



Public Art for Neighborhoods Fund: 2020-21 Community Connection Grants

*Funded by the City of Indianapolis
through the Public Art for Neighborhoods Program*

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply for this grant?

Artists, collectives of artists, and community-based organizations that serve a specific neighborhood can apply for this grant. **Arts organizations may not apply for or receive funds from this grant.** For assistance in determining whether you or your organization are eligible, email jmoore@indyarts.org.

Why can't arts organizations receive funds from this program, even if they only serve one community?

This program is designed for artists and non-arts neighborhood organizations to partner and lead in their own communities. The Arts Council has other grant programs for arts organizations, including the opportunity to receive funds for arts projects in their communities. You can find them [here](#) and [here](#). Please contact grants@indyarts.org to find out if you are eligible for any of them.

Does my organization have to be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to apply?

No. Any non-arts organization or community group in Marion County may apply. You will need to describe your organization and how you serve your community on the application form.

I'm an artist. Do I have to live in Marion County to apply?

As long as the project takes place in Marion County, any artist may be a Lead Applicant or may be paid by a community from grant funds. However, an authentic connection between the artist and the community where the project will take place is one of the evaluation criteria.

Can my Hamilton (or Johnson, or Shelby, etc.) County organization apply if my artist lives in Marion County?

No. Organizations serving as Lead Applicants must be based in Marion County, and, specifically, based in the community where the project will take place.

APPLYING

Where do I apply?

You must apply online, at [this link](#). If you cannot view or access the application, email jmoore@indyarts.org for assistance.

How many applications can I submit?

As long as each application is for a different project and partnership, you can submit any number of applications.

What's the deadline to apply?

You can submit your application anytime before March 19, 2021. Applications will be reviewed every two weeks and decisions announced within 48 hours of the review meeting. **Projects must be completed by May 31, 2021.**

Can I reapply if I am not funded the first time?

Yes, you can reapply, providing there would be enough time for you to complete the project before May 31, 2021. We strongly recommend contacting us to find out why you were unsuccessful, and get tips on how to improve it when you submit it again. Email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss your first application.

Should I apply early, or later, for best consideration?

We recommend applying as soon as you are ready.

- Applications are reviewed and awards made every 2 weeks.
- If you wait too long, all the funds may have already been awarded.
- If you apply too late, the selection committee may feel you will not have enough time to complete your project before May 31, 2021 if something unexpected happens.
- If you are not funded on your first try, applying early leaves you time to consult with Arts Council staff and apply again.

I already got a grant from this program--can I submit another application?

Yes, as long as it's for a completely different project and partnership from the one that was already funded.

Can I be part of two partnerships who are both applying?

Yes, as long as the partnerships are for completely different projects.

PROJECTS

What kind of project is likely to get funded?

- We are looking for arts-focused projects that address issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic within the community, and/or support racial justice initiatives that are important to a specific neighborhood. **These are the only project types that will be funded.**
- A project that makes a good case that this is the right project at the right time for a particular place is very likely to get funded.
- Projects that show authentic partnerships between an artist and a neighborhood are more likely to get funded. Ideally the artist lives in the same neighborhood where they will be doing the project, but it is not a requirement.

My neighborhood organization wants to bring in an artist from outside Indiana for a project. Is that allowed?

As long as the project takes place in Marion County, and the organizational Lead Applicant is an organization serving the neighborhood where the project will take place, artists can be from anywhere. However, an authentic connection between the artist and the community where the project will take place is one of the evaluation criteria.

What will keep me from getting funded?

One or more of the following factors will result in immediate disqualification:

- You are not eligible to apply for this grant.
- Your project does not take place in Marion County.
- Your project does not involve arts activity.
- Your project charges participants a fee.
- Your project takes place in a location that is not open to everyone.
- Your funding request exceeds \$2,500.
- Your budgeted expenses and your expected income do not equal each other.
- Your project completion date is after May 31, 2021.
- Your request is for general operating support, to support an organizational fundraising project, or supports a religious ceremony or celebration.

- You are not working with an artist, or you are not paying a fee to the artist(s) you are working with.

Can I apply for funding for a project that is already in process?

Yes, if it fits the theme of community response to COVID-19 and/or working towards racial justice, and your request is between \$500 and \$2,500, and it is set to be completed by May 31, 2021.

Can I apply for funding for a project with a budget larger than \$2,500?

