

Public Art for Neighborhoods Fund: 2024 Community Connection Grants

*Funded by the City of Indianapolis
through the Public Art for Neighborhoods Program*

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

ELIGIBILITY

Who can apply for this grant?

Artists, collectives of artists, and community-based organizations that serve a specific neighborhood can apply for this grant. **Arts organizations may not apply for this grant as a Lead Applicant**; however, they can be a secondary *Participating Artist*. For assistance in determining whether you or your organization are eligible, email jmoore@indyarts.org.

Why can't arts organizations apply for this program, even if they only serve one neighborhood?

This program is designed for artists and non-arts neighborhood organizations to partner and lead in their own communities. The Arts Council has other grant programs for arts organizations. [You can find them here](#). Please contact grants@indyarts.org to discuss eligibility or other questions.

Does my organization have to be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to apply?

No! Any non-arts organization or community group in Marion County may apply. You will need to describe your organization and how you serve your community on the application form.

I'm an artist. Do I have to live in Marion County to apply?

As long as the project takes place in Marion County, any artist may be a Lead Applicant or may be paid by a community from grant funds. However, an authentic connection between the artist and the community where the project will take place is one of the evaluation criteria.

Can my Hamilton (or Johnson, or Shelby, etc.) County organization apply if my artist lives in Marion County?

No. Organizations serving as Lead Applicants must be based in Marion County, and, specifically, based in the Marion County community where the project will take place.

Do I have to be a member of the Arts Council to apply for this grant?

We don't have members! Any eligible applicant can apply. You will have to register for a free account on our grant application platform, but that is not a membership.

APPLYING

Where do I apply?

You must apply online, at this link: <http://indyarts.grantplatform.com> and you must be a registered user of the grant platform.

- Registration is free
- You can register at the time of application
- To register you will need an email address that you check regularly.

Once you are registered, look for the graphic that says "Public Art for Neighborhoods Community Connection Grants." If you cannot view or access the application, email jmoore@indyarts.org for assistance.

How many applications can I submit?

As long as each application is for a different project, you can submit any number of applications. However, multiple applications from the same artist or

organization are unlikely to be funded if there is the opportunity to fund someone that hasn't received the grant before.

What's the deadline to apply?

You can submit your application anytime before **October 1, 2024**. Applications will be reviewed quarterly (in April 2024, July 2024, and October 2024; if funds are still available, we may extend the deadline to January 1, 2025). ***Projects must be completed by June 30, 2025.***

Can I reapply if I am not funded the first time?

Yes, you can reapply, providing there would be enough time for you to complete the project before June 30, 2025. We strongly recommend contacting us to find out why you were unsuccessful, and get tips on how to improve your application when you submit it again. Email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss your application.

Should I apply early or later for best consideration?

We recommend applying as soon as you are ready. Here's why:

- Applications are reviewed and awards made every 3 months. If you wait too long to apply, all the available funds may have already been awarded.
- If you apply too late, the selection committee may feel you will not have enough time to complete your project before June 30, 2025 if something unexpected happens.
- If you are not funded on your first try, applying early leaves you time to consult with Arts Council staff and apply again.

I got a grant from this program in 2021--can I submit an application?

Yes! This is a new program year.

I got a grant from this program in the 2024 round--can I submit another application?

Yes, as long as it's for a completely different project from the one that was already funded. However, if the new project takes place in the same community, it is unlikely to be funded because we want to spread the funding out around Marion County.

Can I be part of two partnerships who are both applying?

Yes, as long as the partnerships are for completely different projects.

Our organization needs a Participating Artist. Can you recommend someone?

As the program administrator it would be a conflict if we were to recommend artists to you. But we have several resources available to help you find an artist on your own!

- You can search our online [Artist Directory](#) using tags or keywords. **Tip:** search by zip code to see artists living in your community!
- You can use our [Artist Opportunities list](#) to place a “classified” with the information an artist will need to figure out if the opportunity is a match for their skills. Our staff can help you write that.
- You can contact an [arts organization](#) to see if any of the artists they are associated with might be interested.
- If you’re looking to create a mural or other public artwork, you can take a look at the [Public Art Directory](#) and find artists whose previous work you like.
- Finally—ask around! Friends who know artists will be happy to recommend them to you, and if you ask on social media, your contacts will tag artists so you can look into them yourself.

PROJECTS

What kind of project is likely to get funded?

- A project that makes a good case that this is the right project at the right time for a particular place is very likely to get funded.
- Projects that show authentic partnerships between an artist and a neighborhood are more likely to get funded. Ideally the artist lives in the same neighborhood where they will be doing the project, but it is not a requirement.
- Projects for murals on traffic signal boxes have a separate funding pool, and we can make up to 20 \$750 awards from that pool. These projects are highly likely to get funded.

