



SUBURBAN CREATIVE PLACEMAKING WEBINAR



WEBINAR AGENDA

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW: COOK COUNTY ARTS

The Suburban Creative Placemaking program engages the arts to advance Cook County Bureau of Economic Development's mission to enhance quality of life for Cook County residents through transformative community and economic development.

Cook County is committed to: build sustainable communities for all residents.

- all residents having access to vibrant, sustainable and communities where people want to live, learn, work, and play.
- invest \$2 million in community-led projects that advance the economic, physical, and social vitality of suburban communities.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: ABOUT LISC

Together with residents and partners, LISC forges resilient communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families.

The County has partnered with **Local Initiatives Support Corporation** to:

- **Manage** the grant application process
- **Conduct** peer-to-peer Learning Circles
- **Provide** technical assistance to grantees as they work to implement their projects

LISC is an experienced leader in creative placemaking, partnering with local leaders to strengthen and transform communities across the nation.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

ABOUT SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY ARTS CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

Cook County Arts' Suburban Placemaking Program is investing in transformative projects that leverage the arts to enhance quality of life for Cook County residents.

Nonprofit organizations located in and serving suburban neighborhoods may apply for:

- grants from \$50,000 to \$250,000
- access to 1-1 technical assistance for Creative Placemaking projects that improve the economic, physical, and social vitality of suburban communities.

WHAT IS CREATIVE PLACEMAKING?

Creative placemaking transforms the physical environment in ways that make it distinctive and recognizable as home to a unique culture.

- Renovating
- Repopulating
- Embellishing spaces can nurture new connections and other types of revitalization.

Murals, street art, and community-designed transit enhancements can bring a sense of pride to a neighborhood and can deter negative impacts on the built environment.

- Creative placemaking supports the livelihood of local artists as cultural innovators and entrepreneurs.
- It fosters the development of arts-related business clusters and artisanal manufacturing.
- It creates growth opportunities for neighborhood businesses by highlighting the distinct culture of place through festivals and events. Once enhanced with art, and bustling with activity, a neighborhood draws more commerce and foot traffic, which in turn can stimulate investment and create jobs.

Examples of Successful Creative Placemaking



Examples include:

- Transforming a vacant lot into a community garden with rotating art installations
- Developing a mural project that enhances and effects the history of a neighborhood
- Designing public spaces that incorporate interactive art elements

Looking for more examples? Check out the links below:

- [LISC Creative Placemaking: Getting Started](#)
- [ArtPlace](#)
- [National Endowment for the Arts](#)

A solid blue vertical bar is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the title.

PROGRAM BENEFITS & SUPPORT

The vision behind this initiative aligns with Cook County's broader mission: creating vibrant and sustainable communities where residents can live, learn, work, and play. Creative placemaking, at its core, helps to revitalize neighborhood while uplifting their unique cultures and fostering meaningful development.

Grants ranging up to \$250,000 may focus on:

- Artist Murals and Public Art
- Community Gardens
- Cultural Planning
- Neighborhood Gateways
- Reimagined Public Spaces
- Commercial Corridor Improvements
- Creative Asset Mapping
- Completing a Funding Goal for a New Cultural Facilities



PROGRAM BENEFITS & SUPPORT

- If selected, grantee's will **receive disbursements based on milestones met in the executed grant agreement and broken up into two payments.**
- Grant dollars are **not on a reimbursement basis.**
- Project **must be completed by November 1, 2026.**

PROGRAM FUNDS CANNOT BE USED FOR

1. General operating support
2. Ongoing programming that is not creative placemaking related or for projects that do not build creative placemaking or incorporating a community process with community stakeholders, centering artist and arts organizations
 - a. Examples: Theatre Productions, Temporary/ Short Exhibitions, Institutional Programs
3. Reimbursement for work completed, debt reduction, or endowment/capital campaigns.
4. Purchase of computers, software, equipment, and furnishings; website and database upgrades; or annual audits.

All proposed **creative placemaking projects must help to transform communities** into beautiful, livable, lively, and resilient places with the arts at their core.

