

## **OUR TOWN: Grant Program Description**

Our Town is the National Endowment for the Arts' creative placemaking grants program. Through project-based funding, we support projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. Successful Our Town projects ultimately lay the groundwork for systemic changes that sustain the integration of arts, culture, and design into local strategies for strengthening communities. These projects require a partnership between a local government entity and nonprofit organization, one of which must be a cultural organization; and should engage in partnership with other sectors (such as agriculture and food, economic development, education and youth, environment and energy, health, housing, public safety, transportation, and workforce development). Matching grants range from \$25,000 to \$200,000, with a minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount.

FY 2020 marks the 10 year anniversary of the Our Town program. We are looking for projects that reflect a new and catalytic way of working, and demonstrate the potential for sustained support and recognition for arts, design, and cultural strategies as integral to every phase of community development.

### **Projects**

We encourage applications for artistically excellent projects that:

- Bring new attention to or elevate key community assets and issues, voices of residents, local history, or cultural infrastructure.
- Inject new or additional energy, resources, activity, people, or enthusiasm into a place, community issue, or local economy.
- Envision new possibilities for a community or place - a new future, a new way of overcoming a challenge, or approaching problem-solving.
- Connect communities, people, places, and economic opportunity via physical spaces or new relationships.

The National Endowment for the Arts plans to support a variety of projects across the country in urban, rural, and tribal communities of all sizes.

### **Project Types**

Our Town projects must integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that **strengthen communities** by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. Projects may include activities such as:

### **Arts Engagement:**

- **Artist residency:** A program designed to strategically connect artists with the opportunity to bring their creative skill sets to non-arts institutions, including residencies in government offices, businesses, or other institutions.
- **Arts festivals:** Public events that gather people, often in public space or otherwise unexpected places, to showcase talent and exchange culture.
- **Community co-creation of art:** The process of engaging stakeholders to participate or collaborate alongside artists/designers in conceiving, designing, or fabricating a work or works of art.
- **Performances:** Presentations of a live art work (e.g., music, theater, dance, media).
- **Public art:** A work of art that is conceived for a particular place or community, with the intention of being broadly accessible, and often involving community members in the process of developing, selecting, or executing the work.
- **Temporary public art:** A work of art that is conceived for a particular place or community and meant for display over a finite period of time, with the intention of being broadly accessible and often involving community members in developing, selecting, or executing the work.

### **Cultural Planning:**

- **Cultural planning:** The process of identifying and leveraging a community's cultural resources and decision-making (e.g., creating a cultural plan, or integrating plans and policies around arts and culture as part of a city master planning process).
- **Cultural district planning:** The process of convening stakeholders to identify a specific geography with unique potential for community and/or economic development based on cultural assets (e.g., through designation, branding, policy, plans, or other means).
- **Creative asset mapping:** The process of identifying the people, places, physical infrastructure, institutions, and customs that hold meaningful aesthetics, historical, and/or economic value that make a place unique.
- **Public art planning:** The process of developing community-wide strategies and/or policies that guide and support commissioning, installing, and maintaining works of public art and/or temporary public art.

### **Design:**

- **Artist/designer-facilitated community planning:** Artists/designers leading or partnering in the creative processes of visioning, and for solutions to community issues.
- **Design of artist space:** Design processes to support the creation of dedicated spaces for artists to live and/or to produce, exhibit, or sell their work.
- **Design of cultural facilities:** Design processes to support the creation of a dedicated building or space for creating and/or showcasing arts and culture.
- **Public space design:** The process of designing elements of public infrastructure, or spaces where people congregate (e.g., parks, plazas, landscapes, neighborhoods, districts, infrastructure, and artist-produced elements of streetscapes).

### **Artist and Creative Industry Support:**

- **Creative business development:** Programs or services that support entrepreneurs and businesses in the creative industries, or help cultivate strong infrastructure for establishing and developing creative businesses.
- **Professional artist development:** Programs or services that support artists professionally, such as through skill development or accessing markets and capital.

Please view our **Tips for a Successful Our Town Application webinar LINK**, and review the list of grants on our website to see the **types of projects** that have been funded recently through Our Town. The online storybook '**Exploring Our Town**' has illustrative examples of Our Town grant projects and insights into doing creative placemaking for practitioners. You also may download our free publication *How to Do Creative Placemaking*, and look at **additional creative placemaking resources** on our website. Applications on projects resulting from **Mayors Institute on City Design** and **Citizens Institute on Rural Design** are encouraged.

### **National Environmental Policy Act and/or the National Historic Preservation Act Review**

**If you are recommended for a grant and your project may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and/or the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the National Endowment for the Arts will conduct a review of your project to ensure that it is in compliance with NEPA/NHPA.**

Some of the common project types that garner a NHPA review are:

- A project involving or occurring near a district, site, building, landscape, structure or object that is at least 50 years old or older and therefore included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (please note that in some instances, buildings or structures may be included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places that are less than 50 years old).
- The commissioning and installation of temporary or permanent outdoor furnishings such as benches or market structures or art such as a sculpture or mural.
- An arts festival in a park.
- Design planning and services for projects that may involve a historic site, structure, or district.

**This review and approval process may take up to several months to complete and may delay your project's start date. The results of the review may impact our ability to make a grant award/our ability to release grant funds. If you are recommended for an award which may have historic preservation or environmental concerns (NHPA/NEPA), you will be notified and asked to provide additional information. Your thorough and complete information for all project activities and locations will expedite the review. The NEA cannot release an award and/or grant funds until the historic preservation and environmental review is complete.**

To learn more about what **questions you will need to answer** for the review of a project impacted by the **National Environmental Policy Act** and/or the **National Historic Preservation Act**, see **here**.

**Below is what applicants see if they click the link:**

National Environmental Policy Act and/or the National Historic Preservation Act Review

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- An arts festival in a park.
- Design planning and services for projects that may involve a historic site, structure, or district.

**Based on your responses to the questions below, the National Endowment for the Arts will conduct a review to determine whether:**

1. There are no adverse effects on historic properties or resources;
2. One or more approved exemptions can be applied to the project, confirming that there are no anticipated adverse effects on historic properties or resources (approved exemptions are outlined in the Nationwide Programmatic Agreement between the NEA, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO); or
3. The project has the potential to have adverse effects on historic properties or resources (in this case, you will be asked to contact and work directly with your State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

**Below are the questions you will need to answer for the** National Endowment for the Arts to conduct a review of your project to ensure that it is in compliance with NEPA/NHPA.

Provide responses for every project location. Include maps and photographs of each location and property.

1. Provide a very clear description of the district, building, site, landscape, structure, or object in which you will be working, including the address(es). If you don't have a physical address, provide the block or other area of potential effect. Describe the nature of your site, whether activities will take place in public space, streets, vacant lots, historic structures, etc. Include a map.

2. Describe your project activities, including whether the planned activities are temporary or permanent. Provide a short assessment of whether your project has the potential to have an effect on environmental or historic resources and whether that effect is an adverse effect. If your project will physically alter a district, site, building, landscape, structure or object, or if you are working on a plan or design for such a site, describe. For example, if you are commissioning permanent public art, murals, or the design of a permanent structure, your project has the potential to have an adverse effect on environmental or historic resources under NEPA/NHPA.

For the purposes of questions (a)-(i) below, a National Historic Register Place (NHRP) includes any district, site, building, structure, landscape or object that is included or eligible for inclusion on the NHRP, whether individually or as a contributing element.

Additionally, for a project to qualify as temporary it must be 100% reversible.

- a. Does your project involve a festival/public event of limited size or duration? If so, will there be any permanent effects on a NHRP Site(s) or any structures/installations erected or installed on an NHRP Site(s)?
  - b. Does your project involve outdoor murals or other art on a NHRP Site(s) or adjacent to a NHRP Site(s)?
  - c. Does your project involve temporary public art on a building 50 years or older (e.g., sculpture, statuary, banners, mixed media, painting)? If so, does the project necessitate the installation of hardware on a NHRP Site(s)?
  - d. Does your project involve erecting or placing permanent wayfinding signs (e.g., artistic directional signs) adjacent to or on a NHRP Site(s)?
  - e. Does your project involve installing small structures (e.g., benches, bus shelters, produce stands) attached to or dependent on a NHRP Site(s)? If so, describe the ground disturbance necessary for such an installation.
  - f. Does your project involve landscape maintenance or rehabilitation (e.g., community garden, urban park) on a NHRP Site(s)? If so, where? Will it include the addition of new large scale landscape elements?
  - g. Does your project involve in-kind replacements or repairs?
  - h. Does your project involve conceptual planning/design/research (e.g., feasibility and planning studies, early design development work/conceptual drawings and renderings, asset mapping, design charrettes)?
  - i. Does your project involve information gathering/data analysis/information dissemination (e.g., historic and cultural demonstrations, public affairs actions, studies, reports, document mailings, data analysis)?
3. If you are proposing a temporary or permanent public art project, or you are designing or planning a district, building, site, landscape, structure or object, you must provide us with the following detailed information: If any element of the district, building, site, landscape, structure or object (or adjacent properties) is 50 years old or older, describe that element in detail. For example, if you are working on a historic building or district (or there is one adjacent), describe the age (give year built if available), whether or not it's included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and the type of activities being planned or designed for your project.

