FY2027 Catalyzing Impact Grant
Program Guidelines



Catalyzing Impact Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of the Catalyzing Impact Grant Program is to encourage a breadth of programming through arts and cultural heritage projects that support the building blocks of ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action (**Appendix A**). Catalyzing Impact 2027 grant projects must occur between January 1, 2027 and December 31, 2027. Note: the project cannot be completed prior to grant award notification in February 2027.

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 FY2027 Catalyzing Impact Grant Program, 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.
- Propose an arts-based project for this grant.
- 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.
- Does not have a current, active Sustaining Impact grant for the FY27-29 cycle.
- Does not currently have an open Catalyzing Impact Grant with ArtsWave that will not be completed by February 1, 2027 and has successfully completed all previous Catalyzing Impact grant requirements.
- Has not received funding for the proposed project through another ArtsWave project grant.*

**Proposed projects that have already been funded through the ArtsWave Circle, Pride, Young Professionals, or other grant programs are not eligible for funding. A recipient of any of those grant programs is still eligible to apply if they meet all of the requirements above and propose a different project for the Catalyzing Impact grant program.*

NOTE: Applicants new to ArtsWave must schedule an introductory virtual meeting or phone call by January 6, 2027. Please contact Nick To at mailto:nick.to@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 edit resource. 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 edit resource.

UPDATE: Beginning with the FY23 grant cycle, an organization may apply for funding for two (2) consecutive years and if awarded funding in both years would then be required to take one (1) year off before applying for the Catalyzing Impact grant program again. For example, if

you were ***funded for*** Catalyzing Impact in FY25 and FY26, then you would be ineligible to apply in FY27.

Eligible Requests

The Catalyzing Impact Grant Program provides funding for arts or cultural heritage projects that demonstrate impact in one or more of the five building blocks of ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action.

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

Note: If your project involves *Arts in Health* in some form, please be clear on any activities or outcomes pertaining to therapeutic goals, which would assume certified or licensed therapeutic partners.

Receiving a Catalyzing Impact 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 that have been funded through the Catalyzing Impact program in previous fiscal years 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)

Catalyzing Impact Grants cannot be requested for any of the following:

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

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 Catalyzing Impact 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 Catalyzing Impact Grant Program are matching grants 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 will be required in the final report. For purposes of determining the value, volunteer time should be calculated at $36.14 per hour.

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.

The application for the FY2027 Catalyzing Impact Grant Program 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 2021? If yes, please list grant(s), amount(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 the Blueprint Outcome to which your proposed project most closely aligns.*
- Provide a summary description of the proposed project that will be used for announcements and other marketing summaries. * (75 word maximum)
- Explain what makes this an arts or cultural heritage project.* (30 word maximum)
- Provide a more detailed description of the proposed project. Be sure to clarify how the project demonstrates impact of the Blueprint outcome selected above and the defined criteria for this grant.* (500-word limit)
- Estimated total participation (Adults and/or Youth)*
- Project request type*
    - If "existing project" - Description of project expansion and impact of past program (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)
- Provide the physical address of where the proposed project will be completed, held, or performed. Your response should include a street address, city, state, zip)*
- 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 outcome** and reflective of the defined criteria for this grant. (250-word limit)*
- How will outcomes be measured and who (e.g. staff, consultant, etc.) will measure them? (250-word limit)*
- Select grant program resource opportunities of which you have taken advantage.*
- Impact Team feedback opportunity if application submitted by December 28, 2026.*
- Please upload an example of your organization's work that illustrates your capacity to accomplish the proposed project from the past 12 months. (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 Catalyzing Impact Grant Budget Form*

- From where do you anticipate receiving the match for your grant?*
- Any additional budgetary notations. (150-word limit)
- Please attach a high-resolution organization logo (attachment)*
- Attach IRS determination letter

E. Statement of Assurances – An authorizing official will certify that they are 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 their knowledge.

All application materials must be submitted through the online grantmaking system by **5:00 pm ET on January 11, 2027. Late applications will not be accepted.**

Grant Overview Session

ArtsWave will host a free, online webinar to go over the Catalyzing Impact Grant Program Guidelines, the application process, and any questions you might have about the program. The webinar will be held on December 15, 2026. For details and to register, please visit:

ArtsWave Catalyzing Impact Grant Program Webinar Registration, Tuesday December 15, 2026 at Noon | Eventbrite

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

Grant Writing Workshop

ArtsWave will host one online Grant Writing Workshop webinar as a free resource in conjunction with this grant program.

