

MUSEUM  
GRANTS

2026



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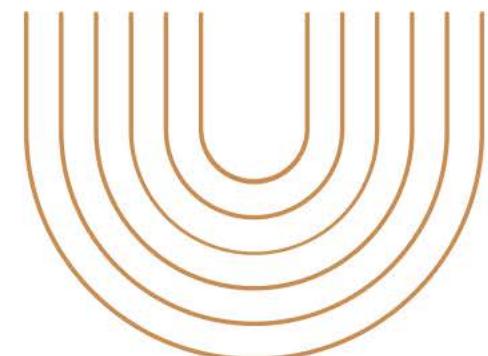
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# A Word About Grants

Success in applying for a grant award begins right at the start with selecting the proper grant and positioning a museum to align with an institution's purpose and goals. There is strategy involved! Every applicant should understand that no grant-making institution will make an award so that the applicant can fulfill its mission. They make awards when they see that an applicant will fulfill theirs. It makes all the difference.



# A Word About Grants

Museums will find a number of solid options from government and corporate grants to private family foundations supporting the arts or cultural development in their region.

Grant seeking is very competitive and funding organizations are confronted every day by an overwhelming array of applicants, all of them in need. As a result, just about every grant opportunity requires an initial Letter of Interest or Inquiry (LOI) before the submission of a full proposal.

Some grants are only available by an invitation resulting from a review of the LOI. In the end, these letters allow grant makers a chance to review potential applicants without reading a ton of submissions that may not align with an agency's or foundation's goals. Some funders have a format for LOI submission while others leave it up to the applicants.

At a minimum, all LOIs should provide:

- A brief summary of the project
- The total project budget
- The amount being requested

Please Contact Us for a customizable LOI template.



# A Word About Grants

2025 has been a tumultuous year to say the least. Nationally, multiple reliable funding sources withdrew from the grant world in response to the huge volume of submissions. Others ended their application cycles in favor of providing funding to known applicants only (they depend upon the relationships built with existing non-profits).

Many more foundations simply ran out of funding for the year as they attempted to meet the ever-growing need as Federal sources ended their grant award programs. Today, foundations have begun to re-enter the philanthropic arena, but it's taking some time to do. Foundations fund their donation activities through well-structured endowment funds. They can't simply reach into a deep pocket and draw more funding out.

Restoring a foundation's grant programming often takes months to accomplish. Boards of trustees meet, tax attorneys and accountants are consulted, new provisions are written and allocations are increased to meet the needs of the following fiscal year. Boards meet and approve the new financial arrangements. It can take months. In the end, 2026 should offer more stability.

Two new grant sources have been added to our list. Application dates and award information have been updated for the new year, and new program contacts have been added where provided.

# Federal and State Government Grants

## GRANTS.GOV

This is the primary source for all federal government grants and where grant seekers will find thousands of listings.

Using the search tools to the left of the screen is essential. Grants.gov will display grants to provide funding all over the world. Tools will help limit the search to the type of institutions that are eligible, the open and closing dates and the agency issuing the grant.

Most grants for museums will originate with the National Endowment for the Arts or the National Endowment for the Humanities and the program offices under each of them. Some federal grant programs are currently on hold pending future funding decisions. Consider looking at state or local grants if a federal grant aligning with your project needs is not available.

 [LEARN MORE](#)



### \* Special Note \*

All Federal grants require registration with one or more government entities. ALL applicants must register with the SAM – The System for Award Management. It can be a cumbersome process and applicants should expect a 6-8 weeks wait to receive confirmation. As challenging as it is, applicants WANT to register with SAM.

It's how all awards are paid!

# Federal and State Government Grants

## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is the largest funder of the arts in the United States. As a rule, all NEA grants must be matched dollar for dollar with non-federal funding sources. With any NEA application, museums get to double their money.

They provide awards in two major areas of focus: **Grants for Art Projects** and **Our Town** – a program geared toward supporting “placemaking” grants to integrate the arts, culture and design into community projects.

NEA funding is also provided through their partnership agreements with 56 state and 6 regional arts organizations. Most NEA initiatives support specialty programs supporting diversity, the veteran’s community (Blue Star Museum programs), theater and the preservation of national treasures.

**Deadlines:** Varies by program



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## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) organizes their grant offerings by office, covering Education, Preservation and Access (museums), and Public Programs (also museums). They provide a funding search page featuring current and upcoming grants found [HERE](#).

