Staff Introductions

Amy Cunningham – Deputy Director, Vermont Arts Council & Creative Futures program manager

Kathy Mulvaney – Creative Futures program manager
Creative Futures Grant Program

- A grant program to support the recovery of Vermont’s creative sector from the Covid-19 pandemic and to set a path for growth
- Made possible by a grant from the State of Vermont through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Department of Economic Development
- A one-time program
"The amount of $9,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Vermont Arts Council to provide grants for monthly operating costs, including rent, mortgage, utilities, and insurance, to creative economy businesses and nonprofits that have sustained substantial losses due to the pandemic."
During the 2022 state legislative session, the Vermont Arts Council and the Vermont Creative Network advocated for increased investment in economic recovery for the creative sector. One outcome of this session (part of Act 189) was the allocation of $9 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the Vermont Arts Council for grants to creative sector entities that have sustained economic harm due to the pandemic. Learn more about our advocacy efforts during the session.

What is the Creative Futures Program?

The aim of this program is to provide aid to creative sector organizations and businesses that continue to struggle financially due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This program is open to all Vermont-based creative economy nonprofits and for-profit businesses, including sole proprietors who can demonstrate economic harm caused by or exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Unincorporated arts, humanities, or cultural groups without official nonprofit status may apply using a fiscal agent if they are otherwise eligible.

Funding amounts will be based on 2019 (pre-pandemic) operating revenue.

These funds are for any regular operating expenses, including but not limited to payroll and benefits, utilities, rent, and insurance. Please refer to the guidelines for more details.

Applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Severity of Covid-19 pandemic harm
- Community and cultural impact
- Economic impact

Applications that are not funded in one round may be re-considered in the next round. Please refer to grant guidelines and the application preview for more detailed information.

Questions?

We welcome conversations well in advance of your application. Our role is to help you prepare the strongest application possible and support you in the application process. See the sidebar for information about grant-seeker workshops and scheduling a time to meet with a program staffer. Inquiries about the Vermont Creative Futures Program can be made by sending an email to creativefutures@vermontarts.org.

The Creative Futures program of the Vermont Arts Council is made possible by a grant from the State of Vermont through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Department of Economic Development.

Accessibility

The Council accepts grant applications via an online form. If you require an alternate format or assistance to access the application, please contact the program manager listed above or Michele Bailey, accessibility coordinator by email or at 802.492.4614. Voice and relay calls are welcome.

Other ARPA funding: For more information about other creative sector legislation that passed in the 2021-2022 session and was signed into law, read our one-page summary. There might be other funds that you can take advantage of.

GRANT CONTACTS

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createfutures@vermontarts.org

APPLICATION AND GUIDELINES

Vermont Creative Futures Guidelines
Application Process
NICHCY Codes
Apply Online

KEY DATES

- Round 1: open Sept. 15, deadline Nov. 1; notifications by mid-December
- Round 2: open Jan. 3, deadline Feb. 28, 2022; notifications by mid-April
- Round 3: open May 1, deadline June 30, 2022; notifications by mid-August

GRANTSEEKER WORKSHOPS

10-11 a.m., Sept. 15, Register
1-2 p.m., Oct. 7, Register

Workshops will be recorded and will be posted on our website after the event.

GRANT PORTAL

Login: Business to Register! Your account will be reviewed and approved in 1-2 business days. All Creative Futures applicants (including sole proprietors) should register as an "organization applicant.

MEET WITH US

Schedule an appointment to meet with a program manager.
Eligibility
Eligibility Requirements

"creative economy businesses and nonprofits that have sustained substantial losses due to the pandemic."

• Nonprofit organizations and for-profit businesses, including sole proprietorships, which are part of the Vermont’s creative sector
• Located in Vermont
• In operation or had taken steps toward becoming operational as of March 13, 2020
• Experiencing continued economic harm due to the pandemic
Creative Economy

- **Culture & Heritage** – Historical societies, museums, libraries, independent curators, and exhibit designers
- **Design** – Product, interior, graphic, architecture, and fashion design firms and designers
- **Film & Media** – Creators of film, video, animation, digital games, including technicians, costumers, editors
- **Literary Arts & Publishing** – Print or electronic publishing businesses and content creators, editors, and writers
- **Performing Arts** – Producers, venues, studios, sound and light technicians, set designers, and performers
- **Specialty Foods** – Specialty and artisanal food producers.
- **Visual Arts & Crafts** – Galleries, artists, artisans, craftspeople, culture bearers, and makers
Determining Creative Economy Eligibility

- Applicants will choose a business code based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to indicate their place in the creative sector.
- VAC has created a list of NAICS codes.
- For-profit businesses can find this code on their tax return under “principal business activity code.”
- Nonprofit organizations will have to search and choose a code.
- Applicants’ work or mission must be predominantly rooted in the creative sector.
Eligible Businesses and Organizations

- C Corporation
- Cooperative Association
- S Corporation
- Limited Liability Corp
- Limited Liability Partnership
- Sole Proprietorship (meeting certain qualifications)
- Nonprofit
- Unincorporated nonprofit using a fiscal agent
Sole Proprietor Requirements

• Be 18 years of age or older
• Own an unincorporated business that does not have W-2 employees
• File a Schedule C as a part of federal tax returns
• Demonstrate a creative economy income that comprises at least 30% of total income and was a minimum of $12,000 in 2019
Types of Economic Impacts Due to the Pandemic

- Lost or decreased revenue
- Lost space
- Increased costs
- Risk of permanent closure
- Challenges meeting payroll or other financial obligations
- Staff layoffs
- Unplanned use of savings/reserves/endowment
- Other
Not Eligible to Apply