Yes, if you can show where the rest of the funding to complete it is coming from. However, your request from this grant program cannot exceed \$2,500.

Can I apply for a “phase 1” of a project that will happen after May 31, 2021?

Yes, if the activities in phase 1 are self-contained enough that they can be completed by May 31 and still be perceived as a finished project without further phases. The project must also fit the theme of community response to COVID-19 and/or working towards racial justice. Please email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss this situation before applying.

Can I apply for funding to complete a “proof of concept” for a larger project?

Yes, if the proof of concept can be considered a self-contained project on its own, and it can be completed by May 31. The project must also fit the theme of community response to COVID-19 and/or working towards racial justice. Please email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss this situation before applying.

WRITING THE APPLICATION

For the purposes of this grant, who is an “artist”?

We define an “artist” as someone who routinely pursues a creative, aesthetic activity and thinks of themselves as an artist, or others think of them as an artist. It can be a visual art (painting, drawing, sculpting, clay, knitting, etc.), a performing art (music, theater, dance, spoken word, etc.), a literary art (writing stories, novels, poetry, etc.), or

something that is more of a social-practice art that engages the community with activities like gardening, culinary, etc. that is nevertheless intended as an artistic act. The artist does not have to be professional--they do not have to be trying to earn a living from their creative work--but they should be doing their art regularly and actively trying to connect with others through their artistic practice.

For the purposes of this grant, what does “public” mean?

“Public” means that all funded activities take place in a location that is open to anyone, there are no restrictions on who can participate, and there is no fee or cost to participate. Projects do not have to take place outdoors or on public property.

Can you help me write my application?

We cannot help you write your application, but we will be happy to review what you’ve written or discuss your idea with you before you start writing. We can also help you decide on what to submit as artistic documentation, and help you figure out what letters of support you should get. Email jmoore@indyarts.org for assistance.

How much does spelling and grammar count?

We don’t take points off for spelling or grammar errors, but a well written application will help you communicate your ideas better. It is a good idea to ask someone else to read your proposal before submitting it. If the selection committee can’t understand your application because they can’t follow your train of thought, they will have no basis for scoring it.

Do I have to submit my application in English?

Please email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss your language preference. We will likely be able to find someone to translate our application form for you and translate your application response to English. We recommend that you contact us right away, and submit your application as soon as possible to ensure there is enough time for this process.

Can you give me some tips on creating a grant budget?

- The most common situation reviewers encounter when reading grant budgets is that the expenses are either overbudgeted or underbudgeted. Try to be very exact about how much things cost when estimating your expenses, and if you feel you must put in a little extra “just in case,” show that on a separate line.
- Make sure the expenses you list are justified by the project narrative. ***The narrative and budget should tell the same story.*** If you talk about an activity in the narrative, there should be numbers in the budget that support it. Similarly,

there should not be any budget line items that seem like they are not essential to completing the project as described in the narrative.

- Reviewers will want to know how solid your income sources are, especially if the total budget exceeds the \$2,500 limit for PAFN funding. If some of your income sources are not yet committed, note their status on the budget line (“unconfirmed” or “promised” or “applied”, etc.).

ARTISTIC DOCUMENTATION

Why do you ask for artistic documentation?

Providing examples of the artist’s (or artists’) work allows the reviewers to understand how they have worked with communities before, and how successful their work has been with that community.

What are good examples of artistic documentation?

- **For visual artists:** photographs of past work, particularly work done in partnership with communities. If the work was community-based, it’s important to have images showing how the community participated.
- **For performing artists (including performed spoken word):** videos of past performances, still images of work being performed, images of audiences viewing performances.
- **For musicians:** scores or other source material you are working from.
- **For literary artists (including spoken word compositions):** texts, video or still images of readings or other community-based sharing of your work
- **For all artists:** links to websites, YouTube or Vimeo videos or channels, SoundCloud or Bandcamp profiles, etc. where your work can be found. Make sure that any videos you want the reviewers to look at are not password-protected, or provide the password(s) in your upload. Provide links to specific projects you want the reviewers to see, and choose projects that have relevance to what you are proposing to do in your grant application.
- **Background information:** resumes, artist statements, reviews of past work, etc. Again, choose projects that have relevance to what you are proposing to do in your grant application.

How do you want me to provide links?

- The best way to provide links is by creating a Word (or similar word-processing software) document that you convert to PDF.

