



UMEZ MERTZ GILMORE SEED FUND FOR DANCE

2023 Program Guidelines

With the support of Mertz Gilmore Foundation, the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation (UMEZ) has established the Seed Fund for Dance to reach more deeply into the Uptown dance community in search of talented artists and organizations not currently eligible for other UMEZ programs. This program seeks to acknowledge their important contributions to the cultural vibrancy of the region.

ABOUT THE UMEZ MERTZ GILMORE SEED FUND FOR DANCE

UMEZ has launched the Seed Fund for Dance to invest in the originality, insight, and potential that exists within the grassroots dance community in Upper Manhattan. Cycles 1 and 2 of the program awarded 16 grantees for the period of January 1, 2022 – February 28, 2023. In 2023, Cycle 3 of the Seed Fund for Dance will highlight 8 artists/groups with exceptional dance and/or choreographic talent, who exhibit a distinctive voice, and whose career path would benefit from the recognition and visibility the award offers.

Grants will support individual dance artists, ensembles, collectives, and nonprofit organizations with budgets of \$250,000 or below in their pursuit of a project that expresses their artistic vision. Projects must be available to a public audience and can be performances, workshops, trainings, arts education activities, and/or other ventures fostering community engagement through dance. Applicants may choose to propose projects in alignment with their current activities, that expand the scope of their work, or embark in a new direction.

HOW THE UMEZ MERTZ GILMORE SEED FUND FOR DANCE WORKS

The UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance will award grants of \$5,000 to support public-facing dance projects or programs taking place in Upper Manhattan from June 1, 2023 – October 29, 2023. Funding is intended for dance-centric projects, ranging from folk/traditional forms to contemporary and socially engaged artistic practices. UMEZ encourages proposals that connect audiences to rich dance experiences as demonstrated by opportunities to attend and/or participate in dance events including concerts, performances, festivals, workshops, and more. The program encourages innovative approaches to the presentation and audience experience with strong artistry at their core. The UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance Program strongly encourages the payment of artist fees, recognizing that for communities to benefit most from artistry, artists must thrive.

Competitive projects will demonstrate strong artistic vision, thoughtful project planning, and clear plans to engage a specific audience. Funding priority will be given to projects that uplift the cultural activity and aspirations of the community in which they are presented and are created by artists with deep connections to the content and community involved. Applicants whose work is rooted in the lived experience of Upper Manhattan's Black, Latinx, Indigenous, immigrant, and other

communities of color as well as those artistically led and producing work by marginalized communities (LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, low income, and/or aging) are strongly encouraged to apply. Funded projects will receive networking and promotional opportunities.

The UMEZ CIF team is available to assist all applicants. Applicants may submit questions including a request for a one-on-one meeting at culture@umez.org. We strongly recommend you view the Application FAQ and PDF of the full application by clicking this link: [Cultural Investments - Seed Fund for Dance — Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone \(umez.org\)](https://umez.org/Cultural-Investments-Seed-Fund-for-Dance---Upper-Manhattan-Empowerment-Zone)

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Individual Artists and Collectives

The UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance invites applications from individual artists, as well as collectives, project-based collaborations, and unincorporated groups that meet the following Eligibility Requirements:

- Individual artists must self-identify as dance makers focused on the creation and/or performance of dance.
- Individual artists must be year-round residents of Upper Manhattan, defined as north of 98th Street on the east side of Fifth Avenue; and north of 110th Street on the west side. Students who only live in Upper Manhattan when school is in session, those registered to vote in another state, and those who file taxes in another state are not eligible to apply.
- Individual artists must have carried out or participated in publicly accessible dance programming in 2 of the last 5 calendar years.
- Individual artists may not apply or receive funds for the benefit of any for-profit or nonprofit entity for this project (including LLCs).
- Individual artists may only be affiliated with one proposal per application cycle.
- Grantees who received funding in the first or second cycle may not apply for the third cycle. However, unfunded applicants may reapply in the third cycle by rolling over their application and providing any necessary updates.
- Collectives and groups must appoint a lead applicant who meets all the criteria specified above for individual artists. If awarded, the lead applicant will serve as the fiscal agent for the project, responsible for disbursing all funds received and providing all required narrative and financial documentation.
- Applicants may have a concurrent UMEZ Arts Engagement grant. Funds may be used as a match to that project or for another project entirely.

