2025 Grant Guidelines

Annual Grants

Rama Vaidyanathan and company, *'New Dimensions to the Margam'* (2022). MATCH, Houston, TX. Courtesy of Indian Performing Arts Samskriti.

CITY OF HOUSTON · TEXAS

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alliance

2025 Grant Guidelines

Annual Grants

Contents

About Houston Arts Alliance (HAA)

Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) is a local arts and culture organization whose principal work is to implement the City of Houston's vision, values, and goals for its arts grantmaking and civic art investments.

HAA's work is conducted through contracts with the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA). HAA also executes privately funded special projects to meet the needs of the arts community, such as disaster preparation, research on the state of the arts in Houston, and temporary public art projects, which vitalize neighborhoods. Several initiatives help HAA realize its purpose to support the arts landscape in Houston.

The City of Houston provides all funds for HAA's competitive Grant Programs. Funds are sourced from the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT), which supports arts and cultural programming that is accessible to the Houston community and its visitors created by individual artists and creatives, 501(c)(3) nonprofits, and fiscally sponsored programs. For more information on HOT funding, visit the **HAA website**. Artists and creatives include but are not limited to musicians, visual artists, performing artists, textile artists, digital artists, conservation artists, and creative entrepreneurs such as hairstylists, make-up artists, nail techs, gallerists, writers, photographers, and arts administrators.

This document is a comprehensive guide that provides prospective applicants with the information needed to apply for 2025 grants from the Houston Arts Alliance. It includes unique sections dedicated to each of the following programs:

— Support for Artists and Creative Individuals

— Festivals

— Support for Organizations

Information common to all programs can be found on page 6. All applicants are strongly encouraged to read both common information and program-specific information in these guidelines. Instructions for all City-funded grant opportunities, except for the City's Initiative and Let Creativity Happen, can be found within this document. More details on the City's Initiative and Let Creativity Happen! grant programs are available on the **HAA website**.

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Which Grant Program is Right for Me?

2025 Support for Artists and Creative Individuals

For individual artists and creatives

Award amount: Up to $15,000

Opens: June 17, 2024

Deadline: 11:59 p.m. CDT on July 26, 2024

Applicants are notified of results in December 2024.

Funds are provided from cash in hand.

Length of grant: January 1–December 31, 2025

2025 Festivals

For 501(c)(3) organizations and fiscally sponsored programs

Award amount: Up to $10,000

Opens: June 17, 2024

Deadline: 11:59 p.m. CDT on July 26, 2024

Applicants are notified of results in December 2024

Funds are provided from cash in hand.

Length of grant: January 1–December 31, 2025

2025 Support for Organizations

For 501(c)(3) organizations and fiscally sponsored projects

Award amount: Up to $125,000 for Category 1; up to $62,500 for Category 2; up to $1 million for Category 3

Opens: June 17, 2024

Deadline: 11:59 p.m. CDT on July 26, 2024

Applicants are notified of results in December 2024.

Grant amounts will be awarded based on projected HOT funding and may be revised if tax receipts are not realized.

Length of grant: January 1–December 31, 2025

What Else Do I Need to Know?

Every individual and organization who is considering applying for an HAA grant should read pages 6–21, in addition to the section pertaining to their specific competitive grant program.

All applicants and grantees will be subjected to the processes and requirements detailed in these pages.

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I Would Like More Assistance/Quisiera Más Asistencia

The HAA Grants Team provides full application support via informational workshops, scheduled meetings, phone calls, and email when requests or questions are submitted.

— Spanish language assistance is available upon request, and HAA grants staff are available to provide technical assistance to people with disabilities. If you have any questions or need assistance, please email through the **Support Desk** or call Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. CDT, 713-527-9330.

— Asistencia en español está disponible a petición. El equipo de subvenciones está disponible para proveer asistencia técnica a personas con discapacidades. Si tiene alguna pregunta o necesita ayuda, envíe un correo electrónico a **Support Desk** o llame de lunes a viernes, 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. CDT, 713-527-9330.

— Workshops include instructions for applying and information on writing a competitive application. **Workshop schedules and registration information** are on the HAA website.

— To request a meeting or ask questions, email the Grants Team through the **Support Desk** or call 713-527-9330, ext. 6. Support Desk messages are monitored by several staff to ensure a quicker and more thorough response.

— All grant notifications are sent solely via email to the applicant and/or the application's primary grant contact designated in the HAA Online Grants Portal.

— On deadline dates, the HAA Grants Team is only available for technical assistance with online application technology due to the volume of calls, **Support Desk** inquiries, and emails.

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Information Common to All Grants Applications

All applicants agree to the following processes and grantmaking structures prior to applying. Details specific to each grant program follow this section.

Elizabeth A. M. Keel, *'Moving Myths'* (2022). Photograph by Lynn Lane. Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Houston, TX. Courtesy of Houston Contemporary Dance.

Grants Funded by Cash in Hand vs. Projections

Grants Funded by Cash in Hand
Based on community input requesting greater stability, Festivals and Support for Artists and Creative Individuals (SACI) grant programs are awarded based on existing funds (cash in hand) and not from projected income. This practice helps guarantee grant amounts with certainty.

Grants Funded by Projected Income
Support for Organizations grants are awarded based on projected income. Projected income is subject to mid-year changes in amounts, contingent on the economic performance of the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). Grant amounts for Support for Organizations have a guaranteed share of HOT, which is estimated at a dollar amount; however, these dollar amounts are not guaranteed. Support for Organizations grantees will sign contracts that reflect that projected amounts may not be provided if tax receipts are not realized by the city.

