WEST SIDE CULTURAL NETWORK RECEIVES $400,000 GRANT FROM GOOGLE.ORG TO SUPPORT CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Google.org's $400,000 grant to the West Side Cultural Network enables it to strengthen cultural infrastructure, expand access to the arts, and provide new technology tools and training.

New York, NY, November 23, 2026 — The West Side Cultural Network (WSCN), a coalition of over 20 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, has received a $400,000 grant from Google.org. The funding advances a capacity-building initiative for WSCN, strengthening cultural infrastructure, expanding public access to the arts, and introducing new technology tools and training. From July 2026 through June 2028, the grant funds coordinated efforts to increase audience engagement, improve operations across the Network, and position Manhattan's West Side as a leading cultural district for New Yorkers and visitors.

Founded to promote collaboration and dialogue among the neighborhood's cultural institutions, WSCN connects organizations across Chelsea, Hudson Yards, the Meatpacking District, and the West Village to increase and sustain visibility and engagement. The grant-supported initiative addresses key challenges facing the cultural sector, including limited marketing resources, siloed communications, and barriers to coordinated audience development. By supporting public programming, organizational capacity, and digital tools, the initiative

establishes a model for sustainable, place-based cultural development aligned with New York City's broader goals for economic vitality, tourism, and equitable access to the arts. The funding also enables further engagement with city and state partners, reinforcing the role of public-private collaboration and attracting additional support to the sector.

Google.org's support will focus on three interconnected priority areas:

> **Expanded Public Programming and Access:** Funding will support two upcoming West Side Fest events, expected to engage more than 200,000 participants and generate significant citywide visibility for the West Side's cultural assets.
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> **Technology and Workforce Development:** At least 15 cultural organizations will participate in AI training, equipping staff with tools to enhance communications, improve service delivery, and expand outreach to diverse audiences.
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> **Strengthening Cultural Infrastructure:** Investments in shared branding, communications, and strategic planning will support year-round programming and establish the Network as an essential civic and cultural resource.

The Google.org funding complements a funding commitment made by New York City Council Speaker Julie Menin and Council Member Carl Wilson, who allocated $25,000 this summer to West Side Fest to enable WSCN to increase its year-round impact, including a new collaborative initiative focused on youth and teen audiences. WSCN has grown rapidly in recent years, with its annual West Side Fest drawing more than 100,000 attendees each year and demonstrating the value and impact in local cultural infrastructure and public programming. Launched in 2023, West Side Fest expanded to a three-day, weekend-long event following its initial success. Now in its fourth year, the Fest returned July 10–12, 2026 and welcomed over 150,000 visitors to the West Side, its highest attendance to date. West Side Fest offered a range of activities, including free admission, programs for all ages, concerts, artist-led workshops, pop-up experiences, and more.

"Since its founding, the West Side Cultural Network has demonstrated the power of collaboration among cultural institutions. We are grateful for support from Google.org that will help us deepen that work by funding the tools, training, and infrastructure, enabling our members to better serve their audiences. From expanding the reach of West Side Fest to strengthening year-round partnerships and visibility, this commitment will help ensure that arts and cultural experiences remain accessible, vibrant, and impactful for communities across New York City," said **Jane Carey, Director of Community and Government Affairs at the Whitney Museum of American Art and founder of the West Side Cultural Network.** "The NYC Council's support of West Side Fest helps us connect tens of thousands of New Yorkers each year to free arts and cultural experiences, strengthening the cultural vitality of the West Side and the city as a whole."

"For over 20 years, Google has been proud to call New York City home, and we are deeply woven into the fabric of our local community here on the West Side. We believe that supporting our local neighborhoods and bridging the digital divide go hand in hand, and the West Side Cultural Network has created a powerful blueprint for public-private collaboration. Through this

Google.org grant, we are thrilled to support their work to expand public access to cultural infrastructure while simultaneously equipping non-profit workers with essential tech and digital literacy skills – helping to ensure that Manhattan's historic West Side remains a thriving, cutting-edge, and accessible cultural hub for all New Yorkers," said **Reggie Thomas, Head of Government Affairs at Google NYC.**

"An investment in New York City's cultural spaces is an investment in the communities they serve," said **NYC Council Speaker Julie Menin.** "The West Side Cultural Network is a powerful example of what we can accomplish when community organizations, private partners, and government work together toward a shared vision. Google's generous investment, alongside the City Council's continued support, will help these institutions reach new audiences, expand access to cultural programming, and create more opportunities for New Yorkers to experience everything our city's extraordinary arts community has to offer. This is the kind of collaboration that strengthens our neighborhoods and ensures our cultural spaces continue to thrive for generations to come."

"New York City's cultural institutions are among our greatest assets, and strengthening their capacity to serve our communities is essential to the future of our cultural sector. The West Side Cultural Network has created a model for how cultural organizations can work collectively to address shared challenges, expand their audiences, and make the arts more accessible. The City Council has been proud to support this work, recognizing that collaboration and shared resources are essential to a strong and sustainable cultural sector," said **Deputy Speaker Dr. Nantasha Williams**. "Google's investment builds on this progress, strengthening the connections between institutions and their ability to share expertise, coordinate efforts, and create greater opportunities for public engagement. By investing in the infrastructure that sustains these partnerships, we are helping create a cultural sector that is better equipped to adapt, innovate, and remain accessible, ensuring that New York City's extraordinary cultural resources continue to serve and enrich communities for generations to come."

"The West Side is home to some of our city's most extraordinary arts and cultural institutions, and everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, deserves the opportunity to experience them," said **Council Member Carl Wilson.** "West Side Fest shows us what is possible when our cultural institutions come together to open their doors to our communities, bringing creativity and inspiration to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. I was proud to join Speaker Julie Menin in securing City Council funding to expand this initiative, and I am so grateful to Google.org for building on that with this transformative grant. These investments will help the West Side Cultural Network reach new audiences and ensure that arts and culture remain accessible to all of us."

About the West Side Cultural Network

The West Side Cultural Network (WSCN) is a group of more than 20 museums, parks, performing arts centers, and cultural institutions located within a half-mile portion of historic New York. Formed in 2019, WSCN highlights the cultural destination along Manhattan's West Side, where arts, culture, history, and community converge to create a uniquely enriching experience for all.

WSCN members include Art Start; Center for Art, Research and Alliances; CUE Art; Dia Chelsea; The FLAG Art Foundation; the High Line; Hill Art Foundation; Hudson Guild; Hudson River Park; Indie Space/West Village Rehearsal Co-Op; The Joyce Theater; The Kitchen; The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center; Little Island; New York City AIDS Memorial; Poster House; Print Center New York; Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art; The Shed; Westbeth Artists Housing; White Columns; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.







PRESS CONTACT

For press materials and image requests, please contact:

Meghan Ferrucci
Senior Publicist
Whitney Museum of American Art
(212) 671-8346
Meghan_Ferrucci@whitney.org

Hannah Gompertz
Director of Communications & Special Projects
Dia Art Foundation
(212) 293-5598
hgompertz@diaart.org

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