



**Council on
the Arts**

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

PATRICK WILLINGHAM
Chair

ERIKA MALLIN
Executive Director

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Contact: Ann Marie Sekeres
Annmarie.sekeres@arts.ny.gov
(212) 459-8859

NYSCA and NYFA Launch 2026 Cycle of NYSCA Reserve Fund Grants

First-of-its-kind program was established by NYSCA in 2025 to support NYS arts and culture nonprofits and address critical needs across the state's creative sector.

[The New York State Council on the Arts](#) (NYSCA) and the [New York Foundation for the Arts](#) (NYFA) today announced the 2026 cycle of [NYSCA Reserve Fund Grants](#) (RFG), an innovative initiative designed to help New York State-based nonprofit arts organizations to establish a reserve fund or build on an existing reserve fund.

Grants of up to \$50,000 will be made available for a total of \$1,760,000 in support. Organizations that have received funding from NYSCA in the last three years (FY24-FY26) with operating budgets of \$150K to \$3M will be eligible to apply.

Organizational reserves are foundational to the economic strength of New York's arts and culture sector. Through strategic funding opportunities like the RFG, organizations address the challenges and concerns facing the arts and culture sector head-on, like increased costs, decreased philanthropy, and unpredictable income. Reserve funds sustain public access to arts and culture, cover the unexpected, strengthen balance sheets to leverage new funders, and make space for organizations and artists to do what they do best - create.

Applications will open on Tuesday, March 10 at 10:00 AM ET and close on Tuesday, May 5 at 5:00 PM ET and [will be available through the NYFA website](#).

Organizations that choose to use grant funds to start a reserve fund and do not already have one at the time of applying are prioritized. Rural and BIPOC-led community-based organizations are strongly encouraged to apply. Grant amounts will be determined by the organization's overall operating budget. Organizations that are fiscally sponsored by another 501(c)(3) are ineligible for this opportunity.

NYSCA Executive Director Erika Mallin said, "The success of the first year of this program was clear – over 1200 applicants and 85% of grantees building their very first cash reserve, a powerful affirmation to how urgently these funds are needed. Organizations with strong reserves are organizations empowered to innovate, to plan, and to deliver the measurable benefits of the arts to their communities. We are proud to partner with NYFA on this critical program for a second year, providing nonprofits with the continuity and long-term sustainability they need to thrive."

NYSCA Chair Patrick Willingham said, “The NYSCA Reserve Fund is a rare and powerful opportunity for arts and culture nonprofits to build the financial foundation they need to keep their doors open, their programs running and their audience growing. I encourage every eligible organization to apply and help us ensure our arts and culture sector remains vibrant and resilient for generations to come.”

Michael Royce, NYFA CEO, said “We are grateful to Governor Hochul for continuing to invest in and strengthen the arts across New York State, and to NYSCA for partnering with us on this groundbreaking program. Reserve Fund Grants are helping to build a more sustainable future for arts organizations and the many communities they serve,” he added.

In addition to providing support through direct funds, the RFG will offer one year of technical assistance focused on organizational sustainability and financial prudence. Each recipient will receive:

- One virtual workshop dedicated to organizational reserve funding and strategies to support long-term sustainability.
- One hour long one-on-one consulting session.
- Monthly office hours to field pressing questions in a communal setting.

Eligible applications undergo a three-round review and elimination process. All applicants will be notified, regardless of the outcome, by Fall 2026.

On receiving the award in 2025, [Stockade Works](#) (Kingston) Founder Mary Stuart Masterson said: “Reserve funds are incredibly challenging to build, and opportunities like the NYSCA Reserve Fund Grant are nearly nonexistent, making this a rare chance for our organization to take a step forward. The grant has also been a motivating factor in establishing a Reserve Fund Policy, which coupled with the seed funding, will enable Stockade Works to thoughtfully build real financial stability, plan for the future, and remain strong for our community during a time when all nonprofits are facing instability and uncertainty.”

For 2025 recipient [Art Beyond Sight](#), the grant will help to ensure that disability-led innovation remains a vital part of New York’s cultural landscape. Said Founder Elisabeth Axel: “For a small nonprofit leading large-scale accessibility efforts, this safety net is more than financial—it is a foundation for resilience, allowing us to deepen our learnings as to how to plan responsibly for the future. Equally significant is the advice and guidance that accompany this grant.”

For those interested in applying, the NYFA Grants team will host virtual information sessions designed to help organizations understand if they are eligible and how to build a strong application.

The first session will take place on Thursday, March 19 at 2:00 PM ET and will dive deeper into the importance of building reserve funds. The second session is scheduled for Tuesday, March 31 at 2:00 PM ET and focus on a general application and guidelines overview. All info sessions are held virtually over Zoom, are free to attend, and are presented in English. Registration is required.

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About New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA):

[The New York Foundation for the Arts \(NYFA\)](#) was established in 1971 to empower artists at critical stages in their creative lives. Today, the nonprofit organization’s programs and services are far-reaching and are rooted in a wealth of physical and online resources. Each year, NYFA awards more than \$4 million in cash grants to

individual visual, performing, and literary artists throughout the United States. NYFA's Fiscal Sponsorship program, one of the oldest and most reputable in the country, helps national artists and arts organizations raise and manage an average of \$4 million annually. NYFA's Learning programs, including its Artist as Entrepreneur and Immigrant Artist Mentoring Program, provide thousands of artists, creatives, and arts administrators with professional development training and support. NYFA's website, [NYFA.org](https://nyfa.org), is used by more than 1 million people and features more than 20,000 opportunities and resources available to artists in all disciplines.

About the New York State Council on the Arts

The mission of the New York State Council on the Arts is to foster and advance the full breadth of New York State's arts, culture and creativity for all. For FY 2026, the Council on the Arts will award over \$161 million, serving organizations and artists across all 10 of the state's regions. The Council on the Arts further advances New York's creative culture by convening leaders in the field and providing organizational and professional development opportunities and informational resources. Created by Governor Nelson Rockefeller in 1960 and continued with the support of Governor Hochul and the New York State Legislature, the Council is an agency that is part of the Executive Branch. For more information on NYSCA, please visit arts.ny.gov/SOAFellow, and follow [NYSCA's Facebook page](#), on [X @NYSCArts](#) and [Instagram @NYSCouncilontheArts](#).