

Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) 2024 Neighborhood Access Program Guidelines

IDEA SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Friday, May 17, 2024 at 5 PM CT

Click [here](#) to submit your idea through CyberGrants!

The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is currently accepting Idea Submissions for its Neighborhood Access Program. The goal of this program is to support the cultural vitality of every neighborhood via grant programs and partnerships designed to be responsive to the complex needs of individual communities. This program will offer direct grants for all types of place-based arts and culture activities.

DCASE is committed to directing significant funding to Chicago's neighborhoods, and prioritizing areas that have suffered from a history of disinvestment. We know that these neighborhoods are vibrant and densely populated with artists, yet they remain under-resourced by our grant programs.

This program was created to support arts and culture activities in all neighborhoods with a focus on those that have traditionally not received significant funding through DCASE's Cultural Grants Program, and to collaborate with other City departments to make a collective impact on neighborhoods identified through other City initiatives.

This program seeks to increase access to DCASE funding with expanded eligibility criteria and a two-part application process.

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DCASE Contact Information

Please direct all inquiries to:

CulturalGrantMaking@cityofchicago.org

The City of Chicago is located on land that is and has long been a center for Native peoples. The area is the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe, or the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other Nations consider this area their traditional homeland, including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo, and Mascouten. The City specifically acknowledges the contributions of Kitiyawa of the Potawatomi in fostering the community that has become Chicago. We acknowledge all Native peoples who came before us and who continue to contribute to our City. We are committed to promoting Native cultural heritage.

Priority Neighborhoods

This is a citywide program, open to applicants located in any Chicago neighborhood.

We will prioritize funding applicants and projects located in the following neighborhoods:

Archer Heights, Armour Square, Auburn Gresham, Austin, Avalon Park, Belmont Cragin, Bronzeville (Douglas, Oakland, Kenwood, Grand Boulevard), Burnside, Chatham, Chicago Lawn, East and West Garfield Park, Fuller Park, Gage Park, Greater Englewood (Englewood, West Englewood), Greater Grand Crossing, Greater Roseland (Roseland, Pullman, West Pullman), Hegewisch, Humboldt Park, Montclare, Morgan Park, New City, North Lawndale, Riverdale, South Chicago, South Deering, South Lawndale, South Shore, Washington Park, West Elsdon.

These include:

- Community areas identified through the [People’s Plan for Community Safety](#) and [My Chi My Future](#) initiatives.
- Additional LMI (Low and Moderate Income) areas that received the lowest number of grant awards in the prior two years of DCASE Cultural Grants programs.
- Past priority neighborhoods to benefit from sustained support to historically under-resourced communities.

Overview of Project Ideas

Project ideas can be anything from a physical artwork to a series of workshops/classes to a performance, happening or cultural event, focused on any artistic discipline including architecture, culinary arts, curatorial arts, dance, design, film, literary arts, media arts, music, performance art, photography, public art, social practice, theater, or visual arts.

Projects can be ongoing or new.

Projects must have these elements:

- Projects must have a primary goal to serve residents of a specific neighborhood or community.
- Projects must engage neighborhood residents as participants or audiences between October 1, 2024 and December 31, 2025.
- Lead applicant’s primary residence/address must be in the neighborhood where this engagement will take place. This lead applicant can be an organization leading the project, or the lead artist, producer or curator for the project.

We welcome projects that:

- Are first-time collaborations between individuals or organizations.
- Are one-time activations or events – projects do not need to be permanent installations or art works.

We strongly encourage:

- Projects that are broadly accessible.
- Cross-industry collaborations.
- Artist-led projects that activate Chicago communities and institutions to address broader social issues, opportunities, and challenges.
- Projects that use art to inspire community organizing, civic engagement and participation.
- Projects that activate vacant or underutilized spaces.
- Projects that seek to celebrate and preserve the cultural traditions of underrepresented or historically marginalized groups.
- Projects that connect youth to arts programming.
- Projects that address public safety, equity, and access through art.
- Projects that recognize and illuminate the character defining attributes of Chicago's neighborhoods.
- Projects that increase dialogue, civic discourse, and exchange around Chicago's unique social issues.

Eligibility Criteria for Applicants

DCASE can only accept one idea submission per applicant.

To be eligible to apply for a Neighborhood Access Program grant, the lead applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Must reside/be located in the city of Chicago with a valid street address.
- Must reside/be located in the neighborhood/community area where the arts project or cultural activity will take place.
- Individual applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

Organizations and individuals located outside of the neighborhood where their project will take place are welcome to apply as a partner with an eligible individual or organization.

The following entities may apply for a Neighborhood Access Program grant:

- Any nonprofit organization, Special Service Area (SSAs) or Chamber of Commerce with 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) status, including religious institutions that provide significant services to the community that are non-religious in nature.
- National nonprofit organizations with a Chicago branch.
- Individual artists, cultural producers, or curators.
- Individuals/collectives applying with a nonprofit fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) status.
- Low-profit limited liability companies (L3Cs).