A search for museums displays a full listing for these institutions for preservation, research, program development and critically, capital funding for infrastructure and capacity building. Many of these grants are not included on Grants.gov.

**Deadlines:** Varies by program



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# Federal and State Government Grants

## THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

### \*\*\* Important Notice:

The Institute of Museum and Library Services has reinstated the IMLS grant programs, and an important funding source has returned. The notice is below:

December 3, 2025

Statement of Agency's Reinstatement of Terminated IMLS Grants, Washington, DC

Upon further review, the Institute of Museum and Library Services has reinstated all federal grants. This action supersedes any prior notices which may have been received related to grant termination.

Grantees should access the agency's electronic grants management system for further information.

<https://www.imls.gov/news/statement-agencys-reinstatement-terminated-imls-grants>

Please note that due to the lack of funding, and the Federal government shutdown, IMLS has not updated their website. No 2025 award information is available at present.

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# Federal and State Government Grants

## THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the leading federal organization devoted to the advancement of American museums and libraries. "IMLS envisions a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage." They fulfill their mission through the award of grants and research in support of their four main goals to Champion Lifelong Learning, Strengthen Community Engagement, Advance Collection Stewardships and Access, and Demonstrate Excellence in Community Services. It is one of the first places any museum should look for funding support.

In 2024, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded \$266.7 million through grantmaking, research and policy development, to advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations. Most awards are administered by The Office of Museum Services and include grants funded under the American Rescue Plan, which provides for collection assessment and preservations, digital humanities projects, and the Museum Assessment Program. Among their programs is Inspire! Grants for Small Museums, an initiative in support of America's smaller institutions. Inspire! offers awards ranging from \$5,000 – \$50,000 in support of museum programs to better serve the public through their exhibits, support education and institutional planning, and technology and infrastructure initiatives. Program information can be found [HERE](#).

Inspire! provides a list of program contacts and applicants should always take advantage of the opportunity to make direct contact. They are valuable resources who are there to explain what an institution is willing to consider, will often give advice on how to position an application.

**Deadline:** The Inspire! Grant deadline has been November 15th annually and this is expected to remain in place.

\*Other deadlines vary by program.



# Federal and State Government Grants



## NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The National Trust is about saving our nation's historic places. Many museums are themselves, historic locations. The Trust is dedicated to telling "America's Full Story," and features the national culture history, the roles of American women and minorities, and an overall goal of inclusion of the American experience.

Among their programs is the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. The Action Fund national grants advance ongoing preservation activities for historic places such as sites, museums, and landscapes that represent African American cultural heritage. Funding supports work in four primary areas: Capital Projects, Organizational Capacity Building, Project Planning,

**Deadlines:** Varies by program

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# Federal and State Government Grants

## Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – FEMA Non-Profit Security Grant Program

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) can be downloaded [HERE](#).

DHS-25-GPD-008-00-99

This was the initial grant (application date August 11, 2025). This is an annual grant and will be reissued with an anticipated application closing date in August 2026.

The total funding allocation is: \$274,500,000

Anticipated number of awards: 56

Awards were made to State Emergency Management offices nationwide. All applications must be directed to those offices. Please contact YOUR state offices for individual grant releases. These awards are probably available now at the state level.



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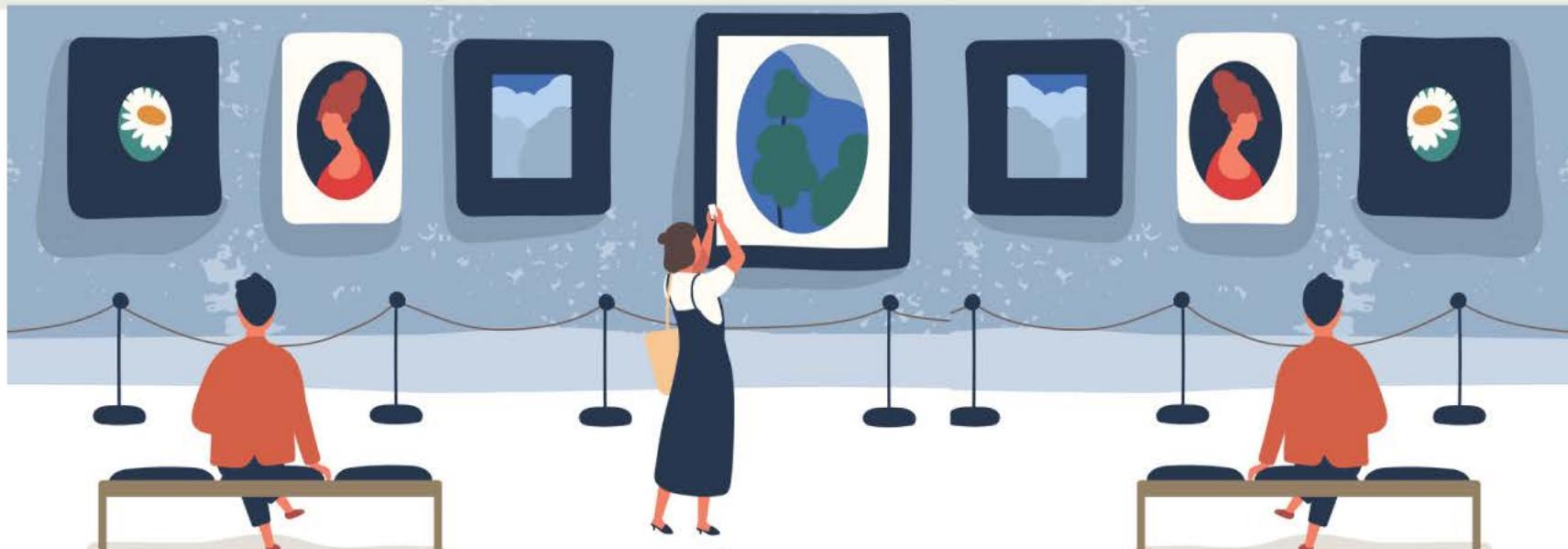


# The Big Foundations

Many applicants shy away from the major foundations in the belief that their odds of success are too low. They shouldn't.

These institutions get inundated with an avalanche of applications, with most being unsolicited and presented because they see the foundation's deep pockets.

Following proper procedures by submitting well-crafted LOIs and positioning a proposal to be aligned with the foundation's mission can, and do, yield positive results.



# The Big Foundations

## TERRA FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART

### Grant Making and Global Impact

Terra offers multiple pathways to funding, including three annual, open application-based grant programs, as well as invitation-only strategic initiatives, which allow them to take a more adaptive approach to emerging and immediate needs in the field. The Terra Foundation offers three annual grants, a Collections Grant, Convening Grants and Exhibition Grants. All require a Letter of Inquiry prior to application.

The Collection Grants are the most relevant, offering support for permanent collection exhibits. Grant support through this program is offered once yearly. The Terra Foundation has NOT posted its specific grant dates yet. These dates extend those used for 2025 applications. Funding will cover projects anticipated to begin in May 2027.

#### Deadlines:

Inquiry Due: August 2026

Proposal Due: October 2026

Grant Range: \$25K - \$200K



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# The Big Foundations

## THE GETTY FOUNDATION

Aside from having its own famous museums (the Getty Center and the Getty Villa Museum), the Foundation funds multiple initiatives in support of the arts globally. The Foundation accepts grant applications through open competition although most initiatives are available by invitation only. Getty has an academic focus and awards are made to increase access to museum collections, advance conservation best practices, and support art history. Residential grants and fellowship awards are made through the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Villa, and the Getty Conservation Institute. A Letter of Interest must be submitted. Applications are submitted by individual program.

**Deadlines:** Open



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## THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has a long-standing commitment to the arts and museums. They divide their interests into four main themes. Museums will find a welcome reception under Humanities in Place with Mellon's "Strategy 1" which supports resource projects, initiatives, and infrastructure. Like other large foundations, Mellon provides a searchable database of its giving history. From 2024 to 2025, the Foundation made 44 awards to Museums totalling \$21,240,000.

Applicants need to create an account on Mellon's grant portal to submit their inquiry. Invitations to submit will be sent to applicants before a full submission is made.

**Deadlines:** Open



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# The Big Foundations

## FORD

Some foundations are huge. Some are even bigger. That can be intimidating and applicants may think they shouldn't try for a grant. That isn't true. The award percentages drop, but often, it's due to applications that aren't in alignment with the foundation.

