
**ArtsWave FY2026
Northern Kentucky Creative Placemaking
Grant Guidelines**



Northern Kentucky Creative Placemaking Grant Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of the Northern Kentucky (NKY) Creative Placemaking Grant is to encourage a breadth of programming that will amplify arts and cultural heritage projects in Northern Kentucky that support the goals of ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action ([Appendix A](#)) and Creative Placemaking Values ([Appendix B](#)). This grant is made possible through a partnership between ArtsWave and meetNKY (Northern Kentucky CVB) to leverage the arts to drive economic vitality, social vibrancy, and a connected community for all. NKY Creative Placemaking Grant projects must occur between June 1, 2026, and May 31, 2027. Note: the project cannot be completed prior grant award notification in May 2026.

Who May Apply

ArtsWave believes that strong arts create strong communities and actively seeks to promote access, equity, and inclusiveness in its grantmaking. To be eligible for the FY2026 NKY Creative Placemaking Grant, an organization must meet all the following requirements:

- Have a 501(c)3 tax status or be non-profit in nature with an established fiscal agent.
- Have a primary mission to provide arts or cultural heritage programs or activities in areas directly concerned with creative placemaking to advance tourism, visitation, neighborhood vitality; Capital and general operating support grants are not eligible.
- Based in the Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN MSA, which includes the following counties: Brown, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren Counties in Ohio; Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, and Pendleton Counties in Kentucky; and Dearborn, Franklin, and Ohio Counties in Indiana.
- Has not received funding for the proposed project through another ArtsWave project grant. *
- Embody ArtsWave's commitment to access, equity, and inclusiveness.

**Proposed projects that have already been funded through the Catalyzing Impact, ArtsWave Pride, Young Professionals, Circle's African American Arts grant programs or Project Grants for Black and Brown Artists are not eligible for funding. A recipient of any of those grant programs is still eligible to apply if they meet all the requirements above and proposes a different project for the NKY Creative Placemaking grant.*

**Sustaining Impact grantees are eligible to apply if they meet all requirements above and propose a different project that is new or differentiated from Sustaining Impact funding.*

ArtsWave will not award grant support to organizations that, in their constitution, bylaws, or practices, discriminate against a person or group because of age, race, national origin,

ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or religious belief. In doing so, we seek to promote respect for all people.

NOTE:

Applicants new to ArtsWave are **highly encouraged** to schedule an introductory virtual meeting or phone call prior to the application deadline.

Please contact Rachael Parker at rachael.parker@artswave.org to schedule a time. Returning applicants are also encouraged to reach out with any questions they may have related to their project or application. All applicants will be given the opportunity to submit their applications by a pre-deadline, specified date as a review and editing resource.

An organization may be awarded funding for two consecutive years and then be required to take one (1) year off before applying for the NKY Creative Placemaking Grant again.

Eligible Requests

The NKY Creative Placemaking Grant provides funding for arts or cultural heritage projects that demonstrate impact in one or more of the five goals of ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action and project alignment with Creative Placemaking Values.

A project is defined as a specific, connected set of activities with a start date, end date, and explicit goals and objectives (see [Appendix C](#) for more application definitions). Projects with multiple components and/or event dates must show a cohesive theme that ties the entire project together.

Receiving a NKY Creative Placemaking grant is a competitive process. Eligible project requests may include a new project or an existing project that demonstrates an expansion of impact. Organizations proposing existing projects should be prepared to demonstrate how the proposed work is expanding impact. Examples may include:

- serving a new or expanded geography (e.g., neighborhood, municipality, or county);
- serving a new or expanded audience (e.g., age or culturally specific); or
- deepening impact within an existing project (e.g., expanded themes, content, or timeframe)

NKY Creative Placemaking grants cannot be requested for any of the following:

- General operating support
- Capital
- Fundraisers
- Re-granting
- Advancing or inhibiting a religious ideology
- Advocacy of specific political causes or candidates

ArtsWave will not award grant support to organizations that, in their constitution, bylaws, or practices, discriminate against a person or group because of age, race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or religious belief. In doing so, we seek to promote respect for all people.

Organizations may only submit one application per deadline. Organizations may only receive one NKY Creative Placemaking Grant in a single fiscal year.

Grant Amounts

Grant awards will be made up to \$10,000 or 50% of the total expenses for the proposed project and may be funded partially or in full. Please note in the application if you cannot complete your project with partial funding.

