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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2022

New York State Awards \$430,000 to Rochester Area Community Foundation for Regional Arts Projects

A new partnership between Rochester Area Community Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) will result in an infusion of grant dollars for local arts programs.

NYSCA has awarded \$430,000 to Rochester Area Community Foundation Initiatives (RACFI), an arm of the Community Foundation. The majority of the funding will support one-time grants for arts projects by nonprofit and public organizations in the Foundation's eight-county Rochester-Finger Lakes region. The grants are intended to increase audience reach, organizational capacity, and equitable access to program support.

The arts grant opportunity will be open to arts and other community organizations in Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates counties. Recent NYSCA grant recipients — 2018 or later — are not eligible. The application process for these \$5,000 grants will open March 14, with an April 29 deadline for proposals. Details can be found at www.racf.org/NYSCA.

The NYSCA funding also will support an in-depth study of the creative economy outside of New York City, with a focus on the Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse metros and other select regions. The study will be used to understand trends, inform arts funding, promote the importance of the arts to community vitality and success, and allow for cross-regional benchmarking and sharing of ideas. Information about the criteria for submitting Letters of Intent may be found at www.racf.org/CreativeEconomy. The study must be completed within a year.

"The arts enliven communities, connect individuals, and inform and inspire us all," said Jennifer Leonard, president and CEO of the Community Foundation. "We are honored to partner with NYSCA in bringing more of these vital benefits to our Rochester region."

As a NYSCA partner, the Community Foundation will leverage its hands-on experience, knowledge, and expertise regarding the local arts ecosystem.

Priorities for this regrant partnership include improving equitable access to NYSCA grants, with an emphasis on programs for underserved communities and organizations. These priorities fulfill NYSCA's goal to provide more grants to organizations that have not received NYSCA funding in recent years, or ever.



The Community Foundation also hopes to attract new local applicants with this funding opportunity.

“During the Foundation’s 50th anniversary year, we want to expand our outreach and extend greater access to local and statewide funding, such as this grant opportunity, to as many new groups as possible,” said Annette Jiménez Gleason, the Community Foundation’s program officer for vitality.

The Foundation is one of the most visible and significant arts funders in the Rochester-Finger Lakes region. Ten percent of its total annual grantmaking, including from donor-advised funds — more than \$3 million — benefits arts and culture across a wide variety of disciplines. Annual competitive arts grants, which amount to \$250,000, assist organizations ranging from small community theater and literary groups to major performing and visual arts institutions.

“Our outstanding regrant partners make it possible for NYSCA dollars to reach every corner of our state,” said NYSCA Executive Director Mara Manus. “Expanding eligibility and increasing access for the full and richly diverse ecosystem of artists and arts organizations of New York remain top priorities for NYSCA. We are proud to support Rochester Area Community Foundation with regrant dollars to invest in critical arts projects, and a groundbreaking study that will showcase the economic impact of New York State’s vital arts and culture sector.”

The Foundation has established an advisory committee of community members involved directly and indirectly in the arts to provide input on this grantmaking opportunity, along with insights into applicants and their programs. They are:

- Mimi Lee, president and board chair of the Asian/Pacific Islander/American Association;
- Julio Saenz, visiting lecturer in communication for Rochester Institute of Technology’s College of Liberal Arts;
- Avette Jordan, director of development at The Hochstein School;
- Danny Hoskins, artistic and managing director at Blackfriars Theatre; and
- Elizabeth Long, executive director of Finger Lakes Opera.

For further information, visit www.racf.org/NYSCA for the NYSCA-Rochester Regional Regrant Arts Partnership.