

PANEL RESULTS & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



To ensure an impartial and transparent application review process, CAC convenes an online panel of arts and cultural professionals who evaluate and score eligible applications. Project Support applications are reviewed via independent, written reviews where panelists provide scores and comments for the applicants.

PANEL RESULTS

Panelists score each application based on the Funding Criteria—**Public Benefit, Artistic and Cultural Vibrancy and Organizational Capacity**. Panelists use the following framework: *With an emphasis on Public Benefit, has the application demonstrated the funding criteria?* Panelists submit scores between 1 – 10 points based on CAC’s funding criteria.

- Applicants that provide strong evidence that the funding criteria are met are recommended for funding.
- Applicants that provide weak evidence that the funding criteria is met are not recommended for funding.

For more details regarding the panel scoring process please refer to page 2 of the [Panel Guide](#).

Grant amounts are determined by the panel score and adjusted according to the total amount of funding allocated for 2026 Project Support grants.

PANELIST COMMENTS

The panelists who reviewed your application are listed on your application feedback page. Panelist biographies begin on page 6 of the [Panel Guide](#). Panelist comments are presented in no particular order.

QUESTIONS?

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PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: 10K Movement

Project Title: 10K Elite Team Dance Advancement

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The videos and photographs provided in the application were excellent. Impressive to see that work with school children, seeing an instructor with a class, and also to witness the audience at the dance festival. It's wonderful to read that the core instructors are aligned with school partnerships and CAL. The group makes the point that Hip Hop and street dance is misunderstood as a form of dance, that it requires time, dedication and discipline.

Applicant organization is sharing it's power with the community. Connection through dance and Hip Hop culture.

Very much appreciated the context given within this proposal. Namely that "Street Dance styles are at risk of cultural erasure, of having their true origins and history separated from the dominant narrative, as happened with Rock N' Roll, for example, or Jazz Dance." The context provided of how Street Dance styles are at risk of erasure drives home how important this organization's preservation efforts are. The applicant underscores that their work protects cultural knowledge and ensures younger generations do not lose this history. Equally as important is the proposal's attention to the economic realities of dancers -- "Despite adding substantial entertainment value, dancers are generally the lowest-paid artists. They're too frequently offered a promise of "exposure" rather than compensation for their contributions." Addressing this inequity by creating fair opportunities for compensation and visibility strengthens not just individual careers but also the broader arts ecosystem. It's encouraging to see a majority of the budget directed toward compensating artists. Ultimately, this proposal does a super job at clarifying what is at stake economically, culturally, and historically and how their organization is uniquely qualified to address it.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

10K Movement wants to help build Cleveland as a hub for high level education and competitions. Admirable goal. So too is the effort to keep the culture thriving. The group strives to influence perspectives and appears to be succeeding even on a focused scale. The visual examples provided clearly demonstrate vibrancy!

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

Not only championing Street Dance style, but also preserving the artistic and cultural vibrancy.

The vibrancy is outstanding! I appreciate this organizations focus on street and hip-hop dance and that they pay it the respect its deserves by making sure that people understand that street dance is dance and requires the time, effort and hard work that every other dance genre does. I really enjoyed all of the artistic support provided and the passion in which the organization expresses its love for the art form. I appreciate the in depth classes and workshops outlined in this project and that using those workshops which reach beyond just dance to connect with and educate their community.

The supporting materials demonstrating the work of the organization were great. One suggestion: the MOV file uploads did not have sound but I was able to get sound in the YouTube links provided.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

For an organization with a small budget, 10K Movement is working to achievements above its pay grade. The outreach to schools and dance students is commendable and includes a strong teaching element (as do the public events). 'm curious to see how they direct their \$69,000 budget line items. The project summary lists an ambitious schedule. I would assume that some of these accomplishments will depend on in-kind support and increase in funding. Not sure where the resources for building the budget will come from. They're doing so much with so little. Still, this is the weakest component of their application. Applaud the excellence of the grant in general.

Majority of funding for artist. Excellent.

This organization seems to be poised to progress and this is demonstrated by a clear and simple budget, a staff with strong artistic merit and a strong commitment to their clients and the community.

The founding team has incredible experience and is reflective of the community they are building and creating in. For future applications, it would be helpful to hear more about the team's vision for the organization's evolution, i.e. short-, mid-, and long-term goals. Identifying specific metrics of success will also serve to strengthen future proposals. For example, how many students or graduates go on to meaningful careers in dance? Or how many new community members are introduced to Street Dance styles and its history?

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Achievement Centers for Children

Project Title: Art Programming at River Rock, an Adult Day Program

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,360

PUBLIC BENEFIT

"For many of our River Rock clients, this is their only opportunity to participate fully in these activities - and the exposure to different forms of creative expression sparks so much joy and opportunity for creative self-expression." There's really not much more to add beyond this statement, is there?

Inclusive and engaging programming for persons with disabilities.

This program seems to have so much public benefit. Everyone deserves to be able to enjoy art no matter what level of their physical or developmental ability. I appreciate this organization for keeping their community at the forefront and for making art accessible to everyone.

The River Rock Day program exemplifies the organization's responsiveness to community needs; they listened and responded to feedback surrounding young adults with disabilities. This demonstrates a track record of community-responsive programming and its leadership in this area in the region.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

It was frustrating to read about the lack of available free tickets to ACC at the CMA and other organizations, like the symphony orchestra. Their willingness to expose their clients to cultural events is stellar and should be applauded and supported. especially given the many nationally renowned cultural institutions in Cleveland. In addition, their goal to continue their interactive live music program is commendable. Music has a powerful impact on the spirit, the mind and the body. And while providing visiting teaching artists with work may be more in keeping with "public benefit," it also contributes to the group's cultural vibrancy.

Funding visiting artists with majority of project budget for arts and cultural workers.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

That it's been in operating since 1947 is remarkable, especially considering that one wouldn't expect for the community to have been all that sensitive to the needs of disabled people back then. The growth in their budgetary capacity is a mark of their resilience and evidence of their positive contributions to the community.

Their organizational capacity is evidenced by experienced leadership (the program manager has 27+ years of relevant experience).

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: America Asian Pacific Islander Organization

Project Title: The Indigenous Voyage To Hawaii

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This organization will be beneficial to the 5%-7% of Pacific Islander Identifications and as well for the general public.

I feel as if this project provides fairly strong evidence that the funding criteria is being met, particularly as it pertains to public benefit. You are highlighting a facet of the community that the general public of Cuyahoga County may not be aware of and doing it in an engaging, approachable manner. And hosting it at the public library offers accessibility and the right atmosphere for cross-cultural exchange and exploration.

Applicant defines the community as those interested in the project and how they promote the project

The organization adequate evidence that it was conducting outreach to the public, but did not address understanding, respecting, and sharing power with its community; listening and responding to its community; or building and strengthening relationships.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Appreciate that you are paying all of your artists and they seem to have strong expertise and passion for their art forms (music, dance). And, nice integration of global and local history through arts and through your research and powerpoint presentation.

Applicant is working intentionally with professional dancers in NEO as well as Hawaii to create an deeply culturally vibrant project.

The organization provided strong evidence for artistic & cultural vibrancy through the project summary and supporting materials. The videos submitted effectively demonstrate the variety of dance that will included in the program.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

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ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Just a note: Link 3 appears to be broken. Loved the videos. I would have liked a little more detail in the expenses, as opposed to round numbers that feel more like estimated expenses. And, just a note to also proofread the application (this did not count against your score but I know it can derail some reviewers). Nice supplemental videos. Nice to see the facebook group to see the types of gatherings and programs offered.

Based on the project application, the organization appears to have the capacity to produce this program. The organization has produced similar programs for ten years and contracts with experienced dancers.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: America SCORES Cleveland

Project Title: America SCORES Cleveland's Power of Poetry

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The numbers reported in the application are sobering and reason enough for the group to demonstrate public benefit, especially since the majority of the students involved come from historically marginalized communities (nearly 46% of youth in the city live in poverty; only 30% of 3rd graders and 24% of 6th graders in the school district scored proficient on state reading tests. 100% are considered economically disadvantaged). The reference to the Laureus USA study also emphasizes the long-term impact of this sort of work.

Helping to build future leaders and continue to improve communities.

This application does a great job of outlining the goals and metrics important to them as well as the statistical composition of the communities they serve.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Given the power that electronic games and media have over today's youth, a program to encourage literary expression is welcome. The application mentions that the student's low proficiency in reading doesn't directly relate to potential. This is true. The curriculum provides a clear and very good structure for the path of learning. Exposure to different ways of self-expression is one of the great advantages of participating in the arts, either as an observer or as an artist.

Promoting equity and inclusion within their community

Poetry is such an underrated genre of literature. I appreciate this organization for spotlighting this genre and highlighting Slam poetry in general. I commend the organization for fostering a love of words in their audience. This not only contributes to the artistic landscape of the community but also allows for the participants to express themselves in ways that our tech obsessed society does not allow for.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Healthy budget and a strong history. "Serves 325 3rd - 5th graders with the students receiving after-school poetry and writing lessons, twice a week for a period of 11 weeks." Sustaining this activity long-term is evidence of the group's organizational capacity. The biggest expense in the budget is administrative. The curriculum timeline is another example of strong planning and capacity. The organization works with teaching artists to lead the programs; the ability to arrange and organize all of the components of the workshops also speaks to organizational capacity.

Clear goals stated.

The application showcases strong programmatic design, including a focus on the support of "poet-athletes." Also, there is an opportunity to strengthen demographic alignment by ensuring leadership is more reflective of the diversity of the community served.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: American Hungarian Friends of Scouting

Project Title: 70th Annual Hungarian Festival

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This organization seems very impactful within the community.

I feel as if this application ranks strong on public benefit building upon long-standing community partnerships and relationships, providing an accessible event, and supporting cross-cultural exchange in fun, culturally-vibrant ways.

The inclusion of the valu-pak coupons helps ensure access and the applicant demonstrates strong commitment to its community through decades-long returning volunteers and a deep knowledge of the Hungarian culture.

The organization has a robust outreach program and intentionally tries to reach different communities in the area. The increased focus on youth programming will help to expand the organization's audience and continue its relevance in the future.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This organization brings the Hungarian culture to the community.

Again, strong...engages a good team of diverse arts and cultural professionals. Would love to see more evidence of a reflective process.

The organization provides a unique cultural experience for people in the Cleveland area. The variety of activities, including interactive dance, folk music, and art, offers something for everyone.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

They appear to be in a strong financial position and have executed this event across multiple years with evidence of success and strong financial positioning.

The organization has a dedicated team of volunteers and families with decades of experience producing this event, as well as collaborations with local arts organizations.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: American Slovenian Polka Foundation

Project Title: 62nd Annual Thanksgiving Polka Weekend and Polka Music Awards

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This group is motivated to preserve a cultural and historical tradition in music and dance. As stated in the application, descendants of this cultural tradition continue to enjoy its programs. Providing cultural activities that attract the older members of our community is valuable. Its expansion into the old city hall as a museum also demonstrates its longevity and public interest. Planning meetings with the community in the spring prior to the event allows for the public to provide input, be involved.

Applicant understands it's community, but also attracting new diverse populations.

I am so excited to know that there is an active Polka Museum and a Polka Festival! I am even more excited to know that this organization is reaching out and cultivating audiences that would not typically be into Polka! That's how art stays alive!

Solid understanding of the community they serve. Moreover, there is a financial bump to the county as a result of this event.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Competitions, performances, awards and more all combine to produce a vibrant event.

Maintaining a Cleveland tradition. Aware of target communities and new persons exploring.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The people behind the organization are involved and contribute much to the weekend's success. The application lists the many types of volunteers that give of their expertise. It also notes the economic impact of the weekend, the hotel nights sold, the buses that come from elsewhere that bring the audiences to Cleveland. There's a sense of enthusiasm about producing the event that comes through in reading the application. However, it's not entirely clear that the group has met the criteria in the

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

guidelines. Are they evolving now? How are they broadcasting a sense of welcome to others? Is it possible for them to recruit one or two people from outside their immediate population in order to diversify their board?

Evident the applicant will continue as the "buckle" of Polka Belt

The organization seems skilled at pulling off this caliber of event and they seem to be good stewards of the funds that they have received and the staff seems to be committed and organized.

Curious how this organization evaluates their programming and how or if they plan on evolving the weekend's events and offerings.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Arts Renaissance Tremont

Project Title: In Memory of Chris Haff Paluck

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization is bringing music to the community and honoring one of their members.

I rated this as strong public benefit with a commitment to diverse artists and community members serving as volunteers and board members Nice partnerships.

Applicant intentionally fosters relationships with the local CDC, churches, and schools, broadening its audience and benefiting the public.

The organization appears to have strong roots in the community and provides programming that would not otherwise exist.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The organization is presenting various forms of music to the community. However, there should be more diversity within the musicians.

I rated this as fair to strong. Would love to see more about how the process of reflection is strengthening the relevance of your programming. Good commitment to diversity.

The YouTube video really showcases the organization's work and the venue is the perfect setting.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as fair to strong organizational capacity, given leadership transition and some of the inconsistencies in the application, listed below. Some inconsistencies to address...In the budget, income total is listed as \$15,500, but expenses total \$11,425. Either increase expense categories (artist fees, marketing, admin) or adjust income sources. In "Organization Overview and History," ART is said to be founded in 1991, but the "Date Organization Formed" is listed as 1990.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

Applicant has clearly explained its renewed capacity after some rocky years, and the passion is palpable in the application.

The organization's board provides a diverse set of skills and knowledge and many have a long history with the organization. They seem well-positioned to continue and grow the organization.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Association of African American Cultural Garden

Project Title: Juneteenth Celebration at the African American Cultural Garden

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 7.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The very purpose of their organization is to create a public benefit, one in keeping with other similar gardens in Cleveland. Beyond that, Juneteenth is an important date in the calendar year. The event is free.

Public event engages community.

This festival seems to bring a a lot of cultural relevancy and vibrancy. Juneteenth is a celebration and I commend this organization for committing to the celebration. I suggest a bit more marketing to bring in a bigger and more diverse audience and volunteers.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The Juneteenth program doesn't list any of the cultural programs referenced in the narrative. Food and libations are the first things described---considering the purpose of this funder, perhaps a few more details in the narrative about who the groups are would be helpful. The budget doesn't reference any expenses related to cultural groups appearing that day (presumably, they're all pro bono---is that what the in-kind line item is for)?

Celebrating through arts and culture. Contributing to city's "cultural gardens"

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Interesting to note that the expenses in the Table has \$0 marked for arts & cultural professionals.

The leadership is reflective of the community it serves. Curious what the marketing plan for this project is in more depth: does it include social media, word of mouth, etc?

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Association of Asian Indian Women In Ohio

Project Title: Children's Day Event and Event for Special Need Kids

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 6.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Truly appreciate the organization focusing on special needs children.

I rated the public benefit of this application as strong. Events are accessible based on cost and location. Nice to include a special needs event. Would love to see more evidence of how community voices shape these events and how power is shared.

The applicant describes the community as the general public, which can be fine, but doesn't explain much of how to connect with them or how they foster relationships with schools to better support the community.

The organization did not provide enough detail on how its programs will benefit the public.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This organization will be bringing the culture of Asian-Indian to the community.

I rated this as fair to strong. Good programming direction with the incorporation of focus on special needs. Staff is qualified and engagement of the Indian community is evident. Would love to see clearer evidence of the process of reflection and engagement.

The project summary is vague and it's unclear what activities will take place.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as fair to strong in organizational capacity. Team roles are clearly described. Reasonable budget. Would love a clearer articulation of desired goals and plans to measure progress toward those goals.

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This isn't a negative but a note that 50 seems like a very low count for participants/audience member for these events. The budget request from CAC is \$1,250, but only \$1,100 is explained in the expenses.

The project budget is concerning. The only income listed is the requested CAC grant and the organization is planning to lose money on the event. No matching funds are listed, as is required.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Babel Box Theater

Project Title: Cassandra

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I understand that this is a project-based grant, but there is not enough supported material to express how this organization is beneficial to the community outside of this play.

I rated this project as strong in terms of public benefit. I appreciate the diversity of locations, the intentional casting, the engagement of community in aspects. I would love to see more examples of power sharing and listening and responding to the community, but this is a great start.

The incorporation of interviews with transgender people from the community and plans to travel the show around the county clearly demonstrate public benefit.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There isn't much evidence (website, social media, Supported Material) to show other programs and events that is planned by this organization for the community.

I rated this project as having very strong artistic and cultural vibrancy--ranging from the selection of this production to the casting choices to the staff listed, this is a great example of artistic and cultural vibrancy as defined by CAC. I would have

Applicant demonstrates artistic vibrancy through its intentional search for inclusive partners and a trans actress.

This project seeks to tell a unique story in a very interesting way. I love the themes that will be presented in this play and their relevance in the current political climate. The YouTube video about the process for costume design is fascinating and show

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ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as fair to strong in terms of organizational capacity. It is an ambitious production with well-qualified staff. I would love to see better articulation of your desired goals and how you plan to measure your progress toward them.

The creative team appears to be extremely talented and accomplished. I'm a little confused by the project budget, which shows \$30,000 in expenses but only \$10,000 in income, including the CAC grant request.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Baldwin Wallace University

Project Title: BW Summer Arts Programs

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This application has a really thorough breakdown of the community BW serves AND how it serves them!

With the application stating "not sure" when asked if the majority of individuals served identify as BIPOC, there is only some evidence that it actually serves a diverse community. Also, the supplemental material shows that there is a financial barrier to entry, without specific counter measure to make it inviting and accessible.

Baldwin Wallace demonstrates through the application an understanding of its community and a strong desire to remain receptive and relevant to its members. It would be even better if specific examples of the partnerships were provided, e.g., which social service agencies, which local schools?

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This project does a great job of building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals, helping them to thrive.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The application has provided sufficient evidence that the program comes from careful and strategic financial planning

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Beachwood Arts Council

Project Title: Sunday Sounds

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This organization wants to conduct 6 events with different musical taste which can engage with multiple cultures. It's very important that the organization includes free programs within their events and programs.

I rated this project as having fair public benefit. I appreciate that the concerts are free and take place at an accessible location within the community. I would like to see more evidence of power sharing with community members and further investment in listening and responding to the community and then being inclusive. I do think that the diversity in programming is a good step toward creating more inclusive and engaging opportunities for diverse audiences.

The organization strives to be accessible by offering their programming for free, reaching out to diverse communities through the local school system, and performing in an accessible building. Working with their new consultant may allow the organization the opportunity to expand its offerings and reach new audiences.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This organization's programs include music and arts for the community of Cuyahoga.

I thought this application was strong in this aspect. You are engaging diverse, experienced arts and cultural practitioners in order to offer more opportunities that appeal to difference audiences. I would like to see more evidence of capacity building an

Applicant demonstrates cultural vibrancy though intentionally working with a new artist consultant to bring in different artists and also connect with the community deeper.

The project description was too vague to determine if the program will meet this criterion.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

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ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this fair to strong in organizational capacity. Your budget seems solid and you seem to have solid financial footing. I would love to see more formalized community partnerships, as well as explicit statement of goal setting and measurement of progress toward those goals.

I feel confident the organization is capable of successfully producing this series of performances, given its long history and the expertise of the board and the new consultant.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Bedford Historical Society

Project Title: 2026 Speaker Series

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 6.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$3,060

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This is a great way to share power within community. Providing a list of local partners and method for implementing the project and selecting speakers, would strengthen the application.

I wanted to know more about Bedford and Bedford Township. Defining your community more clearly would have helped me understand your project further, especially since there are many panelists who are not local to the Cuyahoga County. Questions that I wished were answered in this application include: - When was Bedford and Bedford Township established? - Who lives in the Bedford area? What are the demographics? - What is the history of Bedford, and what is your Speaker Series specifically addressing with each event? - Who are the speakers? What's the relationship between them and Bedford Historical Society (i.e. an invited speaker is a longtime volunteer for BHS)? How were the speakers and their topics selected (i.e. votes from the community)? The support materials help with giving me an idea of what your 2026 speaker series will be like. - How many volunteers will be involved? Who are they?

The series is designed to be free and I see a level of care that went into the planning in regards to scheduling a location so that it benefits the majority of the public.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The expense table was clearly completed so that it provides evidence that the project will be managed in a fiscally responsible manner

The organization provides scant evidence in each funding criteria. While it shows an understanding of its geographically delimited community, there is insufficient detail regarding its organizational capacity, particularly through the budget (with 1/3 of its expenses listed as "other.")

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: BigHearted Blooms

Project Title: Flower Design Workshops in Urban Neighborhoods

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The intentionality with which the applicant engages with neighborhoods and is aware of neighborhood demographics conveys strong understanding, respect, and sharing power with its community.

I loved reading about how BHB doesn't just impact participants, but also the people who are gifted these artworks, or who walk by them in public places. It's a great visual of the impact created through this project.

The applicant demonstrates evidence of awareness of need to diversify its program's audience, however, it does not go into detail of how it will diversity its audience.

The organization clearly demonstrates through numerous examples an understanding of its community. BHB calls out specific partners and neighborhoods primed for increased attention and activation. It is dedicated to not simply forming new bonds, but strengthening existing ones and evolving its programming to best fit the needs of its community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

application has sufficiently demonstrated the staff's qualifications to carry out the program repeatedly.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Brecksville Theatre

Project Title: The Brecksville Theatre's Traveling Education Series

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Their outreach is broad, a critical point, as is the fact that they have years of experience working with established partners. Tailoring the project to better meet the specific communities they impact heightens their effectiveness. They make the point that inclusivity is central to their work. "Intentional hiring" also seems to support this point. Study guides a plus for classroom discussion & involvement. Especially when working with kids, a post-show Q + A session can broaden the impact of the performance on the young audience. Applaud their scholarship program.

Applicant states it is aware and open to ideas, with regard to serving community, but entry could benefit additional detail.

The proposal talks about the importance of "Understanding the community" as vital to their success however, the proposal does not include any specifics regarding said community. What may support future applications is speaking to the types of diversity -- geographic, age, ethnic, etc. -- that they have entertained during their traveling shows.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

As a teenager, I was the lucky recipient of performances by a traveling professional theater. No coincidence that I grew up to be a life-long lover of theater. They may never know the impact their work may have on the children in their audiences.

A traveling theatre production based on a selected piece of children's literature is a wonderful way to bring art to the community. I commend the organization for partnering with schools and local libraries to bring this project to life. I commend the organization for fostering engagement with their audiences by hosting Post-Show Q&A's and talkbacks. What wonderful way to bring audiences into the world of literature and acting!

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The description of their leadership team shows on-target experience needs to produce a project of this kind. Distributing surveys for feedback can be a powerful tool for shaping future efforts.

Mentioning "past venues" was helpful/more detailed than just "a variety of public places" was helpful.

The team has a great deal of collective experience in performance and with children.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Broadview Brecksville Heights Community Chorus

Project Title: Celebrate America -- 250 Years of Freedom

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I rated this project as fair for public benefit. The thematic exploration of freedom, justice, and civic responsibility, demonstrates a commitment to inclusion and diversity, but I feel like I would like to see more explicit examples of listening and responding to the community, being inclusive of diverse populations, and understanding, respecting, and sharing power with its community.

Applicant is demonstrating a commitment to growing its community and building relationships now that it is a c3 organization.

BBHCC's non-audition policy ensures that anyone who wants to participate can. And its extensive outreach efforts reaches a broad audience. Additionally, offering two free performances will remove barriers for many to attend.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Even though this is a good organization; however, there isn't enough diversity within the organization.

I feel as if this project is fair to strong in this particular category. I appreciate the commissioning of a new choral work. I would like to see more evidence of a diverse team engaged and a process of reflection.

Applicant is tapping into the culture of America-250 with an intentionally created work for this series.

I like that BBHCC staff helped to create this composition and that the work was designed with the intention of challenging choral members artistically, helping them grow as artists.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I thought the organizational capacity was fair to strong. Again, I would love more evidence of retention of diverse staff, evaluation as it applies to goal-setting and monitoring. Just a note, I was unable to access the google drive without being granted permission.

The project details are clear and well-planned and the staff seem capable of producing the event. Just an FYI- access for the Google Drive is restricted and I was unable to view the documents.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Brooklyn Heights Service Clubs

Project Title: Brooklyn Heights Art in the Park

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The program is catered to children within in the community to help keep the children learning and occupied during the summer which is helpful regarding keeping children out of trouble. However, I did not see enough diversity within the children from the supported material attached to the application.

I rated this as fair to strong in public benefit. I appreciate the commitment to active listening to the public and responding to the community. I would love more explicit examples of sharing power with community members. I do appreciate the accessibility of the programming, from an interest standpoint as well as cost and location.

The applicant lists several ways it is accessible to the broader community, through free programming, welcoming of volunteers, bringing in artists, and inviting the public to attend and observe.

