



Application Guide

Howard Gilman Foundation - A.R.T./New York

FY28 - FY29

Small Theatres Fund

Updated: September 2026

[A large print application guide is available through this link.](#)

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Overview of A.R.T./New York Grant Programs

For over two decades the Alliance of Resident Theatres/New York (A.R.T./New York) has provided grants to support small and mid-sized theatres in New York City and State through regranting partnerships with foundations and government agencies.

In building A.R.T./New York's grantmaking programs, we work towards the following goals:

1. Provide a streamlined application process to limit the burden on small theaters to apply for funding.
2. Create opportunities for multiple input on scoring and knowledge-sharing in the evaluation process by utilizing a peer panel with nominations open to the public.
3. Provide robust technical assistance during and following the application process so applicants can submit the strongest possible applications to a funding program.
4. Make our applications, technical assistance, and all other grantmaking programs accessible to artists and administrators with disabilities.
5. Reflect and respect the myriad of possible ways to be a theatre company, and center the company's reflection of its needs, opportunities, and challenges instead of providing a "one size fits all" model.
6. Talk explicitly about historical and current under-resourcing of communities and artists due to racial, economic, disability, and sexual identity and/or geographic location, and actively work to address these inequities. This includes holding space for discussions of bias and anti-racism and anti-oppression training, ensuring panels and funding dockets reflect the demography of New York City and State, and interrogating ideas around artistic quality/excellence, community service, and professionalism in non-profit arts management in the creation of funding programs, applications, and panelist discussion and scoring.

General Eligibility for A.R.T./New York Grant Applications

1. Applicants to A.R.T./New York's grant programs are NOT required to be members of A.R.T./New York.
2. Applicants must not charge fees to artists (including but not limited to playwrights, actors, designers, and directors) to participate in theatrical productions of the organization; fees may be charged only for legitimate classes and training programs and only if they are clearly distinct from theatre productions.

Panelist Process and Nominations

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of theatre artists and administrators from across the state. A.R.T./New York accepts panelist nominations from the public to fill our grant panels, and we look to put together a diverse group of panelists from a range of roles and affiliations across the nonprofit theatre field who have particular knowledge of or experience with small theatres. Panelists receive a stipend, and will read and review applications based on an evaluative rubric, then meet for two half days of discussion and funding allocation. Panelist nominations are accepted on a rolling basis. [Please click here to nominate yourself or someone else as a panelist.](#)

New York Common Application Questions

A.R.T./New York is participating in the use of New York Common Application Questions! In 2022, The New York Grantmakers in the Arts (NYGIA) formed a Common Application Committee from a variety of different funding institutions (including public, private, corporate, family, and intermediary grantmakers) who met regularly until 2025. The mission of the committee was to identify and suggest commonalities that could streamline the application experience for NYC artists and arts organizations. The committee drafted a full set of common application narrative questions to be integrated into any grant application as well as explanatory language about the common application project.

A.R.T./New York is pleased to take part in this exciting initiative. Several questions in our applications this upcoming year will be taken from the recommended common questions. You will know they are a common application narrative question if you see the following:

Every question with an ♦ was designed by the New York Grantmakers in the Arts' Common Application Committee. By standardizing question language across applications, this effort seeks to reduce the amount of time New York artists and arts organizations spend on grant proposals. If you encounter one of these questions on another funder's application, you are encouraged to cut and paste the same answer. This work is based on the efforts of the Common Application for the Arts - Bay Area.

Application Support and Technical Assistance

Info Sessions

A.R.T./New York will provide pre-recorded info sessions and a virtual and/or live info session for the Howard Gilman Foundation - A.R.T./New York Small Theatres Fund. The info sessions are led by A.R.T./New York staff and will review the grant, eligibility criteria, and application process. Attendees are encouraged to review the grant website and application prior to attending the info session. A recorded information session will be uploaded to the website by grant opening day. Any other virtual and/or live info sessions will be noted on our website.

We highly recommend new applicants attend an info session before submitting their application. However, it is not required to attend one before you can apply.

Automatic captioning is available on all virtual info sessions. ASL interpretation, live captioning, and other accessibility services are available upon request for all info sessions. Please contact our grants team at grants@art-newyork.org email at least 5 business days in advance

Please visit <https://art-newyork.org/resources/grants/small-theatres-fund/> to find information about this year's info sessions.

Office Hours

A.R.T./New York staff will be offering technical assistance in the form of virtual "office hours." All applicants will be able to schedule a 25 minute session, during which A.R.T./New York staff will be happy to discuss your responses to the questions in the grant application, look over potential work samples you're considering, talk through questions on your budget and/or budget notes, and answer any other questions regarding the grant and your application you might have.

