**2026 General Operating Support
Guidelines and Application Preview**

*Special assistance and accommodations are available upon request. Please contact Connie Isbell, ADA Coordinator, at* *connie@monmoutharts.org* *or 732.212.1890 ext 101.*

**Overview**

In partnership with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Monmouth Arts offers ArtHelps Local Arts Program Grants through a competitive application process. The grants are intended to support organizations and programs that serve the public and provide access to a diverse array of quality arts experiences throughout Monmouth County.

Types of grants include General Operating Support (GOS) for arts organizations, Special Project Support (SPS) for all types of nonprofit organizations with arts projects, and Mini Grants (MG) for small and emerging organizations. Applicants that do not have IRS tax exempt status but meet all other criteria and have a fiscal sponsor may apply for a Mini Grant only.

Eligible recipients include Monmouth County nonprofit arts organizations and community groups with arts programs that provide excellent arts events that are accessible and beneficial to the public. Organizations must be able to complete all reporting necessary by the deadlines in order to accept public funds, including the application, a contract, an interim survey, and a final report.

Grant workshops are held each spring to provide step-by-step assistance with the application process and ADA requirements. These workshops are a valuable resource for those considering applying for any type of grant. Guidelines and applications have been updated, so it is highly recommended that organizations applying for the 2026 grant cycle attend one of these workshops, especially if your organization is new to the grant program or you have a new grant manager.

Important Dates: Grant Period January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026 \*

* 2026 Applications available: April 3, 2025
* Online Workshops: April 23rd at 12:00 PM ([register here](https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=monmouth&id=286)) or May 7th at 5:00 PM ([register here](https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=monmouth&id=287))
* Applications due Monday, June 16, 2025 by 4:00pm
* Notification of Successful Award: October 2025
* Initial payment of 80% sent March/April 2026 (pending signed digital contract and receipt of funds from NJSCA)
* Interim Survey completed July 2026
* Final Reports Due January 2027
* Final payment of 20% sent once final report is approved and funds are received from NJSCA

*\* Dates are subject to change*

 **Applicant Eligibility**

To be considered eligible for General Operating Support Grants and Special Project Support Grants, applicants must meet the following criteria:

* Must be a nonprofit entity based in Monmouth County and recognized by the State of New Jersey, with IRS tax exemption as a 501c3 or a 501c4 organization. Organizations that have not yet achieved nonprofit status but meet all other criteria and have a fiscal sponsor may apply for a Mini Grant. *Municipal agencies and government entities are not eligible for funding.*
* Grant-funded activities must take place within Monmouth County.
* Have a history of providing an active program in the arts for at least two years prior to application. Those with fewer than two years’ history will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may apply for a Mini Grant.
* Previous grantees must be in “good standing” with Monmouth Arts, complying with all contractual requirements of previous grant contract(s).
* All programming must be open to the public and in compliance with all pertinent state and federal regulations including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires all providers of public programs and services to ensure that those programs and services can be enjoyed by all citizens, including those with disabilities

Note: Applicants may not apply to the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and Monmouth Arts in the same fiscal year. Applicants may not be funded by another County’s Local Arts Program.

Note: Educational and religious institutions may apply for Special Project Support or Mini Grant only. Higher educational institutions, such as a community college or university, may submit one application per department; all other applicants may only submit one application per year. Applicants may apply in only one category per fiscal year.

**Funding Priorities**

As part of our efforts to respond to the changing needs of those we serve, Monmouth Arts is continuing to evolve our programming, operations, and grantmaking. Applicants should show strong initiative in one or more of the following areas:

* Serving the needs of local artists with exemplary programs, opportunities, services, or presentation of their work.
* Promoting cultural equity, diversity, and inclusion through projects that elevate the voices and experiences of historically marginalized groups, including those that create opportunities for artists and community members who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) or individuals living with a disability.
* Forging partnerships and collaborations among individuals or organizations, especially those that include different perspectives within the community and connect the arts to other sectors such as economic development, social services, public safety, and health and healing.
* Broadening public participation by attracting more people to the arts, bringing in audiences different from those the organization is already attracting, or deepening experiences by increasing current participants' levels of involvement.
* Advancing and advocating for arts education in schools and life-long learning through the arts.
* Preserving and conserving art forms and cultural heritage through public presentation.

**Types of Grants**

Please be sure to read the complete guidelines for the grant to which you are applying. Applicants may only apply for one type of grant per year.

