REHEARSAL SPACE SUBSIDY

NYC Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program
For NYC dance rehearsal spaces
Providing affordable and accessible space rentals

dance/NYC

2022-2024 New York City Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program Overview

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Program Overview and Goals

Administered by Dance/NYC and made possible by the Mellon Foundation, the purpose of the New York City Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program (RSS) is to make affordable rehearsal space available to dance makers who are in critical need of space for the creation and development of their work, while also fostering a more inclusive and just dance field. By addressing financial barriers to accessing artistic development space, this program aims to advance dance artistry in the five boroughs of New York City and contribute to the field's overall diversity, sustainability, resilience, and health. While dance rehearsal space facilities are the direct recipients of funding, individual dance artists and dance making organizations are the primary intended beneficiaries of the program.

Given the historical affordability crisis impacting artists in New York City, the Mellon Foundation established the Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program in 2011 as a result of the Foundation-support study *"We Make Do:" More Time is Better, But Budget is King* (2010). Dance/NYC assumed administrative oversight of the RSS program in 2018 following two cycles of the Foundation's administration (2012-2014, 2015-2018). Dance/NYC's administration of the program was further motivated by Dance/NYC's research *Advancing Fiscally Sponsored Dance Artists & Projects* (2017), *Performing Disability. Dance. Artistry.* (2018), and *NYC's Foreign-Born Dance Workforce Demographics* (2018). These studies revealed affordability to be a chronic challenge for dance artists, who ranked affordable artistic development space as a top need, especially amongst small-budget dance makers and specific populations like foreign-born and immigrant artists. The development of Dance/NYC's iteration of the RSS program was additionally motivated by needs and concerns described in CreateNYC, the City of New York's first-ever cultural plan released in July 2017, which identified affordable living, work, and presentation spaces as top priorities for New York City's artist population. Furthermore, in alignment with Dance/NYC's research and organizational priority of ensuring that artists had access to quality space that was also accessible for disabled people, grantees were required to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In 2020, Dance/NYC's research study *Defining "Small-Budget" Dance Makers in a Changing Dance Ecology* further highlighted the need for funding to cover space-related costs and noted that lack of access to space and other resources inhibits the development and growth of dance in outer boroughs. These established space challenges have only deepened since March 2020 as the sector responds to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dance/NYC's recent research study, *The Coronavirus Dance Impact Informational Brief - A Dance Sector in Peril* (2021), revealed that the single issue that impacted individual arts workers and organizations alike was rent and fixed costs associated with space. This research also suggested that the need for affordable space is most critical for several segments of the field, including artists of color and immigrant artists; disabled artists; artists who live and work outside of Manhattan; artists and organizations/groups/projects that work with limited financial resources or outside a non-profit structure; and percussive dance artists and organizations, groups, and projects that require hard shoes and/or sneakers.

Prioritizing these segments, Dance/NYC's second iteration of the RSS program will continue to make affordable space available to dance makers who are in critical need of it and aims to limit the financial barriers and the amount of labor required for artists to access space.

As of 2021, the New York City Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program has provided $1,760,500 between 2019-2021 to 16 rehearsal space grantees to provide subsidized rates for over 65,000 hours of dance rehearsal space ranging between $8-$20 per hour across the five boroughs of New York City. *As Dance/NYC moves into the second iteration of the program, it will distribute over $2 million over the course of the grant period (2022-2024) to 20 rehearsal spaces to provide subsidized rates for dance rehearsal space*, with the following goals:

- Prioritize the experiences and input of individual dance artists, the intended beneficiaries of this program;
- Reduce the labor artists and organizations incur to be a part of the program;

- Create the greatest material benefit and tend to the impact participation in this program may create for every dance worker and/or entity involved, from individual artists accessing rehearsal space, to venues providing rehearsal space, to Dance/NYC staff administering the program, to the field at large;
- Increase access to affordable and quality rehearsal space for dance artists and companies to advance dance making and artistry;
- Increase equity in the distribution of subsidized hours in terms of geography, dance genres, budget size, demographics of artists served and the experience of artists throughout the course of the program;
- Increase the quality of artist experience in navigating the program, including reduced labor required to identify, secure, and gain access to affordable space;
- Achieve a stronger and more sustainable pool of rehearsal space providers; and
- Increased visibility and attention to the landscape of artistic development space.

