



Written Panel Guide

2025 Project Support Panel Review – Grant Requests up to \$5,000

September 2024

The purpose of the Project Support (PS) grant program is to promote public access and encourage the breadth of arts and cultural programming in our community by supporting Cuyahoga County-based projects. During the panel review, arts and cultural experts from across the country (who are educated in CAC's funding criteria) assess and score applications.

The written panel review is for Project Support applications requesting up to \$5,000 in funding.

2025 applications requesting more than \$5,000 are reviewed via a [live panel process](#) on September 16-18. All scores and comments are posted publicly at the conclusion of the panel process.

Applicants

America Asian Pacific Islander Organization	Cleveland Shakespeare Festival
American Slovenian Polka Foundation	Cleveland Silent Film Festival and Colloquium
Arts Without Borders	Cleveland TOPS Swingband
Association of African American Cultural Garden	Cleveland Treatment Center
Association of Asian Indian Women In Ohio	Cleveland Uncommon Sound Project
Baseball Heritage Museum	Cleveland Winds
Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation	Cleveland Women's Orchestra
Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging	Colors+ Youth Center
BigHearted Blooms	Comité Mexicano
Blazing River Arts Group INC	Community Cup Classic Foundation
Bodwin Theatre Company	Community Life Collaborative
Brooklyn Heights Service Clubs	Connecting for Kids
Canalway Partners	Coventry PEACE Campus
Case Western Reserve University	Coventry Village Special Improvement District
Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland	Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad
Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District	Dance Evert
Cesear's Forum	DarI Center for the Arts
Cleveland Arts Education Consortium	Deutscher Musik Verein, Inc.
Cleveland Chamber Collective	Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio
Cleveland Composers Guild	East Cleveland Farmers' Market Preservation Society
Cleveland Dance Project Company	Edward E. Parker Museum of Art
Cleveland Inner City Ballet	Empowering Epilepsy
Cleveland Leadership Center	Euclid Beach Park Now
Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestra	Euclid Symphony Orchestra
Cleveland Rape Crisis Center	Far West Center
Cleveland Repertory Orchestra	Fashion Talks Foundation
Cleveland Seed Bank	Food Strong



Fostering Hope
Friends of the East Cleveland Public Library
From Me 2 U
Front Steps Housing and Services
FrontLine Service
FutureHeights
Gardening in the District
German Central
Golden Ciphers Youth Development & Cultural Arts Center
Harvard Community Services Center
Haus of Transcendent
Henry Johnson Center
Hispanic Police Officers Association
India Fest USA
InMotion
International Community Council
International Women's Air & Space Museum
Italian Cultural Garden
Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland Ohio
LakewoodAlive
Larchmere PorchFest
LGBT Community Center Greater Cleveland
Little Italy Redevelopment Corporation
LYLESART
Malachi Center
May Dugan Center
Midnight Art Club
Museum of Creative Human Art
Union Miles Development Corporation
UpStage Players
VIVA Bavaria
West Park Kamm's Neighborhood Development
West Side Catholic Center
Western Reserve Chorale
Western Reserve Fire Museum & Education Center

Negative Space Gallery
New Avenues to Independence
No Exit
North Union Farmers Market
Northeast Ohio Marathi Mandal
Northeast Ohio Musical Heritage Association
OCA Cleveland
Ohio Selfie World Foundation
Pakistani Cultural Garden
Parma Symphony Orchestra
Reaching Heights
Restore Cleveland Hope
RhythmiCLE Sound Tap Company
Roberto Ocasio Foundation
Rollin' Buckkeyez
Seat of the Pants
Slavic Village Development
SOS: Strengthening Our Students
Spread the Love Foundation
Stellar Acrobatic Dance Academy
Studio Institute
Suburban Symphony Orchestra
Tender Hearts Crusades
The Gathering Place
The Harvard Square Center
The Meeting Place Learning Center
Thea Bowman Center
Trobár Medieval
Ukrainian Cultural Arts Association of Greater Cleveland
Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Westown Community Development Corporation
Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus
Woodland Cemetery Foundation of Cleveland
YMCA of Greater Cleveland
Youth Challenge



Panel Review Process

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

CAC staff monitors the online panel review but does not score or provide opinions on applications. Staff manages all administrative and logistical actions necessary to conduct a successful panel review: provide panelists all documentation necessary to evaluate applications effectively; inform the panel in matters of CAC policy and procedures; provide timely, objective responses to any panelist questions.

