



**Calling all artists,  
musicians, creators,  
makers, organizers  
& idea wizards!**

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**REQUEST FOR  
PROPOSALS**  
**BCA**



# THE BRIGHT IDEAS PROJECT

**The Bright Ideas Project is Highlight's engine for crowdsourcing programming at Highlight, Burlington's official New Year's Eve celebration.**

The ideal proposal supports, celebrates, and shares what's important to you while also having a positive impact on the greater community.

Events may have elements of music, art, technology, dance, food, literature, theater, and just about anything else you can think of!

We are looking for big, creative, and complete ideas. For example, instead of submitting a performance from your band, try to think in a larger way about a multi-hour event that includes other performers, visual art, food, or other creative elements. The more complete and inclusive your idea is, the better. We aim to create unique experiences that people won't find anywhere else, and are grounded in our place and time.

# FINANCIAL AWARD & SUPPORTING RESOURCES

**Each selectee will receive support from Highlight in various areas including:**

## **1. AN AWARD OF UP TO \$8,000**

Highlight may fund events completely or in-part. Burlington City Arts disperses funds according to a contract. Please make sure your event can work within a flexible budget. Events are more likely to receive funding when the request is lower than the full \$8,000. When an event is funded, a payment totaling 75% of the award will be made on October 24, 2025, pending the submission of a complete contract and W9 by October 7, 2025. The remaining 25% will be paid on December 31, at the time of your event.

## **2. SUPPORT FROM BCA**

Highlight determines a fixed amount of consulting from BCA for each selectee. The services can be used for production, planning, permitting, booking, graphic design, copywriting, marketing, and/or communications. We will work with each applicant to determine how and where support will be most useful.

# ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

## **All Ages and 21+ events are welcome to apply.**

Applicants must demonstrate that the programming will occur within the City of Burlington and take place between December 31, 2025 and January 1, 2026.

Applicants must be a resident of the state of Vermont. If you are part of an organization, your organization must be headquartered in the state of Vermont.

Applicants must be willing and capable of submitting a signed contract stating the scope and terms of the funded project and a W-9 form to accept funding.

Applicants must be willing to meet with Highlight at our discretion to help develop and refine the proposed event.

Funding recipients must keep timely communications with Highlight and keep all parties informed of any significant changes to the event as proposed in the original application.

Recipients must make the public aware of your event and follow through on the terms of your approved marketing strategy.

Recipients must provide a high-quality image/photo to promote your event. Highlight may be able to provide design support if necessary.

Recipients must ensure that events are accessible and open to the general public.

Any promotional materials generated by the recipient must include Highlight's logo and sponsorship lock up.

Events must adhere to Highlight's inclusive ticket program. Events should not have a supplemental ticket price.

# ABOUT YOUR PROPOSAL

Please break down your proposal into the following sections:

## 1. PROJECTED BUDGET

Use the [budget template](#) to break down all incoming and outgoing financial projections (note that the linked spreadsheet is view only, so please download a copy to make your own). For example, please include information on expected costs or revenues related to:

- Catering
- Talent booking
- Art supplies
- Equipment fees
- Staff
- Partnerships
- Any and all other sources of exchange

Make sure to include the amount you are requesting (up to \$8,000) within your budget. Your budget may be larger than the requested award. Please provide a budget for the entire event, including all expenses and revenue beyond the requested award. In many venues, some production elements like sound, lighting and staging may be provided and therefore not part of a project's budget.

## 2. MARKETING STRATEGY

While Highlight will promote the festival as well as select individual events, recipients are also responsible for making the public aware of your event and for committing to your proposed marketing strategy. While we welcome and encourage your custom designs, all digital and print assets must include the Highlight logo and sponsor logo lockups, which BCA will provide upon acceptance.

## 3. LOCATION

A final list of Highlight venues is still in progress and may include ECHO, Waterfront Park, the Moran Frame, Contois Auditorium, Skinny Pancake, Foam, Vermont Comedy Club, the BCA Center, the BCA Community Room, and the FlynnSpace. This list is subject to change. All venues will be in Burlington. Please design your event with one of these venues in mind. If your application is selected, we will work with you to find the place that suits your event's best location.

# ABOUT YOUR PROPOSAL (CONT.)

## 4. ABOUT YOU AND/OR YOUR ORGANIZATION

Provide a brief background on you and/or your organization: your history and your mission. Who is your community/audience? How many people do you typically engage per year? What are the demographics of your audience or constituency? What kind of special skills, experience, or resources do you have that will ensure a successful event?

## 5. EVENT DESCRIPTION

Describe your event. How does your idea contribute to Highlight with unique social and creative value? How do you foresee the programming unfolding over the course of the event?