4. Provide a detailed description of any project activities that might now or someday have an effect on the environment so that we may review the actions under the NEPA. Be very specific. For example, if you will be doing cleanup of a site, describe exactly what needs to be cleaned. Is it litter on the site or toxic waste that needs to be cleaned up? If you will be installing public art, describe the previous use of the property and why you think the land is not likely to be contaminated.
5. If an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization might attach religious and/or cultural significance to historic properties touched by your project, describe. We may contact you for additional documentation.

### **Required Partnerships**

A key to the success of creative placemaking is involving the arts in partnership with committed governmental, nonprofit, and private sector leadership. All applications must demonstrate a partnership that will provide leadership for the project. These partnerships must involve two primary partners, as defined by these guidelines:

1. Nonprofit organization
2. Local government entity

One of these two primary partners must be a cultural (arts or design) organization. **The highest ranking official of the local government is required to submit a formal statement of support designating the project as the one of the up to two applications being submitted for the local government.** See "**How to Prepare and Submit an Application**" for more information.

Additional partners are encouraged and may include an appropriate variety of entities such as arts organizations and artists, design professionals and design centers, state level government agencies, foundations, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, real estate developers, business leaders, community organizations, councils of government, rural or regional planning organizations, transportation agencies, special districts, educational organizations, as well as public and governmental entities; and should engage in partnership with other sectors (such as agriculture and food, economic development, education and youth, environment and energy, health, housing, public safety, transportation, and workforce development).

You may find it helpful to contact your local or regional arts agency as you begin the process of identifying partners within your community.

### **Strengthening Communities**

Through Our Town projects, the National Endowment for the Arts Endowment intends to achieve the following objective: *Strengthening Communities: Provide opportunities for the arts to be integrated into the fabric of community life.*

Our Town project outcomes may include:

- **Economic Change:** Economic improvements of individuals, institutions, or the community including local business growth, job creation/labor force participation, professional development/training, prevention of displacement, in-migration, and tourism.
- **Physical Change:** Physical improvements that occur to the built and natural environment including beautification and/or enhancement of physical environment, new construction, and redevelopment (including arts, culture, and public space).
- **Social Change:** Improvements to social relationships, civic engagement and community empowerment, and/or amplifying community identity including civic engagement, collective efficacy, social capital, social cohesion, and community attachment.
- **Systems Change:** Improvements to community capacity to sustain the integration of arts, culture, and design into strategies for advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes including partnerships with other sectors, civic and institutional leadership, replication or scaling of innovative projects, long term funding, training programs, and permanent staff positions.

OUR TOWN: Award Information

### **Grant Amounts, Cost Share, and Matching Funds**

We anticipate awarding a limited number of grants, subject to the availability of funding.

You must request a grant amount at one of the following levels: \$25,000, \$50,000, \$75,000, \$100,000, \$150,000, or \$200,000. We will award very few grants at the \$200,000 level; these will be only for projects of significant scale and impact.

Our grants cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the project. All grants require a nonfederal match of at least 1 to 1. These matching funds may be all cash or a combination of cash and in-kind contributions. You may include in your Project Budget matching funds that are proposed but not yet committed at the time of the application deadline.

We reserve the right to limit our support of a project to a particular phase(s) or cost(s). All costs included in your Project Budget must be expended during your period of performance. Costs associated with other federal funds, whether direct or indirect (e.g., flow down through a state arts agency), can't be included in your Project Budget. **Costs incurred before the earliest project start date of July 1, 2020, can't be included in your budget or match.**

### **Period of Performance**

Our support of a project may start on July 1, 2020, or any time thereafter. A grant period of up to two years is allowed. Allow sufficient time to plan, execute, and close out your project. **The two-year period is intended to allow an applicant sufficient time to plan, execute, and close out its project, not to repeat a one-year project for a second year.**

Any planning costs that are included as part of the project must be incurred during your established period of performance.

## OUR TOWN: Applicant Eligibility

All applications require partnerships that involve at least two primary partners as defined by these guidelines: a nonprofit organization and a local governmental entity. One of the two primary partners must be a cultural (arts or design) organization. Additional partners are encouraged.

One of the two primary partners must act as the official applicant (lead applicant). This lead applicant must meet the eligibility requirements, submit the application, and assume full responsibility for the grant.

Eligible lead applicants are:

- Nonprofit tax-exempt 501(c)(3) U.S. organizations with a documented **three-year history of programming**.
- Local governments. For the purposes of these guidelines, local governments are defined as counties, parishes, cities, towns, villages, or federally recognized tribal governments. Local arts agencies or other departments, agencies, or entities within an eligible local government may submit the application on behalf of that local government. The following do not qualify as local governments: state level government agencies, other state-designated entities, state higher education institutions, regional governments and entities, quasi-government organizations, regional planning organizations, and business improvement districts.

For U.S. territories, if no local government exists, the territory government can serve as the local government.

To be eligible, the lead applicant organization must:

- Meet the National Endowment for the Arts "**Legal Requirements**," including nonprofit, tax-exempt status, at the time of application. (All organizations must apply directly on their own behalf. Applications through a fiscal sponsor/agent are not allowed. [See more information on fiscal sponsors/agents.](#))
- Have submitted acceptable Final Report packages by the due date(s) for all National Endowment for the Arts award(s) previously received.
- Have a commitment to the project from the local government, as demonstrated by the required formal statement of support for the project from the highest ranking official of the local government participating in the project.

Additional partners are encouraged and may include an appropriate variety of entities such as arts organizations and artists, design professionals and design centers, state level government agencies, foundations, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, real estate developers, business leaders, community organizations, council of governments, rural planning organizations, transportation agencies, special districts, educational organizations, as well as public and governmental entities. Federal agencies cannot be monetary partners.

The designated state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) and their regional arts organizations (RAOs) may serve as partners, but not primary partners, in projects. National Endowment for the



Arts funds can't support any SAA or RAO costs. There is an exception for U.S. territories. The territory's SAA may serve as the local government primary partner. However, all grant funds must be passed on to the other partners.

All applicants must have a DUNS number ([www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)) and be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM, [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete, and should a grant be made, throughout the life of the award. **Finalize a new or renew an existing registration at least two weeks before the application deadline.** This action should allow you time to resolve any issues that may arise. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit your application. Maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register or renew at least two weeks before the deadline.

### **Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian Applicants or Projects**

We provide support for projects featuring Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian arts across all NEA disciplines. ([See more information here.](#))

### **Application Restrictions**

An organization may submit as a lead applicant two applications to Our Town.

A partnering organization may serve as a partner on as many applications as they like.'

If two applications are submitted from a single lead applicant, local government, or within the same geographic area, the capacity of the lead applicant, local government, or geographic area to carry out and sustain two Our Town projects will be considered in the review of applications.

Each local government -- whether applying as the lead applicant or as the primary partner with a nonprofit organization -- is limited to two applications. The local government must coordinate internally to ensure that only two applications are submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts, rather than multiple applications through its various offices. The submitted applications must be identified as proposing the chosen projects by formal statements of support from the highest ranking official of the local government. If more than two applications are submitted for a government, we will ask the highest ranking official to select two applications to move forward.

### **Other National Endowment for the Arts Funding Opportunities**

You may apply to other National Endowment for the Arts funding opportunities, including Art Works and Challenge America, in addition to Our Town. In each case, the request must be for a distinctly different project, or a distinctly different phase of a project. If you have applied to the NEA in the past and were not recommended for funding, you may apply again to any funding opportunity, including Our Town.

## SIDEBARS

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## OUR TOWN: Application Calendar

<b>Part 1 - Submit to Grants.gov</b>	<b>August 8, 2019</b>
<i>Prepare application material so that it's ready to upload when the Applicant Portal opens</i>	
<b>Part 2 - Submit to Applicant Portal</b>	<b>August 13-20, 2019</b>
<b>Earliest Announcement of Grant Award or Rejection</b>	<b>April 2020</b>
<b>Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance</b>	<b>July 1, 2020</b>

Note: To allow time to resolve any problems you might encounter, we strongly recommend that you register/renew your Grants.gov/SAM registration by at least July 18, 2019 and submit to Grants.gov by at least July 29, 2019.