* **General Operating Support (GOS):** Two-year funding is available for established nonprofits to ensure operating and administrative capacity. General Operating Support grants support the overall operations of nonprofit organizations that are exclusively devoted to the arts. Applicants must have an arts-related primary mission and be at least three years old. Requests may not exceed 20% of the organization’s annual operating budget, with a minimum request of $1,000 and a maximum of $10,000. There is no match requirement for FY 2026. GOS grants are awarded with a two-year commitment, subject to contract stipulations and available funds.
* **Special Project Support (SPS):** Special Project Grants are for an arts project or event that will occur either once or periodically for a short duration of time. Requests can be for up to 50% of project or event expenses, with a minimum request of $1,000 and a maximum of $5,000. There is no match requirement for FY 2026.
* **Mini Grant (MG):** Mini Grants ($500) are available for arts projects to new and emerging organizations, and organizations requiring a small amount of funding. Mini Grants have a simplified application process and a short time frame from application to award. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and are reviewed every two months. Mini Grants are intended as an introduction to the ArtHelps grant program. There is no match requirement for FY 2026.

*Note: Educational and religious institutions may apply for Special Project Support or Mini Grant only. Municipal agencies and government entities are not eligible for funding.*

**Eligible and Ineligible Costs**

Grant requests **may include** funds for personnel, artistic fees, space or other rental costs, materials and supplies, volunteer stipends, intern stipends, marketing and promotion, consultant fees, legal fees for rights to production, and insurance.

Grant requests **may not** include funds for capital improvements, acquisitions, renovations, hospitality costs, foreign travel, deficit reduction, scholarship funds or fellowships, programs in educational or religious institutions not open to the public at large, sub-granting to another organization, fundraising events, and sponsorships. Colleges, universities, other educational and religious organizations may not include funds to pay salaries of faculty or members of the clergy unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such salaries, or a prorated share of them, expressly underwrite the project.

**ADA Compliance**

Ensuring that the programming supported by Monmouth Arts is available to the widest possible audience is a high priority. This includes access for people with disabilities. Accessibility includes the physical performance/exhibition space (whether owned, rented, or borrowed), programming, audience marketing, personnel sensitivity training, audience development, and printed materials. **All grant applications will include an** **Accessibility Survey and** **related narrative for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act**. Additional resources, including a more comprehensive ADA Self-Assessment Tool, can be found on The New Jersey Theatre Alliance’s Cultural Access Network Project website at<https://njtheatrealliance.org/ada-planning>. It is helpful to use the Self-Assessment tool before doing the Survey.

 **Evaluation Criteria**

 Awards are highly competitive, based on

* Public Benefit: Meet community needs/interests; demonstrate outreach; reach diverse audiences; utilize effective marketing; serve appropriate number of people.
* Artistic Merit: Provide innovative, creative, and high-quality programming; expand artistic impact on the community; utilize a system to engage artists and evaluate programming.
* Funding Priorities: Show strong initiative in one or more areas of funding priority, including serving the needs of artists as well as the promotion of cultural equity, diversity, and inclusion (see complete list in guidelines).
* Accessibility Efforts: Demonstrate understanding of Americans with Disabilities Act; provide accessible programming; engage audiences and artists of all abilities; offer programming accommodations if requested.
* Administrative Ability: Quality of application; qualified organization and staff capable of carrying out projects; evidence of long-range planning (collaborations, diverse funding, sustainability).
* Budget: Provide a clear, well-developed, and accurate budget; demonstrate realistic income and expense projections.
* Compliance: Show past compliance with reporting requirements and deadlines from previous grants from Monmouth Arts.

**Review Process**

Monmouth Arts appoints a highly qualified panel of artists, arts administrators and nonprofit experts to evaluate applications with the Board of Trustees making the final approvals. Applications are evaluated on artistic excellence and organizational capacity including public benefit, accessibility of the organization, program, project, or event as well as the applicant’s overall accountability. All decisions are final and may not be appealed.