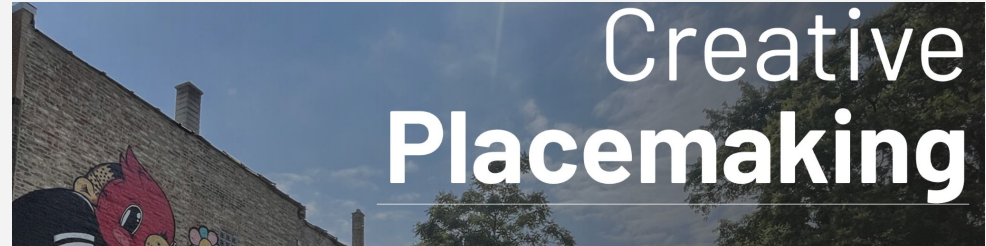
ELIGIBILITY

All proposed **creative placemaking projects must help to transform communities** into beautiful, livable, lively, and resilient places with the arts at their core.

Have received **IRS determination of exempt status as a 501(c) at least two years prior to application and maintained continuous operations since receiving status.** A 501(c) organization is a type of nonprofit entity that qualifies for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) in the United States. These organizations are exempt from federal income tax because they serve a public, mutual, or member benefit purpose rather than a private profit motive. A 501(c) 4 is not eligible to apply.

Have an official business address **in Suburban Cook County** (outside the City of Chicago).

APPLICATION PORTAL



Program Overview

Cook County is investing \$2 million in transformative community-led projects that leverage the arts to enhance the quality of life for suburban Cook County residents. The County has partnered with **Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)** to manage the grant application process, conduct peer-to-peer Learning Circles, and provide technical assistance to grantees as they work to implement their projects.

Nonprofit organizations located in and serving suburban neighborhoods may apply for grants from \$50,000 to \$250,000, along with technical assistance, for Creative Placemaking projects that improve the economic, physical, and social vitality of suburban communities.

[Apply Now](#)

Application Portal

While you can save your progress and return to the application at a later date, we suggest downloading [this PDF](#) version of all application questions for your reference.

The following documents are required for the application:

1. **Creative Placemaking Project Plan**, including:
 - Project history- if applicable and relevant
 - Project budget- indicating proposed source and status of all project revenue
 - Project timeline- long-term maintenance plan
 - Site control
 - Images and details of proposed site if applicable
 - Roster of project team and key community partners (artists, community development leaders, residents, etc.) with brief biographies, their role in the project, and highlighting relevant skills and experiences
2. **IRS Letter of Determination** as 501(c) Nonprofit*
3. **Financial Statements** for the last 2 years (audited or unaudited)
4. **Letters of Support** to demonstrate community support (no more than 3)

*If the applicant is operating with a **Fiscal Sponsorship**, include a signed and executed fiscal agency agreement between applicant and fiscal agent.

[Save my progress and resume later](#) | [Resume a previously saved form](#)

LEAD APPLICANT

Lead Applicant *

APPLICATION PORTAL: ELIGIBILITY

Nonprofit organizations in suburban Cook County are eligible to apply to this program and must be the lead applicant.

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Have received IRS determination of exempt status as a 501(c) with at least two years prior to application and maintained continuous operations since receiving status. A 501(c) organization is a type of nonprofit entity that qualifies for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) in the United States. These organizations are exempt from federal income tax because they serve a public, mutual, or member benefit purpose rather than a private profit motive. Have an official business address in suburban Cook County (outside the City of Chicago) **A 501(c) 4 is not eligible to apply.**
- Have a record of achievement, history implementing services, programs, or initiatives to improve the lives of residents in suburban communities
- Priority for funding will focus on projects from applicants with a history in creative placemaking in underserved/under-resourced communities.

***Multiple applications coming from One Organization will NOT be accepted.**

LEAD APPLICANT

Lead Applicant *

Legal Name of Organization *

Doing Business As Name

Number and Street Name *

Enter P.O. box if mail is not delivered to street address

Does your project require fiscal sponsorship? *

Yes

No

APPLICATION PORTAL: POINTS OF CONTACT

AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL

An Authorizing Official is any individual permitted, alone or with others, by any provision of law or by the issuing public entity, to execute and sign off on behalf of the applicant organization.

First Name *

Last Name *

Job Title *

Phone Number *

Email *

PROJECT MANAGER at Lead Organization

First Name *

Last Name *

Organization/Business *

Job Title *

Phone Number *

Email *

APPLICATION PORTAL: PROJECT INFORMATION AND NARRATIVE

Project proposals may originate from nonprofits working in any area (e.g. community and economic development, education, environment, health, violence prevention, arts and culture, etc.).