- To make a link “live,” type in or copy the webpage address, then hit the space bar, the “enter” key, or the “return” key. You will know a link is live when it is colored blue and underlined.

Is there a size limit for uploaded photos, videos, etc.?

Uploads cannot exceed a total of 25 MB per form. We prefer uploaded files to be as small as possible. We prefer videos to be provided via links, as above. If you need help resizing your documentation, please email jmoore@indyarts.org.

What file types do you accept for uploads?

File types accepted are jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, doc, docx, mp3, mp4, wav, wmv, mpeg.

All my artwork documentation is on my phone. How do I get it to you?

If you use your phone to complete the application, you can upload from your phone to the application form. If you're not using your phone to apply, we suggest using your phone to email images to yourself, saving them to a folder on a computer, and then following the prompts on the application form to attach them to the application. Please email jmoore@indyarts.org for additional assistance.

SUPPORT LETTERS

Why do you ask for support letters?

A successful project starts with a compatible partnership. The reviewers want to make sure that the partnership outlined in the grant request is authentic, and that all partners are aware of and have agreed to participate in the project. Organizations should have already approached their artist(s) and discussed the project with them, and artists should make sure the community will welcome their work.

What should a support letter say?

A support letter should confirm the proposed partner's role in the project and explain why the partner believes that this project is good for the community. If there is a history between the partners, support letters can explain how past projects have proceeded and how successful they were.

Should I get support letters from other community members?

If a particular community member is integral to the project, yes, that person should provide a letter of support. If a person or organization can provide information important to the reviewers' understanding of the project, but they are not actually participating in it, a support letter can be helpful for context.

- General letters of support (for the organization or artist) from people who are not tied to the project are typically not helpful to reviewers.
- Letters of support from powerful or famous people (members of Congress, City Councillors, etc.) are not particularly persuasive if they are not directly involved in the project.

Does the support letter have to be signed?

Yes, the support letter should have a signature.

GRANT REVIEW

How are funding decisions made?

The Public Art for Neighborhoods Selection Committee is made up of community representatives, arts professionals, city representatives, and working artists. It is a City-mandated board and decisions are made in open, public meetings. At this time the meetings are virtual, and anyone from the public may attend. To learn when the selection meetings will be held, email jmoore@indyarts.org

The selection committee looks at three dimensions of a project and will award up to 100 points. Projects scoring an average of 80 points or higher will be funded. The criteria and point values are:

- **25 points - Envisioning a Connected, Just, and Equitable Future for Neighborhoods Through the Arts:** The project's ability to meaningfully engage its community through the proposed artistic activity
- **25 points - Lead Applicant Capacity:** The Lead Applicant's ability to successfully plan and manage a project to conclusion.
- **50 points - Artistic Quality and Cultural Vibrancy:** The project's ability to create a high-quality artistic experience that helps the community rise to the challenges of COVID-19 and/or working for racial justice.

What are the reviewers looking for?

The selection committee is looking for the following:

- How meaningful is the project for the community? Is it something that the community has requested or asked for? Is there an observed condition or situation that led to the project?
- Can the project be completed well using the resources available? (money, time, people, space, etc.) Are there resources available that aren't being tapped, and are there resources that are being overestimated?
- What is the exact connection between the arts project/activity and the need in the community to respond to COVID-19 and/or the ongoing fight for racial justice? How, and how well, does the artistic activity help the community respond? The more closely you can tie the community's need and the nature of the artistic activity together, the greater the likelihood that the project will be funded.
- Is the artistic activity of high aesthetic quality? (to understand what "high aesthetic quality" means for community-based artwork, [review this framework](#))

How much funding will I get?

You may request any amount between \$500 and \$2,500. Our goal is to fully fund all projects that score highly (above 80%) in the application review, until the \$50,000 grant pool runs out. We do not intend to give partial funding.

How many grants are you giving out?

We will make at least 20 grants. The exact number depends on the funding level requested in the successful applications.

If I ask for less money, will I be more likely to get a grant?

Not necessarily. The selection committee is looking at the nature and quality of the project, not the amount requested. Having said that--your overall project budget should be enough to complete the project, and if you have not asked for enough money or your plan seems not to include key likely expenses, the committee is unlikely to award any funding.

This is an evolving document and will be updated regularly. If you do not see your question answered here, please contact Julia Moore, jmoore@indyarts.org or call (317) 631-3301 x240.