THE PRESSER FOUNDATION

NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER 2026

GRANT GUIDELINES

2026-27 Advancement of Music Application

The Advancement of Music grant application deadline is coming up on November 15.

This is the Foundation's general operating support grantmaking area, which we provide to help ensure that organizations that teach, perform, and present music across our region have flexible funding to sustain and advance their missions.

New This Year: Advancement of Music and Special Projects general operating support grants have been combined into a single application process. All eligible applicants for general operating support, regardless of the organization's age, should apply through Advancement of Music.

Check out the **Foundation's website** for updated eligibility and criteria related to this grantmaking area. For additional details, including information about the new music access framework, read the **July newsletter**. And, as always, reach out to Rachael Gartner, Grants & Administrative Manager, at **rgartner@presserfoundation.org** if you have any questions.

2025-26 Advancement of Music Grant Report

Are you a current Advancement of Music grantee? If you apply for the 2026-27 cycle, your application will serve as your final report for your 2025-26 grant, so there's no need to submit a separate report. Because the application asks for updated information about your organization each year, it covers what the final report would. We made this change last year and are continuing it for this cycle.

2026-27 Capital Support Application

The Capital Support application deadline is February 1, 2027. Capital projects include the construction of new facilities and renovation, repair, or expansion of existing facilities. We will also consider proposals for capital needs including hardware, software, and equipment. To learn more, visit the **grants page** of our website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

First Annual Report

100 years of musical philanthropy, and a plan for the future

Our first-ever **annual report** highlights the remarkable year that we had last year – celebrating our 100th anniversary, completing a new strategic plan, and bringing together more than 150 music organizations for our first-ever grantee gathering.

The report, along with our other communications, reflects our commitment to sharing what we're learning and how our work is evolving. We encourage you to read it and reach out to us with any questions or comments.

Hispanic Heritage Month



As we honor Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15), grantees have hosted performances and taught classes that reflect Hispanic/Latine traditions. Graduate Music Fellow Kristin Valentin shares her experiences at these events, including AMLA (pictured).

"As an Afro-Latina music educator and performer, attending events hosted by organizations that feature Latin American musicians has been deeply affirming. Greater Philadelphia has a vibrant Latin American music community whose educators deliver authentic, culturally rich experiences. Their dedication to meaningful music-making resonates with my vision as a music educator."

EVENTS

Next Movement Reflection: AI-Powered Search

Love it or loathe it, AI has changed how people find your organization. When someone searches "jazz concerts near me" or "best music training for a high schooler," does your organization show up, and the way you'd want?



Representatives from 40 music organizations explored that at our September 22 Next Movement Idea Forum: Finding Your Audience in

the Age of AI Search, with regional experts from Sentient AEO and Engine Room.

The big picture: search is shifting from lists of links to direct answers. The habits that make your organization easy to find, like keeping information clear and current, still matter. They just matter in new ways.

Read **our reflection** for the full takeaways and **the recording**.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Celebrating John Coltrane



Philadelphia continues to celebrate John Coltrane's 100th birthday and legacy with events this month. Organized by the Coltrane Estate, **COLTRANE 100** has partnered with a number of music organizations in Philadelphia and around the world to celebrate his remarkable life and career. Foundation grantees have played a large role in bringing his music to life.

Throughout the year, jazz presenter **Ars Nova Workshop has presented COLTRANE 100** in Philadelphia. Performances, conversations, exhibitions, listening events, community gatherings, educational programs, and neighborhood activities across the city have honored Coltrane while asking questions about memory, perseveration, Black cultural production, and the role of music in public life.

Other grantees celebrating Coltrane's legacy this year have included:

- **The Philadelphia Orchestra & Kimmel Center & Highmark Mann Center** – The Orchestra, joined by saxophonist Ravi Coltrane, performed Coltrane's most enduring works under newly commissioned arrangements.
- **WRTI** – Radio station WRTI presented *A Love Park Supreme*, a weeklong celebration of Coltrane's birthday in Love Park, featuring Coltrane-themed broadcasts as well as a live performance from saxophonist Jaleel Shaw, bassist Alex Calffy, and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts.
- **Philadelphia Jazz Legacy Project** – The Project has recorded several videos with historians and musicians about John Coltrane.