BHSC demonstrates that it is committed to being inclusive and engaging diverse populations. The organization recognizes the changes in its neighborhood and embraces those changes.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The children will be learning art, history, science, etc. which can help increase the children's skills and knowledge about the community that they live in.

I rated this as fair to strong in artistic and cultural vibrancy. I appreciate the breadth of offerings and paying local artists and partnering with organizations to offer engaging programming. I would have loved more explicit statements or examples of ho

The programs offered are a great way to expose youth to different forms of art in a fun, relaxed way. I like that the organization encourages interactive programming and offers field trips to local attractions.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as fair to strong. Would love to see more evidence of longterm community partnerships, explicit explanation of goal setting and measurement of your progress towards those goals. The program does seem well thought out with a history of successful implementation.

BHSC seems to have systems and staff in place to successfully produce these programs. Just an FYI- the project dates listed are incorrect.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Building Heights

Project Title: Heights Middle School Shorts

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 6.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

It looks like the response to question 7 is cut off that provides more insight into the community served by this project.

The answer to define the community Building Heights serves was incomplete, so I was not able to completely understand who the organization/project is serving. That being said, the support materials gave me a good sense of the community. The videos in particular were great context on how participants feel about the programming, as well as the news report inviting community members to the public screening.

The application does not go into specific detail about how it eliminates the barriers to entry, or actively engages the students for the program.

Unfortunately, it looks like the organization submitted an incomplete application (see question 7).

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The generative and responsive nature of this project fulfills its criteria for artistic and cultural vibrancy.

The application sufficiently demonstrates how the program will benefit the students, and the staff's qualifications to carry out the program.

The artistic vibrancy of the program is clear, and the program provides an in-depth array of coursework for students.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I was curious about the expenses being twice the amount of the income side of the budget.

It looks like there is an error in the budget, with \$30,000 dedicated to administrative expenses.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Canalway Partners

Project Title: Towpath Trail Lantern Parade

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The facilitation of community classes, and a call for artists, fulfill the criteria for public benefit.

I was curious about the total population of the described geographic community. I was also curious about how many visitors are recorded/estimated throughout the year. Although the Towpath Lantern Parade sounds like a unique community-based event, I wanted to see more information around accessibility. How many free events to make lanterns will there be? How physically accessible is the parade, and what accommodations based on mobility/language barrier/age, if any, are offered?

As a free event, the program certainly is accessible, and has almost no barrier to entry. However, the application does not continue to provide evidence as to how it fosters belonging.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The Lantern Parade compensates artists for their work (with an open RFP process), and simultaneously involves the public in artmaking (and upcycling). This is only part of the strong evidence of the artistic and cultural vibrancy of the project.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization collects clear metrics from past years, including social media and attendance.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Case Western Reserve University

Project Title: 2026 Cleveland Humanities Festival: Freedom

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 9.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The theme of the event, "Freedom," is very informative to the community and it's important that the organization is planning to open the event beyond the university.

I rated this as strong public benefit. I particularly appreciated the good partnerships (longstanding) and the incorporation of community members in the planning.

Applicant demonstrates a commitment to the community by inviting so many into the planning process, including extending invitations to those they don't yet know through existing partners to create an inclusive, vibrant, and diverse event.

I like that BNI has collaborative partnerships with a variety of organizations in the county, and a good mix of students and general public attendees. The broad theme of this year's event allows organizations to interpret freedom in a way that aligns with their missions and values.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

From reviewing the application and the website, this organization plans numerous events that includes different cultures and backgrounds.

I rated this as strong in terms of artistic and cultural vibrancy. I found this to be a great thematic application and very much appreciated your commitment to inclusion. Great partnerships and thought toward impact and identity.

The proposed project is extremely relevant considering the conversations occurring in the country. This will be thought provoking for the residents of the county and hugely beneficial to their understanding of what it means to be free. This sounds like an

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as strong in organizational capacity, as well. Strong financial positioning and execution. Strong partnerships and team. Nice application.

BNI has qualified, experienced staff and long history of producing this event. Its collaborative partnerships with local arts, education, and cultural organizations ensures that many viewpoints will be represented.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland

Project Title: Fatima Family Center 2026 – Embracing the Arts

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The children who engage in these activities are getting the benefit of instruction in different types of artistic expression. Perhaps they're being introduced to certain art forms for the first time or they're learning what they're capable of during the participation. Their families seem to be invested in what their children have learned as demonstrated in the provided video sample.

Serving persons near/within the applicant's physical address/neighborhood. Inclusion is embedded.

Per the proposal, feedback is robustly woven into their programmatic process. Also, this organization's service has been woven through generations, i.e. "Fatima Family Center is a special place. It now has four generations of residents."

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The video that accompanies the application is a delight. It clearly shows enthusiastic community engagement and examples of the children's participation in arts learning. The narrative details who will be leading the teaching sessions and what they will teach. The services to the neighborhood and its residents appear to be thoughtful and sincere. Moreover, they reflect the neighborhood's cultural identity, which is very important.

Teaching artists, educators, and facilitators are a hub for residents.

This celebration of music within Black History month is an amazing concept. To celebrate such a vibrant and dynamic culture through art is much needed.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

This is a long-standing organization with a level of professionalism that is reflected in the operating budget. Ultimately, the proof of an organization's capacity is in the events it produces, as well as the

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

quality of what it produces. The Diocese's organizational capacity, at least in regards to these programs, is top-notch.

Evaluative measure in place that inform future programming

This organization seems to be functioning at a high capacity. The Budget looks clear, the staff seems knowledgeable and talented and the project seems organized and sensible.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District

Project Title: Cedar Fairmount Summer Festival

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Although this event is beneficial to the artists and the community, the event seems to be lacking diversity amongst the community.

I rated this as fair to strong in public benefit. For it to be stronger, I would love to see more evidence of power sharing and responsiveness to the community, more evidence of the residents of Cleveland Heights and the surrounding communities in decision-making positions. I do think the festival is inclusive and inviting to its targeted audience of residents and business owners. Good engagement of the business owners. Would love to see more explicitly stated examples of partnership versus just hosting nonprofits and other orgs at the festival.

More information about the community specifically would strengthen the application; however, the intentional outreach to many arts organizations and neighborhood nonprofits to strengthen the festival is great.

Good involvement with local nonprofits, arts and cultural organizations. The free event, with intergenerational activities should draw a diverse crowd. Not much detail on how the organization will connect with the community. Links to the organization's website or videos from previous events would have been helpful.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

It's a great event to have the community and the artists collaborate together.

I rated this as fair to strong. Good variety of opportunities offered and provided by a team of arts and cultural professionals. I would love to see more explicit statement of how a process of reflection ensures that programming is relevant or co-created

There is not much detail in the application about what types of arts and cultural activities or performances will be available.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as strong. Good partnerships with businesses and longevity. Seems financially healthy and stable. Would love to hear more about how you are measuring progress.

This should be a successful event, with the organization's long history of producing the fair and the executive director's extensive experience.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Center for Employment Opportunities

Project Title: Cleveland's Returning Citizens: Exploring Incarceration Trauma thru Art Therapy

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,950

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Deep impact on a small group of people is as viable as serving a large group at a cultural event. That the arts are successfully used as a key to therapy is the primary point here.

Art therapy and reentry program benefits all communities.

I greatly appreciate the thorough and well fleshed out description of the proposed project. Art Therapy is an underrated tool of healing and I am heartened to hear that this organization is using it to continue community healing.

This organization listens to its constituency and executes. The arts therapy program was created from participants expressing a need for it.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Contracting a trained art therapist is essential. Background about the resources for engaging an art therapist through the Guild, Wallstreet Wes, Art Therapy Studios is important to know, so that the panel gets a sense of the resources relied upon for identifying the therapists. The description of how the participants utilize the therapy sessions is enlightening, especially in how "each activity is designed to explore a behavior related to traumatic experiences." Understanding about the benefits of wellbeing programs that utilize art is growing. Glad to see that CEO caught on in 2024.

Trained art therapist. Artistic vibrancy through safe and inclusive environment.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization "has grown to be one of the largest reentry employment providers in the country with the capacity to serve nearly 8,000 justice-involved individuals and their families annually across 31 sites in 12 states." It's hard to argue with the level of the group's organizational capacity given that overview.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

Given that, an explanation of why project support grants and final reports haven't been completed comes as a surprise. An explanation would have been helpful.

Program is recent addition but anticipates continued work via partnerships.

The organizations team is packed with knowledge and experience. I have no doubt that this organization will be excellent stewards of any funds received.

Curious how this organization measures its programming. What is it's definition of success? What metrics do they track?

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cesear's Forum

Project Title: Conversations after a Burial

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Forum's focus on challenging, vanguard theater is commendable and a necessary component of a vibrant theater community. The samples of productions that are provided (Reza, Wilson) reveal their commitment to thinking audiences.

"Thinking theater-goes" could benefit from an additional statement or two (backup).

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Producing a work by Yasmina Reza is always a wise artistic decision! Her plays are thought-provoking and highly engaging. Gold stars for the company's use of students to help their professional development. It appears that they have attracted a loyal following that understands the company's minimalist approach to production and its emphasis on unconventional works. The review of the Lanford Wilson production is a smart use of an attachment.

Avant-garde and unique theater coupled with moderate pricing and enlightenment contribute to cultural vibrancy.

I appreciate this organization for bringing engaging and thought provoking theatre to the community. I also appreciate bringing theatre students in to boost their professional resumes and to hone their craft through intelligent theatre and through working with seasoned professionals. I love the involvement with the community by hosting post performance talkbacks.

This organization has ongoing engagement between the work and the audience. Defining their audience as "the thinking theater-goer," this applicant has made an intriguing case for their programming and value in the community. Also, I'm curious how this o

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Very small operating budget. Fortunate in their venue location. A bit of confusion over the initial description of "Canadian Gothic" and the proposal for the Reza play, but no matter. The company has been around since 1993, which ought to speak to capacity that is at least strong enough to keep it active for more than 30 years.

Attention to resident and artists and regional work(s) may help ensure continuation of applicant's work.

This organization's prioritization of employing local and emerging artists is a strong display of their values and community driven programming.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: City Club of Cleveland

Project Title: 2026 City Club Authors in Conversation Series

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

An enormously impressive history of presenting top speakers covering a wide range of topics. The support that City Club provides the authors and local booksellers is exceptional. Important mission, even more so in the current political climate (Chasten Buttigieg and William Barr in the same season!). I wondered about the cost of the luncheons and whether that makes attendance prohibitive for potential audiences. Livestreaming and archiving for free is a commendable plus (almost as many watching online as attending in person). A group that any town would wish to have in their community.

Applicant listening to the community and diverse representation via programs, partners, and staff. Relies on community engagement.

This is a very thorough and well written application.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Interesting emphasis on non-fiction writers, whose varied topics must invite memorable q + a sessions. The caliber of the authors that City Club presents is incredibly high. Appreciate the partnership with the Cleveland Foundation to include an Anisfield-Wolf Book Award winner. The fact that they livestream and archive their programs go against any perception of their audience being exclusive, given that the luncheons are ticketed and can only accommodate 330 people.

Intentional artistic/cultural vibrancy.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The City Club's accomplishments over the years are impressive. Minor note: the guidelines request that project dates not be for an entire calendar year. Are programs produced every month? (After reading the list of authors from 2015-2024, it does seem that programs are also produced during the summer months).

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

Long standing tradition of dialogue and discourse will continue.

The organizational capacity of this organization is to be commended. Keeping a 100 year old body dedicated to literacy is no small feat. I commend the organizations for partnering with schools and local bookshops to host these discussions.

This applicant states a commitment to diversity through leadership and programmatic offerings.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Arts Education Consortium

Project Title: CAEC - Arts Education Service in Action

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The main goal is to gather "arts educators and staff from organizations of all sizes around one table to strengthen and promote arts education in Northeast Ohio." Advocating for arts education in NE Ohio and leveraging resources to enhance arts education are stipulated as just two of their service efforts.

Applicant acknowledges not much diversity amongst leadership, but those served may differ. A line or two with regard to future plan(s) or intentional outreach may be beneficial.

I commend this organization for its focus on art in education, especially the Arts plus STEM=STEAM. I think its important to show how art impacts everything. I also think that the programs aimed at educating the educators are very beneficial to everyone.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I appreciate that the overall goal of CAEC is to enhance arts education. But I'm unsure how to rate the artistic & cultural vibrancy of their work. Much of what I read appears to be work related to advocacy, which is in itself crucial and relates to vibrancy. However, it leaves me questioning the artistic component of their work. This despite the direction provided in the guidelines: *Incorporating a process of reflection to ensure that programming is relevant to or created with its community *Building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals, helping them to thrive *Engaging a diverse team of arts and cultural professionals qualified to achieve the mission.

A focus on professional development and the community of arts educators.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Formerly under another nonprofit/univ. Continuation is evident.

Curious how this organization evaluates its programming and what metrics, they deem, are important for them to track. They have a solid marketing plan.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Clinic Foundation

Project Title: Utilizing the Arts to Promote Healthy Aging in Our Community

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

From what is submitted this project seems like a study that doesn't fulfill the criteria of public benefit as described within this application - understanding, respecting, and sharing power with its community.

I really appreciated the full explanation of the "why" of this project and what role it fills in the community at the start of the Project Summary response.

The applicant is clear that it will serve older adults that are living in the community and are participating in its program, however, I do not see evidence that helps me reconcile the large scope that the application is describing, and the expected participant number of 30.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The application has only somewhat sufficient evidence to demonstrate the team's qualifications. Other than the medical professionals, the artists' qualifications are not sufficiently mentioned.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget totals for income and expenses was not filled in.

By partnering with the Beck Center, Cleveland Clinic demonstrates that it is willing and able to outsource expertise in specific artistic areas. They have a clearly articulated goal of using the program to identify programming for older adults that would promote healthy aging, and they have set about this process intentionally and methodically.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Composers Guild

Project Title: Creativity: Learning through Experience XXXIV

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

From the application and website, I am noticing a lack of diversity to help promote public benefit.

I rated this project as strong in terms of public benefit. I appreciate the deep nature of the relationships and the closeness of the working relationships. And the building of relationships between local composers, students, teachers, and professional musicians is beautiful.

The application/recommendation process ensures a variety of students from diverse communities have the opportunity to participate. I would like to see more information on how the final concert is marketed to the wider community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This organization willingness to include students, teachers, and composers is very important to the artistic community.

I rated this as strong in artistic and cultural vibrancy. Again, the depth and long-standing nature of the relationships allows you to really cultivate the connections and therefore pass along the passion for new composition and for music performance while

The inclusion of stipends to all involved as well as the acknowledgement that students and composers grow as artists through working with each other seems to ensure artistic vibrancy.

This sounds like an amazing program! Pairing students with living composers to perform new works offers a unique opportunity for them to grow their talents and expand their understanding of classical music. And having compositions written specifically for

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as strong, as well. The budget seems solid and well supported and you have a good track record of execution. Would love to see more explicit statement of how you are measuring your progress toward your goals, but a beautifully complex and well articulated program with deep impact. Nice job.

The organization has a long history of producing this program and working with talented, local composers. The project description is concise and well organized.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Contemporary Chinese Culture Association

Project Title: Cultural and Arts Performances for Seniors

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This organization brings the Chinese Culture to the Ohio Area and bring the importance of including the elders with this event.

I rated this project application as strong regarding public benefit. It demonstrates a deep understanding of and respect for the Chinese community and the cultural value of filial piety that supports the intergenerational aspect of this programming, particularly as it serves the health and well-being of seniors in the community. It is inclusive to both those within the community from multiple generations but also to the general public and is accessible and inviting.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This event will include the younger and older generations to help inform younger generations and the Ohio Community of the Chinese Culture.

I rated this as strong in artistic and cultural vibrancy. Obviously rooted in strong relationships within the Chinese and Chinese American community and showcasing cultural traditions allows for them to promote diversity and engage a diverse team of arts

The project seems to be deeply rooted in the culture of the community demonstrating cultural vibrancy.

The supporting materials were beneficial to my understanding of the project, as there was not much detail about the planned performances.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as strong--longstanding relationships within the community with a solid financial plan and footing. Only note is that I would love to hear how they are measuring their progress and effectiveness. Else, great program, nice application.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

The income chart only includes the CAC request, not the required match, though there are expenses totaling more than double the request.

The project budget only shows the CAC grant request as income and the budget is unbalanced. Also, the start and end dates of the project are the entire calendar year.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Grays Armory Museum

Project Title: Unwritten History: A Grays Lecture Series

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$3,487

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Public benefit isn't entirely clear as we're not given any details about the lecture series. We don't know the topics to be presented, who the speakers will be, and when the lectures will take place. The narrative states that "speakers are selected to interest a wide diversity of guests." Will any of these lectures be crafted to attract different segments of the community, like the examples provide of "Women in the Civil War" and the Tuskegee Airmen? It isn't clear what specifically they will do to involve "all ages, sexes and cultural groups to attend"? What is meant by "cultural groups"? (Perhaps "gender" would be a better word to use than "sex"?) What ideas or direction have they called from the evaluations? Does the Armory collaborate or partner with other local nonprofits?

Applicant states range in speakers/topics help to diversity audiences. Continuing to work on welcoming all.

The preservation of history is so important to how we grow and advance as a society. If history is not preserved, we cannot learn from our failures and wins. I appreciate this organizations commitment to historical preservation and to telling the stories of our military and service members.

This is, overall, a very thorough application. Also appreciated the candor regarding COVID's impact on programming. What could strengthen the application is, after writing that this programming has been in place for a few years, what have you learned and how would you like to see programming evolve.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

A brief summary of what a visitor would experience in visiting the Armory would be helpful. What kind of objects are in the collection? How many? How does leadership and curatorial representatives interpret the history? Costumes, posters, film clips? Are there exhibits created especially for kids?

Project Summary could benefit from additional detail with regard to the lectures, beyond the statement, "...series that revolves around a variety of historic and military topics..."

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

A positive that the programs are free. The expenses and revenues in the proposed budget don't match. The narrative raises more questions than it answers. More specific details would counter the overall sense of vagueness.

9K in venue or space rental expenses seem odd for applicant/host of programming.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Inner City Ballet

Project Title: Neighborhood Ballet Tea Party Tour 2026

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Involving children in dance is always a plus. Classes are provided in an inner city ward, also a plus to involve underserved neighborhoods. It would be helpful to name the 3 public libraries, the 3 schools and where the Brownhoist is (as a non-resident of Cleveland, I don't know what or where that is). If venues and dates are not confirmed, examples from previous years can be provided.

Inviting community to programming builds stronger relationships within communities, as well as, becomes inclusive and welcoming to diverse persons within community(ies).

A ballet tea party sounds so fun! I commend the organization for bringing ballet to the people. Ballet can sometimes feel exclusive and unattainable and this organization helps solve that by making ballet accessible. This entices the community to explore art further.

Curious how this organization defines success and what metrics it tracks to make sure they are in alignment.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I've read through the application several times and can't get a sense of what exactly the program consists of. I'm assuming that there is a performance of some kind by the dance students, followed by a reception. Since the group now serves all ages, what are the ages performing? The one (charming) photograph shows very young children. Are they the focus? What music are they dancing to? How long is a performance? Does it take place in a black-box setting or a conventional theater space? Does the tea offer places for audience members to sit? Do the performances take place on weekends? Morning, afternoon or evening?

Qualified personnel ensure vibrancy.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Please make sure that the revenues and expenses match on the proposed budget. Otherwise, any panel is left with the impression that the organization is coming into the fiscal year knowing that it won't be able to cover expenses. This is a small organization with limited resources. Its capacity is in keeping with its potential. Its longevity is a decent indicator of organizational survival, but it states that it began in 1998 and that over the course of three years, it has expended and taught more than 300 neighborhood children. Where that three years fell isn't clear. When a panelist reads a grant proposal in a competitive process, unanswered questions act like red flags. Try to anticipate the questions and provide answers in your narrative whenever applying for grants.

The founding director has incredible dance and community programming experience.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Leadership Center

Project Title: Cultivating Civic Insight Through Arts & Culture

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The event from the organization includes adults and children which is important that everyone has a chance to participate.

I rated this project as strong. What would have strengthened it for me would be more demonstration of power sharing and active listening with the community. There are definite hints of it in the language you use and the statement that you are working with cultural practitioners in co-creation. I appreciate the active and current participation of staff in DE&I training and the connection to other civic organizations. And appreciate the description of CLC's work and commitment to inclusion in the community.

This sounds like a very beneficial program for a wide variety of leaders. I appreciate their intentional focus on DEI.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I rated this program as strong in artistic and cultural vibrancy. A nice mix of different offerings and engagement with community artists and cultural practitioners.

The inclusion of a past agenda helps illustrate the project significantly. Additionally, the intentional commitment to increasing participation from different populations helps ensure artistic vibrancy.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I think it is important that the organization is trying to target more BIPOC/Diversity within their leadership.

I rated this project as strong in organizational capacity, as well. Strong goals articulated. Great financial standing. Would love to hear more about how you are measuring your progress. Nice program, nice application. Well-organized and detailed application.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Neighborhood Progress

Project Title: Shaker Square Programming

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 9.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Explaining the history of Shaker Square, its deterioration and renovation illustrates the benefits to the public of the revitalization project, and how cultural events can contribute to elevating the neighborhood. The initiative is only a few years old, but it's telling that the leadership believes that this kind of scheduling is a boost to Shaker Square.

Leadership is accessible, as well as, members of community. Programming activates a public space.

This is a very well written, comprehensive proposal that shows a deep understanding of their community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

We're not given much in the way of details about the artists and performances, but the results of the programming certainly appear to speak to its vibrancy. Giving local artists of multiple disciplines an opportunity to shine is always a plus. With proper management--and sincere interest---the Series could continue to grow!

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Defining the community in question 7 was essential in providing a big picture summary of the neighborhood and the challenges it has faced and presumably continues to face. This clarifies what the challenges are and why this kind of programming is helpful to residents and visitors: a catalyst for revitalization. Clear as crystal.

This organization presents as structurally sound. Their budget seems sensible and the programming presented seems well thought out/ The marketing plan is strong and staff seems knowledgeable and experienced,

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestra

Project Title: Celebrating the Cultures of America

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$3,825

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The event is including performances from diverse cultures which will help expose the community to other cultures.

I rated this as fair. I appreciate the programming of cultures who are not always represented in classical music performance. Would love to see that planning committee not only help with promotions but also help influence your concert programming, as well as the programming supporting your concerts, as that would be a good demonstration of power sharing. I also wanted to see more evidence of existing relationships with the community and how you are listening and responding to them. I am glad you have plans to develop such partnerships.

More information on partnerships the applicant has and ways it works to reflect on the community and design programming with them in mind would strengthen the application.

I appreciate the diversity of works being considered for this project and the planned outreach efforts. More details in the project narratives section would be helpful.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Within the application, the applicant stated the majority of their audience is white, what exactly will the organization plan to create a more diverse audience?

I rated this as fair. I appreciate the attempt to diversify your concert programming and would love to hear more about the diverse team of arts and cultural professionals who are helping you achieve your mission. I would also love to hear more about how a

Tying the project to America 250 is a lovely idea.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization's leadership displays the ability to operate the organization. However, maybe include more diversity within our staff, that will increase more diversity with the audience.

I believe this has fair to strong organizational capacity. Strong financial position and a qualified staff able to execute these two concerts. I would love to see more explicit statement of setting goals, measuring progress, and evolving from that data collected.

The organization has decades of experience producing these events and seems to have qualified people in leadership.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Rape Crisis Center

Project Title: Healing Art Therapy Programming for Survivors of Sexual Violence

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 9.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The facts provided in the narrative make it absolutely clear that this group is doing crucially important work. A needs assessment and community feedback helps direct the services to align with client needs. The number of people impacted may be low, but this indicates a level of depth in the assistance (quality rather than an emphasis on quantity).

Art therapy, listening and responding to their community.

Art therapy is so important for trauma informed healing. I honestly wish that more organizations would use it as a tool to help communities heal. I commend this organization for understanding the benefits of art therapy.

This organization provides critical, trauma-informed services to survivors of rape and sexual assault and has become "a national leader in the sexual violence field and the largest rape crisis center in Ohio." The organization demonstrates both self-awareness and foresight in recognizing the importance of diversifying their leadership to reflect the lived experiences of the predominantly BIPOC community they serve. Moreover, they prioritize cultural competency and language accessibility in their offerings. The comprehensive nature of their application showcases a deep understanding of who is utilizing their services, what their immediate needs are, and how they can best reach them.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Art therapy is hugely beneficial to survivors. Here it is provided by a licensed art therapist and professional collaborators.

Diverse team of professionals.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Programs take place in three locations for easier access, several which are located in neighborhoods whose residents are predominantly Black. Programs are free.

50 years, continued growth, and model organization evident of org's capacity.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Repertory Orchestra

Project Title: Cleveland Repertory Orchestra's Fourth Season

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Exposing the community to Orchestra music is great, but from the application and website, there seems to be a lack of diversity.

