

2027 Creative Learning and SU-CASA Information Session

Webinar Transcript

Welcome + Accessibility

Hello everyone! We're going to get started. Welcome to this evening's information session for LMCC's arts education programs – Creative Learning and SU-CASA!

Before we get started, let's cover a few accessibility notes to get everyone set up.

My name is Esther Nguyen, I am the Program Manager in the Artistic Programs team at LMCC. I use she/her pronouns. I am a mixed asian woman with black hair in a bun. I'm wearing a fuzzy beige sweater with striped sleeves and am standing in front of a blurred background.

I'm joined by my amazing colleagues on the Artistic Programs team: Lauren Slone, Morgan Williams and Lillian Osei-Boateng.

We're so glad you're here, and we're really honored to be the team that supports you in this process.

This session is meant to help you decide if Creative Learning and SU-CASA are a good fit for your work. We're going to cover the main points that you should know before starting an application and what to expect if you choose to apply. We hope you do!

We'll go over:

- What both programs are and the key differences between them
- Their respective *Eligibility Requirements*
- Application components for both programs
- Panel Criteria
- The process timeline and assistance available to all applicants

There will be time at the end to answer questions.

If you come away with nothing else from this session, we want you to know that you don't have to create anything we describe here without support. We are here to help!

About LMCC

Let's start with a quick intro to Lower Manhattan Cultural Council or LMCC.

LMCC was founded in 1973 with a mission to foster a vibrant, equitable arts ecosystem by providing artists and arts organizations with essential resources to thrive. Today, LMCC serves

as the arts council for the borough of Manhattan with three programmatic areas including (1) grant funding, (2) residencies and (3) free public programming.

LMCC is currently accepting applications for five programs! This includes SU-CASA, which we are going to talk about today, as well as all of the Manhattan Arts Grants programs, which are four distinct grant opportunities that provide funding support to artists and organizations: Creative Learning, which we'll also talk about today, Creative Engagement, UMEZ Arts Engagement, and Creative Unrestricted. You can find more information about these programs on our website.

Today, we're going to focus on two opportunities that support teaching artists working with older adults through participatory arts learning: Creative Learning and SU-CASA. These are LMCC's only two Creative Aging / Arts Education opportunities, so we're really excited that you're here!

While they share some similarities, they work in very different ways, so we'll spend some time today breaking down those differences and helping you understand which opportunity may be the right fit for your work.

A couple of things to keep in mind when thinking through these opportunities:

- You are very welcome to apply to BOTH Creative Learning and SU-CASA! You're welcome to apply with either a different project or the same project. We'll talk more about that soon.
- If you choose to apply to ONLY SU-CASA, you are welcome to also apply to any of the other Manhattan Arts Grants programs. For example, you may want to apply to SU-CASA and Creative Engagement or SU-CASA and UMEZ Arts Engagement or SU-CASA and CU.
- However, if you choose to apply to Creative Learning, you will not be able to apply to any of the other Manhattan Arts Grants Programs. You must pick between one of them. If you need more support in figuring out which is the right grant program for your work right now, please connect with us 1-1 so that we can better understand your unique situation.

Let us know if there are any questions about that.

Creative Learning + SU-CASA at a Glance

Jumping into it! Here is an overview of both programs.

Creative Learning is a program-based grant for the creation and delivery of a sequential arts learning program for older adults, in a community based setting anywhere in Manhattan. You apply with a program proposal and location and request funding for the project.

Creative Learning is supported by two funding partners:

- New York City Department of Cultural Affairs or (DCLA) for short, and

- The New York State Council on the Arts or (NYSCA)

Through Creative Learning, LMCC provides funding to artists and organizations ***that cannot apply directly to these agencies***, which generally includes earlier career artists, collectives, and new or smaller non profits.

SU-CASA on the other hand is a residency for the creation and delivery of a sequential arts learning program in an older adult center in Manhattan. You apply with a program proposal, and if selected, LMCC places you at a senior center that you'll collaborate with to deliver the project.

