



THE ADIRONDACK LAKES CENTER FOR THE ARTS
THE ARTS CENTER

ADK Quad-County Decentralization Program

For Clinton, Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton Counties

2021 Community Arts Grant Guidelines

Application Deadline: Sunday, January 31, 2021

Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts
3446 NYS Rt. 28, P.O. Box 205
Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812
www.adirondackarts.org

Grant Coordinator
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518-588-7275



**Council on
the Arts**

HISTORY AND PURPOSE

Founded in 1977, the Decentralization Program (DEC) was developed to ensure that New York State's cultural funding reaches every part of the state. Decentralization has since become one of the most effective ways for the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) to make arts support available to geographically, economically, and ethnically diverse segments of the state's population.

The program forms the cornerstone of NYSCA's partnership with local arts agencies throughout the state, providing a link between NYSCA and portions of the community that might not otherwise be able to access funding from NYSCA.

Decentralization funds are regranted locally by regional and local arts agencies at the invitation of NYSCA. These Decentralization or "DEC" sites are charged as advocates and catalysts for arts and cultural development at the local level and provide a wide range of multi-arts programming and services for local communities, artists, and small organizations. Through DEC regrant funding, DEC sites provide project support to a wide range of professional, vocational, and educational arts and cultural offerings in their respective communities. The Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts (ALCA) in Blue Mountain Lake is the DEC site for the Adirondack (ADK) Quad-County region—or Clinton, Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton counties.

NYSCA has developed broad guidelines that provide a framework for implementing the program, while giving the DEC sites the flexibility to tailor the program to the diverse communities that they serve. Funding decisions are based on evaluative criteria designed by each DEC site and approved by NYSCA staff. DEC-site administration is governed by a set of procedures outlined in the Decentralization Manual issued by NYSCA.

The ADK Quad-County Decentralization Program serves as an umbrella for two distinct funding categories: **Community Arts** and **Arts Education**.

Please note: Decentralization grant applicants may submit up to three direct requests in any combination of categories (Community Arts and/or Arts Education) totaling no more than \$5,000. Fiscally sponsored requests are exempt from the three-request limit and the \$5,000 maximum.

Applicants and/or artists must be at least 18 years of age at the time of application. Current direct NYSCA applicants may not apply for any DEC regrants nor serve as a fiscal sponsor.

COMMUNITY ARTS GRANTS

Community Arts grants provide support for arts and cultural projects to community-based organizations, groups, collectives, or artists. Community Arts grants provide funding to emerging professional artists and organizations whose projects promote the arts and enhance the cultural climate in the communities and neighborhoods where they live and operate.

An applicant organization must be a governmental or quasi-governmental entity, a tribal organization, or a designated New York State nonprofit incorporated in New York State or registered to do business in New York State (see “*Basic Eligibility*” section below). An individual artist or collective may apply for decentralization funds through a fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor then becomes the “applicant organization” and must meet the same basic eligibility requirements as an applicant organization and provide the same required documents (see “*Use of Fiscal Sponsors*” section below).

Most years, a Community Arts DEC Grant would never fund more than 75% of the applicant’s total project budget (total cash expenses). The applicant’s remaining project costs would then be covered through planned in-kind contributions, cash income, or a combination of both as outlined in the project budget. However, for applications for 2021 projects, in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ADK Quad-County DEC Program is waiving the 25%-match requirement: applicants may apply for up to 100% of their total project budget.

Community Arts grants support all forms of multidisciplinary projects, including, but not limited to, theatre, dance, music, film, video, literary arts, visual arts, and folk arts, and DEC-supported projects can be single events or part of a series. All Community Arts grant projects must be community-based and open to the general public.

BASIC ELIGIBILITY

- The legal address of an applicant organization must lie within Clinton, Essex, Franklin, or Hamilton county, and the funded activity must take place within the same county as the applicant’s legal address.
- An applicant organization must be a governmental or quasi-governmental entity, a tribal organization, or a designated New York State nonprofit incorporated in New York State or registered to do business in New York State. Please note that the address on the documentation provided must be within the county where the project is taking place.
 - Any one of the documents below may serve as proof of nonprofit status and must be submitted with the grant application:
 1. Letter of Determination from the IRS indicating tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3)
 2. Documentation of charter by the NY State Board of Regents under section 216 of the NY State Education Law
 3. Documentation of incorporation under Section 402 of the NY State Not-for-Profit Corporation Law
 4. Current NY State Bureau of Charities (Office of the Attorney General) filing receipt
 5. Official authorization as an arm of local government (i.e., a formal letter on official stationery signed by the appropriate county, city, town or village executive).
- Applicant organizations must have an active board of directors/trustees and bylaws.
- An alternative for organizations, artists, or collectives that do not meet these

requirements is to apply for decentralization funds through a fiscal sponsor. The entity serving as the fiscal sponsor becomes the “applicant organization” and must meet the same eligibility requirements as an applicant organization and provide the same required documents. See *“Use of Fiscal Sponsors” section below.*

