



ART WORKS.

arts.gov

**2014 OUR TOWN GUIDELINES
National Endowment for the Arts**

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING



The Levitt Pavilion SteelStacks complex. Photo by Jeff Levy.

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors **strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city or region around arts and cultural activities.**

Markusen, Ann & Gadwa Nicodemus, Anne,
Creative Placemaking, 2010

LIVABILITY



Tour Art D'tour. Photo by Wormfarm Institute

LIVABILITY

***Our Town* will invest in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to:**

- Improve their quality of life
- Encourage creative activity.
- Create community identity and a sense of place.
- Revitalize local economies.

LIVABILITY

- Catalyze a persuasive vision for enhancing the livability of the community.
- Support artists, design professionals, and arts organizations by integrating design and the arts into the fabric of civic life.
- Reflect or strengthen a unique community identity and sense of place, and capitalize on existing local assets.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES



*Allied Arts of Chattanooga in Tennessee's urban park called the Main Terrain.
Photo by Samuel Burns*

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

ARTS ENGAGEMENT

Arts engagement projects support artistically excellent artistic production or practice as the focus of creative placemaking work, including:

- **Innovative programming** that fosters interaction among community members, arts organizations, and artists, or activates existing cultural and community assets.
- **Festivals and performances** in spaces not normally used for such purposes.
- **Public art** that improves public spaces and strategically reflects or shapes the physical and social character of a community.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

CULTURAL PLANNING

Cultural planning projects support the development of artistically excellent local support systems necessary for creative placemaking to succeed, including:

- **Creative asset mapping**
- **Cultural district planning**
- The development of **master plans** or community-wide **strategies for public art**
- Support for **creative entrepreneurship**
- **Creative industry cluster/hub development**

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

DESIGN

Design projects that demonstrate artistic excellence while supporting the development of environments where creative placemaking takes place, or where the identity of place is created or reinforced, including:

- **Design of rehearsal, studio, or live/work spaces** for artists
- **Design of cultural spaces** – new or adaptive reuse.
- **Design of public spaces**, e.g., parks, plazas, landscapes, neighborhoods, districts, infrastructure, bridges, and artist-produced elements of streetscapes
- **Community engagement activities** including design charrettes, design competitions, and community design workshops.

OUR TOWN FUNDING *CANNOT* SUPPORT:

- Activities that are not tied directly to long-term civic development goals.
- Projects where the arts, design, or cultural activity are not core to the project's plan.
- Capacity building initiatives for artists that are not integral to a broader civic development strategy.
- Construction, purchase, or renovation of facilities.
- Costs (and their match) to bring a project into compliance with federal grant requirements. This includes environmental or historical assessments or reviews.
- Subgranting or regranting, except for local arts agencies that are designated to operate on behalf of their local governments or are operating units of city or county government.
- Financial awards to winners of competitions.
- Fund raising or financing activities.

REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS



*Participants in one of four Plan-It Hennepin public planning workshops.
Photo by Mark Van Cleave*

REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS

PRIMARY PARTNERS

- Two primary partners required: a nonprofit organization and a local government entity.
- At least one of the primary partners must be a cultural (arts or design) organization.
- Either of the primary partners can serve as the lead applicant.
- For organizations other than a local government, a public entity or nonprofit partner must be incorporated as 501c3 entities at the time of the application and must be able to demonstrate a three year history of programming prior to the application deadline.

2013 OUR TOWN PARTNERS

Nonprofit Organizations:

- Aging services
- Botanic gardens
- Development/community reinvestment
- Environmental
- Historic preservation
- Land planning (Main Streets)
- Libraries
- Religious
- Recreation
- Scientific
- Youth development

Local businesses:

- Banks
- Construction firms
- Farms
- Galleries
- Hospitals
- Newspapers
- Restaurants
- Real estate developers

Government:

- Non-arts local, state and federal agencies (housing, transportation, parks, etc.)

Education:

- Private K-12 schools
- School districts
- Universities

Other:

- Business associations
- Business Improvement Districts
- Foundations
- Land Trusts

REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS

ELIGIBLE PRIMARY PARTNERS

Eligible **local government** partners include:

- Federally recognized tribal governments
- Counties
- Parishes
- Cities
- Towns
- Villages

Local arts agencies or other departments, agencies, or entities within an eligible local government may submit the application on behalf of that local government.

REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS

RESTRICTIONS

The following do **NOT** qualify as local governments:

- state level government agencies
- state higher education institutions
- regional governments
- quasi-government organizations (e.g., regional planning organizations, economic development authorities, business improvement districts, 501(c)(4) entities)

REQUIRED PARTNERSHIPS

RESTRICTIONS

- Current *Our Town* grantees (FY 2013) **and their officially named partners** are NOT eligible to apply for FY 2014 *Our Town* funding. They may apply to the *Our Town* category again in FY 2015.
- The designated state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) and their regional arts organizations (RAOs) may serve as additional partners, but NOT primary partners, on *Our Town* projects. All grant funds must be passed on to the other partners.

APPLICATION SCHEDULE



*Traction Avenue in the art district of downtown Los Angeles.
Photo by Wakim Muklashy*



**Guidelines
Posted**

Sept 24, 2013



**Guidelines
Posted**

Sept 24, 2013

**Application
Deadline**

Jan 13, 2014

**Guidelines
Posted**

Sept 24, 2013

**Application
Deadline**

Jan 13, 2014

**Panel
Review**

April 2014

**Guidelines
Posted**

Sept 24, 2013

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**Award
Notification**

July 2014

**Guidelines
Posted**

Sept 24, 2013

**Application
Deadline**

Jan 13, 2014

**Panel
Review**

April 2014

**Award
Notification**

July 2014

**Project
Start**

Sept 1, 2014

APPLICATION SCHEDULE

- Application deadline is Monday, January 13, 2014 at 11:59PM Eastern.
- Applications accepted **ONLY** via Grants.gov.
- Take care of your SAM and Grants.gov registration **NOW**. This is a multi-step process - **allow at least two weeks.**
- Awards will be announced in mid-July.
- Earliest start date for grants is September 1, 2014. Projects may last up to two years.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The National Endowment for the Arts is an independent federal agency that funds and promotes artistic excellence, creativity, and innovation for the benefit of individuals and communities.



OUR TOWN

- Application Guidelines
- Nov 4th Guidelines Webinar
- Our Town Web Section



ARTISTIC FIELDS >>

Choose an artistic field for **grant opportunities** and additional content.

Accessibility

Artist Communities

Arts Education

Dance

Design

NEWS >>

National Endowment for the Arts Presents Highlights from the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

National Endowment for the Arts Releases Funding Guidelines for Our Town

National Endowment for the Arts Announces "Ask the Grants Office" Webinar for Current NEA Grantees

ART WORKS BLOG >>



Art Talk with Kristen Nelson of "Art History Mom"



Notable Quotable: Laurie Rubin on the role of the artist



Notable Quotable: Danilo Perez on Jazz

GRANTS

OUR TOWN



If you have questions about an Our Town application, please contact OT@arts.gov ✉

Art works to improve the lives of America's citizens in many ways. Communities across our nation are leveraging the arts and engaging design to make their communities more livable with enhanced quality of life, increased creative activity, a distinct sense of place, and vibrant local economies that together capitalize on their existing assets. The NEA defines these efforts as the process of Creative Placemaking:

"In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired."

Ann Markusen, Markusen Economic Research Services
Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, Metris Arts Consulting
From *Creative Placemaking*

Organizations may apply for creative placemaking projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. An organization may request a grant amount from \$25,000 to \$200,000.

TO APPLY

- [Application Calendar](#)
- [Grant Program Description](#)
- [Award Information](#)
- [Applicant Eligibility](#)
- [How to Apply](#)
 - [How to Prepare and Submit an Application](#)
 - [Application Instructions](#)
- [Application Review](#)
- [Award Administration](#)
- [Other Information](#)
- [FAQs](#)

RELATED MATERIALS

- [Upcoming Guidelines Webinar \(Nov 4\)](#)
- [News](#)
- [Grants.gov](#)
- [Sample Application Narratives](#)
- [Grants by Project Type](#)
- [Grants by State](#)
- [Our Town Videos](#)
- [NEA ARTS Magazine on Creative Placemaking](#)
- [Creative Placemaking Report](#)

