



Audience Guide

2025 Project Support - Live Panel Review

Monday, September 16 - Wednesday, September 18, 2024 at 1:00 pm ET

Welcome!

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) welcomes you to the 2025 Project Support panel review. The purpose of the Project Support (PS) grant is to promote public access and encourage the breadth of arts and cultural programming in our community by supporting Cuyahoga County-based projects. During the panel review, arts and cultural experts from across the country – who are trained in CAC’s funding criteria – discuss and score applications.

This panel review is for Project Support applications requesting more than \$5,000 in funding. 2025 applications requesting \$5,000 or less are reviewed in a [written panel process](#).

Order of Review

Each review should take approximately 7-10 minutes. Start times and breaks will take place at the discretion of the panel chair and are subject to change.

Monday, September 16, 1:00 pm ET

Berea Arts Fest
BorderLight
Carolyn L. Farrell Foundation
Heights Youth Theatre
Hospice of the Western Reserve
Jennings Center for Older Adults
Jewish Federation of Cleveland
Oh Sew Powerful
Open Doors Academy
Open Tone Music
The Land
The Movement Project
Tremont West Development Corporation
University Circle Inc.
Brite Cleveland
Kaboom Collective
West Shore Chorale

Panelist Closing Statements

Tuesday, September 17, 1:00 pm ET

America SCORES Cleveland
Cleveland Arts Prize
Cleveland Chamber Choir
Cleveland Chamber Music Society
Cleveland Cultural Gardens
Cleveland Rocks: Past Present and Future
Friends of the McGaffin Carillon
In Harmony Therapeutic Services
Jones Road Family Development Corporation
Lakewood Young Filmmakers Academy
Maelstrom Collaborative Arts
PALS for Healing
The Brecksville Theatre
The City Club of Cleveland
BlueWater Chamber Orchestra
Cleveland Ballet
Renovare Music

Panelist Closing Statements



Wednesday, September 18, 1:00 pm ET

American Hungarian Friends of Scouting
Baldwin Wallace University
CityMusic Cleveland
Cleveland School of the Arts Board of Trustees
Convergence-continuum
Downtown Cleveland Alliance
Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association
Historic Gateway Neighborhood Corporation
Les Délices
Little Lumpy's Center for Educational Initiatives
Local 4 Music Fund
Mandel Jewish Community Center of Cleveland
Music and Art at Trinity
Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development
Refresh Collective
Talespinner Children's Theatre
Writers in Residence

Panelist Closing Statements

Watch Live

Access the livestream at cacgrants.org/panel.



Panel Review Process

To ensure an impartial and transparent application review process, CAC convenes a panel of arts and cultural professionals from outside the region who discuss, evaluate, and score applications. Panelists are chosen to represent a cross-section of professionals qualified to provide expert knowledge across arts or cultural disciplines, as well as for their management experience, professional knowledge of the sector, and prior panel experience. CAC staff make every effort to ensure that the panel is diverse in all respects. All panelists receive an honorarium for their service.

A team of five panelists review and score each application. The panel is managed and moderated by a CAC staff member acting as a nonvoting panel chair.

Observe Panel Review

Applications will be reviewed for no more than ten minutes, following this sequence of actions:

- The Panel Chair will introduce the organization.
- The panelists lead the discussion by presenting their assessment of the application, budget and support materials based on CAC's Funding Criteria.
- At the conclusion, panelists will submit their final scores.

Audience Protocol

Applicants and audience members are observers only and are not permitted to address the panel during the virtual meeting or contact the panelists. However, if an applicant believes that a panelist has presented incorrect information regarding their application, they can complete an [Information Correction Form](#) before the end of the panel review meeting.

- The panel chair will review the correction to determine if it is objective in nature and confirms information already presented in the application.
- At their discretion, the panel chair will present the correction to the panel and for public record.

An example of objective information would be the panelist misstating the number of performances that an organization detailed in their application. This is not an opportunity to provide additional information.

