



**New Jersey Economic Development Authority
Activation, Revitalization, and Transformation (A.R.T.) Program
Phase II – Public Space Activation Product
NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (“NJEDA” or “Authority”) will begin accepting applications for the competitive grant program, Activation, Revitalization, and Transformation Program Phase II – Public Space Activation Product (“Program”) on **Tuesday, September 26, 2024, at 10:00 AM EST.**

Applications will be accepted during a competitive window and will close **Monday, November 25, 2024 at 5:00 PM EST.**

The application can be accessed at: [Activation, Revitalization, and Transformation \(A.R.T.\) Program - Phase II - NJEDA](#)

The Program will make available grants between \$100,000 and \$500,000 to eligible nonprofit organizations with a 501c (3), 501c (6), or 501c (19) status based on scoring.

Purpose and Overview

This is a competitive grant program that will proactively deploy \$15 million to catalyze community placemaking efforts through the creation of public space activation initiatives, as described below, by leveraging New Jersey’s arts and cultural sector as a creative force for change, specifically in downtowns of select municipalities. Downtowns and commercial corridors play a vital role in both urban and rural geographies, serving as economic engines for communities by empowering entrepreneurs, creating cultural hubs, and building community wealth. This Program will aid in the recovery and continue to mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic of these communities through arts and culture-focused placemaking efforts creating job-sustaining revenue for New Jersey’s Main Streets and communities by driving foot traffic to New Jersey’s most depleted commercial corridors.

Funding

The Program will utilize \$15 million in appropriated funding from the American Rescue Plan (“ARP”) Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (“SLFRF”) through the FY 2023 Budget Appropriations Act (P.L. 2022, c.49) identified as, “Arts Support and Placemaking Grant Program”, which will be assigned to the Economic Recovery Fund (“ERF”). The funds will support placemaking activities that invest in communities to build resilient towns and infrastructure statewide.

The potential award amount is based upon current information about funding availability; NJEDA reserves the right to increase that amount and number of awards should additional funds become available.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants are nonprofit organizations with a 501c (3), 501c (6), or 501c (19) status. Municipalities, governments, and for-profit entities are **not** eligible to apply, although State institutions of higher education that are one of the eligible nonprofit organization categories are eligible. Any Applicant that received a grant from Phase I of the A.R.T. program is ineligible for Phase II of the Program. Applications are limited to one application per EIN.

Applicants must be in substantial good standing with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (as defined by both Departments), and not be in default with other NJEDA financial assistance, prior to approval. In order to be eligible, Applicants must also provide a current tax clearance certificate at time of application (but subject to cure as described below) to demonstrate the applicant is in substantial good standing with the New Jersey Division of Taxation.

All projects will be subject to compliance with the Authority's prevailing wage and affirmative action requirements and the Public Works Contractor Registration Act (N.J.S.A. 34:11-56.48 et seq.), which requires all contractors, subcontractors, or lower tier subcontractors (including subcontractors listed in bid proposal) who bid on or engage in the performance of any public work in New Jersey to register with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Grants will be subject to federal Duplication of Benefits requirements. Applicants cannot have received state or federal funding to support a similar expense identified in the project costs at time of application and will have to submit a Duplications of Benefits certification at time of application. Approvals will be contingent upon a cost reasonableness analysis that will be reviewed prior to approval and disbursement of grant funds. (Please see discussion below regarding "Source and Use".)

Program Requirements

At the time of application submission, applicants must certify and explain how the project meets the following federal eligibility considerations:

- **COVID Impact:** Applicants must address how the proposal is responsive to the negative public health and/or economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and complies with all the ARP program requirements.
- **Capacity:** The applicant must have experience implementing a minimum of one (1) project that is similar to the project being proposed.
- **Long-term Impact:** Competitive applicants must articulate via the application process how the proposal will have a positive long-term impact in its community and the overall benefit to the community at large.
- **Financial Viability:** Must demonstrate long-term financial viability of the project and

evidence that the project will be completed prior to 12/31/26.