- Projects that take place in “*public art deserts*”—that is, census tracts with no public art at all or areas that don’t have public art within one mile of any given location—are highly likely to get funded. You can learn more about the locations of the public art deserts from this document.

My neighborhood organization wants to bring in an artist from outside Indiana for a project. Is that allowed?

As long as the project takes place in Marion County, and the organizational Lead Applicant is an organization serving the neighborhood where the project will take place, artists can be from anywhere. However, an authentic connection between the artist and the community where the project will take place is one of the evaluation criteria.

What will keep me from getting funded?

One or more of the following factors will result in immediate disqualification:

- You are not eligible to apply for this grant.
- Your project does not take place in Marion County.
- Your project does not involve arts activity.
- Your project charges participants a fee.
- Your project takes place in a location that is not open to everyone.
- Your funding request exceeds \$5,000 (\$750 for traffic signal box projects).
- Your budgeted expenses and your expected income, as shown on the application form, do not equal each other.
- Your project completion date is after June 30, 2025.
- Your request is for general operating support, to support an organizational fundraising project, to support a religious ceremony or celebration, or involves signage.
- You are not working with an artist.
- You are not paying a fee to the artist(s) you are working with.

Can I apply for funding for a project that’s already in process?

Yes, if your request is between \$500 and \$5,000, and it is set to be completed by June 30, 2025.

Can I apply for funding for a project with a budget larger than \$5,000?

Yes, if you can show where the rest of the funding to complete it is coming from. However, your request from this grant program cannot exceed \$5,000. Additional sources of funding you can investigate include the Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center's [Neighborhood Grants](#), LISC Indy's [Facade and Property Improvement Grants](#), the Urban League's [African American Quality of Life Initiative Grants](#), the [Black Joy Fund](#), Keep Indianapolis Beautiful's [AES Project GreenSpace](#) program, Big Car's [Power Plant Grants](#), and the Central Indiana Community Foundation's [Artist Ambassador Grants](#) among others.

Can I apply for a “phase 1” of a project that will happen after June 30, 2025?

Yes, if the activities in phase 1 are self-contained enough that they can be completed by June 30, 2025 and still be perceived as a finished project without further phases. Please email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss this situation before applying.

Can I apply for funding to complete a “proof of concept” for a larger project?

Yes, if the proof of concept can be considered a self-contained project on its own, and it can be completed by June 30, 2025. Please email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss this situation before applying.

Can I apply for funding for a project that takes place on City property?

In most cases, yes, but you will need additional permissions from the City and you should factor the permitting time into your project timeline.

- If it's intended to happen in an Indy Parks park you will need to obtain a permit from Indy Parks and demonstrate that you have insurance.
- If you are installing artwork on a City building, in a street median, on a street or sidewalk surface, or in a traffic circle (among other “right of way” locations), you will need to obtain an “Art in the Right of Way” permit.

These permits can be obtained either before you apply for the funding or after you have been awarded funding, but your first award payment will be held until

you have been granted the permit. If any of these situations apply to your project, please email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss the situation before applying so you can get the resources and information you need to successfully obtain a permit.

Why can't my project include signage?

It's a frustrating process to get permission to put up a sign. Signage requires a City permit, and the signage ordinance is very complicated to interpret. In order to make your projects easier to achieve, we have eliminated signage as an eligible project. However, if you want to create artwork as a particular type of sign that doesn't require a permit, or that the City of Indianapolis does not consider to be a sign, you may be able to do that. Some examples of this type of sign are: public signs (which include memorial plaques and signs of historical interest), yard signs (if they are installed for less than 10 days), a non-commercial flag, or a window sign (placed inside the building and facing out through the window).

WRITING THE APPLICATION

For the purposes of this grant, who is an "artist"?

We define an "artist" as someone who routinely pursues a creative, aesthetic activity and thinks of themselves as an artist, or others think of them as an artist. It can be a visual art (painting, drawing, sculpting, clay, knitting, fashion, etc.), a performing art (music, theater, dance, spoken word, etc.), a literary art (writing stories, novels, poetry, etc.), or something that is more of a social-practice art that engages the community with activities like gardening, culinary, etc. that is nevertheless intended as an artistic act. The artist does not have to be professional--that is, they do not have to be trying to earn a living from their creative work--but they should be doing their art regularly and actively trying to connect with others through their artistic practice.

For the purposes of this grant, what does "public" mean?

