

**Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE)
Arts Relief Fund**

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 2 PM CT

Recent decisions to change priorities for long standing arts and humanities federal programs have created challenges for the creative sector at the local and national level. The DCASE Arts Relief Fund supports arts and culture organizations impacted by these cuts and losses. The fund delivers responsive aid for impacted organizations who provide vital programs and resources to Chicago's communities. These grants are one-time only and meant to replace income and opportunities lost through terminated or withdrawn federal funding. DCASE will prioritize organizations awarded grants through the National Endowment of the Arts but may also consider arts-related funding losses from the National Endowment of Humanities (NEH), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), or other agencies impacted.

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Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply, organizations must meet the following criteria:

- Be a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization.
- Must be registered in the city of Chicago with a valid street address. No PO boxes will be accepted.
- Must be the primary award recipient of a federal grant affected by a 2025 notice of termination and/or withdrawal of grant award.
- Have a primary mission to create, produce, present, provide, or support arts and culture activities or services for the public.
- Primarily serve the residents of the city of Chicago

The following entities are not eligible to apply:

- Religious institutions.
- Public or governmental agencies.
- Athletic teams, social organizations, fraternal organizations.
- Individuals.

Funding Restrictions

Funds may not be used for:

- Capital improvements.
- The purchase of permanent, depreciable equipment valued at more than \$5,000.
- Fundraising events, religious ceremonies or events, lobbying or campaigning for a candidate or a ballot issue.
- Investment management costs.
- Pass-through funding or sub-granting.
- Fines, penalties or settlements.
- Food and beverages.
- Vehicle rental of any kind.
- Travel expenses.

DCASE is unable to pay grant funds to any organization with outstanding, existing debt with the City of Chicago. Please set up payment plans or pay off any existing debt (parking tickets, utility bills, etc.) with the Department of Finance: www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fin.html

Grant Details

- Grants are anticipated to range between \$10,000 - \$25,000.
- Grant amounts will be determined by DCASE and will be made in one-time payments.
- Applications will be reviewed by a panel comprised of external arts experts.
- DCASE strives to provide a balanced portfolio of grants across the city and across all eligible disciplines.
- Grant payments will be processed once all required paperwork is completed and submitted. The sooner DCASE receives a complete grant packet; the sooner payment can be processed.
- A brief final report will be required and due in 2026.

Timeline *All dates are subject to change**

Event	Dates
Application opens	Friday, August 1, 2025, 9:00 AM CT
Application deadline	Wednesday, August 20, 2025, 2:00 PM CT - No extensions will be granted
Notifications	October 2025
Payments Disbursed	Anticipated December 2025

Prioritization Criteria:

All applicants will be reviewed for eligibility. If requests exceed available funding for the program, applications will be prioritized in consideration of:

- Urgency and Scope of Need
- Benefit to Community
- Benefit to Applicant
- Applicants not already receiving relief funding

DCASE is committed to supporting an equitable distribution of artistic services across the city. Grant reviewers will be instructed to take geographic diversity into account during the review process, taking note of organizations specifically serving residents in wards that have been historically under-resourced.

What You Need to Apply

- A copy of federal funding termination letter and/or notification.
- A copy of your NEA, or other federally awarded project budget, if applicable.
- Brief narrative information about the terminated or withdrawn federal grant contract and project.
- Financial information including FY25 organization budget, financial statements for the most recently completed fiscal year, and if needed, FY24 actuals.
- General organization information.
- Proof of 501(c)(3) status.

How To Apply

[Complete the application through CyberGrants.](#)

DCASE Contact Information

Please direct all inquiries to:

Melissa Thomfohrda

melissa.thomfohrda@cityofchicago.org

If you need assistance in another language or if you are an individual with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation to apply, please contact melissa.thomfohrda@cityofchicago.org for assistance.