

# Lilly Endowment Reveals Arts and Cultural Initiative Grants



Diverse Projects Will Strengthen Indianapolis for Residents and Visitors

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NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Judith Cebula

317.916.7327

[cebulaj@lei.org](mailto:cebulaj@lei.org)

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INDIANAPOLIS - Inspired by the community's tremendous creativity and its collaborative spirit, Lilly Endowment has approved nearly \$49 million in grants to fund [17 projects](#) through its Strengthening Indianapolis Through Arts and Cultural Innovation initiative.

The grants - ranging from \$49,000 to \$9.2 million - will support efforts to beautify public places, revitalize historic landmarks, increase access to the arts - including for people with disabilities - and infuse new arts experiences in neighborhoods throughout the city. There are 18 organizations receiving grants for 17 projects that will be implemented in collaboration with more than three dozen other organizations. Grant recipients include a museum, schools, parks and cultural institutions, neighborhood community centers, social service organizations and government agencies.

The projects include efforts that will strive to:

- Use the arts to rejuvenate historic city landmarks and beautify other public places.
- Support artists by strengthening the spaces where they work and live.
- Incorporate the arts into neighborhood revitalization activities.
- Create dynamic cultural programs and experiences that bring people together.
- Provide more arts experiences to children through innovative school-based endeavors.
- Infuse art into the development of new nature trails that are accessible to people with physical disabilities.

The Endowment launched this competitive arts initiative in January, inviting Indiana-based charitable organizations to propose ideas that would use the arts to foster community building in Indianapolis. The initiative encouraged organizations to collaborate across sectors, but at least one partnering organization needed to have the promotion of arts and culture as its primary mission. At least one partnering organization needed to be based in Marion County. Also, the Endowment stipulated that most of a proposed project's activities be implemented within Marion County.

Organizations could seek grants ranging from \$7,500 to \$10 million, which could be for short-term efforts or projects that have lasting impact over many years.

When the initiative opened, the Endowment planned to award grants totaling \$25 million. In total, 226 creative ideas were submitted. Many of the proposed projects reflected a commitment to collaboration and were deeply rooted in improving the quality of life for residents across Indianapolis. They demonstrated a strong understanding of how arts and cultural experiences can be powerful tools for community development.

The Endowment received so many creative and promising proposals that it decided to nearly double the amount of money dedicated to the initiative. A total of \$48.9 million in grants will support the projects.

“We were impressed not just by the number of proposals we received but also by the applicants’ collaborative spirit, imagination and energetic desire to make Indianapolis a more vibrant and engaging community,” said Rob Smith, the Endowment’s vice president for community development. “We believe that the projects funded through this initiative will significantly enhance the quality of life for residents and create compelling new experiences for visitors.”

The projects receiving funding will begin to take shape in 2019.

The Endowment has an 80-year history of supporting arts and cultural organizations based in Indianapolis. This grantmaking furthers the Endowment’s broader goals of making Indianapolis a more appealing place to live, work and visit.

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**[Lilly Endowment Inc.](#)** is a private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family – J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons Eli and J.K. Jr. – through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana..