

SU-CASA

ARTS PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS

2026 GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Application Deadline: **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2025 at 5pm ET**

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

SU-CASA is a community arts engagement program that places artists and organizations in residence at senior centers across New York City. The program, funded in FY26 by the New York City Council, provides grants to artists and organizations for the creation and delivery of arts programming for seniors. Teaching artists will engage participating seniors in an art project or series of cultural programs over the course of the residency, which will also include a public program component—an exhibit, reading, performance, open house or other cultural interaction open to the surrounding community. The program will support residencies for individual artists and cultural organizations at senior centers across the City’s 51 Council Districts. Residencies will take place in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.

SU-CASA is a collaboration among the New York City Council, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), the Department for the Aging (DFTA) and four local arts councils—Bronx Council on the Arts, Brooklyn Arts Council, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and Staten Island Arts. Individual artists are eligible to participate in partnership with these four local arts councils; any individual artist interested in participating should contact the arts council in their home borough. Individual artists based in Queens should align with an arts organization to participate in FY26.

Residency grants are \$15,000 per designation, inclusive of a \$2,500 stipend to be paid by the grantee to the partner senior center. DCLA will accept applications from arts and cultural organizations interested in being considered for a potential SU-CASA designation from the City Council for FY26. The SU-CASA application will be vetted by the agency for eligibility and completeness. Not all applicant organizations will be selected by the council members.

Vetted proposals will be forwarded to council members, who will match organizations with designated centers in their districts. Selection of the cultural organization and the senior center partner is entirely at the discretion of the individual council members.

Applying organizations may select up to ten council districts in which to be considered. You should not propose a program for a specific senior center location. **Proposed programs should be adaptable and will be customized in collaboration with the designated senior center partner if your organization is selected.** For FY26, SU-CASA residencies must provide a minimum of 20 contact hours for participants. Contact hours include participant engagement time and may also include participant work time. These hours do not include planning, preparation, or travel.

This initiative seeks to connect artists with seniors in senior centers and to positively impact the well-being of older adults through arts-based activities. SU-CASA supports artists and organizations sensitive to the needs of older adults and interested in engaging their communities. Selected artists and organizations will work with the senior center where they are placed to further refine project goals and coordinate a schedule for residency activities and use of facilities. Members of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) and any organization that submitted an eligible FY26 Cultural Development Fund proposal may apply for SU-CASA through DCLA.

All components of the application must be received no later than **5:00 PM ET on Thursday, October 23, 2025**. Applicants will be notified of their application status and, if selected, senior center placement, as soon as the Council finalizes the designations in early 2026. Residencies will take place in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.

Please note, designations are not confirmed until you receive official notification of an award from DCLA. Any notice of a designation before this point (i.e. via direct communication from your council member, transparency resolution, or on the Discretionary Award tracker) is not 100% confirmed yet. Should a designation be rescinded or changed prior to your organization receiving the official notification of SU-CASA award from DCLA, any work begun on the program will be the organization's financial responsibility.

GUIDELINES

ELIGIBILITY

- DCLA will accept applications only from members of the CIG and organizations that have submitted an eligible Cultural Development Fund application for Fiscal 2026.
- Organizations and their individual principals are not permitted to submit proposals to the local arts councils for the individual grants available through this program; any organization whose principal applies for support through the local arts council will be disqualified.
- SU-CASA falls under City Council discretionary expense funding for FY26. In order to be eligible, organizations must have already submitted a Discretionary Funding Expense Application to New York City Council in February 2025.

PROJECTS

Programs may be offered in any artistic discipline. Projects should be adaptable and customized in collaboration with the senior center partner; nonetheless, all programs must meet the following requirements:

- Project must be cultural in nature. The humanities and natural sciences are included in the definition of arts and culture but not physical fitness, social services, or nutrition/diet.
- Project must consist of regularly scheduled interactive engagement programs for the senior participants at the center where the residency is held (e.g., workshops, classes, art making projects created by seniors or in collaboration with seniors). Activity occurring offsite (e.g. field trips) is restricted to no more than 20% of the total amount of contact hours provided. Any required travel/transportation for participants must be provided at no cost to the participants.
- Programs must provide a minimum of 20 contact hours for participants.
- Programs must be free of charge for senior participants and advertised as such.
- Project must also include a public program component for the general public to experience and engage with the arts at the senior center (exhibit, open house, performance, reading or other cultural interaction that allows participating seniors to share their work with the surrounding community). The public program activities must be promoted and available at no charge. Organizations are strongly encouraged to engage other members of the senior center community as part of the public program component.
- Project activities, including the public program component, must conclude no later than June 30, 2026.
- For CDF applicants: Project may not overlap with any CDF-funded project, unless it is a clear and defined expansion of the CDF project or a discrete activity not included in the CDF project's scope of services or budget.
- Funded services cannot include fundraising events and receptions, capital expenses (including the purchase of equipment such as tablets, computers, digital cameras, and most standard musical instruments), religious activities or programs with religious content.
- Project activities, including the public program component, must take place either at the senior center or virtually. Organizations and senior centers shall determine program design based on the most recent public health guidance.

RESIDENCY AWARD REQUIREMENTS

The residency award is a grant for programmatic activities; grantee organizations will be subject to the following requirements:

- Sign and return a grant agreement and other funding compliance documents as applicable
- Remit a \$2,500 stipend from the grant award to the partner senior center
- Include funding credit and logos on all marketing and event materials, print and electronic
- Track artist contact hours with participating seniors and other evaluative data, as requested
- Submit final report on a timely basis after completion of all project activities

Organizations that do not comply with requirements in a timely manner may lose current funding and be ineligible for future funding from DCLA.

CDF applicants: email any questions to your program officer or cdfhelpdesk@culture.nyc.gov

CIG members: email any questions to ciginfo@culture.nyc.gov