SU-CASA is a collaboration between the New York City Council, the Department of Cultural Affairs, the Department for the Aging and local arts councils, which LMCC is for Manhattan. Individual artists can apply to participate in SU-CASA through their local arts councils, whereas nonprofit organizations can apply directly to DCLA.

In 2027, LMCC anticipates administering 30 SU-CASA residencies.

Eligibility Criteria

So, while both opportunities support hands-on arts learning with older adults, the key differences between them is that one is a grant where you have choice over the location or venue, and the other is a residency opportunity in partnership with specific senior centers. Now, in terms of project eligibility:

For Creative Learning:

- Your program must take place between January 1st - December 31st 2027. This is an annual grant.
- It must be located in an accessible community-based setting in Manhattan of your choice. You must provide this info in the application. This can include a senior center, recreation center, public library, or community center.
- Your program must have a minimum of three (3) sequential contact sessions between the same teaching artists and group of participants. Contact sessions refer to sessions of direct engagement between the teaching artist and participant.
- And it must culminate in a public event, such as an exhibit, performance, or presentation that is open to the public in Manhattan. This serves as a final celebration of the work that has been developed over the course of the program. It can be informal.
- As mentioned earlier, this is a grant, so you'll apply with a program proposal and request funding between \$1,000 and \$17,500. We'll talk more about this.

For SU-CASA

- The program runs between March – June 30th, 2027, so this is a shorter engagement! If you are selected, you'll receive notifications in February and will begin the program shortly after.

- You do not have to apply with a location in mind. As mentioned, this is a location specific residency meaning that, if selected, LMCC will match you with a participating senior center.
 - The list of senior centers that participate in this program is provided to LMCC by the City Council in the Fall. LMCC makes matches based on preferences that both the artists and the center will indicate.
- SU-CASA programs have a minimum of 20 contact hours between the same teaching artists and group of participants.
- Similarly to Creative Learning, SU-CASA must culminate in a public event to celebrate the work that's been developed and showcase it to the community. This can also be informal.
- And lastly, SU-CASA is not a grant, so there is a fixed artist fee of \$6,000 for your participation in the program, as well as a \$2,000 stipend for materials.

Program Ineligibility

So that was program eligibility! There are also a few things to keep in mind for what these opportunities are NOT for.

For Creative Learning,

- Programs CANNOT be designed to be experienced individually, self paced or without any live learning engagement with the teaching artist
- Programs also CANNOT focus only on recreational, therapeutic, rehabilitative, religious, or social services. They MUST focus on in-depth arts learning and the hands-on creation of artistic works.

Because Creative Learning is a program-based grant, this also means that grant expenses must go directly towards supporting that program. This grant cannot be used for:

- General operating support, payments of facilities, capital equipment, scholarships, prizes. We have a full list of these expenses in page 4 of the guidelines.

For SU-CASA,

- Programs also CANNOT be designed to be experienced individually, self paced or without any live engagement with the teaching artists
- Programs cannot be virtual
- Programs must take place at their assigned senior centers. Offsite activity must be limited to no more than 20% of the total contact hours.

Who Can Apply?

Now, moving on to Who Can Apply to both programs.

For Creative Learning, the grant is intended to go directly to the creators of the program, which can be an individual artist, the representative of a collective, or a nonprofit organization. Specific document requirements and funding eligibility for the different funding sources are based on whether you choose an individual or organization. We'll cover this more when we get to the section of the application that asks for it.

For SU-CASA, only individual artists or collectives of 2 may apply through LMCC. If you are a non profit organization and want to participate in this program specifically, you may apply directly through DCLA.

For both Creative Learning and SU-CASA, all applicants would need to provide proof of residence or address in Manhattan, be over 18 years of age, and not be a matriculated, full-time student at the time of the application.

Submittable

Ok, you've got a sense of what and who the program can support.

Let's move on to highlighting what the application is going to ask of you. All of the Manhattan Arts Grants opportunities are hosted on the **Submittable platform**.

A couple of tips:

- We've generated a full preview of all of the application questions that you can download as a PDF on LMCC's website. It can be helpful to look through it before to get a sense of what will be asked of you. You can use the document as a check list.