- U.S. Treasury reporting: Ability (if applicable or requested by US Treasury) to provide the U.S. Department of Treasury with relevant reporting for all project expenditures exceeding \$1, specifically, all proposals must provide a narrative on how the project will address the impacts of COVID-19 in their municipality and why this capital expenditure is the most appropriate to address the economic harms caused by COVID.

At time of application, applicants will be required to submit a Project Timeline as evidence that the project can meet these federal program guidelines. Applicants will also respond to scored questions as to how the project can meet these federal program guidelines.

Additionally, applicants must ensure that the eligible Project location meets all of the following criteria:

- 1) Projects must be in a commercial corridor defined for this program as being in either: a municipality designated as a “Target Urban Municipality” by the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency or designated as a Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) Eligible Municipality by the DCA, or a municipality with a designated Department of Transportation “Transit Village”;
- 2) Projects must be in a municipality ranked in the Top 25% of the DCA 2023 Municipal Revitalization Index (“MRI”); and
- 3) Projects must be located within 1.5 miles of an active New Jersey Transit, PATCO, PATH, or SEPTA passenger rail or light rail station operating in the same municipality, meeting above criteria. (Locations are based on NJ DCA geographic information systems passenger rail station point data.)

The 31 municipalities with areas eligible for the Program are: Asbury Park, Bayonne, Belleville, Burlington City, Camden, City of Orange, Clifton, Dover, Dunellen, East Orange, Egg Harbor City, Elizabeth, Garfield, Hackensack, Hammonton, Jersey City, Linden, Lindenwold, Long Branch, Netcong, New Brunswick, North Bergen, Passaic, Paterson, Pennsauken, Perth Amboy, Plainfield, Rahway, Riverside, Trenton, and Union City.

Note: Although Atlantic City and Newark are municipalities that also meet the above location eligibility criteria, both cities are **ineligible** for this phase of the Program due to additional funding each city received from Phase I of the A.R.T. program, including other FY24 budget appropriations each city has received through the Urban Investment Fund and the Atlantic City Revitalization Grant Program.

Eligible Uses

The Program will support the creation of public space activation initiatives, such as placemaking projects, public art installations, and arts-based projects. These activities may include, but are not limited to, art exhibitions, performances, festivals, parades, concerts or concert series, film and video screenings, and cultural programming. Funding can also be granted to support operational costs for the applicant to execute art or placemaking projects.

Ineligible project activities may include, but are not limited to, acquisition costs of real estate, leases for real estate with expiration dates past December 31, 2026, incubator space, and real estate construction. Also, major infrastructure improvements are ineligible, such as capital expenditures, including, but not limited to, sewer, wastewater, electrical grid, road paving, drinking water systems, and structures that are intended to remain in place after December 31, 2026, including demolition to create vacant land.

Note: All applicants must submit a Source and Use analysis on the application's Source & Use Form. The line items in the Source section must list all sources of project funding, including the funds requested in the Program grant application. If the amount requested on the Program grant application is not listed as a Source or if the Total Sources do not equal the Total Uses, then the Source & Use document will be considered incomplete, and the application will receive a non-discretionary declination.

Grant Amounts

The minimum grant award for the program is \$100,000 and the maximum grant award is \$500,000.

Staff will allocate funds to applicants based on scored ranking in the full dollar amount requested. This process will continue, in descending order of the application scores, always allocating the full dollar amount requested, until all program funds have been exhausted.

If there are remaining applicants, who cannot be funded at the full dollar amount requested, but have reached the minimum score of 65, NJEDA staff will notify the applicants in the descending order of their scores and specify the amount of project funds that are available. These applicants will have 15 business days from the date of being notified by the Authority to both (1) accept the amount of funds available and (2) provide proof of an additional funding source to complete the proposed project budget. Proof can be in the form of a Letter of Intent, commitment letter, or bank statements. If the applicant decides not to accept the amount available or does not identify additional funding to complete the project, the application will be incomplete and deemed withdrawn by NJEDA.