I rated this as fair to strong in public benefit. The project is striving to be inclusive and accessible to diverse populations. I appreciate the performance of works by diverse composers and works that have particular resonance in today's climate. I would love to see more explicit statement of how they are sharing power with their community and/or listening and responding to their community.

I appreciate the organization's commitment to amplifying new and historically excluded voices, which helps to expand its audience.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I rated this as strong given the engagement of diverse composers and works to highlight in their performances. I would love, again, more explicit statement of how they are incorporating a process of reflection to ensure that programming is relevant or cre

Tying the project to America 250 is great! The addition of honorariums to all orchestra members and the varying formats of concerts (chamber music) helps ensure artistic vibrancy through supporting the artists and helping them grow.

The support materials, including the link to the organization's media page, were helpful in demonstrating the quality of the organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization's leadership displays the ability to operate the organization. However, maybe include more diversity within our staff.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I rated this as strong. They appear to be in a strong financial position. Would love to hear more about how they are evaluating their progress toward explicitly stated goals. Nice job.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland School of the Arts Board of Trustees

Project Title: Festival of New Works 2026

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 9.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This organization collaborate with different entities with the community which can help expand the reach of this program and organization.

I found this application to be strong in public benefit. I would love to see a more or more explicit statement indicating sharing power within the community. I do appreciate the engagement across different media and the opportunities to engage students and families.

The inclusion of the audience quote about lives being changed shows public benefit.

I appreciate that CSA reaches a very diverse group of students across the county and helps them develop their own works of art.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This event will include different types of artistic which is beneficial to the community, children, and artists involved.

I rated this as strong in artistic and cultural vibrancy, as it definitely engages a diverse, qualified team of arts and cultural professionals and building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals. I just wanted to see more explicit statement of h

The inclusion of several partner organizations to find AIRs and that each student is creating multiple original works over several mediums demonstrates artistic vibrancy.

I love the design of this program and the dedication of CSA to its students.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as strong in organizational capacity--great multi-year planning with longstanding community partnerships. Strong financial position and management. Would love a little more information about your evaluation plans. Great job with the application.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Shakespeare Festival

Project Title: Free Shakespeare

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The event will happen in various places to include and engage with various parts of the community.

I rated this as fair to strong in public benefit. I like the variety of locations for performances and the accessibility afforded by those locations. the non-traditional casting does invite the community and a broader audience. I would have liked to see more explicit examples of understanding, resepecting, and sharing power within the community and listening and responding to the community.

Making the events free and using "non-traditional casting" help ensure access to the community, though additional details about partners and community engaged would strengthen the application.

It would be beneficial for the organization to provide more detail on the proposed project. Most narrative sections of the application are vague. Why is this event impactful for the community?

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The Shakespeare Festival will indulge the community in the writing of Shakespeare and including acting artists.

I rated this as strong in artistic and cultural vibrancy. There appears to be a qualified team of arts and cultural professionals, as well as community leaders with longstanding engagement. I would have liked to see more demonstration of a process of refl

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I felt organzational capacity was fair to strong. Clearly the ability to plan strategically and maintain a strong financial position. I would love to see more explicit explanation of your goal-setting, measurement, and evaluation.

Applicant clearly has capacity through its years of experience of staff.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland TOPS Swingband

Project Title: Big Band Music PRESENTATIONSor The GENERATIONS

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

It is great that this organization includes seniors for their programs which help engage the elderly community within Ohio.

I felt this this project has fair public benefit. I would love to see more examples of how this program is inclusive and engaging of diverse populations. I do think that it is accessible and inviting within a narrow, important scope, and demonstrates an understanding and respect for that audience. Would love to see some examples of power sharing and more evidence of strong relationships within the community. I suspect they might be there but I do need a more explicit articulation.

Applicant demonstrates a deep knowledge of the community and illustrates how venues ask them to return often. The intergenerational nature of the work is also helpful to diversity and public benefit.

What an amazing organization! I love that its members seek to directly engage with their audience and engages youth as well as seniors.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The programs will reach a specific audience.

I feel as if this project is fair to strong in this respect. Certainly the people involved are passionate and have the expertise to execute an effective, enjoyable program. Love the passion and enthusiasm, as well as using older adult musicians playing fo

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

From analyzing the application website, there needs to be an increase of diversity within their organization and within the members included for their programs.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I rated this as fair. I would love to see more evidence of clearly articulated goals and evidence of measuring that progress. And would love to see recruitment of diverse staff and board members. I am confused about the ticket/admission revenue, given that earlier in the application, the event is listed as being offered for free. Just a note: two of the three links provided in the supplemental did not work for me. Nice project and love the passion and enthusiasm.

Well written application, provides details on activities and impact on residents of the county.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Treatment Center

Project Title: "Rhyme & Rhythm: Let It Ride!"

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

It is very beneficial to the residents that this organization trying to provide an alternative outlet that can increase a substantiable community.

I thought this application was strong in public benefit. I very much appreciated the explicit intent and commitment to reaching out to people who face systemic barriers. This was a nice articulation of what you mean by that label. I would love to see this move to more power sharing or have more explicit examples of power sharing as your work continues.

Intentional outreach to the listed communities help demonstrate public benefit.

This seems like a very much-needed program and a wonderful learning experience for students. This is a great way to share important messages about substance use and promote prevention.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The event is helpful to the community because of the event will be held multiple times throughout the year which can increase interest for the youth and other residents.

I rated this as strong in artistic and cultural vibrancy. I feel like a diverse team was engaged and opportunities have been identified to engage a diverse audience in an inclusive experience, both culturally and artistically. I would love to see more exp

I like that students are able to have hands-on experiential learning with the opportunity to showcase what they 've learned in front of a live audience. Very cool!

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization needs to update their marketing (website/social media/etc.) presence because there are newsletters from 2015 and older pictures from past events on the website. The organization should seek out an individual who can help update and expand the reach of the marketing.

I rated this as strong in this category, as well. The budget seems reasonable and there is a good track record of execution and a financially stable host organization. Nice job.

The support materials and optional information help a lot to understand the capacity and how this project fits into the scope of work of the applicant. Please explain "LIR Youth" as I'm not familiar with LIR as an acronym.

I enjoyed the King Heroin video and I'm guessing the students projects will be similar?

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Uncommon Sound Project

Project Title: Re:Sound Festival 2026

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Audiences and artist benefit from the group's giving a platform for adventurous creators and performing artists of diverse backgrounds. CUSP brings together well-known names in the field; and showcases diverse programming through curated concerts, project incubation, and participatory events.

Diversity of music equate to different artists and engagement amongst all.

Experimental music is often overlooked but can be an amazing experience. I commend the organization for bringing an entire festival of experimental music to the community. I commend the organization for keeping tickets accessible by offering a sliding scale for payment. I also commend the organization for encouraging community engagement and interactions between musicians and the audience.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

CUSP has a "goal of nourishing the local new and experimental music scene, by involving "electronics, improvisation, or formal composition." It makes the case that it "is unified only by a spirit of exploration." Its own words illustrate their vibrancy better than I can. For the past few years, it has sought to collaborate with local arts organizations and artists ("local and beyond") for programming and connecting with new audiences with an emphasis on presenting innovative audience experiences.

Applicant entry about "some of the biggest names in the arts" could be backed up. Organization remains artist led.

Really appreciate how this is a musician led and founded project and that they have iterated consistently, per the application, to produce a better and more streamlined festival each year.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Planning is an excellent and telling component of a group with solid organizational capacity. The following paragraph is a strong indicator of the group's understanding that a successful arts venture cannot be static. It must be responsive and flexible in order to thrive. "CUSP is always refining the structure of Re:Sound to strengthen its artistry, build a larger audience, and offer the best experience possible. While at times, we were unsure of how to achieve our goals, having tried a number of different festival formats. We ultimately found success in the structure of Re:Sound 2025. We plan to build upon this successful formula for Re:Sound 2026, with the inclusion of stronger engagement between audience and performer, bigger name artists, and increased audience participation." "During the early fall, the Re:Sound 2026 advisory committee will be formed, to meet in October to discuss artist curation and incubator selections."

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Winds

Project Title: Cleveland Winds Concert Series

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Selection of music repertoire is one of the ways that the Winds try to engage more diverse audiences. Their performances provide access to the works of female composers and composers of color. These composers often lacked the same educational opportunities available to others and publishing companies didn't often publish their works. The performances help to expose and preserve the works, as well as introduce them to new audiences, which also speaks to their artistic and cultural vibrancy.

Benefit for student artists, artists, and "connoisseurs"

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

*Performances are unique to Northeast Ohio; concerts include exceptional repertoire that is not accessible by most community wind bands. *Partners with the Cleveland State University School of Music on projects with common interests by sharing expenses and guests artists *Performs both historical masterworks and future masterworks. Have chosen large closing works by emerging Black composers

Promoting equity and inclusion through repertoire.

A music ensemble festival that brings eyes and ears to little celebrated genres of music is well needed. I appreciate this organization for bringing ensemble music to the forefront and shining a light on this genre. I commend the organization for their partnerships to bring other organizations into the fold to make the festival vibrant and diverse.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Partnerships lead them to performance seasons around the academic year. The performance schedule, repertoire selection, and guest artists are all coordinated with various partners, such as the CSU School

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

of Music and the Cleveland Youth Wind Symphony. The group seeks to improve organizational capacity conducting preliminary meetings with executives from other successful non-profit arts organizations to get advice on increasing fundraising efforts and starting an external board of advisors.

One of the strongest aspects of this proposal is the organization's partnerships. It would be helpful to know more about how these partnerships are structured — for example, whether formal agreements such as MOUs are in place to clarify roles, responsibilities, and sustainability.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cleveland Women's Orchestra

Project Title: The Cleveland Women's Orchestra 91st Anniversary Concert

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Maintaining and growing tradition for almost a 100 years is praiseworthy. So was the original motivation for starting the orchestra. Their free ticket programs recognizes that ticket prices may be beyond the reach of most people and they focus on several nonprofits in the areas: The Rainey Institute, Broadway School of Music, Music Settlement, Jewish Community Housing for seniors, Cleveland Sight Center and schools. We don't seem to know, however, how much of an impact this effort has. The wonderful photos show little racial diversity in the audience and the orchestra itself. (aware of an Asian soloist scheduled for 2026) This point illustrates that benefiting artists is also a plus: "For most free lance professionals, our annual Severance Hall concert is their only opportunity to play a symphony program in that prestigious hall." General Admission seating is democratic.

County based concerts. -Free Ticket program sounds good, -unsure about "vulnerable neighborhoods" (could benefit from description)

A diversity initiative is mentioned in the narrative and I'm curious what the contours of that are i.e. increasing diversity of Board, staff, orchestra, audience or a hybrid of some or all of the aforementioned. The Free Ticket program is a good way to increase accessibility for their programming.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Women have made strides in representation in orchestras in the USA since this orchestra was founded, but having an all-female orchestra sustaining itself for generations is a remarkable achievement. Participation in performances nurture experience; this too is an important element artistically.

Music is an amazing way to begin to heal communities and I appreciate the organization for implementing accessible ticket prices and for the Free Ticket Program which ensures that all members of the community are able to participate. I also commend the organization for reaching out to schools and the disabled communities so that they feel welcomed and included.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

The application could also be enhanced by including a snippet in the support materials part of the application of the music performed by the orchestra.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

An organization that can still be going strong after so long, especially one that has maintained even the tradition of the venue, speaks to its capacity. The following quote from the application also shows that the logistics for producing this event have a well-established history: "Because our Severance Hall Anniversary Concert is an annual event, we have a well established set of activities for success. Board members have defined roles/tasks and will work together with other orchestra members on committees to sell ads in our program book, for in-house ticket sales, helping with music (passing out, marking bowings), helping get ready for a mass mailing, designing of fliers and promotional material, determining our percussion needs." An active Board is key to supporting a strong organization.

91st Anniversary...may be indicative of a great track record.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Club Dominicano De Cleveland

Project Title: 4th Annual Cultural Dominican Festival

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization is bringing and keeping the Dominican culture alive within the community which is helpful to expose residents to other cultures.

I rated this as strong in public benefit--engagement of diverse board members, volunteers, and sponsors who are bilingual and have strong ties within the Dominican and broader Latinx communities speaks well of the respect and responsiveness this project demonstrates for its community. The organization does seem invested in building long-lasting community bonds and inclusive spaces. Love that the team is rooted in the neighborhood.

The applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to the community and the results of having 4,000 people attend a new festival is impressive.

This sounds like a wonderful, vibrant community event. I appreciate the collaborative nature of the planning process and the robust outreach. The organization did a great job describing its community and how they will connect with them.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The Dominican Festival event is open and welcoming for everyone in the resident to engage and interact.

I thought this application was strong regarding artistic and cultural vibrancy. A diverse, qualified team of professionals and community members have been engaged, and they are actively working to identify opportunities to promote diversity, equity, and i

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT PANEL

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

This application is fair to strong in this respect. It is a young organization that has executed this event in previous years. Mostly to strengthen this section, I would love more explicit statement of goals and measurement of said progress towards those goals (surveys, community talk backs, etc...). Nice job.

It looks like the wrong info was inputted in the project basics section, just an fyi.

The organization seems to have the right people in place to produce this event successfully.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Colors+ Youth Center

Project Title: The Art of Drag - LGBTQ+ Performing Arts

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This appears to be the category where the group shines best. I can't imagine that there are many groups like this one. There is so much misunderstanding about drag. Providing teens with a chance to learn and participate in a series of workshops in a safe and protected environment is a remarkable achievement. It certainly is inclusive and accessible and inviting. The data about the demographic breakdown of the participating youth is revealing. It's not clear to me that the reading series and the workshop series are two different approaches to programs for the public. Apologies if I'm being dense.

Benefit via intersectionality.

I commend this organization for focusing on youth and self-expression, for giving young people outlets to explore their true selves and a safe space to be themselves. I commend the combining of literacy and self expression through the Drag Storytellers. The Art of Drag 101 is an amazing concept making Drag and figuring out ones own way to express themselves accessible to anyone who is willing to learn. This programming seems to have so much benefit for the community regardless of anyway they define themselves.

The organization's track record is compelling: "100% of youth report a sense of belonging when attending Colors+ programming...and consider Colors+ Youth Center to be one of the only safe spaces they have to be themselves." This programming directly addresses a critical need for identity affirmation, safe and non judgmental spaces, and community connection.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Isn't drag a form of theater? If so, I wish the narrative had made more of a bit of that beyond referring to drag's early days in theater. It would help ground the group's place among other nonprofits producing arts opportunities. We don't get much in the way of details about how the workshop series is produced or structured. How often do they take place? How long is a workshop? Where is it held? Do the lessons progress from exploring fantasy selves/names to makeup to dress to directions how to perform? Not knowing this comes across as a lack of structure. The program needs to be championed, but providing

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

this additional information would strengthen the application even further. The photos with family members are touching.

Vibrancy through education and understanding of history/culture of Drag.

The proposal would be strengthened by outlining evaluation methods for their programming. For example, how will the success of Drag Story Time be measured? Attendance numbers? Social media posts? Including specific metrics—such as pre/post surveys, partic

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The group has a healthy budget and has managed to expand to a new location with new programs. Attendance is growing as well. There doesn't appear to be any question that the social services component of the organization is well structured and well organized. The questions in the Vibrancy section about how the program is provided muddle the perspective of its capacity. Clarifying these points would strengthen future applications to other funders. That this program exists at all is in itself a remarkable achievement.

An additional suggestion is to provide more detail about the backgrounds and skill sets of the Board of Directors.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Community Cup Classic Foundation

Project Title: Negro League Soul

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 5.25

2026 Grant Amount: No Grant Awarded

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I'm confused about the scope of this project and its public benefit. The idea for an in-person summer event sounds great, but there needs to be information on the planning and implementation of that in conjunction with the geographic community.

I was curious to know the estimated number of people who engaged virtually that were from Cuyahoga County, as well as the estimated number of potential audience members from partnerships. Another chance to further define your community would be from sharing view numbers from the YouTube videos embedded on your website, or website traffic numbers.

I do not see sufficient evidence that the project for which the organization is requesting funding will serve the targeted amount of people since historically they only have the attendance of 17 people. There is no further evidence of how the organization is planning to increase attendance exponentially.

Not much is said about the outreach into the community nor how an understanding of the public has shaped the programming. There is fair evidence of public benefit in terms of the subject matter alone.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Engagement and input from citizens within Cuyahoga County must be clear.

The project is unique, and there is sufficient evidence of how it can create great sense of belonging for young men of color.

The cultural and humanistic vibrance implicit in these programs is left unsaid or under-explored.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Community Life Collaborative

Project Title: 2026 Garden View Gallery Exhibits for Social and Environmental Change

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The overall functioning of the organization empowers and helps the community with various events.

I rated this project as strong related to public benefit, as it seems grounded in strong partnerships and appears to be inclusive and engaging of diverse populations. The images included of the Doors to My Barrio exhibit were powerful, so thank you for sharing those. Nice diversity to the programming to speak to different facets of the community.

The diversity of programming and mention of positive feedback from the audience demonstrates public benefit. Additionally, the applicant mentions numerous partner organizations that help support the public benefit.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The program exhibits art programs within their gallery and with other organizations to expand reach for the community.

I rated this as strong in artistic & cultural vibrancy, as well. A diverse team of arts and cultural professionals have been engaged. Opportunities to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice were identified and are prominent in the programming.

The inclusion of artists from many walks of life helps demonstrate artistic vibrancy.

The exhibitions described in the project narrative seem like they will be interesting and impactful for the community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

It was very informative that the organization explained the organization's capacity.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I rated this as fair to strong here, too. Good diverse team in terms of leadership. I would love more detail about the "other" sources of funding. And, I would love to see more evidence of goal-setting and evaluation. But nice job overall.

The amount of and diversity of programming offered is impressive, but it's a little difficult to ascertain the organization's main focus and audience.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Connecting for Kids

Project Title: Music Therapy & More 2026

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Being accessible and inviting to its community and the broader public is evidenced by the 6 different library sites for classes.

This was a very thorough explanation of the community you serve, and the breadth of community that you reach! I especially appreciated the inclusion of past participants' testimonies.

The application shows a very well defined community and how the project is tailored for it.

From its beginnings and into the current Music Therapy program, CFK is demonstrably receptive to the feedback of its community. The personalized post-session outreach shows that the organization remains committed to these families throughout and beyond the program. It is clearly a program with accessibility at its core.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The response to question 7 shows the program's responsiveness to the needs of the community - a criteria of artistic and cultural vibrancy.

I see ample evidence of how the project will be carried out by qualified facilitators, and artists.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

There is a slight lack of information missing in terms of what is "other project expenses", which is the majority of the expenses of this project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad

Project Title: Picture Perfect Day

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

A minor point perhaps, but when dealing with people from outside the area, it's helpful to provide content for "transporting people from the Cleveland Zoo to Hale Farm." How far is that ride and what is Hale Farm? The Akron newspaper article was a good attachment for deterring a bit of public benefit, but none of the other samples had viable links to help us see. It appears that the work with the students riding the train and stopping to take landscape photographs along the way would provide plentiful examples of the public benefit in action. I would imagine that this would be quite an adventure for kids from low-income families who would not otherwise have an opportunity to take advantage of this experience. The details about the demographics are important, as they document the organization's outreach. Inclusivity framework is impressive. (responses to questions 6-8 in Narratives).

"We strive for underserved population..." entry could benefit all/everyone. Great Community Connection Strategies entry.

This organization has demonstrated in the proposal a deep knowledge of their community. They also detail specific ways to connect to the community AND how community members can connect to each other through their programming.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The Project Summary is thorough and phenomenal. Every aspect of it is impressive, including the use of cameras for the students and the instructors to lead them.

Multiple disciplines in one project.

Photography is such a great way to get people off of their phones and to take in the beauty that surrounds them. I appreciate this organization for encouraging youth to take advantage of this art and to appreciate the beauty that's around them everyday.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I understand that taking pictures of students is restricted for public use, a creative approach (like a photo of a line of students taking pictures taken from the back) would help make your case even stronger. I must admit I was skeptical about this application when I began reading it, but the clear explanations of the project details and of its impact on the students completely convinced me to support this strongly.

Evaluative measures in place.

This is one of the most thorough grants that I have read. I appreciate the depth and clarity in each answer given. The planning process seems well thought out and the partnerships seem robust. I am heartened that one of the partners is a conservancy that

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Darl Center for the Arts

Project Title: Fiber Fest 2026

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The areas of "public involvement" need to be identified in the application as examples of its public benefit.

I was curious about how local community members have asked for this programming, or contributed to its planning, if at all. It was great to see specific partners named.

There is sufficient evidence of the organization's awareness of its neighbourhood and community, and in the projects importance to the LGBT community.

The organization boasts an impressive list of partnering organization in the addendum. Also impressive are the collaborations articulated in the answer to question eight. Still, to be something more than a "fair" amount of evidence, this reviewer would have liked to see some more detail on how exactly the organization will achieve its goals of "more participation, more diversity and more artist and public involvement."

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Sharing what partnering with The Darl Center entails will show how the programming is connected to its community - a criteria for artistic and cultural vibrancy.

The project specifically supports fiber artists and fashion designers. The application also demonstrates sufficient evidence of the team's qualification to put on the project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Deutscher Musik Verein

Project Title: Jagerfest 2026

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$1,955

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I rated this application as fair regarding public benefit. I would have liked to see more evidence of listening and responding to the community to make this application stronger. I appreciate that the organization has conducted an audit to review its mission and values to identify increased engagement and inclusion of diverse populations. I would love to see more about the plans on how to address those challenges beyond marketing.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The community will be exposed to music from Germany which will engage the community with different culture.

I rated this project as fair to strong regarding artistic & cultural vibrancy. I would love to see more evidence of the process of reflection to ensure that programming is relevant (via surveys, community advisory boards, etc...), although the self-assess

Applicant demonstrates a strong knowledge of their community and centers the culture in the project, while also engaging professional and non-professional musicians.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this application as strong in organizational capacity. You have a reasonable budget and a track record of executing this event annually, and you have articulated some goals for this and future years. I would love to see those turned into opportunities to engage your audience and partners via surveys and community conversations to give you more information to adjust your programming.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I appreciate that the organization conducted a self-assessment to identify ways to expand its audience and recognizes the difficulties that it may encounter. The organization's social media strategy is a good place to start, but more personal outreach and involvement with different communities may be necessary. Adding more support materials would be helpful for grant reviewers unfamiliar with the event.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Downtown Cleveland Inc.

Project Title: Sketch the Square

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$3,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

How can a group dedicated to downtown development not serve a diverse population, considering the diversity of Cleveland's general population? Its strategic locations aims to attract participants. The organization recognizes that more needs to be done to draw in more people or encourage repeat participants, and is working towards that goal.

Applicant states they are committed to inclusivity and equity. Community(ies) may benefit from the project's "expansion."

Talk about community building! Sketch seems to be an amazing event that brings art right to the community and offers an accessible way for people to express themselves creatively and to build upon their artistic skills. Expanding this even is a wonderful idea and hopefully it will achieve its goals of having repeated participants.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Terrific that this project exists at all and that DCI provides art supplies. A+ for: "On-site, our Clean + Safe team sets up tables and benches under a 20x50 tent for shade and light inclement weather. We also offer pre-drawn coloring sheets of the landscape for children or those less artistically inclined, ensuring all can participate comfortably, regardless of skill."

"Fostering belonging" via intentional arts & culture.

This sounds like an incredible event. Curious how they will evaluate the event. The events are free which increases access. Do they also ensure accessibility for those with mobility challenges?

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

An organization of this size has the capacity to produce the event and do it well, as evidence by all the details provided in the response to question #6 in the Narrative.

Also curious if they have any partnerships with local businesses, cultural organizations, etc. that could further support their efforts.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: East Cleveland Farmers' Market Preservation Society

Project Title: Sustainable Urban Food Forests

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$1,700

PUBLIC BENEFIT

While the applicant did mention that they have interest in local food production from existing customers, there is not much information provided on how they will build and strengthen relationships with potential participants in the surrounding area. Additionally, I'd have liked some sample workshop topics to fully grasp what educational information will be shared for the benefit of the public.

I really like this project in the various methods of sustainability that are incorporated: training of youth (next generation of growers), using vacant spaces (revitalization and expansion of green spaces), and increasing food access.

The farmers market is open to the public. Teaches the public how to interact with gardens and good growing techniques.

I see fair efforts to connect with the community. With nine or ten monthly presentations planned in 2026 and a total number of expected participants listed as 50, I wondered if only 5-6 people attend each class or if 50 participate each month. A future proposal could find a way to clarify the level of impact and participation. Additionally, future applications might be strengthened by demonstrating direct engagement and recruitment efforts with targeted communities to attract participants, in addition to the flyers, social media posts, and websites listings.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I could not determine if the applicant has incorporated a process of reflection to ensure that programming is relevant to or created with its community.