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Information Common to All Grants Applications

Exact grant amounts for Support for Organizations grantees are subject to economic fluctuations, such as those globally and locally experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other natural disasters and Acts of God. For example, in the 2020 grant year, HOT experienced a 42% reduction from original projected amounts. Actual HOT amounts are unknown to HAA until the funding is deposited by the City of Houston into HAA accounts. HAA distributes these funds to contracted grantees two weeks after the City deposit.

HAA encourages all applicants and grantees to remain in contact with HAA to discuss scope of work and budgeting concerns. HAA is here to help troubleshoot ideas and check if any changes in scope of work conflict with grantees' contracts or these guidelines. You can share information, ask questions, or request a meeting at any time by email through the **Support Desk**.

Babatunde and Friends, *'Village Wordsmith'* (2023). SAID Institute, Houston, TX. Courtesy of the artist.

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Application Checklist & Process

Where to apply

Grants Portal

Applications must be submitted online through the **HAA Online Grants Portal**.

Application Eligibility Checklist

Requirements

Individuals	Organizations Fiscal Sponsors
Proof of Age	Proof of Headquarters
Proof of Residency	501(C)(3) Tax-Exempt Status
Work Samples	Work Samples
Public Presentation	Public Presentation
One Grant Program per Project	One Grant Program per Project
One application per Grant Program	One application per Grant Program
Applications submitted by Deadline	Applications submitted by Deadline

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Application Checklist & Process

Who can apply

Eligibility

Requirements

— All applicants must provide official documentation demonstrating a physical address within the City of Houston limits which is verified by HAA staff through the **online Council Member verify mapping tool**. P.O. Boxes are not accepted. Details about documentation can be found in the required documentation section on page 14 of this document.

— Organizations or fiscal sponsors must be tax-exempt under the Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), as verified by the **IRS Tax Exemption Organization Search**.

— An individual applicant must be at least 18 years old, which will be verified by the applicant's submission of an official state-issued identification card, passport, or other official document.

— Applicants' scopes of work must have a clear public presentation component, verified by staff review of the application.

— Applicants may submit only one application for each individual grant program. In other words, applicants cannot send multiple applications to the same grant program.

— Applicants cannot use the same project proposal to apply to more than one grant program. Applicants should decide which grant program best aligns with their project goals and apply to that specific program.

— If your project is awarded, that specific project cannot be funded again. Sequential projects or a series of related projects, with unique attributes, features, or iterations, are eligible provided that subsequent applications do not replicate the content or objectives of previous submissions.

For Fiscally Sponsored Projects

A fiscally sponsored "project" is an individual, collective, etc., that does not have the federal IRS tax-exempt status required to apply for organization grants and has entered into a fiscal sponsorship agreement with a 501(c)(3) organization to be eligible.

The fiscally sponsored project, once registered as an organization in the HAA Grants Portal and has started a new application, will need to attach their fiscal sponsor's profile to their application.

1. When the application is in draft and edit mode, select "Associated Organizations" in the menu on the left side of the screen.

2. Search for your fiscal sponsor's organization in the search bar, then select the role as Fiscal Sponsor.

3. Click Save Draft.

Requirements

All fiscal sponsors and their fiscally sponsored projects must adhere to the following requirements in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements above. (Individuals are not required to have fiscal sponsorship for this grant program.)

— The individual applicant or collective seeking fiscal sponsorship and the fiscal sponsor must demonstrate residency and/or headquarters within the City of Houston limits.

— The Sponsor's Board of Directors must adhere to the highest standards of legal and fiduciary responsibility regarding its policy-making and governance of the organization.

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Application Checklist & Process

— The Sponsor's Board must pass a resolution approving the fiscal sponsorship arrangement, as expressed in the written agreement, with the Project.

— The Sponsor must have a conflict of interest policy in place that contemplates conflicts with sponsored Projects and their leadership and provides clear direction for vetting potential conflicts and otherwise implementing the policy.

— The Sponsor must maintain sufficient financial resources to assure continuous, uninterrupted operation and employ procedures and internal controls based on Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and all regulations.

— The Sponsor must evaluate the capability, potential, experience, and integrity of Project leaders to assure a constructive, mutually respected working relationship between the Sponsor and the Project.

— The Sponsor may only charge Projects reasonable fees commensurate with the services it will provide. Further:

  — If the Sponsor is re-granting funds to the Project and not providing additional services, the overhead fee may not exceed 7% of the City grant if awarded.

  — If the Sponsor is re-granting funds to the Project and providing additional services, such as accounting or administration, the overhead fee may not exceed 15% of the City grant if awarded.

Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya, *'Find Hope Here'* (detail) (2022). Asia Society Texas Center, Houston, TX. Acrylic latex on panel. 18' x 36'

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Public Presentation

During the grant cycle, one in-person event or one live, virtual presentation is required. In-person events must be open to the general public, taking place within City of Houston city limits. The applicant must identify the publicly accessible in-person space or live virtual event in their application.

JuJu Strolling Thru, *"Barnstorm Dance Fest"* (2022). Photograph by Lynn Lane. MATCH, Houston TX. Courtesy of Dance Source Houston.

