



NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FY21 PROGRAM AND OPERATIONS PLAN

(Based on adequate human and financial resources)

OVERVIEW

In an unprecedented step designed to allow the Administration and the Legislature to focus fully on leading New Jersey through the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Murphy and state legislative leaders extended state fiscal year 2020 by three months, ending it in September instead of June. Fiscal Year 2021 will be nine months long: October 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021.

As of this writing, New Jersey is amid a phased reopening plan after eight months of restrictions, closures, and halted public activity to stop the spread of the virus. The emotional and mental trauma caused by widespread illness and loss is tremendous, and the financial losses to industries, communities, families, and individuals is catastrophic and far-reaching. This reality is layered with the growing call to address issues of social and racial injustice, bringing into focus the need for action and change as we work to rebuild.

Priorities articulated in this plan are determined within the framework of the Council's [Long-Range Strategic Plan \(2018-2023\)](#). While the field today looks different than it did when the plan was created, agency goals (included below) remain relevant. Strategies for reaching those goals and the measurement of progress has changed. Building a strategy of grants and services that is responsive to the needs, challenges, and opportunities in the sector today is the highest priority as we look to maximize the unique role of the Council to serve the field during this time of change and recovery.

Since March, when the official state of emergency was declared and the State began to shut down, the Council staff shifted focus accordingly. The Department of State (DOS) closed the office at 33 West State Street in Trenton on March 17th, and all staff have been working remotely ever since. The Council employs a workforce of 13 full-time employees (including one person assigned to the Cultural Trust, which continues to have no administrative appropriation), one temporary employee, and one part-time employee.

The workforce is organized into four units with distinct but overlapping responsibilities: Operations; Programs & Services; Communications; and Artist Services (including the Public Art Program). Each unit head reports to the Executive Director. The Executive Director reports to the Council Chair and, within the DOS, to the Secretary of State (or designee).

The Council's purchase of goods and services, personnel matters, processing of payments, the system of accounting, and IT are all coordinated through the DOS Division of Administration. Grantees'

successful interaction with SAGE - the DOS electronic grants system – continues to improve through ongoing upgrades led by Council staff.

In FY21 the Council will carry out the administrative processes for multiple grant programs, upholding the highest standards of accountability, operational efficiency, and broad public support. The fiscal year extension and subsequent truncation means significantly increased demand on staff to maintain a rigorous workflow including modified systems and reporting for grantees, distribution of existing commitments, creation and implementation of new opportunities, and service development and provision. As always, staff will operate in three fiscal years simultaneously but never has the timeline and need for service been what it is this year.

FY21 BUDGET

REVENUE SOURCES

Cultural Projects Appropriation	\$	19,858,000
National Endowment for the Arts Grant	\$	945,700
Administration Appropriation	\$	405,000
Total Revenue	\$	21,208,700

EXPENDITURES

Available for Grants	\$	19,632,442
Reserved for Appeals - Grants	\$	25,000
Total Non-Admin Budget	\$	19,657,442
Total Admin Budget	\$	1,551,258

The Council enters FY21 with a Cultural Projects Appropriation from the State of New Jersey of \$19,858,000, a \$3.858 million increase over last year and the first increase in more than a decade. The Council’s Administrative Appropriation remains unchanged at \$405,000. Typically, State Budget language allows for up to \$250,000 of the Cultural Projects funds to be spent on agency operations. This year, the amount has been raised to \$500,000. Those dollars combined with the Administrative Appropriation do not cover agency costs, and we will again rely on funds from the National Endowment for the Arts to bridge the gap.

The Administrative budget for FY21 totals \$1,551,258. This budget includes the Department of State’s projection of salaries and benefits for the positions outlined above, as well as all non-salary administrative costs. In all, the total administrative budget is just over 7% of the Council’s total projected expenditures for FY21.

The Council has been awarded \$945,700 in the second year of a three-year commitment of federal support from the National Endowment for the Arts. This increase (last year’s award was \$896,600) includes funds to strengthen the State’s folk arts infrastructure as well as support for Poetry Out

Loud. The Endowment funds provide a portion of the agency's operational costs and additional grant funds to support the work of the Council statewide.

The FY21 summary of revenue and expenditures as approved by the Grants Committee, together with the complete list of FY21 awards, including funding principles, annual agency priorities, budget and program plan - as approved by the Council on October 27, 2020 - will constitute the Council's Annual Report to the Governor, Legislature, and to the citizens of New Jersey.