Match Requirements

Grants received through the Northern Kentucky Creative Placemaking Grant require a match through which applicants are expected to leverage ArtsWave funds to secure support from outside sources. This grant program **requires a 1:1 match by the applicant**. Up to 50% of your organization's matching dollars can come from in-kind contributions. Matching funds do not need to be secured at the time of application, but documentation of the source(s) of matching funds will be required in the final report. For purposes of determining the value, volunteer time should be calculated at \$33.49 per hour (Independent Sector, 2026).

Application Instructions

All application materials must be submitted via Submittable, ArtsWave's online grantmaking system. We strongly recommend that you begin your online application well before the due date to familiarize yourself with the online grantmaking system and to address any technical concerns. While completing your application, remember these tips:

- Be brief, clear and direct, focusing on what is most important.
- Review panelists may have little or no prior knowledge of your organization. Create a stronger application by:
 - not assuming reviewers have extensive knowledge of all artistic disciplines;
 - explaining acronyms; and
 - explaining the characteristics of your community or audience as needed.
- We recommend that you prepare your responses offline in a word processing program and then copy and paste them into the appropriate sections of the online application.
- Limit the use of bullets and other formatting in text fields.
- Add Impact@ArtsWave.org to your safe senders list to ensure that you receive all communications from the online grantmaking system.
- Use one of the following compatible browsers: Chrome® v.22+, Firefox® version v.27+, Internet Explorer® v.8-10 (if enabled), Internet Explorer v.11, Safari® v.7+, or Edge®.

The application for the FY2026 NKY Creative Placemaking Grant can be accessed using the following link: <https://artswave.submittable.com/submit/>

The application consists of the following sections (**delineates a field required to submit*):

A. Grant Applicant Information

- Organization name and legal address*
- If 501(c) 3
 - Organization EIN *
- If not 501(c)3
 - Describe the non-profit status of your organization, including your organization's relationship with an established fiscal agent. (150-word limit)*
 - Provide your organization's contract or letter agreement with your fiscal agent *
 - Fiscal Agent's legal street address
 - Fiscal Agent's EIN*

B. Organization Information

- Organization County/Phone/Website/Neighborhood served*
- Chief Professional Officer Contact Information*
- Grant Contact Information (if applicable)
- Type of Organization*
- Provide a brief description of your organization and the type of programming you provide. (150-word limit)*
- Describe your organization's audience and the communities you serve. Please include demographic information such as your audience age, communities--geographic, language, ethnicity, etc. (150-word limit)*
- Has your organization received an ArtsWave grant since 2020? If yes, please list grant(s) and fiscal year(s).
- Number of Full-Time, Part-Time, Contract, and Unpaid staff members and Number of Board members

C. Details of Request

- Project title*
- Select one Blueprint Goal to which your proposed project most closely aligns.*
- Select which of the three Creative Placemaking Values you will address in your project.*
- Provide a summary description of the proposed project that will be used for announcements and other marketing summaries. *
- Provide the physical address of where the proposed project will be completed, held, or performed. (100-word limit; your response should include a street address, city, state, zip)*
- Provide a more detailed description of the proposed project. Be sure to clarify how the project relates to the Blueprint goal above and the defined criteria for this grant. (500-word limit)*
- Please describe how the proposed project will add to the overall artistic and cultural vibrancy of Northern Kentucky. (500-word limit)*

- Estimated total participation (Adults and/or Youth)*

- Project request type*
 - If "existing project" - Description of project expansion (150-word limit)
- Anticipated project start date and end date*
- Provide a proposed timeline for project implementation.*
- Who are the artists involved with this project? Briefly describe their qualifications and background. (150-word limit)
- Please list any organizations you will collaborate with for this project and briefly describe the nature of the collaboration. (150-word limit)
- What are the project's objectives and intended outcomes? What is the change/impact you wish this project to have? These objectives and intended outcomes should be specific, measurable, and aligned to the selected Blueprint goal and Creative Placemaking Value. (500-word limit)*
- How will outcomes be measured and who (e.g. staff, consultant, etc.) will measure them? (250-word limit)*
- Select grant resource opportunities taken advantage of.*
- Impact Team feedback opportunity if application submitted by **Friday, March 20, 2026***
- Please upload an example of your organization's work that illustrates your capacity to accomplish the proposed project. Partnership letters of support are strongly encouraged. (attachment)*