Food is at the heart of all human cultures and societies. This project meets a vital community need, as well as creates a unique opportunity to build bridges and strengthen community connections between the neighborhoods surrounding the farm.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I like the idea of food as art. Offers culturally appropriate connections to growing food in an in-town setting.

I see fair evidence of the org's ability to create a meaningful project. A future application could include a bio for the person primarily responsible for creating the project as an attachment. The application included three sentences about Ms. Schuck.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The leadership has good qualifications to carry out the proposed program.

I see fair evidence of the org's ability to plan and manage the project. The org has a successful history of presenting these monthly classes.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Edward E. Parker Museum of Art

Project Title: A family Affair Intergenerational Art Program

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant is being inclusive and engaging diverse populations, but in the future could more directly tell the reviewers how. I would have liked to hear more about the intergenerational aspect of this proposal. The applicant mentions that members of senior living facilities and students from East Cleveland are involved, but leaves out how they interact with each other through the art program. It is also unclear if this is a series of classes or a one-week class. Providing specific details about the frequency and duration of the classes would strengthen the application.

I really like the intergenerational approach you are taking with this project, as well as the community building components that create space for those participants that return each year and those that are new to the process. EEPMOA's use of art to build community is invaluable in this day and age. Your "Multicultural engagement helps people appreciate differences, challenges stereotypes, and changes perspectives. Mutual respect creates this safe environment. Bullying, or rude behavior is not tolerated."

This is a long standing agency with good outreach to the community. The inter-generational program is a benefit to the entire community

I see strong evidence of a project that meaningfully connects with the community. Future applications could be stronger by specifically stating the details of the project in the Project Summary (# 6). I had to open the attached flyer to learn that this will be a bi-weekly class for approximately six weeks in the summer of 2026. Also, sharing some history about the age demographics of previous participants will strengthen an application, which would show the org's ability to achieve true intergenerational work. Offering both the class and the art supplies free-of-charge shows strong public benefit.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I like that the art is both creative and educational as participants are able to learn about art historical moments and artists such as with the Harlem Renaissance

The leadership and staff have the qualifications to implement the proposed program.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I see strong evidence of the org's ability to create a relevant project. The staff include artists and individuals knowledgeable of the Harlem Renaissance in addition to experience art instructors.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the age of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The agency has a good staff that has built a strong agency.

I see strong evidence of the org's ability to plan and manage the project. The org has a history of producing this project successfully in previous years. FYI, the website link: eepmoa.com goes to an Asian site, and the IRS 2024 confirmation has nothing attached.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Empowering Epilepsy

Project Title: Empowering Through the Arts - Art Therapy Program

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Impressive mission to serve those with epilepsy. This project creates a sense of community by allowing people with epilepsy to meet others and lessen the sense that they are alone. The lessons are provided 2-3 times a month, which speaks to the frequency in which its participants can meet.

Applicant organization understand the community it serves.

Creating safe spaces for people to heal and explore their inner artist is so important. I commend this organization for caring for their community and providing a space for people with epilepsy to feel seen, heard, understood and cared for. Art therapy can help heal so much and can help people get through difficult situations that they may have otherwise drowned in. I believe whole-heartedly in this initiative.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Impressed that they created a specific Art Therapy Room at their headquarters to hold classes year-round. The importance of using art as therapy for a targeted group of people is in itself proof of artistic and cultural vibrancy.

Art therapy offerings deliver artistic & cultural vibrancy.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Art therapy and wellbeing programs that interact with art activities is growing in numbers and awareness. The program is promoted to 30 health and wellness fair booths throughout Northeast Ohio. Rural, inner city, and low income communities are reached and demonstrate efforts for inclusivity. Strategic partnerships are always important for nonprofits. Here, they're working with hospital systems that "specifically treat Epilepsy and seizures in Cuyahoga County, including Cleveland Clinic - both Adults and Pediatrics, MetroHealth, and University Hospitals - both Adults and Pediatrics. Medical and psychosocial staff at the hospitals refer patients to our art therapy groups, and we are allowed to

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

provide flyers in waiting areas and doctor's offices, based on the relationships we have created." This is a very effective and professional outreach and delivery initiative.

It is evident the organization will continue "to connect people with epilepsy to experts and peers for education, care, and friendship."

This organization has very strong partnerships. The leadership team presented has lived and professional experience to benefit the organization.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Environmental Health Watch

Project Title: Fresh Fest Cleveland

Panelists: Rem Cabrera, Jeff Garrett, Tasha Tavaras, Courtney Young

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

An exemplary organization doing critically important work in a field that is vital to our continued survival. Its mission must have been a radical concept when it began.

An understanding of the community is evident.

This festival sounds great. I commend the organization for championing compostable materials by offering vendors discounts if they use compostable materials and I think the class on sustainability is an excellent touch. Art can move people to do many things and using that power to help climate change and environmental justice is a big win!

This is a very thorough and well written application. They show a deep understanding of the community they serve and have a clear plan for how to move forward.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There is a large \$70,000 line item in the budget for arts and cultural professionals. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the narrative that explains who these professionals are and how they contribute to the project. In fact, the entire narrative lacks a compelling case for how the arts are utilized during the event.

Project Summary entry is a bit light with regard to describing the project and could be specific.

I really wanted to hear more about the visual arts aspect of this festival. In reading this, I learned a lot about the music that will be featured but really missed the aspects of the other art genres that will be presented especially since the visual arts engagements team seems so dynamic.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Bravo to them for describing "The Latinx (of any race) population," as the fact that being Latin or Hispanic is an ethnicity and not a race is mostly overlooked or misunderstood.

Evaluative measures in place, strong planning, and overall momentum is present. It will continue.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Euclid Symphony Orchestra

Project Title: Building New Audiences: Fusion Concerts

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This applicant demonstrated a clear understanding of their current community, while expressing the desire to engage diverse populations through the fusion concerts. Since the applicant completed a gospel/classical fusion concert series for their 2024/25 season, I would have appreciated additional data regarding whether their audience demographic has shifted as a result of these performances.

I think is a great approach to use the arts to build bridges across audiences, which further strengthen community connections. I really like that the concerts will be moved into other areas of the city to further increase accessibility and exposure of the program.

Meets the criteria for public benefit by offering programs in different communities and including other musical talents in the performances.

I see strong evidence of public benefit and a project that will connect meaningfully with the community. The organization does a strong job of informing us where they were in the planning process when the request was written and submitted and when they plan to be able to finalize the planning process. More information about how these special concerts will be marketed would be helpful in future along with any pertinent information about partnerships or outreach to communities and organizations that might be more aligned with these fusion concerts beyond traditional symphony concert programming.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I love the concept of this work. Overall, I appreciated the support materials concerning last year's program. However, I would have liked to hear a small sampling of last year's fusion concert to get a feel for and understand the overall work.

The leadership is highly qualified to accomplish the proposed programs. The inclusion of music composed by diverse musicians will make the project quite interesting.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I see strong evidence of the org's effort to provide diverse, inclusive, and expansive programming. The org acknowledges the traditional sphere of symphony patrons and supporters in order to highlight its efforts to expand beyond that programming model.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and prior experience hosting a similar event, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The organization leadership and board are engaged in the agency increasing the capacity to fulfill the mission.

I see strong evidence of the org's ability to plan and manage these concerts. The org has history with this type of special programming in years past.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Far West Center

Project Title: Supporting Recovery from Mental Illness Through Creative Arts

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 10

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant is listening and responding to its community by offering the Open Art Studio as a part of the mental health recovery process. An idea that evolved from their client's recommendations. Additionally, by partnering with other local organizations to showcase the art made by their clients, the applicant is making this artwork accessible to the broader public.

I really love that this program is born from the choices of the client. It is clear that program is built to reflect and put into the actions the needs and suggestions of the clientele and community it serves. "Art's our choice!" is the best testimony for this program.

Agency serves the community through much needed mental health services. The art exhibitions are held in locations throughout the community - expanding the interaction with the art work for the artists.

I see strong evidence of the organization's ability to meaningfully connect with its community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I love that the work will be displayed in easily accessible public spaces. As you indicate, this work has the potential " to connect (y)our community in-need with the broader general community. These exhibits showcase the universal language of art and att

Introducing healing through the arts is an excellent way to connect thoughts to actions - revealing what is in ones mind. It can be kept private or be put on display.

I see strong evidence of the relevancy and necessity of the project. The team that leads the programming is very strong.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the five-decade history of this organization to continue to grow and expand, I have little doubt the organization can handle this program.

The staff leadership and board leadership are in a good position to carry the agency out the mission.

I see strong evidence of the org's ability to plan and manage the project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Fashion Talks Foundation

Project Title: The Runway

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization speaks in generalities about how it reaches the community. There should have been more elaboration on action-oriented approaches instead of only listing forms of engagement.

The organization shows an understanding of its community and intentionality with sharing power in and around the creative industry. The organization's focus in the project narrative on describing the 2025 event and only briefly mentioning the 2026 event made it difficult to identify what specific partnerships and relationships are being built and strengthened in the community through this project this year.

The applicant meets the definition for public benefit. It demonstrates how it's going to serve the community through using fashion as a means of creative expression. While further including local residents.

Powerful focus on community - folks in NE Ohio who share a commitment to using art and fashion as a platform for social connection and cultural affirmation. Focus on BIPOC, LGBTQ+, first-generation.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There is evidence of vibrancy both in the text and the materials provided.

Focus on developing creatives/artists across the region

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization only lists one team member in detail, but provides little information about the other folks involved. Additionally, the descriptions are too general. More descriptive information, including names, would have improved this application. Support materials are not the strongest. For example, while the image shows fashion, photos of the audience and other engagement moments would have been more effective in demonstrating impact.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

The organization provided limited information that made it difficult to evaluate the organizational capacity of this project. The organizational structure is unclear in the application. More detailed information is needed in the application itself (for example, in describing the team).

Impressive leader, and wonderful to see how quickly this project has grown - would be helpful to understand how others contribute to the leadership/capacity of this organization.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Folknet

Project Title: Folknet Concert Series

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 4.5

2026 Grant Amount: No Grant Awarded

PUBLIC BENEFIT

There needs to be more evidence in the applicant's ability to meaningfully connect with its community through this project. For example, providing additional information on how they determine programming/featured artists.

I wondered how many individual concerts and events occur as part of the series. I also wanted to know more about how these concerts are marketed - Flyers? Outreach? Social media?

I do not see sufficient evidence of the organization's engagement with a specific community. There is also lack of evidence as to how the proposed project can foster belonging for an audience.

While this panelist agrees that folk music in its variety is a way to present art that speaks to all, other than a brief sentence about reaching out into other communities, this grant applicant did not provide any evidence of its response and collaboration with its stated community of "Northeast Ohio."

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Featuring local artists is a great example of building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals, helping them to thrive.

Since this is a concert series, one can presume it's quite large in skill. However, the evidence only presents one committed artist, which is insufficient for measuring its artistic vibrancy for the purpose of this application.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Food Strong

Project Title: Growing Knowledge through a Native Plants Mural at SACF

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization is inclusive and engages diverse populations by involving local students in the planning stages of the mural. I also appreciate that their student engagement includes learning about native plants. The organization has shown that it's sharing power with its community through this type of educational engagement.

I really like that that this project combines art and food justice / sovereignty with a mural that also celebrates, reclaims and teaches about the biodiversity of Cuyahoga County.

Provide fresh food to under-resources neighborhoods through farm and mobile locations. The mural will be viewed by program participant as well as those passing by. Public benefit criteria is met.

I see fair evidence of the org's ability to connect with its community through this project. More detail in is the Org Capacity comment section below. More specifics about how the community will be recruited and invited to participate would make future applications stronger. Share details about existing partnerships and historical methods of developing similar projects if the new project's full details are not set when an application is prepared. Show the plan if everything has not yet been solidified.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Murals are a great way to reach the community even when know one is there "to show them" what is going on. In addition, I like the multilayered approach to connecting this project with various aspects of the community from employing local artists to engag

Mural project will be led by agency leader who has experience with mural projects. The native plant theme will be educational and beautiful. The attached video is good.

I see fair evidence of the org's ability to create an engaging project based on the details mentioned below in Organization Capacity. There is history in similar project work (murals) but the lack of specifics for the 2026 project's components affects t

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work. I like that the program continues to move forward and grow in a measured approach to meet the needs of the community.

The leadership team is well qualified to accomplish the project goals and fulfill the agency mission.

I see fair evidence of the org's ability to plan and manage this project. A future application would be stronger if it shared the process by which a lead artist (in this case the muralist) is going to be selected, as well as the specific plans to recruit the volunteers to create the mural. An elementary is mentioned but without details on the history of that relationship of the plan for the 2026 project. This lack of specificity affects both the artistic & cultural vibrancy as well as the public benefit components in reverse.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Fostering Hope

Project Title: Creative Collaborative Art Curriculum

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization does an excellent job of providing information on how it serves the public. You can tell they are very methodical and adaptive in their approach, providing a very curated learning and engagement opportunity for each participant.

The organization's project narratives and support materials show a clear understanding of their community, approaching this project from a place of understanding and respect, and actively working to engage and build relationships with the broader public. Clear public benefit.

Strongly identified community that is critical to serve; valuable to see that "Our community also includes the caregivers, direct service staff, and partner agencies who work alongside these youth." I appreciated reading that the team center youth input in programming; would be helpful to understand more about how this was gathered/incorporated.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There is evidence of artistic and cultural vibrancy in the way they describe the program and in their materials.

Vibrant programming that is responsive to participant needs and is led by artists.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization is well-equipped to effectively provide arts programming on both an artistic and therapeutic level. The materials are terrific! It's great to see methodology, which substantiates their approach. The images are also great at showing impact.

Very helpful to see the logic model in the support materials section and understand the specific outcomes this program is driving toward.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Friends of the East Cleveland Public Library

Project Title: ECCAMP

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$3,400

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This program is of great benefit to their community. Providing more information about how their community is involved in shaping the planning process would strengthen the application.

I would have liked to have more specificity around why the community served is diverse, especially since not every panelist is from Cuyahoga County. I was also curious about what kind of music genres and instruments the students are taught. This would have made the project clearer and the application stronger.

The application shows a well defined community that the project in its capacity and scope is definitely capable of engaging. There is also a sufficient evidence that shows the project is responding to the need of the community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Unfortunately, this application raises many questions left unanswered: While the mentorship program seems like a great one, who are the mentors? What does ECCAMP stand for? What instruments do the students play? How much are mentors being paid? Presumably

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The brief background provided about project director Randy Woods is helpful.

The project, as evidenced by the application, is financially responsible

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: From Me 2 U, Inc

Project Title: Through Their Eyes: Pieces of Me - A Collage Self-Portrait Experience

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant is inclusive and engages diverse populations of youth ages 8-18 years old. This application could improve by providing details about the art projects students engage in throughout the program, the number of students who have participated in previous years, and the duration of the summer camp. It is unclear if the self-portrait collages are the only project the students work on during the summer camp. Or if there are multiple sessions of the summer camp where different students work on the same self-portrait project.

It is clear that you understand the community you serve and the needs of its youth to have access to 'less to safe, supportive environments where they can explore identity, share their stories, and build confidence through the arts.' I really like the intergenerational approach you are taking with this project. I was really curious about the "youth-led artist reflections," and would have liked a little more fleshing out of this component.

Meet the public benefit criteria through offering youth the opportunity for self expression and self identifying.

I see strong evidence that the planned project will provide public benefit to its targeted community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Projects that provide an opportunity for youth and community members to center themselves that are often overlooked can be reaffirming and powerful for youth.

The organization has been engaging the youth in art through its programs. This project will allow the youth to learn collage technique as well as working with different objects. This method of making art has been traditionally used by artists with limited resources.

I also see strong evidence of cultural vibrancy considering the qualifications of the team that will be involved in its creation and execution.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Applicant used Question 6 of the Project Narrative section to explain Mr. Bruce’s qualifications—which I think would be a better fit for Question 9. This would also give the applicant more room in Question 6 to describe the projects students work on at the summer camp.

I like that your work is evidence-based and rooted in social emotional learning practices. Based on the background of the facilitators and staff, as well as the work samples, I feel confident of the organizations capacity to complete this project. My one suggestion is I would like to see you push yourselves and serve more than 25 students in the future similar efforts.

The organizational leadership has the capacity to fulfill the mission of the project.

I see fair evidence that the organization can plan and manage the project. The project description does not share the schedule for the classes/workshops. The locations listed for the public showcases hint at a schedule (Summer Camp program) but more detail could have made the application stronger. Also, the total number of participants listed is 25, so I assumed that the number only represents the participants who would be creating collages and does not include the expected number of individuals who would view the showcases. Future applications could include those in the total number with a breakdown between the two groups (participants and showcase attendees/viewers) included in the narrative.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: FrontLine Service

Project Title: Art Workshops for Adults Who Have Experienced Homelessness

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 10

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant gives a clear and specific outline of what they are offering to their residents. They show that they are building and strengthening relationships in their community by providing these art workshops 2-3x a month so that individuals both have a safe outlet to express themselves while also giving residents space to socialize with one another through creativity.

I like that program supports those facing chronic homelessness, but also who have been impacted by violence in their home or community. Too often both populations are overlooked in terms of access to the arts and creative expression.

The project meets the public benefit. Open to all residents of PSH. Free, provides materials for free. Participants can select from several different locations and times.

I see strong evidence of the org's ability to meaningfully connect with the community through this project. The project's successful history points to its sustainability. A tried-and-true recruitment/marketing strategy has ensured maximum impact over the years.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I like that the projects offer various layers of opportunity for participants to take what they need in the moment - "a simple art lesson, a chance to socialize, or a chance to process and reflect." I think it is also crucial the work is exhibited for o

The curriculum offers a variety of themes and storytelling. Projects can be completed in 1-2 sessions - giving the participants the opportunity to 'finish'. Freedom of expression.

I see strong evidence of the org's ability to create a relevant and engaging project. The lead artist and the support team have history with the project and further develop and strengthen its impact each year.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the age of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The program leader has the qualifications to meet the objectives of the project.

I see strong evidence of the org's ability to plan and manage the project. The org has history with the project and has the capacity (human and financial) to ensure its continuation. One very minor point that I didn't understand - if workshops are held 2-3x each month, how do you get to a total of 48 workshops? Wouldn't you have to meet 4x each month to achieve that? This did NOT affect my score.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: FutureHeights

Project Title: Heights Music Hop

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The understanding of the community and incorporation of their input in planning is clear.

Lovely to hear that the Heights Music Hop is both free and planned by local Cleveland Heights community members. I think, for future applications, it may be beneficial to submit support materials that capture more of the audience/participants, but this is a solid application nonetheless.

There is sufficient evidence that shows the project will create multiple touch points for the community to engage. The project also has a very low barrier to entry. The application also shows how the project is in particular response to what the community is asking for.

As a grassroots, community-led event, Heights Music Hop is responding to its community from the ground-up. Particularly in its definition of the community, the organization demonstrates that it knows the people attending the event and the people of the wider public. Named partners of the event (in question eight) serves as further proof of this work.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The bios of the staff members provides great context for their work.

There is sufficient evidence that the project is put together by the community itself in the way of a committee. It shows equitable decision-making.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Gardening in the District

Project Title: Quincy Paint Off and Art Gallery

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

There is not enough evidence provided to understand the impact fully. It would be great to see more information on how the experience appeals to the people who benefit from the art.

The organization provides ample evidence for public benefit in the bulk of its activities, however, the case is not quite as strong for this project in particular. The organization mentions that this project is an expansion upon a current large scale project—images or videos of that current project and the physical space identified for this project would establish context.

The applicant established public benefit by providing opportunities to cultivate relationships with community members. This was further done through demonstrating a collaborative approach with community members.

The community seems well-defined and appreciate that the idea for this project originated from community input.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There is evidence of artistic and cultural vibrancy; however, the organization lists an array of offerings, and it would have been nice to see more images depicting them.

Great to see the majority of the budget would go toward arts professionals.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

More information on the actual organizers—people from Gardening in the District would have been beneficial to include.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

The application demonstrated diversity within it's staffing, and leadership. In addition, this was further evident by the Koats for Kwanzaa program.

The response to Q9 made it a difficult for me to understand who the core team is - the list of partners is helpful, but I am unclear on who the core GID team is (if the work is still led by the Founder Erika, if it is led by the Board or a main group of volunteers, etc.).

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: German Central

Project Title: German Central Oktoberfest 2026

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project has a long history of serving a well-defined community that seems to have expanded to the broader Cuyahoga County public. There seems to be different entry points including food, music, and art. Fee based participation may cause a slight lack of accessibility, but the earned revenue component as a major driver of the budget supports this decision.

Would have liked to see more effort towards creating broader appeal for this event to the general public.

It is clear that the German Central Foundation engages its audience with this festival - in its extensive planning and in participation. Additionally, reaching out to others of European culture adds relevant diversity and inclusiveness. Having representation from geographical neighbors of the festival show respect and shared power with involved community. Adding some numbers to your public benefit description, e.g. number of volunteers, size of planning committee, number of comments/suggestions received about the event, would strengthen this section.

Great to hear that the organization recognizes the nuances of immigration and assimilation, and that they are inviting other European ethnic groups by tapping into their churches and cultural organizations.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The organization has a long history and it looks to be well resourced to provide specific artistic and cultural services relevant to the German American community.

This project is clearly relevant to its community.

A process of reflection does happen annually.

Thank you for providing photos. This seems like a treasure.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The earned income component is significant, and it shows healthy public participation. 100% volunteer administration is a slight concern, but the budget and 990 show that there may be room for some paid staff if volunteerism wanes.

The planners of the festival have a variety of expertise and it is clear that their experience ensures a successful outcome.

Its clear that there is a strong volunteer organization committed and proud to host this event.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Golden Ciphers Youth Development & Cultural Arts Center

Project Title: DjJembe and Beyond

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant is being inclusive and engaging diverse populations by offering this project to youth ages 5-18 and adults living Cleveland suburbs. This application could strengthen by being more specific around how often the sessions happen, how many participants they expect at each session, and how the applicant is listening and responding to its community.

I really like the intergenerational approach you are taking with this project, as well as the focus around rebuilding the bounds between families and the community. I like that throughout the project are community building and reconnection opportunities such as the drum circles.

Community Center that serves the neighborhood through music, dance, yoga etc. Meets the public benefit criteria

I see fair evidence of the org's ability to connect with its community through the project. In the future, perhaps share a list of partner organizations that help you market your programs and show examples of flyers & social media posts that have been used for previous projects.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

It is clear that you understand the community you serve and the needs of its youth, adults and families. I like that you are using the traditional arts (African drumming and drum making) and cultural, as well as new approaches (meditation) to building a

The workshops are interesting and fulfill the mission to connect families to the culture

I see fair evidence of the org's ability to create a relevant and engaging project. I understand that given the submission deadline for the grant and the project start date being far away from each the lead artist may not be contracted yet. A future app

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Please note: Expense table total should be \$10,000 or more as the total has to be twice the amount of the grant request (in this case \$5,000).

Given the age of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work. Good luck.

The staff leader has the capacity to implement the proposed project. The budget appears to be incorrect.

I see fair evidence that the org can plan and manage the project. The project's Income Table and Expense Table do not match and the expenses listed are not double the requested amount (\$5,000 request with \$7,100 in expenses listed). Additionally, Link 1 (website) went to a blank page.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Greater Cleveland Film Commission

Project Title: Film Forward Documentary Spotlight

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant shows that they are understanding, respecting, and sharing power with their community through the filmmaking workshop portion of the event that provides educational programming to underrepresented audiences. I think it's worthwhile to note that the reason this is so important is that professional filmmaking is a historically inaccessible medium.

I really like the educational and economic opportunities built into this program, as well as the building out the entire infrastructure of the area to support film creatives.

The Forward Film project meets the public benefit criteria. The project is free to the community. It focuses on a local filmmaker allowing the audience to make a connection to the film.

I see strong evidence of Public Benefit, especially the org's focus on its DEI work and involving communities traditionally underrepresented in the film industry (BIPOC and Women). The org presented strong examples to back up this claim.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The applicant shows a clear dedication to building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals by pairing a documentary film viewing with a filmmaking workshop the following day to help current and aspiring documentarians learn best practices in their field.

I like the intentionality behind working in collaboration with the other area film organizations to strengthen the overall Cleveland and Northeast Ohio film community. I also like that the program rotates its location and other funder efforts to ensure com

The project focuses on job creation in the artistic and skill portions of the film industry.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I see strong evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy in creating relevant programming with and for a diverse community within the world of film. Again, strong use of examples and historical relationships were shared.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and past / current success of your efforts, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The leadership has the capacity to carry out the objectives of the proposed project.

