



JL Greene

Arts Access Fund

in The New York Community Trust

2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (INVITATION-ONLY)

Reports show that the audience for theater is dwindling. The most common barriers to participation among adults include a lack of time, venues being too difficult to get to, not having someone to go with, and/or 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.

Upon reviewing its past efforts supporting discounted and free ticket programs, the Jerome L. Greene Foundation learned that offering tickets was no easy task. While its grantee theaters had good intentions, the grantees themselves recognized there were areas for improvement, such as: resources to manage the program, tickets not always reaching the most needy, lack of reliable data, insufficient evidence of whether audiences return, and lack of internal collaboration between an organization's marketing, development, and program departments, among others.

Thus the Foundation created the J. L. Greene Arts Access Fund in The New York Community Trust to help New York City's theaters improve and sustain successful, affordably-priced ticket programs that provide access to theater for underserved audiences such as students, older adults, families, and people from diverse and low-income communities.

Funding Opportunity

The Fund will make grants to help invited theaters in New York City expand existing free and/or discounted ticket programs for performance theater, musicals and plays. Grants will be awarded in January 2019 to increase the reach and impact of these arts access programs over a three-year period. Organizations with operating deficits and those that do not currently have free and/or discounted ticket programs are not eligible to apply.

This program intends to work with an excellent group of theaters over the next three years. Invited theaters may apply for one-year grants ranging in size from \$50,000 to \$250,000 per year. Pending continued funding from the Jerome L. Greene Foundation and the conclusion of a successful project, grants may be renewed automatically for a second and third year in

January 2020 and 2021, providing a total of three years of funding. The J. L. Greene Arts Access Fund expects to make grants totaling \$6 million over three years, split between 10 to 20 theaters.

Criteria

This is an invitation-only funding opportunity. Eligible projects will appropriately market theater access programs in order to ensure that more New Yorkers experience the excellence of the City's theaters in all five boroughs. Criteria for review will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Clear audience development goals and thoughtful, creative strategies for expanding theater-going audiences;
- Increase both the number of ticket sales and the diversity of ticket buyers through a subsidized and/or discounted ticket program;
- Data collection activities to set benchmarks and measure progress annually over the grant period;
- Target audience members who reside in New York City and are underrepresented among the theater's current audience;
- Demonstrate an ability and willingness to learn about, understand, and document target audiences' consumer habits and preferences, rather than make assumptions without evidence or engagement; and
- Demonstrate an institution-wide and long-term commitment to diversifying audiences that will extend beyond a three-year period and include other sources of funding.

The Fund may occasionally convene grantees to encourage shared learning and discuss progress toward each program's goals.

Proposal Specifications and Support Material

Please include the following in your proposal:

1. **Cover letter requesting support**, on stationary and signed by the organization's director
2. **Narrative** (please limit to four pages or less, single-spaced, 12-pt. font), including:
 - a. A very brief description of your organization, including history, mission, program activities, and major accomplishments;
 - b. Analysis (including demographics and statistics) of who comes to your theater, marketing efforts that reach this audience, and information on how you track data on their attendance;
 - c. How your organization currently gives away free and/or discounted tickets, including to youth families, students etc., and identifies and tracks who benefits;
 - d. Description of the proposed project, including:
 - i. The need and anticipated goal(s) and outcome(s) for your audience expansion and diversification effort in the first year of the grant period and what expansion would look like if the grant was renewed at the same or greater level in a second and third year;
 - ii. Who will be served through the proposed theater access program (include demographic details);

- iii. Activities that will take place over the requested grant period, including how you plan to work differently using creative marketing and outreach strategies;
 - iv. Obstacles you anticipate having to overcome to be successful; and
 - v. How you plan to track your progress.
- 3. **Project budget** that shows how funds will be expended over a three-year period that includes the first year grant, and the potential renewal of funding over an additional two-year period, with a possible increase in the second and third year. You may include staff time, marketing, sales, and other reasonable organizational costs. The J.L. Greene Arts Access Fund will provide \$50,000 to \$250,000 of support each year. If your costs exceed your grant request, please indicate other sources of support and note if these sources are committed or pending.
- 4. **Letter(s) of support from partner group(s)**, if applicable.
- 5. **Current annual operating budget** (please list sources of income and expenses)
- 6. **List of Board of Directors**
- 7. **Financial statements.** For organizations with budgets of \$750,000+, submit your latest audited financial statements; organizations with budgets between \$250,000 and \$750,000, submit a CPA review report; all others, provide a copy of your IRS 990.

Submission Instructions and Timeline

Step One: Prepare the body of the proposal and supporting materials (as listed above) in a single PDF that is identified with the organization name (e.g. “XYZ Theater Company”).

Step Two: Complete the proposal cover sheet on The Trust’s Grants Portal in the **“Respond to an RFP” tab on or before 12 noon Eastern Time on Thursday, July 26, 2018.**

Find the name of this RFP and click on the “Apply” button to open the proposal cover sheet. Make sure the name of this RFP is noted at the top of the cover sheet.

Important: When you complete the cover sheet for this RFP, you will be asked to upload the full body of your proposal (items #1-7 above) as a single PDF; *this means that you need to plan ahead to have your full proposal materials ready for submission before you complete and submit the proposal cover sheet.*

Step Three: Hand-deliver OR mail a paper copy of all materials (print out the PDF of the proposal cover sheet, which will be automatically emailed to you, and proposal materials, including the cover letter, narrative, project budget, and support materials) to The Trust for **receipt on or before 12 noon Eastern Time on Thursday, July 26, 2018** (this is NOT a postmarked deadline).

Please address your print materials to:

Sheila Dinkins
The New York Community Trust
909 Third Avenue, Floor 22
New York, NY 10022

Applicants will be notified of the status of their requests for support in **January 2019**. We expect to make an initial one-year grant that may be renewed for an additional one or two years, thus providing three years of funding.

Contact

Questions about this opportunity should be directed to:

Kerry McCarthy, J. L. Greene Arts Access Fund in The New York Community Trust
(212) 686-2578
kem@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 for your theater to the J. L. Greene Arts Access Fund in The New York Community Trust.

Background

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. He and his wife Dawn Greene made transformative grants to such organizations as Columbia Law School, the Juilliard School, WNYC Public Radio, The Jewish Museum, and Planned Parenthood. Today the Foundation honors this commitment by continuing to fund such quality programs, but also to identify new ways to increase access to the arts and education, create opportunity for ground-breaking medical research, and help ensure social justice for all.

The New York Community Trust

Founded in 1924, The New York Community Trust is one of the largest funders of City nonprofits. The New York Community Trust connects past, present, and future generous New Yorkers with vital nonprofits working to make a healthy, equitable, and thriving community for all. It is a public grantmaking foundation dedicated to improving the lives of residents of New York City, Westchester, and Long Island. Visit us at nycommunitytrust.org.