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For Immediate Release

First Friday Berea Receives \$90K, Multi-Year Grant to Continue Presenting the Levitt AMP Berea Music Series through 2025

The expanded grant opportunity provides matching funds over three years bringing free outdoor concerts to Berea City Park Expansion



BEREA, September 15, 2022—The Mortimer & Mimi [Levitt Foundation](#), a social impact funder supporting nonprofits nationwide at the intersection of music and public spaces, has announced that First Friday Berea in Berea, Ky., has been awarded a multi-year Levitt AMP Grant Award of \$90K in matching funds to present a free outdoor music series at Berea City Park Expansion in 2023, 2024, and 2025. As a current Levitt Foundation grantee, First Friday Berea submitted its Levitt AMP proposal to continue its Levitt AMP Berea Music Series, which began in 2017.

The [Levitt AMP Grant Awards](#) is an exciting, multi-year matching grant opportunity bringing the joy of free, live music to towns and cities with a population of up to 250,000 people. For the 2023–2025 grant cycle, the Levitt Foundation expanded the Levitt AMP program from an annual matching grant of \$25K into a three-year matching grant of \$30K per year, for a total grant award of \$90K. In May, the Levitt Foundation invited current grantees to reapply and submit proposals that would reflect the **three goals of the Levitt AMP Awards: Amplify** community pride and a city’s unique character; enrich lives through the power of free, live **Music**; and illustrate the importance of inclusive and vibrant public **Places**. All 18 returning Levitt AMP grantees were awarded \$90K matching grants each to present the Levitt AMP Music Series in 2023-2025, reflecting a total grant

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award of \$1.62 million.

In addition to returning grantees, the Levitt Foundation will award up to 10 additional U.S. nonprofits a total of \$900K to bring the Levitt AMP Music Series to their communities. Following an open call for applicant submissions in June, the new Levitt AMP grant recipients will be announced on November 15, 2022.

Since 2015, the Levitt Foundation has provided funding to 38 communities across America through the Levitt AMP program, activating underused outdoor public spaces, ensuring access to the arts, and strengthening the social fabric of communities through creative placemaking. Levitt AMP concerts are intended to create inclusive experiences, where all members of the community are welcome to participate and enjoy a diverse lineup of artists, music genres, and cultural programming.

"Emerging from the pandemic, we have all witnessed the importance of community and connection on our well-being, and free, live music in public spaces is a powerful way to bring people together of all ages and backgrounds. Expanding the Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Awards into a multi-year, \$90K grant and inviting additional towns and cities into the program was inspired in part by the positive impact First Friday Berea is having on the local community," says Sharon Yazowski, Executive Director of the Levitt Foundation. "We look forward to the continued impact of the Levitt AMP Berea Music Series, which has brought new life into the Old Town Artisan Village district while celebrating this college town's abolitionist roots, fostering a more unified community."

From Main Street communities to rural towns in the heart of Appalachia to historic state capitals, the 18 returning Levitt AMP grant recipients hail from across the country including rural towns with populations of less than 10,000 like Whitesburg, Ky.; Galva, Ill.; Earlham, Iowa; Shenandoah Junction, W.Va.; Soldotna, Alaska; St. Johnsbury, Vt.; and Middlesboro, Ky.*; to mid-sized cities like Berea, Ky.; Carson City, Nev.; Gallup, N.M.; Ocala, Fla.; Sheboygan, Wis.*; Stevens Point, Wis.; Utica, N.Y.; and Woonsocket, R.I.; to larger cities spanning the country including Fort Smith, Ark.; Springfield, Ill.; and Trenton, N.J.*

Berea, Kentucky (population: 15,773)

Since 2017, the Levitt AMP Berea Music Series, presented by First Friday Berea, has infused new life and energy into the city's City Park Expansion through multi-layered and inclusive arts experiences. The 2023 series will continue to spark further investment in the area, positioning Old Town to be a family-friendly destination for art, food, and community gatherings.

Carson City, Nevada (population: 55,244)

Since 2016, the Levitt AMP Carson City Music Series, presented by the Brewery Arts Center, has fostered an exciting chapter of growth and community engagement for the arts hub and surrounding historic downtown area of Nevada's state capital. The upcoming series will further solidify the Brewery Arts Center's role in building community cohesion and local pride during the Levitt AMP Music Series and beyond.