You are required to use Grants.gov. See "How to Prepare and Submit an Application" for further information.

Before you apply through **Grants.gov** for the first time, you must be registered. Registration with Grants.gov:


- Is a multi-step process.
- Takes time; allow two weeks.
- Must be completed before you can submit your application.

**Late, ineligible, and incomplete applications will not be reviewed.**

In the event of a major emergency (e.g., a hurricane or Grants.gov technological failure), the NEA Chairman may adjust application deadlines for affected applicants. If a deadline is extended for any reason, an announcement will be posted on our website.

**If you have questions: E-mail: [OT@arts.gov](mailto:OT@arts.gov)**

 **202-682-5082 Voice/T.T.Y. (Text-Telephone, a device for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.)**

 **Individuals who do not use conventional print should contact the Arts Endowment's Accessibility Office at 202-682-5532 for help in acquiring an audio recording of these guidelines.**

OMB No. 3135-0112 Expires 12/31/2019  
CFDA No. 45.024  
April 2019

## OUR TOWN: We Do Not Fund

Under these guidelines, funding is **not** available for:

- Direct grants to individuals. (We encourage applicant organizations to involve individual artists in all possible ways.)
- Awards to individuals or organizations to honor or recognize achievement.
- General operating or seasonal support.
- Cash reserves or endowments.
- Costs for the creation of new organizations.
- Construction, purchase, or renovation of facilities. (Design fees, preparing space for an exhibit, installation or de-installation of art, and community planning are eligible. However, no National Endowment for the Arts or matching funds may be directed to the costs of physical construction or renovation or toward the purchase costs of facilities or land.)
- Commercial (for-profit) enterprises or activities, including concessions, food, T-shirts, or other items for resale.
- Subgranting or regranting, except for state arts agencies, regional arts organizations, or local arts agencies that are designated to operate on behalf of their local governments or are operating units of city or county government. (**See more information on subgranting.**)
- Costs to bring a project into compliance with federal grant requirements. This includes environmental or historical assessments or reviews and the hiring of individuals to write assessments or reviews or to otherwise comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and/or the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Individual elementary or secondary schools -- charter, private, or public -- directly. Schools may participate as partners in projects for which another eligible organization applies. Local education agencies, school districts, and state and regional education agencies are eligible. If a single school also is a local education agency, as is the case with some charter schools, the school may apply with documentation that supports its status as a local education agency.
- Projects that replace arts instruction provided by an arts specialist.
- Generally, courses in degree-granting institutions.
- Literary publishing that does not focus on contemporary literature and/or writers.
- Generally, publication of books, exhibition of works, or other projects by the applicant organization's board members, faculty, or trustees.
- Exhibitions of, and other projects that primarily involve, single, individually-owned, private collections.
- Projects for which the selection of artists or art works is based upon criteria other than artistic excellence and merit. Examples include festivals, exhibitions, or publications for which no jury/editorial/curatorial judgment has been applied.
- Expenditures related to compensation to foreign nationals and/or travel to or from foreign countries when those expenditures are not in compliance with regulations issued by the U.S. Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control. For further information, see <http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/> or contact our Office of Grants Management at [grants@arts.gov](mailto:grants@arts.gov).

- Project costs supported by any other federal funding. This includes federal funding received either directly from a federal agency (e.g., National Endowment for the Humanities, Housing and Urban Development, National Science Foundation, or an entity that receives federal appropriations such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting or Amtrak); or indirectly from a pass-through organization such as a state arts agency, regional arts organization, or a grant made to another entity.
- Social activities such as receptions, parties, galas.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Gifts and prizes, including cash prizes as well as other items (e.g., electronic devices, gift certificates) with monetary value.
- Contributions and donations to other entities.
- General miscellaneous or contingency costs.
- Fines and penalties, bad debt costs, deficit reduction.
- Lobbying, including activities intended to influence the outcome of elections or influence government officials regarding pending legislation, either directly or through specific lobbying appeals to the public.
- Voter registration drives and related activities.
- Marketing expenses that are not directly related to the project.
- Audit costs that are not directly related to a single audit (formerly known as an A-133 audit).
- Rental costs for home office workspace owned by individuals or entities affiliated with the applicant organization.
- Visa costs paid to the U.S. government.
- Costs incurred before the beginning or after the completion of the official period of performance.

All applicants should carefully review the Assurance of Compliance LINK and Appendix A of our General Terms and Conditions (GTC) LINK which detail other requirements that govern awards.

## OUR TOWN: How to Prepare and Submit an Application

These instructions provide all of the information that you need to submit an application. Submitting an application is a multi-step process. You will interact with the NEA's website, Grants.gov, and the NEA's Applicant Portal. We urge you to read these instructions in their entirety before you begin the application process.

<b>Part 1 - Submit to Grants.gov</b>	<b>August 9, 2019 by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>
<i>Prepare application material so that it's ready to upload when the Applicant Portal opens</i>	
<b>Part 2 - Submit to Applicant Portal</b>	<b>August 13, 2019 at 9:00 a.m., Eastern Time, to August 20, 2019 at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>

Note: To allow time to resolve any problems you might encounter, we strongly recommend that you register/renew your Grants.gov/SAM registration by at least July 18, 2019 and submit to Grants.gov by at least July 29, 2019.

1. View the Our Town Guidelines Webinar:
  - We will conduct a live "Tips for a Successful Our Town Application " webinar on June 24, 2019, at 3:00 p.m., Eastern Time featuring an overview presentation followed by a Q&A session. **Click here to register** for the upcoming webinar and for an **archive of the webinar** after it is concluded.
2. Part 1 – Submit to Grants.gov:
  - **[The Application for Federal Domestic Assistance](#)/Short Organizational Form**

**Prepare application material so that it's ready to upload when the Applicant Portal opens**

3. View the NEA Grant Application Form (GAF) Tutorial:
  - **Online Tutorial: Using the NEA Grant Application Form**
4. Part 2 – Submit to Applicant Portal:
  - **Fill out and submit the NEA Grant Application Form and upload items to Applicant Portal.**

**If you have questions about your application, please contact the staff at OT@arts.gov.**

OUR TOWN: Part 1 - Submit to Grants.gov

**Complete and submit the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form to Grants.gov.**

Register or renew/verify Grants.gov and SAM.gov registration | Go to the Grant Opportunity Package | Fill out the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form | [Submit](#) your application [to Grants.gov](#) | Track Your Application

<b>Part 1 - Submit to Grants.gov</b>	<b>August 8, 2019 by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>
<i>Prepare application material so that it's ready to upload when the Applicant Portal opens</i>	
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Note: To allow time to resolve any problems you might encounter, we strongly recommend that you register/renew your Grants.gov/SAM registration by at least July 18, 2019 and submit to Grants.gov by at least July 29, 2019.

**1. Register or renew/verify Grants.gov and SAM.gov registration:**

**Before submitting to Grants.gov, your organization must register or renew/verify its current registration with both [Grants.gov](#) and the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#). Failure to comply with these requirements may result in your inability to submit to Grants.gov.**

- Go to Grants.gov's **Organization Registration** to create a new organization registration.
- **Grants.gov Contact Center:** Call 1-800-518-4726, e-mail [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov), or consult the information posted on the Grants.gov website at **Support**. The Grants.gov Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **SAM Federal Service Desk:** Call 1-866-606-8220 or see the information posted on the SAM website at **SAM User Help**.
- Registration can take several weeks. Exceptions to the deadline will be considered only for those issues related to registration or renewal. Maintain documentation (with dates) of your efforts to register or renew by at least July 18 with the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS), System for Award Management (SAM), or Grants.gov.
- In addition to these instructions, you should periodically check the **Grants.gov blog** or the **Grants.gov homepage** for tips, updates, and alerts.

**2. Go to the Grant Opportunity Package:**

Access the Grant Opportunity Package with the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form on Grants.gov by clicking on the link for your deadline:

**[CLICK HERE TO GO TO THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY PACKAGE ON GRANTS.GOV](#)**

[Funding Opportunity Number 2019NEA01OT]

When you go to Grants.gov through the link above, the Grants.gov “View Grant Opportunity” screen will open. Choose “Apply” in the “Action” area. On the next screen, choose “Apply” again. You will be prompted to enter your Grants.gov Username and Password.

You will apply using a Grants.gov Workspace. To create a Workspace, look for the “Application Filing Name” field above the “Create Workspace” button (you must be logged in as the Authorized Organization Representative or AOR to be able to see this button and create the Workspace). Enter the legal name of your organization, click the “Create Workspace” button, and follow the screens from there. If you want to [learn more](#) about using Grants.gov’s Workspace, see [here](#).