Public presentations may be ticketed, but they cannot exclude the public or limit who may be a member of the audience. If the event has limited capacity, everyone must have equal access or opportunity to attend on a first come, first serve basis. Examples of the types of events these grants support include art exhibitions, film screenings, music, dance, and theater performances, online arts programming, literary readings and publications, local arts festivals, and other activities. Examples of live virtual events include livestreamed concerts or performances, virtual artist talks, virtual Q&A's and other activities.

A nonprofit organization whose primary mission is not the public presentation or exhibition of art and culture should focus their grant application on the public facing arts programs they are proposing. It may be helpful to provide context on how the arts programming fits into the primary programming of the organization.

Nonprofit organizations or applicants whose primary programming takes place in K–12 schools or is arts education focused must have a public–facing arts program open to the general public. Public programming can be geared toward youth audiences but must be accessible to everyone.

The applicant will be solely responsible for securing the necessary permits, permissions, insurance, and approvals for any proposal that requires City permits or clearances, including, but not limited to, publicly installed art, street closures, sound amplification in public space, or murals.

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What May Not Be Funded

City grant funds may not support the following:

Program during *"Amoako Boafo: Soul of Black Folks"* (2022). Photograph by Victoria Nguyen. Courtesy of Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

— Any activities taking place outside of the City of Houston limits, including those in outlying suburbs. Your program location must be represented by a Houston city council member, verified through the online Council Member verify mapping tool. All funded activities must take place within City of Houston city limits.

— Activities must take place within the respective grant term. Grants cannot be applied to programs outside of the grant term.

— Any activities funded by Miller Outdoor Theatre, which is also supported by the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT), as applicants may not duplicate funding support from HOT for the same program.

— City of Houston employees, elected officials, Mayor's Office staff, and their immediate family.

— Houston Arts Alliance employees, Board members, and their immediate family.

— Grants to K–12 public, private, or charter schools.

— Educational programs such as workshops or youth education programs. If you are applying as an arts educational program, your application should center around the public presentation of your programming that is open to the general public.

— Events with exclusive audiences that do not allow participation of the general public, such as "21 and up" events or programming, youth specific programming or gender specific programming.

— Competitions, award ceremonies, scholarships, cash prizes, fundraising activities and events, sports and recreation activities, or parties and private celebrations.

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What May Not Be Funded

— Trade fairs, events of primarily commercial nature, or consumer shows. For-profit entities may not apply directly. For-profit applicants may apply through fiscal sponsorship with a 501(c)(3) organization. The fiscal sponsor must identify a clear charitable purpose and public benefit with the proposed programming.

— Faith-based organizations using funds for any activities that have a primarily religious purpose or any activities that exist as part of religious sermons or services.

— Organizations and/or individual applicants cannot use the same project proposal to apply to more than one grant program. If your project is awarded, that specific project cannot be funded again.

— Organizations and/or individual applicants collaborating on the same program or project cannot separately apply for support to fund this collaborative program. This includes:

    — Multiple submissions from different applicants for the same program.

    — Multiple submissions to the same grant program from the same organization or individual applicant.

Specific expenses not permitted include:
— Travel outside of the City of Houston.

— Deficits, loans, interest on loans, fines, penalties, or cost of litigation.

— Professional development training for the applicant, such as classes, coaching, conferences, or workshops

— The purchase of a single material or equipment item exceeding $250, except rental costs directly affiliated with the funded project.

— Capital expenses such as the purchase of property or land, building construction or renovation, or landscape adaptations.

— Meals, refreshments, and catering expenses.

Required Documents

The following documents are required of applicants. Both SACI and fiscally sponsored programs have one additional document, outlined below.

Proof of Age

An individual applicant must be at least 18 years old, which will be verified by applicant submission of an official state-issued identification card, passport, or other official document.

Individuals

Requirement:
Individual applicants must provide proof of age. Applicants must be 18 years or older to apply.

Acceptable documents include:
— A photo ID such as a Texas driver license or Texas identification card, unexpired or expired within the last two years.

— Valid, unexpired U.S. passport book or U.S. passport card.

— U.S. Certificate of Citizenship or Certificate of Naturalization with identifiable photo (N-550, N-560, N-561, N-570, N-578)

— Unexpired U.S. military identification card for active duty, reserve, or retired personnel w/ identifiable photo.

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Required Documents

Proof of Residence in the City of Houston

Individuals

Applicants will submit paperwork demonstrating a physical address in the City of Houston limits, which is verified by staff through the online Council Member mapping tool. P.O. Boxes are not accepted, as they do not establish residency or headquarters within the City of Houston limits. P.O. Boxes are allowed to be obtained by any individual inside or outside the City of Houston limits. All applicants must upload a current image of official documentation, such as utility or insurance, that includes a visible City of Houston address with the applicant or organization name.

Verification Tool: Who Is My Council Member
Maps: 2020 to 2024 Council District Maps

Requirement:
Individual artists and creatives must provide current calendar year proof of residency within the City of Houston limits.

Acceptable documents include:

— Texas driver license or Texas identification card, unexpired

— U.S. Certificate of Citizenship or Certificate of Naturalization with identifiable photo (N–550, N–560, N–561, N–570, N–578).

— Unexpired U.S. military identification card for active duty, reserve, or retired personnel w/ identifiable photo.

— Current deed, mortgage, or a residential rental/lease.

— Current insurance policy or statement.

— Current Bank Statement.

— Utility bill or residential mail dated within 2024 calendar year. Examples include electric, water, gas, Internet, cable, telephone bills.

— Mail, dated within 2024 calendar year, from a government entity addressed to the individual.