Scoring

Panelists determine a score for each application based on the following funding criteria:

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

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

With an emphasis on Public Benefit, has the application demonstrated the funding criteria?

Yes: the applicant has provided strong evidence that the funding criteria are met.

Somewhat: The applicant has provided fair evidence that the funding criteria are met.

No: The applicant has provided weak evidence that the funding criteria are met.

Final Score and Funding Recommendations

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

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



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Meet the Panelists



Jordan Adams, she/her
Indianapolis, IN

Jordan Adams brings nearly 15 years of experience with non-profit, public and human services, marketing and communications, and startup entities. Studying organizational leadership and supervision, as well as communications, at Purdue University equipped Jordan with the capacity to look at an organization at both macro and micro levels. Jordan joined the Indiana Arts Commission as the Artist Services Program Manager where she inherited the premiere program for Indiana’s individual artists, On-Ramp: Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator. Jordan has served on United Way of Central Indiana’s Youth as Resources executive board, Project WILL, Inc.’s executive board, and is a former Americorps VISTA. Jordan loves learning about the art of placemaking and keeping through psychological lens of people, place and business.



Diana Agostini, she/her
San Diego, CA

Diana is the Executive Director of San Diego Italian Film Festival, where she combines her passion for cultural studies to the one for the arts, trying to find creative ways to promote critical thinking and inclusion. At SDIFF she has worked on development, programming, community outreach, innovation, and launched the festival's shorts competition. Diana also held positions in institutions of higher education and private schools, as well as in the Commission for Arts and Culture for the City of San Diego. When not working on all things SDIFF, you can find her empowering youth, especially young girls, with programs aimed at closing the gender gap. Diana holds an Executive Master in Management from SDA Bocconi School of Management, a Master's in International Development, and a Bachelor's in Linguistic and Cultural Mediation.



**Heather Beffa, she/her
Centennial, CO**

Heather joined CERF+ as the Readiness and Relief Coordinator in 2021, facilitating applications, review, and determinations. Prior to joining our staff, Heather served as the Grants Program Manager at ArtsKC in Kansas City, Missouri where she oversaw competitive and needs-based funding for artists and arts organizations. She is dedicated to transparency, ethics, and demonstrating the positive effects of funding. Art is the center of Heather's personal and professional life. Heather has a Master's degree in Art History from University of Missouri-Kansas City and a BFA from Kansas City Art Institute in Printmaking. Outside of work, Heather enjoys skiing, reading, and drawing.



**Brad Carlin, he/him
Beaverton, OR**

Brad Carlin is a Senior Consultant for TRG Arts and works with organizations of all sizes and disciplines in the US, Canada, and the UK. Prior to joining TRG, Brad was the Managing Director of Fusebox Festival in Austin, TX and has 15 years of experience in general management and fundraising for arts organizations. He received a Master's Degree in Arts Management from Carnegie Mellon University and a B.A. in Theatre from St. Edward's University.



**Karla Centeno, she/her
San Diego, CA**

Throughout her career, Karla has sought experiences that allow people to see the world as it is while imagining what it could be. She has had the privilege of working in arts at all levels as a museum educator, writer, curator, director of education, and grantmaker. She also co-founded allofus, an artist-run collective and online gallery. She is currently the Director of Education for Working Assumptions



**Keya Crenshaw, she/her
Reynoldsburg, OH**

Founder of Black Chick Media, LLC, Keya acts as a Film Festival Consultant, Digital Media Maven, and Writer. As a creative entrepreneur and stage and voice actor, Keya is and has been, a member of numerous organizations including the League of Professional Theatre Women based in New York City, the So and So Arts Club based in London, England, The League of Professional Theatre Women, and Past Productions Columbus. Keya has previously held positions at The Ohio State University, The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, WOSU Public Media, the Brooklyn Arts Council, Americans for the Arts, and the Columbus Post Newspaper. Her most recent book chapter, *Unbought & Unbossed: Black Womanist Resistance and the Power of Holding Space*, was published in 2022 by The University of Arizona Press as a part of the anthology, *A Love Letter to This Bridge Called My Back*.