I see strong evidence of Org Capacity with a very experienced professional staff who have deep connections in the film world.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association

Project Title: NCA's Multigenerational STEAM Makers

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant shows a dedication to being accessible and inviting to its community and the broader public by not only offering the STEAM workshops to school-age youth, but also at Rec Centers where adults of all ages can participate in photography, art, nature, robotics, and virtual reality. Additionally, the applicant listens and responds to its community by asking participants of its programs what they want to learn and planning activities based on this feedback.

I really love the intergenerational aspect of this work and that the youth will have an appreciation for the arts along with their training in science. I also appreciate the various methods for connecting with youth and adults across Cleveland.

Offers programs to schools and other community sites. Hands on making experiences with innovative materials and ideas and brings all ages into the present technology.

I see fair evidence of public benefit. The Project Summary reads as an overview of the STEAM programming in general and its recent activities and successes. What are the actual components of this programming and what percentage of community participations, staff time, and org resources do each represent within the programming? The 2026 Project for youth (P4SS) will be in how many schools? Serving how many students? The programs for older adults (ICinnect) will serve how many? And where? How many locations? More of these details would be helpful in future applications.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Too often programs focus on the sciences and forget the important role the arts play in creating opportunities for self-expression and the exploration of the human condition. Your program is a vital component in low resource communities where students have

Meets the criteria for artistic & cultural vibrancy by creating spaces for students of all ages to explore their creativity.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I see strong evidence of artistic & cultural vibrancy given the history of programming, the partnerships and artists involved, and the focus on serving the entire community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

Staff leadership has conducted the programming over time and has the qualifications to implement the proposed project.

I see fair evidence of org capacity with this application. It reads more like a Gen Op funding request than a request for support of a specific project. A future application might be stronger if a definable component (or project) of programming with a \$225,000 budget were presented for \$7,500 in project support. The expense budget for the project does not give me a clear idea of what the County's funding would be used to support.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Harvard Community Services Center

Project Title: Harvard Cultural Fest

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization did not provide a detailed project summary, which made it difficult to evaluate the funding criteria. The organization does clearly define its community and demonstrates intentionality behind engagement to foster belonging and inclusivity within the project narratives.

Amazing to see the level of community engagement and organization in this neighborhood - block clubs (attended by HCSC staff), merchant meetings, and well-attended monthly meetings. What a robust way to both serve the community and continuously gather input.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The applicant has a diverse board, and was able to demonstrate it's program relevancy to the community. This was done through it's visual display of the video links.

I can tell from the video submitted that this event features musicians and local craft/vendors, and from the budget that arts professionals will be paid. However, there is not much detail about the event in this proposal to help me understand the artistic

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Haus of Transcendent

Project Title: SummerFest 2026

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project has a clear focus on serving populations historically removed from philanthropy, and the choice not to charge designers improves accessibility and access.

Outstanding job of outreach to other communities and thoughtful planning (ADA compliance, etc.).

This event has a clear understanding and commitment to their community. Their respect, engaging activities, and inclusivity are evident. Understanding how this organization engages with their community beyond the Summerfest is clear in the support materials. The use of numerical data does support this application.

Thanks for thinking comprehensively about public benefit and access. It's clear from your website that a major outcome of your art-based programs is creating opportunities to build trusted relationships.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The project leadership and history suggest that the organization has the necessary experience to deliver on its stated artistic and cultural offerings.

Very vibrant project with fantastic artistic and cultural value to the community.

The reflective process engages the communities that participate in Summerfest. Summerfest also builds the experience of local arts professionals and amateurs. The (free!) workshops are an educational component that adds strength to the relevance, equity, and inclusiveness of the project.

What a fabulously talented group of folks!

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The application would be stronger if there was more explanation of the \$3000 in other expenses, especially because the grant stipulates that total requested amount must reach no more than 50% of total expenses and the project would not reach that threshold without those \$3000 of expenses.

There are no specific goals or progress measures mentioned. Areas of ownership for the individuals planning the event are clear, although data about those persons is not (diversity of the team, years of experience, related relevant events they have plan

Community partnerships and authentic leadership from within the community will make this event a true success.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Hellenic Preservation Society of Northeastern Ohio

Project Title: Grammata Art Workshop

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I can't determine if this applicant meets the criteria for public benefit. I'd have liked to hear more about how the applicant is listening and responding to their community or building and strengthening relationships with this event. Those explanations were missing from the application. I'd have also liked to hear more about the content of the event.

I like that the project offers an opportunity for the community to explore how art can be a vehicle for personal growth and healing.

Funds will be used to support an artist workshop that is open to the public. The Artist will engage the audience in history and culture beneficial to the public.

I see fair evidence of providing public benefit. Future applications could be stronger with more details shared about how the org markets its programming within the Greek/Hellenic community and beyond. The narrative written for Question 8 (How will connect with you community...) was nebulous and lacking in specificity.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I like that this will be a family friendly event and the artist you will be working with for this project. In general, I would have liked to see a little more discussion in your narrative about how this particular project connect with the organization's m

The artist Theodora Miller is a well known artist and will share her art and experiences of recovering from serious injury with the community. The project meets the criteria for artistic and cultural vibrancy

I see strong evidence of a vibrant project being proposed with unique subject matter. Planning has started well in advance and important details have been shared.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, strong volunteer base and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The largely volunteer staff appears to be well qualified to plan and implement the project proposed in the application.

I see strong evidence of Org Capacity to create, plan, and manage this project since the org has a long history of offering arts-related projects and programs.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: High Art Fridays

Project Title: Plastic Quilt Project and Cover A Building 2

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 7.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Evaluating the public engagement aspect of this project was challenging. Although there were mentions of engagement opportunities, such as workshops, the application would have been stronger with more detailed information on how the public will be engaged beyond just having access to the artworks.

The applicant clearly illustrates the public benefit of this project in the Project Narratives and relevant supporting materials. Opportunities for inclusion and engagement are outlined with consideration of physical and economic access.

The applicant didn't demonstrate how it's listening to the needs of the community. It's emphasis seems to be more focused on the executive director.

I appreciate that the community includes "residents who may not traditionally engage with gallery spaces but who are deeply impacted by the environmental and social themes explored in our work." It would be helpful to understand how these community members can give feedback. It's also great to know this installation was designed in collaboration with local partners; more detail about who the partners are and what the collaboration looked like would be helpful in better understanding public benefit.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The materials and answers demonstrate that the artwork is thoughtfully and concisely created, and it is visually appealing.

Innovative and vibrant programming that draws in the community.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

All individuals involved have extensive experience in successfully executing programs

Potential concerns with organizational capacity as it relates to the financial position needed to carry out the project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Hispanic Police Officers Association

Project Title: Cleveland Puerto Rican Parade EXPO

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

More information on the community would have been helpful. In general, I had trouble knowing when the event will take place because the dates did not match. I also was confused about what constitutes grant programming (what they are asking to fund) and the full program.

The Project Narrative is concise and provides a clear outline for evaluation. However, the 2024 date gives the impression that the information may not be updated to reflect plans for the intended 2026 project and raises potential concerns about the event being engaging and relevant for 2026 with feedback from previous projects. That being said, the organization's community is clearly defined, with intentionality behind crafting a program that is inclusive and accessible. More detailed information on intended performers, artists, and their backgrounds would be helpful in future responses.

The applicant demonstrates that it will build and strengthen communities through including a cultural community. This will be done through improving relationship with public safety officers through their programming.

Public benefit is clear and community served is well-defined. Would appreciate more specificity around what community partnerships look like, and how organizers ensure that the event resonates.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

More information about the expo content would have been good to add.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Strong evidence of capacity to run a successful event.

The Executive Director information provided in the Project Basics is confusing (note: not a consideration in scoring, but a note for the organization).

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Historic Gateway Neighborhood Corporation

Project Title: 2026 Take a Hike Stroll Series

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 6.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The tours are a great form of public engagement. More information on how the tours will be accessible to all folks-- including those who are less mobile-- would have been good to include.

Supporting materials were extremely helpful in showing the organization's breadth of programming as well as the project's engagement of culturally and geographically diverse populations, effectively illustrating the public benefit and artistic and cultural vibrancy funding criteria. Something to consider for future applications: I was left wondering what access and invitation to participation looks like for people with disabilities who are interested in engaging with this project and organization.

While the application has other neighborhoods that it has engaged in. It hasn't engaged with those with neighborhoods of color. This doesn't show an active level of diversity or there isn't a plan that states how this will occur.

Community appears to be somewhat loosely defined as people who are interested in stories and preservation. I would challenge this group to think more specifically and deeply about who their community is.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The multimedia examples give a lot of insights into what the tours will look like.

This group seems to have built out a cultural walking tour series around the city very quickly, after the Board decided to expand beyond downtown just last year. Impressive!

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: India Fest USA

Project Title: 2026-17th Annual India Fest USA

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant clearly shows a dedication to being inclusive and engaging diverse populations by not only offering this festival for 15 years, but also through partnering with Latin-American, African American, and Ukrainian communities.

I like that the organization as a whole has used the arts a vehicle of building and strengthening community bonds. For example, " Through our journey of more than 15 years, we have partnered with Latin-American & African American groups, groups for underprivileged children, and other such groups, who would benefit from more inclusivity and diversity."

Free project that takes place at high school. Planning committee with volunteers and staff. Includes other cultures in the programming. This demonstrates public benefit.

I see fair evidence of Public Benefit from this proposed project. There are few details about the two components of the project while the org did share several of the timeline goals for when operational decisions will be made. In general the proposal lacks specificity. In connecting to its community the org lists outcome goals but few details on how the marketing and outreach connects to these communities.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The applicant builds the capacity of arts and cultural professionals by not only promoting well established artists but also emerging artists who might benefit from their platform.

I like that the event is an opportunity to promote both established and emerging artists. I really enjoyed the supporting documents / links which provided an opportunity to actually see a summary of the talent show, which I was delighted to see so many yo

The support materials show the beauty of this project. It appears to be connected to the culture and invites the community to join in, learn and have fun.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I see fair evidence of artistic and cultural vibrancy in this project as presented. The proposed expense budget lists \$4,500 for arts and cultural professionals, no details were shared about who these artists would be. Will there be master classes for the

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The planning committee has the qualifications to implement the program.

I see fair evidence of org capacity to plan and manage this project. Given what I have already stated for Public Benefit and Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy, I would hope that future proposals would include more project specifics.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: InMotion

Project Title: Music that Moves You

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,420

PUBLIC BENEFIT

A very promising program! There is strong evidence that the organization is thinking comprehensively about engagement and approach-- best practices, science-backed data, embodied experience. It's also great that they include caretakers.

Great detail provided about the program to illustrate public benefit to the organization's community. As the organization mentions their 2023-2025 strategic plan and its goal of expanding its community to engage more diverse populations, it would be helpful to have more detailed information on any progress or outcomes.

Well-defined population that can very clearly benefit from this programming. Great that participants are offered the opportunity for feedback. Glad that the 2023-25 strategic plan includes outreach to underserved populations and hope that the outreach to African American churches leads to new partnerships and expanded access.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The organization's efforts to diversity their reach seem promising. It would be great if they could offer these services to more folks.

The applicant demonstrated artistic and cultural vibrancy in the community through helping those with Parkinson disease with using music.

Variety of modalities offered.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: International Community Council-Worldwide Intercultural Network (ICC-WIN)

Project Title: "Voices of Identity: Cultural Connection Workshops"

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant shows a commitment to listening and responding to their community by creating this workshop series based on feedback from their annual summit on the State of the International Community. The feedback from that summit also shows that the organization is being inclusive and engaging diverse populations by sharing power so that the international community can tell its own story.

I really like that the project will use art to build bridges of understanding as well as "creating experiences that foster empathy, curiosity, and connection." Projects like this serve to strengthen our communities as a whole. I also like that the programs are occurring in an accessible and neutral spaces - the public library. Programs in public libraries allow participants to also check out books to learn more at the completion of the program. Maybe request the library create a bibliography of books in their collection that highlight the cultures and arts of each continent that can be handed out to participants. The application states, "Our proposal outlines a solid initiative to repair the broken mosaic of American cultural identity by fostering shared understanding, promoting historical literacy, revitalizing community bonds, and celebrating our common humanity." This is a great mission. I only hope that in the desire to promote historical literacy there is also discussion of the various forms of migration that have shaped the Cleveland area including forced migration of Native American peoples and Great Migration of African Americans. These histories are crucial in understanding what is the American "mosaic story" and who is left out, allowed in and consistently marginalized.

Great partnership with the public library. Free to the public. Involves many different cultures - extensive outreach.

I see strong evidence of Public Benefit with this project. The org has history in bringing together diverse cultural groups and communities to help create similar programs.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I like that the program will cover a variety of cultures on each continent, as well as provide multiple artistic disciplines to explore, which further help to create opportunities for connection. I also like the intentionality of ensure you have facilitat

The proposed workshops will bring arts/cultural facilitators together to explore a range of creativity within each culture.

I strong evidence of artistic and cultural vibrancy with this project, especially given the organization's history with producing similar work in the past.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The applicant could strengthen this proposal by using Question 9 to explain who is on their team and how they are qualified. The narrative submitted does not answer Question 9.

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and previous success with a similar project, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

Doesn't describe the team that will implement the project.

I see fair evidence of Org Capacity to plan and manage the project here. The org neglected to use Question 9 (Describe your team...) to detail who will be involved and in what capacities. The org DOES have history with producing similar events in years past, so there is organizational history with similar successful projects.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Jennings Center for Older Adults

Project Title: Gateway to Culture

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 5.75

2026 Grant Amount: No Grant Awarded

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project is specific and offers cultural accessibility to a well defined population. It would be good to know more about the criteria necessary to participate in the programs and any potential ways that the organization could partner with other populations that need physical or cognitive accessibility in order to meaningfully participate in arts and cultural offerings.

This application does not meet the criteria for public benefit as information about the project was too vague.

The accessibility, design, and staff support of the programs and venue make the community invitation to participate clear. While Jennings Center clearly has expert leaders in elder care, a description of how the community helps evaluate or expand the programming is not clear (beyond attendance numbers).

This is a fabulous experience for the folks at Garfield Heights. This concept is inspiring as a model for other day centers and nonprofits serving older adults.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The team and organizational background shows strong experience with programming for older adults, but it would be of benefit to the application if there was more information about the artists involved in the program.

There is no mention of how the community served is engaged with the reflection process or its content/plan.

It would be great to learn about a few more of the types of artistic/cultural experiences offered, and to learn more about how Jennings helps artists and creative organizations modify their programs for this community. The video and photos offered were lo

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization has a strong organizational capacity and the 990 supports the argument that there are other resources available within the organization to continue the program if this grant were to not be successful.

More information would be needed, particularly concerning budget with nearly \$75,000 in unspecified costs and only \$15,000 designated funds for artists.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland Ohio

Project Title: Colors of Life: Stories Through Color and Light

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The specific population identified in the project would be well served by the organization's stated goals. That said, it would strengthen the application to know more about the specifics of how the program aims to engage with its target demographic.

Lovely project to increase sense of belonging for mentally ill client artists.

Engaging the community they serve throughout the year in planning for their project shows listening, responding, respecting and sharing of power with that community.

This seems like a consistent, purposeful experience for folks that engage with JFSA.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The leadership has significant experience with both arts and Arts as a tool for engaging with populations facing mental illness or cognitive differences.

The planning process (does it include reflection on past events) does engage the community served and, therefore is relevant, relationship building, and strengthening. Examples of consultant artists used in the past would illustrate the use of arts professionals and strengthen this application.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget should be more specific and it is stated in the application that the requested amount should be no more than 50% of total expenses. As stated in the application, expenses are equal to the requested grant amount.

Outstanding

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

The project team has expertise to ensure success.

Would have been helpful to understand a little more about how the budget is being used. Glad to see that there is a line for arts and culture professionals, but it's not clear what their role is.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Jewish Federation of Cleveland

Project Title: Cleveland Israel Arts Connection: Roe Green Gallery Exhibitions

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project showcases specific artwork that is in alignment with the mission, vision, values stated in the organization's materials.

A variety of venues to match the variety of art presented shows inclusivity and increases engagement of the JFC community.

It's a challenge to assess the public benefit of this project, because it leaves much to interpretation. Public benefit is relevant in the context of a time and place. This organization's mission supports the nation of Israel as a Jewish state. Given ongoing religious and ethnic violence centered around this issue, these art exhibits could be very powerful as they explore mourning and borders. Because art helps us process complex realities, this experience could help the community wrestle with its identity by sparking introspection and/or productive dialogue. With empathy for the leaders of this organization that are navigating this long term tension, I am choosing to read between the lines: these curatorial choices were made with purpose and situational awareness. I hope that they can discuss this more openly in the future, and believe it will help future reviewers of grant applications understand the clear public benefit of an arts experience like this. Other attempts at community relationships through the Dia de los Muertos event are appreciated.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The project leadership shows experience with the state at work and seems able to deliver on the artistic and cultural product.

Outstanding cultural vibrancy in this project.

The use of a variety of arts professionals is clear. The expansion of mediums to include video shows evolution of programming. Program committees (for "Memory") indicate the process of reflection is inclusive and relevant to the community.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organization and project budget look like they are able to support the project.

Program expertise is clear. Funding management/planning is described and is strong.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Jones Road Family Development Corporation

Project Title: Literacy Through the Arts Summer Academy

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

More information about the students attending the summer class would have been good to include such as what neighborhoods do they come from and how do they benefit from the program.

The organization could provide more information in the Project Summary. The project is clearly defined as a music and arts instruction summer camp, but the link to literacy and academic outcomes is unclear. Partnerships with local schools are mentioned, but it is not clear how students are selected or how or if outcomes are tracked.

Great focus on children in a specific, under-resourced neighborhood. I am curious if there is an additional focus on children who are behind in reading or if this program is intended to improve literacy for all levels.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Information in the Project Basics and Project Narratives shows the organization's responsiveness and growth in listening and responding to its community and diversifying its team of arts and cultural professionals over time.

The applicant demonstrates its artistic and cultural vibrancy by including those who attended the summer program. It further has determined this through working within its specified community.

An innovative and powerful focus on using multiple artistic forms to increase literacy. Multiple teaching artists, the majority of whom identify as African American, like the children they are teaching.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Kings & Queens of Art

Project Title: KQOA "Community Paint Party"

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

It was hard to determine the public benefit of this application. One way to strengthen the application is to explain how the applicant will listen and respond to its community in planning the event.

I really like that the work is born from a lived experience and works to meet people where they are. The Mobile Art Palace is a fairly new endeavor, that I look forward to seeing it grow. I like that the work also provides opportunities for formerly and currently incarcerated.

Community Paint Day is free and open to the public. Participants can choose to get involved with the mural or make individual painting. Meets the public benefit criteria.

I see strong evidence of Public Benefit with this project. There is a well defined community being served that is consistently marginalized by society, although specific project does not seem to be directed to the transitioning/formerly incarcerated community which is the organization's stated mission.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This application could be strengthened by including the names of some of the artists who will work on this project and if they have experience teaching art workshops or if this opportunity will help give them that experience so that they can go out into the community and find other teaching artist jobs. This would help support that the applicant is building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals and helping them thrive.

I really like the link to the event, as it showcased not only the variety of art activities that happen, but also the collaboration and community that has formed around the work. In general, it would have been nice to see two different examples of the pro

The project will be an exciting community wide event with art in two locations. The community will have the opportunity to see art and make art. Meets the artistic and cultural vibrancy criteria.

PANEL RESULTS & COMMENTS

2025 WRITTEN PROJECT SUPPORT PANEL

I see fair evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy in this project. I would like to know more about who will be creating and leading the projects on those two days, or how they will be recruited, selected, and guided. Will the lead artists be members of

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Please note: Expense total should be twice the funding request. So in this case, Expense total should be \$10,00 since the applicant is requesting \$5,000.

I feel like the community is behind this work and will ensure to make it happen.

Applicant does not like the question re how is the team qualified- so does not describe the team. The team will consist of artists and community members.

I see fair evidence of Org Capacity to plan and manage the project. The Cuyahoga Arts & Culture staff or various Business Volunteers groups could recommend additional individuals to help with grant writing and event planning & management. The Expense budget does not include an equal amount of In-Kind dollars to match what is in the Income budget, and the submitted budgets do not show a 50% match for the amount being requested. The submitted budgets should be at least \$10,000 total.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Lake View Cemetery Foundation

Project Title: 2026 Concert Series at Lake View Cemetery

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant could improve their request by sharing how they listen and respond to their community. The applicant is inclusive and engages diverse populations by showcasing a variety of different kinds of music, utilizing the cemetery's location in the University Circle arts and culture district, along with offering the concerts on Sunday afternoons.

Given the diversity of communities and activities that intersect Lake View's property this a great opportunity to also build bridges and serve as a "third space."

The free concert series reaches 5000 people - that is a community wide event. The mix of programs allows people from different experiences to enjoy the series.

I see strong evidence of Public Benefit with this project. The org has a history of programming a diverse and wide-ranging concert series over the years. The org did a solid job of detailing how it will reach its targeted communities.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The applicant did mention that, "Free summer concerts allow the entire community to experience the talent of local musicians among the beauty of Lake View Cemetery." But it was not clear if this is the same concert series they are requesting funding for. I'd have liked to hear more about how they are building the capacity of local arts and culture professionals through this series.

I like that Lake View seeks to offer a variety of programs. The application states, "Various performances and types of music will be offered at the 2026 Concert Series in order to appeal to Cuyahoga County's diverse population. Concerts are typically held

The website captures the types of concerts that are offered

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I see strong evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy given the history of programming and an expressed desire to program across and for many communities.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the program and experience of the staff, I have no doubts this program will be executed.

The agency has been conducting the concert series for many years. They will be able able to accomplish the goals of 2026 project.

I see strong evidence of Org Capacity from an organization with history and professionalism.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: LakewoodAlive

Project Title: Front Porch Concert Series

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

A very strong application. In order to meet the diversity they hope to accomplish, it would be beneficial to engage different partners i.e. music-oriented organizations.

The organization's project narratives provide clear evidence of public benefit, with emphasis on accessibility and inclusion in the community. While the past projects/event timeline provided in the Organizational Overview is helpful, it would be even stronger with a narrative, such as what is shown on the 'About Us' page of the provided website, to help contextualize the organization's context and evolution.

Applicant was able to demonstrate diversity through it's series which showcases artists from a diverse line up. As this reflects the community hosting these events.

Beneficial to the broad demographics of Lakewood. Would be great to understand if there are specific ways that attendees and residents can offer feedback and suggest programming.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Appreciate the artistic curation to showcase a diversity of genres and types of bands from across Lakewood and Cuyahoga County.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Staff seems well equipped to run the program!

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Larchmere PorchFest

Project Title: Larchmere PorchFest 2026

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This is a strong application that provides access to art and community.

Wonderfully inclusive and innovative community project!

The applicant shows the engagement of their community in the creation, execution and support of Porchfest.

This event is a prime example of arts experiences with public benefit. Love to see photos of the event, and it seems like many types of music and people are present. As an outside reviewer, it would have been helpful to hear more about the neighborhood, and understand how the organization is staying aware of inclusion or working on any current challenges.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The application would benefit from more specifics on leadership and their experience not only with art and culture, but also with presentation.

The community served is engaged in the reflection process, and the expansion of the arts included in Porchfest show the engagement of a variety of arts professionals.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget reflects the organization's ability to deliver on the project goals, however, given that the organization submitted a 990 N, more specifics would be beneficial.

Strong volunteerism speaks well for this project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Lexington-Bell Community Center

Project Title: Kuumba Celebration Series

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project has a clearly defined demographic and the summary of programming looks to provide a breath of activities and experiences.

A worthy outreach program to encourage community engagement and strengthening relationships.

The variety of the programming, with its unity of theme, shows respect for and understanding of the community that the LBCC serves.

This is a meaningful cultural celebration that integrates creativity. Clearly the LBCC is known as a space for kids and families to engage in culture.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The team shows experience in leadership in the area, and the application would be stronger if they had a few more examples of the artists that will be involved in the project and more about their background.

Both the supporting material and the examples of artists involved illustrate the LBCC's use of arts professionals. A brief description of a process of reflection (and how the community served participates in it) would strengthen this application.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The organizational budget looks robust enough to support the project, however more details on other funding would make for a stronger application.

Strong use of a variety of mediums to connect with the community to inform them of this event.

It would have been helpful to have a few minor details like the length of the activity, and an image of the quilt activity.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: LGBT Community Center Greater Cleveland

Project Title: Speak Out Stage at 2026 Pride in the CLE

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 9.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Tremendous public benefit, with strong evidence of partner engagement and sensitivity.

Concise but detailed project narrative clearly displayed public benefit, including understanding and respecting its community, listening and responding to needs and feedback, expanding on access and inclusion, and building on strong partnerships with other community organizations.

The applicant demonstrates the need of the community through inviting and engaging it's members through this yearly event.