Public Comment

After the panel chairs adjourn the discussion and scoring is complete, CAC will hold an optional session for public comment on the panel review process.

Audience members may submit public comments via the [Public Comment Form](#).



Scoring

Panelists score each application on a point scale from 0 to 100 based on the following funding criteria:

- **PUBLIC BENEFIT:** An organization’s ability to meaningfully connect with its community through its project.
- **ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL VIBRANCY:** An organization’s ability to create a relevant and engaging project.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY:** An organization’s ability to successfully plan for and manage its project.

Panelists will use the following scoring framework to score each application on the funding criteria:

Has the application demonstrated the funding criteria?	Public Benefit: 45%	Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy: 35%	Organizational Capacity: 20%
STRONG The applicant has provided <u>strong</u> evidence that this funding criterion is met.	39-45	31-35	18-20
FAIR The applicant has provided <u>fair</u> evidence that this funding criterion is met.	28-38	22-30	13-17
WEAK The applicant has provided <u>weak</u> evidence that this funding criterion is met.	0-27	0-21	0-12

Final Score and Funding Recommendations

Scores are calculated by combining and averaging the score of all panelists. Applications that receive a score of 75 or higher are recommended for funding. CAC will calculate final scores and notify all applicants via email. Grant amounts are pending board approval at CAC’s Board of Trustees meeting on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 4:00 pm.

Questions? Contact a member of the [grantmaking team](#).



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Meet the Panelists



**Roshi Ahmadian, she/her
Chicago, IL**

Roshi Ahmadian derives her sense of purpose from her value of impact and has centered her career on this value. Roshi holds an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, an MA in art history and museum studies from Case Western Reserve University, and is a Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society graduate with BA degrees in art history and pre-architecture from the same university. Roshi is a fluent Persian speaker, has working knowledge of Italian and Arabic, and is learning Japanese. In her free time, Roshi enjoys photography, graphic design, painting, and traveling, and has visited over a dozen countries to date. Roshi lives in Chicago with her husband and daughter.



**Melissa Astin, she/her
Chattanooga, TN**

Melissa Astin joined ArtsBuild in April 2022. She has resided in Chattanooga for ten years. Previously, she was the Director of Community Outreach & Engagement at Crabtree Farms. Prior to her time at Crabtree, she worked for the City of Chattanooga-Public Art, initially as an intern and then as a contractor. The Manager of Grants and Community Engagement oversees ArtsBuild's grantmaking programs and supports our local arts communities with a focus on collaborative work, needs-based initiatives, and equitable arts programming in underserved areas.



**Lisa Chang, she/her
Madison, AL**

Lisa Chang, MSW, Deputy Director of United Women of Color, has spent over 20 years working in development, community engagement, and management for advocacy, arts, and faith-based nonprofits. With a unique background in social work and engineering, Lisa brings expert relationship management and a data-driven approach that is rooted in anti-racism and anti-oppression. Lisa has worked for a variety of arts, faith-based, and advocacy organizations such as Pulitzer Arts Foundation, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, and the Bloomberg School of Public Health. She has also served on numerous nonprofit boards, including Prison Performing Arts, Encore Stage and Studio, and the Huntsville Bail Fund.



**Sheryl Doades, she/her
Ellettsville, IN**

Sheryl recently earned her master's degree in arts administration from the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Bloomington. She holds a B.A. and B.F.A. in theatre arts and has performed in, directed, and taught theatre and musical theatre across the U.S., Canada, and overseas. Sheryl currently works full-time as a writer/editor at IU Bloomington and part-time as a teaching artist, director, and performer in South Central Indiana.



**Michael Greer, he/him
Bainbridge, WA**

As a relationship builder, thought leader, and strategic planner, Michael Romy Greer is dedicated to supporting the mission of ArtsFund to support the arts through leadership, advocacy, and grantmaking in order to build a healthy, equitable, and creative Washington. With degrees in economics, education, and business, Michael brings a diverse skill set to the role and a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities of the sector. In addition, he is a dedicated community partner, serving on several boards, including the Downtown Seattle Association and Puget Sound Regional Council's Economic Development District.