D. Financials

- Annual operating budget*
- Total project budget*
- Requested grant amount*
- How will the grant funds be used? (150-word limit)*
- Can this project still be completed if award is for partial funding?*
- Most recent annual financial statement (attachment)*
- Complete NKY Creative Placemaking Grant Budget Form*
- Where do you anticipate receiving the match for your grant from?*
- Any additional budgetary notations. (150-word limit)
- Please attach a high-resolution organization logo (attachment)*

E. Statement of Assurances – An authorizing official will certify that s/he is authorized to submit the application on behalf of the organization and that the information submitted in the application is true and correct to the best of his/her knowledge.

All application materials must be submitted through the online grantmaking system by **5:00 pm EST on Friday, April 3, 2026. Late applications will not be accepted.**

Grant Overview Session

We welcome you to join ArtsWave as we host a virtual overview webinar for all applicants. Please register to learn more about the NKY Creative Placemaking Grant Guidelines, the application process, and any questions you might have about the program.

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, Virtual (Zoom) Noon – 1 p.m.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fy2026-artswave-northern-kentucky-creative-placemaking-grant-overview-tickets-1982298949520?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true

This webinar session will be recorded and made available on ArtsWave's website.

Grant Writing Workshops

ArtsWave will host three online Grant Writing Workshop webinars as a free resource in conjunction with this grant.

The General Grant Writing Workshop webinar will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at noon. For details and to register, please visit:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fy26-artswave-northern-kentucky-creative-placemaking-grant-writing-workshop-tickets-1982300401864?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true

The Goal Setting and Assessment Workshop webinar will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2026, at 1 pm. For details and to register, please visit:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fy26-artswave-nky-creative-placemaking-grant-workshop-goal-setting-asses-tickets-1982301268456?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true

The Budgets Grant Writing Workshop webinar will be held on Friday, March 6, 2026, at noon. For details and to register, please visit:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fy26-artswave-nky-creative-placemaking-grant-workshop-finances-budgets-tickets-1982306069817?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true

Other Grant Resources

If you would like to receive feedback on your application draft, complete the application in Submittable, and click SUBMIT by **Friday, March 20, 2026 before 5 PM EST**. After we have reviewed your application, you will receive an email through Submittable opening your application to edit that feedback. You must edit and resubmit by the deadline **Friday, April 3, 2026, before 5 PM EST**.

Determination of Grant Amount

All applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of community volunteers and ArtsWave staff. Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- The organization has the capacity to contribute to creative placemaking goals in Northern Kentucky.
- The proposed project is aligned with ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action;
- The project can be achieved in the proposed timeline; or, should gatherings be limited in the coming months or weather-dependent, that there is an alternate timeline or contingency plan;
- The project objectives and intended outcomes are clear and measurable; and
- The proposed project budget is reasonable and meets matching funding requirements.

Grant Requirements

Upon notification of award, grant recipients must submit a grant acceptance form. A single grant payment will be issued once the grant acceptance form has been received.

Along with the award notification, grantees will receive the FY2026 NKY Creative Placemaking Grantee Handbook, which will outline the grantee expectations and requirements set by ArtsWave for NKY Creative Placemaking grantees in FY2026. By accepting funding, an organization agrees to adhere to the grant recipient guidelines outlined in the handbook, including all of the Terms and Conditions of the federal portion of their award.

A final report will be due after the project's completion, but no later than **Wednesday, March 31, 2027**, or prior to applying for another NKY Creative Placemaking grant. Applicants are ineligible to apply for funding if a previous final report is outstanding. An applicant may not have two NKY Creative Placemaking grants open at the same time.

Key Dates

Virtual Grant Overview Session	Grant Writing Workshops	Application Deadline *	Funding Decision	Final Report Due
March 3, 2026	March 4, 2026 March 5, 2026 March 6, 2026	April 3, 2026	May 14, 2026	March 31, 2027

*** application closes at 5 PM EST on the deadline**

Contact ArtsWave

Additional application questions may be directed to Rachael Parker at rachael.parker@artswave.org

Appendix A: Blueprint for Collective Action 2.0

Our Vision – A more vibrant regional economy and more connected community for all.

