

ALCA Awarded \$295,000 for Our 2023 ADK Quad-County Region SCR Arts Grant Program

The >125% increase means expanded funding for arts organizations & artists in Clinton, Essex, Franklin & Hamilton counties, including a new local priority for funding of projects focused on Native American & other indigenous people's arts, culture & history

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Author: Fred Balzac

BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE, NY, December 2023—The Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts (ALCA) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a grant of \$295,000 from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) for ALCA's Adirondack (ADK) Quad-County Region Statewide Community Re-grants (SCR) Program for fiscal year 2023.

The award, which resulted from an application by ALCA staff members in NYSCA's "Support for Partnerships" category, represents a greater-than-125% increase in the arts center's current SCR funding of \$130,000. In providing the grant, NYSCA approved 100% of ALCA's request for the additional \$165,000.

Along with significantly increasing the amount of money the SCR Program will be able to regrant to arts organizations and artists in Clinton, Essex, Franklin and Hamilton counties, the additional funding

enables ALCA to expand its offerings and services to the entire four-county region. In addition to the ongoing grant categories of Community Arts and Arts Education, ALCA's SCR Program is reviving the Individual Artist grants, which have not been offered in the ADK Quad-County region in approximately a decade.

Each grant category lists several criteria on which applications are evaluated—for example, artistic merit, organizational competence, service to the community, and local priorities for SCR funding in Community Arts. In this last one, priorities include projects that cross real or perceived boundaries in the region; projects that address areas of distinct cultural deficiency—e.g., programs for underserved rural communities; and projects that focus on, or represent, aspects of our region's history or cultural

identity/diversity. With the presence of the Akwesasne community based north of Franklin County in mind, ALCA's grants program is pleased to add the priority of projects dedicated to Native American and other indigenous people's arts, culture and history.



RiverJack Z of the Zucchini Brothers brought his 2022 "Creating Oceans of Sound" program to kids at libraries across three ADK Quad-County regions, supported by the SCR Program. (Photo: CEFLS)

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All in all, the increase in SCR support means an expansion of both the funding and services ALCA provides to arts organizations and artists in the four-county region, which translates into wider benefits for residents of, and visitors, to the many varied communities within the region, according to Jean-Marie Donohue, Development General Director of ALCA.

"We are grateful to NYSCA for this generous increase, which is a validation of the truly indispensable work ALCA has been doing for all four counties in our service area since at least the mid-2010s," she said. "We are also excited about the opportunity the increase in funding offers to extend and deepen our service to the abundance of wonderful artists and arts organizations in the region. Although ours is a rural area, the communities we serve range from the City of Plattsburgh to the tiniest hamlets in remote stretches along the Canadian border and in the heart of the Adirondack mountains.

"On behalf of everyone among the ALCA staff and consultants who worked on several NYSCA applications this year, I want to thank the members of our Board of Trustees for their continued support of our SCR Program. We really could not do this without them!"

Spurring Cultural Preservation and Collaboration

One main objective of the SCR Program statewide is to ensure that grant-supported programs reach underserved and underrepresented populations in New York. A top priority of the ADK Quad-County Region SCR Program is to connect with new or emerging artists and arts/cultural organizations, as well as longer-established ones, that serve underrepresented or underserved people—with one stated goal being the encouragement and advancement of projects that represent diverse cultures and backgrounds in the four-county region.



The Dara Anissi Ensemble, rooted in Middle Eastern music, performed at Saranac Fire Hall in Nov. 2022, presented by Hill and Hollow Music. (Photo: HHM)

“One of the hopes for the new local priority for funding is that it will highlight and spur further preservation of the arts,

culture and history of such people as the Akwesasne as an indispensable component of world culture,” said Fred Balzac, ALCA’s SCR coordinator. “It is also hoped that this will encourage numerous members of the Akwesasne and other indigenous peoples to apply individually, as well as to collaborate either within their own community or between their community and/or those of other Native American/indigenous people and/or non-Native American/non-indigenous people.”



Brooklyn's Ghost Funk Orchestra rocked the 2022 Northern Current Music Festival in Saranac Lake, backed by SCR funding. (Photo: Northern Current)

He also cited as a reason for the priority is the growing number of arts and cultural programs devoted to Native American themes and topics, such as one undertaken recently by the Plattsburgh-based Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System, a current and past SCR

grantee. “Among our own recent SCR or Restart NY grant-supported projects, we’ve seen an increase, including such 2022 programs as ‘The Haudenosaunee Creation Story and Sculptures,’ presented by the Clinton County Historical Association in Plattsburgh, and ‘Stories of the People of the Longhouse,’ presented by the Lake Pleasant Public Library in Speculator, in Hamilton County,” Balzac noted.

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Similar circumstances undergirded the decision to propose reviving the Individual Artist grants after a 10-year-or-so absence in this region. “Back then, it was thought that the few applications the then-named Decentralization, or DEC, Grant Program received in the Individual Artist category closely resembled certain Community Arts projects,” Balzac said. “However, the past couple of years we’ve received Community Arts applications that could’ve worked as well, if not better, in the Individual Artist category.

“Plus, given the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic on the arts as well as so many other parts of our society, we felt it was a good way to further support artists in our

region—since the category funds the creation of works of art, not just their public presentations.”

Perseverance, Innovation and Creativity

Helping to fulfill the needs of the arts organizations and artists in the region is one of the aspects NYSCA implicitly recognized as being an objective of the additional funding provided for 2023. “We extend our immense gratitude for your organization’s perseverance, innovation, and creativity throughout these last two years of immeasurable challenges,” wrote Katherine Nicholls and Mara Manus, NYSCA’s Chair and Executive Director, respectively, in the award notification to ALCA. “Arts and culture will continue to lead our State through this historic recovery.”

As for the 2023 SCR application process itself, “How-to-Apply” seminars, which will be required for artists or sponsoring-organization representatives who have not applied since the 2021 cycle (and optional for those who have), are set to begin in February, with the application deadline occurring on Tuesday, March 28, at 11:59 pm.

Artists and arts enthusiasts who are not planning to apply, or to be involved in an application, for the 2023 SCR Program are encouraged to nominate themselves or people they know to serve as panel reviewers. (Members of applying organizations may serve as long as they

are not the grant writer or the prospective project manager for the proposed program and, of course, will be required to recuse themselves from any evaluation of their organization's project.) Also being sought are nonprofits of all kinds, not just arts organizations (e.g., service organizations such as a Kiwanis or Rotary club), to serve as fiscal sponsors.



The “Journey” exhibit at Tahawus Cultural Center featured artists Heidi Gero & Carrie Plumadore, supported by SCR funding. (Photo: Tahawus)

To learn more about serving as a panel reviewer or fiscal sponsor, any aspect of the application process, or the SCR Program in general, please contact Fred Balzac at fred@adirondackarts.org and/or 518-588-7275.

The Statewide Community Re-grants program is made possible with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by NYSCA.