Required Documents

Proof of Headquarters in the City of Houston

Applicants will submit paperwork demonstrating a physical address in the City of Houston limits, which is verified by staff through the online Council Member mapping tool. P.O. Boxes are not accepted, as they do not establish residency or headquarters within the City of Houston limits. P.O. Boxes are allowed to be obtained by any individual inside or outside the City of Houston limits. All applicants must upload a current image of official documentation, such as utility or insurance, that includes a visible City of Houston address with the applicant or organization name.

Verification Tool: Who Is My Council Member
Maps: 2020 to 2024 Council District Maps

Organizations

Requirement:
Organization applicants must provide proof of headquarters within the City of Houston limits with current calendar year documentation addressed to the organization by name.

Acceptable documents include:
— Current deed, mortgage, or a residential rental/lease

— Current insurance policy or statement

— Current Bank Statement

— Utility bill or residential mail dated within 2024 calendar year. Examples include electric, water, gas, Internet, cable, telephone bills.

— Mail, dated within 2024 calendar year, from a government entity addressed to the organization.

Fiscal Sponsors

Requirement:
Fiscal sponsors must provide proof of headquarters within the City of Houston limits. The sponsored applicant (individual or collective) must provide current proof of residency within the City of Houston limits.

Acceptable documents include:
— Current deed, mortgage, or a commercial rental/lease.

— Current insurance policy or statement.

— Current Bank Statement.

— Utility bill or residential mail dated within 2024 calendar year. Examples include electric, water, gas, Internet, cable, telephone bills.

— Mail, dated within 2024 calendar year, from a government entity addressed to the fiscal sponsor.

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Required Documents

Work Samples

Individuals   **Organizations**   **Fiscal Sponsors**

Applicants must upload documentation of their work meant to demonstrate consistent and confident proficiency in the proposed project or applicant's body of work. Applicants may include up to five individual image or audio files and up to five PDFs , not to exceed a file size of 100MB each. Applicants are encouraged to include text descriptions to help panelists understand work samples.

Work Sample Submission Guidelines

— PDFs: Submit images; links for audio or video samples with any passwords; fiction or nonfiction manuscripts; other literary samples; and articles, reviews, and sample publications, such as PDF documents not exceeding 10 pages.

— Images: Submit images as .jpg or .png files.

— Audio or video samples: Submit files as .mp3, .mp4, or .mov files.

Additional Documents

Individuals   **Organizations**   **Fiscal Sponsors**

W-9 and ACH forms are for contracts and payment processing if the applicant becomes a grant recipient.

Fiscal Sponsors

All fiscally sponsored applicants must upload a copy of the fiscal sponsorship agreement.

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Financial Reporting Required for Organizations

The application must meet one of three financial reporting requirements:

— **Organizations and fiscally sponsored programs who have at least one year of financial history** must generate and submit a Funder Report from third-party financial reporting platform SMU DataArts, and the sponsored program must complete a program-specific budget within the application.

— **Fiscally sponsored programs with no previous financial history** must submit the budget table in the online application, and the fiscal sponsor should submit the Funder Report.

— **First-year organizations with no previous financial history, or that have an IRS tax exemption less than one year old,** must submit a budget table in the online application.

Contact HAA grants staff if you are unable to submit a Funder Report from third-party financial reporting platform SMU DataArts.

SMU DataArts Required Documents

Support for Organizations, Categories 1, 2, 3, and *Festivals* applicants must complete a Cultural Data Profile (CDP) for the fiscal year ending in 2023. While only one CDP is required, the platform will share with HAA three years of data, if available.

SMU DataArts uniformly collects data about arts organizations' finances and programs. This uniformity allows

Amanda Pascali, *'The Other Side: Bringing to Light the Stories of Immigrants in Houston'* through Fresh Arts' 2022 Space Taking Artist Residency program. Courtesy of Fresh Arts.

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Financial Reporting Required for Organizations

for useful data analysis about the field—locally and nationally. The Cultural Data Profile (CDP) is the platform's flagship service. It enables organizations to view trends in its history and benchmark against peers through reliable and comprehensive data on the arts in Houston. To learn more about SMU DataArts and to get familiar with the SMU DataArts platform, you can watch this **orientation video**. You can also sign up for a free live orientation webinar on the **SMU DataArts calendar**.

— The CDP must be in "complete" status, meaning that it has cleared the system error check. The error check compares the information you have entered across the entire CDP and ensures that your financial and non-financial information is consistent across all sections. If you receive an error, it must be addressed for the survey to be marked complete. You may address the errors as you enter data, or wait until the end of your data-entry process and click on the "Check and Complete" button in the upper right corner of the screen. This will generate a complete list of errors so that you may address them all at once. If an error occurs that you believe is not applicable to your organization, please call the Support Center at 877-707-3282.

— If the organization's primary mission is not arts- or culture-centric, the organization will **only enter data for the arts and cultural project** and will classify themselves as an entity under a parent organization. This rule applies to organizations such as senior centers, community development corporations, human services organizations, and others. If you are not sure if your organization is an entity under a parent organization, you can find out more from **this SMU DataArts knowledge base article**.

— The data you entered into the CDP is also used in the assessment of review criteria for *Support for Organizations* applicants.

City-funded grant awards are calculated by an organization's operating expenses, less in-kind expenses;

therefore, it is essential that you enter in-kind expenses correctly. You can refer to this SMU DataArts knowledge base article: **What are in-kind contributions, and how do I record them in the Data Profile?** Additionally, SMU DataArts offers a free short webinar: **Revenue, Part 1: Demystifying Earned, Contributed, In-Kind, and Non-operating Revenue**.