Overview

By supporting a wide variety of art forms and providing strategic leadership for the arts sector in the broader community, ArtsWave creates an environment where the growing impact of the arts is felt and celebrated by the entire community.

The Blueprint for Collective Action provides a focus for ArtsWave's community investments and strategic initiatives for the next ten years. The Blueprint is designed to achieve three things:

- Align with broader community objectives;
- Provide more clarity and specificity around the kinds of activities and outcomes ArtsWave desires; and,
- Leverage more support from the community by demonstrating relevance to the community.

By focusing the ArtWave's investment strategy, the Blueprint is intended to stake a bold vision for the region for enhanced impact through the arts by establishing five community goals and creating a roadmap for their achievement.

Blueprint Goals and Roles

The Blueprint is based on the following principles:

- All goals have equal priority.
- Every arts organization plays a part in achieving our collective goals through a wide variety of activities and programs that create community impact – some new, many already established.
- Individual arts organizations (of any size or discipline) can play specific roles in support of the achievement of each goal.
- No single arts organization can fulfill all roles for all goals all the time. A diverse arts community supporting many different types of organizations and activities is necessary to fulfill all roles and achieve all goals.
- A single activity or program may fulfill several roles and may advance progress on more than one goal.
- Larger institutions that receive more support are expected to take an active role in achieving all five Blueprint goals.
- ArtsWave, too, has specific roles to play in the achievement of each goal. ArtsWave must leverage its position as leader, connector, aggregator, and partner to build capacities sector-wide.

ARTS PUT CINCINNATI ON THE MAP

Greater Cincinnati's innovative arts scene attracts talent, visitors, and business to the region.

GOAL: To be a more competitive region for talent attraction by leveraging arts that are perceived as extraordinary

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To design new or unexpected artistic collaborations
- To create arts experiences that are active, immersive, and social; and that stretch the boundaries of the art form
- To improve and employ digital capabilities and use of social media to reach and engage digitally oriented or remote audiences
- To participate in collaborative efforts to increase earned media and leverage paid media/marketing opportunities
- To develop and share stories that distinguish the region through its arts

ARTS DEEPEN ROOTS IN THE REGION

Residents who are engaged in the arts – whether as volunteers, artists, or audience members – have a stronger and more positive connection to the community.

GOAL: To deepen feelings of engagement and connection to the community by widening participation in arts experiences, especially those that resonate with adults age 40 and under

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To create arts experiences that are participatory, social, recurring, and encourage personal investment in the organization and/or community
- To create arts experiences for college students and young professionals
- To develop partnerships and collaborations with local colleges and universities
- To involve college students and young professionals at all levels of organizational decision-making

ARTS BRIDGE DIVIDES

When the arts reflect and celebrate the diversity of our community, residents build a greater understanding and appreciation of cultural differences.

GOAL: To promote cross cultural understanding by increasing the availability and accessibility of arts experiences that include and represent all races and ethnicities

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To present works of art created by artists of all races and ethnicities
- To create arts experiences that include artists of all races and ethnicities
- To create and/or present art that tells the story(ies) of all races and ethnicities
- To create shared arts experiences for people of all races and ethnicities
- To identify and establish partnerships and collaborations that support equitable access to arts experiences for people of all races and ethnicities
- To involve at all levels of organizational decision-making people who reflect the broadest possible racial and ethnic diversity
- To develop cross-cultural artistic partnerships and collaborations

ARTS STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS

Community arts centers, galleries, and theaters serve as vital hubs for neighborhood activity that supports local business and builds civic pride.

GOAL: To enhance the vibrancy of neighborhoods, particularly those that are underserved and/or revitalizing, by increasing the availability and accessibility of arts organizations and opportunities

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To establish partnerships and collaborations within the neighborhood in which the organization is physically located
- To create an environment where all members of the organization's surrounding neighborhood feel welcome
- To increase the variety and frequency of arts experiences embedded in or accessible to neighborhoods throughout the region
- To improve the aesthetics of the region's neighborhoods
- To enliven indoor and outdoor public spaces throughout the region with arts experiences
- To optimize the use of resources already present in neighborhoods throughout the region to support equitable access to arts experiences

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- To improve and employ digital capabilities and use of social media to reach and engage neighborhoods

ARTS FUEL CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

The arts have the power to transform education both by improving learning of core curriculum and teaching skills like creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

