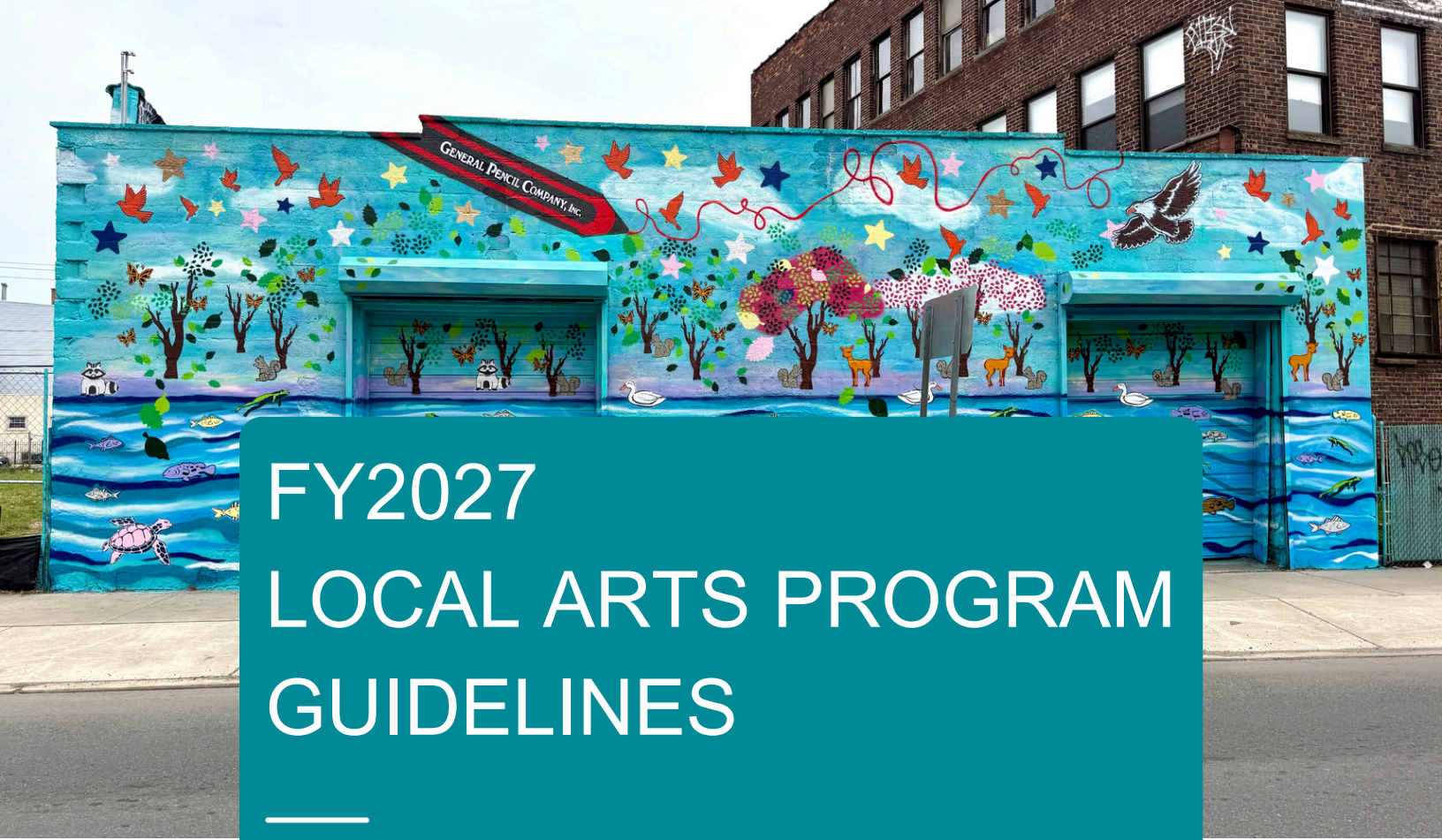




FY2027 LOCAL ARTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

A HUDSON COUNTY OFFICE OF CULTURAL &
HERITAGE AFFAIRS | TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

For programs and services from
January 1st, 2027 to December 31st, 2027

APPLICATION DATES

Opens:
Monday, August 17th, 2026

Closes:
Friday, September 25th, 2026



Contact

Phone 201-459-2070
Website www.hudsoncountyculturalaffairs.org
Email lapgrants@hcnj.us
Address 583 Newark Avenue,
Jersey City, NJ 07306



