

What Can We Do? (WCWD?)

A micro-grant opportunity for AAPI artists addressing community care in creative ways

“Movements are born in critical connections rather than critical mass.” – Grace Lee Boggs

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

What Can We Do? (WCWD?), presented by the Asian American Arts Alliance (A4), is a micro-grant opportunity for artists looking to support the AAPI community in NYC with engaging, creative projects rooted in care. Honoring the power of art as healing, WCWD? invites artists with a desire to affect change in their communities to carry out a project in a three-month period (March 1-May 15, 2023).

The lingering effects of the twin pandemics of COVID and anti-Asian hate continue to be felt today. In response, many mutual aid groups, direct service organizations, and community and business leaders have stepped in to take care of elders and other vulnerable AAPI community members across the city.

WCWD? gives artists a chance to find their place in the care ecosystem either by complementing existing services and offerings, or creating their own.

PROGRAM GOALS

For this program, 30 NYC-based artists will be selected as project awardees by a random draw. They will each receive \$500 to create and carry out ideas to engage, aid, and care for the Asian New Yorker community with a focus on Chinatown, Manhattan and Flushing, Queens.

Projects may take many forms such as performing music for seniors waiting in line at food pantries or leading workshops to create ‘zines that reinforce positive aspects of AAPI culture. While we prefer projects to be in-person activities, we understand that for safety reasons, projects may need to be virtual. You can review past projects [here](#).

Matchmaking with Community Organizations

In the application, we ask artists to share a project idea and a community or community organization you would like to work with and/or serve through your project.

If you are selected, there is flexibility in updating the project idea and/or community if circumstances require. Any updates will need to be communicated to A4.

If you are selected, A4 is happy to facilitate an introduction to a pre-approved community-based organization in either Chinatown, Manhattan or Flushing, Queens.

These 10+ organizations (listed below) have already agreed to being matched with an artist for a project. Should you be interested in being matched, there is a place in the application where you can select your top three organizations. Please note that there is no guarantee that you will be matched with an organization; we will try our best.

Chinatown, Manhattan

- [Think!Chinatown](#) – An intergenerational non-profit based in Manhattan’s Chinatown, working at the intersection of storytelling, arts & neighborhood engagement.
- [Send Chinatown Love](#) – A digital community for Chinatown’s restaurants to sustain themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. In short, Send Chinatown Love gives merchants an online platform who otherwise wouldn’t have one.
- [Mencius Society for the Arts](#) – The organization’s mission is inspired by the teachings of Mengzi (better known as “Mencius“ in the west), a Chinese philosopher who believed in the notion of personal cultivation and social contract. With focus on the Chinese tradition (though by no means exclusively) Mencius seeks to enhance public awareness of classical and folk cultures and to promote personal and social benefits that are derived from learning and from disciplined pursuits. In performing arts, Mencius presents concerts, festivals and workshops under the banner of EastRiver Ensemble and EastRiver Arts Center.

- [Charles B. Wang Community Health Center](#) – A federally qualified health center offering comprehensive primary care services to all, regardless of their ability to pay, their language, or their immigration history.

Flushing, Queens

- [Nan Shan Senior Center](#) – The Nan Shan Senior Center in Flushing provides seniors ages 60+ with lunch, ESL classes, culture and art programs, education, health management, exercise classes as well as health and nutrition seminars and case assistance.
- [Undo Poverty Flushing](#) – The group’s mission is to help move all Flushing community members out of poverty toward sustainable economic advancement using a community-informed and driven approach. The initiative is funded by the Robin Hood Foundation and is anchored by CPC and includes key collaborative partners AAFE, MinKwon, Queens Public Library, The Child Center of NY, and River Fund.
- [Korean Community Services of New York](#) – Founded in 1973, Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc (KCS) is the oldest and largest 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization assisting Korean-Americans and other immigrant communities in the greater New York City area with economic empowerment, social well-being, and health and wellness. KCS envisions a world where immigrant communities remain grounded in their heritage and work together with the broader community to build a better society at large.
- [Lewis Latimer House](#) – The Lewis H. Latimer Fund, Inc. was established to preserve and promote the legacy of Lewis Howard Latimer, and other innovators of color who made extraordinary contributions to technology and American life. The Museum offers STEAM educational programs, exhibitions and public programs in poetry, arts, technology, and social justice. Latimer's life story is used as a point of departure from which to examine issues of race, class, immigration and contemporary events.
- [Red Canary Song](#) – Red Canary Song is a grassroots massage worker coalition in the U.S. There are over 9000 workplaces like these across the country with no political representation, or access to labor rights or collective organizing. Anti-trafficking NGO’s that claim to speak for migrants in sex trades promote increased policing and immigration control, which harms rather than helps migrant sex workers. We also organize transnationally with Asian sex workers across the diaspora in Toronto, Paris, and Hong Kong.