New Jersey State Council on the Arts Long Range Strategic Plan (LRSP) Goals for 2018-2023

1. *Strategically supported New Jersey artists and arts organizations.*

Maintain stability in the field, encourage innovation, and increase access and equity in grantmaking.

2. *Quality arts education and lifelong opportunities for everyone.*

Increase access to and participation in arts education opportunities for all New Jerseyans, in educational settings and throughout their lives.

3. *People of all ages, abilities and backgrounds engaged in the arts.*

Increase participation in and access to arts events, experiences, and opportunities for all people.

4. *New Jersey communities thriving through the arts.*

Sustain, identify, and create opportunities for arts leaders and artists to participate in development and social change initiatives statewide, placing emphasis on the support of those communities traditionally under-resourced.

5. *Widespread public understanding of the importance of the arts.*

Raise awareness and understanding of the importance of the arts, and the positive impact of a thriving arts industry for all facets of New Jersey life.

FY21 PROGRAM PRIORITIES AND OPERATIONS PLAN

The priorities listed below are the result of ongoing self-assessment and field communication. Measuring our progress under last year's Program Plan (in the context of our LRSP), accounting for initiatives underway, current circumstances, and agency capacity, these priorities broadly describe the areas of work to which staff and board have committed. Work plans, timelines, and goals are established within each professional unit, using these priorities as our guide.

1. Sustain and advance effective programs and services; identify and deliver changes and improvements that align with sector needs. (LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

- Advance effective core agency programs and services in the FY21 and FY22 application cycles, including direct grants and services to artists, organizations, and partners.
- Assess and challenge inequities (racial, geographic, socioeconomic, etc.) in existing grant programs and services.
- Explore data and information from the sector regarding the impact of COVID in order to continue to develop responsive programs and resources, such as grant opportunities for organizations and individuals.

- Continue to provide resources, such as ADA plan review, to assist organizations in removing barriers and creating opportunities for people of all abilities and backgrounds to participate in the arts.
2. **Take a comprehensive approach to understanding, challenging, and addressing issues of equity and access in agency operations, policies, communications, grantmaking and service provision.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 4, 5)*
 - Engage in Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion (DEAI) assessment and learning with a professional facilitator to guide the staff and board toward transformation.
 - Continue to engage with the field, grantmakers in other sectors, professional service providers, and partners nationwide to understand current challenges and trends for addressing inequities.
 - Build on field research, outreach, and resources that serve artists and organizations traditionally underrepresented.
 3. **Focus on grant and service opportunities to encourage innovation, engage new voices, and foster collaboration.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)*
 - Create and identify opportunities through which artists and arts organizations can innovate – creatively, financially, and operationally – so they may survive any reality.
 - Leverage the Council’s network and partnerships to increase resources for arts programs from private and corporate sources.
 - Actively seek new partnerships that broaden the Council’s scope of service and support.
 - Encourage collaboration, both in the arts and across sectors, to strengthen the field and provide maximum public benefit for an equitable statewide recovery.
 4. **Grow programmatic support for grantee professional and fiscal health, and effectiveness.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 4, 5)*
 - Build out field-driven programs such as Communities of Practice and free professional development opportunities that focus on unique challenges facing the industry today.
 - Continue to help arts organizations build appropriate institutional stability and capacity through the Critical Financial Services Program, and other initiatives, especially given the changing environment.
 - Evolve technical and professional services to the field such as public meetings, constituent meetings, and site visits to reflect new health and safety protocols and maintain meaningful engagement.
 5. **Strengthen the network of County Arts Agencies to improve effectiveness in reaching local neighborhoods, communities, and populations traditionally under-resourced.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)*
 - Ensure strong county government support for County Arts Agencies regrant programs and professional services.
 - Work with the County Arts Agencies to ensure effective community engagement practices result in an equitable extension of state resources to a diverse pool of grantees.

- 6. Expand and strengthen the network of New Jersey Folk Arts Centers to help increase outreach to and inclusion of diverse artists, cultures, and communities.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4)*
 - Help strengthen the Folk Arts Centers as a network; capitalize on the unique offerings and insights of each; and understand the challenges they face operationally and otherwise.
 - Focus on the synergistic alignment of the Folk Arts Centers with the County Arts Agencies and Arts Education programs to increase outreach and impact.
 - Amplify the role of the Folk Arts Centers as critical statewide partners, anchors in their respective regions, and partners in support for New Jersey folk and traditional artists.

