FY2027 ArtsWave Young Professionals Project Grants

The ArtsWave Young Professionals (YP) Grant Program began in 2016 and is an initiative that provides funding to support programming that engages young professionals with a purpose to attract and retain young professionals in the Greater Cincinnati region. The funding to support the FY2027 YP Grant Program comes from donations restricted to young professionals during the 2026 ArtsWave Campaign.

ArtsWave convened a review committee of nine volunteer community panelists on Thursday, October 15, 2026 to review 25 applications received for the FY2027 ArtsWave Young Professionals Project Grants. The panel recommended funding approval for nine projects totaling $47,250.00.

Organization	Request	Award	Project Title
Cincinnati Arts Association	$10,000.00	**$5,000.00**	**CAA Presents! Young Professionals Series**
Cincinnati Opera Association	$10,000.00	**$6,000.00**	**Cincinnati Opera Young Professionals**
Cincinnati Shakespeare Company	$10,000.00	**$6,000.00**	**Cincy Shakes YP Preview Night**
Contemporary Arts Center	$10,000.00	**$5,000.00**	**CAC Creative Café**
Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati	$9,500.00	**$4,250.00**	**After the Fallout**
Pones	$10,000.00	**$8,000.00**	**Dance Happy Hour: Clock Out + Move with Pones**
Summermusik / Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra	$3,000.00	**$3,000.00**	**Cocktails and Curators**
The Carnegie	$10,000.00	**$5,000.00**	**Carnegie YP Passport**
The Ghostlight Stage Company	$5,750.00	**$5,000.00**	**Shining a Light Series**
Total	$78,250.00	**$47,250.00**	

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Cincinnati Arts Association
CAA Presents! Young Professionals Series

Venues like the Aronoff Center for the Arts present some of the most iconic performances in the region, including Broadway in Cincinnati, but ticket prices can put them out of reach for many young people. The "CAA Presents! Young Professionals Series" invites young professionals into the Aronoff for four performances drawn from CAA's presenting schedule at a reduced cost, each paired with a VIP-style pre-show networking reception with complimentary drinks and snacks. The lineup spans cultural dance, film, live music, acrobatics, and magic, giving participants a chance to discover art forms they may not have experienced before. Between the reception, intermission, and the show itself, young professionals can build peer networks around a shared experience. The series reinforces that public cultural institutions like the Aronoff belong to the entire community and helps position the region as a dynamic place for young professionals to live and work.

Cincinnati Opera Association
Cincinnati Opera Young Professionals (COYP)

Cincinnati Opera Young Professionals (COYP) presents year-round programming designed for adults ages 21–40, planned by young professionals for young professionals. Signature events include Bacchanal, which takes on a new theme and venue each year and may feature a local chamber orchestra playing modern music alongside live opera; Singers & Spirits, a two-part series that brings opera into relaxed neighborhood spots like Revel OTR and Redtree Coffee & Art; and a celebratory preview of the summer festival with a backstage tour, live performances, and a conversation about the season's themes. COYP will also host YP Nights at select mainstage performances with pre-show meetups and discounted tickets, plus a YP Networking Night that brings together professionals from finance, business, and the arts. Together, these programs introduce new audiences to opera while helping young professionals build lasting relationships with each other, the arts, and the city.

Cincinnati Shakespeare Company
Cincy Shakes YP Preview Night

YP Preview Night brings young professionals to the first public preview performance of each show in Cincinnati Shakespeare Company's Mainstage season for a $25 ticket that includes a complimentary drink. Each night features a Community Partner, often a local group or small business connected to the production. This season so far, Flying Cloud Academy led Regency dances for The Complete Works of Jane Austen (Abridged), and UC Game Lab and Media

Studies created an interactive news-ratings game for Network. After the show, participants talk with members of CSC's artistic team and share feedback, giving young professionals a voice in the art-making process. Now an established part of CSC's season, YP Preview Night is also building a pathway to deeper involvement, including a YP ticket to CSC's annual REVEL gala, helping young audience members grow into long-term stakeholders in Cincinnati's arts community.

Contemporary Arts Center
CAC Creative Café

"CAC Creative Café" turns the Contemporary Arts Center into a gathering place for the region's creative community. Held every other month for a total of five events, each Creative Café fills the CAC lobby and at least one gallery level with a Vendor Village of local artists selling their work, with the CAC taking no percentage of sales, and a Spotlight Performer from any discipline sharing a 30- to 60-minute set. Between events, a revived Creative Café Instagram account will keep the conversation going with artist interviews, studio visits, and CAC's own take on NPR's Tiny Desk concerts. Last year, most featured artists and attendees were young professionals, making Creative Café a natural place for young creatives and art lovers to have fun, share experiences, and make friends. The program also intentionally features artists from underrepresented communities, reflecting the CAC's values of civic engagement and cultural dialogue.

Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati
After the Fallout: A Young Professionals Climate and Theatre Night at ETC

"After the Fallout" is a one-night arts and civic-engagement experience for young professionals ages 21–40, presented during the January–February 2027 run of Lucy Kirkwood's The Children at Ensemble Theatre Cincinnati in Over-the-Rhine. The play follows retired nuclear scientists confronting the aftermath of an environmental disaster and a life-altering request about responsibility to future generations. The evening opens with a pre-show social featuring food, cocktails and mocktails, guided networking, and an interactive "What Would You Choose?" activity inspired by the play's ethical dilemmas. Guests will also add to a "What We Leave Behind" installation about the Cincinnati they hope to pass on. After the performance, ETC artists and local environmental and community leaders will lead a conversation on climate anxiety, generational responsibility, and the power of storytelling. No theatre or environmental expertise is required, just curiosity and a willingness to connect.

Pones
Dance Happy Hour: Clock Out + Move with Pones

"Dance Happy Hour: Clock Out + Move" with Pones is a series of six after-work dance gatherings held on weekdays from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., monthly from February through July 2027. Each event explores a different era or culture in a different local venue, with no dance experience needed. Planned sessions include a 1920s Charleston, a 1950s sock hop, 1970s disco, 1980s and '90s hip-hop with Elementz, salsa with La Fórmula and Salsannati, dances of the African Diaspora with DANCEFIX and live percussion by Baba Charles Miller, and Indian classical and Bollywood dance with Nrityarpana School of Performing Arts. Rather than staying in one neighborhood, the series travels across Greater Cincinnati so participants discover new corners of the region. Pones will promote the series through major employers and young professional networks, offering a fun, low-pressure alternative to traditional networking where relationships form naturally through shared movement and laughter.

Summermusik
Cocktails and Curators

"Cocktails and Curators" is an interactive kickoff party for the 2027 Summermusik Festival, designed and hosted by young professional members of the Summermusik Board of Trustees. Set for Friday, July 16, 2027, at The Pit on Pleasant/The Sidelot, the evening brings together local musicians and mixologists to celebrate Cincinnati's arts and hospitality scenes. Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra musicians David Goist and Bonnie Farr, who curate Summermusik's Chamber Crawls in bars and breweries, will perform excerpts from upcoming 2027 concerts and talk about artistic curation. Renowned mixologist Molly Wellmann will join the conversation and take a turn behind the bar, with additional beverage service from women-owned Bars on Wheels. By putting young professionals at the front of both the performance and the leadership, the event creates a welcoming, peer-led space and invites attendees to consider how creative curation shows up in their own lives and careers.

The Carnegie
Carnegie YP Passport

"Carnegie YP Passport" is a season-long program introducing young professionals ages 21–40 to The Carnegie in Covington, Kentucky. Each eligible 2027 production will feature a dedicated YP Night with discounted admission, a complimentary drink, a pre-show social gathering, and a post-show conversation with the artists. What sets the program apart is its passport: each YP Night attended unlocks additional benefits, which may include behind-the-scenes experiences, opportunities to meet artists, complimentary tickets, the chance to bring a first-time guest, and an invitation to an exclusive end-of-

season YP event. The structure encourages participants to come back throughout the season rather than attend once. By lowering the barriers of cost and social connection and creating a welcoming setting for people who may come on their own, YP PASSPORT helps young professionals make The Carnegie a regular part of their cultural life in Greater Cincinnati.

The Ghostlight Stage Company
26/27 Shining a Light Series

"Shining a Light" enters its fourth season as The Ghostlight Stage Company's free professional development series for young professionals, expanding into a year-round program. From fall 2026 through summer 2027, participants can attend free workshops and lectures at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park on Funding Your Art, Inclusive Art Creation, Audio Description in the Arts, and Easing Anxiety with the Alexander Technique. Two Studio Sessions offer small-group mentorship: a Playwright Session in partnership with Queen City Queers, led by Derek Snow, and a Photographer Session led by Romain Mayambi. Four Pre-Shine Social Hours, co-hosted with the League of Cincinnati Theaters and Cincinnati Playhouse, make networking easy with games, snacks, and drink specials. Topics are chosen to be useful across career fields, and keeping the series free removes a major barrier, so young professionals can learn, connect, and see Cincinnati as a place where they can grow.