Inclusive and intersectional population served, including the diversity of LGBTQ+ folks in Northeast Ohio.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Amazing to hear how community feedback has meaningfully shifted programming on the mainstage.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The expenses far exceed the income. How will they cover their expenses?

Great to see that this org is not only LGBTQ+ led but BIPOC led.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Linking Employment, Abilities & Potential (LEAP)

Project Title: Quantum LEAP Talent and Art Show

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project serves a well defined population with a service that has documented evidence of benefiting not only those with disabilities, but the entire public. It would be helpful for reviewers to know more about the reasoning behind charging participants a fee for participation. This seems like a hindrance to accessibility.

Thoughtfully created and very creative event.

Preparation sessions with a variety of art options engage participants beyond the Talent Show and builds community and strengthens relationships. The respect for community is illustrated in the attachments of past projects and accessibility is clear. Education of the public further engages and includes a more diverse population.

Staff and volunteers are members of the disability community, and these experiences are designed with inclusion top of mind. Having these consistent, encouraging, proud experiences to amplify the talents and voices of folks with disabilities are so important for our entire society.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The staff, as detailed in the application, show experience and education with the artistic and population specific needs to successfully administer the program.

Examples of instructors participating in the programming would illustrate the use of arts and culture professionals and strengthen this application.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Led by an expert team, a description of the reflective process would strengthen this application. The materials attached from last year lend support to the ability of LEAP to successfully plan and manage this event.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Little Italy Redevelopment Corporation

Project Title: 2024 Little Italy Summer and Holiday Art Walks

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 6

2026 Grant Amount: \$2,720

PUBLIC BENEFIT

It was hard to determine the public benefit of this application. I could not find evidence that the applicant is listening and responding to its community; building or strengthening relationships. I can see how the applicant is sharing power with its community by offering these art walks where merchants, artists, and galleries all participate. I'd have liked more data on how many artists/galleries/merchants participate to help determine how much the applicant is building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals and helping them thrive.

I really like that art is being used a vehicle to bring community together, as well as creating economic opportunities for artists and businesses in the area.

I see fair evidence of Public Benefit for this project. This proposal is extremely light on details in all areas. the bare minimum of information is shared. The community of participating artists and "walkers" is not defined, not is the plan to market the project to artists and attendees. The organization has history of producing this project in the past, so there should be more information available about how it is structured each year; how it grows and changes and adapts; how a diverse community is invited to advise on content and participate.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Anytime we can use the arts to rebuild the bonds of community and support cultural identities, it is a public benefit for all to get to know each other. In general, I really love the poster images that was submitted, but would have appreciated an actual p

Not enough information about the merchants, artist and galleries in the community is provided

I see fair evidence of Artistic and Cultural Vibrancy with this project. As mentioned in the previous section, the lack of detail and specificity makes this project very hard to evaluate.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

I see fair evidence of Org Capacity with this project. With \$0 going to artists in the expense budget and 75% of the project budget listed as "other project expenses," additional details could be provided for context.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: LYLESART

Project Title: ARTOGRAPHY, Community Photography Project

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The application is a little confusing. The project summary suggests that participants will meet certain learning objectives; however, question 8 has little explanation on how they will meet their goals except for the youth guided by local photographers. How does placing cameras on tree branches and infrastructure, lead to an exploration of, "broad spectrum of photography including visual arts, documentary, portraiture and photojournalism. The goal is to explore critical social cogency issues directly related to their lives and community that have been fixed by environment through creativity and visual dialog." This engagement seems more passive. Will there be learning opportunities for the folks taking pictures?

Well presented project with community engagement woven into all aspects of the process and clear public benefit. Strong evidence of community collaboration and the organization's ability to build relationships and considering accessibility and inclusivity. One question on project-specific details. Relating to the public placement of cameras (i.e. tree branches and infrastructure), is there a contingency plan/budget or potential over distribution plan in the event of potential loss of those cameras/images?

The applicant has stated how they will engage with their community through addressing their shared experience with others. This will be done through the development of educational programming related to their environment allowing them to have a creative outlet.

Impact is centered on a specific group of neighborhoods, with emphasis on young people 13-25 but with the ability for all community members to participate through publicly available disposable cameras. This mixture of targeted outreach through a school program and broad outreach through an eye-catching public activation feels like a smart balance.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Appreciate the accessibility of the project, with instruction provided in schools as well as the community activation.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Malachi Center

Project Title: CRAFTERNOONS

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 5.75

2026 Grant Amount: No Grant Awarded

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project serves a specific population who's outcome is directly tied to the benefit of the entire community.

This program appears to be very well received and of benefit to Malachi House's community. The project activities are diverse, engaging, and practical. Yet, with a full year of contact with their population there is ample opportunity for Malachi House to listen to, share power with, and build relationships with their community (which is likely happening) - there is no mention of how these regular interactions influence the crafternoons and summer open activity time programs. A brief mention of this community engagement process (including staff and volunteers who are part of the community as members and neighbors) would greatly strengthen this application. The support materials add credibility to the public benefit (participation, diversity, engagement) of this program.

This seems to round out some core services to folks who are seeking community support. It's great to know that some staff are former program participants. Love to know that the activities involve all members of the family unit. It would be helpful to understand more about what the participants experience from these activities. Stress relief was mentioned.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

It would make for a stronger application if the team included practicing teaching artists or individuals that were trained in arts therapy.

Would like to see a more diverse team of arts and cultural professionals.

The partnership with Sew4Service engages arts professionals with this program.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Surprisingly high administrative cost that is about six times the cost of the artistic professionals.

The specific goal of increased attendance is noteworthy. Increased focus on growing the diversity of Malachi Center board will increase the culture of belonging with their community. The financial request of CAC exceeds half of the expenses.

There's a significant amount of the funds allocated to "administrative" but it's not clear what this really means.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Mandel Jewish Community Center of Cleveland

Project Title: Mandel JCC's 20th Annual Cleveland Jewish FilmFest

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 9.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This applicant shows clear commitment to being inclusive and engaging diverse populations through its collaborations with Facing History and Ourselves to reach younger audiences and by offering films that have cross cultural interest. The supporting documentation showed clear proof that this film festival has a positive impact on its community and the broader public.

I like that the films are located throughout the Cleveland area, which increase accessibility and opportunities for community connections. I also like that Facing History and Ourselves will develop a curriculum.

The FilmFest reaches 7,500 people annually making an event that many people care about and support. There are many different locations. The Strategic partnerships allow more people to join in the audiences. The after film conversations education/empower the audience.

I see strong evidence of Pubic Benefit. The org has a long and successful history of producing this project. Extensive details about planning and marketing to prospective attendees have been shared.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I like the intentionality to connect with other film groups to build bridges of understanding and strengthens the overall Cleveland arts and film community.

The film selection covers a wide breath of films made by Jewish filmmakers and issues around Jewish life. The support materials demonstrate a high quality films.

I see strong evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy for this project. The programming is diverse and inclusive beyond Jewish-centric films.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, strong volunteer base and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The staff leadership has the capacity to implement the project as proposed.

I see strong evidence of Org Capacity. The org has a clear history with this project and a capable team to plan, market, and manage it.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Metro West Community Development Organization

Project Title: The Art Garden Festival

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project seems focused on a relevant population and uses arts & culture to activate a geography that is critical to the county's infrastructure.

This project has strong evidence that it will strengthen community relationships.

The diverse community of the Stockyards is made clear. Is Storer Avenue in the Stockyards neighborhood? Does this project only impact that neighborhood? A free, hands-on art-focused community festival will help build and strengthen relationships. The outreach described support engaging diverse populations and being inviting.

This is an interesting idea, but I'm left with questions about how much community input will be created. Community art participation takes time and trust. It's great to hear some of the outreach ideas through door-to-door canvassing, block clubs, etc. There could be a great opportunity here to amplify any existing cultural traditions of the neighborhood in the arts activities. It would be great to learn more about how these residents are informing or inspiring the types of activities offered, which will probably also improve engagement and feedback.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The team description highlights the relevant skill set, but more details would make for a stronger application.

Local artists are engaged in this project. Their diversity is declared but not supported with specifics and it is not clear that it reflects the neighborhoods impacted by the Festival.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget lacks detail and more information about in kind services would make for a stronger application.

A reflective process for the event is not mentioned nor are goals. The Planning leaders appear to have expertise/experience to lead this project. Commentary on strategic planning for a strong financial position as well as measures or goals for success

It's not clear how many or what kinds of arts activities will be offered, so I'm not confident that the budget is realistic or fair to artists.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Midnight Art Club

Project Title: Midnight Forum Complex

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 6.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

It is unclear to me if this application meets the criteria for public benefit. There isn't enough information about how the broader public will be involved or how the applicant anticipates the public engaging with the installation. I also did not see any evidence that the applicant is being inclusive and engaging diverse populations. For example, I'd have liked to hear how the applicant is already in conversation with neighborhood residents and stakeholders and how they are involved in the process.

I am a big believer in the power of the arts to impact community, especially when executed in public spaces. The application states, "What defines us is our commitment to radical collaboration and co-creation. Every aspect of our work—from planning and building installations to hosting events and community engagement—is 100% co-created by our members." I love that as a group you are truly diving within to cross-pollinate and amplify each other's gifts, talents and skills. With that said, I was curious how the community outside of your members would be connected to and embrace the work vs. feeling like it had been "imposed" on the public area. Would have liked to see a little more discussion on how you are connecting with the communities and stakeholders within the immediate area of the park.

Very large community event reaching over 10,000 people. Project occurs in a public park. Collaborative team includes creators from many disciplines.

I see fair evidence of Public Benefit with this project. No completion or exhibition/open-to-the-public timeline (or even goal timeline, understanding the challenges of getting all of the necessary city and county government approvals). It's a very exciting project, however the proposal needs a more detailed narrative.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I really like the work and look forward to seeing how this piece evolves as it goes into production. In general, I am a little confused about the scale of the work when I compare the images and the description where you indicate, "

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

As demonstrated on the website the past art installations are beautiful and well received by the the public. The collaborative team of artists have a developed a rhythm to create good works.

I see strong evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy. Large-scale, public space/site-specific, non-traditional installation work is always exciting AND challenging to pull off. This org knows what it's doing and how it wants to (and plans to) arrive at

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

It is clear from your website you have the skills and capacity to complete this work. I like that your work has humble beginnings that has continued to grow and expand.

Agency pushes back on the 'are they qualified' question by saying that they have done it in the past so should be able to do it again. This is the 2nd app that I reviewed that the agency appears to reject the question. Interesting- maybe the question has

I see fair evidence of Org Capacity to plan and manage the project. The expense budget does not show the required 1:1 match.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: MidTown Cleveland

Project Title: Juneteenth: Celebrating Togetherness

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 6.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project has a specific target and includes elements of arts and culture, but the application would be stronger if there were more details on the artistic component.

Worthy project to engage the local community.

Neighborhood residents participate in the creation, planning, and execution of the Juneteenth event - and that means the organization is respecting, sharing power, listening and building/strengthening relationships with their community. There is no mention if this is a single "festival" like event or many events under the Juneteenth/Black History Month theme. That information would make the project and its goals clearer. A few examples of the actions taken that show how MidTown Cleveland "values inclusive celebration, creative collaboration, and ... mutual respect" would strengthen this application. An expectation of 200 people in such a large population area is concerning.

Love to see that the event is resident-led and supported by the organization. It would be great to have a little more detail about the event, especially from a resident's point of view. Is it a day-long festival or series of events during Juneteenth season?

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The information on the team could be more detailed.

It would seem that the process of reflection is built into the planning process as the residents/participants of the project prepare for the coming year. A comment on the feedback/reflection process, however, would strengthen this application. Examples (names and credentials/experience) of arts/culture professionals who participated in the past would also strengthen this application.

Would have been great to see some photos from past events (found one photo in the 2024 recap document) and learn more about the types of arts and cultural experiences that will be offered.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Organization has an impressive strategic plan.

Little is said about the leadership of this project beyond community residents will be handling it. More specifics about the individuals leading this effort would further strengthen this application.

There are a lot of questions about what this event will actually be. Since it has taken place for a few years now, it seems like the group has experience implementing.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Museum of Creative Human Art

Project Title: MoCHA Gallery

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 6.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization states very high goals for public engagement and benefit. Organizing a rotating exhibition with many artists and exhibition programs is a big feat. Not impossible to do with two staff members, but I wonder how the organization will establish a "venue, project managers, artists, and marketing strategies" and run programs to meet their goals. It would have been good to include a bit more on artist selection.

While the organization shows clear intentionality and a foundation for public benefit, the project narratives are broad in scope and vague in particulars, feeling underdeveloped. As someone unfamiliar with the area and organization, there's a lack of detail as to how the project addresses the lack of accessible art spaces in the community (the location is identified as a gallery) and what artists and community are being served.

The applicant demonstrated the public need through increasing the awareness and recognition of programming. This was done through providing artist talks, and offering workshops that promote a safe space for youth.

As defined here, the community seems very broad.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

It is also not clear to me how this project incorporates a process of reflection to ensure that programming is relevant to or created with its community, nor how cultural professionals or stakeholders outside of the director are engaged.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Does the organization have partners for this project? If yes, it would have been good to include.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: NAMI Greater Cleveland

Project Title: Hope 'n Mic 2026

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project identifies the specific population and serves the entire community by drawing awareness and highlighting the role of Art and Culture in Community.

Worthy project but benefit to the community is unclear.

The applicant has provided strong evidence of their work for their community and this event is only possible with their community's participation. This creates a powerful and meaningful connection.

This seems like a useful experience for folks who are part of NAMI GC's programs. It would have been helpful to see some photos or videos from past years or to hear some stories about the impact of this event.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The application did a good job of showing the capability of the team to produce this work.

This project is both relevant to and engaging with NAMI GC's community and it promotes understanding, and inclusivity to the larger public. The addition of video or photographs showing pieces of previous events like this would have strengthened this application.

It would have been great to learn more about how the artist-led workshops fit into the program. Do the artists offer these workshops on the day of the event, or as preparation for potential performers?

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Would prefer to see diversity in leadership and individuals served beyond the limited definition provided by this organization. Expenses for arts professionals are less than administrative costs, which is concerning.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

The staff is well qualified to successfully plan and manage this project.

I have no doubt that the organization can execute the program.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: New Avenues to Independence

Project Title: Promoting Access to Music for Individuals with Disabilities

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This is a well thought out application supporting a meaningful project. References to how serving this specific population benefits the entire community are present throughout the application and the design of the program incorporates a wide range of community participation.

This looks like a strong project for this community.

The applicant showed strong evidence of meaningfully connecting with their community - as performers and audience members at this event.

Love to hear that a choir and ensemble program have been established. These seem to be wonderful, communal, creative experiences. Thank you for articulating the experience of both participants and attendees. I encourage this organization to begin tracking the demographics of its clients, staff and leadership to understand its own reach within its community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The application details both lived and learned experience from the team leaders and gives confidence that they are able to deliver the artistic offerings.

As presented, it is clear that this event promotes diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Thank you for the photos and videos of the program. It seems like a high quality experience for participants.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget and 990 suggest that there is organizational capacity to support the project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

The team is professionally dedicated to creating a culture of belonging. This event celebrates music therapy and the individual successes with personal goals and progress.

Glad to see that the organization has other sources of revenue supporting this program, as it seems to be a core service/experience for its clients.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: No Exit

Project Title: The Cleveland School Concert Series

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

It makes sense for the applicant to continue their collaborative relationships with partnering venues. Both as a way to strengthen those existing relationships, but also to engage with diverse populations surrounding those venues.

I think it is wonderful when the arts can be used to create space for the community to dive deeper in local history to understand the community's past and how this influences the present and future.

Concert Series that takes place in three locations. New music being introduced to the community that is composed by artists who are not traditionally chamber music artists. Meets the criteria

I see strong evidence of Public Benefit with this project. Performing work by living composers is very important. The org does a strong job demonstrating the depth of its partnerships and the reach into its partners' communities along with the org's community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I really like that the project will not only create new art pieces (classical music and poetry), but also celebrate and showcase the various artistic disciplines associated with the Cleveland School.

Agency partners with other artist and is performing at venues that introduce new audiences

I see fair evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy. The proposal could be enhanced in the future by providing the demographics of composers whose works have been premiered over the years. I looked up the composers listed for the project, all men, to lea

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I appreciate that the applicant included information about how they have historically invested and have contribute significantly to the growth and flourishing of partner venues (arts communities) where they have performed free concerts for 15 years. I would have liked to hear more about how the applicant does this. For example, with some data from partnering venues that proves this statement.

Given the age of the organization, staff experience and longevity of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete the proposed project.

The team involved in the performances have a good deal of experience and will be able to implement the project in 2026.

I see fair evidence of Org Capacity. The income and expense budgets for the project do not match totals, but the org has a successful history operating and producing other projects with its partners.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: No Surf House

Project Title: No Surf Fest

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 6

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The proposed project looks like it would give public benefit to the communities where the festival is located. That said, it is unclear to what stage the project has been planned. The application would be much stronger if it identified exactly where in the process the planning was.

The applicant provides a compelling narrative that this event will meaningfully connect them with the community/neighborhood most affected by his non-profit, subsidized housing for traveling musicians in the Cleveland area. Representatives from the affected neighborhood are to be included in the planning as are local musicians.

It would be helpful to put a little more thought into the community for this festival and what they will get out of the experience.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The team shows ample experience to deliver on the proposed project.

A free, community concert definitely grows the capacity of musicians as well as promotes diversity, inclusion and belonging for people residing in and visiting the neighborhood. Determining a process of reflection that embraces local neighbors would support this grant in the future as well as engage and build relationships with existing neighbors.

No Surf House's mission to support touring musicians is incredible! I'm having a hard time understanding how this particular festival supports their mission. Maybe it would be helpful to share more details about the goals of this particular festival and i

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget for this event does not seem reasonable, with \$5,000 for administrative expenses, \$7,500 for artists and \$2,500 for marketing, with expected attendance of 250-500. Also, I would welcome more evidence that this organization can produce an event of this scale.

The team of professionals and volunteers is capable and committed. Commenting on setting goals, measuring progress, and having a process to guide the evolution of this event (however small) would have strengthened this application.

Seems like a great organization.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: North Pointe Ballet

Project Title: Accessible "Nutcracker Ballet" Performances in Cuyahoga County

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This application demonstrates the organizations commitment to providing accessible artistic services to the community. There are several specific examples of how accessibility features are included to provide maximum public benefit.

Very thoughtful programming and planning with regard to ADA accessibility, sensory-friendly, and ASL narration.

NPB presents strong evidence of support for accessible and inviting programming for its community and the larger public. Additionally the location adds an accessible and welcoming element to their project with their community. Examples of how NPB understands, respects, listens and responds to its community definitely strengthened this application.

It's clear that inclusive public benefit is a core reputation for NPB. It's wonderful to learn that NPB has partnerships in the disability advocacy and service community, which connect them to potential dancers and audience members. It seems like NPB's way of operating is strongly centered in inclusion and public benefit. It would be great to learn more about the impact of this work. Is the number of folks served growing? Are more arts nonprofits and entertainment providers inspired to implement these practices?

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The description of the team shows evidence that they can deliver the stated artistic product.

The artistry of the work and the diversity and inclusiveness of the performers (from the supplemental information) show the NPB's success in promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging with this project.

The artistic quality of these productions is incredible. It's wonderful to see video of kids interacting with professional ballet dancers.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget suggest that there is organizational capacity to complete the program.

The team leaders show expertise that ensures a successful outcome for the project. A brief comment on strategically planning for a strong financial position would strengthen this application FYI - Project dates are all in 2025.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: North Union Farmers Market

Project Title: North Union Farmer Market Music at the Market Program

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 6.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$3,625

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The requested project would add artistic benefit to a public event. The application would be stronger if there were more direct references to the artist that will participate and how they are scheduled to integrate with the farmers market. Project samples were helpful, but information on future engagement would also strengthen the application.

Very large number of anticipated participants.

The applicant presented strong narrative about its knowledge of and engagement with its community. Some specific examples or research references would further strengthen this application as would the use of data (attendees, musicians, etc).

Love to see the arts integrated into daily life. Farmer's Markets are true communities, and the relationships artists can build with audiences is real. This program is part of NUFM's vision to invest in local talent, cultural expression and community well-being, including engaging younger audiences. It would be wonderful to learn more about how artists and others have informed this strategy.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The application would be stronger if there were more team members identified with a strong artistic background that could help understand and promote the needs of the artist.

This project does offer the opportunity for arts professionals and amateurs to build capacity and promote their work. A brief description of the feedback/reflection process and its engagement with the Farmers' Market community (surveys? interviews?) would strengthen this application.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget could use more detail, particularly on the expense side which shows less total expenses than the requested grant amount.

Administrative costs seem high in relation to artist fees.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development

Project Title: La Placita Pop Up Markets

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 9.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant shows clear dedication to understanding, respecting, and sharing power with its community by hosting the event in a neighborhood with a strong Hispanic and Latino presence where local artists, performers, and entrepreneurs can share their work.

I like that the project is rooted in multiple layers of public benefit. For example, "The project is intentionally designed to provide direct public benefit by activating a public space for cultural celebration, strengthening the visibility of local Hispanic-owned businesses, and creating a platform where art and culture are shared through lived experience. Through multilingual marketing, youth art engagement, and live cultural performances, La Placita fosters community pride and cross-cultural connection."

'The project is designed to provide direct public benefit by activating a public space for cultural celebration, strengthening the visibility of local Hispanic-owned businesses, and creating a platform where art and culture are shared through lived experience.'

I see strong evidence of Public Benefit with a well-defined marketing plan to reach the targeted communities. The org involves previous participants in the planning of future markets.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Additionally, the applicant builds the capacity of arts and cultural professionals by highlighting local artists and performers (such as Latino bands), and including an indoor marketplace (including handmade goods, cultural crafts, and traditional food).

It is clear that you understand the community you serve and the needs of its youth, adults and families. I like that you are creating multiple opportunities to celebrate cultural heritage and multiple artistic disciplines, as well as providing artists and

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

This area is rich in cultural traditions expressed through local art, music, and cuisine, creating a deep sense of pride and connection.

I see strong evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy with a commitment to DEI & belonging and the inclusion of the community throughout the process.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Please note: In the Income Table, the total should be \$15,000 or more because CAC requires a 1:1 match and the applicant is requesting \$7,500.

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

With over 9 years of experience hosting this event, our team brings both institutional knowledge and a shared passion for uplifting Hispanic and Latino culture.

I see strong evidence of Org Capacity. The organization has a successful history of producing these markets and an experienced team to plan and manage them.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Northeast Ohio Musical Heritage Association

Project Title: Lake Erie Folk Festival 2026

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant shows their commitment to being inclusive and engaging diverse populations by including a diverse array of traditional musical forms—from as Tuvan throat singing to gospel and blues. Additionally, they moved locations in 2024 to Case Western Reserve in order to be accessible and inviting to their community. I would have liked to hear more about how this move made their event more accessible to the public.

I like that the program is accessible and creates economic opportunities for area creatives. I like that the organization took a chance to move the program to live out your values and "a commitment to accessibility," which positively impacted the festival as "numbers stayed strong, in spite of the challenges of bringing attendees along to a new location, and we saw better participation than ever among younger participants, diverse audiences and new visitors to the festival." This more than anything indicates the intrinsic value and public benefit of this festival.

Large Community event that is free to the public. Partners with agencies to accomplish accessibility goals. Seeks diverse audiences.

I see strong evidence of Public Benefit. The physical move has opened up more of the festival to the differently abled community, and I see strong evidence of a desire to involve many constituents in planning and creation. More detail about plans (and examples of) to include diverse and inclusive programming in 2026 would have been helpful.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I really like the diversity of music traditions present in the festival to reflect the increase in diversity and youth as your audience has continued to grow.

Seeks diverse musical talents and performers.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I see strong evidence of Artistic and Cultural Vibrancy, although I would have liked to have seen more detailed lists of the partner orgs individuals who are mentioned in Question 8 (How will you connect...).

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and strong community support of the work in both the volunteers and the continued growth of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

Volunteers and board support this large undertaking. The agency has the support to accomplish the goals.

I see strong evidence of Org Capacity. The org has a successful history of planning and managing this event over the last decade. The project Income and Expense budgets do have have equal totals, and while no In-Kind is listed, In-Kind expenses are listed.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: NuPoint Community Development Corporation

Project Title: NuDay Festival

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant shows a commitment to incorporating a process of reflection along with listening and responding to its community by including community input and collaboration into the planning process. As the applicant states, this will help ensure the festival reflects the neighborhood's cultural legacy.

I like that event occurs in space that creates opportunities for neighborhoods to connect, build bridges and strengthen community connections, as well as create economic opportunities for creatives.

Community Arts Festival that will have a mix of music, dance, and all creative expressions. This Festival that will bring together all walks of the community in a public space.