SU-CASA app preview:

<https://lmcc.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2027-SU-CASA-Application-Questions.pdf>

CL App Preview:

<https://lmcc.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2027-Creative-Learning-Application-Questions.pdf>

- If you do decide to apply, please connect your Submittable account to an email address that you check regularly. We'll send notifications, updates, and questions about your application directly through the Submittable platform. We have information about creating a Submittable account on pages 9-10 of the guidelines, but if you have any trouble with that part, please let us know.

AI Policy

Our guidelines speak to AI usage for creating your application, but we wanted to highlight that here quickly. We also acknowledge that each of you may have a very different relationship to whether, and if, you use it. We could host a session on this topic alone, but for the purposes of creating your grant application it's important to know that:

LMCC allows applicants to use generative AI in preparing grant applications. Regardless of the tools used, applicants are responsible for ensuring that all information submitted is accurate, truthful, and appropriately represents the proposed work. Applicants should review and verify all materials before submission and should not include any content they cannot independently verify.

The use or perceived use of AI should not influence a panelist's assessment of an application. Panelists may not upload, enter, or otherwise provide LMCC application materials or applicant information to generative AI tools as part of the review process.

So that's for our AI policy.

Application Form: Section I

Alright, continuing on! If you are ready to apply, you can find the application links to both programs at the APPLY button on their respective program pages.

Once you click on it, you'll select: "CREATIVE LEARNING 2027 - Application Form" and/or "SU-CASA Manhattan 2027 - Application Form"

Once you've logged in, you'll see some intro text about both programs. This is all the same information as what's on the website.

Then you'll scroll down and see an Eligibility Quiz. This is new this year. We added it at the beginning to help ensure that you meet the baseline eligibility criteria before you spend time completing the full application.

The quiz will also ask you to confirm that you're aware of important information before applying:

The key thing we want you to know here is that:

For Creative Learning, if you are selected, you might not receive funds until May 2027. This means that if you apply with a program that takes place between January and April, you need to be able to cover the costs upfront.

If you aren't in a position to do that, we highly recommend that you apply with a program that takes place after May 2027.

For SU-CASA, if you are selected, you likewise might not receive your stipend until April 2027. This means that if you choose to begin your classes right when the program begins in March, you need to be able to cover those class costs upfront.

If you aren't in a position to do that, we highly recommend planning to begin classes after April 2027.

Back to the eligibility quiz, if all of your quiz answers are correct, you'll be taken to the full application form automatically.

If you are prompted that you're ineligible and you think that's incorrect, please email us!

Once you've made it to the application, you'll notice both forms are actually really similar! The majority of the questions repeat across both applications, so you're very welcome to re-use answers if you apply to both.

Both applications are organized into three sections: (1) PROGRAM INFORMATION, (2) GRANT RECIPIENT or APPLICANT INFORMATION, and (3) DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY.

Section I is the heart of both applications. This is the section that panelists will review closely for their evaluation.

Application Form: Section I Part A

Part A is: **Program Goals and Lesson Plan.**

- You'll begin by providing a title for your program, its artistic discipline, and a 10 word short description of what it is
- Then, you'll be asked to provide a longer description of your program, which includes the learning goals and impact. This is where we want you to help the panel understand what you're proposing, how it will happen, and what you want participants to learn and experience. Because these are arts education opportunities, you want to be sure to delve specifically into what the goals of the program are as well as intended impact.
- You'll then describe your target audience, outreach and recruitment plans. Here we want to know – who do you hope will participate in your program? What strategies are you using to reach them?
 - For Creative Learning since you'll be applying with a specific location to deliver the program, you might already know who your audience is and you might already have relationships with them. Let us know about that!
 - For SU-CASA on the other hand, because you won't know which center you'll be paired with, we want to know how you plan to recruit participants who may not know you or your work and who you'll essentially have to develop trust and relationships with! We want to know that you're thinking with creativity and adaptability!
- Then, you'll describe potential areas for adaptation. For both programs, this is where we want you to think specifically about the accessibility needs and skill levels of the older adults you're proposing to work with. You don't need to anticipate every possible need. We want to see that you're thinking intentionally about how your teaching approach can be responsive to the people you'll be working with.
 - This is really important especially for SU-CASA, because if selected, you might be paired with a center and community that you've never met before, so you want to show adaptability in your planning!

The next item you'll provide in Part A of section I for both programs is the Lesson Plan!

LMCC has provided a template that you are welcome to use for this. It is linked as a Google Doc in the application form. We're also going to drop it in the chat.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/15RVokp_d3ynHkvWxQM6NILGf7pRigVtM/edit

- You're welcome to download it, fill it out directly and then upload it back to the application.
- This is a really important part of the application. Remember that both Creative Learning and SU-CASA support sequential arts learning activities, meaning that the arts learning experience is supposed to build from one session to the next. The lesson plan is where you display this!
 - You'll be asked to provide 3 session examples. For each session, you'll need to provide the topic, arts content, material, session length, objectives and the procedures for leading the class. This is what helps the panelists understand what participants will experience.
 - You want to make sure the classes are sequential, that there is clear development between sessions one, two and three and that it is clear what arts activity the older adults are learning.
 - There is also instruction text on the lesson plan directly to help you fill out each section of the document. Please pay attention to that!

Once you've finished the lesson plan, you'll need to describe your culminating event. As a reminder, this is a requirement for both programs. Here, we simply want to know what you have in mind for the culmination of your program and what format that may take. This can look like a presentation, performance, exhibition, reading, open studio, or another culminating public engagement. While this is a requirement of both programs, you will not be held accountable to facilitating exactly what you describe in your application as we understand this may shift a bit throughout the program.

The last part of this section asks for some of the practical details of your program.

- For Creative Learning, you'll be asked for how many contact sessions you plan to deliver. For SU-CASA you'll be asked for contact hours. As a reminder, the respective requirements are 3 contact sessions for CL and 20 contact hours for SU-CASA.
- For both programs, you'll then be asked for start and end dates as well as an estimated number of recurring and drop in participants. An estimate is totally okay here, no need to worry about getting this number exactly right or sticking to it.
- The last couple of questions then differ:
 - For Creative Learning, you'll be asked for your program start and end dates like we saw in the previous slide, as well as the venue you're planning to deliver the program in. You'll then be asked if those dates and venue are confirmed, pending, or aspirational.
 - For SU-CASA on the other hand, because LMCC will pair you with a center if you are selected, you will be asked for your proposed weekly schedule for your sessions, as well as what language you can deliver your sessions in.
 - We ask these two questions to help us in the pairing process. So for example, some centers request artists that speak specific languages. We

always aim to make pairings that work well for both the artist and the center.

Those are all the questions in Part A!

Application Form: Section I Part B

Part B of Section I is Teaching Artists. These are really short sections for both programs.

- For Creative Learning, you'll be asked to designate a lead teaching artist who is confirmed as a creative leader or significant contributor to the program. You'll describe their experience with older adults as well as list additional personnel that may be involved in your project. You're welcome to provide context here as to how they'll contribute to the program too.
- For SU-CASA, you'll provide the teaching artist's name, which could be for an individual or a collective of 2, their experience with older adults, as well as the total number of teaching artists involved. This can be 1 or 2 if you're a duo, but it can also be more if you're planning to invite guest teachers or assistants. You can also provide an optional website.

For both applications, this is a good place to think about the connection between your experience and the program you're proposing.

You don't need to tell us everything about your career. Focus on the experience that helps the panel understand why you're prepared to lead this particular program with older adults.

That's part B! Nice and short!

Application Form: Section I Part C

Part C is Participant Work Samples!

This is another area where the two applications are essentially the same. In the application, you have the option to submit up to two samples: one required and one optional. For both, you can submit audio, video, image, or text, either as a link or an upload.

For both programs, we strongly recommend submitting participant work samples from past educational settings you've taught in that come as close as possible to what you're proposing in this application to demonstrate your experience as a teaching artist. This will help the panel understand the experience of the participants and the artistic process explored through your teaching.

So, when you're choosing your samples, think less about "What is my best artistic work?" and more about "What can I show the panel that will help them understand what it's like to learn and make with me?"