**HUDSON
COUNTY**
NEW JERSEY
CRAIG GUY
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



Cultural & Heritage Affairs
Tourism Development

INTRODUCTION



Hudson County Executive Craig Guy and the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners are pleased to introduce the Fiscal Year 2027 Hudson County Local Arts Program (LAP). Funding for this program is made available through the New Jersey Department of State - State Council on the Arts (NJSCA) and the County of Hudson.

In partnership with NJSCA, the Hudson County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs/Tourism Development/Tourism Development (HCOCHA/TD) offers matching grants to non-profit organizations located in, and serving the residents of, Hudson County.



"The arts are at the heart of Hudson County's identity, showcasing the creativity and diversity that make our community unique. Through the Local Arts Program, I support local artists and organizations as they bring high-quality cultural experiences to residents across all 12 of our municipalities, enriching the lives of our residents and strengthening our vibrant arts scene," said Hudson County Executive Craig Guy.

Hudson County Executive, Craig Guy



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PRIORITIES FOR FUNDING

Special consideration will be given to proposals of quality, innovation, and merit that address the following priority issues:

Outreach to underserved communities (i.e., senior citizens, people with disabilities, culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged).

Accessible and ADA-compliant programming.

Support of the arts in municipalities in northern and western Hudson County.

Promoting the growth of artists, arts organizations, and arts programs in Hudson County.

Expanding the influence of Hudson County artists to a broader sphere.



ELIGIBILITY

An organization that meets **ALL** of the following criteria may apply:

- ☒ Based in Hudson County, NJ.
- ☒ Serves the residents of Hudson County, NJ.
- ☒ Has been in existence for at least one full year as of January 1, 2026.
- ☒ Is a New Jersey nonprofit recognized by the IRS under 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), or 501(c)(6)
- ☒ Applicants must be either:
 - An arts organization; or
 - A nonprofit organization presenting public arts programming.
- ☒ Is able to match the grant award as specified under “Grant Categories”.

MULTIPLE APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

ARTS-ONLY ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations whose primary mission is related to the artistic realm (i.e., visual arts, music, dance, theater, literature, etc.)

May apply for grants in the following categories:

- **Program Support**
- OR**
- **General Operating Support**
- **Technical Assistance**

NON-ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Such as schools, hospitals, religious institutions, social service agencies or fraternal organizations*

May apply for a grant in the following category:

- **Program Support**

*SCHOOLS

At any level - public or private, arts training programs, or arts in education programs

Schools or school organizations that offer programs that are **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** may apply for:

- **Program Support**

Schools are encouraged to contact the education coordinator of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts for assistance in identifying state grant to support artist residencies.

KEEP IN MIND

Arts Only organizations may apply for grants in two of the FY27 LAP categories, BUT General Operating Support (GOS) applicants may NOT apply for a Program Support (PS) grant in the same Fiscal year.

Organizations with several divisions or agencies may only submit one proposal per fiscal year.