Application Submission and Review Process

Applications will be accepted during a competitive application round through the program's online application portal, which will be **open from September 26, 2024, at 10 a.m. EDT November 25, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. EDT**. All applications will be reviewed following the closure of the application period. Applications are limited to one application per EIN. The Authority will perform a review of all submitted applications for eligibility documentation on or after the closing date of the application period.

Applicants will be given 10-business days to submit missing or incomplete documents related to eligibility requirements ("cure period"). If the application remains incomplete after the 10-day cure period, the application will be rejected without a right to appeal. If the application fails to establish program eligibility, the application will be declined.

Staff may also request additional responses from applicants to clarify eligibility documentation and application responses.

Scoring

Complete and eligible applications will be reviewed and scored by an evaluation scoring committee comprised of Authority staff members. Applications must achieve a **minimum score of 65 points** to be recommended to the Board for consideration of approval, which shall be from the highest scoring applicant to the lowest scoring applicant that meets the minimum score, as based on the following criteria:

1. Describe the project, including cost estimates.
 - **8 points** for final plans and cost estimates.
 - **3 points** for preliminary plans or estimates.
 - **0 points** if otherwise.
2. Describe site use and access. Does the entity currently have the ability to use, or obtain permission to use, the site for the purposes described in the project?
 - **7 points** if the applicant has demonstrated site use and access.
 - **0 points** if otherwise.
3. Describe how this project will increase foot traffic in the local community based on existing historic traffic data such as foot traffic measurements, ticket sales, audience counts, or other similar measures.
 - **5 points** if the applicant has demonstrated significant increase in foot traffic [greater than 50% increase].
 - **3 points** if partial increase [1% to 50% increase].
 - **0 points** if no increase.
4. Explain the level of experience the applicant organization has with similar projects demonstrating their ability to complete the proposed project successfully. Please include any previous projects that involved arts-based activity in spaces open to the public or municipal spaces and explain the status of those projects.
 - **15 points** if two or more projects completed.
 - **8 points** for one project completed; and
 - **0 points** for no relevant examples.
5. Describe how your project will:

a. Contribute to the resilience of your community post-COVID and mitigate COVID impacts.

Provide examples of how this project will mitigate COVID impacts and build community resilience through its short-term impact (within one (1) year of completion) on the local economy, as it relates to local businesses, local employment, local arts and culture production/performance, exhibition, preservation and/or education. Provide additional examples of the same for the project's long-term impact (beyond one (1) year of completion).

- **Up to 15 points** for a response that demonstrates short & long-term impact.
- **0 points** if project fails to demonstrate engagement with the community in ways specified above.

b. Activate vacant or underutilized space post-COVID.

The activation of vacant or underutilized spaces can include, but is not limited to, facilities, classrooms, production areas, galleries, exhibition and performance spaces, public and private buildings, or parts of buildings, public or private empty/vacant lots or parcels; streets, blocks and/or neighborhoods; public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, or arts installations that have been impacted by COVID.

- **Up to 10 points** for a response that demonstrates activation of underutilized space.
- **0 points** if project fails to demonstrate engagement with the community in ways specified above.

c. Contribute to the community's vision post-COVID.

Describe how this project addresses the community's vision as expressed by county, municipal, or neighborhood-level plans, studies and/or statements. Examples include plans and studies focused on community arts and arts education, economic development, Main Street, Sustainable NJ, small business entrepreneurship, cultural and heritage plans, local arts and culture development, historic preservation, travel and tourism promotion, local beautification and placemaking, neighborhood redevelopment, neighborhood revitalization or other plans.

- **Up to 10 points** for a response that demonstrates how the project addresses the community vision.
- **0 points** if project fails to demonstrate engagement with the community in ways specified above.

Up to 35 points TOTAL for 5 (a), (b), and (c).

6. Describe how the primary focus of the applicant organization is centered around arts and culture. Provide a narrative of no more than **250 words** and no more than three (3) pieces of supporting documentation that show the organization's focus.