**LaShawnda Crowe Storm,
she/her
Indianapolis, IN**

LaShawnda Crowe Storm is an artist, activist, community builder and occasionally an urban farmer. Whether she is making artwork or sowing seeds, Crowe Storm uses her creative power as a vehicle for dialogue, social change and community healing. Crowe Storm has an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a B.A. in mass communications and English Literature from the University of Michigan. She has received numerous awards for art and community activism including but not limited to a MdW Fellowship (2023), Power Plant Award (Big Car with the Andy Warhol Foundation), Artist of Distinction Award (Indianapolis Art Council). Crowe Storm is the creator and project manager of *Powerful Conversations on Race*, a monthly community dialogue series exploring race in America as the Community Engagement Director for *Spirit & Place*. *Spirit & Place* uses the arts, humanities and religion as a vehicle to create space for critical community dialogue.



**Noah Dixon, he/him
Columbus, OH**

Noah Dixon is an award-winning screenwriter, director and editor based in Columbus, OH. Recognized for his “assured debut” by The New York Times, Noah’s first feature film, POSER, premiered at the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival and found theatrical distribution through Oscilloscope Laboratories. His work has screened at numerous festivals in the U.S. and abroad including Filmfest Hamburg, American Film Festival, Cleveland International Film Festival, Thessaloniki International Film Festival, Nashville Film Festival and the Jecheon International Music and Film Festival. In 2023, Noah was sponsored by the Greater Columbus Arts Council and the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony for an artist residency in Dresden, Germany. Noah is the co-owner and creative director of the production company, Loose Films which has had films featured at Sundance Film Festival, Big Sky Film Festival, and distributed via Showtime, The New Yorker and Vimeo Staff Picks.



**Lenore Eggleston-Herbst,
she/her
Wilton, CT**

With more than thirty years of experience managing non-for-profit organizations, Lenore is dedicated to utilizing Woodcock Nature Center’s incredible team to connect the community more deeply to nature. Lenore’s previous leadership experience includes twelve years as director of marketing and development for the Westchester Philharmonic. She has also worked in fundraising and marketing for The Ballet Tech Foundation (New York City’s only tuition-free public school for dance) and the Kaufman Center, also in New York City which operates a community arts school, a K-12 public school for gifted music students, and the renowned Merkin Concert Hall. Lenore holds a B.A. in Dance and Psychology from Connecticut College and an M.A. in Performing Arts Administration from NYU. .



Claudia Gage, she/her
Bloomington, IN

Claudia is a recent graduate of the MAAA-MPA program at the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. She currently works in Student Leadership for her alma mater, coordinating work-study programs, seminar series, workshops, and volunteer opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students. Claudia's background is in the performing arts. Her early career as an arts educator led to a broader interest in nonprofit leadership and program management.



Jeff Garrett, he/him
Davison, MI

Jeff Garrett is a grant Program Manager and Accessibility Coordinator for the State of Michigan Arts and Culture Council. Previously, Jeff served as the Director of the Art School at the Flint Institute of Arts. He has teaching experience in Michigan Public Schools K-12, has been adjunct faculty at Vincennes University, Saginaw Valley State University, Mott Community College, and was Head of the Art & Design Department at Crowder College. He received a Master of Fine Arts degree in Ceramics with Distinction from Indiana State University.



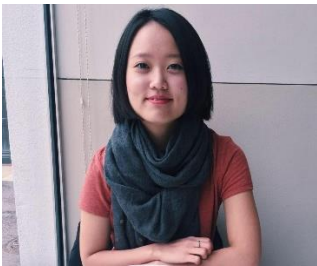
Julia Hosch, she/her
Dallas, TX

Julia is passionate about expanding arts access to all. As the current Manager of Cultural Programs for the City of Dallas, Julia leads a team responsible for distributing more than \$8M in funding to artists and ensembles across the City. Previously, Julia worked as a Consultant for nonprofit-focused firm The Bridgespan Group, and as a Project Manager for a creativity and social justice-focused nonprofit, Big Thought. Julia holds degrees in Cognitive Science from Yale University, and Business and Arts Administration from Southern Methodist University. She has played the French horn for more than 20 years in local and national ensembles, and lives in Dallas with her husband, Aditya.