Schools MAY Apply	Schools MAY NOT Apply
• Public arts programming • Community arts events • Public exhibitions • Public performances	• Curriculum • Scholarships • Tuition • School supplies

INELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

Ineligible programs, projects, and expenses in ALL grant categories. LAP grants MAY NOT be used for the following:

-  Programs, projects, exhibitions, performances, publications, artwork, or other creative content that are primarily generated through artificial intelligence (AI).
-  Administrative salaries, except for GOS applicants as previously defined.
-  Airline travel and hotel expenses.
-  Capital improvements, such as renovation or construction.
-  Purchase of equipment, including, but not limited to, phones, computers, televisions, theatrical lights, cameras, etc.
-  Programs or projects that are for the curricular or extracurricular activities of a school.
-  Field trips to events or cultural programs.
-  Presenting performances, exhibits, and productions outside Hudson County
-  Hospitality or food costs.
-  Collateral to obtain loans.
-  Using as fund to lend to other organizations.
-  Programs whose sole emphasis is to motivate religious, sectarian, social welfare, or health education.
-  The acquisition of works of art, antiques, ephemera, etc.
-  The restoration of statuary, historic property, etc.
-  Parades, fashion shows, religious feasts or plays, food festivals, antique shows, etc.
-  Fundraising activities or related fundraising costs.
-  Cash prizes, trophies, scholarships, tuition.
-  For personal gain in any manner.
-  Offsetting institutional/organizational budget deficits.

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

GOS

MAX REQUEST

\$15,000

WHO MAY APPLY

Arts Only organizations

Applicants must demonstrate sustained artistic excellence and organizational capacity.

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

General operating and programmatic costs.

Up to 15% of the grant may be used toward administrative costs.

REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants must:
 - at least one full-time paid staff administrator,
 - a proven fundraising campaign,
 - be fiscally responsible,
 - have an active Board of Directors or Trustees involved in the governance of the organization.
- Offer year-round programs.
- Submit a schedule of its board of directors or trustee meetings for FY2026 and FY2027
- Submit a letter from a recognized professional in the same discipline attesting to the professionalism and artistic quality of the organization.
 - This letter may not come from any individual connected with the organization.
- Must compensate all artists involved in their programs.
- Match any grant award 1-to-1 and at least 25% of that match must be in cash.
- Submit a copy of the by-laws of its organizations with the application.

RESTRICTIONS

- **ALL applicants to the GOS category, including previous GOS recipients, must first discuss this option with HCOCHA/TD BEFORE applying.**
- Organizations that rely upon membership dues or fees for more than 25% of their operating budgets are ineligible to apply in the GOS category.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

PS

MAX REQUEST

\$12,000

WHO MAY APPLY

Arts Only and Non-arts organizations

Agencies that sponsor arts programs as part of a broader range of community outreach activities, such as schools, social service agencies, chambers of commerce, community development agencies and libraries

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

Programmatic costs, such as space rentals, advertising, artist fees, props, etc., of presenting a specific arts program, art exhibits, or series of related arts programs.

Examples of programs include: multi-disciplinary performing arts series, cultural tourism themed arts festivals, concert series, art or photography exhibits, or outreach services to the arts constituency. Marketing materials that promote an event, series of events, or an arts organization, are also allowable expenses.

REQUIREMENTS

- May apply for up to 50%, or half of the total projected cost of their PS-eligible program, up to a maximum of \$12,000
- Must match any grant award 1 to 1, providing the other half of the total cost of the PS-eligible program
 - Example: A program or project's expenses total \$6,000; the applicant would request \$3,000 would be required to match it with \$3,000.
- May match the grant amount with cash, and/or with in-kind contributions equaling the cost of those materials and services (including space rent) that are crucial to the presenting and planning of the program or project, or any combination of cash and in-kind contributions.
- Program Support grants are intended to supplement, not fully fund, a project. Applications demonstrating diversified funding sources will receive stronger evaluation scores.

RESTRICTIONS

- An organization's administrative costs cannot be underwritten using funds from this category.
- Organizations may not reimburse themselves for the administrative or operational services it provides or donates to the program.
- Programs or projects with budgets that are incomplete or vague will receive low scores.
- GOS Applicants MAY NOT APPLY for a Program Support grant in the same Fiscal Year.

PRIORITY CONSIDERATION

HCOCHA/TD encourages schools and non-arts organizations to use the Program Support grant as an outreach service to collaborate with the local professional arts community to bring the work of Hudson County and New Jersey artists and performers to the general public.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TA

MAX REQUEST

\$4,000

WHO MAY APPLY

Arts Only organizations that clearly demonstrate a genuine need for assistance in non-profit administrative development.