Please note that you will submit the substantial part of your application during Part 2.

**3. Fill out the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form:**

**NOTE:** All asterisked (\*) items and yellow fields on this form are required and must be completed before you will be able to submit the form. Do not type in all capital letters when completing the form. Enter information directly into the form. Do not copy from an old Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form or another document and paste into the form.

**1. Name of Federal Agency:** Pre-populated.

**2. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** Pre-populated.

**3. Date Received:** This will be filled automatically with the date that you submit your application; leave blank.

**4. Funding Opportunity Number:** Pre-populated.

**5. Applicant Information:**

**a. Legal Name:** The name provided here must be the applicant's legal name as it appears in the current IRS 501(c)(3) status letter or in the official document that identifies the organization as a unit of state or local government, or as a federally recognized tribal community or tribe. (Do not use your organization's popular name, if different.) If you are a parent organization that is applying on behalf of an eligible independent component, do not list the name of the independent component here. You will be asked for that information later.

**b. Address:**



Use Street 1 for your organization's physical street address. This address should agree with the address that you used with the SAM (System for Award Management). In addition, use Street 2 for your organization's mailing address if it differs from the physical street address. In the Zip/Postal Code box, organizations in the United States should enter the **full 9-digit zip code** that was assigned by the U.S. Postal Service. If you do not know your full zip code, you may look it up at [www.usps.com/zip4/](http://www.usps.com/zip4/)

d. Type of Applicant: Select the item that best characterizes your organization from the menu in the first drop down box. Additional choices are optional.

e. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): Enter the 9-digit number that was assigned by the Internal Revenue Service; do not use a Social Security Number.

f. Organizational DUNS: All organizational applicants for federal funds must have a DUNS number, which is recognized as the universal standard for identifying organizations worldwide. **The number that you enter here must agree with the number (either 9 or 13 digits) that you used with the SAM (System for Award Management) as part of the Grants.gov registration. Otherwise, your application will not be validated by Grants.gov and will be rejected.**

g. Congressional District: Enter the number of the Congressional District where the applicant organization is located. Use the following format: 2 character State Abbreviation-3 character District Number. For example, if your organization is located in the 5th Congressional District of California, enter "CA-005." If your state has a single At-Large Representative or your territory has a single Delegate, enter your 2 character state/territory abbreviation and "-000." If you need help determining your district, go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and use the "Find Your Representative" tool.

## 6. Project Information:

a. Project Title: Enter "N/A." You will provide a project title in the NEA's Applicant Portal during Part 2 of the application process, not in Grants.gov. Anything you enter in Grants.gov will not be used in the review of your application.

b. Project Description: Enter "N/A." You will provide a project description in the NEA's Applicant Portal during Part 2 of the application process, not in Grants.gov. Anything you enter in Grants.gov will not be used in the review of your application.

c. Proposed Project Start Date/End Date: Enter the beginning and ending dates for your requested period of performance, i.e., the span of time necessary to plan, execute, and close out your proposed project. The start date should be the first day of the month, and the end date should be the last day of the month. Our support of a project may start on or after **July 1, 2020**. Generally, a period of performance of up to two years is allowed. Your budget should include only the activities and costs incurred during the requested period of performance.

## 7. Project Director:

Provide the requested information for the Project Director. Select a Prefix (e.g., Ms., Mr.) even though this is not a required field.

Provide contact information, including an e-mail address, that will be valid through the announcement date for your category.

Due to restrictions from the Department of Homeland Security we are not able to send emails to alias addresses that forward to another email account. Please do not enter this type of email address.

#### **8. Primary Contact/Grant Administrator:**

Provide the requested information for the individual who should be contacted on all matters involving this application and the administration of any grant that may be awarded. For colleges and universities, this person is often a Sponsored Research, Sponsored Programs, or Contracts and Grants Officer. Select a Prefix even though this is not a required field. For the Telephone number field, use the following format: 000-000-0000.

In some organizations, particularly smaller ones, this individual may be the same as the Project Director. If this is the case, you may check the "Same as Project Director" box and not repeat information that you have already provided in Item 7. (If the Primary Contact/Grant Administrator is the same as the Authorizing Official, please complete all items under both 8 and 9 even though there will be some repetition.)

Due to restrictions from the Department of Homeland Security we are not able to send emails to alias addresses that forward to another email account. Please do not enter this type of email address.

#### **9. Authorized Representative:**

Enter the requested information for the AOR (Authorized Organization Representative) who is authorized to submit this application to Grants.gov. Select a Prefix even though this is not a required field. The AOR must have the legal authority to obligate your organization (e. g., be a senior member of the staff such as an Executive Director, Director of Development). See specific requirements for who can serve as an AOR for colleges and universities. Contractors or administrative support staff cannot serve as an AOR. By clicking the "I Agree" box at the top of Item 9, this individual will be certifying compliance with relevant federal requirements on your organization's behalf. (These requirements can be found in the "**Assurance of Compliance**" section of these guidelines.) The "Signature of Authorized Representative" and "Date Signed" boxes will be populated by Grants.gov upon submission of the application.

Due to restrictions from the Department of Homeland Security we are not able to send emails to alias addresses that forward to another email account. Please do not enter this type of email address.

#### **4. Submit your application to Grants.gov:**

- To begin the submission process, log on to Grants.gov and go to the Forms tab on the Manage Workspace page. Click the “Sign and Submit” button, under the Forms tab.
- **Be certain that you are satisfied with your Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form before you click this button. No revisions to your form are possible through Grants.gov once it is submitted.**
- Once you complete and submit your application, you will see a confirmation screen explaining that your submission is being processed. Retain the Grants.gov Tracking Number that you receive in the application submission confirmation screen.
- If you wait until the day of the deadline to submit your application, you are taking a significant risk! We strongly suggest that you submit your application no later than July 29 to give yourself ample time to resolve any problems you might encounter.
- We will not accept late applications. The only exception is for a technological failure on the part of Grants.gov, as determined by the National Endowment for the Arts. To be considered for this exception, you must provide documentation of a Grants.gov technological failure dating from July 29.

We will consider and address your situation as appropriate. We will not make exceptions for applications that are the result of user error, including failure to verify that your application was validated by the Grants.gov system through [Track My Application](#).

- Failure to successfully submit the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form through Grants.gov will make you ineligible to complete Part 2 of the application process.

### 5. Track Your Application:

- Verify that your application was validated by the Grants.gov system. Go to [Track My Application](#) to confirm the validation and track the progress of your application submission through Grants.gov. Do not wait until the day of the deadline to verify your submission in case you encounter any difficulties.

### 6. Prepare to Complete Step 2:

- Read the [Part 2 instructions](#) to learn about how and when to access the Applicant Portal to submit material and upload items.
- To access the Applicant Portal, you’ll need your **Agency Tracking Number/NEA Application Number**. The NEA assigns the number to your application 1-2 business days after you submit your Grants.gov application.

### Additional Help

For additional help on how to use Grants.gov, please see the Grants.gov website at [Support](#). **You also may send e-mail to the Grants.gov Contact Center at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) or call them at 1-800-518-4726, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

OUR TOWN: Part 2 - Submit to the Applicant Portal

**Fill out and submit the NEA Grant Application Form and upload items to the Applicant Portal.**

**You will use the NEA's Applicant Portal to complete Part 2 of the application process. You must first have successfully completed Part 1 (submitting to Grants.gov) by the application deadline of record.**

<b>Part 1 - Submit to Grants.gov</b>	<b>August 8, 2019 by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>
<i>Prepare application material so that it's ready to upload when the Applicant Portal opens</i>	
<b>Part 2 - Submit to Applicant Portal</b>	<b>August 13, 2019 at 9:00 a.m., Eastern Time, to August 20, 2019 at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>

Note: To allow time to resolve any problems you might encounter, we strongly recommend that you register/renew your Grants.gov/SAM registration by at least July 18, 2019 and submit to Grants.gov by at least July 29, 2019.

Do not attempt to complete Part 2 before the Applicant Portal becomes available to you on these dates. Your log on credentials will be created for you.

### **1. Access the Applicant Portal:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Log on to Applicant Portal at: <a href="https://applicantportal.arts.gov">https://applicantportal.arts.gov</a></b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>User Name = Grants.gov Tracking Number</b>  (Example: "GRANT12345678")</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Password = Agency Tracking Number/NEA Application Number</b>  (Example: "1234567")</li> </ul>

The User Name and Password are meant to be used by one person at a time in the Applicant Portal. If multiple people use the User Name and Password at the same time to work on an application, it could result in the loss of data.

