



States Leading Creative Aging Grant Guidelines

Program Synopsis

In collaboration with E.A. Michelson Philanthropy, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is making available up to \$700,000 in grant funding to help state arts agencies strengthen meaningful arts learning experiences for older Americans. Grant funds from this States Leading Creative Aging initiative can be used to build on existing creative aging programs led by state arts agencies as part of the Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging initiative.

Background/Purpose of Grant

Between March 2021 and September 2022, 36 state/jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) developed creative aging programs with seed funding from the Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging (LSICA) initiative, a partnership between NASAA and E.A. Michelson Philanthropy. The LSICA initiative helped SAAs to offer robust programs and services benefiting 7,637 older adults and 831 teaching artists in hundreds of communities across the country. Together, NASAA and the participating states learned significant lessons about how state arts agencies are uniquely poised to enhance the artistry, well-being and social connections of older Americans.

In reflecting on the successes and lessons learned from the LSICA initiative, NASAA recognizes an important opportunity to help state arts agencies do more of what they do best, which is to provide the public benefit of the arts and creativity to all in

America, especially those in under-resourced communities. Lessons learned from LSICA also underscore that catalyzing transformative work is hard to do with limited resources, and that not every state arts agency has the current capacity to engage in transformative work in creative aging in their state.

The new States Leading Creative Aging (SLCA) grant opportunity builds on those learnings. It is a competitive grant process designed to provide meaningful resources to SAAs positioned to realize the next level of leadership in creative aging in their state and gain significant ground in meeting the needs of their older adult population through the arts and creativity.

The States Leading Creative Aging initiative is made possible by a partnership with E.A. Michelson Philanthropy. Through advocacy and strategic investments, E.A. Michelson Philanthropy empowers older adults to discover their creative capabilities and form meaningful connections within their communities. Starting in 2018, NASAA and E.A. Michelson Philanthropy have collaborated to raise awareness about creative aging, conduct research on the creative aging activities of SAAs and fund SAAs to grow their work in this issue area. This initiative is a continuation of that collaborative process.

State and jurisdictional arts agencies share a public mandate to make the social, educational, economic and health benefits of the arts and creativity available to all residents, especially underserved populations. Meeting the needs of older adults through meaningful arts engagement is an important component of that mission. The SLCA initiative helps SAAs to strengthen their creative aging partnerships and extend creative aging programs into communities that often experience barriers to arts resources.

Our Approach to Creative Aging

A [robust body of research](#) points to the power of the arts to support health and well-being as we age. Arts and cultural participation can improve the emotional well-being of older adults, support good physical and cognitive health, strengthen social bonds, and bring a heightened experience of purpose and joy to our lives. NASAA recognizes that there are many valid approaches to pursuing these positive outcomes. While we applaud all tactics that gainfully serve older adults, for this

particular initiative NASAA is once again aligning with E.A. Michelson's emphasis on a learning (rather than health intervention) model. This approach:

- respects the high capabilities of older adults by challenging them to develop artistic skills;
- offers sequential arts instruction in a sustained and organized fashion;
- deepens social engagement;
- employs teaching artists trained to understand the effects of aging and their significance for the design and delivery of arts programs for older adults.

For additional information, consult:

- E.A. Michelson's [Vitality Arts model](#)
- Lifetime Arts's [Creative Aging Lifelong Learning program model](#)
- [Museums and Creative Aging: A Healthful Partnership](#), from the American Alliance of Museums

Award Amount

Up to seven SAAs will be awarded grants of up to \$100,000. NASAA will accept only one application per state arts agency.

This is a nonmatching grant category. SAAs who elect to or are able to secure additional resources to support the work will be invited to describe that on their budget form; however, the presence or absence of additional funds will not be a factor in the adjudication of this nonmatching grant opportunity.

Eligibility and Grant Requirements

Eligibility

- **Only state/jurisdictional arts agencies that participated in and successfully completed activities and reporting requirements for the Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging initiative are eligible to apply for funding.**

- Eligible SAAs must certify that they are able to complete their proposed project activities by June 30, 2025.

Allowable Activities

- The primary beneficiaries ultimately served through project activities must be older adults.
- Funds may be used for new programs or to augment existing creative aging projects.
- Funded activities should lead to sequential, skill based activities that engage older adults in the process of artistic creation. These activities should include meaningful community or social engagement. (See [Our Approach to Creative Aging](#) above.) If proposed project activities include training, partnership cultivation, communications or other developmental work, those activities should create the conditions or capacities needed to provide sequential and skill based programs at a later time.
- Funded activities should take into consideration the accessibility requirements of older adults.
- While allowable activities are not limited to the following, applicants are encouraged to propose projects that include one or more of the following priorities:
 - Training teaching artists to address the specific needs of older adults
 - Developing the capacity of local providers (including but not limited to arts organizations, community organizations, libraries or retirement communities) to provide successful creative aging programs
 - Seeding collaborative initiatives with state or local entities who serve older adult populations
 - Reducing ageism and bias in programming geared toward older adults
 - Expanding access to creative aging to older adult and/or artist populations with historically limited access to resources (such as rural, BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and/or people of color], low-income or immigrant communities)
 - Developing or deepening the online delivery of creative aging programs to make them more accessible to quarantined individuals, populations with limited mobility or rural communities

Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- consulting fees
- honoraria for speakers, project advisors or panelists
- travel/transportation to creative aging activity sites, trainings or partner consultations
- registration fees
- convening expenses: space rental, audiovisual costs, food, accessibility accommodations, etc.
- technology costs related to online program design or delivery, including video conferencing platforms, web programming, site design, etc.
- artist stipends for participation in trainings and professional development
- artist fees for the delivery of creative aging teaching/learning programs
- materials used in the delivery of creative aging teaching/learning programs
- salary for staff directly involved in creative aging program development or partnership activities
- subgrant awards for creative aging activities consistent with the intent of this NASAA grant program (If this option is elected, the SAA must make award determinations; adjudication may not be delegated to a third party)
- administrative expenditures directly related to the management of the SLCA project

Unallowable activities and expenses include:

- stand-alone performances, exhibits or activities that are not part of a sustained arts learning program
- services designed primarily as health interventions (using art for therapeutic purposes to treat cognitive or physical diagnoses). Please see [States Leading Creative Aging Grant Guidelines FAQs](#) (page 2) for more information.
- tuition or activities for which academic credit is given
- programs or services for children, unless intergenerational programming with older adults is the focus of the program
- administrative expenditures, rent or overhead unrelated to the management of the SLCA project
- deficits incurred from past activities
- expenses incurred before the start or after the ending date of the grant period

When considering whether their projects are good matches for this grant opportunity, applicants are encouraged to consider:

- lessons learned from their LSICA initiative
- input from diverse stakeholders, to inform the design of the program
- opportunities for impact, especially in reaching underserved constituencies
- approaches for completing the work by June 30, 2025

Grant Time Line

NASAA will initiate one grant application round in February 2023. Funded projects may commence any time after July 3, 2023, and must conclude on or before June 30, 2025. State arts agencies may propose their own start and end dates for projects within those date brackets, to give themselves as much flexibility as possible.

- Application opens: Friday, February 24, 2023
- Application deadline: Friday, April 14, 2023, 11:59 p.m. Eastern
- Award notification: Wednesday, May 31, 2023
- Grant implementation period begins: no earlier than Monday, July 3, 2023
- Grant implementation period ends: no later than Monday, June 30, 2025
- Final report deadline: Monday, September 1, 2025

How to Apply

- The application will be available on NASAA's [Creative Aging](#) web page on Friday, February 24, 2023.
- Please email NASAA Arts Learning Projects Director Susan Oetgen for log-in and password to access the application web page (susan.oetgen@nasaa-arts.org).
- Applicants will submit Project Details, a Project Narrative (no more than six pages), and Project Budget electronically to creativeaging@nasaa-arts.org.
- Applicants will receive a confirmation email once your submission has been accepted.

- For more detailed information about how to apply, please refer to the [Grant Guidelines FAQs](#).

Application Components

Project Details

- Name of state arts agency
- Name, title and phone/email contact information of the individual responsible for the application
- Name, title, organizational affiliation and phone/email contact information of the individual responsible for project implementation
- Project title
- Project start and end dates
- Do you anticipate needing to use a fiscal agent? See the [Grant Guidelines FAQs](#) for more discussion on this point.

Project Narrative

Please address all of the following questions in a Project Narrative of no more than six single-spaced pages.

1. Please describe the creative aging initiative you propose to undertake with this award.
 - What project activities will occur?
 - Who will be served by project activities? How will stakeholders be consulted in the design of the initiative?
 - Where and when will project activities take place? If projects are digital/virtual, describe that strategy.
 - How will you promote the project and secure the buy-in of partners and participants?
2. Please describe how your project is positioned to have a positive impact on the creative aging field in your state.
3. Please describe how you plan to expand access to creative aging in under-resourced communities through your project.
4. Please describe the capacity available (through your own agency or your partners) to complete your proposed project in a timely way.

5. Please describe how your project will contribute to the sustainability of future creative aging work in your state.

Project Budget

- Please complete the Project Budget form for your proposed project, including income and expenses.
- Project revenues should reflect \$100,000 in the States Leading Creative Aging line.
- Applications that do not have a balanced budget will not be eligible for funding.
- There are no required matching funds; however, applicants should include any matching funds, cash or in-kind (resources, services), that are available for the project. The presence or absence of additional funds will not be a factor in the adjudication of this grant opportunity.