- 7. Improve Council communications tools to increase public access to opportunities, information, and advocacy resources.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 3, 4, 5)*
 - Coordinate with the Department of State to improve the Council’s website as a useful and broadly accessible tool for the public, incorporating resources on health and safety, reopening guidance, and funding opportunities.
 - Work with national, state, and local leaders to promote the public value of the arts, incorporating critical needs for industry sustainability as well as the role of the arts in an equitable statewide recovery.
 - Continue to build on our dynamic social media presence and regular email communications with the field including weekly resources related to the pandemic, bi-weekly opportunities for organizations and artists, and a quarterly publication dedicated to highlighting folk and traditional arts statewide.

- 8. Broaden, deepen, and diversify the reach of Council supported arts education and lifelong learning initiatives and partnerships.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 5)*
 - Maintain a leadership role in supporting the innovative adaptations of arts education providers in the field, in schools, and virtually to help ensure students, teachers, artists, and individuals of all ages can benefit from safe, quality arts experiences virtually or in person.
 - Support the work of all co-sponsored arts education programs in expanding their reach to more students and educators, increasing geographic and art form diversity represented, and maintaining excellence in the field.
 - Promote and encourage arts learning in and out of school for people of all ages.
 - Build on the statewide and regional leadership role in supporting, training, and networking teaching artists.

- 9. Serve as a leader, partner, and advisor to help ensure the unique needs of the arts sector are considered as the state and the nation continue to navigate the pandemic.** *(LRSP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)*
 - Staff and board will continue to participate in national, statewide, and local committees such as the New Jersey Cultural Alliance for Response, the Performing Arts Readiness Project, September Ready, and the Governor’s Arts and Culture Recovery Working Group.
 - Leverage Council partnerships, programs, and opportunities to connect to funding, resources, and guidance for artists and organizations to ensure the industry recovers.

- Continue to build strategic partnerships with statewide leaders in government, education, philanthropy, economic development, etc., to convey artists and arts organizations as invaluable community resources with critical needs.

10. Continue to provide opportunities for the State’s communities and artists to engage with, create, and enjoy art in public places. (LRSP Goals 1, 3, 4, 5)

- Manage commissioning of work for State-financed construction projects through the Public Buildings Arts Inclusion program, advancing projects in process and facilitating new projects.
- Continue the on-going inventory and assessment of Inclusion Act-financed projects and others statewide and promote the Public Art Archive digital collection inventory.
- Continue to advocate for the inclusion of New Jersey artists in public art projects.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES SUMMARY

Advance what’s working, align with field needs:

The Council is a dynamic, multifaceted agency that administers several different grant programs, provides statewide leadership in multiple areas, engages in a battery of cosponsored projects, maintains intensive communication with constituents and the public, manages a large, active and multi-agency public art program, provides extensive technical assistance, maintains the highest standards of quality and accountability, and plays a leadership role in the state in promoting the public value of the arts for people and communities everywhere.

FY21 is year two of our three-year General Operating Support and General Program Support cycle. Before the Pandemic, FY21 also included several project grant programs for which the application processes were well underway in March 2020. The Council reviewed the needs of the field at the time and decided to dedicate all available FY21 funds outside the GOS/GPS program toward relief/recovery grant programs for artists and organizations. This change necessitated a recall of multiple project opportunities as well as a complete redesign of the Cultural Trust arts round.

The leadership and flexibility the Council displayed in making these changes was and continues to be appreciated by the field. As we know, operating and recovery funds are the greatest needs consistently expressed by struggling organizations and artists statewide who have been hit hard by the Pandemic.

For all funding programs offered, regardless of circumstances, the process involves many steps, always beginning with a critical look at eligibility criteria and program guidelines. In accordance with ongoing field feedback, Program Officer research, and changing industry practice, the Council will refine programs to align with sector needs. Once vetted and complete, the process includes distributing guidelines and conducting technical assistance workshops, reviewing notices of intent to apply, in-take of applications through the SAGE system, securing the services of panelists, running independent grant evaluation panels, and assembling data and panel evaluation materials for Grants Committee consideration at the end of the fiscal year. This year, with regard to process, is no different than any other year. The main differences this year include the extreme need field-wide, and the accelerated timeline due to the fiscal year changes.