To Generate a Funder Report:

1. Gather **relevant financial materials**, **programmatic materials**, **and staff information**. If you are an entity under a parent, please refer to this **article on how to enter your data**.

2. Login and create a **Cultural Data Profile** for the fiscal year ending in 2023 in your DataArts account.

3. Review your data and generate the City of Houston Funder Report by **following these steps**. Please be sure to generate the Funder Report for the grant program to which your organization is applying.

4. Once you have generated the Funder Report for the City of Houston, HAA grants staff will be able to retrieve the report within the SMU DataArts platform. You do not need to attach the PDF Funder Report to your application, but we recommend you save it for your records.

5. Important to note: If you make any changes to your Funder Report after it has been generated and submitted in the HAA Grants Portal, you will have to re-generate the report for the City of Houston to make it available again.

For additional information about completing the Cultural Data Profile (CDP) and generating a Funder Report, email the SMU DataArts Support Center at **help@culturaldata.org**, or call 1-877-707-3282, Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. CDT.

Financial Reporting Required for Organizations

Using the Budget Table

Who uses the Budget Table

— *Support for Organizations,* Category 2, applicants with less than one year of financial history and/or 501(c)(3) IRS tax exemption

— All fiscally sponsored applicants

— All *Festivals* and *Support for Artists* and *Creative Individuals* applicants

How to Use the Budget Table

Use the income and expenses table to report the full cost of your proposed arts and cultural programming. If recommended for funding, the award amounts will follow the guidelines for the specific grant program to which the applicant applies.

Income Section: In this section, you will add all of your funding sources, including the amount you are requesting in your grant application. In Row 1, "Contributed – City of Houston," list your request under the "Amount of Request" column. In Rows 2–9, you will list other funding sources under the "Other Funds" column. The columns will automatically calculate the sum, which will appear in the row labeled "Total."

Expenses Section: In this section, you will list out all of your expenses for the program.

— In the "Amount of Request" column, you should only list the expenses that will be covered by the City grant.

— Be sure to review the What May Not be Funded section on pages 9–11 of the grant guidelines to ensure only eligible expenses are listed under this column.

— In the "Other Funds" column, you should list all other expenses that will be covered by other funding sources. The columns will automatically calculate the sum, which will appear in the row labeled "Total."

Description Column: Use the description text box in each row to provide additional details about the income or expense line item.

Support for Organizations, Category 2 applicants who have less than one year of financial history or less than one year being a 501(c)(3) IRS tax-exempt organization will be prompted to respond to these additional questions for grants staff to perform the objective financial assessment.

1. What are the total assets as of June 30, 2022?

2. What are the total liabilities as of June 30, 2022?

3. What are the total budgeted expenses for the entity for the year?

4. What are the total budgeted fundraising expenses for the entity for the year?

5. What are the total budgeted program expenses for the entity for the year?

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Financial Reporting Required for Organizations

Income

Source	Description	Amount Request	Other Funds
Contributed: City of Houston	HAA Grant	$10,000	
Contributed: Foundations	Houston Endowment		$500
Contribute: Corporations	Texas Commission on the Arts		$500
Contributed: In-kind donations	Donations		$1,000
Contributed: Government			
Contributed: Other			
Earned: Admission			
Earned: Classes/Workshops			
Earned: Other			
Total		**$10,000**	**$2,000**

Expenses

Source	Description	Amount Request	Other Funds
Marketing Expenses	How to Market an Event	$1,000	$250
Artistic Personnel	Artist Fees	$5,000	$500
Administrative Personnel	Admin Salaries	$3,000	
Technical Personnel	Technical Personnel		$250
Production Expenses	Production Expenses	$1,000	$1,000
Other Expenses			
Total		**$10,000**	**$2,000**

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Review Process

Applications received by Houston Arts Alliance undergo a multi-step review process, as follows.

'The Flow: A Night of Monologues' during "Fade to Black Play Festival" (2023). MATCH, Houston, TX. Courtesy of Shabach Enterprise.

1. HAA Staff Verify Eligibility

Applications are reviewed by HAA grants staff to verify eligibility, application completeness, public presentation requirements, and scores of objective criteria through the process detailed below.

Completeness

All required documents and application fields must be completed to be considered for funding. Any applications with missing or incorrect documentation will be notified for rectification. Staff will notify those applicants with missing/incorrect documentation via email. All grant notifications are sent solely via email to the applicant and/or the application's primary grant contact designated in the HAA Online Grants Portal. The email notification will provide applicants with the opportunity to cure the missing or incorrect documentation within four business days from the notification date. Applicants may only be prompted to cure the following:

— Illegible or outdated proof of age documentation

— Illegible or outdated proof of residency documentation

— Financial assessment documentation

    — Incorrect SMU DataArts Funder Report grant program

    — Missing financial statements (audits or CFO letters)

Applications will not be reopened to correct narratives, work samples, responses to questions, or budget tables. No information will be accepted after the curing deadline as indicated in the notification email. Those who fail to submit correct documentation within the allotted time frame will be ineligible and will not be considered for funding. Any concerns regarding eligibility determination must be resolved following the grants appeals guidelines, which may be requested at any time through the **Support Desk** or call 713-527-9330, ext. 6.

