



Paul M. Angell Family Foundation

Performing Arts

Request for Proposals: Envisioning the Future: Holistic Resources for New Work Development

As part of the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation's (PMAFF) sustained commitment to Chicago's performing arts ecosystem, the Foundation is currently seeking proposals from Chicagoland arts organizations to support new performance work that is created and premiered within our local community. This pilot grant opportunity provides organizations with holistic resources to create bold new work, across performing arts genres, that speak to the complexities of our time and advances compelling visions of the world they hope to create.

Opportunity Overview:

The PMAFF Performing Arts Program knows that the arts have a unique ability to evoke emotion and connect us to the beauty and complexity of our own humanity and that of others. The performing arts engage us on both a personal and collective level - strengthening communities, building empathy, calling us to action, creating a sense of meaning and shared purpose, and encouraging us to imagine new futures where all cultures, identities, and communities are valued, supported, and flourishing.

In anticipation of the launch of the PMAFF's new strategy for the Performing Arts later in 2026, we are inviting organizations to respond to this Request for Proposals – Envisioning the Future: Holistic Resources for New Work Development. This initiative will be the first time that the foundation's Performing Arts program will fund performing arts organizations beyond theatre and classical music. Other music genres, dance, and multidisciplinary live performance art forms will also be eligible for funding. As this pilot is designed to build relationships between the foundation and organizations new to us and those we have not funded recently, grantee partners funded since January 1, 2023, are not eligible to apply.

This initiative will proceed in two phases. The first phase of funding supports the administrative and artistic costs of the creation and development of a new work. During this phase, the Foundation will review all submitted applications and select up to 30 to move forward to its organizational due diligence process and participate in virtual site visits. From among these organizations, the Foundation anticipates making grants to up to 25 organizations, to support their proposed projects.

The second phase of the initiative will occur in the Foundation's November 2027 grant cycle. Organizations selected for grants in phase one will be invited to complete a renewal application that includes a preview of the completed work and outlines the costs associated with a fully realized production of the work.

Eligibility:

The following are ELIGIBLE for funding:

- U.S.- based nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations;
- Organizations that center the arts in their mission (arts and culture is the primary area of organizational focus).; examples include performing arts presenting organizations, dance companies, theater ensembles, music organizations, etc.;
- Organizations located in Chicago and the immediate surrounding suburbs (Cook County);
- Organizations with annual budgets of up to \$10M;
- Organizations that have been operating and consistently producing performance work since January 1, 2023;
- Projects led by one artist, multiple artists, or collaboratives;
- Proposals for the commissioning, devising, and development of original work;
- Proposals for work centered in the performing arts; examples may include music, dance, theater, etc.

The following are NOT ELIGIBLE for funding:

- Commercial and/or for-profit enterprises or non-presenting organizations;
- Individual artists or those applying through a fiscal sponsor;
- Organizations funded by the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation's Performing Arts program since January 1, 2023;
- Organizations not primarily working in or headquartered in Chicago or the immediate surrounding suburbs (Cook County);
- Proposals to adapt existing work;
- Work that has already been developed and is at the production stage of development.

PMAFF Funding Expectations:

- The Foundation expects to provide up to 25 grants to organizations in the pilot year of this initiative;
- The size of individual grants will depend on the phase of the project. Grants for the development phase will be up to \$150,000, and grants made for the production phase will be up to \$250,000. Grant amounts will also be based on the unique features of the proposed project, organization size, and other criteria-driven factors;
- Grant funds (for development and production) must be fully expended within three years of the first payment.

Grant Criteria:

The following criteria will be used to select organizations/projects for this grant opportunity:

1. Does the organization/project meet the defined eligibility criteria?
2. Does the proposed project speak to the complexities of our time and "respond to the now" or "envision the future?"
3. Does the proposed project align with the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation's goals of strengthening communities, building empathy, uplifting and celebrating new and/or excluded voices, and providing avenues for healing and connection in an increasingly isolated world?
4. Does the organization and/or artist(s) have a history of creating compelling, culturally relevant, and engaging performances and a history of successfully completed projects.
5. Does the organization have the capacity, infrastructure, marketing, expertise, relationships, etc., to complete this project?

6. Does the proposed timeline and budget align with the scope of the proposed project?
7. Are the artists involved in the project's creation, production, and design being compensated equitably?
8. Does this organization/company have an audience and community of sufficient size and reach to embrace a new work, and do they provide opportunities for audiences and community members to see the work for free or at low cost?
9. Will there be opportunities for the new work to be staged, read, or produced at each level in the development process, and will it lead to a fully realized staged and produced premiere within three years?

Proposal Instructions:

Below are the proposal questions and requested attachments. To submit an application, please click [HERE](#) to create a new account in the grant portal system.

1. Organization Mission
2. Please give us a brief overview of your organization (main programs, governance structure, accomplishments, etc.).
3. What is your proposed idea for a new performance? How does this proposed work “respond to the now” or “envision the future?” Why is it important for this work to be made and produced now?
4. What are your goals for this project, artistically, organizationally, and related to audience/community engagement?
5. Describe in what ways, if any, your organization is working to advance equity. How does this project forward or reflect those efforts?
6. Who is involved (Please include relevant bios, resumes, and/or work samples in attachments)? Describe your organization’s history working with this artist(s) and their history of developing new works with you or others.
7. Why is your organization in a strong place to do this work now? Does your organization have a history of producing new work that is similar in scope to your proposed project? If this project is of a different scale than your previous work, how are you prepared/will prepare to execute it successfully?
8. What is the anticipated developmental process and timeline for this new work? Will there be free or low-cost public readings/presentations as part of the process? Do you anticipate being able to complete the development and production of this project within three years?

Attachments:

- Org budget
- Project budget
- Audit or 990
- Board list
- Donor list
- Work samples / artist bios (3 spaces)

Timeline:

Phase 1- Development and Creation

- RFP Launch: Monday, June 8, 2026
- Informational Webinar: June 16, 2026, noon - 1:00 pm (will be recorded) [Register Here](#)

- Office Hours: Available to applicants 2 hours per week in 15-minute slots [Sign Up Here](#)
- Applications Due: Friday, July 31, 2026 @ 5pm CT
- Round 1 Selections: Early August 2026 (up to 30 organizations invited to move forward)
- Detailed review and site visits with selected organizations: August 2026
- Final Decisions and Notification of Organizations: November 2026

Phase 2- Production and Marketing

- Applications Open: 2027