



UMEZ UNVEILS NEW CULTURAL INVESTMENTS STRATEGY

Contact: Cultural Investments (culture@omez.org)

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Kenneth J. Knuckles, President & CEO of the **Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation (UMEZ)** announces that UMEZ will extend its support for arts and culture organizations serving Upper Manhattan through the Cultural Investment Fund. UMEZ will continue to offer its signature capacity-building support through four initiatives: Capacity Grants, Infrastructure Grants, Technical Assistance Grants, and Catalyst Grants. In addition, UMEZ is excited to introduce a new initiative, **UMEZ Arts Engagement**, a grant program designed to offer project-based support for smaller arts groups, collectives, and individual artists. The UMEZ Arts Engagement program will offer grants from \$1,000 to \$10,000 to support public engagement with the arts in Upper Manhattan. This marks the first time that unincorporated artist collectives and individuals can apply for UMEZ support, provided they have appropriate fiscal sponsorship. To launch this program, UMEZ is partnering with **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC)**, a Manhattan-based regrantor and arts service organization serving the entire borough. UMEZ will distribute up to \$250,000 for projects taking place from July 1 – December 31, 2018, and up to \$400,000 for projects taking place from January 1 – December 31, 2019.

“We’re delighted to expand our support to artists and smaller arts-based groups in Upper Manhattan,” said Mr. Knuckles. “Look around and you can see that Upper Manhattan is anchored not only by major cultural institutions, but also by the hundreds of artists and smaller groups that enrich our community. This program will provide more resources to allow our creative community to expand their programs, broaden their audience, and deepen their engagement with the larger community.”

Echoing these sentiments, Kay Takeda, LMCC’s Vice President of Grants & Services, adds that, “For years, LMCC has had the great privilege of providing arts resources and collaborating with institutions in Upper Manhattan. UMEZ Arts Engagement will not only provide much-needed support to important creative projects and programming in vibrant neighborhoods, but also enable LMCC to deepen the relationships and knowledge we have developed in Upper Manhattan.”

UMEZ will continue to offer capacity-building support through four ongoing funding initiatives. Organizations with operating budgets larger than \$100,000 may apply for Capacity or

Infrastructure support for capacity-building projects like marketing and fundraising improvements, capital projects, and other enhancements that are based on a strategic plan for sustainability and growth. UMEZ will also continue its Technical Assistance Grant, a program designed to help organizations address a problem in partnership with a skilled consultant, and the Catalyst Grant, designed to support a one-time, large-scale marketing based initiative in Upper Manhattan.

UMEZ has been offering grants to nonprofit organizations since 1998. The Cultural Investment Fund was created in 2004 to support capacity-building initiatives specifically for arts and culture nonprofits in Upper Manhattan. “For many years, there has been a large concentration of culturally-specific arts groups driving a significant portion of the Upper Manhattan economy,” said Verdery Roosevelt, Senior VP of Cultural Investments. “The Cultural Investment Fund provides very specific, capacity-building support for these groups. UMEZ grants are distinctive for their focus on matters that are critical for organizational growth, but are not commonly supported by funders.”

Information about the new and revised Cultural Investment Fund programs is available on the UMEZ website: <https://www.umez.org/cultural-investments/>. Applicants are encouraged to read the UMEZ website thoroughly before making an application.

To contact the Cultural Investment Fund staff, email culture@umez.org or (212) 410-0030.

ABOUT THE UPPER MANHATTAN EMPOWERMENT ZONE (www.umez.org)

Since its founding in 1996, the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ) has been a catalyst in the revitalization of Upper Manhattan. UMEZ’s investments, upwards of \$238 million to date, have provided funding to numerous organizations, businesses, and institutions that drive the local economy, create jobs, and add to the vibrancy of New York City. Significantly, these funds have also been leveraged to generate over \$1.1 billion in private capital investments into Upper Manhattan. UMEZ is also a leader in reestablishing the area as one of New York’s most dynamic cultural districts.

ABOUT UMEZ CULTURAL INVESTMENTS

UMEZ began making cultural investments through the Cultural Investment Fund (CIF) in 2004 to support cultural institutions – from the iconic to the new and burgeoning – that serve as a powerful platform for the revitalization of the communities in which they reside. CIF’s strategy is designed to encourage long-term, permanent change within its grantees by building administrative capacity, organizational development, and/or making needed capital improvements. Since its inception, CIF has provided \$55 million in grants to over 50 arts and cultural organizations in Upper Manhattan.

ABOUT LMCC

Since its founding in 1973, LMCC has been dedicated to empowering artists in Manhattan and

enhancing the cultural vibrancy of communities in New York City.

In 2018, LMCC will award over \$1,000,000 in grants; place over 70 individuals and arts groups in studio residency programs; and present over 140 days of free cultural experiences for the public to enjoy, including its flagship River To River Festival, Open Studios with artist talks and work-in-process showings, Arts East River Waterfront programs, and exhibitions and installations in LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island and other locations.

Through its investment in individual artists and small arts groups, its robust network of partners in the public and private sectors, and its integrated approach to fostering local neighborhood efforts, LMCC aims to spark public imagination and inspire personal connection to NYC's communities.

For more information, visit www.lmcc.net

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