

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

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**IDEA SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Friday, May 21, 2021 at 5 PM CST**

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 new 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. Through its pilot year, this program will offer direct grants for all types of community-based arts and culture activities.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot and DCASE are 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 the INVEST South/West initiative.

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

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## **DCASE Contact Information**

Please direct all inquiries to:  
**[culturalgrantmaking@cityofchicago.org](mailto:culturalgrantmaking@cityofchicago.org)**

*We acknowledge that all Chicago neighborhoods are on the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other Nations such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac, and Fox also called this area home.*

## **Priority Neighborhoods**

**This is a city-wide program, open to applicants located in any Chicago neighborhood.**

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

- The ten neighborhoods identified through the City of Chicago's [INVEST South/West](#) initiative: *Auburn Gresham, Austin, Bronzeville, Greater Englewood, New City, North Lawndale, Humboldt Park, Greater Roseland/Pullman, South Chicago, South Shore.*
- Additional LMI (Low and Moderate Income) community areas that have not received direct funding through DCASE's Cultural Grants Program over the past two years, including: *Archer Heights, Armour Square, Avalon Park, Burnside, Gage Park, Hegewisch, Montclare, Morgan Park, Riverdale, South Deering, West Garfield Park.*

All [My Chi My Future](#) neighborhoods are also prioritized based on the above criteria.

### **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, 2021 and December 31, 2022.
- Lead applicant's primary residence/address must be in the neighborhood where this engagement will take place.

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, you 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 artist 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 using a fiscal sponsor/agent that meets all eligibility criteria.

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

- For-profit organizations.
- Municipal departments and their affiliate 501c3s, including libraries, parks, transit and family services agencies
- Recipients of 2020 or 2021 CityArts Project grants. 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.

Funds cannot be used to support:

- Capital improvements or the purchase of permanent, depreciable equipment 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](http://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 10 – 40 grants through this program.

### **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.
- **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.

If more than 1,500 applications are received, 1,500 applications will be selected for review via a randomization/lottery process, prioritizing the neighborhoods listed above.

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

<b>Event</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Idea Submission Portal opens</b>	<b>April 20, 2021</b>
<b>Idea Submission deadline</b>	<b>Friday, May 21, 2021 5:00 PM CST - No Extensions will be granted</b>
<b>Notifications</b>	<b>July 2021</b> – All applicants will be notified about if they have been selected as a finalist or not.
<b>Finalists Interviewed</b>	<b>July 2021</b>
<b>Full Proposal Deadline</b>	<b>August 2021</b> - For invited finalists
<b>Final Notifications</b>	<b>October 2021</b> – All finalists will be notified about if they have been selected for a grant or not.
<b>Payments Disbursed</b>	<b>December 2021</b> - Grants will be made in a single, one-time payment.
<b>Grant Period</b>	<b>January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2022.</b> This is the time during which grant funds must be spent.

### **How To Apply**

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

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

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

We want to hear 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 can't accept late submissions.**

After reviewing all of the ideas submitted, our external review panel will select finalists to interview to learn more about their projects. Following interviews, finalists will be asked to submit a full proposal with more detailed information about their projects. We'll walk you through how to complete the full proposal during the interview process.