Adjudication Process and Criteria

Process

- To assist state arts agencies with preparing their applications, NASAA will convene a technical assistance webinar and host ongoing "office hours" throughout the application period. Applicants also are encouraged to contact NASAA's [arts learning projects director](#) with specific questions, and/or to request review of application materials prior to the submission deadline.
- Incomplete applications or those proposing unallowable expenses will be removed from consideration.
- A panel of independent reviewers will evaluate applications according to the program criteria. Panelists will include individuals with diverse perspectives who are knowledgeable about state arts agencies, arts learning and older adults.
- The panel will convene virtually in May 2023. Any applicant can listen to panel meetings.
- NASAA will make final funding decisions based on panel ratings, available resources and the goals of the program.
- NASAA will notify applicants about grant awards by May 31, 2023.

Criteria

Adjudication criteria for this grant opportunity were directly informed by state arts agency feedback garnered from the LSICA initiative evaluation. SLCA applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Positioned for Impact (9 points)**

Successful SLCA applications will address specific opportunities that are ripe for advancing creative aging in their state. Proposed strategies should be informed by prior LSICA work and best practices for creative aging, and should address how SLCA funds will equip the SAA to make a bigger difference in the lives of older adults.

- **Expanding Access to Creative Aging in Under-resourced Communities (9 points)**

State arts agencies are uniquely positioned to broaden access to creative aging in under-resourced communities. Competitive SLCA applications will be informed by diverse stakeholder perspectives and address how the proposed activities will equitably expand creative aging programs into under-resourced communities.

- **Capacity to Complete the Proposed Project in a Timely Way (9 points)**

Capacity constraints (around time, financial resources, human resources and other assets) were top of mind for most SAAs in the Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging initiative. Competitive applications for this new round of grants will explain how the applicant is addressing capacity challenges and will describe how SLCA funds could help. The intent of this criterion is not to reward applicants who have greater capacity to implement creative aging activities, but rather to offer applicants an opportunity to share their strategies for tackling capacity constraints.

- **Sustainability of Future Creative Aging Work (9 points)**

Competitive SLCA applications will describe how the state arts agency is cultivating relationships and resources that can help to sustain creative aging services beyond the life of this grant.

Please review the [SLCA Adjudication Rubric](#) for additional details on panel review and scoring.

These application criteria are informed by the *Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging* evaluation report, which panelists will review. Applicants are likewise encouraged to consider the insights surfaced in that evaluation report.

Payment Disbursal and Reporting Requirements

- Once grants are announced, NASAA will request from awardees an invoice and W-9 for the amount of the grant.
- State arts agencies must be the grantees of record on award letters of agreement.
- Please note: The time line for processing your grant award does not start until we receive your signed letter of agreement, invoice and W-9. Once we receive these documents, it will take approximately four weeks for NASAA to issue a check.
- NASAA will disburse 100% of the grant amount at the beginning of the grant period.
- At the project midpoint, all grantees will be required to submit a brief progress report describing work completed and spending to date. Progress reports must demonstrate continued commitment to the project.
- All grant recipients are required to notify NASAA of any significant changes in time line, personnel, collaborating organizations or strategy.
- Recipients must submit a final report 60 days after the completion of the grant period, no later than September 1, 2025. Fulfillment of requirements (including the supply of descriptive information, participation counts and completion of an exit interview) is a condition of the grant.
- NASAA will engage an independent consultant to develop creative aging case statements that draw, in part, on information about state arts agency

activities. Cooperation with this SLCA project component is a condition of accepting the grant.

Additional Requirements

- Grant recipients are required to acknowledge NASAA and E.A. Michelson Philanthropy in all print, audio, video and Internet materials, and all publicity materials (such as press releases, brochures, posters, advertisements and websites) related to grant activities. Detailed information will be provided in the grant contract package.
- Throughout the award period, grantees will ensure that NASAA and E.A. Michelson Philanthropy receive any public communications or media releases pertaining to the project.

Access and Nondiscrimination Policy

NASAA is committed to supporting entities that maintain an environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic bias, disability, citizenship, veteran status, or other category protected by applicable state or federal law. All activities supported through these grants must be conducted in compliance with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the ADA Amendment Act of 2008, and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design as well as the 2010 ADA Title III regulations for nondiscrimination.

Questions/Contact

NASAA staff is available to provide assistance throughout the application process, including answering eligibility and requirement questions, refining proposal ideas, discussing fiscal receiver issues, reviewing proposal drafts and providing other forms of assistance. Discussions with staff do not influence funding decisions. For inquiries about the grant program or the application submission process, please email NASAA Arts Learning Projects Director Susan Oetgen at susan.oetgen@nasaa-arts.org.