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Review Process

Objective Criteria

— Programs Inclusivity: *In the Festivals and Support for Organizations* categories, staff will verify specific reference to a commitment to historically underserved communities within the organization's mission via the organization's IRS filing (990/990N).

— Payments to Artists: *In Support for Artists and Creative Individuals*, staff will verify evidence of payment to artists and creatives using the application budget. In *Festivals* and *Support for Organizations*, staff will verify using the DataArts Funder Report and application budget.

— Stewardship of Public Resource: In the *Support for Organizations* categories, staff will verify scores using the DataArts Funder Report and additional questions in the application.

2. Peer Panel Scoring

HAA uses the competitive peer review process to score and rank eligible grant applications—a longtime, national practice of engaging community representatives with arts expertise to make critical decisions about public funding competitions. The panel's ranked scores are then combined with the objective measures in the application to determine the final ranking on a 100-point scale. A description of each 100-point scale can be found in each grant program section within this document. This process removes the HAA staff and board from the evaluation of grant applications, except for the objective scoring sections outlined above. Panels include individuals with a diversity of skills, self-identity, art forms, expertise, and experience, ensuring they are able to properly assess merit in each of the applications requesting city arts funding. HAA invites anyone with arts experience to be part of the panelist database through the **online application form**. For demographic data about the panelists that HAA uses, please refer to the Grants *Process + Impact* section at **this link**.

BIPOC Boost Formula

The Houston Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) has introduced a funding formula boost in the annual grants competitions, Support for Organizations (SO), Support for Artists and Creative Individuals (SACI), and Festival Grants (FG). This formula change provides support to organizations, artists, and creatives who have been awarded through the same peer panel process, but have historically been marginalized from opportunities, such as grants. The boost is specifically designed for applicants who meet BIPOC qualification criteria for their respective grant programs and have been awarded funding through HAA's peer community-based panels. Awardees under this initiative will receive a 45% increase in their awards with a cap of $20,000. The BIPOC boost qualification requires organizational applicants meet at least three of five criteria listed below:

— Having 60% key leadership (director title and above) that identifies as BIPOC

— Having 60% board leadership that identifies as BIPOC

— Having 60% staff that identifies as BIPOC

— Serving a key constituency that is predominantly BIPOC

— Operating with a budget under $200,000

BIPOC qualification requires individual applicants to self-identify as BIPOC.

For the year 2024, MOCA allocated an additional $800,000 to the grants programs to accommodate this formula change. This year, the boost funding will derive from the Hotel Occupancy Tax budget for the 2025 grant cycle. To learn more about how our funding works and the allocated percentages to all our grant programs visit the **HAA Funding web page**.

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Review Process

## 3. HAA Grants Committee and Board Review the Process

Peer panel recommendations are forwarded to Houston Arts Alliance's Grants Committee, which reviews and votes to ensure the panel process was followed with integrity. The Grants Committee then sends its approval to the HAA Board of Directors for its review of the process. The Committee and board do not alter the recommendations from the panel's adjudication.

4. City of Houston Approval

Once the HAA Board of Directors has approved, recommendations are forwarded to the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs for final approval by the mayor. Recommendations are not final until the City of Houston approval process is complete.

5. Award Amounts

The amount of each Support for Organizations grant is based on a formula that is explained on page 25. All SO grants have an estimated eligible award. SACI and Festival grants receive the amount requested in the application, up to the grant program's maximum award. Funds are limited by projected or in-hand cash receipts, depending on the performance of the Hotel Occupancy Tax.
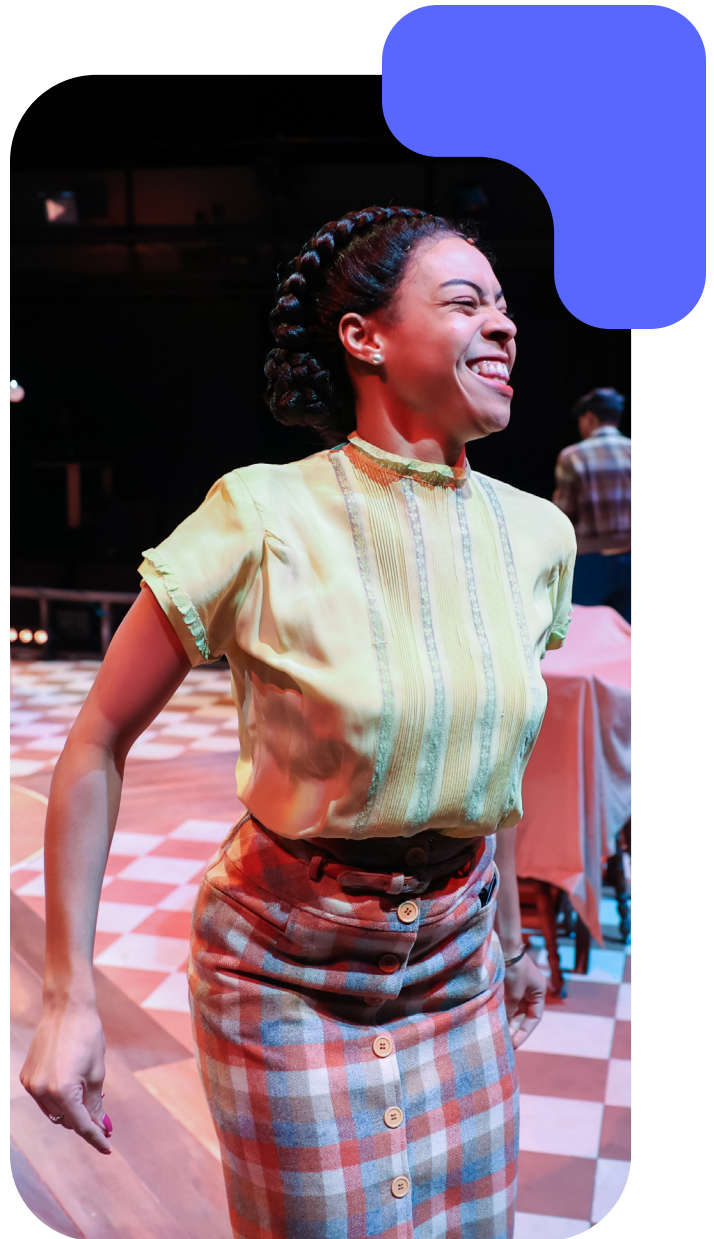
Keith Glover, *'Thunder Knocking on the Door,'* directed Tevyn Washington, cast pictured Sarah Sachi, Steve Scott and Kaleb Womack (2023). Photograph by Melissa Taylor. Courtesy of Stages, Houston, TX.

