



New Federal Funding Streams for Sustainable Communities Guide for Arts and Cultural Organizations

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Background

The Obama administration announced new grant opportunities—through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and endorsed by the National Endowment for the Arts—to create more sustainable communities across the country.

What Are These Grants?

These are fairly large-scale planning grants for multi-jurisdictional regions such as metropolitan areas and rural counties or clusters of counties. They must include more than one municipality, county, or other sub-region of state government. Especially in rural areas there is some flexibility in the definition of regions.

What Is the Deadline?

August 23, 2010

Who Is an Eligible Applicant?

- 1) These grants are open to consortia that must include:
 - a. The designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for your region. Regions are generally a Metropolitan Statistical Area or Micropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) covered by the MPO.
 - b. At least the central city within your region as well as other cities if needed so that at least 50 percent of the region's population is represented.
 - c. At least one nonprofit organization or educational institution with capacity to bring new constituencies into the planning process.
- 2) Consortia may also include other partners including state or tribal governments, other nonprofits such as arts and cultural organizations, sustainability or environmental organizations, charitable foundations, health organizations, educational organizations, or other groups relevant

to the project outcomes (see outcomes below). There is no formal limit on the number of partners so long as it is reasonable and able to function.

- 3) It is expected the MPO will be the lead applicant but any of the core consortia partners may serve in significant leadership roles. The lead partner must have relevant capacity, such as experience managing HUD programs or grants.

What Project Outcomes Are They Looking For?

These are funds for regional/multi-jurisdictional planning. There are two levels of plans that can be produced:

- 1) New regional plans that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments that consider:
 - a. Economic competitiveness and revitalization
 - b. Social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity
 - c. Energy use and climate change
 - d. Public health and environmental impact
- 2) Updates to existing regional plans that address the above and that expand upon them by creating detailed execution plans. Some implementation dollars may be budgeted for such things as pre-development costs, architectural designs, engineering plans, and the like.

Why Should Arts and Culture Organizations Consider Being Part of This?

- 1) To build upon partnerships you already have with city and regional planning entities, transportation agencies, sustainability groups, health organizations, and others
- 2) To learn the language used by and the issues relevant to city and regional planners, civic leaders, and politicians as well as other key infrastructure agencies.
- 3) To begin to articulate the valuable roles cultural organizations can play in the realms of economic and workforce development, housing, transportation, health, and environmental sustainability as well as serve as part of essential regional and community infrastructure.
- 4) To bring valuable skills, capacities, and relationships to the planning table. Arts groups have multiple abilities that planning agencies often lack. These include:
 - a. Ability to connect with and draw together diverse audiences crossing economic, ethnic, and geographic lines.
 - b. Experience in convening educational activities and workshops in which people participate creatively.
 - c. Marketing research and surveying capacities.

- d. A few have strong social science and economic data research capacities.
 - e. Great spaces and central locations for convening public meetings and charrettes.
 - f. Ability to translate and visualize abstract processes such as planning to community audiences and participants.
- 5) To represent the interests of their diverse communities at regional planning tables. Their communities may include artists, geographic neighborhoods, communities of color, networks of other cultural groups, youth, the differently-abled, and others rarely heard in such planning circles

What Could Be Some Benefits of Participating?

- 1) Compensation for work performed in the planning process such as managing outreach, hosting public input sessions/events, conducting surveys and marketing research, and other services.
- 2) Overcoming much deferred consideration of cultural resources as essential community infrastructure.
- 3) Good karma for being good citizens.
- 4) New relationships, understandings, and vantage points.
- 5) Possible future resource allocations for the arts as vital parts of civic and economic improvement.
- 6) Healthier, more vibrant and creative communities as a result of more inclusive, culturally-attuned, and creative planning

What Is the Size of These Grants?

- 1) Large metropolitan areas of 500,000 or more - \$500,000 to \$5 Million
- 2) Medium-sized regions of 200,000 to 499,000 - \$200,000 to \$2 Million
- 3) Small regions/rural areas of less than 200,000 - \$100,000 to \$1 Million

Of the \$100 Million in funds available, \$25 Million will be reserved for small regions and rural areas

What Should I Do To Get Started?

- 1) Identify and contact your MPO or designated regional planning organization. If you don't know who that is, ask your city planning department staff, a well-established Community Development Corporation (CDC), city council person, or environmental sustainability group. (HUD indicated they would be putting a guide to MPOs on their website.)

- 2) Take stock of your assets—what relevant skills and resources could my organization offer? What constituencies/communities do we represent?
- 3) Download and read through the Notice of Funding (NOFA) at www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa10/scrpg.cfm.
- 4) Locate your MPO's current plan or your city comprehensive plan to become familiar with some of the issues and vocabulary used. Most make them available on their websites.
- 5) Stay networked through Arts Alliance Illinois to learn more as others report in their experiences.

Where Do I Get More Information?

- 1) Visit www.HUD.gov/sustainability.
- 2) Look for Fiscal Year 2010 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program (Docket No. FR-5396-N-03).
- 3) See FAQs and you can replay the 60-minute webinar from July 7, 2010.
- 4) Email questions to sustainablecommunities@hud.gov.

Is This a One-Time Program?

While this program is currently authorized for one year, HUD staff said it was likely to be re-authorized for a second year and possibly could continue for several years.

What Does the NEA Have To Do with It?

The NEA convinced HUD that arts and cultural organizations could be valuable partners on the regional level to bring some of the skills and capacities described above to the planning table. They also made the case that the arts represent an increasingly important sector and player in the planning, development, and programming of public space, in economic development, and in the success of public transit, housing, and neighborhood development. The arts are also influential in promoting public health, sustainability, and good environmental practices. Language pertaining to the arts was incorporated in the Notice of Funding Availability and guidelines. Representatives of the arts will be included in funding review panels nominated by the Endowment.

Tom Borrup is Principal of Creative Community Builders and author of The Creative Community Builders Handbook. His engagement with Arts Alliance Illinois is made possible by the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.

For more information on efforts by Arts Alliance Illinois to support cross-sector collaboration, please contact David Pankratz, Strategic Initiatives and Research Director, at pankratz@artsalliance.org or 312.855.3105 x11.