"Public" means that all funded activities take place in a location that is open to anyone, there are no restrictions on who can participate, and there is no fee or

cost to participate. **Projects do not have to take place outdoors or on public (i.e., city-owned) property.**

Can you help me write my application?

We cannot help you write your application, but we will be happy to review what you've written or discuss your idea with you before you start writing. We can also help you decide on what to submit as artistic documentation, and help you figure out what letters of support you should get. Review our [Grantwriting Tips](#) document, or email jmoore@indyarts.org for assistance.

How much does spelling and grammar count?

We don't care about spelling or grammar errors, but a clear and well-written application will help you communicate your ideas better. It is a good idea to ask someone else to read your proposal before submitting it. If the selection committee can't understand your application because they can't follow your train of thought, they will have no basis for scoring it and it is unlikely to be funded.

Do I have to submit my application in English?

Please email jmoore@indyarts.org to discuss your language preference. In most cases you can apply in the language you are most comfortable with, and we will find someone to translate your application responses into English if the reviewers don't speak your language fluently. We recommend that you contact us right away if this is the case, and submit your application as soon as possible. Your application may need to be reviewed in a later round to allow time for translation.

Can you give me some tips on creating a grant budget?

- The most common situation reviewers encounter when reading grant budgets is that the expenses are either overbudgeted or underbudgeted. Try to be very exact about how much things cost when estimating your expenses, and if you feel you must put in a little extra "just in case," show that on a separate line.
- Make sure the expenses you list are justified by the project narrative. ***The narrative and budget should tell the same story.*** If you talk about an activity in the narrative, there should be numbers in the budget that support it. Similarly, there should not be any budget line items that seem like they are not essential to completing the project as described in the narrative.

- We recommend that you budget at least one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of your request to pay artists (or if the applicant is an artist—to pay yourself!). Be sure you discuss payment terms with artists in advance to understand what their services are and the compensation they expect to receive.
- Reviewers will want to know how solid your income sources are, especially if the total budget exceeds the \$5,000 limit for PAFN funding. If some of your income sources are not yet committed, note their status on the budget line (“unconfirmed” or “promised” or “applied”, etc.).

ARTISTIC DOCUMENTATION

Why do you ask for artistic documentation?

Providing examples of the artist’s (or artists’) work allows the reviewers to understand how they have worked with communities before, and how successful their work has been with that community.

What are good examples of artistic documentation?

- **For visual artists:** photographs or videos of past work, particularly work done in partnership with communities. If the work was community-based, it’s important to have images showing how the community participated.
- **For performing artists (including performed spoken word):** videos or audio clips of past performances, still images of work being performed, images of audiences viewing performances (showing a positive reaction).
- **For musicians:** audio or video files from past performances, and/or scores or other source material you are working from.
- **For literary artists (including spoken word compositions):** texts; video or still images of readings or other community-based sharing of your work
- **For all artists:** links to websites, YouTube or Vimeo videos or channels, SoundCloud or Bandcamp profiles, etc. where your work can be found. Make sure that any videos you want the reviewers to look at are not password-protected, or provide the password(s) in your upload. Provide links to specific projects you want the reviewers to see, and choose projects that have relevance to what you are proposing to do in your grant

application. If the project in the application has already been done, provide documentation of that installation, performance, etc.

- **Background information on the artist(s):** resumes, narrative biographies, artist statements, reviews of past work, etc. Again, choose projects that have relevance to what you are proposing to do in your grant application.
- **Site and project information:** reviewers appreciate seeing where projects will take place, and if possible, how the project might be experienced by the community. Consider taking photographs of the park, street, lawn, shelter, etc. where the project will happen, and if you already have a design or layout in mind, provide that as well.

How do you want me to provide links?

- There will be spaces on the form to provide a full URL, starting with http://
- You can also provide a page of live links by creating a Word (or similar word-processing software) document and uploading it.
- To make a link “live,” type in or copy the webpage address (starting with http://), then hit the space bar, the “enter” key, or the “return” key. You will know a link is live when it is colored blue and underlined. That link will then be clickable and people will be sent to that webpage.

Is there a size limit for uploaded photos, videos, etc?

Uploads cannot exceed 10 MB each.

- We prefer uploaded files to be as small as possible.
- We prefer videos to be provided via links, as above.
- If you need help resizing your documentation, please email jmoore@indyarts.org

What file types do you accept for uploads?

File types accepted are jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, doc, docx, mp3, mp4, wav, wmv, mpeg. If you want to know whether we can accept a certain filetype that cannot be converted into any of these, please email jmoore@indyarts.org

All my artwork documentation is on my phone. How do I get it to you?