For example:

- If you're proposing a writing workshop, you might share writing created by participants in a past workshop.
- If you're proposing a music program, you might share documentation of an instruction session or participants performing work at a culminating event.
- If you're proposing a hands-on visual arts program, you might share images of participants making work or documentation of their finished pieces.

And if possible, we encourage you to choose samples that are relevant to older adult participants and the discipline you're proposing.

Your second sample is optional. You can think of that one strategically. For example, it could be education-based work by another teaching artist who will be contributing to the program, past participant work from another program or another part of the artistic learning process that the first sample doesn't capture.

Ultimately, you want to think of your work samples as evidence that helps the panel understand the learning experience you'll create.

That's for work samples.

Application Form: Section I Part D

Part D of Section I of the Creative Learning and SU-CASA applications are different.

For SU-CASA, Part D consists of your location selection. Remember that SU-CASA is a placement based residency opportunity, meaning that LMCC will match you with a center that matches your location preference, discipline and spoken language. So in this section, you'll be asked to provide preferences as well as whether you're open to being placed outside of those preferences.

For Creative Learning, Part D consists of the budget.

There are two core questions here: The budget itself and the grant amount.

You'll need to complete a budget table that asks for both expenses and income.

Starting with expenses, think of this as putting a number to everything you've described in your program proposal. You want to include all of the costs you anticipate, including fees for everyone contributing to the program, which is required by LMCC.

You don't need to know the exact cost of everything yet. We encourage you to make a reasonable estimate of what you might need, not the minimum possible cost. The budget is not

a test of how cheaply you can produce your project. We want you to be able to make the program you're dreaming of.

You'll then enter any secured income, such as grants you've already received or confirmed donations. If you don't have any confirmed income, you can leave this section empty.

A couple of things to consider generally:

- You'll see in the table there are pre-entered suggested categories, you don't need to use every category, just use the ones that apply to your project.
- In the description column, you want to be specific at how you arrived at numbers so the panel understands the math behind your budget. *For example: 5,000\$ = 10x canvases at 500\$ for 10 students.*

Once you've entered your expenses and income, the table will calculate your balance, which shows the amount you still need to fundraise

You'll then select a grant request between \$1,000 and \$17,500 that is as close as possible to that balance.

For example, if your balance is \$8,700, you might request \$9,000 to give yourself some room for unknowns.

It's also important to understand that the amount you request isn't necessarily the exact amount you'd receive in the event of an award. However, to the degree possible, LMCC's goal is to fund as many applicants as possible at their full request amount.

THAT is all for the part of the application that will be reviewed by the panel. We want to emphasize that you don't need to think of each question as a completely separate exercise.

Ultimately, your narrative questions + work samples + budget for CL should paint a cohesive picture of what you are trying to accomplish. Each part should be in harmonious conversation with one another.

Application Form: Section II

We are almost there! Moving onto Section II of the application which is the Applicant Information.

We'll start with SU-CASA, because this section is pretty simple. As we mentioned earlier, SU-CASA applications through LMCC are for individual artists or collectives of up to two. Here, you'll provide the contact information and proof of address for the applicant, and if you're applying as a collective, one member will complete this section on behalf of the group.

For Creative Learning, Section II is the Grant Recipient portion. As was previously mentioned, the grant is intended to go directly to the creators of the project, which can be individuals or organizations. The grant recipient signs the contract, receives the funds, and is responsible for reporting and any tax liability.

So when completing this section, you want to ask yourself – who would carry out the responsibilities that come with this grant?

- (1) An individual with residence in Manhattan (applying on behalf of themselves or their collective)?
- (2) An organization legally registered in Manhattan?

Depending on which option is selected, we then have a few different pathways for receiving the funds based on our funding partners' eligibility:

- Individual artists can receive the funds:
 - directly
 - through a nonprofit fiscal sponsor based in Manhattan
 - through a nonprofit fiscal sponsor in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens or Staten Island
 - Or as a Tribal Nation member present within New York State
- Organizational grant recipients can receive the funds
 - As an arts nonprofit with 501c3 status
 - As a NY state chartered educational institution
 - Or as a Government or Quasi-Governmental Entity

Each of these options have a unique set of required documents. In all cases, you'll be asked to provide proof of Manhattan residency or address. The best place to review these requirements is in our application preview PDF beginning on page 7, which we'll drop in the chat again.

