

CT foundation awards \$6M in grants in a show of support for theaters, museums and arts nonprofits

Christopher Arnott : 7-8 minutes : 9/10/2025

In a grand show of support for local theaters, museums, performance groups and other arts nonprofits, the [Hartford Foundation for Public Giving](#) has committed to granting \$6 million to arts and culture organizations in the Greater Hartford area over the next two years.

Through several new grant programs, the foundation is demonstrating the importance of arts and culture to the Hartford community. The programs also encourage collaboration, mentoring and networking opportunities and an increase in creativity among the grantees.

Dozens of grants already awarded as part of a new Centennial Arts and Culture Investment initiative announced at a press conference on Wednesday. The application process for other new grant programs will begin in a few months.

The Centennial Arts and Culture Investment initiative, which describes itself as “a comprehensive initiative designed to launch the next century of creativity,” credits its advisory group, [Artists of Colors Unite!](#), for assisting in the creation of the program, which aims to be diverse and inclusive in its grant giving.

“For a century, the Hartford Foundation has been committed to building and strengthening our region’s arts and culture ecosystem,” said Hartford Foundation president and CEO Jay Williams in a statement. “As a funder of arts and cultural organizations large and small, we seek to ensure that inclusion flows through every aspect of the arts and culture sector, from the people who create to the programs that inspire to the organizations that lead.”



Courtesy of TheaterWorks Hartford

TheaterWorks Hartford received a \$200,000 Arts & Culture Appreciation grant from The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. (Courtesy of TheaterWorks Hartford)

The foundation's concerted interest in arts and culture grants reflects a growing trend among organizations to address recent declines in federal funding. Some arts and culture organizations are also still dealing with the aftermath of the COVID shutdowns of 2020 and 2021, which affected subscription- or membership-based models and other forms of public support for these institutions.

Under the Centennial Arts and Culture Investment initiative, 48 arts and culture organizations in 13 towns in the Greater Hartford area received one-time Arts & Culture Appreciation grants that collectively add up to \$4 million. There are no restrictions on whether the grants can be used for general operating funds or for special projects.

The Arts & Culture Appreciation grants account for two thirds of Hartford Foundation's \$6 million investment in arts and culture. A separate \$1 million was designated for the [Artists of Color Accelerate](#) program, which was founded in 2021 by [224 EcoSpace](#) to provide fellowships for local artists with organizations that can provide mentorships and opportunities for them.

There is also \$460,000 earmarked to launch a new professional development program "for independent creatives" called Greater Hartford Creatives Alliance as a partnership with the Massachusetts-based nonprofit [Assets for Artists](#). The two-year program will fund 10 artists from the Greater Hartford area each year, with each artist receiving an unrestricted grant of \$10,000, a \$5,000 project grant and opportunities for professional development through networking and workshops. The application process is expected to begin in spring 2026.

Small nonprofit cultural organizations and historical societies will receive one-time grants through another new program, in conjunction with [CT Humanities](#), which will distribute a total of \$400,000. The organizations will be selected through an open application process that will begin in early 2026. Like the other programs, the CT Humanities partnership will involve direct funding as well as mentorship and development opportunities.

Arts and culture organizations who'd received grants from the Hartford Foundation in the past three years were deemed eligible for the new grants. Many of the grants were intended to represent 10% of the awardees' annual operating budgets, through that model could not be maintained for larger organizations such as [Hartford Stage](#) or [The Bushnell](#).

Hartford Stage, The Bushnell and the [Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art](#) each received \$300,000, the largest grant amount, and [Real Art Ways](#) received \$250,000.

The Charter Oak Cultural Center, Connecticut Museum of Culture and History, Connecticut Science Center, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center for Literary Activism, Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Mark Twain House & Museum and TheaterWorks Hartford each received \$200,000.

The Artists Collective, Hartford Performs, Justice Dance Performance Project, Playhouse on Park, the Simsbury Performing Arts Center, the Amistad Center for Art & Culture, the Children's Museum and The Connecticut Forum each received \$100,000.

The Conference of Churches (which oversees 224 EcoSpace), the HartBeat Ensemble theater collective, Little Theater of Manchester, Lutz Children's Museum in Manchester, the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, the Noah Webster House in West Hartford and Spectrum in Motion Dance Theater Ensemble each received \$50,000.

ActUp Theater, Hartford Artisans Weaving Center, Hartford's Got Talent!, Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington and Webb Deane Stevens Museum in Wethersfield were each awarded \$50,000 grants.

The dance organization Layavinyasa in Glastonbury, the New England Ballet Theatre in Avon, the Opera House Players in Enfield, the West Indian Foundation in Bloomfield and Windsor Art Center each received \$15,000.

Glastonbury Arts, Hartford's Proud Drill, Drum and Dance Corp, the Klassy Katz Elite Dance Team, Shine Your Light CT in East Hartford each received \$10,000.

The Asian Pacific American Coalition of Connecticut in Glastonbury, Cultural Dance Troupe of the West Indies, Hartford Youth Chorus, Journey Writers, Sankofa Kuumba Cultural Arts Consortium in Bloomfield, the Marlborough Arts Center and Museum, the Wethersfield theater group Times Fool Company and Ujima African American Alliance in Enfield were each awarded \$5,000 grants.

The majority of the grant recipients are based in Hartford and include some of the oldest, best-known and deeply established arts institutions in the state. Most of the recipients have regularly received support from state arts funding agencies, as well as CT Humanities and other organizations, but seldom in such substantial amounts.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving has awarded over a billion dollars in grants since its founding in 1925. Its stated mission is “putting philanthropy into action to create lasting solutions that result in vibrant communities within the Greater Hartford region.”

More information on the foundation and its many grants programs is available at [hfpg.org](https://www.hfpg.org).