I see fair evidence of Public Benefit. In general this proposal reads aspirational and lacks specificity. The community is not defined in detailed ways - no demographics, population size, etc.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

As someone who is not a Cleveland native, I would have liked more direct demographic information about the Union Miles and Mt. Pleasant neighborhoods.

I like the celebration of the various ways in which the community can connect with the arts - "listen, create and celebrate" with spoken word, murals, craft stations and more.

The festival will pull from the rich cultural community in the area.

I see fair evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy. Does the org have history in producing similar events? If so, state that and share details about individuals and partner orgs that will be engaged to help create the program.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

This is a festival that has a very big vision with the organizational support to see it through to success.

I see strong evidence of Org Capacity. The org is large and has dedicated specialists to plan and manage the different aspects of a project such as this one.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: OCA Cleveland

Project Title: Cleveland Asian Festival Performances

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

"Organized by the community for the community, the festival relies heavily on volunteers." This statement encompasses the importance of this work.

Very large free community wide event that celebrates Asian cultures. Organizers involve partners in planning. Includes community members and organizations.

I see strong evidence of Public Benefit. The festival has roots and a history of success. The community is involved in planning and participating.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The applicant shows a commitment to building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals by offering this festival where there are 16 hours of performances including martial arts, dance, and music.

I really like the extensive stage performances over 2 days which reflect a diversity of cultural expressions and art forms.

The artists participating in the festival are well known and sought after. They bring an engaged audience to the festival.

I see strong evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy. DEI and Belonging are obvious in the programming of the festival.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The fact that over 80 volunteers help support this festival shows how important the event is to the applicant's community.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

Given the longevity of the organization, staff experience and length of the program, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The organizers rely on volunteers to support the planning and implementation of the festival.

I see strong evidence of Org Capacity to plan and manage the project given its history of producing the festival over time. The expense budget, however, does not include an equal amount of In-Kind Expense to match the In-Kind Income.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Ohio City Inc

Project Title: Ohio City Oktoberfest

Panelists: Liz Bayan, LaShawnda Crowe Storm, Jo-ann Lawrence, Christopher Schram

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This application could be strengthened by including how the applicant listens and responds to its community when planning this event.

I like that this project will not only create a space for community connections and celebration, but will also highlight and "honor" "ne of the few remaining open green spaces in the dense urban core."

The event will strengthen local partnerships, create an accessible event that will foster positive density and a safe space for all members of the community to connect. This meets the criteria for public benefit.

I see fair evidence of Public Benefit. The org is building on history of producing this and similar events. Demographics should not include being of Hispanic/Latin heritage with racial identifiers. Examples of multi-lingual marketing would be helpful hear to back up what is written in the response to Question 8 (How will you connect...)

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

While I understand what an Oktoberfest is, it would have been nice to hear from the applicant the ways this festival is celebrating artistic and cultural vibrancy. For example: Live music and cultural performances are listed, but the application could be stronger by giving examples of types of live music and performances that are celebrated at an Oktoberfest type festival.

I like that there are a variety of activities celebrating multiple art disciplines (culinary arts, music and cultural performances), as well as offer an opportunity for economic development for area businesses and creatives. I also like that there is a pl

The event will have cultural vibrancy that includes live performances and children activities,

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

I see fair evidence of Artistic & Cultural Vibrancy. A list of previous performers/artists, partners, vendors, etc. would strengthen this proposal in the future. instead of single photos as individual attachments, more details about the programming woul

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Given the 5 decades of success of this organization, and staff experience, I do not have any concerns about the organization's capacity to complete this work.

The team planning the event have the background to make the 2026 Oktoberfest a success.

I see fair evidence of Org Capacity to plan and manage the event given its history with it. The In-Kind amounts in the Income and Expense budgets do not match.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Ohio Selfie World Foundation

Project Title: The Ambition Lab: Igniting Creativity and Economic Opportunity

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 5.5

2026 Grant Amount: No Grant Awarded

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Project Narrative provides fair evidence of public benefit, considering each of the criteria provided by the funder. However, the organization included some confusing points. There is also a lack of support materials. Some confusion over how the location is noted in the Project Basics versus the Project Description, with the first describing programming taking place at the organization's central location and the second indicating sessions will be held in locations throughout the community. The support materials section is not employed to full effect. The organization provided only a Tax Form 990-N User Guide and no project or organization-specific materials. This same Tax Form 990-N user guide was provided in the tax info section, perhaps mistakenly. Further, I was unable to access the organization-provided website. The link appears to redirect to an unrelated website.

The applicant didn't demonstrate how it responding to the broader public. It became confusing when it states the partnership between this organization and the other one that it's aligning with.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

While there is some information on what the student's will learn, the application could have been stronger with more detailed information.

The organization provides detailed information about its team, which appears diverse and qualified. A partnership with another organization is mentioned, but detailed information about that organization and its team is absent.

Valuable focus on developing skills for a core group of young people so they can potentially participate in the creative economy.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The work sample is a IRS Form 990-N user guide.

I am not familiar with Diamonds and Gems, Inc., and would have appreciated some more context about who this partner is and why they are a strategic addition to this project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation

Project Title: Old Brooklyn Farmers Market Live Art Series

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,440

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Application clearly articulated how the artist would be integrated in showcased into the market. The market itself seems like a quality public offering that is accessible to many in the community and the integration of live music feels intentional.

The applicant has provided a strong narrative and some evidence (supplemental materials) that this project is one of many that engages their community and is accessible and inviting as well. A brief description of how the applicant understands, respects, and shares power with their community would strengthen this application.

Thank you for the description of your community. It would be great to hear some feedback from past years, like which types of demonstrations were most successful, or what visitors enjoyed about the experience.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The staff felt experienced in their relative areas of expertise, but it would be even better if there was a specific art coordinator with a background in performing arts.

Would like to see more evidence that this project reflects the community's growing diversity and is actively working for inclusion.

The applicant showed strong evidence of the arts professionals' capacity building opportunity in this event. Examples of artists (names, art form, credentials or experience) would strengthen this applications claim of a "diverse and dynamic lineup" as well as reinforcing the variety of arts being demonstrated. Is there a process of reflection for this project? Does it include the community in some way (survey? comments?)? A brief description of the feedback/reflection process would also further strengthen this application.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

Thank you for the attention to varied and diverse artists and art forms. Curious if any of the performers/artists are neighborhood residents?

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget reflected organizational capacity sufficient to carry out the project.

Extremely high administrative costs in relation to artist fees.

The use of data from past years (size of coordinating team, number of music performances and art demonstrations, participant quotes, etc) would strengthen this application.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: One South Euclid

Project Title: South Euclid Food Truck Park Concert Series

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant has a strong understanding of their community.

I appreciate the breakdown of One South Euclid and the community it serves through both demographics and explanation of the One South Euclid committees and organization. The Food Truck Park Concert Series is clearly described as an event that's evolved with community needs and responses.

The applicant has provided a good amount of evidence that the concert series will serve is identified community, which is quite diverse

One South Euclid knows its community. The creation of Food Truck Park was in response to post-COVID momentum and continues amidst cited research by the APA. The organization remains responsive to its community artistically as well, with more local acts being engaged and supported through the program.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Featuring local artists and providing a method for feedback from the public show great artistic and cultural vibrancy.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The proposed project itself is building a program from last year demonstrating progress

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Open Doors Academy

Project Title: 2026 Summer Camp Program

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project seems to serve a large number of youth, providing benefit today and in the future.

Appears to be a strong program for its community.

ODA provides a strong narrative on the impact of their program and some evidence of the accessibility and inviting nature of the program. This narrative feels like the program is being done 'for' the community and not 'with' the community. Examples of arts professionals involved with the Summer Camp (names, credentials or experiences) would strengthen this application.

It's great to hear that you're engaging artists with similar lived experiences as the students. It's wonderful to know that you have been tracking the impact of these arts activities on academic performance and engagement.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There was attention paid to the quality and relevance of the instruction and instructors, and the Application would be even stronger if there was more detail about the instructors background and qualifications in arts & culture.

Is the ODA community involved in a feedback/reflection process? A brief discussion of how would strengthen this application. Examples of artists who are people of color (name, credentials or experiences) would strengthen this application as would data (even estimated data) (campers, family members, teachers, volunteers, hours of engagement in different art forms).

It could be helpful to share more of the high quality arts and creative experiences. Photos and social media shows lots of different types of play and learning, but very little evidence of strong arts education.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget was balanced enough to give confidence in organizational capacity,

Administrative costs exceed artist fees; would prefer explanation of this as well as very high "other" expenses.

Acknowledgment of the boards diversity not matching the community it serves is a great piece of awareness, unfortunately there is no mention of wanting to change that. The duties of the planning team have been made clear. Adding examples (names, position

It would be helpful to understand what 15 camps means logistically. Do camps change every week, or do some happen concurrently? How many students may participate?

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Open Tone Music

Project Title: Open Tone Music Amistad Caribbean Arts Program

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This applicant provides strong evidence that they understand their community and are building and strengthening relationships.

I appreciate that OTM already has partnerships for this project in the works, with the partners having different audiences (i.e. schools and students/students' families vs. community centers/festivals for all). I was curious about learning more of the communities OTM reaches through "Julio de Burgos Cultural Arts Center, CentroVilla25, and local festivals like La Placita" as that would have made this application stronger.

The application has provided strong evidence that the project will serve a large amount of people in the area by traveling and by eliminating barriers to entry

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I appreciate how the applicant describes how they're building the capacity of arts and cultural professionals, helping them to thrive.

The arts professionals of the Amistad Caribbean Arts Program reflect the cultural makeup of the students served by the program and occasionally overlap as alumni of the same program. The organization's founder and program director reflect their community

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The application has demonstrated the fact that they have been collecting data since the founding of the program

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Pakistani Cultural Garden

Project Title: Pakistani Cultural Garden's One World Day Celebration 2026

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project sounds like a welcome addition to the public, but it is not clear the extent to which arts & culture will be a part of the final offering.

Creating mutual understanding in the community is a worthwhile goal. This application demonstrates that the project will strengthen relationships.

The applicant strongly indicates that this event will further their meaningful connection with their community as they engage, invite, build relationships, listen and respond to, show understanding and share the power of this event.

I appreciate the proactive recruitment of folks and giving them both the opportunity to share and lead.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

More detail on the individuals that will be leading the artistic part of the offering would be helpful.

The applicant showed evidence of a variety of art forms/skills being presented at this event and the cultural experts, those who live their culture daily, will be present. Discussion of community members planning and participating in this event show the relevance, inclusiveness, and sense of belonging this event brings to the applicant's community. A brief comment on a feedback/reflection process would have strengthened this application.

The cultural gardens seem like a wonderful asset to the community, and it's fabulous that this group of folks are building community around it.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The timeline was clear but the team members were not. Specific examples of team members from prior years would strengthen this application as would brief comments about goals, measured progress (improvement), and evolution of the event.

It would be helpful to learn a little more about how the organization operates. It's great to know that you're seeking more volunteers and types of support.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: PALS for Healing

Project Title: Healing Through the Transformative Power of Creative Expression

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

A very comprehensive program hitting many areas and forms of engagements.

The organization demonstrated clear public benefit through their project narrative and supporting materials. The 2024 Annual Report was particularly useful in helping provide context, particularly around outcomes in the community. One note: I would advise the organization to include context for acronyms in future submissions (i.e. ACES) for clarity.

The applicant demonstrated it's public benefit by showing the increased need for trauma services in healing through the arts. This was further enhanced by the presentation movie.

Providing a vital service to a well-defined community; this project is focused on expanding access for those who need it most.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Highly qualified team that is demographically representative of the community they serve.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Very adept staff! There is strong evidence that staff is equipped to run the programs. Ticket/ admission revenue is 73,400. Who is paying for what services? While tickets and admissions are fine, I wonder how the organization supports those who cannot afford these fees.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Parma Symphony Orchestra

Project Title: Guest Artists to Perform with the Parma Symphony Orchestra

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 6.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

More information on who they reach, the recipients of public engagement, would have been good to include.

The organization has not provided sufficient detail to display the public benefit of this project. It is unclear what type of guest artists are being sought out and hired (though a reference to returning guest artists is made), how many performances across the season a guest artist or artists may be contracted for, or if there are particular relational, skill-based, or artistic and/or artistic capacity building reasons for funds to support guest artists over the organization's current local community. The organization indicates that a free concert for local schools is a goal for the upcoming season, but does not indicate if or how that is tied in to the project described for funding.

The applicant establishes a public benefit by its establishment of its program as this will aid in an appreciation and exposure to classical music. This is for the community which are predominantly students.

Community is very broadly defined as "all of Cuyahoga County" - I wonder if this group could be more specific about who in particular they are hoping to serve (Parma specifically, school children who have not yet experienced symphonic music, households within a certain radius of their performance venue, etc.).

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There is no mention of how many performances they will conduct, or how many artists they will invite.

It would be helpful to understand more about this organization's diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work, as well as what mechanisms they use to gather feedback from the community.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I had to tease out what the project is. It would be better for the organization to list in the project summary all the components.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Phantasy Community Foundation

Project Title: Queer Expressions: Showcasing LGBTQ+ Art, Performance, and Community

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I love how programming is co-created with artists and the community itself.

The application demonstrated strong evidence that the project will serve a historically marginalized community.

Phantasy Community Foundation has the benefit of being able to directly access and engage its community through the Lakewood Fieldhouse and by being based in Lakewood in general. Programming is presented in lockstep with LGBTQ+ artists following community listening sessions to guide its development. These are all strong indicators of the public benefit to the PCF community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This application's greatest strength is its artistic and cultural vibrancy - Incorporating a process of reflection to ensure that programming is relevant to or created with its community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The 2024 990 file was missing the 990 form portion itself. Additionally, the first link of online documentation for arts/culture programming was not viewable. The programming that PCF is necessary and incredible, and double checking that all files are correct and accessible will make it easier for future panelists to understand the full breadth of the work that you are doing.

The organization has a strong team to implement the program. The organizational mission itself also supports the project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Polish Village Parma

Project Title: Polish Constitution Day Parade and Festival

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The support materials are vital to understanding the community involvement and engagement involved in this organization and project. Partner organizations are mentioned within the organization's established community and emphasis is placed on the event being free (financially accessible for participants). The organization mentions the event has grown constantly; no metrics or evidence provided to support that for someone unfamiliar with the organization. More information is needed to evaluate how the organization works to support access for the community and engages the broader public.

The community served is well-defined but still inclusive of people who may not have Polish heritage.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There are many partners, which indicates good collaboration efforts.

The applicant was able to demonstrate the community to which it serves as it celebrates Poland adoption of the first constitution. Through the establishment of a parade those who attend will be able to connect to both of these areas that the event represents.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

A bit more information on the team leading the parade would have been good to include. Who are they and what is their experience?

Impressive that the majority of the committee has been involved since 2011; continuous and dedicated leadership.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Powerful Long Ladder

Project Title: The Italian Jitney

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 9.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This international production should have great public benefit! There are many moving pieces, but I feel confident that the project will come to fruition and meet its goals.

The applicant demonstrated its strength to its community through including programming of the August Wilson play. This further was done by making it accessible to others virtually, and in person options for master classes.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The organization has clearly set forward the collaborating organizations, demonstrated their commitment to and capacity for the project, and shown involvement of diverse arts and cultural professionals. The project narrative also identifies opportunities

What a unique project and great opportunity for cross-sector partnerships to bring this work, highlighting the Black diaspora, to Cleveland.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Adding more key players--names, roles, etc-- would have supported this answer.

Impressive partnerships between multiple entities, and great to see that the largest line item in the budget remains payment for arts and culture professionals.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Reaching Heights

Project Title: Summer Instrumental Music Camp

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 8.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The program has clear objectives and is benefiting community through youth engagement with arts and culture. This has benefits both today and in the future.

This project appears to constitute a strong benefit to the community.

Seeking to make the Music Camp free to participants indicates an understanding of and respect for the community served by this program as well as increases its accessibility.

The efforts to remain accessible with financial assistance and to recruit students is appreciated. It's not clear if or how the participant community is informing this experience.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The team described is experienced in both arts and administration, and look to have the qualifications necessary to deliver the project.

The engagement of music teachers and arts professional in the planning and execution ensures the relevance of the project as well as increases its success. This builds the capacity of the professionals engaged in this project. It also shows that the process of reflection ensures relevance.

It looks like a joyful time and the students are clearly working hard.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The project budget is sufficient.

Experienced and qualified staff lead this project. The inclusion of "silly fun" and theme days helps participants to feel like they belong. Examples of goal-setting or evolution of the program would further illustrate the organization's capacity to conti

I encourage the organization to track its participants demographics to better understand its breadth of service and potential barriers to access.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Restore Cleveland Hope, Inc.

Project Title: The FreedomSeekers on Ohio's Underground Railroad

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 5.5

2026 Grant Amount: No Grant Awarded

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The free Saturday tours that this grant would fund is a strong and compelling public benefit, however there is very little evidence that the applicant understands their community or has worked in collaboration with them.

This application could have been stronger by including a breakdown of the northeast Ohio residents that have engaged with Restore Cleveland Hope in the past, even if it's just something like, "RCH has 1,500 visitors during 2024." Mentioning any confirmed or pending partner organizations that you're planning on presenting programming with would also be great to see (with their consent of course).

The application demonstrates an accessible project that provides vital education. However, there is a lack of evidence that it actively engages and invites the community to the project.

The Cozad-Bates House is a vital piece of preserved history to help attendees and the public understand the Underground Railroad. However, this application is very light on detail about how the public collaborates, listens to, and/or generates programming alongside its stated community. The organization's website gives some more detail, though not enough to warrant higher than a "fair" mark for evidence in this area.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The income section of the budget did not follow the guideline that only "50% of your match funds can come from in-kind donations." Additionally the expenses came out to be 3x larger than the income listed for the project budget. I wondered if the in-kind line in the expense section was meant to be there or just in the income section.

There is only a fair amount of evidence that the organization is retaining staff since they volunteer. Narratives about volunteer specific retention effort would have been appreciated.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: RhythmiCLE Sound Tap Company

Project Title: RhythmiCLE Sound Tap Festival (RSTF)

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 6.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The community definition provided is, unfortunately, very vague. I wanted to learn more about the demographics of the students that are already being served as well as the teachers. What does "diverse backgrounds" in this context mean, and how many volunteers and supporters are expected based on attendance to other tap dance festivals? Thank you for explaining the art of tap dance and its place within the dance in the U.S.; I understood the the urgency and demand of sharing this art form with the Cuyahoga County community.

The application demonstrates a strong understanding of this community divided by category – clearly responding to the communities and what they need.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

What would strengthen this application is incorporating a process of reflection to ensure that programming is relevant to or created with its community.

It not only provides the access to tap dance to students, but it also creates an opportunity for artist to be mentors and teachers. This is a strong evidence that creating an environment that artists can thrive.

The RhythmiCLE Sound Tap Festival is wide-ranging, accessible, and being developed with audiences new and established in mind. As envisioned by RSTC, the Festival will educate and celebrate an under-appreciated expressive art form and thus making for a m

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Rollin' Buckkeyez

Project Title: Creative Skate

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Clearly defined project combining multiple art forms with intended sport/physical activity and artistry. Support materials (website) were helpful in understanding the intended demographic community. As a panelist unfamiliar with the geographic community noted in the Project Basics, more information about this specific community segment and the partnership with the host community center would be helpful in fully illustrating the public benefit.

The applicant demonstrated the need of the community through it's establishment of it's program. This was done through the establishment of a structured place that will help youth in the creation of artistic expression.

The "who" served here is very clear, and the programming is tailored to them. I would gently note that the phrasing "too many unproductive, unsupervised kids and too much time to get into trouble" in the organization overview seems to define the kids by what the lack as opposed to what they have. A slight reframe using an abundance mindset might be a powerful tool to continue advancing the public benefit of this program.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The program is very dynamic, offering dance, skate, and visual arts, and health! Knowing how past participants have responded to the program would have been good to include. ex. incorporating feedback from students.

Multiple art forms (dance/skating, visual art, music) are integrated in this program. Not only are several creative professionals involved, but the participating kids are encouraged to exercise their own creativity through the showcase.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

A very strong team!

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Rose Centers for Aging Well

Project Title: Feeding the Soul through Arts and Culture

Panelists: Brittany Alston, Lisa Chang, Lisa Much, Tim Murphy

Score: 9.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This organization is very beneficial to the community because the seniors/elderly are normally forgotten, and the organization help keeps the seniors occupied and engaged with their motor skills.

I rated this project as strong in public benefit. This project is inclusive, accessible, and engages diverse populations to foster productive aging while acknowledging and addressing the importance of social connection in healthy aging.

Applicant demonstrates a strong knowledge of their community. Additionally, they provide evidence and new partnerships to increase beneficial offerings to the community.

I love this program! What a great way to keep older adults active and engaged, especially those with limited means.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The event will have multiple classes throughout the year to engage with more than one time within the community.

I thought this project was strong in artistic & cultural vibrancy, clearly incorporating a process of reflection via pre and post surveys to inform programming and offerings while building the capacity of staff and participants. A diverse arts team is eng

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I rated this as strong in organizational capacity, as well, given the articulated evaluation plan, strong community partnerships, solid financial position and acknowledgement of the shifting financial landscape, and general awareness of the community with whom you are working. As a side note, I found

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

this entire application very easy to read, understand, and felt it addressed the criteria well and succinctly. Well done.

The description of the organization's program evaluation process and results is helpful to understanding the importance of the program. I also like the added evidence for the benefits of these types of programs from the US Surgeon General and Meals on Wheels.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Schmooze Ohio

Project Title: Schmooze Ohio Networking Event

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 6.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The application would have benefitted from the inclusion of impact numbers such as number of attendees in the past and number of projects that have come to fruition because of Schmooze.

The applicant didn't appear to be listening or responding to their community. It's whole emphasis is on the referral and networking aspect with nothing else emphasized.

Well-defined community for whom this event is specifically tailored.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The organization clearly shows their intent to build the capacity of arts and cultural professionals. However, this would be stronger with additional details related to outcomes and participant feedback/a reflection process.

Geared toward connecting professionals with one another and building a creative pipeline for the creative industry in NE Ohio.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I appreciated the details provided in describing the organization's team and their experience. Overall, however, the organization provided limited details and materials to illustrate organizational capacity re: finances, goal setting, and strategic planning.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Seat of the Pants

Project Title: PERFORMANCE+ Production of ELEPHANT'S GRAVEYARD, by George Brant

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 9.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization has clearly considered and illustrated public benefit of this project, with emphasis on being inclusive and engaging diverse populations artistically, geographically, and demographically. Detailed information on accessibility helped clarify the public benefit.

The applicant was able to demonstrate its response and listening to the community through the engagement of various other community theatre companies.

Thoughtful definition of community - the "concentric circles" description demonstrates reflection on who this group is trying to serve.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Strong focus on engaging diverse creative professionals with the intention of developing capacity and skill sets of company members and sharing opportunities with the community.

It's clear this group is not afraid to reinvent itself, and the PERFORMANCE+ initiative demonstrates a willingness to collaborate, incorporate many different artistic disciplines, and literally invite the community into the process through opportunities.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Great description of team! Regarding support materials, the inclusion of video (clips from performances) would have been good to include.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Sew4Service

Project Title: Library Classes in Cuyahoga County

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Excellent public benefit. The project is accessible and there's a great community partnership with the local library. This section could have benefited from more demographic information about the people being served in the neighborhoods the libraries exist in.

I was curious about the specific classes that would be offered - would they be the same/similar to the ones featured in the brochure in content and/or amount? Is there a specific minimum goal of funded classes Sew4Service is aiming for?

The applications show strong evidence that the project will be accessible since it will be at public libraries and free

Through libraries, this programming is accessible in the sense that it is free and available to anyone visiting the library. The programming is inclusive, and the organization states its history of welcoming all into its classes. Beyond this though, there is little offered by way of example or evidence of community engagement or public outreach.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Having more context about why the classes are successful and how they're selected would be helpful to show that programming is relevant to or created with its community.

It shows fair evidence that is engaging artists on a returning basis so that they can thrive

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Sharing the involvement of the teaching artists through the years was totally relevant. If anything, the names of these artists could have been included.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Shaker Arts Council

Project Title: Around the Town

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I'd like to see more on how the council determined the components of this performing arts series to show how it's sharing power within its community. I'd also like to see more by way of understanding the Shaker Heights community in the response to question 7.

I appreciate that the Shaker Heights community is directly involved in selecting which performances will be included in the project! I also loved learning about the specific team members of the project; your answer to #9 was very detailed and easy to read. Your project narrative could have been a bit more detailed by answering the following: Which artists have you hired in the past? How many people are on your mailing list? How many people engage with you on social media?

The application demonstrates evidence that it serves its defined community by inviting local artists to play for local communities.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I appreciate the note about the performers reflecting the diversity of the city. The audience survey is a great way to facilitate community ownership.