- Individuals who are not working as sole proprietors
- Businesses owned by persons under age 18
- Businesses that are franchises or chains
- Religious, political, or advocacy organizations
- Government agencies
- Pre-K through Grade 12 schools
- Universities, colleges, and academic departments. (Arts and cultural organizations that operate under the umbrella of a college or university with 501c3 status may apply.)
- Sporting event entities, karaoke, exotic dancing, fitness studios
Funding
Use of Funds

These funds are for regular operating expenses, including but not limited to:

• Payroll and benefits
• Utilities
• Rent
• Mortgage
• Insurance
Award Amounts

For most **businesses and nonprofits**, grant amounts will be based on 2019 operating revenue. (pre-pandemic)

- Awards based on a tiered system
- Awards will be about 10% of 2019 operating revenue
- Maximum grant of $200,000

**Sole Proprietors** are eligible for grant awards of $4,000
# Award Levels for Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019 Operating Revenue</th>
<th>Award Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>over $2M</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>over $1.75 M - up to $2 M</td>
<td>$187,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over $1.5 M - up to $1.75 M</td>
<td>$162,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>over $1.25M - up to $1.5 M</td>
<td>$137,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over $1M - up to $1.250</td>
<td>$112,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>$50,001 - $100,000</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>up to $50,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applying
Materials Needed to Apply

- An organization account in the Vermont Arts Council’s grant portal
- A completed application
- Tax and revenue documents for 2019, 2020, 2021 as .pdf attachments
- List of past Covid-19 relief funding including amounts received or pending
Welcome!

We have a new grant system! Are you a new user? Please register by clicking on the link below.

User ID (Email address)

Password

Keep me signed in

Sign In

Register / Send password hint / Reset password

If you run into issues with registration or signing in, please send an
Registering in the VAC grant portal

EVERYONE must register as **Organization Applicant** (do not choose Individual Artist)

**Returning organizations:**
- Search to find your existing account in the VAC grant portal
- Update information as needed and apply

**New organizations and businesses:**
- Create a new account by clicking the **“Create New Organization”** button
- Start making a profile and apply

**New and Returning Individuals (Sole Proprietors)**
- Do not use an existing individual artist account
- Start a new account by clicking the **“Create New Organization”** button
- You may now have 2 accounts in the system. That is okay.
Application Questions

Describe your organization’s:

• **Severity of pandemic harm** - financial insecurity; decreased revenue; increased costs; challenges meeting payroll; and other operating costs

• **Cultural and community impact** - mission; cultural significance; and communities served

• **Economic impact** - role in local economic recovery; ability to retain or rehire jobs; unique products or services provide; likelihood of post-pandemic resilience
Required Documents

• Federal Business Tax Returns for 2019, 2020, 2021 (for example: 1040 w/schedule C for sole proprietors, 990 for nonprofit, 1120 for corporate, etc.)

• Management-prepared financial statements for year-to-date of the current fiscal year (and any prior year for which a tax return is not yet filed):
  • Profit and Loss statement for the period
  • Balance sheets from beginning and end of each Profit & Loss period

• Other financial documents and information as required (Example: entities which were legally organized prior to March 13, 2020, but had not yet become fully operational)
Past and Pending Pandemic Funding

Past funding

• SBA Loan – Payroll Protection Program
• SBA Loan – Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)
• SBA Grant – EIDL Emergency Grant
• Vermont Economic Recovery Grant
• Vermont Economic Recovery Grant – Supplemental
• Shuttered Venue Operators Grant
• Vermont Cultural Relief Grant Program through Vermont Arts Council and Vermont Humanities (2020)
• Vermont Cultural Recovery Grant Program through Vermont Arts Council and Vermont Humanities (2021)
• NEA Direct ARPA Grant
• NEH Direct SHARP Grant

Current/Pending

• VEDA Forgivable Loan Program
• Community Recovery and Revitalization Grant
Timeline
Grant Timeline

Round 1: open **Sept. 15 – Nov. 1**; notifications by mid-December

Round 2: open **Jan. 3 – Feb. 28, 2023**; notifications by mid-April

Round 3: open **May 1 – June 30, 2023**; notifications by mid-August

*All applicants who meet eligibility criteria who are not funded in the first round will be considered in the second and third rounds. Applicants will need to review their applications to ensure all information is still accurate and make any necessary updates.*
Evaluation Process
Evaluation Process

• Applications reviewed for eligibility by VAC program staff
• Applications evaluated by outside panel
• VAC staff compiles recommendations for funding
• VAC Board approves funding recommendations
Evaluation Criteria

**Severity of Pandemic Harm**
financial insecurity; decreased revenue; increased costs; challenges meeting payroll; and other operating costs

**Community and Cultural Impact**
mission; cultural significance; and communities served

**Economic Impact**
role in local economic recovery; ability to retain or rehire jobs; unique products or services provide; likelihood of post-pandemic resilience

**Special Consideration Groups**
organizations serving and led by members of communities traditionally under-resourced in the arts and humanities
Special Consideration Groups

- People of color or indigenous people
- People who identify as LGBTQ+
- People who live in rural areas
- People with disabilities
- People who identify as immigrants or refugees
- People whose first (or only) language is not English
Opportunities to Learn More
Opportunities to Learn More

• Watch recordings of the grant seeker workshops on our website: https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/creative-futures-grant-program

• Consult FAQs on our website

• Make an appointment to talk one-on-one with program staff https://calendly.com/kmulvaney-vac/30min

• Email staff at creativefutures@vermontartscouncil.org

• Call staff at 802.828.5423
Questions