- Applicants must be 18 years of age at the time of application.
 - An applicant organization must conduct all activities in a way that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religious belief, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.
 - Previous grantees must have submitted all required final reports from all previous cycles.
 - All projects must be completed during the funding cycle. For the 2021 grant cycle that is between March 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022.
 - All applicants (new and returning) must attend an informational seminar (or confer 1-on-1) with the Grant Coordinator. See *“Schedule of Informational Seminars” section below.*
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USE OF FISCAL SPONSORS

Individual artists or collectives may apply to the ADK Quad-County Decentralization Grant Program through a fiscal sponsor. The entity serving as the fiscal sponsor becomes the “applicant organization” and must meet the same eligibility requirements as an applicant organization listed above.

Please note:

- The fiscal sponsor must be based in the county that the proposed activity is taking place; however, the sponsored applicant is not required to reside in that county.
- A direct DEC applicant may serve as a fiscal sponsor and may sponsor more than one applicant as the sponsored requests do not count towards the three-request limit or \$5,000 maximum.
- The sponsored applicant is limited to three requests in any combination of categories totaling no more than \$5,000 per DEC site.
- Direct NYSCA applicants may not serve as a fiscal sponsor for a DEC applicant

Additional Fiscal Sponsor Prerequisites and Expectations:

Sponsoring organizations may serve as fiscal agents for grants being applied to and limit their role to receiving, disbursing, and reporting on grants. The sponsoring organization may alternatively provide additional fiscal, administrative, and other services to the sponsored group/artist. When choosing a sponsor, the group/artist must understand and establish the role of the sponsor organization, which must be fully described in the grant application. The sponsored group/artists are expected to meet with the sponsoring organization prior to the preparation of the application. The sponsoring organization should work with the sponsored group/artist to comply with the Decentralization Program’s requirements and procedures.

Fiscal Sponsors are responsible for:

- Knowledge and understanding of grant-opportunity criteria and relevant guidelines.
 - Ensuring that the work for which funding is sought will occur within the appropriate contract period and required service area.
 - Consulting with the sponsored group/artist regarding project eligibility and conveying all relevant grant application information, including deadlines and online access details.
 - Registering requests and submitting applications with all required supporting information.
 - Executing a letter of agreement with the sponsored group/artist that clearly outlines the administration of the grant and defines mutual responsibilities.
 - Informing the sponsored group/artist of funding decisions in a timely manner (prior to the expiration of the appeals period).
 - Receiving and disbursing granted funds and ensuring that all relevant tax filings and reporting are executed as appropriate.
 - Submitting a final report on the expenditure of the grant funds.
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WHAT DECENTRALIZATION CAN FUND

1. Activities and projects of local arts organizations
2. Artists fees
3. Marketing and publicity costs
4. Direct administrative expenses
5. Supplies and materials needed for the execution of the program

COMMUNITY ARTS RESTRICTIONS

The following cannot be funded:

1. New York State agencies and departments, including SUNY schools
2. Public universities or colleges and public, private, or parochial secondary and elementary schools
3. DEC-site staff or board members
4. Student projects
5. Unincorporated applicants without an eligible sponsor
6. Direct NYSCA applicants, including fiscally sponsored applicants that have applied to NYSCA in the most recent cycle
7. Projects involving partners that apply directly to NYSCA. NYSCA grantees may not serve as a fiscal sponsor for a DEC applicant nor can a NYSCA grantee benefit from ticket sales or revenue from a DEC project.