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

There are two types of TA grants:

- **TA-Consultancy**
- **TA- Seminar/Workshop.**

Training provided by qualified professionals or organizations that will strengthen the professional non-profit administration of arts organizations, including strategic planning; staff grant writing development; fundraising development; board development.

Artistic-related consultancies, guest artists programs, items such as lighting, sound, costume or set design and choreography and the like **are not eligible** for TA grants.

REQUIREMENTS

- Technical Assistance grants do not require a match.
- The applicant's narrative must explain how the training will be conducted. Items to consider and address:
 - Whether the training will be held at a reputable non-profit support center or will a consultant be brought in.
 - Must clearly state what the training goals are and how they will be achieved.
 - The dates these services will begin and end and how long each session will last

Consultancy

- If bringing in a consultant, the TA applicant must submit:
 - the professional qualifications of the consultant
 - references
 - a letter of intent or scope of services, including the breakdown of cost of services

Workshop/Seminar

- If using an acknowledged and reputable training center, the TA applicant must provide:
 - A description of the courses or seminars offered.
 - An evaluation of the training and/or consultancy must be provided in a final report at the end of the grant term.
 - All expenses that are reimbursable through this grant must be backed up with actual receipts.

RESTRICTIONS

- Any Technical Assistance application that does **not** include a consultant's letter of intent will be automatically rejected.
- Consultant travel mileage is limited to the current State of New Jersey rate of reimbursement (65.5 cents). Air travel and hotel costs are not eligible expenses under this grant.
- Technical Assistance proposals that request the services of current and past employees, past and present board members, relatives, friends or associates, regardless of their professional expertise, will not be considered.

YOUR NARRATIVE

The narrative will constitute an overview of your organization, including its mission, targeted audience, history, governance, administration, planning and artistic distinction (i.e., what sets your group apart from others).

Each grant category - GOS, PS and TA - has its own narrative. The guidelines for each are below.

GOS NARRATIVE PARAMETERS

GOS

- Discuss the qualifications of the full-time and part-time paid administrative and artistic personnel, including their longevity.
- Present an overview of the board of directors, including longevity of each member, titles, term of office, frequency of meetings, board retreats, standing committees, and how board members are cultivated and chosen to serve.
- Explain in detail the process used to develop and choose your organization's programming and who makes the final decisions.
- Indicate how artists with special needs are considered for inclusion.
- State what measurable tools are employed to evaluate the artistic excellence and audience participation in all programs.
- Discuss the organization's long-range plan, with goals to be achieved, and elaborate on the time frame and current status of that plan.
- Illustrate how your organization's programs address HCOCHA/TD's Priorities for Funding as described in the LAP Guidelines.
- Tell how the organization measures greater diversity in its audience and how it develops programming to respond to that diversity.

PS NARRATIVE PARAMETERS

PS

- Explain in detail your organization's programming for which you are seeking funding.
- Indicate how artists with special needs are considered for inclusion in this programming.
- Describe how success will be measured.
- Tell how the organization measures greater diversity in its audience and how it develops programming to respond to that diversity.
- Detail artists/performers/instructors from Hudson County that will be participating in your program or project.

STRONG APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ✓ Clearly identify a community need
- ✓ Explain why the project matters
- ✓ Demonstrate measurable outcomes
- ✓ Include realistic budgets
- ✓ Show diverse funding sources
- ✓ Explain accessibility planning
- ✓ Describe evaluation methods
- ✓ Use clear, concise language

TA NARRATIVE PARAMETERS

TA

- Describe in detail what kind of Technical Assistance is needed and why. You must cite specific problems or situations to justify your request for assistance and why a consultant, seminar, workshop or retreat is necessary.
- Detail your organization's genuine need for the services allowed under the TA grant category.
- Describe how a TA grant will help sustain your organization long term. In addition, you must identify if you are seeking funds from other source(s) for this Technical Assistance. If "yes," then identify the source(s).