**How do I find my Grants.gov tracking number?** Your Grants.gov tracking number is assigned to you by Grants.gov at the time you submit your application. A confirmation screen will appear once your submission is complete. Your Grants.gov tracking number will be provided at the bottom of this screen. Remember to save this number.

**How do I find my Agency Tracking #/NEA Application Number?** The NEA assigns the number to your application 1-2 business days after you submit your application. Log on to Grants.gov with your Grants.gov Username and Password. Under Grant Applications, select Check Application Status. Once in the Check Application Status feature, look for your Grants.gov tracking number and select Details under the Actions column. You'll be taken to the Submission Details screen to find your Agency Tracking#/NEA Application Number. NOTE: Check Application Status is a separate feature from Track My Application at Grants.gov.

For specific help on how to complete your application, please review the instructions in these guidelines or **contact the staff at OT@arts.gov**.

## **2. Fill out the Grant Application Form**

You will submit a substantial part of your application through the Grant Application Form (GAF) in the Applicant Portal, including:

- Answers to narrative questions about your organization and project.
- Financial information about your organization and project.
- Bios of key individuals.
- Work samples and statements of support.

Click below to see the application questions, instructions, and information about required application materials that you will submit through the Grant Application Form in the Applicant Portal. For your application to be considered complete, every item that is required **MUST** be included in your application.

**[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS \(PDF\)](#)**

**You should prepare your responses and material well in advance of the deadline and have them fully ready to upload once the Applicant Portal opens for you. You will not have access to the Grant Application Form until the Applicant Portal opens for you to submit your application materials on the dates noted above.**

**Note: We strongly urge you to complete and submit the Grant Application Form and upload materials outside of the hours of heaviest usage, generally 8:00 pm to 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on the day of the deadline.**

## **3. Submit the Grant Application Form in the Applicant Portal:**

- Hit the "Submit" button when you are ready to submit your application. If you do not hit the "Submit" button, your application will not be received.

- After submitting your application, you may log back into the Applicant Portal and make modifications to your submission up until the system closes at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on the day of the deadline.
- Once you have submitted your application, you will NOT receive an email confirmation. To confirm that your application was received, log back in to the Applicant Portal. On the first screen it will say “Submitted” if your application has been received. If your application has not yet been received, it will say “In Progress.” You can maintain documentation of your successful submission by taking a screenshot.
- You may print a copy of your application at any time, whether in draft or final form, for your records.

### HELPFUL TIPS:

1. Submit your materials to the Applicant Portal prior to the deadline to give yourself ample time to resolve any problems that you might encounter. You take a significant risk by waiting until the day of the deadline to submit.
2. NEA staff will not be available to help you after 5:30 p.m., Eastern Time, on the day of the deadline.
3. Make sure you use the Step 2 Application Instructions PDF that corresponds to the category to which you are applying. Requirements vary.
4. When in doubt, contact the staff at [OT@arts.gov](mailto:OT@arts.gov).
5. Some special characters (such as ampersands, quotation marks, apostrophes, and angle brackets) take up more character counts than others in webforms, including the Grant Application Form. This is because certain characters are translated into HTML code which takes up more than one character space. If you notice a higher than expected character count when you enter information directly into the Grant Application Form or copy and paste from your word processing program, here are a few tips:
  - Transfer your text into a text-only utility like Notepad before pasting it into the Grant Application Form. This will delete hidden HTML code to ensure the proper capture of your text. However, any formatting you had will be deleted.
  - Use a solution other than special characters. For example, instead of using quotation marks for titles of works, put them in italics and that won't affect character count.
  - Use only one space after the end of sentences. Single spaces after punctuation marks (periods, commas, colons, etc.) only reduce the character counter by one character. If you enter two spaces after a period, HTML coding adds extra spaces.
  - Save character space by limiting the use of tabs.
6. View the [Grant Application Form Tutorial](#) for other helpful tips to assist you in completing the online form.

## OUR TOWN: Application Review

### Review Criteria

Applications are reviewed on the basis of the following criteria:

The **artistic excellence** of the project, which includes the following:

- Quality of the artists, arts or design professionals, arts organizations, works of art, or services that the project will involve, as appropriate for the community in which the project takes place. Artistic excellence is evaluated based on the material and work samples submitted with the application. This includes a description of the process and criteria for the selection of artists, design professionals, arts organizations, works of art, or services to ensure artistic excellence; and work samples of selected or proposed artists, design professionals, arts organizations, works of art, or services that demonstrate artistic excellence. See "**Prepare Application Material (PDF)**" for the material and work samples that are required to ensure and demonstrate artistic excellence.

The **artistic merit** of the project, which includes the following:

- Potential to advance local economic, physical, and social outcomes by:
  - Bringing new attention to or elevating key community assets and issues, voices of residents, local history, or cultural infrastructure,
  - Injecting new or additional energy, resources, activity, people, or enthusiasm into a place, community issue, or local economy,
  - Envisioning new possibilities for a community or place - a new future, a new way of overcoming a challenge, or approaching problem-solving, or
  - Connecting communities, people, places, and economic opportunity via physical spaces or new relationships.
- Potential to ultimately lay the groundwork for systemic changes that sustain the integration of arts, culture, and design into strategies for strengthening communities by engaging partners from other sectors (such as agriculture and food, economic development, education and youth, environment and energy, health, housing, public safety, transportation, and workforce development).
- Potential to support artists, design professionals, and arts organizations by integrating the arts and design into the fabric of civic life.
- Level of community engagement in planning for and participating in the project.
- Strength of the partnership between required local and nonprofit partners, as well as engagement of the private and public sectors.
- Where appropriate, potential to reach underserved populations such as those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited.
- Ability to carry out the project based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, the quality and clarity of the project goals and design, the resources involved, and the qualifications of the project's personnel:

- Appropriateness of the project to the partners' missions and the community in which the project will take place.
- Appropriateness of the proposed performance measurements and their ability to demonstrate that project activities are advancing local physical, economic, and/or social outcomes, including, as appropriate, plans for documentation and evaluation of the overall project results.

If two applications are submitted from a single lead applicant, local government, or within the same geographic area, the capacity of the lead applicant, local government, or geographic area to carry out and sustain two Our Town projects will be considered in the review of applications.

### **What Happens to Your Application**

All applications are reviewed according to the review criteria by an advisory panel comprised of qualified peer experts, including at least one knowledgeable layperson, representing a range of multidisciplinary art, design, and economic and community development fields. Panel recommendations are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts, which then makes recommendations to the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Chairman reviews the Council's recommendations and makes the final decision on all grant awards. Pending the availability of funding, it is anticipated that applicants will be notified of award or rejection in April 2020.

NOTE: All recommended applications undergo a review to evaluate risk posed by the applicant prior to making a federal award. This may include past performance on grants, meeting reporting deadlines, compliance with terms and conditions, audit findings, etc.



OUR TOWN: Award Administration

### **National Environmental Policy Act and/or the National Historic Preservation Act Review**

If you are recommended for a grant and your project may be subject to the **National Environmental Policy Act** (NEPA) and/or the **National Historic Preservation Act** (NHPA), the National Endowment for the Arts will conduct a review of your project to ensure that it is in compliance with NEPA/NHPA.

Some of the common project types that garner a NHPA review are:

- A project involving or occurring near a district, site, building, landscape, structure or object that is at least 50 years old or older and therefore included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (please note that in some instances, buildings or structures may be included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places that are less than 50 years old).
- The commissioning and installation of temporary or permanent outdoor furnishings such as benches or market structures or art such as a sculpture or mural.
- An arts festival in a park.
- Design planning and services for projects that may involve a historic site, structure, or district.

**This review and approval process may take up to several months to complete and may delay your project's start date. The results of the review may impact our ability to make a grant award/our ability to release grant funds. If you are recommended for an award which may have historic preservation or environmental concerns (NHPA/NEPA), you will be notified and asked to provide additional information. Your thorough and complete information for all project activities and locations will expedite the review. The NEA cannot release an award and/or grant funds until the historic preservation and environmental review is complete.**

To learn more about what **questions you will need to answer** for the review of a project impacted by the **National Environmental Policy Act** and/or the **National Historic Preservation Act**, see **here**.

### **Accessibility**

Federal regulations require that all NEA-funded projects be accessible to people with disabilities. Funded activities must be held in an accessible venue and program access and effective communication must be provided for participants and audience members with disabilities. If your project is recommended for funding, you will be asked to provide information describing how you will make your project physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities:

- Buildings and facilities (including projects held in historic facilities), should be physically accessible. This includes, but is not limited to: ground-level entry, ramped access, and/or elevators to the venue; integrated and dispersed wheelchair seating in assembly areas;

wheelchair-accessible box office, stage, and dressing rooms; wheelchair-accessible display cases, exhibit areas, and counters; and wheelchair-accessible restrooms and water fountains.