<https://lmcc.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/2027-Creative-Learning-Application-Questions.pdf>

Once you make this selection, you cannot change it after submitting the application. In the event of an award, LMCC will pay the full grant amount as a bank transfer to the entity selected in this section.

Please also remember that LMCC staff cannot offer tax, financial or legal advice so we recommend you speak to a professional about how grant funds may impact you.

This selection also affects which of our funding partners you may be eligible for. The diagram on this slide, which is also included in the guidelines, lays out those different pathways.

We're not going to walk through all of them today, and you don't need to memorize them! They're there as a resource to help you make the appropriate selection.

For now, we recommend focusing on Section I and on identifying the appropriate grant recipient. Our team will review your documentation on the back end and determine your eligibility for each funding source.

Alright! That should be it!

Application Form: Section III

And this finally brings us to the short demographic survey at the end of the application, which you can complete as the lead artist or on behalf of the lead artist listed in the first section. There are a couple of questions here which help us understand who we are reaching and who we are not reaching yet. **Panelists cannot access this section and it has no bearing on the review of your application.** We report this information in an anonymized and aggregated manner to our funding partners. In all cases you can choose which information to disclose, if any.

Okay that was all for the application! We are almost at the end folks!

Review Process + Criteria

Now that you've made it through the application, let's talk about what happens next and what the panel will be looking for.

For both programs, applications are reviewed by panelists with expertise across artistic genres, arts education practices, a breadth of backgrounds, and knowledge of Manhattan communities. Panelists review applications independently and then come together to make recommendations. If you'd like to recommend yourself or someone you know for panel participation, you're welcome to do so at the link here.

<https://airtable.com/appTuRBRxNI5GKpTX/pag26LjbJ7QYEnBcE/form>

When putting together your application, it's helpful to keep the panel criteria in mind. There are three criteria, and each is equally important:

- Artistic learning goals: Have you clearly explained what participants will learn, how you'll teach it, and what their creative experience will look like?
- Community impact: Have you clearly identified who the program is for and presented a thoughtful, realistic plan for reaching and engaging those participants?
- **Click Once** Viability: Does your lesson plan, timeline, budget, and teaching artist experience support your ability to deliver the program and culminating event?

SU-CASA has four criteria, and again, each is equally important:

- Artistic learning experience: What will participants learn and make, and how will you facilitate that learning?

- Project feasibility: Is the project realistic within the March–June residency, including your timeline, contact hours, and learning goals?
- Clarity and detail: Does the application clearly and cohesively communicate all of the elements of your project?
- Potential impact: Have you considered outreach, accessibility, accommodations, and opportunities for social engagement?

The panel looks at your application as a whole, so think about how all of the pieces work together to communicate your project.

Timeline & Next Steps

Both Creative Learning and SU-CASA have the same application deadline: November 12, 2026 at 6:00 PM Eastern Time. There are no extensions, so please plan ahead and reach out to us early if you need support.

After the deadline, applications will move into review. Creative Learning panel review and Board approvals will take place between January and March, with results announced April 5, 2027. SU-CASA panel review takes place in November and December, with results announced in February 2027.

From there, Creative Learning projects can take place throughout 2027, while SU-CASA residencies are expected to run from March through June 30, 2027.

Last but not least, we know this is a lot of information, and putting together applications can be really daunting, so between now and November 12th, we have a number of ways you can receive help on your application!

- We are hosting applicant labs – which are informal, in-person drop-in sessions. You can come with questions, get technical assistance on your application, or just work alongside other applicants and our team. We have four coming up in October at different locations across Manhattan.
- We are also hosting office hours the week leading up to the deadline. These are virtual meetings where you can come with specific questions or receive guidance from LMCC staff on specific aspects of your application.

You can learn more and RSVP for all these sessions on [LMCC.net/Apply](https://lmcc.net/Apply).

Lastly, you are welcome to email us at creativelearningt@lmcc.net.

That's all! Thank you so much!