**YOUR DESCRIPTION SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE:**

- A title and a headline-style subtitle for your event
- A 250-1000-word description of your event, to be used for promotional purposes
- A preliminary list of the names of any performers that you expect will participate
- An estimated run-time and preferred time of day for your event

## 6. SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL (NOT REQUIRED)

Here you may include any and all other information you feel may be pertinent to your proposal. This may include attachments, media, data, references, or any number of other materials.

# REVIEW CRITERIA AND SELECTION PROCESS

**BCA, will review all proposed events. Proposals will be selected based on the following review criteria:**

**PROPOSAL QUALITY & CLARITY:** Have you been thorough and complete in your answers? Is your idea clearly communicated?

**FEASIBILITY & BUDGET:** Is the budget realistic? Do you have the team and/or other resources necessary to successfully facilitate the idea?

**CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:** Is your idea unique and forward-thinking?

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT:** Regardless of the size, events should provide a meaningful experience for participants. Are you engaging new or underserved communities/cultures? Are you connecting unique groups of people? Does your event encourage participation and offer easy accessibility? Will your event encourage support for a cause?

**PROGRAMMING IMPACTS:** Lucky for us, we often get a lot of Bright Idea submissions — many more than we can actually realize in one event. We look at the complete programming picture and consider how your Bright Idea, if it meets the conditions above, might fit into Highlight 2025. To that end, not every truly Bright Idea gets funded due to venue limitations, budget limitations and our overall programming.

# SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

Submit your proposal via email to [zwilliamson@burlingtoncityarts.org](mailto:zwilliamson@burlingtoncityarts.org). You may submit hardcopy proposals in-person to Burlington City Arts at 135 Church St, Burlington VT.

All proposals must be submitted by September 29, 2025 at 11:59 PM EST. Late submissions will not be considered.

Highlight will announce awards on October 1, 2025.

## TIMELINE

Applications will be due on **September 29, 2025**

Announcements of awards **October 1, 2025**

Completed W-9 and contract **October 7, 2025**

75% of funds available **October 14, 2025**

# FAQ

**Q:** Can multiple groups be a part of one proposal?

**A:** You may collaborate with as many people, groups, or businesses as you like, but only one person will receive and be responsible for the award.

**Q:** Can you use additional money from your business or personal budget, new and/or existing sponsorships agreements, grants, other awards, etc. for the event?

**A:** Yes, as long as these funding sources currently exist or are deemed likely to be procured within the timeframe of this project.

**Q:** What kind of sponsorships are you allowed to procure for your event?

**A:** Some Highlight sponsorships will need to be represented in your marketing materials and on-site at your events. We will all work closely to create tasteful and creative branded activations at your event that do not obstruct (and in fact complement) the look, feel, and mission of your event. You may pursue additional sponsorships for your event (sponsors you acquire will be recognized on your individual event materials only).

**Q:** Can you advertise the event on your own platforms?

**A:** Highlight strongly encourages you to self-promote your event in addition to the overall marketing campaign that Highlight will design and execute. Highlight will provide you with marketing assets that you are strongly encouraged to use in promotion. You must represent our sponsors, project partners, and Highlight itself in good fashion.

**Q:** Can you profit off your event?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** I am already planning an event or have held similar events in the past. Can my existing event become a part of Highlight?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** I would like to become a sponsor of Highlight. Where can I get more information?

**A:** Email us at [zwilliamson@burlingtoncityarts.org](mailto:zwilliamson@burlingtoncityarts.org)

**Q:** I have more questions! What do I do?

**A:** Applicants are encouraged to read through these requirements, criteria and eligibility carefully before contacting staff with questions. However, we are happy to connect with you regarding your ideas and help make them a reality. If you are unsure of the feasibility of an idea and want to check it with us before you spend a lot of time in development, that is ok too. We can't guarantee anything in advance, but we can offer insight. Direct questions to [zwilliamson@burlingtoncityarts.org](mailto:zwilliamson@burlingtoncityarts.org)



# PREVIOUSLY FUNDED BRIGHT IDEAS PROJECTS

**Some illuminating examples of funded Bright Idea Projects from years past include:**

Midnight Rodeo NYE, a unique dance party in ECHO

Big Gay New Year, an inclusive mini-festival in ECHO

Taylor Swift ERAS Tour Dance Party in Contois

Illuminated Collective's Illuminated Eve, a group LED art installation

Nightshade Kitchen's music and inventive food pairing

Mal Maiz's Nochevieja Latin music festival

Future Tactic's place-based theater performance Tarot Taxi

Front Porch Follies' local-based improv comedy

Daytime Disco, a multi-DJ afternoon dance party

Dwight & Nicole's Play the Future, a multi-performer NYE celebration

Noah Scneidman's mini indie-music fest, Spirit of NYE, which including multiple bands and visual art.

**There are plenty more ideas out there and we can't wait to hear about yours!**