Please be sure you have reviewed the grant application, eligibility requirements, and evaluation criteria prior to your meeting. You do not need to have completed responses to the application questionnaire before your meeting, but the more you have prepared the more substantial feedback they'll be able to provide.

Please visit <https://art-newyork.org/resources/grants/small-theatres-fund/> to sign up for office hours.

Post-Panel Feedback

After award notifications have gone out, applicants will have the opportunity to meet virtually with a member of the grants team to review the panel's comments and feedback on the application. This session is intended to give applicants an understanding of the panel process, of areas of strength within their application, and opportunities for improvement or clarification for future grant applications. Further information will be available in the notification letters.

Contact

For the quickest response to any questions, please email grants@art-newyork.org or Erica Wray Barnes(she/her), ewraybarnes@art-newyork.org
Associate Director of Grants and Membership Engagement



New York City Small Theatres Fund

A.R.T./New York is thrilled to partner with the Howard Gilman Foundation on a multi-year funding opportunity for small New York City-based theatres. The New York Small Theatres Fund provides two-year general operating support grants to New York City-based theatre companies with annual budgets between \$15,000 - \$250,000. Grant awards will be between \$7,500-\$10,000 each year and applications will open annually in the fall.

By offering a two-year committed grant, this program provides meaningful financial support for small theatres who typically do not have many options for accessing general operating support. The grant supports a wide range of theatrical aesthetics, methods of production, and artistic communities throughout the five boroughs who are engaging their artists and audiences in meaningful, exciting, work and are committed to creation and production. We aim to fund a group of applicants who reflect the diversity of New York City theatre-making, and increase opportunities for theatres and artists who have been historically under-resourced due to barriers associated with racial, economic, disability, gender, and/or sexual identity and/or geographic location.

The Small Theatres Fund is a two-year grant, and the grant period will be July 1, 2027 - June 30, 2029. Grantees will be required to report on the grant in the summer of each year.

Timeline

Application Opens:	Tuesday, September 29 at 10am ET
Office Hours:	September 29 - November 13, 2026
Application Closes:	November 17, 2026 at 5pm ET
Notifications Round 1:	March 2027

Application Round 1 - Open Application

The first stage of the open application process is completing the Howard Gilman Foundation - A.R.T./New York Small Theatres Fund application.

The applications from the Open Application period will be paneled by a group of NYC-based theatre-makers and administrators in Winter 2027. All applicants will be notified about the status of their application by March 2027.

Application Round 2 - Invited Application

Based on the scores and discussions of the panel, a group of 40 applicants will be invited to submit a final application for the grant program. All invited applicants will be notified of the funding decisions in June 2027. Applicants who submit an application in the final round will receive a stipend of \$150.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Small Theatre Fund, applicants must:

- Be a theatre company, organization, or artist collective creating, developing, or presenting theatre for at least two years;
 - Applicant may be a 501c3, LLC, fiscally sponsored, or unincorporated entity that is “non-profit in spirit”.
 - A.R.T./New York has an expansive definition of “theatre” as a discipline of live performance. If you call your art theatre, then you are eligible to apply for this grant! However, keep in mind as you write your application that a panel of theatre-makers will be evaluating your application for this theatre-based grant.
- Have annual expenses totaling between \$15,000 - \$250,000 for its most recently completed fiscal year (excluding any regrants or artist relief the theatre may have distributed);
- Be primarily producing, developing, or presenting work in the five boroughs of New York City;
 - Companies that create work in New York City and then tour nationally and internationally are eligible for this grant program.
- Not be funded directly by the Howard Gilman Foundation.

Evaluation Criteria

Reviewing evaluation criteria is a crucial step in the grant writing process. Please keep the following evaluation criteria in mind when completing your grant application:

Artistic Merit (25%)

Artistic merit is not a measure of whether an artistic product is “good” or “bad”, but a tool to measure whether companies have created work with intentionality, integrity, and rigor, whether the work contributed to the theatrical culture of New York, and whether the production is achieving artistic success by the definition of the company. A.R.T./New York supports an expansive definition of theatre as a discipline of the performing arts and rejects the idea that service to the Western European artistic canon is a core component of artistic merit.

Organization Identity (25%)

Who are you, what do you do, and why do you do it?

Clearly articulate your theatre’s mission, vision, goals, and core programming and state how your artistic programs align. There are many different ways of writing about the organizational identity of a company. Please clearly define the driving values and programming behind your theatre’s work.