Nonprofit Dance Organizations

The UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance invites applications from nonprofit dance organizations that meet the following Eligibility Requirements:

- Organizations must have a principal mission that promotes the knowledge, appreciation, practice, and/or performance of dance.
- Organizations must be headquartered in Upper Manhattan, defined as north of 98th Street on the east side of Fifth Avenue; and north of 110th on the west side. (Office is determined by address on Federal/State filing.)
- Organizations must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with proof of nonprofit status.
- Organizations must have carried out or participated in publicly accessible dance programming in 2 of the last 5 calendar years.

- Organizations must have operating budgets of \$250,000 or below for two of the last three completed fiscal years. Organizations incorporated less than three years ago with a current budget of \$250,000 or below are also eligible to apply.
- Organizations may have a concurrent UMEZ Arts Engagement grant. Funds may be used as a match to that project or for another project entirely.
- Organizations may only be affiliated with one proposal per application cycle.
- Grantees who receive funding in the first or second cycle may not apply for the third cycle. However, unfunded applicants may reapply in the third cycle by rolling over their application and providing any necessary updates.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Applications will be accepted for dance projects that meet the following requirements:

- Project must include a public component accessible and promoted to the public.
 - The public component may be a single event or series of in-person presentations or a combination of in-person presentations with related online engagements.
- Public in-person activities of the project must be in Upper Manhattan, defined as north of 98th Street on the east side of Fifth Avenue; and north of 110th Street on the west side.
- Projects experienced solely online would be eligible, provided they are designed for active, synchronous engagement of Upper Manhattan audiences.
- Project activities must take place between June 1 and October 29, 2023.
- Project budget must show expenses of at least \$5,000 (the amount of the Seed Fund for Dance grant). No match is required. If the budget includes expenses surpassing the \$5,000 grant amount, the applicant must be able to list any other planned income sources, which may include other grants, ticket sales, or cash contributions.
- The UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance Program strongly encourages the payment of fees for participating artists.
- Eligible projects must be dance-centric and may include but are not limited to: outdoor and/or indoor performances, workshops, education projects, training or youth programs, creative aging projects, or humanities projects.

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Under this program, funding is **not** available for:

- Projects restricted to an organization's membership; eligible projects must be promoted and remain available to the public.
- Public or private schools, colleges or universities, or religious institutions.
- Re-granting programs or offering fellowships or cash prizes.
- Requests that exceed an organization's total budget.
- Payment for endowment and cash reserves, accumulated deficits, debt reductions, emergency funds, purchase of capital items, funds to establish a new organization, or non-project-related administrative expenses.
- Entertainment costs, such as opening parties, receptions, or fundraisers.
- Previous grantees of UMEZ that have failed to comply with grant contract or reporting requirements, such as the UMEZ Arts Engagement program through LMCC (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council).

Grantees who receive funding in the first or second cycle of the program cannot apply for the third cycle.

REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA

A jury of artists and arts professionals will review projects using the following four criteria:

- **Artistic merit:** The artistic excellence — or the potential for excellence — of the proposed project as well as the merit of the creative team's body of work based on information included in the application and associated work samples.
 - Please note: evaluators will use *Animating Democracy's Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change* which can be found here: [Aesthetics Short Take.pdf \(animatingdemocracy.org\)](#). Applicants may access the full framework here: [Aesthetic Perspectives Full Framework.pdf \(americansforthearts.org\)](#)
- **Clarity of project proposal:** The cohesiveness of the application and adequate description of all elements of the project.
- **Project feasibility:** The appropriateness, effectiveness, and thoroughness of the planning process guiding the proposed activity.
- **Audience engagement:** The explicit understanding and description of the audience experience, including project relevance to the intended community, and connection to the applicant's artistic vision and goals.