The following entities cannot be listed as the lead applicant on a proposal. However, collaborations with these entities are welcome.

- For-profit businesses that are not incorporated as an L3C.
- Municipal departments and their affiliate 501(c)(3)s, including libraries, parks, transit, and family services agencies.
- City of Chicago employees.
- Recipients of CityArts Project, Together We Heal Creative Place Program, Millennium Park Residency Program, Chicago Presents, or Chicago Arts Recovery Program grants that are currently in effect with the City of Chicago. CityArts general operating grantees remain eligible for funding.
- Organizations and individuals receiving other forms of DCASE support remain eligible to apply; however, priority will be given to those not receiving other DCASE support.
- Artists and organizations can receive funding through the Neighborhood Access program for up to **two consecutive** years before being required to take one year off from applying. If you received a grant in 2022 **and** 2023, you may not apply for the 2024 cycle.

Funds cannot be used to support:

- Capital improvements or the purchase of a single, permanent, depreciable equipment item valued at more than \$5,000.
- Fundraising events, religious ceremonies or events, or campaigning for a candidate or a ballot issue.
- Vehicle rental of any kind.
- Travel expenses.
- Artists or organizations with outstanding, existing debt with the City of Chicago. Debt does not need to be resolved prior to submitting an idea but will need to be in order to receive a payment from the City. 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

- Grant requests can range from \$5,000 - \$50,000.
- Applicants can request up to \$50,000 regardless of their budget size.
- We anticipate making 20 – 40 grants through this program.

For this program, individual applicants with a grant award of \$15,000 or higher will need to use a nonprofit fiscal sponsor organization. The fiscal sponsor does not need to be identified at the time of idea submission but will be required prior to funds awarded. Please reach out with any questions on fiscal sponsorship, as DCASE is available to advise.

Review Process and Criteria

All idea submissions will be reviewed by an external grant review panel including residents of priority neighborhoods and multi-disciplinary arts experts. Consideration is given to creating review panels reflective of the city as a whole, including artistic expertise, race, gender, geographic knowledge of the city, and cultural understanding. A majority of the grant review panel will be BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color). This panel will select finalists to interview, participate in interviews, review full proposals, and make final funding recommendations to DCASE.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Strength of proposed project:** The proposed project possesses artistic merit and vision alongside quality, meaningful opportunities to engage neighborhood residents in arts and culture activities. Proposed project seems feasible based on applicant experience and description.
- **Increasing Access:** Project expands the scope of projects funded by the Cultural Grants Program by taking place within a priority neighborhood, activating vacant or underutilized spaces, and/or supporting historically disinvested neighborhoods and populations.
- **Benefit to communities:** The project’s potential to benefit Chicago residents and impact communities through cultural programming intended for the greater good. We value both projects that have a wide and expansive reach and those that provide deep, enriching experiences for participants.
- **Community experience:** The applicant demonstrates a depth of experience, relationships and engagement with artists and partners in identified communities/neighborhoods. The applicant and its partners demonstrate experience working in, on behalf of, and leading communities; including outreach, strong listening skills and attention to detail.

Timeline ****All dates are subject to change*

Event	Dates
Idea Submission Portal opens	April 22, 2024
Idea Submission deadline	Friday, May 17, 2024 5:00 PM CST – No Extensions will be granted
Notifications	July 31, 2024 – All applicants will be notified about if they have been selected as a finalist or not.
Finalists Proposals Deadline	September 6, 2024 – Finalists have 5 weeks to gather supporting documents
Final Notifications	October 31, 2024 – All finalists will be notified about if they have been selected for a grant or not.
Payments Disbursed	December 2024 or February 2025 – Grants will be made in a single, one-time payment.
Grant Period	October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025. This is the time during which grant funds must be spent.

How To Apply

Click [here](#) to submit your idea through CyberGrants!

There are three ways that you can share your idea with us. You can either:

- 1) Narrative: Provide a brief written description of your idea.
- 2) Recording: Provide a 5-minute video or audio recording describing your idea. (Video does not need to be highly edited. Phone videos are fine!)
- 3) PDF/JPEG file upload: Provide a PowerPoint or other presentation with images and text describing your idea.

We want to know about:

- **Why** you want to do this project
- **What** you hope to accomplish
- **Who** will be involved
- **When** and **where** it might take place

Please try to submit your idea earlier than the stated deadline because we cannot accept late submissions.

After reviewing all the ideas submitted, our external review panel will select finalists. Finalists will be invited to meet with the panel to discuss their projects. Prior to meeting, applicants must submit materials that will outline the details of the project. Grant readiness workshops will be offered to all finalists to assist in preparation of supporting documents, with a special workshop for first-time grant applicants.