BUDGET NARRATIVE AND BUDGET

Your LAP budget narrative and budget are important because they inform the Peer Review Panel about the costs of your program/project or the finances of your organization and the rationale for same. **Please be advised that both the narrative and line item sections are required for consideration.**

Explain how your budget supports the proposed activities. Provide enough detail for reviewers to understand how each major expense was calculated.

Please also include as much detail as possible for the Peer Review Panel to identify your organization's plan and programming as it relates to the budget.

The LAP budget is the actual accounting of your organization's finances (General Operating Support) or the expenses associated with your proposed program or project (Program Support) or consultant or workshop (Technical Assistance). It is important to be as specific and accurate as possible.

ALLOWABLE ADA EXPENSES

Applicants are encouraged to budget appropriate expenses to make programming accessible to as wide an audience as possible to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), such as, but not limited to, sign language interpreters and large print type programs.

The purchase of equipment is not permitted. HCOCHA/TD offers free rentals of assistive listening devices.

ADA ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Accessibility to Facilities and Programming

Applicants must demonstrate how facilities, communications, digital content, and programming are accessible to people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into federal law in 1990, requires that all public programs and services be made accessible to all people, regardless of an individual's physical or developmental challenges. The State of New Jersey/Hudson County Local Arts Program (LAP) grant program supports this law.

HCOCHA/TD requires that all applicants develop an ADA Organizational Plan. In addition, the FY27 LAP application has several questions related to accessibility which you must answer.

Your Plan must cover the years 2026, 2027, and 2028. Applicants must use the ADA Plan chart template provided by HCOCHA/TD. The chart is provided in the application portal which you will print, fill out, and upload back into your application.

Your ADA plan and answers to the ADA questions on the application constitute 20% - 30% of your total LAP score.

Currently, Accessibility accounts for 20 points of the evaluation. **Organizations in the ADA Improvement Project may receive an additional 10 progress points based on implementation.**



SCOPE OF YOUR PLAN

Your ADA Organizational Plan requires careful thought and analysis of your facilities, as well as your programming, your organization's website and audience/artistic outreach. Groups that do not own their own spaces/facilities are still required to comply with ADA accessibility issues in their programming and facilities.

Plans will vary in length depending on the mission, size and scope of your organization. An ADA Organizational Plan should describe your accomplishments and outline any future goals and objectives for making your facilities, programs, and services accessible to persons with disabilities.

ADA Organizational Plans should be submitted in a combined narrative and chart form. The narrative page or pages should be attached to the chart. The name of the organization should be at the top of each page of the Plan. You must use the chart provided by HCOCHA/TD in the online application.

AREAS TO BE INCLUDED IN YOUR PLAN

Areas that must be addressed in all ADA Organizational Plans:

- Board of Directors Resolutions regarding ADA policy.
- Appointment of an ADA Compliance Officer.
- A grievance policy: facility analysis and plans for compliance.
- Outreach both for audience and artistic engagement.
- Publications.
- Neighborhood accessibility.

ADA ACCESS PROJECT

Once all applicants' ADA scores are tabulated, the 10 organizations with the lowest ADA scores will be asked to participate the ADA Access Project.

Through the Project, John McEwen, Executive of the New Jersey Theater Alliance, and an expert on accessibility issues, will exhaustively review the participants' ADA plans with them and make concrete recommendations on how to improve accessibility for all patrons.

Being asked to participate in the ADA Access Project is not punitive; rather, it is a constructive way to assist grantee organizations and recommend common sense measures to ensure that all people can enjoy the quality programming that they offer. ADA Access Project meetings are held via Zoom and last approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE PROCEDURE

Applicants who do not submit a detailed ADA Organizational Plan **will NOT be considered for funding.**

Applicants funded through the LAP grant program that give false or misleading statements may forfeit their entire grant award and may be excluded from future participation in the LAP grant program.