The criteria are not listed in order of priority; each is equally important. Please make sure your application, taken as a whole, addresses these criteria.

Applying to the UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance is a competitive process. Proposals should accurately describe the project, public activities, target audience, the project's anticipated impact, and any local partners or relationships in Upper Manhattan that you will draw on to support your work. Project budgets should be precise and reflect anticipated costs.

Applicants will be notified of the results of the jury's decision in **May 2023** for the third cycle. The jury's determination is final; there will be no appeals. We encourage applicants of declined projects to contact the CIF (Cultural Investment Fund) team to receive feedback on their applications. Funded applicants will receive feedback on their application as part of the required Grantee Orientation.

UMEZ MERTZ GILMORE SEED FUND FOR DANCE TIMELINE

Cycle 3

Guidelines, application FAQ, and full application available online: February 27, 2023

Technical assistance request period: February 27, 2023 – April 21, 2023; Email culture@umez.org

Application deadline 1: April 21, 2023, at 5 p.m. ET

Adjudication: May 2023

Grantee notification: May 2023

8 Grantee projects: June 1 – October 29, 2023*

*Grantees are required to submit a final report no later than fifteen (15) days after completion of all project activities.

Grantee orientation period: May 2023

Applicant feedback period: June 2023

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applications must be completed and submitted online before 5 p.m. on April 21, 2023. Incomplete applications, hard copy submissions, and applications received after the stated deadlines will not be considered.

1. **Read the Program Guidelines and Online Application Form.** Make sure you and your project are eligible for consideration before you apply. You may contact the CIF team at culture@umez.org prior to the application deadline if you have any questions.
2. **Prepare Required Documents, Work Samples and Support Materials.** Prepare digital versions to submit as a part of the Online Application Form. We strongly recommend you view the Online Application Form in advance.
3. **Complete and submit all components of the Online Application Form.** Use your existing Submittable account or create a free account at www.Submittable.com if you have not used the online submission platform before. Your application will always be connected to your existing Submittable account. The main point of contact for the application should manage and maintain access to the Submittable account throughout the grant process as well as the project, if selected. The CIF team will use the email address connected to your Submittable account to contact you with questions, follow-up information, and the official grant notification. This is the same email address you use to login to your Submittable account.
 - a. If you are new to Submittable, we recommend watching this [Quick Video Tutorial \(link\)](#) for an overview of how to create an account, start your application and manage your submissions. [Submittable's Help Articles](#) also have quick tutorials on topics such as how to sign into your Submittable account, how to download a copy of your submission, and how to change the email associated with your Submittable account. We encourage using these resources to become more comfortable with the Submittable platform.

PROJECT BUDGET

Your request amount to UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance must be at least \$5,000. To ensure your project budget is balanced (income equals expenses) you will need to show expenses of at least \$5,000. If your budget exceeds \$5,000, your income plan can include both funds you have already raised and those you are planning to apply or ask for, including potential ticket sales and other grants.

Each project is different; therefore, project budgets will vary widely in terms of the types of expenses included. Some examples of eligible expenses include: personnel (artistic, administrative, technical, etc.), production materials, space rental, marketing and promotion, transportation and shipping, hospitality, permits/fees/licenses, administration, fiscal sponsorship, and contingency.

The project budget is both a plan and a working document. For funded projects, the grantee will use the same budget format submitted with the application to record the actual expenses incurred and specific income received as the project is executed. Once the project is complete, the resulting form, as certified by the grantee, will become the final financial report for the grant.

WORK SAMPLES

Work samples are an essential element of your application. We encourage you to choose samples of completed dance projects from within the last five years that best represent your artistic practice or project.

