

Nonprofits benefit in NYS regional funding

Business First by Tracey Drury, Buffalo Business First Reporter

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New state funding will allow nonprofit groups in the Western New York region to train employees, expand access to the arts and expand employment opportunities for the clients they serve.

Nearly a dozen projects by nonprofit organizations were included among 58 projects selected by the [Western New York Regional Economic Development Council](#). A total of \$52.8 million was allocated to the Western New York region by the state-run Regional Economic Development Council, part of \$738 million allocated statewide.

The YWCA of Niagara was approved for \$158,167 to expand its Community Culinary Training Center in Lockport. The project includes renovations and construction of a commercial kitchen training facility.

CEO [Kathy Granchelli](#) said the project expands a culinary programs started at Carolyn's House in Niagara Falls, its shelter for women and children. The project has served as a starting point for women who move on to further education at [Niagara County Community College](#) and [Niagara University](#).

"The YWCA culinary training is a great example of community collaboration," she said.

Other grants, while small, go toward expanding access to the arts. Arts Services Initiative of WNY received \$48,237 to support its Arts Access program, providing discounted and free tickets to cultural events for needy families.

Tod Kniazuk, executive director, said the grant is a partnership between Arts Services Initiative of WNY, the Theatre Alliance of Buffalo, Crowley Webb, the Mobile Safety-Net Team, [M&T Bank](#) and Arts Partners for Learning.

"The Arts Access program will provide the opportunity for economically challenged individuals and families to enjoy our region's cultural offerings by providing low cost tickets and free transportation to them, and will grow the audience and awareness of the participating venues," he said.

Other grants to nonprofits include:

- Springville Center for the Arts Inc. was funded with a \$434,310 grant to redevelop 37 North Buffalo St., a former Baptist church in the Village of Springville, which will be transformed into a mixed-use space with an arts cafe, artisan marketplace and artist housing. A second grant for \$394,810 will fund rehabilitation of 5 E. Main St. as a second mixed-use site.

- Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Arts Gallery (CEPA) and Big Orbit Galleries will use a \$65,000 state grant toward merger costs. The two organization plan to create a contemporary arts and learning center in downtown Buffalo, with the re-envisioned CEPA Gallery providing emerging and under-recognized artists with presentation opportunities.
- Just Buffalo Literary Center received \$125,000 toward targeted investments in staff time, artist fees and marketing to advance its arts and community-building work.
- The Gowandas Historic Hollywood Theater will receive \$420,000 to continue restoration of the theater, including upgrades to HVAC and architecture work. The site is planned as a multi-use facility for the visual and performing arts.
- The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra will receive \$90,000 to host its Celebration of Music on Buffalo's inner harbor as part of a larger family-friendly series of events.
- The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo will receive \$300,000 to train 80 unemployed workers in green rehabilitation construction through its Green and Healthy Homes workforce development program.
- The Martin House Restoration Corp. was approved for \$268,000 to support the final stage of interior restoration of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed site in Buffalo.
- [The Buffalo Zoo](#) will use a \$376,000 grant toward its upgrade and replace its polar bear exhibit to comply with standards of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.
- Catholic Charities of Buffalo received a grant for \$79,884 to train 200 workers in Lean Six Sigma practices and other workforce skills development.

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