Supporting documentation can include, but is not limited to, charter or formation documents; awards of other federal/state/local government and/or private/public philanthropic grants, awards, prizes or other benefits for arts and culture related activities or projects; membership documents in a local, state, national or international organization related to arts and culture advocacy, promotion or public service; proof of previous teaching or exhibition work related to arts and culture; participation in or collaboration on an academic, economic or government study related to arts and culture; annual programming documentation, annual report, annual financials and other documents that prove arts & culture focus.

- **20 points** if narrative and supporting documentation provided to demonstrate this is an Arts & Culture focused organization.
 - **0 points** if it is not.
7. If the Applicant organization is partnering with an individual artist, artist collective, an arts and cultural non-profit, a municipal entity, a community group, or private sector entity, provide proof of partnership with a Letter of Intent approved by both entities that includes:
 - a) the benefit that the partnership brings to the project,
 - b) commitment to the scope of the project,
 - c) the timeline for executing and completing the project,
 - d) the expected final product, and
 - e) any other personal, material, or financial resources committed to the project (if applicable).
 - **10 points** for letter of commitment from one or more partners.
 - **0 points** for no letter of commitment from a partner.

Note: In the event that two or more applications score the same total number, the recommendation for award will be made based on number 1, as listed below. If the applications scores for number 1 are also the same, then recommendation for the award will be made to the highest scoring application based on number 2, as listed below. If the applications scores for number 2 are also equal, then the recommendation for the award will be made on the highest score based on number 3, as listed below.

- 1) MRI Index- project host municipality with lowest MRI score will be recommended to the Board.
- 2) Question 4- project with the higher score on question 4 (the level of experience the

applicant organization has with projects of similar scope) will be recommended to the Board for award.

- 3) Question 5- project with the higher score on question 5 (how the project will impact the local economy, activate vacant or underutilized space, and contribute to the resiliency of the community overall) will be recommended to the Board for award.

Grant Funding Disbursements

Under the Program, the applicant will receive the full grant disbursement upon execution of the Grant Agreement. The Authority will disburse funding only to the approved eligible applicant.

After the execution of the Grant Agreement, applicants will be required to submit quarterly reports until the project is completed. NJEDA will provide the applicant with a template that will include documentation indicating proper use of funds. The quarterly reports must include the summary of funds expended to date, a narrative detailing milestone(s) achieved and overall progress of the project, and proof of prevailing wage/ Affirmative Action compliance.

The applicant is responsible for assuring the compliance of the project with all terms and conditions of the application and the Program funding requirements. The Authority reserves the right to recapture any grant funds used for ineligible purposes.

Application Fees

No application fees will be charged for this Program.

Additional Requirements and Information

Comprehensive information about the Activation, Revitalization, and Transformation Program Phase II - Public Space Activation Product is available at [Activation, Revitalization, and Transformation \(A.R.T.\) Program - Phase II - NJEDA](#)

Questions concerning this Program's Notice of Funding Availability should be submitted to ArtPhase2@njeda.gov.

The NJEDA is subject to State and Federal statutes including, but not limited to, the following, which may impact affiliates: N.J.S.A. 52:32-60.1, et seq., which prevents the New Jersey government entities from certain dealings with businesses engaged in prohibited activities in Belarus or Russia; Compliance with the list of "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons" promulgated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov>; N.J.S.A. 24:6I-49 which provides that the following are not eligible for most State or local economic incentives (a) a person or entity issued a license to operate as a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or that employs a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and (b) a property owner, developer, or operator of

a project to be used, in whole or in part, by or to benefit a cannabis cultivator, manufacturer, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or delivery service, or to employ a certified personal use cannabis handler to perform work for or on behalf of a cannabis establishment, distributor, or delivery service; and N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12, et seq., which prohibits a member of the Legislature or a State officer or employee or their partners or a corporation in which they owns or controls more than 1% of the stock to undertake or execute any contract, agreement, sale, or purchase of \$25.00 or more, made, entered into, awarded or granted by any State agency, with certain limited exceptions.