The aim of the work sample is to bring the jury as close as possible to an actual experience of your work in dance. Do not submit edited promotional or interview materials including recordings with voice over narration or multiple dance works compiled into a single recording or image.

You will be asked to provide:

- A. Work Sample Format – select which option you will be submitting.
- B. Work Samples – enter links or upload files.
- C. Work Sample Inventory – provide descriptions for each work sample.

Work Sample Format Options

Select a format option and provide samples of past or current work by uploading or providing links directly in the Online Application Form. Be sure you maintain the links until the grant recipients are announced.

- Option 1: 2 Video Recordings
- Option 2: 1 Video Recording and 5 Images

1. For recordings

- Submit up to two recordings of past/current dance works or projects by providing links to video samples hosted on one of these external sites: YouTube.com, Vimeo.com or via cloud storage platforms including Dropbox or Google Drive. Provide access passwords, if applicable.
- The selection jury will view each recording for up to three (3) minutes. However, we encourage you to submit full-length work. For any work sample that is longer than three minutes, provide a cue point.

2. For images

- Submit a maximum of five (5) digital images saved as JPEG files. 1500 pixels in the longest dimension is recommended.
- Each image filename must be saved as: "ApplicantName_#" (e.g., JohnSmith_01.jpg / JohnSmith_02.jpg / etc.).

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Individual Artist(s) and Collectives

1. **Proof of Upper Manhattan address** of the individual artist or lead applicant of a collective. Upload a copy of valid state ID or IDNYC (college/university ID is not acceptable). Please note: if an ID is not available or the address does not match the individual's address entered in the application, provide a copy of a utility bill (e.g., electric, cable, gas, etc.). P.O. Boxes are not acceptable.

Nonprofit Organizations

1. **Letter of Determination** from the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) indicating tax-exempt status under section **501(c)(3)** with an address in Upper Manhattan. Please note: if the address on the Letter of Determination is a P.O. Box or shows an address that does not match the organization's actual address in Upper Manhattan, provide a copy of the utility bill (e.g., electric, cable, gas, etc.) for the organization's actual location in Upper Manhattan.
2. **Board of directors list.** Indicate your Board Chair.
3. **Annual Operating Budget** for the most recently completed fiscal year.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their request after the adjudication. UMEZ staff will be available to provide feedback to all applicants, whether or not they received a grant.

GRANT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Successful applicants will be required to attend a Grantee Orientation, where UMEZ staff will review their grant agreement, explaining the grant's terms and conditions. The orientation will also cover the final narrative report and financial documentation requirements, as well as other responsibilities of the grantee.
- All grant letters will contain an end date for the grant period. Requests for extensions, if needed, must be made in writing.
- All UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance grants are restricted to the project described in the application. Grantees are required to notify UMEZ at least four (4) weeks in advance of any significant changes to the proposed activities, including key participants, project scope or budget, before these changes are finalized.
- Funds advanced to the grantees by UMEZ must be repaid in the event the approved project is not carried out.
- Grantees are required to acknowledge the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation and the Mertz Gilmore Foundation on all marketing and event materials, print and electronic, for the funded activity. UMEZ will provide logos and text in the agreement. Digital copies of all marketing and event materials must be included in the Final Report for the grant.
- Grantees are required to notify UMEZ at least six (6) weeks before funded public events take place to allow UMEZ time to promote the event and/or arrange for a UMEZ or Mertz Gilmore representative to attend.
- Grantees are required to submit a final report no later than fifteen (15) days after completion of all project activities.
- UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance grant recipients may be asked to submit additional documentation or cooperate with UMEZ in sharing the results of the projects with the field.

QUESTIONS?

Contact: The UMEZ Cultural Investments Fund team at culture@umez.org

Funding for the UMEZ Mertz Gilmore Seed Fund for Dance is generously provided by the Mertz Gilmore Foundation.