If you are using your phone to complete the application, you can upload from your phone to the application form. If you're not using your phone to apply, we suggest using your phone to email images to yourself, saving them to a folder on a computer, and then following the prompts on the application form to attach them to the application. Please email jmoore@indyarts.org for additional assistance.

SUPPORT LETTERS

Why do you ask for support letters?

A successful project starts with a compatible partnership. The reviewers want to make sure that the partnership outlined in the grant request is authentic, and that all partners are aware of and have agreed to participate in the project.

Organizations should have already approached their artist(s) and discussed the project with them, and artists should make sure the community will welcome their work.

What should a support letter say?

A support letter should confirm the proposed partner's role in the project and explain why the partner believes that this project is good for the community. If there is a history between the partners, support letters can explain how past projects have proceeded and how successful they were. This is valuable information that supports and expands on what is in the application.

Should I get support letters from other community members?

If a particular community member is important to the project, yes, that person should provide a letter of support. If a person or organization can provide information important to the reviewers' understanding of the project or can provide verification of the quality of an artist's work, but they are not actually participating in the project under consideration, a support letter can be helpful for context.

- General letters of support (for the organization or artist) from people who are not associated with the project are typically not going to be helpful to reviewers as they evaluate your application.
- Letters of support from powerful or famous people (members of Congress, City Councillors, etc.) are not particularly persuasive if the writer is not directly involved in the project.
- Remember that community members will have the chance to comment on your application during the review process, via an online form. If you want to demonstrate support from your community, please use that opportunity (it's an online form with comments limited to 250 words per person).

Does the support letter have to be signed?

Yes, each support letter should have a signature.

GRANT REVIEW

Who makes the funding decision?

The [Public Art for Neighborhoods Selection Committee](#) is made up of community representatives, arts professionals, city representatives, and working artists. It is a City-mandated board and so decisions must be made in open, public, in-person meetings. Anyone from the public may attend.

How are funding decisions made?

The selection committee looks at three dimensions of a project and will award up to 100 points. Projects scoring an average of 80 points or higher will be funded. The criteria and point values are:

- **25 points - Envisioning a Connected, Just, and Equitable Future for Neighborhoods Through the Arts:** The project's ability to meaningfully engage its community through the proposed artistic activity
- **25 points - Lead Applicant Capacity:** The Lead Applicant's ability to successfully plan and manage a project to conclusion.

- **50 points - Artistic Quality and Cultural Vibrancy:** The project's ability to create a high-quality artistic experience that meets the community's expressed cultural goals.

What are the reviewers looking for?

The selection committee is looking for the following:

- How meaningful is the project for the community? Is it something that the community has requested or asked for? Is there a local condition or situation that led to the project idea? What is the exact connection between the arts project/activity and the goal or need in the community? How, and how well, does the artistic activity meet the community's goals? The more closely you can tie the community's goals and the nature of the artistic activity together, the greater the likelihood that the project will be funded.
- Can the project be completed well using the resources available? (money, time, people, space, etc.) Are there resources available that aren't being tapped, and are there resources that are being overestimated? The match of available resources and the plan for using them should be very strong.
- Is the artistic activity of high aesthetic quality? (to understand what "high aesthetic quality" means for community-based artwork, [review this framework](#)) Is the partnership with the artist authentic and is this the right artist for the project? Does the project spring from a genuine collaboration with the artist?

How much funding will I get?

You may request any amount between \$500 and \$5,000. Traffic signal box projects are a flat \$750 grant. Our goal is to fully fund all projects that score highly (above 80%) in the application review, until the grant pool runs out. We do not intend to give partial funding, but if some aspects of your project are ineligible for funding, we may decide to fund other parts of it and ask you to revise your project accordingly.

Should I ask for the maximum funding amount?

If you ask for the maximum amount and the request does not seem to be justified based on the case you have made in your application, the committee is unlikely to award any funding. You should scale your request to the actual cost of the project.

How many grants are you giving out?

We will make at least 16 project grants. The exact number of grants depends on the funding level requested in the successful applications. We will give exactly 20 \$750 traffic signal box art grants.

If I ask for less money, will I be more likely to get a grant?

Not necessarily. The selection committee is looking at the nature and quality of the proposed project, not at the amount requested. Having said that--your overall project budget and requested amount (up to \$5,000) should be enough to complete the project unless you have indicated that you have secured additional support. If you have not asked for enough money, or your budget and project plan seem as if they don't include key necessary expenses, the committee is unlikely to award any funding.

This is an evolving document and will be updated regularly. If you do not see your question answered here, please contact Julia Moore, jmoore@indyarts.org or call (317) 631-3301 x240.