



New Jersey Economic Development Authority

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (“RFI”)

2023-RFI-193

for

Identifying Barriers to Obtaining Capital for Art/Culture Entities

1. INTENT/SUMMARY OF SCOPE

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“Authority,” “NJEDA”), is an independent Authority of the State of New Jersey and is seeking information to better understand the challenges faced by arts and culture businesses, institutions, and entrepreneurs in New Jersey in accessing capital, especially businesses and institutions that anchor New Jersey’s Main Streets. Access to capital for arts and culture entities is essential for both for and non-profit entities. A lack of capital access can impede growth, expansion, daily operations, and survivability of important arts institutions. Traditionally, the arts and culture sectors have been considered superfluous to economic impact. When in fact, NJ’s core arts and culture entities directly accounted for \$4.6 billion in revenue in 2021 with an additional \$18 billion in revenue from indirect impact in other supporting industries like broadcasting, logistics, and publishing. The combined impact of arts and culture industries account for 3/5% of NJ’s GDP, as well as 3.1% of the states’ work force.¹ In 2022, non-profits specifically, created \$532.3 million in economic stimulus: \$338.5 million in spending by arts and culture organizations, with their audiences spending an additional \$193.8 million in event-related expenditures.² Arts and culture businesses create job-sustaining revenue for New Jersey Main Streets and communities with an average arts event attendee spending over \$32.68 on restaurants, retail, and services outside of their arts experience.³ The arts are a growing component of the travel and tourism industry, New Jersey’s second largest industry.⁴

Providing access to capital for arts entities is also a core factor to building a “Stronger and Fairer New Jersey,” especially for the youngest New Jerseyans. In 2019, New Jersey led the nation in becoming the first state to provide universal access to Arts Education for all public-school students.⁵ Multiple

¹ [Creative Economy State Profiles – National Assembly of State Arts Agencies/ASAA \(nasaa-arts.org\)](https://www.nasaa-arts.org/).

² [Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 \(AEP6\) | Local & Regional Findings \(americansforthearts.org\)](https://americansforthearts.org/)

Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic & Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organization & Their Audiences in New Jersey, October 2023.

³ Americans for the Arts; Arts and Economic Prosperity 6, New Jersey issued 10/27/2023; [AEP6 Study Findings \(americansforthearts.org\)](https://americansforthearts.org/)

⁴ [New Jersey State Council for the Arts](https://www.nj.gov/arts/).

⁵ [New Jersey Becomes First State to Provide Universal Access to Arts Education; nearly 1.1 Million Students Actively Participate - Arts Ed NJ](https://www.nj.gov/arts/).

studies show that the arts teach students invaluable life and professional skills, preparing them for the 21st century workplace in which, creativity and integrative thinking, teamwork, self-discipline, and self-confidence remain essential. Additionally, access to arts education drives higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and college-going rates, as well as lowering drop-out rates. These academic benefits are reaped by students across all socioeconomic strata. Arts and Culture anchors New Jersey communities now and for the future. Arts venues act as a core component of strong and growing downtowns from internationally famous for-profit arts institutions to those lesser known in small towns, as well as the hundreds of large and small-scale non-profit arts organizations in all 21 counties throughout the state. These institutions work to sustain and grow their communities of artists, arts sector workers, residents, and visitors of all ages.

Governor Murphy and the NJEDA are exploring new and innovative funding solutions to help grow New Jersey Arts and Culture business and non-profits by addressing barriers to capital. The purpose of this Request for Information (“RFI”) is to inform EDA of capital access needs of the New Jersey arts and culture sector. The NJEDA is seeking information and ideas from qualified entities (“Respondents”), including but not limited to for-profit and non-profit entities, philanthropic partners, higher education institutions, community development organizations involved in arts-based placemaking, Chambers of Commerce, arts industry advocacy organizations, state and local government entities, and other stakeholders with perspectives on structural barriers and disparities encountered by arts and culture entities in terms of access to capital. The NJEDA also seeks interest and ideas on solutions to address those obstacles, including but not limited to, existing programs that address gap financing due to lack of philanthropic capital for non-profit entities. The NJEDA is interested in receiving comments, questions, recommendations, facts, information, ideas, and responses that will help the NJEDA better understand the scope and characteristics of access to capital and other forms of financing available to arts and culture entities.