It demonstrates a strong amount of evidence that it will support local artists. With transparency into the selection process

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The involvement of the Shaker Heights Council in planning is a great strength. The outreach to prospective venue locations shows a strong ability to successfully plan and manage the project.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

Shaker Arts Council proves strong evidence of its organizational and programmatic capacity to produce "Around the Town." The methodical and meticulous description of project phases and deliverables is a chief demonstration of its ability to execute the project. The committee in charge of the event features experts in both music and dance, and the outreach plan described herein is sound.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: SHED Projects

Project Title: Sunday School

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant shares how their project has evolved with their community through the "Teach Anything" model, incorporating local teaching artists, reducing barrier to entry, facilitating programming on multiple sites, and sharing who their audience/community is from a psychographic perspective. Incorporating more demographic data points on the community they serve would have strengthened this component.

I appreciate the depth of explanation of the Brooklyn Centre community members that are served by SHED Projects. I especially appreciated the mentions of identities that aren't usually included in conversations around access: "parents, tradespeople, caregivers, educators." I do think, however, that this project narrative could have been more focused on defining specific outcomes/community impacts that Sunday School will have on the Brooklyn Centre community, rather than centering the pedagogical framework of the pilot.

It demonstrates strong evidence that the organization understands. It's community by providing bilingual flyers Ward.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This applicant does a good job of explaining how the project they're proposing came together and is executed among their stakeholders, staff and community.

The application demonstrates evidence that it will build capacity for artists since the project is planned for expansion

SHED has provided extremely strong evidence of its ability to create artistically and culturally vibrant programing. Its dual model of incubation/mentorship and its unique emphasis on shared leadership and open boundaries between teacher and student demo

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The applicant's response to question 9 does a great job conveying the team member's experiences that are relevant to this project, as well as their role. Providing more explicit goals and criteria for meeting them would strengthen this component.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Shore Cultural Centre

Project Title: Shore Cultural Centre 2026 STEAM Fest

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 7.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Elaborating a bit more on the impact this event has on participants would have made this application stronger.

In the Project Narrative, the organization tells a clear story of planning with feedback in response to its community and past participants in the event and intentionality behind accessibility (free event, ADA compliant). However, the Project Narrative does not provide much detail in terms of the event itself (i.e. what types of exhibitors and activities are included). Participation specifics and metrics would also help in illustrating public benefit, such as who is involved in the project, who returns from year to year, and what the expected audience participant numbers are in relation to previous years (i.e. is the event expected to grow? remain the same?).

The applicant was able to establish the need for arts and cultural events. This was done through encompassing arts that will benefit the diversity of Euclid through STEAM Feast. They were also established through the visuals on prior events.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The narrative did not provide enough information for me to understand whether STEAM fest would be artistically and culturally vibrant. I am unclear on what types of art forms are featured and how arts and culture professionals are engaged.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Slavic Village Development

Project Title: Rooms To Let: CLE

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The project shows a commitment to revitalizing its community through art.

Application clearly shows the community benefit of this project.

The applicant presented strong evidence that this event meaningfully connects them with their community... and brings positive change to their neighborhood and neighbors.

Your efforts to cultivate artistic leadership from the community have paid off! Bravo! Thanks for including examples of how the community's input has been incorporated. It's clear that the arts have been a strong engagement tool for SVD, and therefore has the potential to amplify resident voices to shape development decisions.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Very vibrant art.

The artwork shown in the supplemental materials was vivid, strong, and impactful. The fact that neighborhood residents were part of the planning shows the respect, power sharing, relationship building, and activation power of this project. Naming a few of the participating artists and their credentials/experience would have added some strength to this application.

This project uses arts and creativity to celebrate the stories and culture of a neighborhood that was declining and may face strong forces of change in the future.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The ask amount is in line with the budget and the 990.

Recruitment of neighborhood residents to clean up the geography before the event increases the diversity of participants and shares the work and power of the organization.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Smart Development

Project Title: Arab Cultural Heritage Celebration Projects

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

More project specifics would be helpful to understand the project better.

Smart Development offered excellent support of the respect, sharing of power, and strong relationships they have with their community. It is clear that this organization and its work (a variety of art forms) meaningfully connects with its community.

Genuine cultural celebration aiming to create connection and community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The application would benefit from a more detailed explanation of the team.

This is a worthy project for the community with strong cultural value.

The mural project (prior arts/culture projects) engaged a local yet successful arts professional and this sets the stage for next year's arts/culture professionals. The sharing of these celebratory events also promotes diversity and understanding.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Good collaboration with community groups and other entities.

The earlier projects from the upload supported the organization's capacity to accomplish an arts project. The staff team and arts/culture team reflects its community and their shared background. A few examples with credentials would strengthen this appl

There's not much detail that helps us understand the logistics of this program, but the info provided about the past mural project is thorough and inspires confidence in this area.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: SOS: Strengthening Our Students

Project Title: SOS After School Enrichment Program

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 7.33

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,950

PUBLIC BENEFIT

More evidence is needed to understand the public benefit of this project. Will only 15 participants be engaged in the program?

The program looks like it will benefit a variety of students, and has demonstrated that it is growing its audience as indicated by the need to move to a larger venue.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

More evidence is needed to understand how the applicant will connect with the community and foster belonging for all people.

Incorporating art and creativity into the program alongside sports, social justice, environment, and culinary arts is awesome!

This project teaches a wide array of skills to kids.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Strong evidence of organizational capacity.

The budget looks well thought-out and realistic.

The team seems quite capable.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Stella Maris

Project Title: Sip 'n Paint to Recognize and Celebrate Recovery

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 6.33

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The connection between the paint 'n sip program and the Rock of Faith concerts provided in the supportive materials was not clear. Additionally, the Rock of Faith concert series raised questions for me about whether or not there is a religious element to this, which would impact its ability to benefit the general public. However, the actual description of the Paint 'N Sip program was strong, and it seems like a worthwhile endeavor.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I don't get a sense that this project is something that the community (the people in recovery) want or asked for. I feel like it needs to be more community-driven.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Applicant has demonstrated clear evidence of their organizational capacity to produce this project.

It seems like the staff is really knowledgeable and invested in the people they support.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Stellar Acrobatic Dance Academy

Project Title: Dance of Four Beauties

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

This is a project that celebrates a specific culture but also serves to allow the public to learn more about that culture.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Applicant presents strong evidence of artistic and cultural vibrancy by providing participants with a relatable program.

The project appears well-designed and well-researched.

This project sounds very creative and visually appealing.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Expenses appear to be relatively precise numbers rather than estimates, which is encouraging and lends credibility to the budget.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Tender Hearts Crusades

Project Title: Borders Within

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8.67

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Strong evidence of public benefit and cultural vibrancy and connection to this specific community. More evidence needed to understand process of reflection and evaluation.

The project is multidisciplinary and public-facing and looks like it will be of interest and benefit to many attendees.

I think this project shows a deep knowledge of the community it serves.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Links to recordings and the provision of the musical score for the string quartet was helpful.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Letters of support were especially helpful in demonstrating community support.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: The Foundry

Project Title: The Foundry's 4th Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The impact of the project is evident and appears valuable to the communities it serves.

It seems like this project is building a successful track record and goodwill in the community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

While the nature of the project seems to have the potential to demonstrate public benefit and artistic vibrancy, the application lacks evidence to demonstrate the organization's capacity to foster this project ensuring impact in the other two categories. How does this project connect to the organization's mission as a nautical sports organization? How is the organization integrating arts education into their programming? There is not much evidence of this program/the organization teaching students how to enhance their artistic skills, but rather simply presents an open call and adjudicates the work.

The budget seems incredibly high for a project of this scale. It appears that admin for the entire organization might be reflected in this budget rather than just for the project itself. This isn't a problem necessarily, but it's best to keep the budget limited to the project expenses only.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: The Gathering Place

Project Title: The Gathering Place's Expressive Arts Programming

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 6.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I appreciate the mention of programming at various sites, and the variety of accessible classes offered. Adding more to show how the programming is responsive to its community would strengthen the application. There is mention of collaboration among healthcare partners, but no information on how they collaborate or hear from the populations they serve. The application could also be strengthened by sharing ways that their offerings are engaging diverse populations and are accessible to the broader public.

I wanted to know more about the project itself: how often would the therapy sessions take place (weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, etc.)? Within the expressive art programs, what kind of art are the participants creating? Is it sculpture, painting, multimedia; what kinds of themes do the programs have?

The application demonstrates strong evidence that it understands its community and how to serve them through the project. On the other hand, outreach strategy is slightly lacking in clarity.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I cannot find evidence in this application to show that this initiative is engaging a diverse team of cultural professionals, or incorporating a process of reflection to ensure that their offerings are relevant to or created within their community.

The Expressive Art program is a needed one in the cancer community, and TGP offers a fair amount of evidence to support the artistic and cultural vibrancy of the project. This reviewer would have liked more detail concerning the "highly qualified profess

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Based on what has been submitted I do not see evidence that the proposal has met any of the criteria for organizational capacity. The staff does seem professionally qualified to carry out the sort of classes that are listed.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: The Harvard Square Center

Project Title: Annual Family Fun Day Festival

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 6.67

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Application lacks evidence to demonstrate public benefit, artistic vibrancy, and organizational capacity. More specificity is needed to understand the program and its impact on the community.

The program taking place directly in the neighborhood it serves is outstanding.

This event seems to involve the community, and was started by a member of the community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Engaging multiple disciplines including interactive events makes for a strong event.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Budget looks reasonable and balanced.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: The Land

Project Title: Community Journalism at The Land

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Strong evidence of public benefit. The applicant has demonstrated the capacity and impact to both build the skills of residents in this community and invests in their development by paying participants and creating pathways to employment for local journalists.

The program model is outstanding and has clearly defined public benefit for both the participants and the general public.

This is a really compelling and topical project; great way to continue to train great journalists in the midst of journalism starting to (unfortunately) lose some standards.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

I would like to have seen a little bit of explanation about the expense budget, particularly if the line item for arts and cultural professionals includes the stipends paid to students. Completely fine if it is, but I wanted to see a little more transparency there.

I think the team is capable and knows what they are doing.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: The Meeting Place Learning Center

Project Title: Seussical Spectacle: A Student-Driven Production

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 7.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant's response to question 7 shows a deep understanding of their community and what they value.

I was curious about how this project engages the broader public, i.e. local residents who do not have students involved. Is there outreach via physical flyers, social media ads, partnerships with other organizations?

The Meeting Place Learning Center understands its local community and the role its artistic program could play in community members' lives. The project itself is suited for the community, and the organization provides some evidence of how it is sharing its power with the public, namely by envisioning the program as student-led. More might have been said about how the project specifically achieves the organization's mission to "support the spiritual, social, emotional, and academic growth of children and families."

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Artistic and cultural vibrancy is a great area of strength for this project with creative aspects of it being community-led.

The application demonstrates strongly keep the that the project will foster a sense of belonging.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The applicant meets some of the criteria for question 9 by naming the team members and their years of experience for two of three team members. To strengthen this portion it would be good to add one more sentence describing how these folks are qualified for the work they'll be doing on this project, and to note the third team member's years of experience.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: The Student Conservation Association

Project Title: Cleveland Urban Green - Community Farm Volunteers

Panelists: Michael Greer, Cinzi Lavin, Susan Roll, Anna Tragesser

Score: 5.25

2026 Grant Amount: No Grant Awarded

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant's engagement of volunteers from their alumni, food desert geographic community, and the neighborhood of the partner in this event shows its desire and ability to connect with its community through this project. It is so positive that the relationships forged between the applicant's community and the public they serve improves their relationship with the applicant. It also speaks to the ability of the applicant to role model inclusivity for their community.

These activities will build community, and there seem to be a lot of opportunities for people to engage the way they want. It would be great to learn more about the experience at Vel's Purple Oasis and how Vel's and the community's input is being incorporated into the next year.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I don't see any artistic component

The cultural vibrancy for this project is not fully clear from the application. More clearly articulated details would be needed.

The applicant's age-based goals validate the relevance and engaging nature of this project. It is so positive that the relationships forged between the applicant's community and the public they serve improves their relationship with the applicant. It also speaks to the ability of the applicant to role model inclusivity for their community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The expertise of the team leading the project is learning. Their acknowledgment of diversity gaps in their board and their intent to change it speaks of their commitment to diversity and equity.

How many volunteer events are we talking about? I don't fully understand the budget. \$10,000 is being allocated to arts and cultural professionals. Will any other materials or equipment be needed?

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Thea Bowman Center

Project Title: 2026 Summer Youth Arts and Culture Program

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8.67

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Clarity needed between responses to Question 4 (Total number of expected participants and/or audience members) and Question 6 (Project Summary). How will the organization engage 150+ people if only approximately 20 young people will be enrolled in the program? Will there be a public showcase or opportunity to engage the larger community?

As a program taking place directly in the community it benefits, this program is a very strong offering.

This is a great project for young people in this neighborhood.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Wonderful attention to diversity in types of creative expression represented.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Applicant has demonstrated how its leadership structure has enhanced its organizational capacity to produce this program.

Budget and staff capacity appear reasonable for the project scale and are well-balanced.

The project team seems to know the community well and respond to its needs.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Tremont West Development Corporation

Project Title: Tremont Arts and Cultural Festival

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8.67

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Strong evidence of public benefit.

As an entirely public-facing outdoor event with a high rate of attendance, this program clearly demonstrates value to the public.

This project seems to bring several communities and neighborhoods together.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Inclusion of survey data was especially encouraging here.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Inclusion of a budget narrative was very helpful. Additionally, the budget seems quite modest for a project of this scale, which supports the applicants ability to operate with a high level of efficiency.

The project team is experienced and know what they are doing.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Tuskegee Airmen North Coast Chapter

Project Title: Cleveland Heroes Project: Legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 7.5

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Connecting this historical exhibition with public libraries strengthens its public benefit.

In addition to being an exciting and important project, this panelist really appreciates the scope of intended audiences to experience the Cleveland Heroes Project. Naming eleven key partners with varying communities is very exciting!

The application only demonstrate fair amount of evidence that it is actively engaging his community. The application expense timing, explaining the organizational values and how it shaped is community. However, it doesn't specify who are in that community and how the organization is actively engaging them.

The number of partners and collaborators is very impressive. This reviewer could have used more specificity in the answer to question 8, particularly with the "how" of these connections.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The application could be strengthened by illustrating how it will incorporate community input - a qualification of artistic and cultural vibrancy.

The applicant has provided fair evidence of an engaging and artistically vibrant project. The organization was able to identify an artistic gap in programming and addressed it by partnering with students from Cleveland School of the Arts.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: University Circle Inc.

Project Title: Wade Oval Wednesdays 2026

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8.67

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

As a public-facing free concert series with a variety of genres the public benefit is strong.

This project will appeal to several communities and neighborhoods. I love the attention given to the types of food vendors. It seems like all community members are considered with this project.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

For a project at this scale and budget, some survey data would have been helpful. The quote from a patron did show that feedback and input is gathered from audiences, however, which is great.

This seems like it engages a diverse array of artists.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Clear evidence of organizational capacity to produce this large-scale project.

The expense budget raised some questions for me - particularly the venue rental costs and marketing, which seemed quite high for a project at this scale. I would like to have seen some explanation or detail about how those figures were calculated, perhaps in a budget narrative.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: UpStage Players

Project Title: UpStage Players 2026 Broadway Theatre Production

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 7.67

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

More insight needed to understand the fee-based model for this community theatre program. But benefit is being provided if young artists are charged a fee (even if small) to participate. How will this grant be used to increase access to participation?

This project seems to hit the goal of "being inclusive and engaging diverse populations."

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

More evidence needed to understand the artistic and cultural vibrancy of this project. Examples of previous performances, supporting materials, and/or testimonials would support in understanding the cultural vibrancy of the project.

I would strongly recommend gathering some real data on demographics through a survey/questionnaire. This will make future applications even stronger and show that you have a direct and documented dialogue with your audiences and participants!

I like the idea of doing a performance at a nursing home; theatre is community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Precise & specific numbers in the budget are encouraging and show a level of detail and knowledge on the financial side.

I'm struck by the fact that in the (optional) question about BIPOC communities, they said "Many of them are People of Color, however, we cannot quantify the number; so we cannot say with confidence if the majority are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Ursuline College

Project Title: 5th Annual Juneteenth Celebration and Art Exhibit 2026

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8.33

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Strong evidence of public benefit, artistic vibrancy, and organizational capacity.

Free public exhibits that identify unique subcultures and help individuals identify with community and tradition - very strong!

I think it's great to have a Juneteenth celebration, especially since such things are getting rolled back lately.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Budget looks very reasonable for this scale of project.

I'm struck by the fact that the project is about Juneteenth but they answered "no" to the question: Do the majority of your organization's senior leadership and board publicly self- identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)? Also, what will t

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: VIVA Bavaria

Project Title: A Bavarian Christkindlmarkt 2026

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 7.33

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The reach seems a bit narrow in terms of audience. However, strong attendance numbers lends credibility to the public benefit.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Evidence of providing a very specific outlet of cultural vibrancy for the Germanic community of Ohio.

The quality and diversity of offerings is impressive. Some survey data or direct input from audiences and vendors would strengthen this.

The project sounds interesting and informative about other cultures.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The evidence provided in the application warrant clarity to help understand the organization's capacity to produce this program. The project is managed primarily by a volunteer board, but the budget would suggest that the organization is well-resourced enough to hire, at minimum, a part-time employee or contractor. More clarity also needed to help understand the significant line items in the budget such as the venue/space rental and other project expenses.

I would like to see a bit more detail on the budget. \$129k in "other funding" raised some questions.

I love how well-thought-out this project is, as evidenced by the project timeline.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: West Park Kamm's Neighborhood Development

Project Title: Pop Ups in the Parks

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8.67

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,585

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Clear evidence of public benefit.

Bringing art and culture directly to the places where people already gather is an extremely strong way to produce a meaningful and impactful event.

This project seems to be really beneficial in bringing the community together.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The project sounds quite creative.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The budget looks very reasonable and balanced. Precise amounts and balanced expense and income tables speak to the financial literacy of the organization.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: West Shore Chorale

Project Title: Joyful Voices, Jubilant Sounds!

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Seeing that the organization takes steps to have board representation from unaffiliated individuals was very strong.

The organization keeps the community's needs in mind.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Clear evidence of artistic vibrancy.

The concerts seem to be engaging.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

A budget that includes room for revenue growth (i.e. expenses don't outweigh or equal income) was especially strong, and shows the organizations capacity to be sustainable long-term.

The project seems to be well-thought-out, as evidenced by the project timeline.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: West Side Catholic Center

Project Title: Expressive Arts Project

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 9

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Clear evidence of public benefit by offering artistic services in conjunction with social services.

This is a powerful program that clearly is meeting a need in the public as evidenced by broad participation and work samples provided.

This project will benefit the population it serves.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

This project, in my opinion, really touches at the soul of people. I like how the church is looking at the whole person who needs to be nourished (with food, clothing, and creative expression).

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

A very simple budget, but realistic and actionable.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: West Side Community House

Project Title: Summer of Sisterhood

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8.33

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

I wanted to understand a little more about how participants are selected for this program. It is a very strong program and looks like it could be competitive. Is there a selection process?

This project really fits with the ideas of seeing a need in the community and building relationships.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Clear evidence of the organization's capacity to administer the program.

Budget looks great, nice to see exact dollar amounts shown.

The team seems very diverse and empathetic.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Western Reserve Fire Museum & Education Center

Project Title: Western Reserve Fire Museum Project

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$4,250

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Application lacks specificity to fully understand its ability to impact any of the funding areas.

Surveying your audiences is an excellent step and shows that you're responding to community needs and wants.

I feel like the "community" is mainly "fire buffs" and not the wider Cleveland community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I think this is an interesting project to apply for funding with this grant. It's not "arts" but it can be "culture" and it's something that is informative.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Budget looks extremely reasonable.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Project Title: Tree Stewards Training Program

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 6

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

There is no evidence of artistic or cultural aspects of this project.

This seems like a very worthwhile project, but I was left with questions about how it intersects with arts and culture.

I think this project is a unique way to express "art" in the Cleveland area.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Budget looked very good, specific and actionable.

The project team seems capable and knowledgeable.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Westlake Chinese School

Project Title: Westlake Chinese School Ethnic Folk Dance Project

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 7

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

PUBLIC BENEFIT

More evidence is need to understand how this cultural dance style relates to the community. And/or how the organization is educating the community about this cultural program.

The scope is somewhat limited due to the specific nature of the cultural traditions represented. But there is clearly an effort made to engage the broader public, and the program appears valuable to the community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I like that the project has different types of Chinese dance.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

The project team seems very capable and experienced.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Westown Community Development Corporation

Project Title: Arts & Culutre in the Westown Historic Districts

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 6.67

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,375

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I'm unclear on what "Arts & Culture in the Westown Historic Districts" exactly entails. The Project Summary section was confusing.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

More clarity needed on the program and what it entails. What are the goals?

The project clearly has merit but the application narrative was a bit chaotic and very difficult to follow. Budget looked good, and the photos helped. Writing with a focus on readability and a logical flow/narrative would have improved the application.

The project team seems to be quite diverse.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus

Project Title: A Spring Spotlight of Local Roots and Resistance

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 8.33

2026 Grant Amount: \$6,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Clear evidence across all three criteria.

Inclusiveness to nonbinary participants is encouraging to see!

I think the project is a worthy one.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

I love the idea of this project. But it seems a tad unpolished.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

A dedicated grant committee assigned to the project is a plus, and certainly shows in the application.
Budget looks very well-reasoned.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Women in Film and TV Ohio

Project Title: SHE CREATES SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL

Panelists: Karla Centeno, Sheryl Doades, Danielle Hamner, Ellen Milligan

Score: 8.75

2026 Grant Amount: \$5,000

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The organization showed a lot of evidence of providing public benefit. Their work with BIPOC/ underrepresented communities is well thought out including networking, educational, and professional opportunities.

The organization has clearly considered avenues of accessibility for various segments of its community and intended audience for this project as well as opportunities for community outreach leading up to the event.

The applicant was able to effectively demonstrate the greater need in closing the gap for film and media. It was able to show that it will benefit the public by partnering with an organization to have youth experience film making opportunities. This need has been identified within the community.

Well-defined community that will be thoughtfully served through programming that prioritizes access. Appreciate that the project life cycle specifically calls out a phase for gathering feedback.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Great video! Shows what programming looks like. Also great song and editing.

There is limited information from which to adjudicate the organization's financial position provided in this application. The project budget very much exceeds the organization's 2025 total budget; more information would help illustrate how and if this project could proceed absent or less some of the requested CAC funding.

Thoughtful budget and impressive team.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: YMCA of Greater Cleveland

Project Title: 27th Annual Steps & Stages Production

Panelists: Sarah Gilmer, Sara Little, Alicia Olivo, Penny Pun, Michael Smith

Score: 8.25

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The applicant does a good job of identifying the groups they work with who benefit from their program. However, they do not broadly identify or reference their geographic community (in question 7), or how they connect with this audience beyond their organizational partner Y-Haven (in question 8). I'd like to see ways they can cultivate more partnerships within the community of those impacted by SUD in the response to question 8.

Based on this project narrative, CPT and Y-Haven's Steps & Stages program engages a broad audience, mainly those directly and indirectly affected by SUD.

The applications demonstrate strong evidence that the organization knows the community and has designed a project that responds directly to that community

The YMCA weaves power-sharing throughout the timeline of the project. From the collaboration with Cleveland Public Theatre and Y-Haven to the leadership role taken up by individuals struggling with SUD, the YMCA is co-sharing the artistic production with its community. The YMCA is also committed to performing the production at several venues, ensuring its accessibility throughout the community.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

Artistic and cultural vibrancy is this project's area of greatest strength. They fully fulfill the criteria for this, specifically, incorporating a process of reflection to ensure that programming is relevant to or created with its community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Hearing about the general process of how CPT and Y-Haven staff work together to serve the actors is helpful, however, in question 9 we're specifically asking for the names, roles, and experience of those who will be involved with this project. Knowing more about the project administrators, teaching artists, producers, and directors would strengthen the application.

PANEL SCORES & COMMENTS

2026 PROJECT SUPPORT



Organization: Youth Challenge

Project Title: Youth Challenge Theatre Troupe

Panelists: Deonté Griffin-Quick, Lenore Herbst, Philip Rice, Tamara Williamson

Score: 9.33

2026 Grant Amount: \$7,500

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Clear evidence of public benefit. Applicant has outlined clear measures to ensure accessibility of the program to all.

I think this is a wonderful project for the community. Not just for the performers with physical disabilities, but for the wider community. It's so important to see people with various abilities participating in activities like this.

ARTISTIC & CULTURAL VIBRANCY

The one-on-one approach shows a clear commitment to creating a meaningful experience for participants.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Budget was balanced and specific.

I think the organization is guided by great principles and a love for the community.