Learn more about the year-long celebration, including events past and upcoming, on the **COLTRANE 100** webpage.

ArtPhilly's *Sound of History*



Celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary this summer, ArtPhilly presented the *What Now: 2026* festival that shown a light on Philadelphia's creative voices by placing artists, neighborhoods, and arts organization at the center of civic dialogue.

Through the Black Music City collaborative, the Foundation supported the *Sound of History* project, which gave musicians Zeek Burse and Laurin Talese the opportunity to create new compositions after an immersion at the Museum of the American Revolution. Through the immersion, Burse and Talese were able to foster a deeper understanding of the sounds of 1776 through four original songs.

Performances of these compositions (listen to them through **WXPN's website**) were sold out, showing that the listeners understand the importance and intertwining nature of history and memory, and how music can connect them.

NEWS & INFORMATION

Ask PANO

The **Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations** (PANO) supports nonprofits across the state with resources on legal matters, advocacy, communications, finances, leadership, fundraising, and more, along with monthly webinars and in-person classes for nonprofit staff, board members, and volunteers. Through **Ask PANO**, anyone, member or not, can submit a question to PANO staff or its network of experts. Most questions are answered free of charge; if a response will take 30 minutes or more, PANO will let you know in advance that a fee may apply.

Request for Photos

We're excited to be refreshing our website, and we'd love to feature your work on it. If you have photos of your programs, performances, or participants that you'd like to share, please send them to Kate Houstoun at **khoustoun@presserfoundation.org** by January 15, 2027. To ensure the best quality online, images should be high resolution, ideally at least 2000 pixels on the longest side (300 dpi preferred), in JPEG or PNG format. Please include photographer credit and any relevant caption details, and confirm that you have permission to share the images. While we appreciate every submission, we may not be able to use all photos we receive.

Blog Posts & Newsletter

Guest Blog Post: Your organization can submit a guest blog post about your efforts and receive an unrestricted honorarium! Check out the guest blog post guidelines on our website.

Report Blog Post & Newsletter Feature: The Foundation may also reach out to feature your organization based on information from your most recent grant follow-up report. Foundation staff will write the article and share a draft with you before publication.

Board & Staff Updates

Honoring Ellen Rosen



In July, Ellen Rosen completed her time as Board President and moved into the Strategic Planning Officer position. Her longstanding dedication to the Foundation, including as the leader of its initial DEI efforts, inaugural Chair of the DEI Committee, and President, has been essential in shaping how the Foundation serves its grantees and the broader music community.

In honor of her efforts, the Foundation worked with Board Member Peter Burwasser to select a composer to create a piece of music as a gift for Rosen.

Local composer Kile Smith was the perfect match. He wrote two pieces under the umbrella "Sing, Sweet Air," which were premiered on September 30, 2026, by soprano Sarah Schafer and harpsichordist John Walthausen.

Music has always been at the heart of Rosen's commitment to the Foundation, and the Board could think of no better way to honor her than with these pieces.

Graduate Fellows

The Foundation welcomes one Fellow and welcomes back another!



Kristin Valentin joins the Foundation as this year's Graduate Music Fellow. Valentin is a vocalist and educator whose career has been shaped by the belief that music belongs to everyone. She holds a Bachelor of Music in vocal performance from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, with a focus on opera and a jazz certification. She is currently pursuing a Master of Music in Music Education at Temple University, where she serves as a Graduate Teaching Assistant supporting coursework in inclusive music teaching and learning. Her K-12 teaching background in Wisconsin included building a choral program from the ground up, motivated by her experience of not having one at her primary school. As the Graduate Music Fellow, she has begun attending and writing about performances by Presser grantees for audiences including musicians, grantees, peer funders, and the music community.



Erica Breitbarth, a current Ph.D. student in music education and urban music education policy at Temple University, returns as the Graduate Research Fellow for another year. She continues her diligent efforts on the Foundation's research supporting strategic planning. This year, she will focus on understanding the state of music education in Philadelphia. A strong advocate for music education, Breitbarth served as co-founder and President of the Milwaukee Music Educators Association (MMEA), which worked to restore 100+ music teacher positions to the Milwaukee Public Schools and increase access to comprehensive music education for Milwaukee Public School students. In addition to teaching, she is an active soprano soloist.

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