



Animating Infrastructure Grant Guidelines | FY2021

Introduction

The Vermont Arts Council is offering a funding opportunity to communities that are poised to integrate works of public art into upcoming infrastructure projects. The Council seeks proposals for projects that provide opportunities for artists to engage with community in the design and/or fabrication of permanent or temporary public art for an interior or exterior site that is accessible to the public.

The Animating Infrastructure program is designed to foster partnerships between communities and artists. The intent is to enhance a sense of community pride and identity, foster social connections, and to improve the livability and vibrancy of Vermont communities, downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods. Through the development and installation of site-specific works of public art, Vermont communities can reflect their vision, values, and creative spirit.

For the purposes of this program, the Vermont Arts Council's definition of infrastructure is broad and includes community facilities and services such as buildings, trails, water or sewer systems, roads, power systems, parks, and more. Functional components of infrastructure such as sidewalks, railings, benches, walls, signs, stairs, tree grates, fences, water fountains, and more in the built and/or natural environment have the potential for artistic enhancement that creates unique places where people want to live, work, visit, and play. Applicants are encouraged to review these [sample projects](#).

A panel will review the letters of interest and select a small number of applicants to invite to submit full proposals. The Arts Council will ultimately award funds to three to five projects that demonstrate a collaborative process that sparks a creative, lively integration of public art into existing or proposed community infrastructure projects. For the selected projects, the Council will provide guidance to the grantee in the artist selection process, as well as assistance in outreach to Vermont artists. The community will be responsible for implementation. Grantees will be asked to document their process and product through stories, photos, videos, models, etc.

Who May Apply or Receive Funding

Vermont 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and municipalities are eligible to apply. Community groups without tax-exempt status may apply using a fiscal agent. A fiscal agent must be a charitable nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in Vermont. All applicants (or the fiscal agent) must have a [D-U-N-S Number](#). Proposals from Vermont designated downtowns, village centers, or neighborhood development areas are encouraged. Applicants should have strong, supportive community leadership in place to give the project high potential for being completed successfully. Individual artists may not apply.

Who May Not Apply

- organizations that have received any other Arts Council grant in the same fiscal year to support the same project
- organizations with outstanding or incomplete reporting for any Vermont Arts Council grant
- individual artists

Eligible Activities

Animating Infrastructure provides communities with funds to engage and work with an artist. Funds will be awarded for:

- **Public Art design (\$5,000 maximum):** The funding must be used to conduct a process to select an artist and to engage the artist with the community in the development of the design of artwork. At the end of the grant period, the grantee should have a final design that includes a budget, drawings or models, and details about specific materials. It should also include a timeline and information on fabrication, installation, site preparations, and maintenance requirements for the proposed artwork.
- **Public Art implementation (\$15,000 maximum):** Grant funds may be used to support an artist in the fabrication and installation of public art for a previously designed project.
- **Combination Grants (\$15,000 maximum):** Grant funds may be used to support both a design process (as outlined above) and the fabrication and installation of public art.

All eligible project proposals are welcome. The Council is especially interested in:

- integrated projects where infrastructure is the art
- projects in their early planning phases
- projects that foster connections among people of diverse socioeconomic groups, abilities, races, cultures, genders, and/or ages, etc.

What We Do Not Fund

- the purchase, lease, or exhibition of pre-existing artwork or editions
- any ongoing operational expenses of the applicant organization or partner
- capital improvements not directly related to the public artwork
- the purchase of land or property
- design of artwork that will not be publicly accessible or visible

Grant Amounts and Matching Requirements

Grants will range from \$1,000 to \$15,000. Up to \$5,000 will be awarded for design grants and up to \$15,000 will be awarded for implementation and/or combination grants.

Grants will not require a match, but grantees will be responsible for any additional expenses above the grant amount. At least 80% of grant funds must be used to support artist honorariums/fees related to the design, and/or artist expenses for fabrication and/or installation of artwork. The remaining 20% of the funds may be used to support project management, community engagement activities, online application/software fees, space rentals, and/or community outreach.

Selection Criteria

A successful application will demonstrate a unique opportunity for the integration of public art into infrastructure and will relate the community to the place. The following represents specific criteria for different phases and funding categories.

Letter of Interest

Competitive proposals will demonstrate project potential with:

- a clearly defined place and proposed infrastructure project that has high community visibility
- clearly defined vision with specific goals and outcomes
- strong community leadership and partnership opportunities
- opportunities to celebrate and/or tell a story of what is unique and special about the community/place
- appropriate/realistic scope and scale
- community engagement that fosters connections among people of diverse socioeconomic groups, abilities, races, cultures, genders, and/or ages

Additional consideration will be given to projects that:

- have potential to be a model project for other communities because of the project location, the community engagement, it presents a unique opportunity, it is an uncommon project, and/or the infrastructure itself is the art
- articulate compelling reasons why the project is important to the community at this time

If an applicant is invited to submit a full proposal, the following criteria will be used to assess applications.

For Design and/or Implementation Grants:

Competitive proposals will have high potential for success by demonstrating:

- a clearly defined place and proposed infrastructure project that has high community visibility
- clearly defined vision with specific goals and outcomes
- strong and supportive community leadership and collaborating organizations
- diverse, cross-sector representation on a local review committee that includes/included at least one member of the arts community
- community engagement that fosters connections among people of diverse socioeconomic groups, abilities, races, cultures, genders, and ages
- will celebrate what is unique and special about the community, place, and/or people
- an appropriate and realistic scope and scale with a well-thought budget and fundraising ideas
- potential to inspire community attraction to, or interaction and/or engagement with the space, structure, or the community

For Implementation Grants (artwork has already been designed):

Competitive proposals must meet the above criteria and have high potential for success by demonstrating:

- selected artist(s) has demonstrated the ability to successfully manage and implement the proposed project on time and on budget
- proposed artwork has high artistic merit (based on uploaded final design documents)
- durability and safety of the proposed artwork relative to maintenance requirements, theft, vandalism, and exposure to weather and location

Grantee Requirements

Grantees will be expected to sign a contract agreeing to specific funding requirements. The Council shares success stories with other communities and continues to support creative placemaking efforts. Therefore, a final report with a narrative, final budget, visual documentation (e.g., photos, drawings, and/or video) of the process and final design will be required at the end of your project. The report will be due no later than thirty days after the completion of the funded activities.

Application Submission and Deadlines

- **December 18, 2020: letter of interest due**
- January 29, 2021: finalists invited to develop full proposal
- March 15, 2021: full proposals due
- April 30, 2021: applicants notified of grant award
- May 1, 2021: project begins
- November 30, 2022: project completed
- December 30, 2022: final report submitted

Applications must be submitted through the Council's [online granting system](#). The Council welcomes conversations well in advance of your application. Our role is to help you prepare the strongest possible application and support your process.

Access and Nondiscrimination Policy

The Vermont Arts Council 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. Arts Council grant recipients who receive federal or state funds must be in compliance with the requirements of Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the ADA Amendment Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325) which became effective on January 1, 2009.

Questions?

Inquiries about the Animating Infrastructure program should be made by sending an [email to Michele Bailey](#) or by calling 802.402.4614.

Inquiries about using the online application system should be made by sending an [email to Meredith Bell](#) or by calling 802.402.4478.