ACCESSIBILITY GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Artists or members of the public who are unable to participate in a funded program or project because of a physical or program content barrier may submit a grievance to HCOCHA/TD in writing.

In such a case, HCOCHA/TD staff will investigate each complaint. The recommendations are then presented to the Hudson County Counsel for legal review.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

After all proposals have been reviewed by HCOCHA/TD staff for eligibility and guidelines compliance, they are then evaluated by an independent panel of peer professionals in the arts realm.

These panelists are chosen for their expertise in a particular discipline and for their overall ability to critique the merits of proposals in a fair and insightful manner. They review and score each proposal based upon criteria that includes the following:

Evaluation Criteria (100 Points)

Category	Points
Artistic Merit / Program Quality	25
Community Impact	20
Organizational Capacity	15
Financial Sustainability	15
Budget Quality	10
Alignment with LAP Priorities	10
Application Completeness & Clarity	5
Total	100

ARTISTIC MERIT / PROGRAM QUALITY (25 POINTS)

The extent to which the applicant demonstrates artistic excellence through high-quality programming, qualified artists, thoughtful planning, innovation, and evidence of successful artistic achievement.

Reviewers should consider:

- Artistic quality
- Qualifications of artists
- Program design
- Innovation
- Evidence of excellence

COMMUNITY IMPACT (20 POINTS)

The extent to which the proposed activities serve Hudson County residents and demonstrate meaningful public benefit.

Reviewers should consider:

- Community need
- Public participation
- Service to underserved populations
- Geographic reach
- Evaluation methods

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (15 POINTS)

The applicant's ability to successfully carry out the proposed activities.

Reviewers should consider:

- Staff qualifications
- Board leadership
- Organizational planning
- Partnerships
- Previous accomplishments

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY (15 POINTS)

The extent to which the organization demonstrates sound financial management and diversified revenue sources.

Reviewers should consider:

- Balanced funding strategy
- Matching funds
- Financial planning
- Earned and contributed revenue
- Long-term sustainability

Organizations that rely primarily on Local Arts Program funding may receive lower scores in this category.

BUDGET QUALITY (10 POINTS)

The proposed budget should accurately reflect the scope of the project and provide sufficient detail for reviewers to determine that requested expenses are reasonable, allowable, and properly calculated.

ALIGNMENT WITH LAP PRIORITIES (10 POINTS)

The proposal demonstrates clear alignment with Hudson County Local Arts Program priorities, including:

- Artistic excellence
- Accessibility
- Community engagement
- Service to underserved populations
- Support of Hudson County artists

APPLICATION COMPLETENESS & CLARITY (5 POINTS)

Applications should be complete, well organized, professionally prepared, and responsive to every question.

MINIMUM FUNDING SCORE

Due to limited funding availability, the Hudson County Local Arts Program is highly competitive.

Applications receiving a Peer Review score of less than 80 out of 100 points will not be recommended for funding, regardless of eligibility.

Applications scoring 80 points or higher will advance to the Accessibility Review Panel evaluation.

Final funding recommendations remain subject to:

- Accessibility Review Panel scoring
- Available funding
- Approval by the Hudson County Board of County

Applications will also be reviewed independently by the Accessibility Review Panel. Accessibility reviewers evaluate only the ADA and Accessibility portions of the application.

The Accessibility Review Panel may award up to 20 additional points.

GRANT AWARD GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- An applicant may not appeal its grant award based on disagreement with the consensus critique of its proposal.
- An applicant may not appeal its grant award if any part of its proposal contains ineligible expenses or requests that are not allowable under the guidelines.
- An applicant may not appeal its grant award based on outdated HCOCHA/TD guidelines published in prior years. New or additional information that was omitted from the submitted application may not be used as grounds for grievance.
- An applicant that can demonstrate a pattern of gross misunderstanding on the part of the grant panel, as written in the panel's consensus critique, based on the facts, information, or support materials contained in its submitted application may appeal its grant award.
- An applicant that can factually document that the consensus critique of its proposal contains actual statements of bias against race, age, religion, physical or developmental aptitude, cultural diversity, or sexual orientation, may appeal.
- An applicant that meets the grievance procedure requirements as enumerated above may submit a written appeal up to 30 days after the date on the HCOCHA/TD letter of recommended grant award and consensus critique. Appeals will not be considered after this time period. Appeals by telephone will not be answered. Appeals that meet the grievance procedure requirements will be reviewed by HCOCHA/TD. Applicants will receive a written response from HCOCHA/TD with appropriate action, if any, no later than thirty after the appeals due date.