- [YWCA Queens](#) – The YWCA of Queens was created by the Queens community, for the Queens community and, in continuation of our legacy, strives to be of the Queens community. Today, the YWCA of Queens is recognized as an influential non-profit that meets the needs of low-income individuals and immigrants in one of the most diverse cities in the world. The YWCA of Queens now serves over 5,000 families annually through its multi-generational and cross-cultural services. With our overarching goal to address the diverse needs of Queens residents, we are able to stand as a beacon in the communities we serve and offer integral services to encourage educational, economic and personal well-being.
- [Queens Botanical Garden](#) – Queens Botanical Garden is an urban oasis where people, plants and cultures are celebrated through inspiring gardens, innovative educational programs and demonstrations of environmental stewardship. The vision of the Queens Botanical Garden’s programming is to be a leading cultural, educational, and environmental resource that reflects the diversity of our audiences in an accessible and welcoming way, and that celebrates nature, arts, culture and the history of our community in this unique garden setting.
- [Flushing Town Hall](#) – The mission of Flushing Council on Culture and the Arts (FCCA) is to present multi-disciplinary global arts that engage and educate the global communities of Queens, New York and New York City, New York, in order to foster mutual appreciation. As advocates of arts equity since 1979, we support local, immigrant, national, and international artists, developing partnerships and collaborations that enhance our efforts.

INFORMATION SESSION

An information session for those interested in applying was held on Thursday, January 12 from 12:00-1:00 pm EST via Zoom. You can find a recording of the session on our YouTube Channel [HERE](#).

ABOUT A4

The Asian American Arts Alliance (A4) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring greater representation, equity, and opportunities for Asian American artists and cultural organizations through resource sharing, promotion, and community building. Since 1983, A4 has sought to unify, promote, and represent the artistic and cultural producers of one of New York City’s

fastest-growing populations. We are a diverse alliance of artists, organizations, and arts supporters who believe that working together as a pan-ethnic, multidisciplinary community is essential to nurturing the development of artists and arts groups. A4 serves as a thoughtful convener of the Asian American cultural workforce around issues of race, identity, and artmaking and provides a critical voice for this community. We are the only service organization in the country dedicated to the professional development of Asian American and Pacific Islander artists in all disciplines.

WHO SHOULD APPLY

Are you a NYC-based artist or community leader interested in exploring and/or developing a creative project with the aim to offer care for the Asian community in New York? Do you feel you want to do something about anti-Asian hate and violence and its effects on the community, but don't know how to get started? Your skills and talents can make a difference, and we want to hear from you.

What Can We Do? is seeking 30 participants with a range of artistic expression, social justice/social impact expertise, organizing frameworks, and lived experiences.

Eligibility Criteria includes:

- A resident of New York City & primarily based in New York City during the program period (this program will take on a hybrid form).
- The project must benefit communities in Chinatown, Manhattan (District 1) or Flushing, Queens (District 20) **and/or** the applicant must currently reside in Chinatown, Manhattan (District 1) or Flushing, Queens (District 20).
- All disciplines and stages of artistic exploration/developments, activism, community organizing, educational practice, and thought leadership are welcome. No prior organizing experience required.
- Demonstrate a willingness or an interest in community work and care for vulnerable populations
- Create or develop an existing or new project that centers community building, healing, reflection, and joy, and not limited to being solely reactionary to moments of crisis or protest. The project can be a

one-time gesture or an ongoing, longer term idea as long as its intentions are rooted in community and care.

