

# **2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (INVITATION-ONLY)**

## **Cultural Heritage, Sustainability, and Community Development: Model Approaches for City Neighborhoods**

New Yorkers face many challenges and competing priorities in their efforts to achieve meaningful and fulfilling lives. Lack of affordable housing, ongoing displacement, failing public transportation, and the effects of climate change threaten the viability of the City’s low-income neighborhoods, which are primarily made up of people of color. Accelerating demographic changes and growing economic disparities have made the city, especially its housing and schools, more racially segregated.

Now more than ever, the City needs nonprofits that can meaningfully integrate low-income residents’ **cultural heritage** – which we define as including *historic preservation* and the *arts* – **sustainability**, and **community development** goals. While cultural heritage was a key organizing principle in the origins of the community development movement of the 1960s, many community development corporations (CDCs) disconnected from arts and cultural work over time. Additionally, 50 years after the City’s approved landmarks law went into effect, and the preservation movement’s complementary focus on a “designate and regulate” approach, researchers found a correlation between preservation and neighborhoods where owners are predominantly wealthier, whiter, and more educated than the rest of the City.

Community-based organizations with deep roots in low-income communities of color are well-positioned to reconnect to cultural heritage as tools to create strong neighborhoods while keeping gentrification at bay. At the same time, while using these tools of the 1960s, it is important to tackle the issues making neighborhoods vulnerable today, including climate change. Many preservationists argue that the most sustainable building is an old building, and environmental sustainability efforts that advance green infrastructure, energy efficiency, open space, and clean energy can help low-income neighborhoods thrive in an uncertain future. A more inclusive strategy, driven by communities on the frontlines of the affordability and sustainability crisis, is needed.

Despite significant potential for collaboration among the historic preservation, environment, and community development sectors, more often than not these policy areas work in silos. There are, however, bright spots around the City where neighborhood community activists are working to advance low-income residents’ cultural heritage, sustainability, and community development concerns. The Trust seeks to support projects that integrate these three areas and promote holistic models for community wellbeing.

### **Funding Opportunity**

The New York Community Trust is interested in funding invited community organizations’ projects that center cultural heritage and sustainability in advancing neighborhoods that are affordable, environmentally resilient, and culturally vibrant. The Trust expects to award funding for a one- or two-year period, with individual grants ranging from a

total of \$25,000 to \$150,000 – no grant will exceed \$150,000. We expect to award three to six grants. Eligible activities for support may include:

- Organizing community-based planning efforts to integrate arts, culture, and historic preservation into planned or existing “eco-districts” – neighborhood-scale planning and investment efforts that advance multiple environmental and clean energy goals in a holistic way;
- Creating, developing, and/or and promoting a planning framework that incorporates preservation, environment, and community development perspectives; and/or
- Engaging in community organizing and advocacy to promote policies (e.g. energy efficiency codes, zoning, landmarking) that respond to residents’ concerns around cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and community development.

In addition to supporting projects at the intersection of cultural heritage, sustainability, and community development, the intention of this invitation-only RFP is to create a learning community among the funded groups. Grantees will participate in cohort meetings to share resources and cross-fertilize efforts, where appropriate.

The following groups have been invited to apply for this opportunity:

1. Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association
2. Eastern Queens Alliance
3. El Puente de Williamsburg
4. Fifth Avenue Committee
5. Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)
6. Greater Jamaica Development Corporation
7. Neighborhood Housing Services of Staten Island
8. The POINT Community Development Corporation
9. Rockaway Waterfront Alliance
10. UPROSE
11. WE ACT for Environmental Justice
12. Women’s Housing and Economic Development (WHEDco)

## **Criteria**

The Trust is interested in projects that:

- Are led by invited community organizations (coalitions and collaborations are welcome to apply, but the lead applicant must be a group that has been invited to apply);
- Focus on a particular neighborhood and serve primarily low-income residents in that neighborhood;
- Meaningfully integrate all three focus areas – cultural heritage (historic preservation and the arts), environmental sustainability, and community development; and
- Are driven and/or designed by community residents.

As per The Trust's general guidelines, we will not provide grants for general operating support, capital projects, and single performances and/or exhibitions.

## Proposal Specifications and Support Material

Organizations may apply for one- or two-year grants ranging from a total of \$25,000 to \$150,000. Grant decisions will be announced in December 2018.

Please include the following in your proposal submission:

1. **Proposal cover sheet**, completed on The Trust's Grants Portal in the [“Respond to an RFP” Tab](#). Find the name of this RFP and click on the “Apply” button to open the proposal cover sheet. Make sure that the name of this RFP is noted at the top of the cover sheet.
  - a. Important: When you complete the cover sheet for this RFP, you will be asked to upload the full body of your proposal (items #2-7 below) 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.*
2. **Cover letter requesting support**, on stationery and signed by the organization's director.
3. **Narrative** (please limit to five pages or less, single-spaced, 12-pt. font), including:
  - a. A brief description of your organization: its history, mission, program activities, major accomplishments, and commitment to equity;
  - b. Populations served, plus the challenges these groups face in the City and how your organization helps them overcome these challenges; and
  - c. Description of the proposed project, to include:
    - i. The need, anticipated goal(s) or outcome(s), and a description of how the project aligns with the goals in this RFP;
    - ii. Any partners or collaborators, and their strengths and responsibilities with respect to the project;
    - iii. Activities that will take place over the requested grant period;
    - iv. Obstacles you anticipate having to overcome to be successful; and
    - v. How you plan to measure your success.
4. **Project budget** (you may include reasonable staff time and other organizational costs)
5. **Current annual organizational budget** (please list sources of income and expenses)
6. **List of board of directors**
7. **Most recent audited financial statement**, for organizations with budgets of \$750,000 and up or if not available, IRS Form 990; organizations with budgets between \$250,000 and \$750,000 should submit a CPA review report.

## Submission Instructions and Timeline

**Step One: Attend office hours.** Staff from The Trust will be available for 30-minute phone meetings the weeks of June 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Michele Kumi Baer, Program Associate for Thriving Communities, to schedule your appointment: [mkb@nyct-cfi.org](mailto:mkb@nyct-cfi.org)

**Step Two:** Prepare the body of the proposal and supporting materials (as listed in #2-7 above) in a *single PDF* that is saved with the filename format: “Organization Name.pdf”

**Step Three:** Submit your proposal via the [“Respond to an RFP” tab](#) in our Grants Portal. There you will find the RFP-specific [proposal cover sheet](#). Fill out the cover sheet and submit your proposal PDF *as an attachment to the cover sheet* on or before 12 noon Eastern Time on Wednesday, July 18, 2018.

**Step Four:** Hand-deliver OR mail a paper copy of all materials (cover sheet, cover letter, proposal narrative, project budget, and support materials) to The Trust for **receipt** on or before 12 noon Eastern Time on Wednesday, July 18, 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 **early December**.

*The Trust’s office will be closed from Monday, August 27 to Monday, September 3, 2018.*

## **Contact**

Questions about this opportunity should be directed to:

Michele Kumi Baer, Program Associate for Thriving Communities  
at (212) 686-0010 ext. 658, or [mkb@nyct-cfi.org](mailto:mkb@nyct-cfi.org)

## **Background**

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](http://nycommunitytrust.org).