GRANTS

OUR TOWN



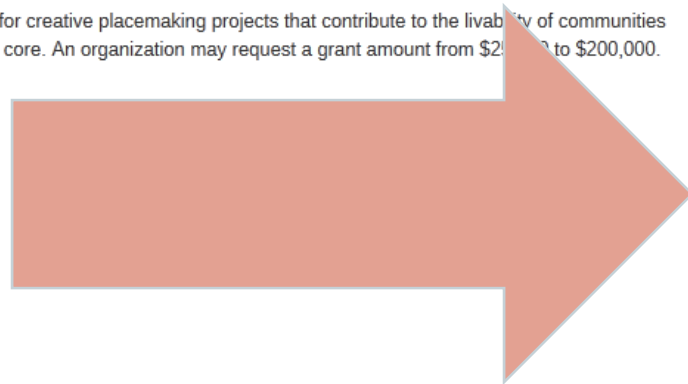
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Home » FOIA » FOIA Reading Room, Frequently Requested Records

Sample Application Narratives: Our Town



Click on links to open or download pdfs.

ARTISTS SPACE:

City of Dubuque, Iowa

"Dubuque, IA (pop. 60,000)
\$100,000 (FY11)

New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

New York, NY (pop. 8,200,000)
\$200,000 (FY11)

ASSET MAPPING / CULTURAL DISTRICT PLANNING:

Hennepin Theatre Trust

Minneapolis, MN (pop. 382,578)
\$200,000 (FY11)

Town of Brattleboro

Brattleboro, VT (pop. 12,046) - RURAL \$50,000 (FY12)

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES/ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

City of Fort Collins, Colorado

Fort Collins, CO (pop. 59,229)
\$100,000 (FY11)

City of New Haven, Connecticut

New Haven, CT (pop. 129,779)
\$100,000 (FY11)

CULTURAL FACILITIES:

Ballroom Cultural Arts Foundation

Marfa, TX (pop. 2,121) - RURAL \$250,000 (FY11)

Minnesota Museum of American Art

St. Paul, MN (pop. 281,253)
\$150,000 (FY12)

FESTIVALS/PERFORMANCES:

Public Corporation for the Arts of the City of Long Beach (Arts Council for Long Beach)