The Individual Artist Fellowship awards honor New Jersey artists in 12 rotating disciplines each year. The 2021 Fellowships are in the following categories: Playwriting/Screenwriting, Crafts, Photography, Interdisciplinary Performance/Interdisciplinary Visual Arts. This year's Arts Annual exhibition will take place at The Newark Museum of Art. Refreshed professional development for individual artists will take place this year as the Council works with partner organizations to evaluate the Artist Professional Development offerings and refine the programs to suit artists' needs now. A variety of other Council initiatives will also continue as circumstances permit, including: Choreography Fellowship Showcase and the first-ever Literary Fellowship Publishing Opportunity in partnership with Rutgers University Press; Opportunities for the Field listings; and the Senior Art show.

Understand, challenge, and address issues of equity and access:

This year, the Council has committed to undergoing a facilitated agency assessment; to explore the policies and practices at the core of our work to help identify and address issues of equity and access in operations, policies, and grantmaking. We will build on the strides already taken toward achieving greater balance, and ultimately a diversified, broader, positive impact. Responsible stewardship of public resources relies not only on sound fiscal management, but on understanding the needs of the diverse constituency the Council seeks to serve.

In addition to the internal work, the Council will also use the information gathered through grantee reporting to help us identify the needed services to strengthen this work in the field, model initiatives that currently exist, and capitalize on the opportunities for collaboration and education for the field. Understanding the appropriate and effective language and approach to this sensitive and important work is critical, time consuming, and time sensitive.

The Council will continue to work toward ensuring that all Council programs, events, publications, and materials are accessible to people with disabilities. Moreover, the Council will serve as a resource and advocate to help arts organizations statewide remove barriers to access and create opportunities for people of all abilities to participate in the arts as a patron, donor, staff member, and/or artist. The Cultural Access Network, a co-sponsored program of the Council's and the New Jersey Theatre Alliance, will continue to serve as the Council's Access Advisory Committee, helping to provide resources such as ADA plan review and compliance. Additionally, access measures at each public business meeting have become standard practice, such as the accessibility statement and the guaranteed provision of captioning services. Renewed focus will also be placed this year on availing Council materials in multiple languages.

The Council will continue aligning with the NEA Creative Forces Arts and Military Network to connect military and veteran families to arts opportunities in their communities, and will remain involved in other arts and health initiatives that connect artists and art professionals with health and wellness providers, in order to educate, advocate for, and advance best practices in arts and health. Working with partner State Agencies in the NJ Department of Health, the NJ Department of Human Services, and the NJ Historical Commission, the Council will continue to recruit arts organizations to connect with new audiences through the Families First Discovery Pass program (FFDP). FFDP was designed to ensure New Jersey residents who receive public assistance benefits have access to the arts.

As the first-ever statewide partner in the Diversity in Arts Leadership (DIAL) program, the Council will work with our national partners to build on the successes of year one, and the successfully adapted virtual year two. In year three, we will continue the program, engaging students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds and pairing them with high performing New Jersey nonprofit arts organizations to help strengthen and encourage the next generation of creative leaders. Depending on the circumstances next summer, this program will adapt to virtual or in-person learning.

In addition to the Council's work supporting the next generation of diverse arts leaders, we will continue our work to elevate arts administrators of color at all levels of experience through our support of the NJ Arts & Culture Administrators of Color Network – a partnership of the NJ Theatre Alliance, ArtPride NJ, and the Council. In its inaugural year, the Network engaged over 100 members throughout the state and is already looked to as a valuable resource as arts organizations deepen their work in diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. For FY21, we will further the partnership between the Council and the Network through strategic conversations related to grantmaking, leadership opportunities, and job opportunities.

Fiscal health and sustainability in the field:

The Council provides technical and professional assistance to the field all year long. Considerable effort is made to ensure Council support services and grant opportunities are widely accessible to artists and arts organizations of varying disciplines, locations, and sizes. As organizational needs shift, the Council seeks to remain flexible whenever possible to assist with capacity issues and challenges of grantees.

This year, we have seen organizations with a history of fiscal strength succumb to the realities of a shut down that took away nearly every opportunity for revenue, presented increased expenses, and forced furloughs, layoffs, and salary reductions.

Building appropriate capacity is an important component of sustainability in the field, especially now. A main role of the Council is to serve as a resource for establishing partnerships, sharing information, or connecting like-missioned entities, which we know could mean a lifeline for some. Building on a strategy for support that began in FY19, the Council will continue to engage Communities of Practice organized by operational capacity, service, or content area statewide. These networks have proven to have great value for participants; the continuation of weekly and bi-weekly meetings is driven by the field and shows no signs of slowing.