Please note: A NYSCA grantee may offer its venue gratis to a DEC-funded project. The DEC grantee may pay for any direct costs related to use of the venue; however:

- a. The NYSCA grantee must not handle the box office or ticketing;
- b. The NYSCA grantee must not profit from the DEC program; and

- c. The program must not be advertised as part of the NYSCA grantee's season/programming.
 8. Non-incorporated chapters of organizations whose "parent" is incorporated outside of the Decentralization service area
Please note: When crossing county lines, a fiscal sponsor in the appropriate county is required.
 9. Start-up or seed funding for the establishment of a new organization
 10. General operating expenses
 11. Operating expenses of privately owned facilities (e.g., homes and studios).
 12. Requests greater than an applicant's project expenses minus total project income
 13. Non-arts activity, including:
 - o Galas, benefits or fundraising events, including entertainment costs for receptions, food, or fundraising events
 - o Entertainment such as balloons, clowns, and magicians
 - o Projects that are recreational, therapeutic, rehabilitative, or religious in nature, including at-risk/social-service programs when the purpose is primarily for rehabilitative aims, therapeutic aims, or worship
 14. Activities not open to the general public such as those at camps, clubs, or college associations
 15. Events that take place in private homes
 16. Acquisition of works of art
 17. Contingency funds
 18. Permanent equipment or capital improvements
 19. Creation of textbooks or classroom material
 20. Lobbying expenses
 21. Programs in which children are used as professional artists (paid a fee)
 22. Re-grants by applicants to fund other activities
 23. Cash prizes, juried shows, fellowships, scholarships, and other awards to students
 24. Past grantees that have failed to submit final reports
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APPLICATION PROCESS

All applications must be submitted electronically through our online submission platform, Submittable.com. If you do not have an account, you will have to create one. The application can be accessed through www.adirondackarts.org, or by using the following link: <https://adirondacklakescenterforthearts.submittable.com/submit>. The application format must be adhered to and the application completed in its entirety, including all required attachments.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

1. Community Arts grant application form – Complete in its entirety. Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk and must be completed in order to finalize submission.
2. Project Narrative and Budget Notes – The project narrative and budget notes are included in the application form. The key to writing a successful grant application is to present a clear, concise, and detailed proposal that falls within the scope of the

Decentralization program from which you are requesting funds. A grant proposal is simply a request for funds to support a project or program. Your job is to convince the review panel that your proposal is worth their support and that you can carry it out at a high level of merit and skill.

3. Project Budget – All applicants must use the provided budget form. It's an Excel document and can be found online at www.adirondackarts.org or by emailing the Grant Coordinator at fred@adirondackarts.org. The budget form, including the in-kind section, should be completed in its entirety. Please indicate all secured and anticipated funding sources.

Please note: The project narrative and budget form provide the same information in two different forms. Discrepancies between these two will be noticed and questioned by the review panel. Everything mentioned in the narrative that will produce an expense or income for your project should be accounted for in your budget form. For example, if you say that a local corporation has agreed to give you \$500 towards your proposed project, make sure that contribution is included in your budget form.

4. Proof of nonprofit status. All applicants should submit one of the following documents:
 - Letter of Determination from the IRS indicating tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3)
 - Documentation of charter by the NY State Board of Regents under section 216 of the NY State Education Law
 - Documentation of incorporation under Section 402 of the NY State Not-for-Profit Corporation Law
 - Current NY State Bureau of Charities (Office of the Attorney General) filing receipt
 - Official authorization as an arm of local government (i.e., a formal letter on official stationery signed by the appropriate county, city, town, or village executive)
5. Applicant organization's current list of board members and bylaws
6. Letter of agreement between fiscal sponsor and applicant, if applicable. See *"Use of Fiscal Sponsors"* section above.
7. Applicant organization's most current audited financial statement
8. Bio/resume of key artist(s) and/or project manager(s)
9. Letter(s) of support (optional) – You may include letters of support from community members expressing the needs for the project and/or showing support.
10. Applicable work samples. Work samples should be submitted electronically along with the completed application.
 - Audio-video samples: Audio or video files or a URL with excerpts of recent work totaling no more than five minutes of audio or video; label clearly with name of artist/work title/year of creation.
 - Images: No more than 10 images, which may include diagrams and sketches of proposed work and/or images of previous projects. No PowerPoint presentations.
 - Literary Arts: Applicants may submit a writing sample. The excerpt may be no more than five pages.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted electronically to the Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, January 31, 2021. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Please note: All required fields in the application form must be completed in order to finalize and submit your application. These fields are indicated by red asterisks. After you have submitted your application successfully, you will receive a confirmation email generated by Submittable.com to the email address associated with your Submittable account. If you do not receive a confirmation email, assume your application was not submitted and contact Submittable technical support and/or the Grant Coordinator.

GRANT REVIEW PROCESS

Applications are reviewed for eligibility, completeness, and accuracy by the Grant Coordinator. It is your responsibility to submit a complete and accurate application. As part of the review process, the Grant Coordinator may contact you by telephone or e-mail to clarify and review information.