Legacy, Evolution, and Administration of the Program

Dance/NYC believes the dance ecology must itself be just, equitable, and inclusive to meaningfully contribute to social progress and envisions a dance ecology wherein power, funding, opportunities, conduct, and impacts are fair for all artists, cultural workers, and audiences. It seeks to advance policies, investments, programs, mindsets, and actions that remove and prevent inequities that exist along the continuum of lives in dance, from the public-school classroom to the stage.

Dance/NYC's approach cuts across its public programs—advocacy; research; leadership training, networking and convening; technology and visibility; and regranting—and all aspects of its operations. Its approach is intersectional, building upon multiple issue areas that together create a more just, equitable, and inclusive dance ecology. Dance/NYC's approach is also grounded in collaboration. It recognizes generations of people and organizations working to advance justice, equity, and inclusion in the arts and culture and strives to contribute to their efforts. It has established formal partnerships with colleague arts service organizations.

The second iteration of the New York City Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program, its components, and continued evolution is a reflection of:

- Ongoing learning and dialogue with current RSS grantees, artists who utilized subsidized space offered through the program, field partners, Dance/NYC's task forces and committees, and Dance/NYC's ongoing research;
- Research related to the broad landscape of dance rehearsal space and expertise in the development and operation of cultural space; and
- The current events impacting the field.

The RSS is not only a space subsidy program, but also a research initiative that studies and assesses the health and gaps in this crucial part of the dance ecosystem. As a result of its learnings through the first iteration of the program, the evolving impact of COVID-19 on the sector, and the continued presence of oppressive systems and practices in dance, Dance/NYC has identified a series of changes to apply to the second iteration of the RSS program anchored on its values of justice, equity, and inclusion. Changes that reflect these values include:

- Artist-centered:
  - Including arts workers in the application and selection process of grantees;
  - Establishing a nomination form that allows artists to nominate venues near their homes who already provide them with equitable access to rehearsal space;
  - Prioritizing selection of venues who:
    - Have equitable and easily accessible booking systems for artists through this program; and
    - Reflect a sustained commitment to equity and foster equitable relationships with the artists they serve; and
  - Expanding eligibility for subsidized rehearsal space rentals to artists and groups working outside of the nonprofit business model, such as artists who are self-employed, working through an LLC or other for-profit structure, working independently on multiple simultaneous projects and small for-profit dance groups;
- Venue-centered:
  - Creating a two-step Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) and application process that allows venues to learn more about the program and consider their ability to be a part of it before dedicating extensive time and labor to the application process;
  - Compensating all applicants for the time and staffing resources allocated to the application process regardless of the outcome of their proposal;
  - Providing additional technical assistance, including one-on-one session to support applicants in the generation of application materials; and
  - Expanding eligibility to local, for-profit dance studios and mixed-use spaces;
- Field-centered:
  - Working with community organizers and partner organizations to spread the word about the program; and
  - Prioritizing in grant selection venues that:
    - Demonstrate a commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of their operations and program delivery; and
    - Provide rehearsal space to dance artists who have historically had less access to resources.

In applying a JEI lens, Dance/NYC seeks to advance programs and actions that remove and prevent inequities that exist along the continuum of lives in dance and that create tangible material benefits for those most impacted by systems of oppression. Dance/NYC also seeks to incentivize rehearsal spaces to redress inequities in their own practices and the wider field and to advance diverse artists and artistry. In alignment with these stated values, Dance/NYC will lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Program to ensure the following:

- Program priorities are met;
- Artists served are a reflection of the demography of the metropolitan New York City area to whatever extent possible;

- Applicants receive clear information regarding eligibility and the application process;
- Applicants across geographies, operating structures, organizational types, venues sizes, and demographics have the opportunity to receive support in completing their application;
- The application process and the dissemination of information regarding the application is led by and in conversation with community partners, organizers, and members of the field;
- The application process creates opportunities for more meaningful engagement with local dance-making communities; and
- As many barriers to participation as possible are removed.