As part of the Critical Financial Services Program the Council offers in partnership with the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF), we will continue to review the financials of GOS/GPS Council grantees. Through this partnership we offer a number of important initiatives that provide organizations with a customized financial analysis, providing insight and guidance to help either maintain or achieve greater stability. The program will continue to offer webinars, workshops, and "office hours" for groups to meet with NFF experts. The data collected through these services will help us better understand trends, needs, and opportunities, as we help support the field through recovery over the next several months and years.

The Council is a founding member of NJCAR (New Jersey Cultural Alliance for Response), the first-in-the-nation alliance to include both the arts and history sectors, created to empower New Jersey's cultural communities to preserve assets and sustain operations before, during, and after a disaster. The Council is also part of the national team that created the Performing Arts Readiness (PAR) project, specifically designed to assist the performing arts sector. While neither network was founded with pandemic preparations or mitigation strategies in mind, both have pivoted to include health and safety training, insurance issue guidance, and venue, patron, and collection protection.

Local impact, sustaining communities, celebrating culture:

The Council will continue its funding of and active collaboration with the statewide network of 21 County Arts Agencies, and the State Association of County Cultural & Heritage Agencies. As the SAGE e-Grant and database system continues to develop, the Council plans to integrate the re-grantee data from the Counties and the Local Arts Program (LAP), into the Council's information systems. A deeper understanding of the current and potential reach and capacity of the County Arts Agencies will help the Council strengthen local networks, and ultimately improve effectiveness in reaching traditionally under-resourced communities, neighborhoods, and populations.

As demand increases for local funding, the Council will continue to examine the role of the LAP partners in providing meaningful support for low-capacity, high-impact arts organizations, and projects. Ongoing collaboration on initiatives such as technical assistance, outreach, lifelong learning, and others is critical to the success of these partnerships.

The Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program was put on hold for FY21 as part of the Council's decision to recall project-based opportunities. This program plays a unique role in helping to ensure the survival of valued traditional artforms in New Jersey communities, and we hope to reinstate it for FY22. Additionally, work is underway to better align the support of Folk Artists as an integral part of the Council's Artist Services strategy. In FY21, as part of the ongoing efforts to find ways to highlight Folk Arts Masters and their work with Apprentices, the Council will continue the creation and distribution of Passing it On, the quarterly electronic publication that promotes and highlights community based, culturally specific artforms and artists statewide. Additionally, new collaborations are underway between the Council's Folklife Centers and the 21 County Arts Agencies.

The Council will work to bring the existing five Centers together, and, in partnership with the NEA, continue to build on these hubs of cultural activity and further promote, support, and integrate the work of diverse New Jersey artists, cultures and voices. Also in partnership with the NEA, the Council will continue to revive the Folk Arts in Education program, continue fieldwork for a possible 6th Folklife Center, and continue to expand upon the Folk Arts for Homebound program, pairing traditional artists with homebound individuals and their caregivers, furthering the Council's commitment to the healing and restorative power of the arts. Like so many others, this program has innovatively shifted to include virtual offerings, ensuring the continued delivery of invaluable human, creative connection for vulnerable populations.

Arts promotion, advocacy, and leveraging resources:

The Council will continue to promote, educate, and communicate to stakeholders and the public about the unique recovery needs of the sector, and the critical role of the arts in a true statewide

recovery. We will represent key Council priorities in national, regional, state, and local initiatives such as arts education, access and equity, artist services, health and healing, cross-cultural understanding, economic vibrancy, overall quality of life, etc.

As the Co-Chair of the Governor's Arts and Culture Recovery Working Group, the Council Executive Director will continue to help amplify the relief and recovery needs of the field and solidify channels of communication among State leaders and arts leaders statewide.

The strength of the Council's services relies, in large part, on the partnerships – within the arts and across sectors – to identify needs and capitalize on opportunities for solutions across all priority areas. We will continue to build coalition with private and corporate philanthropic leaders to leverage critical support for the sector. We will seek to foster new opportunities for connection to and between artists and organizations of all sizes to facilitate dialogue, capacity building, and resources for recovery. An important example of this work, and a continued area of focus, is the New Jersey Arts and Culture Recovery Fund, of which the Council is a founder and Steering Committee member.