All eligible applications are distributed to the review panel, a committee of area residents knowledgeable about the arts. The review panel evaluates each application and recommends a level of funding based on the evaluation criteria, the funding priorities, and the grant guidelines. Upon request, panelists will be furnished with final and interim reports as well as audit information, prior panel comments, and correspondence when considering organizations/individuals who have applied or have been funded in prior years. The panel's recommendations are submitted to and reviewed by the Arts Center's Board of Trustees and then NYSCA, which has the final authority for all decisions.

OPTIONAL APPLICATION REVIEW PERIOD

It is highly recommended that applicants take the opportunity to submit an application draft via Submittable.com for review by the Grant Coordinator at least two weeks before the submission deadline. The Grant Coordinator will not have time to look at last-minute drafts. After the deadline, no changes can be made to the applications and the Grant Coordinator will not review applications for completeness. Prior review by the Grant Coordinator does not guarantee funding; however, applicants who take advantage of this opportunity tend to do well during panel review.

Please note: The optional review period deadline is Friday, January 15, 2020.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Awards are based on a competitive review process. Due to strict guidelines, limited funds, and the competitive nature of the process, not all applicants will receive funding. Each applicant is reviewed on the basis of its own merits and against others in the application pool.

The review panel will make funding recommendations based on the following criteria:

ARTISTIC MERIT

- Quality of the artist or artists
- Quality of artists' participation in community outreach and integration into the community
- Programs that represent diverse cultures and backgrounds
- Uniqueness and innovation of the program as compared with programs happening in the area

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCE

- Organizational history and stability
- Responsibility and cooperation with past grant regulations
- Accurate and clear project budget with relevant budget notes
- Clearly defined marketing strategy using multiple media

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

- Events that reach and develop new audiences
- Programs that service year-round local communities.
- Programs that focus on building a sense of community through the arts

LOCAL FUNDING PRIORITIES

- Programs that cross real and perceived boundaries in the community
- Areas of distinct cultural deficiency—e.g., programs for underserved rural communities
- Creative and innovative programs that represent diverse cultures and backgrounds
- Programs that service the year-round population during the off-season (September - June) or that specifically target year-round residents during the summer season, especially youth
- New programs from new or returning applicants
- New organizations with a rural address or performance capability
- Projects initiated by artists of all disciplines, including: writers, performers, musicians, dancers, and visual artists
- Applicants who hire regional artists as a part of their performance
- Collaborative artistic performances
- Projects elaborating regional history and/or cultural diversity

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

People with disabilities have the right to participate in the programs that we fund. All services and facilities of organizations that receive NYSCA funding should be provided in a way that best suits individuals' needs. Each NYSCA grantee is required to provide assurances that it will comply with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 in making its programs and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities. You may ask the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to send you its

publication “The Arts and 504” and its companion piece, “Program Evaluation Workbook.” The NEA address is 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20506. Office numbers for the NEA’s Office for Access Ability are 202-682-5532, 202-682-5613 (fax), and 202-682-5496 (TTY). You can also find ADA information and help at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

CONTRACTS AND PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Applicants will be notified by March 15, 2021 via Submittable (email) of the review panel’s decision. If applicants are awarded funding, they must first accept the ‘Terms and Conditions’ of the grant award via Submittable. After they have accepted, award letters and contracts will be mailed to the applicant of record. Contracts must be returned before checks are awarded. Grant checks and certificates will be awarded at an awards ceremony held at one of the cultural centers located throughout the four counties. *Deviations from this schedule may occur. Applicants will be notified as quickly as possible of any changes.*

APPEALS PROCESS

In the event that your project is not funded, the guideline steps as follows are set in place to ensure a fair appeals process for all applicants.

Applicants should first consult with the Grant Coordinator to review the considerations that went into the panel’s decision. If, after the consultation, the applicant wishes to pursue an appeal, the applicant must submit a formal request in writing to the Executive Director of the Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts within 14 calendar days from the issue date on the denial letter. The applicant will receive a written response, and the appeal will be assigned to a different appeals panel who will meet to examine the grounds of the appeal. The appeals panel will provide a recommendation to the Arts Center’s Board of Trustees for final approval.

There are three grounds for appeal:

1. Non-presentation of material information by staff or panelist;
2. Misrepresentation of material information by staff or panelist;
3. Improper procedure.

Please note: An applicant’s dissatisfaction with a denial of an award or with the grant amount is not sufficient reason for an appeal.

GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Receiving a Decentralization Grant carries responsibilities for the grantee. All of these obligations are directly related to NYSCA’s duty to see that public funds are expended responsibly.

