



**Jerome L. Greene
Foundation Fund**
in The New York Community Trust

2023 Request for Proposals (Invitation Only)

BACKGROUND

Reports show that the audience for theater is dwindling—a decline accelerated by continuing economic and public health strains from the Covid-19 pandemic. Other common barriers to audience attendance can include lack of time, venues being too difficult to get to or perceived as unwelcoming, and the high cost of a ticket. We also know that early exposure to theater drives attendance. Research has shown that adults who attend performances as children are three to four times more likely to see live theater as adults.

Since 2018, the Jerome L. Greene Foundation (the Foundation) has worked with The New York Community Trust (The Trust) to provide important support for theaters. During the Covid-19 pandemic, theaters closed their doors yet made great progress toward democratizing the art form by making it more accessible—reaching new audiences through free digital programs, hyperlocal community programming, and activation of public spaces for public art and as sites of political engagement. Many have continued to engage their audiences and communities in new ways.

As theaters work to regain and cultivate audiences, the Foundation will make grants designed to bring more, and more diverse, audiences to the theater. The Jerome L. Greene Foundation Fund (the Fund) in The Trust will help theaters reach audiences such as college students, young and older adults, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income communities that face barriers to attendance, and build upon the audience development efforts and lessons learned from the past few years.

OPPORTUNITY

The Fund will make grants to help invited theaters expand free and/or discounted ticket programs and audience development efforts. Theaters may apply for grants of up to \$250,000 per year. Pending continued funding from the Jerome L. Greene Foundation and the conclusion of a successful first year, the Foundation intends to renew grants. **Initial grants will be for 10 months.** Organizations that do not currently have free and/or discounted ticket programs should not apply.

Electronic applications are due to The Trust no later than 5pm on Friday, June 9, 2023.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Grant proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- Clear audience development goals and thoughtful, creative strategies for expanding theater-going audiences;
- Plan to increase both the number of ticket sales and the diversity of ticket buyers;
- Plan to appropriately market theater access programs to targeted audiences;

- Ability and willingness to research and document target audiences’ consumer habits and preferences;
- Data collection activities that will set benchmarks and help the theater measure progress annually over the grant period;
- Demonstration of an institutional and long-term commitment to diversifying audiences.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

The proposal narrative should not exceed five pages and should address the following:

1. Brief overview of your organization’s history, mission, and programs.
2. Audiences currently served by your programs, noting demographics where possible.
3. Current efforts to reach audiences, including ticket initiatives to make programs accessible and affordable, marketing efforts, and information on how you track attendance data.
4. Description of the subsidized ticket/arts access project, specifying new audiences you seek to reach, the need for this project, and how you will track progress and collect data, noting the indicators you will use to determine if the project has succeeded.
5. Brief timeline of activities, noting any potential obstacles that may hinder progress.
6. How the project responds to and is shaped by lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Include a **budget for the project period**, that indicates expenses and income, including the Fund’s potential contribution and other sources of support, if applicable, noting which sources are confirmed, pending, or projected.

Additional support materials should include the following:

7. Annual audience attendance breakdown for each year, from FY2019 to FY2023 year-to-date, and projections for FY2024. This information should include paid, discounted, and free audience attendance for each year. A sample format for this information follows below. We understand the challenges of capturing some of this information particularly for FY20 and FY21, and will accept your best effort.

FY2019 Audience Attendance			
	In-person	Virtual	Total
Paid			
Discounted			
Free			
Total			

8. Operating budget for the current fiscal year.
9. Actual income and expenses for the most recently completed fiscal year.
10. List of board of directors.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

1. On the NYCT grants portal (<https://proposals.nycommunitytrust.org/Home/ThreeChoices>), under “(By Invitation Only) Jerome L. Greene Foundation Fund” under *Available LOIs*, click “Apply” and complete the cover sheet.
2. Upload a single PDF file of your entire application (proposal narrative, project budget, and support materials) to the cover sheet. Please have the PDF ready in advance.
3. Click Submit.

Questions about this opportunity should be directed to **Julia Chang, Philanthropic Initiatives Officer**, at jtc@nyct-cfi.org. Please do not contact the Jerome L. Greene Foundation about this funding opportunity. You may invite the Greene Foundation’s staff to shows, but please observe a strict no-solicitation policy and direct all questions about funding to The New York Community Trust.

SCHEDULE

May 5, 2023	RFP is published.
June 9, 2023 5:00pm	Proposals due.
June 2023	Proposal review.
July 2023	Grant awards announced. Grants will be for 10 months.

About the Jerome L. Greene Foundation

The Jerome L. Greene Foundation supports select programs that make a significant impact on the lives of all New Yorkers in the areas of the arts, education, medicine, and social justice. Its 40-year history of giving is grounded in the vision of its founder, Jerry Greene, to give back to the city he loved.

About The New York Community Trust

The New York Community Trust is a public charity and New York City’s largest community foundation. It connects generous people and institutions with high-impact nonprofits making the city and its suburbs a better place for all. It builds stronger communities, influences public policy, fosters innovation, improves lives, and protects our environment.