



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Sean M. Ryan

State Legislators Announce Over \$2.3 Million In State Arts Funding For Buffalo Organizations

SEAN M. RYAN January 10, 2025

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State Legislators announce NYSCA funding for Buffalo-based arts organizations at Ujima Company Theatre, Jan. 10, 2025

Funding from New York State Council on the Arts Will Support Over 80 Local Artists and Cultural Organizations in 2025

BUFFALO, NY – Today, January 10, 2025, State legislators representing the City of Buffalo gathered at Ujima Company Theatre to announce that the city's arts organizations have

been awarded over \$2.3 million in arts and culture grants from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA).

Each year, NYSCA funding provides critical operating funding to arts organizations across New York State in recognition of the economic and social impact of New York's arts and culture sector. This year's grants will support 1,497 nonprofit organizations and 509 individual artists statewide.

Nonprofit arts organizations in Buffalo have been awarded 86 grants totaling \$2.314 million for Fiscal Year 2025. The grants include \$1,689,000 in funding to help cover operating expenses for 49 different local organizations, \$350,000 to support individual artists, and \$275,000 in regrants to promote the arts more broadly.

The majority of the individual artist grants will be administered by Arts Services Inc. (ASI), a Buffalo-based regional arts council providing direct services and funding to Western New York artists and arts organizations. As the fiscal sponsor for 34 of the Western New York region's individual artist grants, ASI is the second-largest sponsor of NYSCA funding across the state.

Senator Sean Ryan said, "Our local arts and cultural scene is a big part of what makes Buffalo the city we know and love. It also has a massive positive economic impact on our region. Organizations like Ujima bring beauty and creativity to their neighborhoods, and make the arts more accessible and representative of Buffalo's diversity. It is important that we always continue to support the arts in Buffalo and across Western New York, especially the local nonprofits who spread the joy of artistic expression to every part of our community."

Senator April Baskin said, “One of my first paid jobs as a teenager was working for the Planned Parenthood Teen Reality Theatre Group, facilitated by Ujima Theatre founder Lorna C. Hill. Ujima taught me the art of building community, the importance of collaboration and instilled a sense of confidence in me that has catapulted me into the leader I am today. The organization does this and so much more for local youth like I once was. Local government has an obligation to uplift our historic arts centers, especially those housed in marginalized communities and serve underrepresented populations. I remain not only grateful to Ujima Theatre for helping shape my leadership skills, but I also remain a steadfast supporter of their institution. I encourage my partners in local government to do the same.”

Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes said, “Everywhere you go in the City of Buffalo you can see the positive impacts of the arts. It is all around us and that is a beautiful thing. With the funding from the NYSCA, it ensures that our creatives will continue to do what they do best; enriching our communities.”

Assemblymember Jon D. Rivera said, “The impact of the arts goes far beyond the spaces that art projects occupy or even the dollars they generate. The arts stir within us the best versions of ourselves, and organizations like Ujima use arts funding to inspire us, challenge us, engage us in new and unique ways, and strengthen our communal bonds. Last summer, I welcomed NYSCA Director Erika Mallin to Buffalo, showcasing the limitless potential for our arts sector here in Western New York. I have no doubt that she left with an impression that Buffalo is a city whose arts community punches far above its weight.”

Assemblymember Bill Conrad said, “The arts – in all forms – so enrich our communities, with their ability to revitalize neighborhoods, inspire learners, boost business, and celebrate history. And our most magical moments in life often involve an artistic expression: viewing an impressive public mural, taking in a live play, listening to a symphony. To see that NYSCA recognizes the value of the arts in Western New York, including some of the most beloved organizations in my Assembly District, is gratifying. I’m proud of New York State for its enduring support of the arts, and I thank both the team at NYSCA and the artists who every day make Greater Buffalo better and brighter.”

Erika Mallin, Executive Director of NYSCA, said, “The continued support from the Governor and Legislature is a testament to their dedication to the importance of our sector, which is critical to the health of our communities and economy. In my travels across the state, I have had the privilege of experiencing first-hand the boundless creativity and world-class artistry of Western New York. From our artists to organizations of all sizes– our unparalleled creative sector is what makes New York the global epicenter of arts and culture. Congratulations to all the grantees, we look forward to all you will accomplish for New York State.”

Jen Swan-Kilpatrick, Executive Director of Arts Services Inc., said, “As the regional arts service organization, ASI works with many of the arts and culture organizations that are funded by NYSCA. ASI’s Arts & Economic Prosperity Report found that the Western New York arts and cultural sector is a \$382 million sector and it generates \$8.5 million in revenue for New York State, showing the importance of the state’s investment in the arts. It is a positive and influential working relationship for the strength of our communities and wellbeing.”