ALL GRANT RECIPIENTS MUST:

1. Sign and return a contract to the DEC site, prior to the awards ceremony and prior to receiving a grant check.
2. Notify the Grant Coordinator immediately if a project cannot take place or if any changes need to be made to the project.
3. Notify the Grant Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the event and hold two tickets for an auditor.
4. Copy the Grant Coordinator on all press releases, advertisements, etc. and forward copies of all promotional and marketing pieces to the Grant Coordinator.
5. File a final report for each project within 30 days of completion of the project.
6. Use the following logo for the Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts and credit statement on all publicity and marketing materials:



This project is made possible with the funds from the Decentralization Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and administered by the Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts.

7. Send a letter of thanks to your state and local elected officials and to representatives at the New York State Council on the Arts, describing your funded project and acknowledging their support for the Decentralization Program.

SCHEDULE OF INFORMATIONAL SEMINARS

The Decentralization grant application process begins by attending one of the many informational seminars scheduled throughout the Quad-County service area—in-person or via an online platform such as Zoom, given continued restrictions on public gatherings stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts offers free informational seminars to provide prospective applicants with instructions on how to apply for Decentralization grants. At these seminars the Grant Coordinator will review changes in the grant guidelines from the previous year, answer questions, and provide feedback and technical assistance. In order to receive funding, applicants are required to attend one of these seminars before completing the application. The seminars are free and open to the public. All applicants (new and returning) must attend a seminar or arrange for a 1-on-1 consultation with the Grant Coordinator.

Please note: The contact person, the grant writer, and the person who attends the seminar must be the same person.

Prospective applicants must register for the seminars in advance by contacting the Grant Coordinator. Seminars will take place in December and January in various locations throughout Clinton, Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton counties and/or via Zoom. Please visit the Arts Center's website for the seminar schedule: www.adirondackarts.org.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If I have received funding in the past, may I apply again?

Of course! If you have received funding in the past, you are eligible to apply again. However, prior funding does not guarantee continued support. Each application is reviewed in the context of the current program guidelines, funding priorities, and evaluation criteria. The review panel will also consider compliance with the previous contract and reporting requirements. When reviewing projects that have received funding in the past, priority will be given to projects that are able to successfully demonstrate growth, artistic expansion, community support, and/or continued community need.

How much of the total project is the grant intended to cover?

Decentralization Grants usually are not intended to cover the complete cost of the proposed project. In 2019, Decentralization grants have ranged from \$306 to \$4,500. The average grant was approximately \$2,170.

Most years, Decentralization Grants never fund more than 75% of the applicant's total project budget (total cash expenses). Your project budget would demonstrate that a minimum of 25% of the proposed project income comes from other funding sources, covered through planned in-kind contributions, cash income, or a combination of both as outlined in the project budget. Typically, for Arts Education grants, the 25% can be covered by only in-kind donations; but, for Community Arts grants, the 25% would include additional cash income. However, because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on DEC-supported projects in 2020, the match requirement is being waived in its entirety for 2021 projects. It may be reinstated for 2022 projects.

May I apply for funding for more than one project?

Yes. A single applicant may submit up to three project requests for Community Arts and Arts Education grants. Please note: the maximum total request amount cannot exceed \$5,000. Fiscally sponsored requests are exempt from the three-request limit and the \$5,000 maximum.

Must I attend an informational seminar?

Yes. Attending an informational seminar is required for all applicants, regardless if you have applied in the past. If you are unable to attend a seminar due to scheduling conflicts, you must contact the Grant Coordinator and schedule a meeting with her or him. The purpose is to give a personalized overview of the DEC program and to familiarize the applicant with the grant guidelines. It also gives applicants the opportunity to consult with the Grant Coordinator on the specifics of their projects and to get feedback before applying. Given the persisting restrictions on public gatherings stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, most, if not all, 2020-21 informational seminars will be held via Zoom and the Grant Coordinator will make every effort to accommodate all requests for 1-on-1 consultations, especially by phone, for prospective applicants who cannot attend in-person seminars or have difficulty making any seminars held via Zoom.

I am an out-of-county artist: am I eligible to be a direct applicant?

Artists providing programs in a county they do not permanently reside in are eligible for Decentralization Grants using a fiscal sponsor whose legal address lies within the county in which the program is taking place. The fiscal sponsor must meet all of the eligibility requirements listed above for an applicant organization. The fiscal sponsor must be the applicant organization and receive the funds on behalf of the artist as a pass-through. See *the “Use of Fiscal Sponsors” section above*.

For questions regarding the ADK Quad-County Decentralization Program, please contact Grant Coordinator Fred Balzac at 518-588-7275 or fred@adirondackarts.org.