- The event or project must take place within the period (March 1 - May 15, 2023)
- Must be at least 21 years of age

PROGRAM STRUCTURE + TIMELINE

As part of the program, participants will:

- Carry out their project idea anytime between March 1–May 15, 2023, providing periodical progress updates to A4;
- Write and submit a simple, one-page report of their work including 2 photographs, the community they served, its impact, and any next steps;
- Present their final project in-person or virtually at the end of the program in a public share out;
- Receive an honorarium of \$500 per artist.

The program schedule is as follows:

January 10, 2023 – Application opens

January 12, 2023 – Pre-submission Information Session (12-1pm EST)

February 20, 2023 – Deadline for all submissions (by 11:59 pm EST)

February 22, 2023 – Awardees selected based on random draw

February 23, 2023 – Awardees notified

Early March – Awardees matched with community organizations (if applicable)

March 1-May 15, 2023 – Awardees carry out their projects

May 22, 2023 – Final reports due

June 8, 2023 (Tentative) – Public Share Out (Flushing, Queens)

June 15, 2023 (Tentative) – Public Share Out (Chinatown, Manhattan)

This program is presented by the Asian American Arts Alliance (A4) and is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Special thanks to Council Members Christopher Marte and Sandra Ung.

FAQ

The following questions were submitted during the information session. If you have a question that is not answered below, please email Justine Lee at jlee@aaartsalliance.org.

Could book publishers submit on behalf of their authors?

Yes, as long as each application includes different contact information for each author, and A4 can be working directly with the author if they are selected.

Does the applicant's location affect the chance for being selected?

As long as the applicant resides in NYC, they are eligible. Specifically, if you reside in a neighborhood other than Flushing, Queens or Chinatown, Manhattan then your project idea must directly impact communities living in Chinatown, Manhattan, or Flushing, Queens. We created a handy flowchart to help you determine residential eligibility:



Do you have to provide proof or documentation that you are a practicing artist?

We consider resumes that capture your body of work over time (projects, shows, collaborations, etc.) proof that you are a practicing artist.

What if experience on my resume does not show that I am a practicing artist?

We are willing to be flexible on what we consider a practicing artist; you need not be a full-time or professional artist to be eligible for this opportunity. As long as you practice art and creativity in some capacity and have a creative project you would like to carry out for the community, you are eligible.

Do you have Japanese organizations to match artists with? And should the Japanese organizations be in either Chinatown, Manhattan or Flushing, Queens if the artist doesn't live in those areas?

At the moment, we do not have Japanese-specific organizations to match artists with. If you have an organization in mind, please indicate what organization you plan to work with in your application. If your project affects communities living in Chinatown, Manhattan or Flushing, Queens, you do not need to reside in either neighborhood. However, if your project more broadly benefits the NYC AAPI community, and not those specific neighborhoods, you are required to reside in or be from Chinatown or Flushing. It's either/or/both.

How many projects will be selected?

30 artists will be selected, and the total number of projects granted \$500 depends on that.

If I have a project in mind that would be a collaboration, should only one person apply?

You should apply as one person and mention that you will work with a collaborator.

Can translation, language justice, and community organizing count as an art practice?

Yes, the goal of this project is to engage the community, and language justice or translation help for your community counts.

Why random drawing? Since the selection is a drawing, how do we strengthen our application?

Random drawing provides a more equal opportunity for artists who might not typically receive awards based on merit. Random drawing is also an easier lift for A4 while selecting as many artists as possible and supplying them with a meaningful cash award. There is not really a way to strengthen your application as long as you make sure your application shows that you are eligible, such as making sure your project shows care to the community.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Click [HERE](#) to access the online application through Jotform.

