

Inclusive Arts Fund 2026 Grant Opportunity

Frequently Asked Questions

This document was created to share the frequently asked questions and answers that were addressed during the virtual information session.

Should new organizations apply for this funding?

New organizations may apply for this grant opportunity. We recommend scheduling time to meet with the program officer to ensure alignment for your organization's size. Email Njeri Rutherford at nrutherford@cfsem.org to schedule a virtual meeting.

Can previous grant recipients apply again?

Organizations are not eligible for funding in consecutive years. For example, if your organization was awarded in 2025, you are ineligible to apply in 2026.

We have applied several times unsuccessfully. Can we talk with someone about how to improve our application?

Funding is competitive and not guaranteed. Please schedule time to meet with the program officer for additional guidance on your application.

I am a grant writer for multiple organizations that may qualify for this opportunity. Are there rules about helping more than one group apply?

Organizations will not be penalized for using the same grant writer or consultant.

The Inclusive Arts Fund supports programming, operations and capacity building — does the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan have a preference among these categories?

Generally, the Community Foundation prioritizes project-based applications due to the nature of our funding, though, we advise applicants to choose the funding area where there is both need and alignment. We recommend scheduling time with the program officer for further guidance.

Can this funding support existing programs as well as capacity building?

You may apply for general operating support, program/project support **or** capacity building. We recommend applying within the funding area where your organization has the most need and alignment.

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For organizations that offer additional programming outside the seven counties, should our impact narrative focus on that area?

Yes. Organizations must be physically located in and/or serve one or more of the seven counties within the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan service areas to be eligible. Applications should highlight the activities that take place within the geographic focus area.

There are multiple grants listed under "Current Grant Opportunities." Are organizations able to apply more?

While eligible applicants may apply for more than one open grant opportunity, funding is competitive and not guaranteed. The Community Foundation prioritizes diversifying grant opportunities and applicants should apply to the program that is most aligned with organizational need. We recommend scheduling a meeting with the program officer for further guidance.

What financial documents are required as part of the application?

Most recent financial documentation within three years (audit, financial review, IRS Form 990, or exemption documentation). If available, organizations are encouraged to submit audited financial statements or financial reviews in addition to the IRS Form 990. For newer organizations using a 990-N (or 990 EZ), we recommend scheduling time to meet with the program officer to ensure alignment for your budget size.

Can we work on the application over time and submit it when it's ready?

We strongly recommend copying and pasting the application questions into a separate document and submitting the application all at once. The portal does not allow you to save as you go.

What is the difference between general operating support, capacity building, and project/program support?

General operating support is flexible funding that typically covers an organization ongoing, day-to-day expenses such as salaries, office or workspace, administrative costs, etc. Capacity building grants typically support an investment into the infrastructure of an organization such as hiring a consultant, small improvements to physical space, one time equipment purchases, technology improvements, etc. Program or project support generally includes activities such as workshops, classes, events, etc. We recommend scheduling a meeting with the program officer for further guidance.

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What specifically makes a strong application — highlighting one focus area (e.g., a single program) or covering a range of programs?

Strong applications regardless of funding focus will:

- Expand access to arts and cultural experiences across Southeast Michigan
- Strengthen organizational capacity and long-term sustainability
- Demonstrate strong community presence and meaningful engagement

Contact

Please feel free to reach out to the Njeri Rutherford at nrutherford@cfsem.org for further guidance or additional questions.