

DANCE/NYC ANNOUNCES THE 2021 NEW YORK CITY REHEARSAL SPACE SUBSIDY (RSS) PROGRAM - NOMINATION AND REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

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By Dance/NYC

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New York, NY - Dance/NYC is pleased to announce the second iteration of the [New York City Rehearsal Space Subsidy \(RSS\) Program](#) administered by Dance/NYC and made possible by the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The purpose of the program 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.

To center artists' experience in this process, Dance/NYC has created a nomination form for dance artists to nominate spaces to be considered for the program. Dance/NYC invites artists and choreographers, administrators, producers, managers, and all members of the dance community that use rehearsal space to nominate studios for consideration in the program. This will be followed by a public Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) form, to be released November 9, 2021, for spaces to determine their eligibility before being invited to complete the full application. Nominated spaces will be contacted directly and invited to submit a Request for Expressions of Interest, and the RFEI will be publicly available on Dance/NYC's website. Nomination forms will be accepted until November 19, 2021. NOTE: Spaces do not need to be nominated in order to apply. For more information and to submit a nomination, visit [Dance.NYC](#).

The second iteration of the RSS 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.

Grant Benefits

Each rehearsal space venue selected as a grantee will receive the following:

- Grant funds to provide subsidized dance rehearsal space throughout the course of the grant period (April 1, 2022-December 31, 2024);
- Fees to support administrative costs to run the program;
- In-kind marketing, communications, and outreach annually through Dance/NYC platforms; and
- Professional development support in the form of grantee cohort meetings and annual site visits to drive individual and collective learning about artists' needs and the landscape of rehearsal space.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply if they:

- Have facilities that are ADA compliant;
- Are located in the five boroughs of New York City;
- Are able to provide a minimum of 200-1,000 rehearsal space hours annually (600-3,000, in total); and
- Are able to provide proof of 501(c)(3) status and/or operational business license if a for-profit entity.

Applicants are not eligible to apply if they:

- Do not have ADA compliant facilities;
- Are located outside of New York City;
- Are unable to provide a minimum of 200-1,000 rehearsal space hours annually (600-3,000, in total).

Application Process

In order to minimize applicant labor, the application will be a two step process:

1. Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI), to be released on November 9, 2021. This will be an accessible online form assessing applicant interest and eligibility for the grant.
2. Full Application, to be available January 12, 2022. Applicants selected through the RFEI process will be invited to submit a full application.

Given the historical affordability crisis impacting artists in New York City, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation established the Dance Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program in 2011 as a result of the Foundation-supported 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 concerns laid out in CreateNYC (createnyc.org), 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.

In 2020, Dance/NYC's research study *Defining "Small-Budget" Dance Makers in a Changing Dance Ecology* (2020) 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 Rehearsal Space Subsidy Program has provided \$1,760,500 between 2019-2021 to 16 grantees to collectively provide subsidized rates for over 65,000 hours of dance rehearsal space 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 (2022-2025) to 16-18 rehearsal spaces to provide subsidized rates for dance rehearsal space, with the goals to:

- 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 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.

Questions

If you have further questions, please email [\[email protected\]](mailto:) 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 [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#)

As the largest supporter of the arts and humanities in the US, the Mellon Foundation seeks to build just communities where ideas and imagination can thrive. To this end, our core programs support exemplary and inspiring institutions of higher education and culture. The Foundation makes grants in four core program areas: Higher Learning; Arts and Culture; Public Knowledge; and Humanities in Place.

About [Webb Management](#)

Webb Management's mission is to advance the arts with sound planning and research. They are the 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.

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