Deonté Griffin-Quick,
he/him
Avenel, NJ

Deonté is a nationally recognized, award-winning actor, arts administrator and consultant with a proven track record of envisioning and implementing change at the local and regional level. Currently, Deonté serves as the Managing Director of External Affairs for Artist Communities Alliance (ACA). Before joining ACA, Deonté served as Director of Programs and Services at New Jersey Theatre Alliance where he built lasting partnerships, led statewide initiatives, and oversaw programming to support the cultivation of 42 professional theatre companies. In an effort to connect, empower, and cultivate other arts and cultural leaders of color, in 2019 Deonté developed and spearheaded the New Jersey Arts and Culture Administrators of Color Network.



Jo-ann Lawrence, she/her
Stone Mountain, GA

Jo-ann Lawrence is a non-profit professional with experience in the theatre, ballet, and museums as well as healthcare, child-welfare, early education, and disability services. Her expertise lies in operating non-profits. Specifically, program creation/management, strategic planning, board management, grant writing, grants training, grant making, and annual funds. A few examples of Jo-ann's past hands on work are managing two historic theatres, running a city-wide arts education program in Chicago, managing a health system grant making program and creating programming for youth in foster care. Lawrence graduated from Butler University with a B.S. in Arts Administration and Columbia College Chicago with a M.A. in Performing Arts Management. While Jo-ann has been working independently for many years, she recently formed Ascension Nonprofit Development Strategies, LLC to bring all of her interests and efforts under one umbrella.



**Cherie Martin Irwin,
she/her
Rio Rancho, NM**

Cherie Martin Irwin is a visual artist and current Studio Arts undergrad at the University of New Mexico. Her first undergraduate and graduate degrees are in Film. Retired from three careers, she started as a Hollywood talent manager and was a festival producer, adjunct film professor, and arts administrator before a 20-year career as a digital product manager and department lead. She is currently Vice Chair of the arts commission for the City of Rio Rancho and has served on many Arts juries and panels. Much of her work in arts and culture has been to facilitate the work of others, including administering NEA funding; showcasing filmmakers, musicians, poets, and visual artists at festivals and events; and creating avenues for artists to teach others. Cherie's work is exhibited in many locations around New Mexico. She is a juried artist in Recycle Santa Fe and Taos Folk. She has had work in juried group shows in California, Florida, New Mexico, and Maryland.



**Ellen Milligan, she/her
Seattle, WA**

Ellen Milligan (she/her) is Vice President of Grantmaking at ArtsFund in Seattle, Washington. She has been a member of the ArtsFund team since 2016, and before that, worked for performing arts organizations on the West Coast and in the Midwest. She earned her B.A. from Ohio State University. She has served as a member of the Seattle Cultural Accessibility Consortium Steering Committee since 2021.



Yuki Numata Resnick,
she/her
Buffalo, NY

Yuki Numata Resnick is a violinist, nonprofit leader, and educator. Originally from Vancouver, BC, she is passionate about her adopted home in Buffalo, NY, and ensuring that all youth in Buffalo have equitable access to music education. Yuki holds violin performance degrees from the Eastman School of Music and the University of Michigan. She also holds a Certificate in Nonprofit Management from Duke University. As a violinist, Yuki has performed on stages from the Sydney Opera House to Carnegie Hall and is a passionate advocate for new music. In 2016, she released *For Ko*, her debut solo record featuring brand new works by living composers. A versatile musician, Yuki has also played with and recorded for artists such as The National, Beirut, King Princess, Lisa Hannigan, Arcade Fire, and Taylor Swift. She is also a featured musician on Ed Sheeran's 2023 record, *(Subtract)*. Yuki co-founded Buffalo String Works, a music program focused on leadership development and social change. She is currently the Director of Arts and Culture at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. Her role interacts closely with the Raph C. Willson, Jr. Foundation's \$100M commitment to transform the long-term viability of Western NY's arts and culture community through the establishment of an endowment that will support the sector now and forever.