To watch a recording of the Information Session, visit our YouTube channel [HERE](#).

If you have any questions about the application, please email Justine Lee at jlee@aaartsalliance.org.

APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE:

Personal Information

Full Name

Pronouns

Birthdate (you must be born on 1/1/2002 or before to be eligible)

Email Address

Phone Number

Address of Residence (you must reside in one of the five boroughs of New York City to be eligible)

Demographic Information

A4 seeks to be inclusive and accessible to all applicants. For this reason, we request this information to assess whether our program is achieving its diversity objectives.

Gender Identity (Optional)

Sexual Identity (Optional)

Do you identify as a person with a disability?

Ethnicity (please select all that apply):

- Central Asian
- East Asian
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern
- Multi-Regional
- South Asian
- Southeast Asian
- Prefer not to say
- Other

District Eligibility Requirements

The proposed project must benefit communities in Chinatown, Manhattan (District 1) or Flushing, Queens (District 20) and/or the applicant must currently reside in Chinatown, Manhattan (District 1) or Flushing, Queens (District 20).

What community or communities do you hope to benefit through your project?
(Check all that apply)

- Chinatown, Manhattan
- Flushing, Queens
- Other

Do you reside in either Chinatown, Manhattan or Flushing, Queens?

Dropdown:

Yes; Chinatown, Manhattan

Yes; Flushing, Queens

No; Neither

Proposed Project Details

Projects may take many forms such as performing music for seniors waiting in line at food pantries to leading workshops to create 'zines that reinforce positive aspects of AAPI culture.

Proposed Project Description (250 words max):

Proposed Engagement Date (If you already know):

How do you plan to reach the communities, partners, and/or collaborators involved in your proposed project? (250 words max):

Matchmaking with Community Organizations

If you are selected as an awardee, A4 is happy to facilitate an introduction to a pre-approved community-based organization in either Chinatown, Manhattan or Flushing, Queens. These 10+ organizations have already agreed to being matched with an artist for a project. Please note that there is no guarantee that you will be matched with an organization; we will try our best.

Would you like to be matched with a pre-approved community-based organization for your project?

Yes, I would like to be matched with a community organization

No, I already have a community organization in mind

No, my project does not require a community organization

If you answered "Yes, I would like to be matched with a community organization", please check 1-3 organizations you would like to collaborate with, host, or benefit from your project.

- Think!Chinatown
- Send Chinatown Love
- Mencius Society
- Charles B. Wang Community Health Center
- Nan Shan Senior Center
- Undo Poverty Flushing
- Korean Community Services of New York
- Lewis Latimer House

- Red Canary Song
- YWCA Queens
- Queens Botanical Garden
- Flushing Town Hall

If you answered "No, I already have a community organization in mind", please answer the following questions:

Community Organization Name

What community or communities does the organization serve? (Check all that apply)

- Chinatown, Manhattan
- Flushing, Queens
- Other

Community Organization Website

Do you have a relationship with the Community Organization?

Yes/No

Supplementary Information

This information provides us additional ways to get a greater sense of who you are, explore your body of work, recent and past projects, and collaborations.

Upload Resume/CV

Upload Headshot

If you are selected, we will use this image for the public announcement. Please check this box to indicate that you give A4 permission to use this image for promotional purposes.

Please provide the name of the photographer of your headshot if applicable.

Website

Instagram

Other Handle

Documentation

Applicants must be a resident of New York City & primarily based in New York City during the program period (this program will take on a hybrid form with

some in-person meetings), and must be 21 years or older. Please upload documents that verify your proof of residency and age below.

Upload Documentation of NYC residency:

Note: Documentation must be an official document stating the applicant's name, date, and NYC address; Can be, but not be limited to: utility bill, bank statement or bill, credit card statement, valid government ID listing NYC address issued in 2022-23, residential lease, idNYC issued in 2022-23, roommate agreement, rent receipt or proof of rent, studio lease or any other form of official documentation listing the above.

Upload Proof of Age:

Note: Upload passport or state-issued ID, including idNYC

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