Earlham, Iowa (population: 1,382)

Since 2019, the Levitt AMP Earlham Music Series, presented by Chicks with Checks, has been fueling a community-driven effort to create a vibrant, music-filled destination in rural Iowa. Next year's summer series will continue fostering inclusivity and connectedness in Earlham and throughout the surrounding areas, located a short distance from the state's capital, Des Moines.

Fort Smith, Arkansas (population: 87,788)

Since 2021, the Levitt AMP Fort Smith Music Series, presented by 64.6 Downtown, has been breathing new life into an outdoor amphitheater in the heart of this former frontier town. While bringing attention to a beautiful, underused public space, next year's series will continue to use free, live music as a vehicle to strengthen the social and economic fabric of this former manufacturing hub.

Gallup, New Mexico (population: 21,637)

Since 2021, the Levitt AMP Gallup Music Series, presented by the Gallup MainStreet Arts & Cultural District, has celebrated the city's large Native community while fostering civic pride and reinvigorating the local arts scene. Next summer, Gallup MainStreet will build upon community efforts to nurture a positive and inclusive community identity while fostering civic pride.

Galva, Illinois (population: 2,539)

Since 2018, the Levitt AMP Galva Music Series, presented by the Galva Arts Council, has inspired community-driven investment in the rural town's local creative economy, transforming Wiley Park from an underused green space into a dynamic hub complete with a permanent stage for connectedness and self-expression. Next year's series will continue to inspire local collaborations that go beyond the music series.

Middlesboro, Kentucky (population: 9,242)*

Since 2015, the Levitt AMP Middlesboro Music Series, presented by Middlesboro Main Street, has transformed a once vacant gravel lot into a vibrant gathering space and regional music destination in the heart of the Appalachia. The upcoming season will build upon this momentum, augmenting the community-driven revival of Middlesboro's downtown, positioning the series for a wider impact through robust partnerships with local and regional nonprofits.

Ocala, Florida (population: 60,021)

Since 2017, the Levitt AMP Ocala Music Series, presented by the Marion Cultural Alliance, has inspired an exciting new chapter for the historic Webb Field, a once-forgotten green space that has now become a vital part of West Ocala's cultural and economic development. The 2023 series will continue to deepen local partnerships to create inclusive multi-layered arts experiences that amplify 'One Ocala'.

Sheboygan, Wisconsin (population: 48,153)*

Since 2015, the Levitt AMP Sheboygan Music Series has sparked myriad ripple effects in this Wisconsin town, including the creation of City Green public space, an outdoor permanent stage,

mixed-use residential housing, and new citywide cultural events. Presented by the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, the upcoming season will continue fostering opportunities for creative exchanges between artists and the public, while creating a stronger, more connected community.

Shenandoah Junction, West Virginia (population: 1,382)

Since 2021, Levitt AMP Shenandoah Junction Music Series, presented by Jefferson County Parks and Recreation, has elevated and expanded Sam Michael’s Park’s existing concert series, bringing together people from surrounding rural communities to enjoy stellar music in the lush 130-acre park. The returning series in 2023 will help the previously underused amphitheater, aka “the AMP,” realize its potential as a welcoming music-filled destination for local residents.

Soldotna, Alaska (population: 4,705)

Since 2019, the Levitt AMP Soldotna Music Series, presented by Vision Soldotna, has enlivened Soldotna Creek Park along the banks of the famed Kenai River, celebrating the community-driven effort that transformed a once contaminated maintenance yard into a vibrant gathering space for people of all ages and backgrounds. In 2023, the Levitt AMP Music Series will continue to honor the rich heritage of Soldotna’s diverse communities, including Alaska Natives.

Springfield, Illinois (population: 167,601)

Since 2019, the Levitt AMP Springfield Music Series, presented by the Downtown Springfield Heritage Foundation, has ushered in a lively new era for the state capital’s historic downtown, transforming the formerly vacant “Y-block” into a community destination. The Levitt AMP grant will continue to unify the city by gathering residents from all walks of life to enjoy free, live music and build a shared vision for this long-dormant public space.

St. Johnsbury, Vermont (population: 5,815)

Since 2017, the Levitt AMP St. Johnsbury Music Series, presented by Catamount Arts, has become a cornerstone of the summer recreation and community building efforts in this scenic rural community in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom. The 2023 music series will continue to energize the town’s lush, 150-acre Dog Mountain, bringing opportunities to deepen relationships with residents, artists, and downtown businesses, and continue building a thriving local economy.