In the case of the Ford Foundation, they don't post their Form 990 and it's so large that it would be useless. Instead, they provide a searchable grants database online. Ford awarded 517 grants to 213 individual museums from 2006 through 2024 totaling \$173,911,498.

To date, Ford has made 108 grant awards to 70 museums in 2025. Annual totals are not yet available.

They are certainly worth a look for museums. The Ford Foundations has an open application cycle, accepting Letters of Inquiry year-round. Find the database [HERE](#).

**Deadlines:** Open



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## SAMUEL H. KRESS FOUNDATION

The Kress Foundation focuses on the preservation and presentation of European Art from ancient times to the 19th Century. They have separate portals for their Letters of Inquiry and full submissions. Each has a separate guidance document available online. Applicants can register [HERE](#).

Kress has a scholarly bend and offers awards in clearly defined program areas and professional development fellowships in art history, digital art history, and architecture, art conservation and museum curation, education, and for art librarians.

**Deadlines:** The Kress portal accepts Letter of Interest for 15 days with the opening of the foundation's three grant cycles. Spring opens on February 15th, Fall on August 15th and Winter on December 1st each year.



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# The Big Foundations

## THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

The Gates Foundation is known for its major funding investments in the development of water resources in Africa and its commitment to education and public works abroad. But they also make substantial awards within the United States and provide grants in all 50 states. The foundations awards to museums include multiple children's museums and exhibits, the Bellevue Art Museum, and the World Forestry Museum. Most awards are made on the recommendation of their staff so contact with the foundation is essential. A Request for Proposals is then issued to the applicant.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation operates through two main award programs:

- Grant Opportunities
- Grand Challenges

**Deadlines:** Vary by program and opportunities

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# The Big Foundations

## KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Normally associated with newspaper publishing, the Knight Foundation has a deep commitment to the arts in all of its forms. In fact, support of the arts makes up the largest portion of their awards by a long shot. While many awards are focused on Florida and the American South, Knight is national in scope and recipients run the gamut of institutions include the American Museum of Natural History, Motown, and ethnic-centered museums both large and small.

The Knight Foundation believes that art and culture are fundamental to the health of better informed communities. They have a particular focus on the application of technology to the "creation, dissemination, and experience of art." Knight's awards are focused on 26 communities where they owned and operated their newspapers with eight primary cities including Akron, Ohio, Charlotte, North Carolina, Detroit, Michigan, Macon, Georgia, Miami, Florida, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, San Jose, California, St. Paul, Minnesota. They support awards in other locations through a series of partnerships with local foundations.

Knight posts their Form 990 online and provides a searchable database of their grants as well. Awards range from \$25,000 to \$5,000,000. Applicants submit a Letter of Inquiry and Knight offers a series of city-based challenge grants across their programs as well.

**Deadline:** Open

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# The National and Regional Banks



Often overlooked in grant management plans, banks generally offer two levels of support for public institutions like museums.

Most national and regional banks have their own foundations (corporate giving from the banks themselves). Additionally, many banks, particularly the larger regional institutions, administer family foundations and trusts for major depositors with the bank.

Most provide listings of foundation administrators who oversee the foundation's assets and manage their grant application processes. These banking officers can offer direct knowledge of the family foundation or trust and are willing to provide guidance on applications right from the first contact. Reaching out to these administrators is almost always productive.

# The National and Regional Banks

## BANK OF AMERICA CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

The BoA operates at the local level everywhere they do business. Their Art Conservation Project provides financial support to non-profit museums and institutions to preserve historically and culturally important works of art.

Applicants are asked to contact the bank directly for project inquiries and information on the proposal process by email [HERE](#).

BoA is committed to creating meaningful change in the communities it serves through philanthropic efforts, associate volunteerism, community development activities and investing, support of arts and culture programming and environmental initiatives. Grants to museums will be considered under their Neighborhood Revitalization Program

Bank of America foundation and trust administrators operate across the country. Individual state offices have listings of the private foundations administered and multiple officers with their contact information. Multiple foundations and trust have their own deadlines. Please contact your BOA administrator to

**Deadline:** End of May 2026 – End of June 2026

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# The National and Regional Banks

## BANK OF AMERICA PHILANTHROPIC SERVICES

BoA offers a search database for grants with excellent research tools. Today, the bank administers 64 foundations offering awards under the heading of Arts, Culture and the Humanities. Each foundation is displayed with its due dates, program types and restrictions – usually driven by location.