These goals will be met by:

- Continuing to work with Carrie Blake, Senior Consultant at Webb Mgmt, who will continue to lead Dance/NYC's RSS research efforts, bringing forth expertise in the Arts & Culture sector and the development and operation of cultural space, as well as current experience researching and analyzing data from the first iteration of RSS. Blake is a management consultant, researcher, project manager, and administrator dedicated to the cultural sector. A senior team member at Webb since 2006, she has directed research and analysis on more than 300 studies and plans.
- Streamlining application announcements, eligibility and ineligibility criteria, and application questions and materials;
- Only including questions in the Artist Nomination of Venues Form that are absolutely necessary to meet funding priorities and that are conscientious of the time and resource investment required of individual dance artists;
- Only including questions in the application that are absolutely necessary to meet funding priorities and that are conscientious of the time and resource investment required of applicants;
- Offering multiple points of contact for applicants to receive support; and
- Working in collaboration with borough arts councils and hiring local community organizers to spread the word about the Program.

For the second iteration of the NYC Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program, to minimize applicant labor and prioritize the experience of individual dance artists, the application evolved to a two-step process. A new component of the program, the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) phase served to identify venues that met the program's primary eligibility requirements and justice, equity, and inclusion goals. The RFEI was an open call, accessible online form with short answer questions for venues to provide details on their ability to offer hours, their mission, and how they work to support individual dance artists through their facilities. Venues identified through artist nominations and Dance/NYC's research and program analysis from the first iteration of the program were contacted directly and invited to respond to the RFEI. Grantees of the first iteration of the program who remained in good standing were not required to respond to the RFEI and were automatically invited to the next step of the application process. Venues that responded to the RFEI and were not already a part of Dance/NYC's research process during the first iteration of the program were visited as part of the RFEI process. Invitations to participate in the full application process were made to venues selected through the RFEI review panel process.

The second iteration of the New York City Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy program is led by the following Dance/NYC Staff:

- Alejandra Duque Cifuentes, Executive Director
- Kirsten Reynolds, Grantmaking Manager
- Milena Luna, Grantmaking Consultant
- Jenna Purcell, Grantmaking Assistant
- Maleni Palacios, Operations Consultant

Timeline

Artist Nomination Release	November 2, 2021
Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) Release	November 16, 2021
RFEI Webinar	November 19, 2021, 12:00 p.m. EST
RFEI Virtual Technical Assistance Sessions (20 minutes)	20-minute sessions available November 15, 2021-December 10, 2021
Artist Nomination Deadline	November 19, 2021, 6:00 p.m. EST
RFEI Submission Deadline	December 10, 2021, 6:00 p.m. EST
RFEI Panel Review	December 2021
Application Release	February 2, 2022
Application Webinar	February 2, 2022
Application Submission Deadline	March 13, 2022, 5:00 p.m. EST
Application Panel Review	March - April 2022
Award Notification	May 2022
Grant Term	May 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024
Interim Grantee Report Due	February 3, 2023
Interim Grantee Report Due	February 2, 2024
Final Grantee Report Due	January 31, 2025

Questions
If you have further questions, please email rehearsalspacesubsidy@dance.nyc. Please only send questions to this email account. Questions sent to Dance/NYC staff or project consultant email accounts directly may be missed and go unanswered.

About Dance/NYC
Dance/NYC's mission is to promote the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and performance of dance in the metropolitan New York City area. It embeds values of justice, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of the organization.

About the Mellon Foundation
The Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core

belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive.

About Webb Mgmt
Webb Mgmt's mission is to advance the arts with sound planning and research. The firm is a leading provider of advisory services for the development and operation of cultural facilities, organizations, agencies, and districts. Our clients include public agencies, colleges and universities, nonprofit arts organizations, community and private foundations, commercial developers, economic development agencies, and various friends of the arts.