After Decisions Are Made

Grant Awards

HAA will email final decisions to applicants. These award notification emails will include instructions about receiving panel feedback and, if the grant was awarded, details on completing contracts, payment schedules, and more. The City of Houston will publicly announce the grant recipients, and Houston Arts Alliance will echo this announcement on its own social media channels and in its newsletter. The grant term is one year long.

Share Your Success

We highly encourage you to share the press release from the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs announcing grant recipients. Make sure to tag MOCA and HAA in your posts using the hashtags: **#HoustonArtsAlliance #HoustonMOCA #HOUcitygrants**

Panel Feedback

Panelists' evaluative comments are available to applicants upon request. We strongly recommend applicants request the available panelist feedback in the pursuit of preparing for future applications. Use the **Support Desk** to request these comments. Please note that comments will be available 10 weeks after award notifications, as they are formatted for clarity while HAA staff balances other grants activities.

After Decisions Are Made

Final Reporting

Final Reports can be submitted anytime, upon completion of your public presentation. All Final Reports are due to Houston Arts Alliance within 30 days of the end of the specific grant program's term. Visit the **Final Report webpage** for more details.

Acknowledgment

Grant recipients are required to acknowledge the support of the City of Houston and Houston Arts Alliance to demonstrate how City funds support arts and culture. Recipients receiving funds must use the required logos and credit line on all printed and electronic materials that advertise performances, exhibitions, or other public events throughout their work or, for those receiving operating support, throughout the grant period. The credit line and links to logos are listed below:

— "This work [event, organization, or individual name] is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance."

— Required **logos are available for download**.

Support for Artists and Creative Individuals Grant Program

Bruce Norris, *'Clybourne Park',* directed by Rob Jones, (2022). Photograph by Gary Griffin. MATCH, Houston, TX. Courtesy of Dirt Dogs Theatre Company.

Overview

The **Support for Artists and Creative Individuals (SACI)** grant category provides funds of up to $15,000 for specific programs that stimulate the creation and presentation of new works of art, or for completing work already in progress throughout the City of Houston. Applications are accepted from all artistic disciplines and creative practitioners, including but not limited to musicians, visual artists, performing artists, textile artists, digital artists, conservation artists, and creative entrepreneurs such as hairstylists, make-up artists, nail techs, gallerists, writers, photographers, and arts administrators. Creatives are encouraged to demonstrate their creativity in whatever form it takes.

Based on community input requesting greater stability, the SACI grant program is awarded based on cash in hand and not from projected income. This practice helps guarantee grant amounts with greater certainty.

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Support for Artists and Creative Individuals Grant Program

Program-Specific Requirements

— Artists or creatives who work in an artistic capacity with nonprofit organizations, such as artistic directors, executive directors, lead artists, resident artists, and conductors, must apply with a project or program that is independent of their organization.

— For collaborative art programs, one artist or creative must serve as the applicant for the project, and all members must meet eligibility requirements. A collaborator is defined as someone who is a co-owner of the program and a generative part of the team. Subcontractors are not collaborators.

Application Checklist

Details about required documents are provided in the Common Information section on page 6.

Completed application form

Proof of Residency

Work samples (A maximum of 10 documents can be uploaded to the online application.)

Eligibility verification documents

Review Criteria

Applications are scored on a 100-point scale.

Artistic Programming (45 points)

Applicant demonstrates artistic and cultural vibrancy; has documented past successes and demonstrated ability to execute proposed activities; clearly defined public programming that is imaginative and innovative for Houstonians and visitors.

Detailed Program Proposal
35 points | 300 words max.
Describe your proposed program in detail. Describe what the project is, when and where it is happening, and who is involved in the project. Things to consider:

— Be you, use your authentic voice!

— What about your project might stay on the mind or in the hearts.

— What are the goals of your program? What do you hope to learn, explore, or create?

— What does a successful project look like for you? What are your indicators for success?

Artistic Practice
10 points | 200 words max.
Describe your artistic pursuits! This could include artistic history and/or where your artistic practice is going.

— What are you most proud of? What are your accomplishments? What are your creative dreams?

— How does this work fit into your overall creative/artistic practice?

— What do you enjoy most about sharing your work with others?