 **Steps of the Grant Application Process**

1. Organization submits application (see list of application materials below)
2. Monmouth Arts staff reviews application materials/completeness check
3. Independent panel review
4. Grant Committee review
5. Board of Trustees approval
6. Monmouth Arts and Regrantee sign contract
7. Regrantee submits Interim Report
8. Monmouth Arts evaluates programming/conducts site visits
9. Regrantee submits Final Report

 **Regrantee Obligations**

* A Revised Budget based on the actual grant award will be required with the signed digital contract.
* A Final Report will be due in January 2027 at the conclusion of the grant period. Final Reports will include a final budget, a description of how the funds were expended as well as demographic and statistical data on the population served. Regrantees that do not comply with the deadline may be denied future funding.
* A Publicity Agreement requires that regrantees credit Monmouth Arts and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts on publicity materials, including brochures, programs, websites, electronic communications, and posters (a funding statement with logos will be provided). Additionally, regrantees are required to submit photographs of programming that may be used in Monmouth Arts materials.
* Grant payments may be delayed or canceled due to the delay or cancellation of funding to Monmouth Arts from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.
* Unexpended funds must be returned to Monmouth Arts. If an organization is unable to expend the grant money awarded, regrantees must contact Monmouth Arts immediately. Staff will work with you to find a positive solution.
* As part of the Monmouth Arts regrantee evaluation, organizations must make available two complimentary tickets for at least one grant-funded program during the grant cycle.
* Notify Monmouth Arts of any personnel changes in Board or staff that directly affect the administration of the grant during the funding year.

**A Completed Application Includes the Following:**

1. Finance Chart for GOS or a Project Budget for SPS and MG (attachment; [forms can be found on our website](https://www.monmoutharts.org/arthelps))
2. Copy of organization’s most recent IRS 990 Form (attachment).
3. Proof of IRS nonprofit status (attachment).
4. Audited financial statements for organizations with gross receipts over $500,000 or Internal Financial Statement for smaller organizations (attachment).
5. List of Board Members.
6. List of Key Personnel.
7. One example of a brochure or program with required funding statement/logos if the organization previously received funding (attachment).
8. Work samples by discipline (attachments not to exceed 400MB total):
* Music – a recording representing the best performance over the past 18 months that includes a variety of tempos and styles in musical performance. Limit five minutes.
* Dance, theater, film, and interdisciplinary organizations – a recording of a performance or piece during the past 18 months. Limit five minutes.
* Visual arts, crafts, media arts, and photography organizations – one catalog of an exhibit from the past 18 months and/or five to ten images; up to four can be images of the space and/or installation of an exhibit and the rest of the images should be exhibited work in JPEG format, sized at 300 dpi.

*Note:* *Good quality recording or video are critical to evaluating the artistic quality of the applicant’s organization or project. Files must be clearly labeled with the following information: name of organization, title and date of performance, event, or exhibition.*

6. Support Materials (limit of three attachments)**:** media coverage, advertisements, press releases, promotional materials, critical reviews, awards /recognition received, newsletters, annual report, social media/website analysis, etc (pdf format).

**Application Preview: General Operating Support**

## **Please answer the following questions to determine eligibility for General Operating Support funding:**

Is your organization located in Monmouth County?
Yes
No

Will all grant-funded activities take place in Monmouth County?
Yes
No

Does your organization have an arts-related primary mission?
Yes
No

Is your organization a nonprofit recognized by the State of New Jersey with IRS tax exemption as a 501c3 or 501c4?

*Organizations will be required to upload proof of nonprofit status as part of the application.*Yes
No

Check the category that applies to your organization. *Certain organizations are only eligible for Special Project Support and Mini Grant opportunities (see complete guidelines for more information).*Nonprofit arts organization
Municipal agency
Educational institution
Religious institution

Does your organization have a history of providing programs in the arts for at least three years?
Yes
No

Is your organization currently seeking funding from another County Arts Agency or the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA) for direct funding?
Yes
No

Will your project be open and accessible to the public and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act?
Yes
No

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that funds may not be used for ineligible activities such as fundraising, capital projects, scholarships, hospitality costs, deficit reduction, etc.

## **If eligible, continue to General Operating Support application.**

Organization Name

Organization Address

Mailing Address for Organization (if different)\

Organization Website

## **Contact Information**

Grant Contact

First Name

Last Name

Title

Contact Phone Number

Contact Email

Executive Director or President

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Phone Number

Finance Manager or Treasurer

First Name

Last Name

Phone Number

Email Address

## **Organization Information**

Federal Tax ID Number

Please upload proof of nonprofit status.

Please upload a copy of your most recent IRS 990 form or 990-N.

New Jersey Legislative District

Select your organization's artistic discipline.
Dance
Music
Opera/Music Theater
Theater
Visual Arts
Design Arts
Crafts
Photography
Media Arts
Literature
Interdisciplinary
Folklife/Traditional Arts
Multidisciplinary

Choose the representation of the organization's staff and board.
Asian/Pacific Islander
Black
Hispanic/Latinx
Native American/Alaskan Native
White
General (at least half of board or staff is not one race)

Please list the members of your organization's board of directors.