**Deadlines:** Varies by Foundation Grant Cycle

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## CITIBANK

Like most institutions, the Citi Foundation is divided by multiple programs. Museums will make their inquiries with the Community Finance Innovation Fund found [HERE](#).

**Deadlines:** Open

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# The National and Regional Banks

## 5/3 BANK

The Foundation Office at Fifth Third Bank is committed to creating a greater impact on programs and initiatives that create strong, vibrant communities and provide pathways to opportunity. The Foundation Office administers Private Family Foundations that leave a lasting legacy.

The respective Committees review all grant requests for the following trusts and foundations for which Fifth Third Bank serves as trustee or agent. Grants for programming in education, the arts, community development, and health and human services in the Greater Cincinnati area are considered, in addition to the specific funding interests originally identified by each of the individual benefactors.

These trusts and foundations include: Charles Moerlein Foundation, Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, Eleanora C.U. Alms Trust, H.B., E.W. & F.R. Luther Charitable Foundation, Helen G., Henry F., & Louise Tuechter Dornette Foundation, Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts, Louis & Melba Schott Foundation, The Ohio Valley Foundation, Patricia Kisker Foundation, and the Stillson Foundation.

**Deadlines:** Open

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# Local and Regional Sources

## Looking at the States

Every state in the union has a cultural development or art commission in one form or another.

There can be great differences between funding level, depending upon the state, but it is worth looking for funding opportunities with these organizations.

Some offer general operating support, while others support programing and funding for smaller institutions.

Some examples follow.



# Local and Regional Sources

## SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION

The Commission envisions a South Carolina where the arts are valued and all people benefit from a variety of creative experiences. The mission of the South Carolina Arts Commission is to promote equitable access to the arts and support the cultivation of creativity in South Carolina. They have a particular focus on the folk heritage of the state and a deep commitment to the inclusion of all Carolinians and offer grants for artists, schools and organizations.

Grants for organizations have a 3:1 (applicant: SCAC) match requirement. There is no set range for awards to organizations. Awards to small organizations can receive funding up to \$5,000 and have a 1:1 match requirement.

**Deadlines:** February 15th annually for most grants

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## MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

TMCC is a well funded organization. The Massachusetts House Committee on Ways and Means just passed a \$25 million funding package for the Council. Mass Cultural Council works to elevate the rich cultural life in Massachusetts. They partner with communities across the Commonwealth to expand access, improve education, promote diversity, and encourage excellence in the arts, humanities, and sciences to make Massachusetts a better place to live, work, and visit for everyone.

The Council funds a wide variety of programs in the arts and culture and offers grants through their Cultural Facilities Fund to support the acquisition, design, repair, rehabilitation, renovation, expansion, or construction of nonprofit cultural facilities statewide. They've awarded \$154 million in grants to 553 organizations since 2007. This fund offers: Capital Grants, Feasibility and Technical Assistance Grants, and System Replacement Plan Grants.

**Deadline:** Applications open in October and the following February annually

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# Local and Regional Sources

## ARIZONA COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

Awarding grants to arts organizations and schools is at the center of the Arizona Commission on the Arts' service. In this effort grant applicants are our partners, providing direct arts experiences throughout Arizona. The Arts Commission provides a variety of funding opportunities that enable schools, organizations and community groups to carry out projects and to maintain ongoing, high quality public arts programming. ACA offers a variety of funding opportunities to artists, programs and organizations.

Museums will find opportunities in the Creative Capacity Grant. Awards are divided between smaller institutions (budget cap of \$399,999) and larger facilities with budgets over \$400,000. Award levels and eligibility are arranged by annual revenues and range from \$2,000 – \$60,000

**Deadlines:** February 15th to April 1st annually



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# Local and Regional Sources



## THE MICHIGAN ARTS AND CULTURE COUNCIL

MACC) coordinates grants to arts and culture organizations, cities and municipalities, and other nonprofit organizations ensuring that every citizen and community in Michigan enjoys the civic, economic and educational benefits of arts and culture.