- The programmatic offering should be accessible either as part of the funded activity or upon request, where relevant. This can include, but is not limited to: contact information for requesting accommodations; electronic materials and websites; print materials in alternative formats, such as large-print brochures/labels, Braille, and electronic/digital formats; accommodations for performances, tours, and lectures, such as audio description, tactile opportunities, sign language interpretation, and real-time captioning; closed/open captioning of video and film; and assistive listening devices.

Please see the **Nondiscrimination Statutes** in our "Assurance of Compliance" for additional information. For technical assistance on how to make your project fully accessible, contact the Accessibility Office at [accessibility@arts.gov](mailto:accessibility@arts.gov), 202-682-5532 Voice or the Civil Rights Office at 202-682-5454 or 202-682-5082 Voice/T.T.Y., or see our online **Accessibility Resources**.

### **Changes in Projects**

Applicants must notify the National Endowment for the Arts immediately of any significant changes in their project that occur after they have submitted their application. If the project or the organization's capacity changes significantly before an award is made, any funding recommendation may be revised or withdrawn.

Grantees are expected to carry out a project that is consistent with the proposal that was approved for funding by the National Endowment for the Arts. If changes in the project are believed to be necessary, the grantee must submit a request through a proper REACH account for the award, with justification, for review by the Office of Grants Management. Approval is not guaranteed. Detailed information is included in the NEA General Terms & Conditions for Grants to Organizations.

### **Project Reporting and Evaluation**

We ask all applicants to define what they would like to achieve, how they will evaluate the degree to which it is achieved, and, upon completion of the project, what they have learned from their experiences. Such feedback need not entail large-scale or expensive evaluation efforts. You should do what is feasible and appropriate for your organization and project. When a grant is completed, you must submit a final report and answer questions on your achievements and how these were determined. We recognize that some projects involve risk, and we want to hear about both your successes and failures. Failures can provide valuable learning experiences, and reporting them will have no effect on your ability to receive NEA funds in the future.

All Our Town grantees will be assigned the agency's Strengthening Communities objective. Before applying, please review the reporting requirements for the agency's **Strengthening Communities** objective. Given the nature of Strengthening Communities projects, benefits are likely to emerge over time and may not be fully measurable during the period of a grant. You will need to provide evidence of progress toward achieving improved strengthening of the community(ies) as appropriate to the project.

## **Crediting Requirement**

Grantees must clearly acknowledge support from the National Endowment for the Arts in their programs and related promotional material including publications and websites. Additional acknowledgment requirements may be provided later.

## **Administrative Requirements**

Beyond the reporting requirements for all grantees, selected Our Town grantees may be asked to assist in the collection of additional information that can help the National Endowment for the Arts determine the degree to which agency objectives were achieved. For example, Our Town grantees may be asked to participate in surveys or interviews, and/or may be asked to assist in publicizing and promoting these data collection efforts. You may be contacted to provide evidence of project accomplishments including, but not limited to, work samples, community action plans, cultural asset studies, programs, reviews, relevant news clippings, and playbills. Please remember that you are required to maintain project documentation for three years following submission of your final report.

We may publish grantees' reports and products on our website. Please note that all federal grantmaking agencies retain a royalty-free right to use all or a portion of grantees' reports and products for federal purposes.

## **Award Notices**

Grant decisions for the Our Town category are expected to be announced in April 2020.

Note that "announcement" is likely to take the form of a preliminary congratulatory note, a request for revisions, or a rejection notification. Official grant award notification (i.e., a notice of action authorized by the National Endowment for the Arts Office of Grants Management) is the only legal and valid confirmation of award. This can take several months depending on a number of factors such as whether a revised budget is needed for your project, the number of awards to be processed, whether the agency has its appropriation from Congress, etc.

## **Implementation of Title 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards**

This guidance from the federal government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) establishes clarity and consistency of the pre- and post-award requirements applicable to federal grantees. Under the authority listed above, the National Endowment for the Arts adopts the OMB Guidance in 2 CFR part 200 under §3255.1 Adoption of 2 CFR Part 200. This part gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance and supplements the guidance as needed for the National Endowment for the Arts.

## **General Terms & Conditions**

Federal and agency requirements that relate to grants awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts are highlighted in our *General Terms & Conditions* (GTC). The GTC incorporates the adoption of 2 CFR Part 200 by reference. The document also explicitly identifies where the National Endowment for the Arts has selected options offered in the regulation, such as budget waivers and requirements for use of program income. It also includes agency requirements for

matching funds reporting requirements, amendment processes, and termination actions. Grantees must review, understand, and comply with these requirements.

### **Legal Requirements:**

**PLEASE NOTE: This list highlights some of the significant legal requirements that may apply to an applicant or grantee however, it is not exhaustive. More information regarding these and other legal requirements may be found at Appendix A of our General Terms & Conditions which sets forth the National Policy and Other Legal Requirements, Statutes, and Regulations that Govern Your Award. Please note that there may be other applicable legal requirements that are not listed here.**

1. By law, the National Endowment for the Arts may support only those organizations that:

- **Are tax-exempt.** Organizations qualifying for this status must meet the following criteria:
  1. No part of net earnings may benefit a private stockholder or individual.
  2. Donations to the organization must be allowable as a charitable contribution under Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.

For further information, go to the **Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) website**.

Note that organizations who have had their IRS status revoked are not eligible for National Endowment for the Arts support. It is your responsibility to ensure that your status is current at the time of the application and throughout the life of your award.

- **Compensate all professional performers and related or supporting professional personnel on National Endowment for the Arts-supported projects at no less than the prevailing minimum compensation.** (This requirement is in accordance with regulations that have been issued by the Secretary of Labor in **29 C.F.R. Part 505**. This part does not provide information on specific compensation levels.)
- **Ensure that no part of any National Endowment for the Arts-supported project will be performed or engaged in under working conditions which are unsanitary or hazardous or dangerous** to the health and safety of the employees involved.

2. **Some legal requirements apply to every applicant, for example:**

- **Compliance with the federal requirements that are outlined in the "Assurance of Compliance"** below.
- **Debarment and Suspension procedures**. The applicant must comply with the record keeping and other requirements set forth in Subpart C of 2 CFR 180, as adopted by the Arts Endowment in 2 CFR 32.3254. Failure to comply may result in the debarment or suspension of the grantee and the NEA suspending, terminating and/or recovering funds.
- **Federal Debt Status (OMB Circular A-129)**. Processing of applications will be suspended when applicants are delinquent on federal tax or non-tax debts, including judgment liens against property for a debt to the federal government. An organization's debt status is displayed in the System for Award Management (SAM). New awards will not be made if an applicant is still in debt status as of September 1.

- **Labor Standards (29 C.F.R. pt 505)**. If a grant is awarded, the grantee must comply with the standards set out in Labor Standards on Projects or Productions Assisted by Grants from the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities.
- **The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988** (41 U.S.C. 701 et seq. and 2 C.F.R. Part 3256). The grantee is required to publish a statement regarding its drug-free workplace program as well as comply with other requirements.

3. **Some legal requirements apply depending upon what the grant is funding, for example:**

- If your project activities have the potential to impact any structure that is eligible for or on the National Register of Historic Places, adjacent to a structure that is eligible for or on the National Register of Historic Places, or located in an historic district, you will be asked to provide additional information about your project or take additional action so that the agency can review and comply with the **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**. NHPA also applies to any planning activities that may affect historic properties or districts. The additional agency review must be completed prior to any agency funds being released.
- If your project activities have the potential to impact the environment or environmentally sensitive resources, you will be required to provide information in accordance with the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**. The additional agency review must be completed prior to any agency funds being released.
- If your contract is over \$2,000 and involves the construction, alteration, or repair of public buildings or public works, it must contain a clause setting forth the minimum wages to be paid to laborers and mechanics employed under the contract in accordance with **The Davis-Bacon and Related Acts**(DBRA)

4. **Some legal requirements apply depending upon who the Applicant is, for example:**

**The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990** (25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) – which applies to any organization that controls or possesses Native American human remains and associated funerary objects and receives Federal funding, even for a purpose unrelated to the Act (25 USC 3001 et seq.)

**Assurance of Compliance**

**By signing and submitting its application form on Grants.gov, the Applicant certifies that it is in compliance with the statutes outlined below and all related National Endowment for the Arts regulations and will maintain records and submit the reports that are necessary to determine compliance.**

We may conduct a review of your organization to ensure that it is in compliance. If the NEA determines that a grantee has failed to comply with these statutes, it may suspend, terminate, and/or recover funds. This assurance is subject to judicial enforcement.