Number of paid full-time staff

Number of paid part-time staff

Number of volunteers

Has your organization received previous funding from Monmouth Arts?

Yes, if so in what amount and what type of grant?
No

Please provide your organization's mission statement.

Briefly tell us about the history of your organization.

Briefly share highlights of your current programs, services, and activities.

To help us gauge the impact of your organization’s work, please indicate how many individuals (participants, audience members, etc.) were engaged with your programming in 2024.

To help us gauge the impact of your organization’s work, please indicate how many artists (exhibitors, performers, teaching artists, etc.) were engaged with your programming in 2024.

## **Programming Overview**

Purpose of Funding: State in 50 words or less what the Monmouth Arts funding will help to support. Begin your statement with “This Monmouth Arts grant will help support…”

*This statement should illustrate both what will be made possible through the grant and its public benefit. It may be used for press releases, publicity, and for reporting to the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.*

Briefly summarize your organization's goals and objectives.
*Limit: 300 words*

Which areas of Monmouth Arts Funding Priorities does your organization address?

* Serving the needs of local artists with exemplary programs, opportunities, services, or presentation of their work.
* Promoting cultural equity, diversity, and inclusion through projects that elevate the voices and experiences of historically marginalized groups, including those that create opportunities for artists and community members who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) or individuals living with a disability.
* Forging partnerships and collaborations among individuals or organizations, especially those that include different perspectives within the community and connect the arts to other sectors such as economic development, social services, public safety, and health and healing.
* Broadening public participation by attracting more people to the arts, bringing in audiences different from those the organization is already attracting, or deepening experiences by increasing current participants' levels of involvement.
* Advancing and advocating for arts education in schools and life-long learning through the arts.
* Preserving and conserving art forms and cultural heritage through public presentation.

Select all categories that make up 25% or more of the population directly benefiting from your programming.
Asian/Pacific Islander
Black
Hispanic/Latinx
Native American/Alaskan Native
White

Select all categories that make up 25% or more of the population directly benefiting from your programming.
Individuals with Disabilities
Individuals in Institutions (include people living in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, assisted care facilities, correctional facilities, and shelters)
Individuals living below the Poverty Line
Military Veterans/Active-Duty Personnel
No single distinct group made up more than 25% of the population directly benefited

Please describe the individuals or communities you will serve in 2026.

What is your estimated audience or participant size for 2026?

What benefits will the community derive from your program(s)?
*Limit: 300 words*

Clearly articulate the intended impact on the places and communities where programs or services are sited and the general public who may experience them.

What specific actions are you taking to cultivate a more diverse audience and/or participants? Please include details about outreach to specific organizations and/or communities.

Who will carry out the work of your organization? Please include roles and qualifications.
*Limit: 300 word*s

Provide a timeline of how you plan to complete your work or program/project (January through December).
*Limit: 300 words*

Describe your plans to evaluate your programs/services. How do you measure success?
*Limit: 300 words.* Be as specific as possible about surveys and other formal evaluation methods you have in place.

Briefly describe your plans for marketing and promoting your organization and your programs/projects.

## **Accessibility Survey**

Ensuring that the programming supported by Monmouth Arts is available to the widest possible audience is a high priority. This includes access for people with disabilities. Accessibility includes the physical performance/exhibition space (whether owned, rented, or borrowed), programming, audience marketing, personnel sensitivity training, audience development, as well as digital and printed materials. This survey of your accessibility policies and services will help provide us with information about how we can assist in this area. It is also meant to provide organizations with an outline of steps and achievable goals for improving accessibility.

Does your organization have a board-adopted ADA Plan?
Yes
No. If not, please explain how your organization plans to address the need for an ADA plan.

Does your organization have an ADA Coordinator?
Yes. If yes, please provide the name and email address of the ADA Coordinator.
No. If not, please explain your organization's plans for naming an ADA Coordinator.

Does your organization have an ADA Advisory Committee?
Yes
No. Please explain how your organization plans to address the need for an ADA Advisory Committee.

Does your organization have a board-adopted policy that states it will not discriminate against potential staff, volunteers, artists, or others due to a disability in the engagement for services?
Yes
No

Does your organization have a board-adopted ADA grievance procedure?
Yes
No. If not, please explain your organization's plans for creating an anti-discrimination policy.

Does your organization have a budget for ADA compliance?
Yes. Please provide the amount of the ADA budget.
No. Please explain why budgeting is not required or your plans for doing so.