Beth Prevor, she/her
New York, NY

Beth Prevor is a co-founder and Executive Director of Hands On, an arts service organization that advocates for access to the cultural arts for the Deaf community and audiences with disabilities. As Executive Director, Beth works with arts organizations to ensure inclusion for all by providing marketing, community engagement and audience development strategies. As a disabled advocate, Beth is active as an advisory member to groups including, Shubert Accessibility Committee, New Jersey Theatre Alliance, and the Museum, Arts & Culture Access Consortium (MAC). She has led workshops on accessibility and the arts around the country including the Kennedy Center's LEAD (Leadership Exchange in Arts & Disability) Conference, Americans for the Arts, National Arts Marketing Project, Theater Communications Group (TCG) and Alliance of Resident Theaters/New York (ART/NY) where she is their Disability Consultant. She is the 2015 recipient of the John F. Kennedy Center's Excellence in Accessibility Leadership Lifetime Achievement award.



Christopher Schram,
he/him
Kalamazoo, MI

Christopher Schram is the Director of Development for the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He has served as Executive Director/Artistic Director and/or Director of Advancement/Development at a number of institutions in Michigan, Illinois, and Florida including art museums, theaters, and multi-disciplinary organizations, such as the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (Kalamazoo, MI), Victory Gardens Theater and Court Theater (both in Chicago, IL), and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts/youngARTS (Miami, FL). He has served on grant review panels throughout the nation. He is also a producer, director, choreographer, actor, dancer, singer, classical pianist, and composer/lyricist. A cum laude graduate of Washington & Lee University, Mr. Schram holds a BS in Business Administration and a BA in French.



Michael Smith,
he/him
Wexford, PA

Michael A. Smith is the Assistant Director of The Fine Foundation, a funder of Arts & Culture and Jewish Life in the greater Pittsburgh region. Before working as a grantmaker, he established a reputation for enabling bold arts-based economic development projects through a career in institutional development, most recently at the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Michael earned a Ph.D. in English from Duquesne University, where he researched placemaking, geocriticism, and the American railroad. He is published in MDPI's Humanities journal and the St. John's Humanities Review. Michael serves on the board of PA Humanities and on the Northland Public Library board. He also serves on the advisory committee of the International Poetry Forum, the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry's finance committee, and on the Committee on Honors and Awards for the MLA. In addition to serving as a panelist for Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, he has reviewed grants for The Whiting Foundation.



**Tom Werder, he/him
Denville, NJ**

With Morris Arts since 2012, Werder serves as chief operating executive officer. In New Jersey, Werder previously served as the Managing Director of Two River Theater Company in Red Bank; the Executive Director of Carolyn Dorfman Dance, based in Union; and the Managing Director of George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick. Before that, he was the Managing Director of Portland Stage Company in Portland, Maine where he was also a member of the Executive Committee for the Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance, an organization charged with the creation of a Downtown Arts District and credited with the revitalization of the city's downtown area. On a national level, he was twice an Executive Committee member of the League of Resident Theaters (LORT) and a member of numerous collective bargaining committees. He has served on the board and executive committees of Dance/USA and Dance New Jersey, as treasurer of the Morris County Tourism Bureau and chair of The Bridge to Recovery in Bowling Green, KY. Tom received his MFA in Theatre Management from the Yale School of Drama and his BFA from Purchase College (SUNY) where he was lighting designer and stage manager.



**Tamara Williamson,
she/her
Memphis, TN**

Tamara has a B.A. and an M.A. in English from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and has been a grant writer for 8 years, at the Children's Museum of Memphis and previously at Shelby Residential and Vocational Services, a nonprofit that supports people with disabilities.