GOAL: To promote the development of 21st century skills by ensuring that all children in the region, particularly those that are underserved, have access to multiple arts opportunities

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To provide meaningful arts education opportunities for youth at all grade levels
- To optimize the use of resources already present in school and community settings to support equitable access for youth to meaningful arts education opportunities
- To provide professional development and enrichment opportunities for arts educators
- To develop curricula, materials, and training to support arts integration in all subjects and at all grade levels

Appendix B: Creative Placemaking Values

Creative placemaking integrates arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities. Creative placemaking requires partnership across sectors, deeply engages the community, involves artists, designers and culture bearers, and helps to advance local economic, physical, and/or social change, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change. This definition is intentionally open and broad because creative placemaking draws on all artistic disciplines and can be deployed as a strategy to address a wide range of community issues or challenges from public health to safety, economic development to housing. - [National Endowment for the Arts](#)

Economic Change

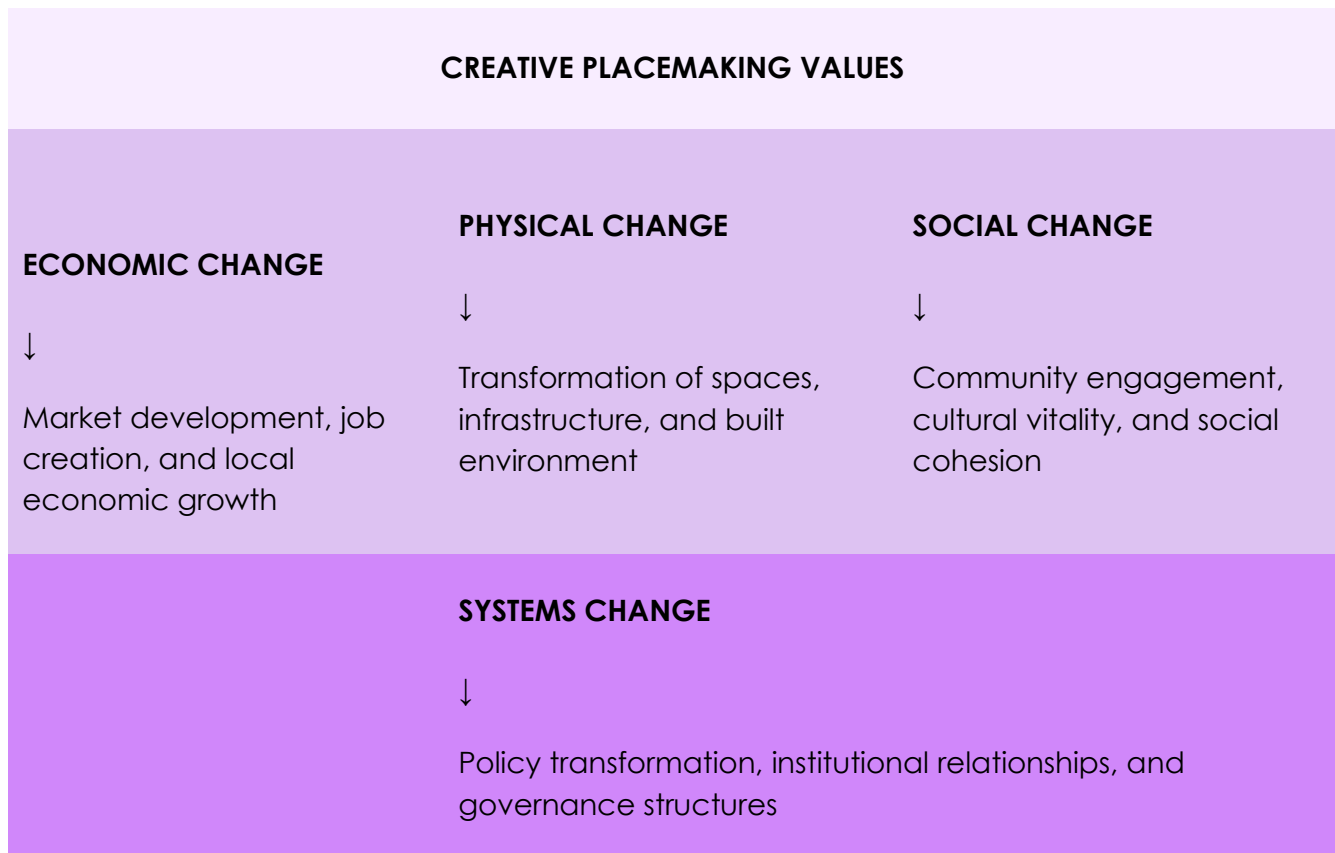
Economic improvements of individuals, institutions, or the community.