Operational Support provides funding to arts and cultural organizations only. Municipalities, schools, and non-arts nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply in one of the other categories. Awards are made to: Arts Education Organizations, Arts Services Organizations, Collecting or Material Organizations (such as museums, historical societies, and zoos), Material Organizations (such as museums, historical societies, and zoos), Public Broadcasting Organizations, Literary Arts Organizations, Performing Arts Organizations and Visual Arts/Film/Video/Digital Organizations. Operational Support program applicants must participate in SMU/Data Arts,

Capital Grants are also offers for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and municipalities that provide funding assistance for the expansion, renovation, or construction of arts and cultural facilities; upgrade of equipment and furnishings to provide an up-to-date environment; provide or increase accessibility to persons with disabilities, or integrate energy efficient products and technologies. Applicants should partner with their local government for this grant.

**Deadline:** June 1st

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# City Focused Foundations

Many cities have foundations that promote the arts, culture, social services and economic well being of their communities. Many will also provide support beyond the city limits proper to include the "greater" urban region. The region can extend to multiple counties or even states. These organizations are "aggregators," both administering individual local foundations (family charities and trusts) and corporate donations gained from businesses in the region. At times, they are able to combine the efforts of multiple sources to turn smaller opportunities into larger ones.

Cultural organizations should always develop productive working relationships with these foundations as their funders are devoted to the betterment of the local community. The odds of a museum gaining support from these sources are remarkably improved. There will be instance when a known donor to a museum also provides a channel for funding through these foundations and the chances of approval might be enhanced. There are more than 750 community foundations across the United States.

Here are three of them.

# City Focused Foundations

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR A GREATER RICHMOND

The Community Foundation is a leading partner and advocate for philanthropy and service in the Richmond region. Founded in 1968, they have built a strong legacy of helping people and institutions give back with passion and purpose.

Today, they manage more than 1,200 charitable funds with assets exceeding \$1 billion. This includes six supporting foundations that have been chosen to fulfill their charitable legacy in partnership, as well as three regional affiliates that were established to address the needs and interests of the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. Since their inception, the Community Foundation has collectively granted \$1 billion to thousands of nonprofits working to support and enhance all areas of community life.

Museums will find opportunities under the Community Impact Grant/Community Vibrancy Program. The application process begins with a Letter of Introduction, accepted from December 1st to January 31st annually. The typical grant ranges between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

**Deadline:** March 20th annually

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# City Focused Foundations

## GREATER CINCINNATI FOUNDATION

As the region's leading community foundation, Greater Cincinnati Foundation (GCF) connects people with purpose in an eight-county region in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. They lead the charge toward a more vibrant and equitable Greater Cincinnati for everyone — now, and for generations to come.

Change is sparked when people come together — in partnership, collaboration and generosity. Their role is to align the right players. Then, coordinate their efforts and contributions in a way that creates the most substantial impact since 1963.

As a community foundation, Greater Cincinnati Foundation invests in a more vibrant and equitable region, in part by grant-making to their community partners doing the work. They make grants in a variety of ways including concentrated investments in Community Leadership focus areas, Request for Proposals and Donor Advised Funds.

**Deadlines:** Vary by program

 [LEARN MORE](#)

# City Focused Foundations

## SEATTLE FOUNDATION



Seattle Foundation offers a variety of grants to support local nonprofits. Their priority is for organizations to make meaningful, measurable change within the key areas of their Blueprint for Impact — from arts and culture to health and wellness. With decades of experience and extensive research, they understand what investments need to be made to ensure that the communities thrive. Review their current opportunities and learn how they might help your organization make progress toward its mission.

Seattle Foundation lists member foundations individually along with their requirements for LOIs and quarterly, annual and rolling application dates. Applications are accepted through the Foundations portal found [HERE](#).

Seattle Foundation's Form 990 lists 28 awards to museums ranging from \$5,500 to \$767,579.

**Deadlines:** Vary with the grant source.

 [LEARN MORE](#)



# art sentry®

Since 2005, Art Sentry has helped to protect art and other treasures in prestigious museums, galleries, and institutions throughout the country. After 20 years of experience working closely with our customers, we have developed and perfected a quality method to protect art and historical objects from damage.

Our security system will increase the protection and preservation of the artwork and artifacts in your organization. Top U.S. art museums report proven results—preventing artwork touches, lowering security costs, enhancing the visitor experience, and using actionable system data to strengthen museum operations.

For further information about these attainable security goals, read our case studies about antique and art protection.

[CONTACT US](#)