What has your organization done in the past year to educate the organization's staff, board, and volunteers about access?

In the past 12 months, has a representative from your organization attended any accessibility workshops presented by the New Jersey Theatre Alliance's Cultural Access Network?
Yes
No

Did a representative from your organization attend the April 7th, 2025 Accessibility Awareness Training presented by Monmouth Arts?
Yes
No

Detail your organization's accommodation efforts for the coming year.

Please check those that apply to your organization.
We include accessibility information on our website.
We utilize accessibility symbols in our electronic and print materials.
We market our organization, events, and programs to individuals with disabilities.
We caption our video presentations and virtual/online events and programs.

Is your site barrier free (accessible to individuals with mobility concerns)?
Yes. Please explain how you determined the accessibility of your site.
No. Please explain how you provide reasonable accommodations for those visiting your site.
*Your organization is legally responsible for the facility in which you choose to present your program, regardless of whether you own it, rent it, or borrow it. You can ensure the accessibility of a site by conducting a survey, enlisting a professional to do so, or by requesting a survey of the facility you are renting/borrowing.*

Please check those accommodations you will provide upon request to address specific needs.
Advanced copies of scripts, programs, materials, etc.
Assistive Listening System
Audio Description
Braille Publications
Companion Seating/Admissions
Large Print Materials
Open Captioning
Publications on Audio
Sign Interpretation
Space for Service Animals
Tactile Exhibits

## **Budget Summary**

Please use figures from the Finance Chart for FY 2026 (which will be uploaded in the next section of the application.)

Total Monmouth Arts Funding Requested for FY 2026

Enter Total Organization Income (Projected FY 2026)

Enter Total Organizational Expenses (Projected FY 2026)

Enter Total Value of In-Kind Contributions (Projected FY 2026)

## **Financial Narrative**

Please provide additional information about the finances of your organization's program.

Provide an overview of how the funds will be spent; this amount may not exceed the requested amount.

Please upload the completed Finance Chart for FY 2026 (download from the Monmouth Arts website).

Please upload Audited Financial Statements for organizations with gross receipts over $500,000 OR upload an Internal Financial Statement for smaller organizations.

If you are a current grantee and your funding is cut for FY 2026, do you have a contingency plan in place?
Yes
No
N/A (not a current grantee)

## **Supporting Materials**

Did your organization receive an ArtHelps Local Arts Program grant from Monmouth Arts between 2023 and 2025?
Yes
No

Please upload recent work samples that demonstrate your organization's artistic merit and ability to complete the proposed program(s). High-quality work samples are critical to a competitive proposal. (Maximum total size limit of 400MB)

* Music organizations – a recording representing the best performance(s) over the past 18 months. Video or audio may not exceed (5) minutes in length.
* Dance, theater, film, and interdisciplinary organizations – a recording of the best performance(s) or piece(s) during the past 18 months. Video or audio may not exceed (5) minutes in length.
* Visual arts, crafts, media arts, and photography organizations – one catalog of an exhibit from the past 18 months and/or work samples, with a maximum total of ten (10) uploads.

*Note:**Files should be clearly labeled with name of organization as well as title and date of performance, event, or exhibition. Files are preferred but a document with clearly labeled links to online content may be uploaded.*Please upload up to three (3) examples of media coverage, press releases, promotional materials, critical reviews, awards/recognition, newsletters, annual report, social media/website analysis, etc.

*Note: Files are preferred but a document with clearly labeled links to online content may be uploaded.*

## **Submit Application**

**Agreement**

If awarded a grant, the organization agrees to the stated guidelines and agrees to submit a final report at the conclusion of the grant period. Organization will acknowledge Monmouth Arts with the required funding statement and logo as a supporter on its website and in all advertising, program booklets, and press releases.

**Certification**

Submission of this application implies prior review and representations therein by my organization’s board or appropriate governing body. By typing my name below, I certify that all statements in this application are true to the best of my knowledge; I hereby release Monmouth Arts, its employees, and agents from any liability and/or responsibility concerning any submission of materials to the program. I also understand and agree that submission to Monmouth Arts signifies the intention of compliance with all pertinent state and federal regulations including, but not limited to The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments 1972, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Fair Labor Standards, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

**Confirmation**

First Name

Last Name

By signing here, you acknowledge that all information on this application is true, and any false information may result in forfeiture of grant funding and future opportunities with Monmouth Arts.

Today's Date

Submit Form