Physical Change

Design of physical improvements to the built and natural environments.

Social Change

Improvements to social relationships, civic engagement, community empowerment, and/or amplifying community identity.



Appendix C: Grant Application Glossary

Artistic Excellence

The quality of the artists and other key individuals, creative process, works of art, organizations, arts education providers, artistic partners, and/or services involved in the project and their relevance to the audience or communities the project aims to serve.

Artistic Merit

The value and appropriateness of the project to the organization's mission, artistic field, artists, audience, community, and/or constituency. The ability to carry out the project based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, clarity of the project activities, resources involved, and the qualifications of the project's personnel and/or partnerships. Clearly defined goals and/or proposed outcomes and an appropriate plan to determine if those goals and/or outcomes are met. Evidence of direct compensation to artists, art collectives, and/or art workers. May also include, as applicable, engagement with individuals whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, race or ethnicity, economics, or disability, and the ability to strengthen the arts sector through knowledge-sharing and resources.

Creative Placemaking

Creative placemaking integrates arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities. Creative placemaking requires partnership across sectors, deeply engages the community, involves artists, designers and culture bearers, and helps to advance local economic, physical, and/or social change, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change. This definition is intentionally open and broad because creative placemaking draws on all artistic disciplines and can be deployed as a strategy to address a wide range of community issues or challenges from public health to safety, economic development to housing. - [National Endowment for the Arts](#)

501(c)3 Status

A non-profit organization that has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt, charitable organization.

Non-Profit in Nature

An organization, group or individual artist whose programming are organized for purposes other than generating profit (such as to benefit a community or communities) but are without a 501(c)3 status.

Fiscal Agent

A fiscal agent is a non-profit organization that holds the tax-exempt status as granted by the Internal Revenue Service under code 501(c)3 and that agrees to act on behalf of an individual or organization that does not yet have tax exemption for the purposes of this grant process.

Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN MSA

The Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN MSA includes the following counties: Brown, Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren Counties in Ohio; **Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, and Pendleton Counties in Kentucky**; and Dearborn, Ohio, and Union Counties in Indiana.

BIPOC

Black, Indigenous and People of Color “We use the term BIPOC to highlight the unique relationship to whiteness that Indigenous and Black people have, which shapes the experiences of and relationship to white supremacy for all people of color within a U.S. context.” We take this explanation and practice from the BIPOC Project.

Economic Change

Economic improvements of individuals, institutions, or the community.

Physical Change

Design of physical improvements to the built and natural environments.

Social Change

Improvements to social relationships, civic engagement, community empowerment, and/or amplifying community identity.

Project

A project is defined as a specific, connected set of activities with a start date, end date, and explicit objectives and outcomes. Projects with multiple components and/or event dates must show a cohesive theme that ties the entire project together.

New Project

A project that has not occurred before and/or has not received ArtsWave funding before.

Existing Project

A project that has occurred before (this may include projects that have OR have not received ArtsWave funding before).

New or Expanded Audience

Demonstrated project expansion through serving a new or expanded audience, such as an age group, a racially or culturally specific group, etc.

New or Expanded Geography

Demonstrated project expansion through serving a new or expanding geography, such as a school district, neighborhood, municipality, county, etc.

Other Expansion

Demonstrated project expansion through deepened impact, such as expanded themes, content, or timeframe.

Estimated Total Participation – Adults

The estimated number of persons aged 19+ years that will be reached through this project.

Estimated Total Participation – Youth

The estimated number of persons aged 0-18 years that will be reached through this project.

Objective

An objective defines the specific, measurable actions your organization must take to achieve successful outcomes.

Outcome

An outcome defines changes that have taken place because of your organization's work (i.e. results or impact). Outcomes help you answer the question, "so what?".

Annual Operating Budget

The annual operating budget should be based on a realistic projection of income for the current year. This should reflect an organization's entire operations, not just the project budget.

Financial Summary

A financial document (called: profit and loss, statement of activities, or income and expense statement) from your organization's most recently completed fiscal year.