The Applicant certifies that it does not discriminate:

- On the grounds of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), implemented by the NEA at 45 U.S.C.1110.
- On the grounds of disability, in accordance with **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** (29 U.S.C. 794) and the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** ("ADA"), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 12101-12213), implemented by the NEA at 45 U.S.C. 1151. The ADA's requirements apply regardless of whether you receive federal funds.
- On the basis of age, in accordance with the **Age Discrimination Act of 1975** (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) implemented by the NEA at 45 U.S.C.1156.
- On the basis of sex, in any education program or activity, in accordance with **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972** (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.).

Applicant will inform the public that persons who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age may file a complaint with the Director of Civil Rights at the NEA.

Applicant will forward all complaints for investigation and any finding issued by a Federal or state court or by a Federal or state administrative agency to:

Director, Office of Civil Rights  
National Endowment for the Arts  
400 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20506

Applicant shall maintain records of its compliance and submission for three (3) years. The Applicant will compile, maintain and permit access to records as required by applicable regulations, guidelines or other directives.

The Applicant must also certify that it will obtain assurances of compliance from all subrecipients and will require all subrecipients of NEA funds to comply with these requirements.

The United States has the right to seek judicial or administrative enforcement of this assurance.

For further information and copies of the nondiscrimination regulations identified above, please contact the Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or 202-682-5082 Voice/T.T.Y. For inquiries about limited English proficiency, please go to <http://www.lep.gov>, the **FOIA Reading Room**, or contact the Office of General Counsel at [GeneralCounsel@arts.gov](mailto:GeneralCounsel@arts.gov) or 202-682-5418.

## OUR TOWN: Contacts

If you have questions about how to complete your application, please contact the staff at **OT@arts.gov** with your question or to set up a time to speak to staff. Due to the high volume of interest in Our Town, please allow 24 to 48 hours for staff to return your e-mail or call.

If you have questions about SAM or Grants.gov:

- **SAM Federal Service Desk:** Call 1-866-606-8220 or see the information posted on the SAM website at **SAM User Help**.
- **Grants.gov Contact Center:** Call 1-800-518-4726, e-mail **support@grants.gov**, or consult the information posted on the Grants.gov website at **Support**. The Grants.gov Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## OUR TOWN: Other Information

### **Standards for Service**

The National Endowment for the Arts has set the following standards for serving applicants. We pledge to:

- Treat you with courtesy and efficiency.
- Respond to inquiries and correspondence promptly.
- Provide clear and accurate information about our policies and procedures.
- Provide timely information about funding opportunities and make guidelines available promptly.
- Promptly acknowledge the receipt of your application.
- Ensure that all eligible applications are reviewed thoughtfully and fairly.

We welcome your comments on how we're meeting these standards. Please address them to: [webmgr@arts.gov](mailto:webmgr@arts.gov), attention: Standards for Service.

For questions about these guidelines or your application, contact [OT@arts.gov](mailto:OT@arts.gov).

In addition, applicants may receive an invitation to participate in a voluntary survey to provide feedback on the grant application guidelines on our website and any experiences consulting with our staff.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act Statement**

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at an average of 27 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We welcome any suggestions that you might have on improving the guidelines and making them as easy to use as possible. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: [webmgr@arts.gov](mailto:webmgr@arts.gov), attention: Reporting Burden. Note: Applicants are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.



## OUR TOWN: Frequently Asked Questions

**[Basics](#) | [Review Process](#) | [Other National Endowment for the Arts Grants](#) | [Budget and Matching Funds](#) | [Eligible Partners](#) | [Local Government Entity](#) | [Letters of Endorsement/Statements of Support](#) | [Other](#)**

### **BASICS**

#### **Q: What is "creative placemaking?"**

A: Creative placemaking is when the arts, culture, and design integrate into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes through partnerships with other sectors such as agriculture and food, economic development, education and youth, environment and energy, health, housing, public safety, transportation, and workforce development. The online storybook '**Exploring Our Town**' has illustrative examples of Our Town grant projects and insights into doing creative placemaking for practitioners. You may download our free publication, *How to Do Creative Placemaking and look at [additional creative placemaking resources](#) on our website.*

#### **Q: Could you tell us about the future of the Our Town initiative?**

A: It is our hope that Our Town will continue as an annual program, but as with all federal programs it is subject to funding availability.

#### **Q: What is the success rate for applicants?**

A: Based on numbers from previous years, Our Town applications have a success rate of roughly 25%.

#### **Q: If we received an Our Town grant last year, can we apply again this year?**

A: Yes, you may apply to the Our Town category for FY 2020 for a **distinctly different project, or a distinctly different phase of the project**, from that which was funded.

#### **Q: How long can my grant period be?**

A: Your grant period may be up to two years in length, and may start on July 1, 2020, or any time thereafter. If your project is part of a multi-year initiative, you may describe the broader vision but your application, including the budget, should reflect only the activities or phases of work that will occur within the grant period.

#### **Q: Will projects in small towns and rural areas be competitive?**

A: Yes. We are seeking a diverse range of applicants and encourage communities of all sizes to apply.

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

#### **Q: How will the projects be evaluated?**

A: Congress specified in our authorizing legislation that "artistic excellence and artistic merit" are the criteria by which all applications must be evaluated. For more detailed information about how artistic excellence and artistic merit apply to Our Town projects, see the "**Review Criteria**" in the guidelines.

**Q: How can I demonstrate artistic excellence for my proposed project?**

A: Artistic excellence is evaluated based on the material and work samples submitted with the application. This includes a description of the process and criteria for the selection of artists, design professionals, arts organizations, works of art, or services to ensure artistic excellence; and work samples of selected or proposed artists, design professionals, arts organizations, works of art, or services that demonstrate artistic excellence. For more discussion on how to demonstrate artistic excellence, view our "Tips for a Successful Our Town Application" webinar [LINK](#).

**Q: Who reviews and selects grantees?**

A: All applications will be reviewed according to the review criteria of artistic excellence and artistic merit by an advisory panel composed of qualified peer experts, including at least one knowledgeable layperson, representing a range of multidisciplinary art, design, and economic and community development fields. Panel recommendations are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts, which then makes recommendations to the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Chairman reviews the Council's recommendations and makes the final decision on all grant awards. [A list of past Our Town panelists](#) is available on the website (see the Design discipline).

**Q: Can staff help me with my application?**

A: Members of Design and Creative Placemaking staff are available to answer specific questions about the application materials and forms. However, we do not review full proposals or provide edits to text or budgets in advance of the application deadline. Please e-mail [OT@arts.gov](mailto:OT@arts.gov) with any questions.

**Q: Can I request panel comments or feedback after my project has been reviewed?**

A: Yes. After notification of whether you've received a grant or not, you may contact [OT@arts.gov](mailto:OT@arts.gov) to schedule a telephone conversation to receive a summary of panel comments. In such instances, you must contact us no later than 30 days after the official notification.

**OTHER NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS GRANTS****Q: Is a project eligible to receive funding from both the Our Town and Art Works categories?**

A: Yes. You may apply to other National Endowment for the Arts funding opportunities, including Art Works, in addition to Our Town. In each case, the request must be for a **distinctly different project or a distinctly different phase of the same project**, with a different period of performance and costs.

**Q: If a project has been recommended for a Challenge America grant, may the same project be submitted for additional funding to Our Town or Art Works?**

A: You may apply to Our Town or Art Works for a project already receiving a Challenge America grant, as long as you apply for a distinctly different phase of the project, with a different period of performance and costs.

## **BUDGET, COST SHARE, AND MATCHING FUNDS**

### **Q: Do all matching funds need to be committed in advance of the submission deadline?**

A: No, but we ask you to designate on the budget form funding that is committed versus funding that is being proposed or sought. Designate committed funding with a (\*) after the source.

### **Q: Can funds raised prior to the project be used as part of the match?**

A: Yes. However, matching funds must be spent on eligible activities included as part of the proposed project, during the proposed period of performance.

### **Q: Can matching funds be in-kind?**

A: Yes. No formula exists for how much of the required match can be in-kind. However, reviewers tend to look very carefully at any project with a budget that shows a match that is largely in-kind; generally some cash match is preferred. In all cases, matching funds are evaluated in the context of the project. Remember, if you use in-kind contributions as part of your match, you need to maintain proper documentation. For help in doing this, see our **sample format** for recording in-kind (third party) contributions.

### **Q: Can federal funds such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) or Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding count toward the match?**

A: No. Even though these funds may come through your state, the original source is federal. No matching funds can be from federal sources and these should not appear in your *Our Town* project budget as either income or expenses.