Competitive proposals will include:

- **Community Impact:** The project addresses critical community needs by revitalizing shared spaces, promoting social cohesion, and fostering a deeper sense of belonging among residents. The initiative ensures equitable access to resources, improving quality of life and creating opportunities for collective growth.
- **Community & Arts Engagement:** The project integrates arts and culture as central tools for storytelling and expression, empowering local voices and reflecting the community's unique identity. Artists are involved and incorporate public installations, and the initiative encourages active participation, making the arts an accessible and transformative force in the community.
- **Project Feasibility:** With a detailed project plan, secured resources, and partnerships with local stakeholders, the initiative is well-positioned to achieve its goals within the designated timeline and budget. The project is practical, scalable, and sustainable in its execution by November 2026.
- **Organization Capacity & Experience Managing Federal Funds:** The organization has successfully completed federally funded projects, demonstrating compliance, transparency, and effective use of resources. With established systems for reporting and financial management, the team is equipped to handle the rigorous demands of federal funding requirements.
- **Overall Team Expertise:** The project team brings a wide-range of expertise in arts programming, community engagement, and project management, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach to success. Key team members have extensive experience in leading impactful initiatives, combining creative vision with technical skills to achieve meaningful outcomes.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

- **Creative Placemaking Project Plan** (include as one document)
 - ✓ Project history, if applicable and relevant)
 - ✓ Project budget (Indicating proposed source and status of all project revenue)
 - ✓ Project timeline (including milestones) Project completion must be November 1, 2026.
 - ✓ Long-term maintenance plan
 - ✓ Site control – what is the plan to gain site control? What approvals are needed?
 - ✓ Images and details of proposed site if applicable
 - ✓ List of Board of Directors
 - ✓ List of project team and key community partners (artists, community development leaders, residents, etc.) with brief biographies, their role in the project, and highlighting relevant skills and experiences.
 - ✓ If the applicant is operating with a **Fiscal Sponsorship**, include a signed and executed fiscal agency agreement between applicant and fiscal agent.
- **IRS Letter of Determination as 501(c) Nonprofit** (Please note: a 501(c)4 is not eligible to apply)
- **Financial Statements for the last 2 years** (audited or unaudited)
- **Letters of Support** to demonstrate community support (no more than 3)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: DEMOGRAPHICS SECTION

Please note that information asked will have no impact on whether or not you receive a grant. This is purely for reporting purposes and to better understand the makeup of the Suburban Cook County nonprofit arts sector, in order to improve future programs meant to serve this vital sector.

Creative Placemaking Key Points & Take Aways

Creative placemaking is a strategy that uses arts, culture, and design to improve the physical and social character of a community, often by integrating artists and community members to collaboratively shape a space, enhancing quality of life and addressing local issues through creative projects and initiatives; essentially, it's about using creativity.

Creative placemaking requires partnership across sectors, deeply engages the community, involves artists, designers and culture bearers, and helps to advance local economic, physical, and/or social change, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change. *This definition is intentionally open and broad because creative placemaking draws on all artistic disciplines, and can be deployed as a strategy to address a wide range of community issues or challenges from public health to safety, economic development to housing.*

Key points about creative placemaking:

- **Community-driven:**
Emphasis is on involving residents and local artists in the decision-making process to ensure projects reflect the community's needs and values.
- **Multi-faceted approach:**
Can include public art installations, cultural events, community workshops, placemaking design interventions, and more.
- **Economic development potential:**
Aims to attract new businesses and visitors by creating attractive and unique places.
- **Social impact:**
Can help build community cohesion, foster social interaction, and address social issues.
- **Place-based focus:**
Concentrates on improving specific neighborhoods or regions by leveraging their unique characteristics.

KEY DATES AND APPLICATION PROCESS

February 25th Online application opens

February 27th Informational Webinar #1

LISC Office Hours

March 4th 5:30 - 6:30 PM

March 6th 11:00-12:00 PM

March 20th Information Webinar #2

March 25th **LISC Office Hours**

March 27th 5:30 - 6:30 PM

April 1st 10:00 - 11:00 AM

11:00 -12:00 PM

April 7th Application Deadline

June 1st Award Notification Sent

July 2025 Grant Program & Technical Assistance Begin

November 2026 Suburban Creative Placemaking Program Concludes



**Thank you for your interest in the
Cook County Arts Suburban
Creative Placemaking Initiative!**



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ARTS
Advancing Creative Capacity

Questions Session



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Thank you!