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## **ArtsWave and meetNKY Announce \$58,000 to be Awarded in Inaugural Northern Kentucky Creative Placemaking Grants**

**CINCINNATI (May 14, 2025)** — ArtsWave, the engine for the arts in the Greater Cincinnati region, and meetNKY, Northern Kentucky's Convention and Visitors Bureau, have awarded **\$58,000 through nine Northern Kentucky Creative Placemaking grants to support arts and cultural heritage projects across Northern Kentucky**. These new grants, part of a strategic partnership between the two organizations, will fuel creative endeavors that strengthen Northern Kentucky's cultural identity and drive economic vitality.

The grant initiative, launched earlier this year, aims to leverage the arts to amplify Northern Kentucky's unique character while supporting the region-wide goals of [ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action](#). Funded projects will take place between June 1, 2025, and May 31, 2026.

"This partnership with meetNKY represents a significant investment in Northern Kentucky's cultural landscape," said Alecia Kintner, President & CEO of ArtsWave. "By supporting these innovative projects, we're not just funding great art, we're strengthening community connections and driving economic growth throughout the region."

The grants, up to \$10,000 per project, support a wide range of initiatives, from cultural festivals and theatrical performances to community art installations and musical programming.

"These creative placemaking projects will transform public spaces across Northern Kentucky into vibrant cultural destinations," said Julie Kirkpatrick, President & CEO of meetNKY. "By showcasing our region's unique artistic and cultural assets, we're

enhancing Northern Kentucky's appeal as a destination for visitors while creating meaningful experiences for residents."

The nine funded projects span Boone, Campbell, and Kenton counties, ensuring that the benefits of creative placemaking will be felt throughout Northern Kentucky. Projects include African cultural festivals, free Shakespeare performances, library concert tours, and community art installations.

The Northern Kentucky Creative Placemaking Grant reflects both organizations' commitment to using the arts as a catalyst for community and economic development. According to research from [Americans for the Arts](#), arts-driven development stimulates local economies and boosts tourism, making it an essential strategy for regions like Northern Kentucky that are looking to grow.

To learn more about the programs that will be funded by the new grants, visit [artswave.org/NKY](https://artswave.org/NKY).

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### **About ArtsWave**

ArtsWave fuels the Cincinnati region's arts, supporting 150+ organizations, projects and artists each year. Since 1927, it has been the primary way the region funds the arts, raising millions annually from tens of thousands of individuals, businesses and foundations to drive a more vibrant economy and connected community. Through the Blueprint for Collective Action, ArtsWave strategically makes investments that maximize the arts' impact across the region. **The 2025 Community Campaign ends May 20. To learn more or give to the campaign, visit [artswave.org](https://artswave.org).**

### **About meetNKY:**

meetNKY drives quality of life and economic growth for Northern Kentucky through tourism marketing and destination development. Learn more at [meetNKY.com](https://meetNKY.com) and [visitycincy.com](https://visitycincy.com).

## **Northern Kentucky Creative Placemaking Grants**

### **Bi-Okoto | Afrika On The Move: A Pop-Up Cultural Festival Series**

Afrika On The Move is a traveling cultural festival designed to enliven Northern Kentucky neighborhoods with dynamic African arts, music, dance and culinary experiences. The festivals will be immersive, single-day events in two neighborhoods, with performances, workshops, a marketplace and more. Bi-Okoto, a leader in African cultural arts for over 30 years, will curate and lead the programming, ensuring authenticity, engagement and accessibility.

### **The Center for Great Neighborhoods | Sparks in the Park**

The Center for Great Neighborhoods, in partnership with the Eastside Plus Neighborhood Association, will host a series of 5 community events for youth and families during the summer. Each event will consist of food, music, arts and cultural programming, and community engagement activities aimed at a multigenerational audience. These events will take place in the Eastern Neighborhoods of Covington, supporting Eastside residents to developing and activating a quality-of-life plan that consists of youth/family development, housing, economic development, greenspace, transportation and arts & culture.

### **Cincinnati Shakespeare Company | FREE Shakespeare in the Park in NKY**

Cincinnati Shakespeare Company's FREE Shakespeare in the Park tour is one of the nation's largest free Shakespeare programs. CSC partners with local parks, municipalities and organizations to transform outdoor spaces, bringing professional, high-quality theater directly to Northern Kentucky residents. The program enhances public spaces, and strengthens community identity through live performance.

### **Kentucky African Women Association | The African Art Showcase**

Organized by the Kentucky African Women Association (KAWA), this dynamic celebration of African artistic expression will be a platform for African and African diaspora artists to share their work with the broader Northern Kentucky community. Twice a year, the event will feature visual art, live performances and storytelling that highlight the richness of African heritage while fostering cultural appreciation and understanding.

### **Kentucky Symphony Orchestra | 2025-26 KSO/NKY Public Library Tour**

The NKY Public Library Tour establishes new partnerships between the KSO and Northern Kentucky's three public county library systems. Two KSO subsidiary groups will perform a total of six free, themed concerts, increasing the variety and frequency of arts

experiences accessible to all NKY residents at two branches within each county's library system. The KSO's Flood Wall Jazz Quartet and Men in Black brass quintet will perform at these free concerts.

### **Queer Kentucky | Arts and Culture in NKY Digital Magazine**

Queer Kentucky will create a digital magazine promoting the arts and culture scene in NKY. The publication will feature original stories, artwork and photography, highlighting local artists, businesses and attractions and encouraging people to visit and engage with the art and artists of Northern Kentucky. Queer Kentucky will highlight the strong artist community of the region with artist-on-artist interviews and stories about the innovation, culture, street art, food and welcoming spirit that make the region special.

### **ReNewport | The Orchard Project**

A growing creative presence in Newport tracks from Monmouth to York and several places in between. Orchard Street connects them all. Embracing this alley and flooding it with light, murals and people capitalizes on that presence to build community. It will bring color and life to a beautiful alleyway, encouraging visitors and bringing attention to local businesses. The spot will come to life with farmer's markets, flea markets, local business crawls, creative showcases, and mural dedications.

### **Southbank Shakespeare | Southbank Shakespeare Summer Season**

Southbank Shakespeare is expanding their season, adding more performances to more communities in Northern Kentucky. Southbank Shakespeare productions make theatre more accessible and relevant to Northern Kentuckians from all walks of life. The outdoor setting creates an inclusive environment where everyone can come together and experience the power of live performance. These productions encourage community connection, boost local pride and stimulate public interest in the arts, ultimately enhancing the cultural landscape of the region.

### **Urban Appalachian Community Coalition | UACC Place Keepers – Woven Branches Project**

Inspired by the irrepressible spirit of Appalachian people, the Woven Branches project is a social arts platform for young adults to creatively explore Northern Kentucky's diverse migration heritage and home place themes through visual art and writing collaborations with established arts educators. This collaborative arts initiative will extend branches of cultural curiosity and craft-based practice into Kenton and Campbell County neighborhoods, inspiring younger generations to grow roots that will strengthen their sense of arts community belonging.