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“Authority”, “NJEDA”) to seek information from stakeholders with perspectives on the barriers to obtaining capital faced by the arts and culture community. The NJEDA is interested in receiving comments, questions, recommendations, facts, information, ideas, and responses that will help the NJEDA better understand the scope and characteristics of the Arts and Cultural entities of New Jersey in anticipation of better understanding the challenges and seeking potential solutions. The authority is interested in identifying creative approaches to supporting New Jersey’s arts and culture sector enabling economic stability and sustainability.

2. BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority serves as the State’s principal agency for driving equitable economic growth. The Authority is committed to making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development by focusing on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities, create good jobs for New Jersey residents and provide pathways to a stronger and fairer economy. Through partnerships with a diverse range of stakeholders, the Authority creates and implements initiatives to enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in the State and strengthen New Jersey’s long-term economic competitiveness.

In The State of Innovation, building a “Stronger and Fairer Economy in New Jersey”, the State’s comprehensive Economic Development Plan released in October 2018, Governor Murphy reiterated the importance of thriving downtowns and vibrant cities in New Jersey, which shows a real income growth of six times that of the rest of the country and acts as a driver for accelerating job and wage growth for more of our residents. Two of the strategic priorities include “Investing in Communities” and “Investing in People.” Critical investments in New Jersey communities and people create inclusive growth across industry in both for-profit and non-profit sectors. Governor Murphy’s plan also committed to a New Jersey future that supports all the State’s businesses, specifically emphasizing small business and their importance in building strong, equitable and sustainable urban centers and downtowns. The Arts & Culture industry is a significant contributor to the overall creative economy and ecosystem of New Jersey with multipronged benefits. The Arts have proven to be powerful engines that support the development and growth of communities, as well as their economic viability, by providing jobs, making downtowns attractive to new businesses and talent, and attracting tourism. Arts and Culture are a catalyst for making a social and an economic impact in any community.

This RFI focuses on the challenges faced by, and potential solutions for, increasing capital available to arts and culture entities, and is one of several steps being taken by the Authority and the Murphy Administration to address the goals of the State’s Economic Development plan. Understanding the importance of addressing the existing barriers for Arts & Culture entities to create a stronger and fairer economy, NJEDA will continue to engage and connect with other state entities to determine additional resources that may be utilized in meeting capital needs for arts entities, including:

- New Jersey State Council on the Arts (“NJSCA”) which provides arts entities with support, financing, and opportunities for growth across New Jersey while also driving public interest in the arts, culture, and humanities
- The Department of Community Affairs (“DCA”), which spearheads efforts related to community revitalization with strategic guidance, financial support and technical assistance to local governments, community development organizations, businesses and individuals that improve the quality of life in New Jersey.
- Department of State, New Jersey Cultural Trust, which operates as a public/private partnership to help ensure a stable and healthy nonprofit cultural industry by providing grants to support capital projects, endowments and institutional and financial stabilization of arts, history, and humanities organizations in New Jersey.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (If applicable)

The RFI is seeking responses from all interested stakeholders. Specifically, this RFI welcomes input from entities and organizations including:

- Arts Organizations
- Artists and Arts entrepreneurs
- For-profit and non-profit arts entities
- Higher education institutions with arts venues
- Arts industry advocacy organizations
- State and local government or public entities
- Other stakeholders with perspectives on structural barriers and disparities encountered by arts and culture entities

4. RFI RESPONSE QUESTIONS

In submitting responses to this RFI, respondents are encouraged to answer any questions they consider relevant and to the best of their ability. Respondents do not need to answer all questions for their response to be considered. Answers are understood to be preliminary and non-binding. Respondents are free to go beyond the scope of the questions and/or structure responses as necessary to increase clarity and efficiency of responses. Respondents should also feel free to submit additional or alternate information as deemed necessary.

Description of Your Organization:

1. Please provide information on your organization including:
 - a. The name of your Arts or Cultural-based organization
 - b. Your name and title
 - c. Your operating/business location(s), including municipality and county in NJ
 - d. Your organization type and business structure, e.g., non-profit, municipality, county, LLC, for-profit arts business entity, sole proprietor?
 - e. How many years your organization has been in operation?

