



# Connecting arts, culture, and community

Cayuga Cortland Herkimer Madison Oneida Onondaga Oswego

January 30, 2024

For Consideration by Honorable Members of the Legislature:

CNY Arts is sincerely grateful to our State elected representatives for their steadfast commitment to supporting the arts and culture sector in New York State. We would especially like to acknowledge the special Senate initiative, spearheaded by Senate Majority leadership, which secured an additional \$10 million appropriation for regional and local arts councils in FY '23 and '24.

\$1 million of these funds was allocated to CNY Arts both years, enabling our agency to provide an unprecedented level of service to Central New York artists, cultural venues, and heritage sites. The social and economic impact of these funds cannot be overstated, and we respectfully request that the Legislature sustain this crucial \$10 million support for regional and local arts councils in FY '25.

CNY Arts serves a six county, 5,500 square mile region with a population of approximately 1 million people that reflects a truly diverse physical and demographic landscape. Much of the CNY Arts territory also includes traditionally under-served communities like the inner city and rural poor. The State regrant model empowers regional arts councils to meet the unique needs of our constituents by leveraging local decision-making and a “boots-on-the-ground” perspective. CNY Arts is pleased to share the following year-over-year statistics that underscore how enhanced funding has a transformative impact on the vitality, inclusivity, and durability of our creative communities:

- In the 2022 grant cycle, CNY Arts was allocated **\$200,000** in State regrant funds, and received approximately **80** applications, totaling **\$324,925** in requests.
- In the 2023 grant cycle, CNY Arts was allocated **\$510,000** in State regrant funds, and received **163** applications, totaling **\$609,612** in requests.
- In the 2024 grant cycle, CNY Arts was allocated **\$510,000** in State regrant funds, and received **172** applications, totaling **\$852,682** in requests.
- In just three years, the enhanced and sustained level of State funds generated an increase of total applications by 115%, total dollar amount requested by 162%, submissions from new applicants by 22%, and BIPOC artist engagement by 60%.
- In addition to regrants, the \$1 million allocation has also enabled CNY Arts to conduct a robust marketing campaign on behalf of the sector as a whole, offer training and networking opportunities to arts educators, and provide professional development to aspiring arts administrators through the Arts Fellow Leadership program.

Anecdotally, we also find that many potential applicants who assume that there is not sufficient funding available tend to self-select away from program participation. Our data demonstrates a direct correlation between increased funding, access, opportunity, and number of applications.

Art and culture opportunities create community, boost business, and are powerful catalysts for economic development. Maintaining support for our sector will enhance the quality of life for all New Yorkers and reaffirm the status of New York State as a premiere destination for cultural tourism.

Stephen Butler  
**Executive Director**

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## Programs

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## Contact Us

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CNY Arts applauds the Legislature for the inspired decision to increase funding for the arts during previous budget cycles, and respectfully requests that the special budget appropriation designated for local and regional arts councils is replenished in FY '25. These funds help expand administrative capacity, support new initiatives, and improve equity among grant applicants.

Additionally, we urge our representatives to maintain the FY '24 NYSCA budget allocation of \$100 million. The arts and culture sector experienced substantial disruption due to COVID-19. To-date, audience attendance and live participation with the arts remains significantly below pre-pandemic levels. Providing NYSCA with a robust operational budget ensures that artists, cultural sites, and entertainment venues have access to the resources necessary to revitalize and thrive, and sends a strong message to foundations, corporations, and private partners that the arts are here to stay.

On behalf of our Board, staff, regional arts council peers, and the public whom we serve, we thank you for your dedication to the arts. CNY Arts believes that art is for everyone, and with the continued support of our elected officials, New York State can look forward to a vibrant and prosperous future.

Sincerely,



Stephen Butler  
Executive Director



Rita Paniagua  
Board President