

The Trust Van Lier Fellowship

2025 Request for Proposals to Advance the Development of Young Professional Artists from Historically Underrepresented Populations

Overview

The New York Community Trust's Edward and Sally Van Lier Fellowship Program provides support for talented young professionals (aged 18 to 30) from historically underrepresented populations who are dedicated to a career in the arts. Grants will help arts groups provide young professional artists living and working in New York City with paid opportunities to create and present new work, as well as training, mentorship, and other support. Fellowships are intended to help young working artists achieve a significant professional credit that can lead to future opportunities and advance their careers.

We expect to award two- or three-year grants to a small number of arts groups to sponsor two or more artist fellowships. Requests should not exceed \$150,000 over two or three years. **Proposals are due to The Trust no later than 5:00 pm ET on Thursday, May 22, 2025. Grants will be announced in October 2025.**

Background

Two goals of The Trust's arts program are to: 1) promote diversity and equity in the arts and 2) develop talented young artists from historically underrepresented populations. The Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund, created by the will of Sally Van Lier, allowed The Trust to establish a fellowship program for young artists to further these goals. Sally Van Lier was a theatrical performer in 1920s New York and appeared in the original production of *Showboat*. Throughout their lives, she and her husband were avid visitors to the City's museums, concerts, and plays, and introduced many young people to the arts. To honor our donor's intent, we make grants to arts groups to provide education, training, or other support to artists at two stages of development:

- Pre-Professional—The period of training and development to prepare for college, conservatory, or advanced professional training.
- Young Professional—The period when artists between 18 and 30 years-old seek to establish a professional career.

We issue a separate Request for Proposals (RFP) for each level of development, typically in alternating years. **This year, the RFP will only consider proposals for efforts to serve young professional artists ages 18-30.**

A 2016 evaluation of the Van Lier program is available [here](#).

Eligibility

Organizations: Grants will be made to tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organizations in New York City administering residency or fellowship programs that promote the artistic and professional development of talented young artists. Grants will not be considered for groups with annual operating budgets below \$250,000 (to be demonstrated by actual income and expenses for the most recently completed fiscal year), nor for agencies with an accumulated deficit or negative fund balance.

Applicants must request support for *at least* two artists and may request to support more than this number. The fellowship activities and support may be provided directly by the sponsoring organization or in cooperation with another group. In all cases, the grantee will be responsible for recruiting and selecting fellowship recipients, assuring that resources are provided, monitoring the artists' progress over the term of the fellowship, and tracking subsequent professional career developments.

Groups with active grants from The Trust's arts program that conclude after October 2025 are not eligible to apply for this round. Additionally, The Trust will not support a Van Lier fellowship program for more than six consecutive years. If you are unsure of your organization's eligibility, please contact Chiara Ricisak at cricisak@thenytrust.org to confirm.

Fellowship Programs: We will consider programs that provide fellowships or equivalent support for young professional artists. We will not consider applications solely focused on regranting. Activities must take place and help artists who reside in New York City. Fellowship recipients should be aged 18 to 30 and should not be enrolled in academic, conservatory, college, or degree-granting programs during the fellowship. Priority is given to agencies that help young artists from historically underrepresented populations in the arts, as determined by, for example, race/ethnicity, ability, and gender identity.

Fellowship activities should be appropriate to both the art form and the development needs of the individual artists. We support a broad range of activities and related costs, such as advanced training and coaching; equipment, instruments, and supplies; mentoring; rehearsal and workspace; opportunities to create, produce, perform, or publish; professional conferences; and travel, living, and material expenses. Fellows must receive a financial stipend and should gain a significant credit that will advance their careers.

Award Terms

Requests should:

- Not exceed \$150,000 (\$75,000 per year for two years or \$50,000 per year for three years) depending upon the number and size of fellowships offered;
- Extend for a period of two or three years; and

- Sponsor two or more fellowships (agencies may request *up to* \$25,000 per fellow, per year as direct payments to artists and may request less than this amount).

The purpose of the award is to provide support to young working artists from historically underrepresented populations within arts disciplines (e.g., filmmaking, theater, dance, music, visual arts, literary arts). Requests to support graphic design, media post-production, curatorial, educational, or administrative roles will not be considered. Funds may be used to support or expand an existing program or begin a new one. Grants are intended to cover fellowship costs; however, a reasonable amount of administrative costs attributable to the program may be requested. Supplemental funds from other sources are encouraged.

Groups may choose to support either the same artists over the term of the grant, or different artists for shorter periods. The size and duration of each fellowship should be based on the activities involved, and the resources and time needed for the artists to achieve a significant professional credit that will advance their careers. Organizations should do their best to ensure selected artists are first-time Van Lier fellows.

The Trust will require grantees to submit periodic reports on the program as a whole and on the status of each fellowship recipient, generate line-item expense reports that demonstrate how grant monies are spent, and establish procedures for tracking recipients' artistic achievement after the fellowship.

Submission Materials

In a single PDF (no larger than 25 MB) please combine the following materials:

1. Proposal narrative. The narrative should not exceed **five pages** and should address the following:
 - a) Brief overview of your organization's history and mission.
 - b) Explanation of your organization's familiarity with the needs of young people from historically underrepresented populations in arts disciplines, and how your program to advance talented young artists meets those needs.
 - c) Number of fellowships to be provided, their duration, and a description and estimated timeline of activities, resources (financial and other), opportunities, and services provided to fellows to help them establish and achieve career goals.
 - d) Methods used to identify fellowship recipients, including determination of need.
 - e) Plan for tracking each artist's progress and their career development after the fellowship.
 - f) Description of the role and qualifications of partnering organizations, if any.
 - g) Strategy for continuing the fellowship program after Trust support has concluded.
 - h) Previous Van Lier grant recipients should note how Trust support has affected the organization overall. For example, did the Van Lier program help attract new diverse artists or advance the organization's commitment to diversity among its staff and board? How did previous fellows benefit? Please cite specific examples.

2. Multi-year project budget. The budget should indicate the annual and total cost of all fellowships. Include an itemization of the costs per artist (e.g., stipend, space rental, supplies, administration, etc.) and the total request from The Trust. If applicable, note other confirmed, pending, and projected funding sources.
3. A list of your Board of Directors, including affiliations.
4. Actual income and expenses for the most recently completed fiscal year.
5. Operating budget for the current year and projected budget(s) for the requested grant period.

Submission Instructions

1. Assemble and merge items 1-5 (listed above) into a single PDF. Name it in the following format: “ApplicantOrganizationName.pdf”
2. Complete a [cover sheet for the 2025 Van Lier Fellowship Program](#) and upload your single PDF of materials. Please note, in the project description section of the cover sheet, you should specify the number of fellows you will support and the size of their stipends.
3. Once uploaded, check the certification box at the end of the cover sheet and click submit. You will get an email confirming the proposal has been received. This email will include—as a PDF attachment—the Cover Sheet you just completed. The email will be sent to the email address entered in the “Information about Person Completing this Form” field on the Proposal Cover Sheet.

Proposals must be submitted electronically by 5:00 pm ET on Thursday, May 22, 2025.

Late proposals will not be accepted.

You may email questions to program associate Chiara Ricisak at cricisak@thenytrust.org.