Impact on and Service to the Community (25%)

Explain how your theatre distinguishes itself from other theatres in the city in creating work and programming that impacts artists, audiences, and others who you define as your community. Explain the impact your theatre has on the local theatrical field. Talk about any intentional steps around audience and community building.

Need and Impact of the Grant (25%)

Explain the impact receiving this grant would have on your theatre, artists, and community. Make an effective case for the grant’s impact on your ability to stabilize and/or build capacity. Make a clear case for funding.

Howard Gilman - A.R.T./New York Small Theatres Fund

Application Outline

PAGE 1: WELCOME + ELIGIBILITY

Welcome! Thank you for applying for the Howard Gilman Foundation - A.R.T./New York Small Theatres Fund. In this section you will be directed to complete a series of questions to determine your eligibility for Howard Gilman Foundation - A.R.T./New York Small Theatres Fund. If you have questions about eligibility criteria or your theatre's specific circumstances, please contact us at grants@art-newyork.org.

ELIGIBILITY QUIZ

**Required Question*

1. *What were your theatre's annual expenses for the most recently completed fiscal year?
 - ☐ Over \$250,000
 - ☐ Between \$15,000 and \$250,000
 - ☐ \$15,000 or below

2. *Are you a theatre company, organization, or artist collective creating, developing, or presenting theatre in the five boroughs of New York City for at least two years?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

3. *Is your theatre directly funded by the Howard Gilman Foundation?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

PAGE 2: Contact and Theatre Information

Primary Contact Info

This information is pre-filled from your user profile.

- * First Name
- * Last Name
- * Email Address
- * Phone #

Secondary Contact

Please provide the name and contact information of a second contact (with a different phone number and email address) who will also receive information regarding this grant application.

- * First Name
- * Last Name
- * Email Address
- * Phone #

Theatre Information

Below we will be collecting information about your theatre.

*Theatre Name

This will be how your theatre will be referred to throughout the application process.

*Theatre Mailing Address

This is either your theater's physical address and/or where you receive mail for your theatre if you do not have a theater venue.

Website

Please provide a link to your website. Panelists may visit and view your website as part of their review process.

Upload any image or logo that your company uses

Provide any Social Media Handles you use

*What year was your theatre founded?

This should be the year that your theatre first started working together; this may not match with the year of formal incorporation.

*What is the organizational structure of your theatre?

- ☐ Non-profit organization with 501c3 status

- ☐ Fiscally sponsored organization or project
- ☐ Incorporated organization or LLC without fiscal sponsorship or 501c3 status
- ☐ Unincorporated entity or group without fiscal sponsorship
- ☐ Other:

*Which of the following best describes the work of your theatre company?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Producing Organization
- ☐ Developmental Organization
- ☐ Presenting Organization
- ☐ Artist-led Ensemble/Company
- ☐ Theatre for Youth/Theatre for Young Audiences
- ☐ Arts Service Organization and/or Community Organization
- ☐ Venue
- ☐ Other:

*What boroughs of New York City does your theatre primarily work in?

Select all that apply

- ☐ NYC - Bronx
- ☐ NYC - Kings/Brooklyn
- ☐ NYC - Manhattan
- ☐ NYC - Queens
- ☐ NYC - Richmond/Staten Island

*Are you currently a member of A.R.T./New York?

This field will not be seen by the panelists or impact your score.

- ☐ Yes, my theatre is currently an A.R.T./New York Member
- ☐ My theatre has been an A.R.T./New York member in the past, but we are not currently a member
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

PAGE 3: Theatre Narrative

In the Theatre Narrative section, you will answer questions about your theatre company's work.

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applications, this effort seeks to reduce the amount of time New York artists and arts organizations spend on grant proposals. If you encounter one of these questions on another funder's application, you are encouraged to cut and paste the same answer. This work is based on the efforts of the Common Application for the Arts - Bay Area.

Suggested lengths are listed on questions from the New York Grantmakers in the Arts' Common Application Committee. Please do not feel like you need to write extensively on each. A few paragraphs on each section or question will be enough for most applicants.

Applicants have three options for completing the narrative portion of the application.

- You may provide a pdf document that answers the prompts below in a narrative format.
- You may answer the prompts as short answers within the portal.
- You may record a video or audio file of you answering the questions. If you select the recorded option, the recording should be limited to a member or members of your company answering the questions, with no editing or additional material. This is not an example of your artistic work. The recording and transcript will be provided to panelists for their review.