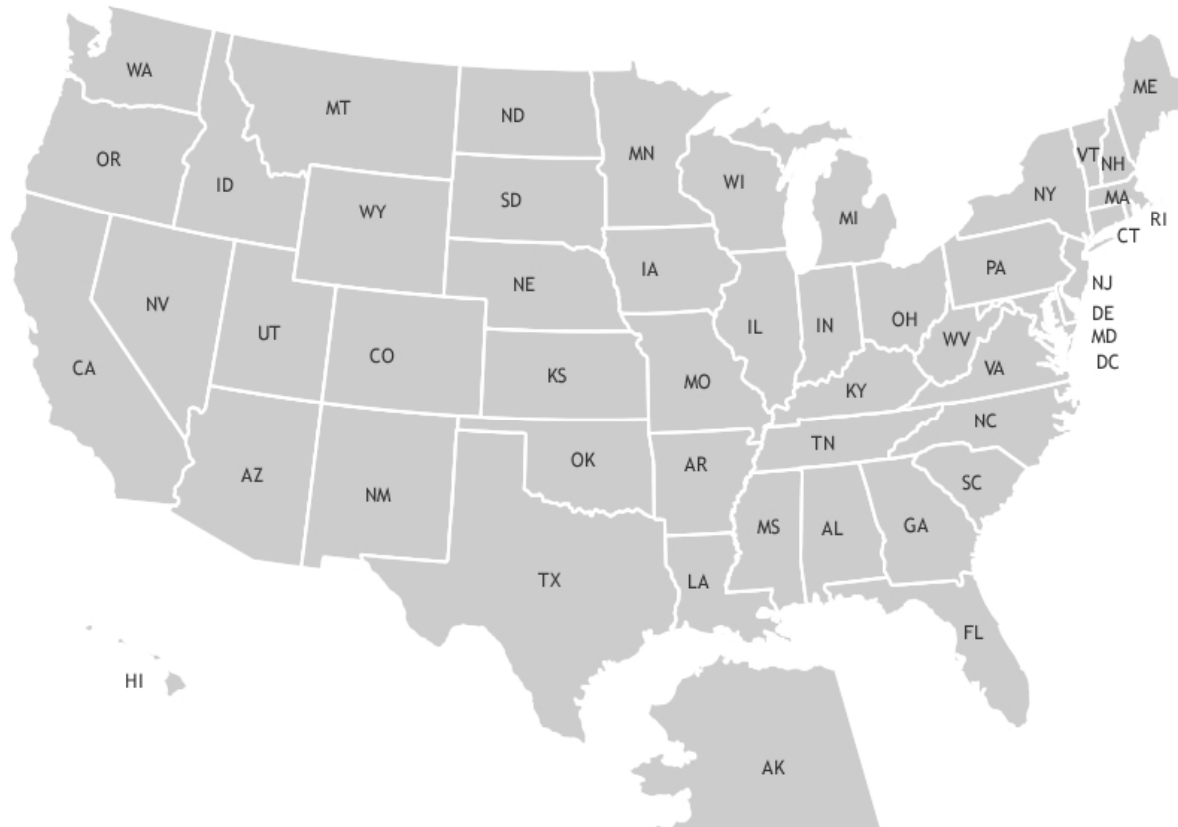
FOIA GUIDE >>

- Freedom of Information Guide
- Text of the Freedom of Information Act [r2](#)
- FOIA Regulations
- Privacy Act Guide
- FOIA Exemptions
- FOIA Reading Room, Frequently Requested Records
- FOIA Resources
- FOIA Contacts
- Sample FOIA Request
- NEA FOIA Fee Schedule
- Agency FOIA Reports and Logs

OUR TOWN

Our Town is the NEA's primary creative placemaking grants program, and invests in projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. Explore Our Town grants by clicking on a state abbreviation.

-- Select State --



Home » Artistic Fields » Design » Our Town

OUR TOWN

Press Releases



National Endowment for the Arts to Present Webinar on Our Town

October 23, 2013

Washington, DC -- NEA's Director of Design Programs Jason Schupbach and design specialist Jennifer Hughes will present a webinar on Monday, November 4, 2013 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. ET about applying to Our Town, the NEA's primary creative placemaking grant program. Our...

National Endowment for the Arts Releases Funding Guidelines for Our Town

September 24, 2013

Now available on the NEA website are guidelines and application materials for Our Town, the agency's primary creative placemaking grants program. Pending availability of funding, grants will range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. Our Town will invest in creative and innovative...

National Endowment for the Arts to Host Twitter Chat on Creative Placemaking

August 28, 2013

Come tweet with us! For anyone interested in creative placemaking, and who is not afraid to ask, the National Endowment for the Arts invites you to a live Twitter chat on Wednesday, September 4, 2013 from 2:00--3:00 PM ET. Jason Schupbach, NEA's director of design programs...

National Endowment for the Arts Announces 2013 Our Town Grant Recipients

July 17, 2013

Washington, DC -- The National Endowment for the Arts marks another investment in creative placemaking with a third year of funding through the Our Town program. Acting Chairman Joan Shigekawa announced that the NEA plans to award 59 grants (pdf) in 36 states totaling \$4.725...

National Endowment for the Arts Releases Funding Guidelines for Our Town

October 11 2012

Home » Grants » Apply for a Grant » Grants for Organizations » Our Town

GRANTS

OUR TOWN: Frequently Asked Questions



[Basics](#) |
 [Review Process](#) |
 [Other NEA Grants](#) |
 [Budget and Matching Funds](#) |
 [Eligible Partners](#) |
 [Local Government Entity](#) |
 [Letters of Endorsement/Statements of Support](#) |
 [Other](#)

BASICS

Q: What is "creative placemaking?"

We think Ann Markusen and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus said it best in their publication, *Creative Placemaking*:

"In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired."

For more information, please [click to Creative Placemaking](#).

Q: Could you tell us about the future of the Our Town initiative?

A: It is our hope that Our Town will continue as an annual program, but as with all federal programs it is subject to funding availability.

Q: What is the total funding available through the Our Town initiative?

A: The NEA's Appropriations Request to Congress is \$10 million. Pending availability of funding, grants are expected to be awarded at set levels ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000.

Q: What is the success rate for applicants?

A: In 2013, 254 eligible applications were received and 59 grants were recommended, a success rate of roughly 23 percent.

Q: If we received an Our Town grant last year, can we apply again this year?

A: No. Current **Our Town** grantees (FY 2013) and their officially named partners are not eligible to apply this year under the FY 2014 Our Town guidelines. You may apply to the Our Town category again next year for FY 2015 for a **distinctly different project, or a distinctly different phase of the project**, from that which was funded.

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**WEBINAR
Q&A**

Email if you have additional questions as you
prepare your application:

OT@arts.gov



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