We will continue to build on our effective strategies in public relations, including Council meetings and event coordination, Council member public (virtual or in-person) appearances, arts marketing, and promotion. Special attention will be paid in FY21 to the Council's website (pending DOS support), social media presence, online publications, and the following Council co-sponsored projects: State of the Arts; Art Matters; and Discover Jersey Arts. Discover Jersey Arts has experienced strong and steady growth over the past three years and continues to align its priorities with those of the Council, especially as we strategically reposition the program to be more nimble and provide even greater service to the field. Art Matters, recently rebranded Keep Jersey Arts Alive, has undergone a complete redesign and is now the perfect megaphone for driving home the value of the arts industry as well as what's at stake if we lose our valued cultural resources.

The Council will continue to work with state and local government, as well as private entities, to establish and sustain cross-sector partnerships that strengthen the arts industry and New Jersey communities as a whole. Ongoing initiatives that focus on creative placemaking, economic development, and cultural tourism will continue, with an eye toward promoting the arts industry as central to all facets of New Jersey life. The Council will continue to work closely with the South Jersey Cultural Alliance, harnessing their unique position as a hub for resources, services, and promotion of the arts in the eight southern counties.

Arts education and lifelong learning:

Two longstanding arts education co-sponsored projects will be making significant strides in FY21. Due to the pandemic, Poetry Out Loud broadened its eligibility requirements for NJPOL, allowing for the in-person and virtual inclusion of community organizations and other institutions that serve students in grades 9-12 or grade equivalent to participate. The Artists in Education Residency Grant Program (AIE) fully executed its new ARC model in FY20, allowing for the addition of more schools to be added to the AIE program moving forward.

In FY21, the Council will deepen its commitment to supporting teaching artists through the Artists Professional Learning Institute (APLI), which launched last year, an outgrowth of the decades old

Artists Teacher Institute. APLI will develop tools to connect teaching artists and teachers to quality, arts-based professional and creative development, connecting teaching artists with arts education organizations throughout New Jersey.

In addition to ongoing initiatives, the Council was invited to be part of a task force - spearheaded by our partners at Arts Ed NJ – in response to the pandemic’s impact on classroom learning and arts education. The dedicated work of this group led to the development and publication of “September Ready Fall 2020 Guidance for Arts Education,” which offers practical guidance for K-12 school administrators and educators seeking to provide meaningful arts instruction for their students. As circumstances evolve, the task force will continue to provide guidance and insight for safe, meaningful arts experiences in schools.

The Council will continue to focus on essential arts education programs and services through targeted grant categories and co-sponsored arts education initiatives. A number of Council-supported arts education programs are involved in purposeful Collective Impact work in the state - including Arts Ed NJ, Arts Ed Newark, and Count Basie Center for the Arts. The NEA’s national strategy for arts education through Collective Impact is integral in our arts education support to communities, schools and arts organizations. Our Arts Basic to Education, Arts Education Special Initiative and co-sponsored project grants in arts education all continue to help make important strides toward quality arts education for every child, and quality arts education and lifelong learning for everyone.

Continuing over 40 years of excellence in public art:

Now more than ever, the importance of accessible public art in all communities cannot be understated. As residents, tourists, and arts patrons seek safe arts experiences, the Council will continue working to highlight New Jersey’s vast collection of public art and provide more opportunities for New Jersey artists to showcase their art in public spaces. After a successful Newark launch of the TRANSITional Art Project (TAP) – a partnership between the Council and NJ Transit – TAP will be unveiling a new exhibit this fall in Atlantic City, with other exhibitions planned for other Transit areas in the spring. In addition to showcasing new pieces of public art, the Council will continue promoting its Public Art Archive, which highlights works of art statewide.

In FY21, the Council will continue to seek out public installation and commission opportunities for New Jersey artists, capitalizing on new and existing partnerships that help expand the scope of opportunity beyond what the Council’s or Arts Inclusion resources can provide. As more communities recognize the role of public art in creating dynamic gathering spaces and opportunities for complex civil discourse, artists are challenged in new and exciting ways.

Working with the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the Council will release a commission opportunity this year for a public mural project that will focus on themes of voting rights and civic engagement, and specifically engage artists that identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). And with the New Jersey Historical Commission, the Council will develop a multi-site public art and history proposal to mark the 250th anniversary of the formal founding of the United States. Under New Jersey’s larger initiative to mark this anniversary, historians and artists will collaboratively connect historical narratives to the contemporary landscape of New Jersey.

The Council's Communications and Artists' Services teams will continue to work with commissioning state agencies and others to promote calls for artists through the Call for Entry (CaFE) online system. Utilizing CaFE helps ensure opportunities are well-known and widely accessible. Simultaneously, the Council's Artists Services team will continue to advance the many projects currently underway.