The Grant **Writing Workshop** webinar will be held on Thursday, December 17, 2026 at noon. For details and to register, please visit:
FY2027 ArtsWave Grant Writing Workshop Registration, Thursday, December 17, 2026 at Noon | Eventbrite

Other Grant Resources

If you would like to receive feedback on your application draft, complete the application in Submittable, and click SUBMIT by December 28, 2026. After we have reviewed your application, you will receive an email through Submittable reopening your application so you can make edits based on that feedback. You must edit and resubmit by the deadline January 11, 2027.

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 provide quality cultural experiences for the community;
- The organization demonstrates the capacity to complete the project;
- The proposed project is aligned with ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action;
- The project can be achieved in the proposed timeline;
- The project objectives and intended outcomes are clear and measurable;

- The proposed project budget is reasonable and meets matching funding requirements;
- The proposed project can deliver a high level of community impact;
- The project is relevant to the Greater Cincinnati region.

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 FY2027 Catalyzing Impact Grantee Handbook, which will outline the grantee expectations and requirements set by ArtsWave for Catalyzing Impact grantees in FY2027. By accepting funding, an organization agrees to adhere to the grant recipient guidelines outlined in the handbook.

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

All requirements must be submitted through the online grantmaking system, and access to all records related to this grant must be retained for no fewer than three (3) years following December 31, 2027, and which may be made available to ArtsWave and their financial auditors.

Key Dates

Grant Overview Session	Grant Writing Workshop	Application Deadline *	Funding Decision	Final Report Due
December 15, 2026	December 17, 2026	January 11, 2027	February 2027	December 31, 2027

*** application closes at 5pm on the deadline date**

Contact ArtsWave

Additional application questions may be directed to Nick To, Grant Programs Manager at mailto:nick.to@artswave.org.

Appendix A: Blueprint for Collective Action 2.0

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

Overview

By investing in 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 embraced by the entire community. The 2026-2035 Blueprint for Collective Action confirms a bold vision for the region's future with the arts playing a vital, connected role in its growth.

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 do three things:

- Align with broader community objectives;
- Provide clarity and specificity around the kinds of activities and outcomes ArtsWave believes will advance these objectives; and
- Leverage more support from the community by demonstrating ever-greater relevance to the community.

By focusing ArtsWave'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.

- 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.

The Cincinnati Region's dynamic and innovative arts scene attracts employees, visitors, and businesses to the region, generating economic value and positive public perception.

GOAL: To increase the region's competitive advantage in the attraction of talent, new business and cultural tourism by offering arts that are perceived as extraordinary and innovative.

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To design new or unexpected artistic collaborations
- To engage or employ artists at the forefront of their field
- 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 act as laboratories, critics, conveners, and guardians in the evolution of AI
- 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
- To participate in collaborative efforts to share resources and decrease duplicative costs throughout the sector

ARTS DEEPEN ROOTS IN THE REGION

Residents who are engaged in the arts – whether as volunteers, artists, or audience members – are more likely to stay in the region because they 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, promote well-being, and/or encourage personal investment in the organization and/or community
- To engage young adults, including teens, college students, early career professionals and young families in arts experiences that inspire memories and future involvement.
- To engage newcomers to the region in arts programs that are welcoming and inclusive.

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 increase understanding and appreciation of differences among us, contributing to our region's identity as welcoming and inclusive.

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 as well as other demographic differences
- To develop cross-cultural artistic partnerships and collaborations

ARTS STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS

Arts organizations and cultural facilities serve as vital hubs for neighborhood activity that supports local business, builds civic pride and cultivates personal and community health and well-being.

GOAL: To build vibrancy and well-being in neighborhoods, particularly those that are under-resourced 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 with arts experiences
- To optimize the use of existing community resources to support equitable access to arts experiences
- To improve and employ digital capabilities and use of social media to reach and engage neighborhoods
- To maintain and enhance cultural facilities

ARTS FUEL CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

The arts have the power to transform education and outcomes for youth both by improving learning of core curriculum and teaching skills like creativity, collaboration, compassion, critical thinking and problem-solving.

GOAL: To unlock imagination and foster future-ready skills by ensuring that all youth in the region have access to multiple arts opportunities.

Roles for Arts Organizations:

- To provide meaningful arts education experiences, opportunities and arts-based content for youth at all grade levels, prioritizing gaps and underserved populations
- 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