the Department.

APPENDIX D: CITY BUDGET PROCESS AND DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT

City Budget Process

Each year, the Mayor issues a preliminary budget in January as one of the first steps in the City's annual budget process. The preliminary budget contains proposed allocations for each agency, including the Department of Cultural Affairs, listed in summary form. Following public hearings before the City Council and the Borough Presidents, the Mayor's executive budget is issued in late April. Thereafter, additional public hearings are held before the City's elected officials. The final budget is required to be adopted by the City Council in June, signed into law by the Mayor and certified by the Comptroller and City Clerk.

Member Item Support

During this budget adoption process, members of the City Council may designate cultural organizations for single year discretionary (or "Member Item") support, which may be allocated through DCLA's budget when for cultural activities. Discretionary awards are for one year only.

Organizations that are also applying for City Council discretionary support to be administered by DCLA in FY27 must submit the CDF application by the April 2, 2026, 5:00PM ET deadline in order to be eligible to receive the allocated funds through DCLA. In addition, organizations must have submitted a Discretionary Funding Application on the City Council website by February 18, 2026. (Note: Member Item funding allocated through other City agencies does not require a CDF application.)

The projects for which such Member Item support is sought must be the same as those in the CDF application.

Organizations awarded Member Item support at budget adoption for the provision of cultural services will be notified of this funding in their FY27 award letters. These allocations will be incorporated into the organization's FY27 CDF grant agreement. Funds will not be disbursed until the City's budget has been adopted and DCLA has confirmed that the organization is compliant with City requirements.

Contact the Council Member in the district where you are providing services to learn about any additional requirements that may apply to this funding.

City Council Initiatives

DCLA administers source-specific initiatives from the City Council. The project proposed in the CDF application may NOT overlap with any funds awarded from the following Initiatives:

- Coalition of Theatres of Color (CTC)
- Cultural After-School Adventures (CASA)
- Cultural Immigrant Initiative (CII)
- SU-CASA
- Violence Prevention and Intervention for Youth and Young Adults

To be eligible for any of these specific initiatives, an organization is required to submit a complete FY27 CDF application by the stated deadline, as well as the Discretionary Funding Application on the City Council website.