*denotes required questions ◇ denotes Common Application questions

1. Theatre and Programming:

*◇Mission Statement

*◇Provide a brief organizational history.

Suggested length: 400 words or 2-3 paragraphs

*◇Summarize your organization's current programs and activities.

Suggested length: 800 words or 4-6 paragraphs

*◇How does your programming help you to meet your mission?

What are the distinguishing characteristics of your work?

(An opportunity to express how your work looks and feels, expand on your methods of working, clarify your aesthetic style, or discuss any aspect of your organization's work not yet addressed in the questions above. If you have nothing to add, you may leave this section blank.)

2. Artists, Audiences, and Communities:

*Tell us about your organization's impact on artists and audiences.

*◊Describe the communities your organization is rooted in, engages, and or serves. *Suggested length: 400 words or 2-3 paragraphs*

3. *◊Describe how your organization engages with equity and accessibility.

Suggested length: 400 words or 2-3 paragraphs

4. *◊Describe, if applicable, any recent or upcoming organizational changes or challenges (leadership, operational, financial, and/or major shift in programming).

Suggested length: 400 words or 2-3 paragraphs

5. *How would a two-year general operating support grant help your theatre address a challenge you face or engage with an opportunity you foresee? What would the impact of this grant have on your organization?

Please be specific in how you would allocate the funds during the two year cycle.

6. Is there anything else you would like to share with the panel about your theatre, your work, or the community you serve?

Page 4: Budget Information

***Organizational Budget**

Please upload an organizational operating budget which includes the following:

- Most recently completed fiscal year
- Current fiscal year actuals to date
- Current fiscal year budget projections
 - Your current fiscal year budget projections should be for the total year, not just from now until the end of your fiscal year.
- Projected budget for next fiscal year
 - Include your grant request(s) and any associated expenses in your budget.

[You may use either A.R.T./New York's template](#) or your own budget document as long as it includes the required years detailed above. Your budget must be a single page in pdf format.

***Budget Notes**

Budget notes are your opportunity to provide context, additional clarification, and explanation for the information provided in your budget. Your budget notes should be thorough, clear, and easy to read, and they should be written so someone not specifically familiar with your theatre can understand your budget.

Below are some areas that you should address in your budget notes; however, your specific budget may require additional explanation, so do consider carefully what additional context or explanation the panel might need in order to fully understand and evaluate your presented budget.

- Any line item that changes by more than 10% between fiscal years.
- Details for both earned and contributed income, including projected ticket sales, as well as individual and board contributions. Please also indicate secured and pending institutional funding. (You may notate secured funding using an asterisk)
- The cause of a deficit, and especially take the time to explain plans to address year-over-year deficits.

DO NOT refer to the row numbers in your spreadsheet on your budget notes, as these row numbers will not be visible when the panel reviews your document. We recommend referring to the items you are addressing by name (i.e. box office income, production expenses, etc).

You may either upload a pdf document with your budget notes, or you may type your budget notes directly into this form.

***Budget Overview**

Using information from your most recently completed fiscal year in the organizational budget you created above (if using the A.R.T./New York budget, all numbers in GREEN highlight in that template), please give us the following totals. Please round to the whole number and do not include commas.

***Total Earned Income**

***Total Contributed Income**

***Total Operating Expenses**

***In-Kind Contributions**

***Artist Compensation**

Please briefly describe how you compensate your artists. You should provide numerical pay rates for your artists, not just a note that you do compensate them. You may combine artists and rates into ranges as is helpful in describing your pay rates. (i.e. Actors: \$500/wk for full productions, \$50-\$100 for developmental readings; Technical Crew: \$20-\$35/hr; etc)

Page 5: Work Samples/Documentation

Please provide work samples or documentation that will help the panel understand the artistic and programmatic work of your theatre. We know that it is difficult for work samples to fully depict the experience of live performance and that there is no “one-size-fits-all” work sample that works for all applicants, so we are offering applicants flexibility in what they share with the panel as work samples or documentation. ***You must submit at least one work sample; you may include up to five.**

Potential types of work samples may include:

- Production photos
- Up to a 3 minute video or audio clip of a live or virtual production
- Letters of support from community partners
- Impact statement from program participants
- And more!

You may either upload your documents and work samples below, or link to a page on your website or on a video hosting site where the panel can view the material. Each applicant may submit up to five (5) pieces of documentation for their work samples, only one of which may be a video or audio clip of up to 3 minutes. No submitted document should be more than 3 pages in length please.

You have the option of providing a description of each work sample. Please keep your description brief, but this is an opportunity to direct the panelists towards why you selected a particular sample to submit.