Stevens Point, Wisconsin (population: 26,144)

Since 2017, the Levitt AMP Stevens Point Music Series, presented by CREATE Portage County, has re-framed the story of small-town Midwestern living by elevating the local creative economy. Making the picturesque Pfiffner Pioneer Park its home, the upcoming music series will continue to shape the future of the city’s downtown and riverfront while fostering a stronger and more connected community, inspiring meaningful shared arts experiences in downtown Stevens Point.

Trenton, New Jersey (population: 83,387)*

Since 2015, the Levitt AMP Trenton Music Series, presented by the Trenton Downtown Association, has infused downtown Trenton with diverse music inspiring residents of all ages and backgrounds to gather in Mill Hill Park to enjoy multilayered arts experiences in the heart of the historic capital city. The 2023 series will build upon past efforts to nurture the creative economy of this former industrial hub, celebrating the past, while creating a vibrant new future.

Utica, New York (population: 59,984)

Since 2016, Utica Monday Nite has presented the Levitt AMP Utica Music Series, positioning the city’s cultural assets at the center of its community-building efforts. Creating a safe and welcoming gathering place for the scenic Rust Belt city’s long-time residents and diverse refugee communities, the 2023 series will continue to build a stronger, more unified community, while inspiring investments in Oneida Square’s Kopernik Park and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Whitesburg, Kentucky (population: 2,215)

Since 2017, the Levitt AMP Whitesburg Music Series has sparked new energy and engagement with local shops, restaurants, art galleries, and the city’s farmers market, creating a thriving gathering place where community members come together through a shared affinity for live music. Presented by the Cowan Community Center, the upcoming series will bring a wide range of world-class talent to this rural Appalachian town and foster connections for a stronger and healthier community.

Woonsocket, Rhode Island (population: 41,616)

Since 2018, the Levitt AMP Woonsocket Music Series, presented by NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley, has ushered in a new chapter for River Island Art Park in the heart of the city, inspiring catalytic cultural, social, and economic growth. The fifth season will continue to spark renewed life for the once underused green space, new collaborations with neighborhood groups, and inspire new businesses.

**Previous multi-year grantee continuing series*

Up to 10 additional first-time grant recipients, from among U.S.-based nonprofits who applied to the Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Awards in June, will be announced on November 15, 2022. Reflecting the Foundation’s commitment that all Levitt projects be community-driven, the grantees will be selected following a public voting process that takes places September 12–21, 2022; the public can vote and learn more about the 36 community proposals at levitt.org/vote. Combining new and returning Levitt AMP grantees, the Levitt Foundation is investing over \$2.5 million over the next three years to bring free concerts to 28 communities across the U.S. as part of the Levitt AMP Music Series, featuring a diverse lineup of high-caliber entertainment while building community through music.

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About the Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation

The Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation is a private family foundation that exists to strengthen the social fabric of America. Through its commitment to creative placemaking, the Levitt Foundation supports the activation of underused public spaces—such as neglected parks, vacant downtown lots, and former brownfields—into welcoming, inclusive destinations where the power of free, live music brings people together to create more equitable, healthy and thriving communities. The

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Returning Grantees Received 2023–2025 Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Award

Foundation’s primary funding areas include Levitt venues and the Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Awards. Both of these programs present free concerts in outdoor, open lawn settings featuring high-caliber talent in a broad array of music genres and cultural programming. Levitt venues and Levitt AMP concert sites attract people of all ages and backgrounds and reflect the character of their town or city, while benefiting from the framework and best practices of the Levitt program.

Returning Grantees Receive 2023–2025 Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Award

The Levitt Foundation invests in community-driven efforts that harness the power of partnerships and leverage community engagement. Levitt venue nonprofits and AMP grantees partner with other local nonprofits and community groups to inform programming, outreach and engagement, embodying the Foundation’s funding philosophy and core values to support projects that are inclusive, catalytic and dynamic, and create connectedness and joy. Reflecting its ongoing commitment to self-reflection and contributing to the creative placemaking field, the Levitt Foundation invests in research to evaluate the social impact of Levitt programs in communities, which in turn informs the Foundation’s evolving philanthropic practice. Learn more: levitt.org and follow us @levittfoundation on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and @levittfdn on [Twitter](#).