FINAL REPORT

All GOS, PS and TA LAP grant recipients must submit a final report to HCOCHA/TD at a date designated by HCOCHA/TD staff.

Grant recipients must:

- Documentation of all grant and match expenses must be in the form of paid receipts, canceled checks, or print out of an accounting program (e.g. Quickbooks) and submitted with the final reports at the end of the grant cycle. Time record sheets may document in-kind donations for volunteer hours and statements of value document donated goods and services. Whether used for "match" purposes or not, in-kind donations must be noted.
- Adhere to the proposal approved in the original application. If any changes are to be made to the proposal, recipients must notify HCOCHA/TD in writing, in advance of the program start date, for approval.
- Keep records of the number of people who are served by their programs, including the number of underserved residents (i.e., culturally diverse communities, persons with physical or developmental challenges, senior citizens), and the number of artists served or participating in the program(s).
- Grant recipients must keep all receipts as they will be required for submission with the final report.
- Provide all the materials pertaining to their category as requested in the guidelines.
- Provide at least two (2) digital photos documenting the funded programming with their final reports. They can be attached to the electronic application. These photos are required by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and may be used for promotional purposes and/or in its annual report.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDS AND PAYMENTS

LAP grant awards are announced by letter. If awarded, a grant applicant will receive a first payment of 75% of its total award in the first quarter of FY27.

First quarter means anytime between January and the end of April. We strive to get payments to you as expeditiously as possible. Grant funds are disbursed, only after receiving properly completed and signed contracts and payment vouchers, as follows:

- **75% after HCOCHA/TD's receipt of the county contracts and vouchers signed by the awardee. NO FUNDS WILL BE DISPERSED UNTIL HCOCHA/TD IS IN RECEIPT OF AN ORGANIZATION'S SIGNED FY27 CONTRACT.**
- **An appropriation from the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners and Hudson County Executive Craig Guy. These funds will be distributed in the third quarter of the year, most likely in July or August.**
- **25% after receipt of the final report and final payment vouchers.**

Please be advised that FY26/27 Hudson County operating budget will not be finalized until June of 2027.

In past years, HCOCHA/TD has given grantees a range of possible amounts in the award letter. Once a budget is passed by the Hudson County Board of County Commissioners and signed by the Hudson County Executive, we will know the exact amount in county funds you can expect to receive.

Whether you receive this amount, or any additional county funding at all, will be determined upon finalization of the aforementioned FY27 Hudson County budget.

AUG-SEP	Application Open
OCT-NOV	Evaluations and Peer Review
DEC-JAN	Award Letters go out
JAN-FEB	Vouchers & Contracts go out to organizations
JAN-APRIL	First payment of 75% of total award recieved
JULY-AUGUST	County funds distributed
JAN 2028	Final reports due / once received, final payment vouchers to go out

QUESTIONS

APPLICATION HELP

If you have any questions regarding the application, please reach us at:



201-459-2070



lapgrants@hcnj.us

We are available Monday - Friday
from 9AM to 5PM

TECHNICAL ISSUES/HELP

If you are having technical issues with the application platform portal, we urge you to reach out to SurveyMonkey Apply.

Submit a ticket and their support team will get back to you in a timely manner.

Use the link below to reach Support



<https://hcnj.smapply.org/helpdesk/>

You can also reach Support through your application in the upper right hand corner. Click the ⓘ symbol and click “Having technical issues with this site?”. This will take you to the support ticket form.