**Maria Iafelice, she/her
Findlay, OH**

Maria Iafelice is an arts leader and museum professional dedicated to making art accessible and building capacity with mission-driven organizations. Iafelice has held positions at the Akron Art Museum, Center for Arts-Inspired Learning, Cleveland Museum of Art, and most recently at the Toledo Museum of Art, where she launched the award-winning Teen Leaders program, co-authored the museum's inaugural Belonging Plan, and was recognized as the 2019 Emerging Professional of the Year by the Ohio Museums Association. Iafelice is the Visual Arts Chair for the Black Swamp Arts Festival, serves as the Board President for Public Works Collaborative, Board Treasurer of the Collingwood Arts Center, and sits on the Artist Services Committee at The Arts Commission of Greater Toledo. She earned a M.A. and B.A. in Art Education from Kent State University and was part of the 2018 NextGen Museum Leadership class at Getty Leadership Institute.



**June Kim, she/her
New York, NY**

June Kim currently serves as Senior Manager, Grants and Development Communications at The Juilliard School. Previously, she served in the development offices at the Santa Fe Opera and IU Jacobs School of Music. She is a graduate of St. Olaf College and Indiana University, where she studied flute performance and arts administration. In her daily work, she is guided by the core principle of eliminating barriers to arts education, exploration, and access.



**Sara Little, she/her
Erie, PA**

Sara's journey in dance began nearly 40 years ago right here in Erie at Little Dance Studio. There, she immersed herself in various dance styles, from tap and jazz to ballet, lyrical, modern, hip hop, contemporary, Irish step, and swing. As a dedicated member of Jazz Kids Dance Company, Sara showcased her talents at prestigious venues, including Times Square's Project Dance in NYC. During high school, she graced the stage in musicals with the Footlights Theatre Program under the direction of David W. Mitchell. Later, she transitioned to the Footlights staff, where she choreographed "Annie" and "Bye Bye Birdie!" For over 28 years, Sara has nurtured dancers of all ages and skill levels, from beginners to aspiring professionals, at various studios in Erie.



Dana Manyothane, she/her
Denver, CO

A Native of Denver, Colorado, Dana was the executive director of The Colorado Black Arts Festival before joining the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District team as a program officer in 2017. Dana is a passionate advocate for visual and performing arts and racial equity initiatives. She has served on the board or in board advisory positions in several non-profits in the Denver Metro area, including African Leadership Organization and FreshLo, and is the current chair of the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts's Equity, Inclusivity, Diversity, and Accessibility committee. She is a graduate of the University of Colorado-Boulder, married, the proud mother of four college-aged children, and an avid consumer of cultural events. Dana's hobbies include terra cotta pot painting, reading, and roller skating.



Lisa Much, she/they
Columbus, OH

Lisa Much is currently a nonprofit events, fundraising, and operations consultant. Her background is predominantly in community development, having worked for Ohio CDC Association for nine years, and theatrical stage management. She has a BA in Sustainable Theater Management from Green Mountain College and recently completed her Masters in Public Policy & Management from the John Glenn College at The Ohio State University.



Alicia Olivo, they/them
Pasadena, TX

Alicia Margarita Olivo is a Houston-based Mexican American writer, director, arts manager, and weather enjoyer. They are currently the Manager of Membership Programming for Benvenuti Arts and a Community Storyteller with Houston BANF. Alicia was the Texas Representative in the 2022-2023 National Leaders of Color Fellow cohort. As a playwright, Alicia's works have been developed and/or received readings with Rec Room Arts, Stages, Company One Theater, The Workshop Theater, Teatro Chelsea, Telatúlsa, AlterTheater, and The Inkwell Theater. They've directed or assistant directed for TEATRX, Rec Room Arts, Stages, and Wellesley Repertory Theater. Selected recognitions include being Finalist for AlterTheater and La Lengua Teatro's Historias de Descolonización Commission, Finalist for Texas State University's Black and Latino Playwrights Celebration New Play Development Workshops, plus more.



**Alexandra Opsahl, she/her
Altadena, CA**

Originally from Norway, Alexandra Opsahl studied cornetto and recorder at the Royal Academy of Music in London, graduating with 1st Class Honors in 2004. She continued her studies of historic brass at the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland. Her performances include collaborations with renowned ensembles such as the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Philharmonia Baroque, Boston Early Music Festival, I Fagiolini, Capella Barocca di Mexico, Carmel Bach Festival, Apollo's Fire (Cleveland Baroque Orchestra), and Portland Baroque Orchestra. In 2007, Alexandra relocated to Los Angeles, where she founded Tesserae Baroque, a non-profit arts organization dedicated to performing music from the Renaissance and Baroque periods. She also served as executive director for Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra. Now, as the Member Engagement and Development Manager for ACSO, Alex brings her collaborative spirit and passion for the arts to a role focused on supporting and championing the classical music community as a whole.