### **Q: Can community infrastructure costs be considered part of the match for something like a streetscape project?**

A: Costs that pertain strictly to preparing a site specifically for the art or design work, such as slabs or pedestals, landscaping that's necessary for the art work or landscaping that is the art work (e.g., a mosaic tiled walkway with landscaping that is required for the work) are allowable. Installation of street lighting or wayfinding signage are not allowed. Costs to prepare the street, including purchase of property, building appropriate access, infrastructure, etc., are not allowable and can't be used for match.

### **Q: Are artists' or consultants' fees eligible expenses?**

A: Yes. Fees for individuals involved in the project are eligible, such as fees for artists, performers, designers, architects, facilitators, or other consultants. All fees must be incurred during the period of support.

### **Q: Is rent for space for an event an eligible expense?**

A: Yes, but not for a party or reception.

### **Q: Can overhead be funded?**

A: You may claim administrative costs or overhead as direct costs under "3. Other expenses" on the Project Budget form. (This assumes that there is a basis for justifying the costs as direct costs.) You also may use a federally negotiated indirect cost rate to account for overhead.

**Q: Can salaries for administration or additional fundraising be funded?**

A: Salaries, contract fees, and stipends for administration and project management are allowed, as well as fund raising specifically for the approved project.

**Q: Does sharing the funding between the two required partners count as subgranting or regranting?**

A: No. Subgranting is defined as regranting funds to an individual or organization for activities that are conducted independently of your organization and for the benefit of the subgrantee's own program objectives.

**Q: Does anything need to be done to formalize the financial relationship between the two required partners?**

A: When a grantee partners with another organization that will directly support project costs tied to the federal award, the grantee must ensure a contractual agreement is in place that outlines the relationship and responsibilities of each partner. In addition, the partner's accounts and documentation will be subject to review if audited by the NEA or the grantee's own auditors.

**ELIGIBLE PARTNERS****Q: Can a private foundation or corporate entity serve as a partner?**

A: Partnerships must involve at least two primary partners as defined by these guidelines: a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and a local government entity. One of the two primary partners must be a cultural (arts or design) organization. Only the two primary partners can serve as lead applicants, but additional partners across all sectors are encouraged.

**Q: Can a local government arts agency apply and fulfill the role of the cultural organization and the government agency?**

A: Yes, but it would still need a nonprofit organization to serve as the other primary partner.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITY****Q: Can a city and county apply for separate projects if the city lies within the county?**

A: Yes. Each local government is limited to two applications, so we encourage each community and region to coordinate internally to ensure that only up to two applications per government are submitted. If more than two applications are submitted for a government, we will ask the highest ranking official to select the two applications to move forward. However, if two applications are submitted from a single lead applicant, local government, or within the same geographic area, the capacity of the lead applicant, local government, or geographic area to carry out and sustain two Our Town projects will be considered in the review of applications.

All applications must include a formal statement of support for the project from the highest ranking official of the local government participating in the project.

**Q: Can a county partner on more than one community?**

A: Yes. Each local government is limited to two applications, so we encourage each community and region to coordinate internally to ensure that only two applications per government are

submitted. If more than two applications are submitted for a government, we will ask the highest ranking official to select two applications to move forward.

However, if two applications are submitted from a single lead applicant, local government, or within the same geographic area, the capacity of the lead applicant, local government, or geographic area to carry out and sustain two Our Town projects will be considered in the review of applications.

All applications must include a formal statement of support for the project from the highest ranking official of the local government participating in the project.

**Q: Can a nonprofit partner on more than one application in different communities?**

A: Yes. A nonprofit can partner on more than one application in different communities.

**Q: Can a tribal government entity apply?**

A: Yes, federally recognized tribal governments qualify as local governments.

**Q: Can a regional government entity apply as a primary partner?**

A: No, regional government entities do not qualify as local governments and may not apply as a primary partner.

**Q: Do public school districts or community colleges qualify as a local government entity?**

A: Local education agencies (school districts) and local government-run community colleges are eligible to represent a local government entity they serve. Please note that a letter of endorsement from the highest ranking official for the local government is required regardless of who the local government partner is, e.g., the superintendent of a school district cannot send the letter.

**Q. Does a state university qualify as a local government entity?**

A. No, as with all state level entities, a state university does not qualify as a local government entity under the *Our Town* guidelines. If the state university has nonprofit status designated by the IRS, however, it may serve as the required nonprofit partner on an *Our Town* project.

**Q: Does a quasi-local government organization, such as a Business Improvement District (BID) or Chamber of Commerce, qualify as a local government entity?**

A: No. Business improvement districts and chambers of commerce do not qualify as local government entities.

**Q. Does a U.S. territory qualify as a local government entity?**

A. If no local government exists, the territory government can qualify as the local government. In these cases, the territory's state arts agency also may serve as the local government primary partner. However, all grant funds must be passed on to the other partners.

## **LETTERS OF ENDORSEMENT/STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT**

**Q: If we have a local government entity on board as a partner, do we still need a letter of endorsement from the highest ranking official for the local government?**

A: Yes. A letter of endorsement from the highest ranking official for the local government is required. Do not assume that your project is the only one in your community; larger cities may

designate one agency or contact to pre-select projects from that city. Each local government is limited to two applications, so we encourage each community and region to coordinate internally to ensure that only two applications per government are submitted. If more than two applications are submitted for a government, we will ask the highest ranking official to select two application to move forward.

**Q: How do we reach out to our highest ranking official for the local government to request a letter of endorsement?**

A: Each community is managed differently, but we suggest checking with your local arts agency (also known as cultural affairs department or arts commission, etc.) to determine how best to reach out to your highest ranking official for the local government.

**Q: Can you guide us as to what the letter of endorsement should contain? Do you have a template that we can use?**

A: We do not have a template. However, the document should be a one-page formal endorsement letter, on appropriate letterhead, from the highest ranking official for the local government (e.g., mayor, county executive, or tribal leader). This letter should reflect the official's familiarity with and support for the project, and must designate your project as the one of the up to two applications being submitted for the local government. Many local government structures exist. Please provide in your letter a sentence explaining why this official is the leader of the local government. For example, "In the Village of XYZ, our city manager is the highest ranking government official."

**Q: We are applying with the local government as lead applicant. Should we submit an endorsement letter from the highest ranking official for the local government, or a statement of support from the nonprofit organization?**

A: You are required to submit both.

**Q: Is there a limit to the number of statements of support that we can submit?**

A: Yes. You may submit up to 10 letters of support. We encourage you to be selective in listing only the partners or individuals that are critical to the project's success, not those that are solely funding sponsors or project beneficiaries. If you are working with multiple agencies within a community, only one statement is necessary. Please keep statements to one page each.

## **OTHER**

**Q: What are some examples of measurement tools you'd like to see?**

A: See the "Measuring Project Results" page on Exploring Our Town for help determining successful measurements for your project: <https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town/project-process/measuring-project-results>.

You should propose measurement tools that are feasible and appropriate for your organization and project. You will be asked to address the anticipated results in your application. If you receive a grant, you will be asked to provide evidence of those results at the end of your project. Given the nature of Our Town projects, benefits are likely to emerge over time and may not be fully measureable during the period of a grant. You will need to provide evidence of progress toward achieving improved strengthening of the community(ies) as appropriate to the project.

We recognize that some projects involve risk, and we want to hear about both your successes and failures. Failures can provide valuable learning experiences, and reporting them will have no effect on your ability to receive National Endowment for the Arts funds in the future.

Beyond the reporting requirements for all grantees, selected Our Town grantees may be asked to assist in the collection of additional information that can help the National Endowment for the Arts determine the degree to which agency objectives were achieved. For example, Our Town grantees may be asked to participate in surveys or interviews, and/or may be asked to assist in publicizing and promoting these data collection efforts. You may be contacted to provide evidence of project accomplishments including, but not limited to, work samples, community action plans, cultural asset studies, programs, reviews, relevant news clippings, and playbills. Please remember that you are required to maintain project documentation for three years following submission of your final report.

**Q. Can federally recognized tribes apply?**

A. Yes. In keeping with federal policies of **Tribal Self Governance** and **Self-Determination**, we may provide support for a project with a primary audience restricted to enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe. Applicants (federally recognized tribal governments, nonprofits situated on federally recognized tribal lands, or other nonprofits whose mission primarily serves federally recognized tribal enrollees) should consult with **our staff** to verify their eligibility before preparing an application.

**Q. Can non-federally recognized tribes apply?**

A. Yes, as long as the applicant is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organization. Projects for non-federally recognized tribes and indigenous groups may be supported, but project participation can't be restricted to only tribal members.

**Q. Can Native Hawaiian groups apply?**

A. Yes, as long as the applicant is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organization. Projects for Native Hawaiians may be supported, but project participation can't be restricted to only Native Hawaiians.