2. Which best describes your organizational mission? (Check or list all that apply)

- a. Presenting organization
- b. Exhibition space
- c. Studio space
- d. Arts Education
- e. Professional Development/Training for Arts Community
- f. Granting Organization
- g. Arts Resource Organization
- h. Membership Organization
- i. Sales of Art/Arts related services
- j. Other; please explain

3. What are your organization's sources of income? (List all that apply)

- a. Grants
- b. Local government contributions
- c. State government contributions
- d. Corporate funding/donations
- e. Educational offerings (e.g., fees from classes, workshops, seminars, etc.)
- f. Private Donors
- g. Sales of goods & services
- h. Other; please explain

4. Briefly describe the full scope of your presence in your community and the impact you have.
(Please summarize in no more than 2 paragraphs.)

13. Is there an integrated model of creative placemaking that your organization is currently working toward as part of your strategic plan? If so, please describe/site model and key components.

14. Have you undergone a capital campaign to raise private funding? What have been the challenges in raising private capital?

15. Would pre-approval of funding from NJEDA for a project facilitate private fundraising?

16. Would professional development or training be helpful to your organization? If so, in what ways?

5. **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS** (From Respondents to the EDA)

All questions concerning this RFI must be submitted in writing no later than 12:00 PM EST, on Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024 via e-mail to: ArtsCulture@njeda.gov.

The subject line of the e-mail should state: "QUESTIONS-2023 RFI-193 Capital for Arts & Culture".

Answers to questions submitted will be publicly posted on the Authority's website on or about Tuesday, February 6th, 2024 at: [Bidding Opportunities - NJEDA](#) as Addendum.

IT IS THE RESPONDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THIS URL REGULARLY FOR UPDATES.

6. **RESPONSE DETAILS** (Info Provided to Respondents Regarding Document Submission)

All RFI responses must be submitted in writing no later than 11:59 PM EST, on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024 via e-mail to: ArtsCulture@njeda.gov.

The subject line of the e-mail should state: “RFI Response-2023-RFI-193 Capital for Arts & Culture”.

7. **FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS** (from EDA) / **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Respondents may be asked to provide additional information to allow the Authority to better understand the responses or services available.

8. **PROPRIETARY AND/OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

The Authority reserves the right to copy any information provided by the Respondents. The Authority reserves the right to use ideas that are provided by Respondents, applicants, stakeholders, or vendors. By submitting a Response, the submitter represents that such copying or use of information will not violate any copyrights, licenses, or other agreements with respect to information submitted or product solutions demonstrated, if applicable. Responses must clearly be marked for any information the Respondent deems Proprietary and/or Confidential.

9. **DISCLAIMER / NO OBLIGATION**

This RFI is not a request for qualification/proposal. It may or may not result in further action.

This RFI is issued solely as a means of gathering information regarding the Authority’s desire to understand the types of barriers to accessing funding faced by the Arts and Culture sector in the market to meet the Authority’s needs. Interested parties responding to this RFI do so at their own expense. There will be no monetary compensation from the Authority for the time and effort spent in preparing the response to this RFI. All expenses incurred are the sole responsibility of the Respondent.

Should the Authority decide to move forward and issue an RFQ/P or announce a program/product related to this RFI, Respondents need not have submitted a response to this RFI to be eligible to respond to the RFP. Should an RFQ/P be issued, responding to this RFI will not affect scoring or consideration for that process.

The Authority is under no obligation to contact Respondents to this RFI.

10. **NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC RECORDS ACT**

Respondents should be aware that responses to this RFI are subject to the “New Jersey Open Public Records Act” (N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.), as amended and including all applicable regulations and policies and applicable case law, including the New Jersey Right-to-Know law. All information submitted in response to the RFI is considered public information, notwithstanding any disclaimers to the contrary, except as may be exempted from public disclosure by OPRA and the common law.

Any proprietary and/or confidential information submitted in response to this RFI will be redacted by the Authority. A person or entity submitting a response to this RFI may designate specific information as not subject to disclosure pursuant to the exceptions to OPRA found at N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1, when such person or entity has a good faith legal and/or factual basis for such assertion (i.e. information that may be included in another ongoing public procurement or solicitation). The Authority reserves the right to make the determination as to what is proprietary or confidential and will advise the person or entity accordingly. The Authority will not honor any attempt to designate the entirety of a submission as proprietary, confidential and/or to claim copyright protection for the entire proposal. In the event of any challenge to the Respondent’s assertion of confidentiality with which the Authority does not concur, the Respondent shall be solely responsible for defending its designation.