**Susan Roll, she/her
Escanaba, MI**

Sue is an engineer by education, a life coach by training, a costumer by avocation, a manager by choice, a planner by necessity, an arts administrator by vocation, and an out-going optimist. She has lived and worked overseas for many years of her career which has included 19 years with Intel Corporation, creating a successful coaching and consulting practice in the rural community, and, over the last 10 years, has been involved in her community arts and culture world including the position of an executive director of a community arts center. She helped establish the Upper Peninsula Arts and Culture Alliance, a non-profit that generates connections and community prosperity across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan through arts and culture. She is passionate about people and their connections with and through arts and culture.



**Ami Scherson, she/her
Elmhurst, NY**

Ami (ah-mee) Scherson is a Queens, NY based arts administrator, musician, and facilitator. She is currently the Membership & Individual Giving Manager at National Sawdust. Prior to joining the organization, she worked at Americans for the Arts and Arts Business Collaborative to develop and implement programs that support and elevate the voices of BIPOC arts leaders. As the manager for national programs such as the Diversity in Arts Leadership (DIAL) Internship Program and Arts and Culture Leaders of Color, she curated educational programming for emerging and mid-career leaders, developed partnerships with New York City and national arts organizations, and guided the pivot to virtual programming during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Emily Sollenberger,
she/her
Baltimore, MD**

Emily is the Program Director, Arts Services at the Maryland State Arts Council, where she works with a team who encourages and invests in the advancement of the arts for all Marylanders. She is the staff expert in the visual, media, multidisciplinary, folk/traditional arts, and service disciplines - and supports the artists and arts organizations within these discipline categories with access to grant opportunities, professional development, and strategic initiatives to better serve their own communities. She was also selected for the very first cohort of its kind in the country, one of twelve arts administrators across the county, in the Crisis Analysis & Mitigation Coach Training for Arts Responders, supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Coalition of Arts Preparedness & Emergency Response (NCAPER).



**Anna Tragesser, she/her
Indianapolis, IN**

Anna Tragesser is the Program Manager at Indy Arts Council. As a lifelong Hoosier, she's inspired by the tension and beauty of today's Midwestern cultural expression. Her career is to make work and life easier for artists. In a previous role at the Indiana Arts Commission, Anna managed hundreds of artist and nonprofit grantees, supported creative community development with municipal governments, and launched an award-winning artist entrepreneurship accelerator. She's also been on the other side of the table as a freelance grant writer and community arts organizer. Anna is committed to a journey of understanding racial equity and its applications in philanthropy and the arts and culture sector.



Elena Velasco, she/ella
Alexandria, VA

Elena Velasco (she/ella) is a Helen Hayes nominated theatre artist serving DC and Greater Boston. A commissioned playwright and researcher, she has written for Routledge, Intellect Books, and several TYA musicals, and served on panels for Boston Conservatory, George Mason University, and Theatre Washington. Her yogic training and DEI experience informs her culturally responsive processes, practices she has shared as a consultant for organizations such as American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE), Southeastern Theatre Conference, Women’s Theatre Festival, and TheatreWashington. Her professional and academic theatre work garnered the 2024 University Systems of Maryland Board of Regents Excellence in Creativity Award, and she was named the 2023 recipient of SDCF’s Barbara Whitman Award. She is an associate theater professor at Bowie State University and serves on the advisory council for DC Theatre Arts, Carpe Diem Arts and is the Professional Theatre Network chair for AATE.



Laura Weiss, she/her
Baltimore, MD

Laura Weiss joined the staff of the Maryland State Arts Council in 2019. Previous to MSAC, Laura has 13 years of non-profit arts management experience as a long-time staff member at Everyman Theatre in Baltimore. During her tenure at Everyman, she served in multiple roles including Associate Director of Marketing and Media Relations, Special Assistant to the Artistic and Managing Directors, and Development Operations Manager. Laura holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Musical Theatre from The Catholic University of America. She is a Baltimore area native, having grown up in Towson and attending Carver Center for Arts and Technology for high school. The arts have always played an important role in Laura's life, and she is proud to support individual artists and arts organizations across the State in her role as Program Director for Arts Services at the Maryland State Arts Council.