Support for Artists and Creative Individuals Grant Program

Public Benefit (30 points)

Project connects to a defined community; applicant demonstrates effective strategies in marketing and audience engagement that are inclusive and publicly accessible; how is the project inviting to it's community and the broader public?

Community Impact

15 point | 50 words max.
Describe your community(ies)! How does your project meaningfully connect with your defined community(ies)? Consider the following questions to help shape your narrative:

— How does your project reflect, build, and/or empower your defined community(ies)?

— How does your project listen and respond to the community?

— Are you engaged in any artist collaborations or community partnerships in the production and presentation of this project?

Program Inclusivity

5 points
Does your proposed project foster artistic expression in and reflective of historically underserved communities defined by race, culture, sexual orientation, gender variance, or nationalities? If yes, how?

　　　Yes　　　　　　No

Program Access

10 points | 100 words max.
Access to arts and cultural programming is a key value of the City of Houston's arts investment. Describe how you will promote and expand access to your work. Consider the following questions to shape your narrative:

— How will you promote this work? Include information such as promotional mediums you will use to market your event (i.e. social media platforms, fliers, posters, newsletters, etc.)

— How have you maintained or expanded access across levels of ability, lived experience, geography, and other diversities?

— How will this project highlight Houston as an arts and cultural tourist destination?

Stewardship of Public Resources (25 points)

Applicant demonstrates the ability to steward public resources; details show appropriate preparation to complete proposed activities; and the budget is feasible and demonstrates investment in artists, creatives, and local talent.

Budget Table

15 points
Include details about the project budget and descriptions of how City grant funds will be used. Please refer to the full budget table breakdown on page 21.

Overall Proposed Timeline

10 points | 100 words max.
Please describe the overall proposed timeline for your program, including the expected timeline for development, execution, and final public presentation.

Artist Fees

5 points
The applicant demonstrates investment in individual artists and artistic practice through the payment of artist fees (collaborators, contractors, etc.), as indicated in the program budget. If this criterion is met, all five points are awarded. If it is not met, zero points are awarded.

　　　Yes　　　　　　No

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Festival Grant Program

Choreography by **Kyle Rucker**. *"Mind the Gap XXVII"* (2023). Photograph by Lynn Lane. MATCH, Houston, TX. Courtesy of Dance Source Houston.

Overview

The **Festival** grant program provides support of up to $10,000 to fund arts festivals or arts components of cultural festivals to celebrate Houston's diversity and promote the city's creative identity as a unique arts and cultural destination. Festivals allow communities to share artistic and cultural traditions, which can create vibrant opportunities and experiences for residents and visitors. This grant is funded by cash in hand.

Festival Grant Program

Program-Specific Requirements

A festival is defined as:

— An annual or twice-a-year celebration

— An immersion around a unifying theme
 or programmatic focus

— Featuring a varied and curated program of events

— Occurring within a specific, condensed time, such
 as one day or over a week

— Open to the public

Application Checklist

Details about required documents are provided in the
Common Information section on page 6.

 Completed application form

 Proof of Residency

 Work samples (A maximum of 10 documents can be
 uploaded to the online application.)

 Financial document: SMU DataArts Funder Report for
 the fiscal year ending in 2023 OR the budget table in the
 online application. See the Required Financial Reporting
 for Organizations section on page 18 for more details.

 Eligibility verification documents

Review Criteria
The application is scored on a 100-point scale.

Artistic Programming (45 points)

Applicant demonstrates artistic and cultural vibrancy; has
documented past successes and demonstrated ability to
execute proposed activities; public programming is
imaginative and innovative for Houstonians and visitors

**Festival Programming
Detailed Program Proposal**
45 points | 300 words max.
Describe your proposed festival in detail. Describe what the
festival is, when and where it is happening, and who is
involved in the festival. Things to consider:

— What key activities take place during the festival?

— If art is not the primary theme or purpose of the festival,
 describe the artistic programming and how it fits into the
 larger festival.

— What is the history of the festival?

— Are you engaged in any artist collaborations or
 community partnerships in the production and
 presentation of this festival?

— What are the goals of your program? What do you hope
 to learn, explore, or create?

— What does success look like for this festival? What are
 your indicators for success?

Festival Grant Program

Public Benefit (30 points)

Project connects to a defined community; applicant demonstrates effective strategies in marketing and audience engagement that are inclusive and publicly accessible; how is the project inviting to it's community and the broader public?

Community Engagement
15 points | 250 words max.
Describe your community(ies)! How does your project meaningfully connect with your defined community(ies)? Consider the following questions to help shape your narrative:

— How does your project reflect, build, and/or empower your defined community(ies)?

— How does your project listen and respond to the community(ies)?

— Are you engaged in any artist collaborations or community partnerships in the production and presentation of this project?

Programs Inclusivity
5 points
Does your proposed project foster artistic expression in and reflective of historically underserved communities defined by race, culture, sexual orientation, gender variance, or nationalities? If yes, how?

Yes   No

Program Access
10 points | 100 words max.
Access to arts and cultural programming is a key value of the City of Houston's arts investment. Describe how you will promote and expand access to your work. Consider the following questions to shape your narrative:

— How will you promote this work? Include information such as promotional mediums you will use to market your event (i.e. social media platforms, fliers, posters, newsletters, etc.)

— How have you maintained or expanded access across levels of ability, lived experience, geography, and other diversities? Does the organization reduce barriers to participation through ticketing or other strategies?

— How will this highlight Houston as an arts and cultural tourist destination?

Stewardship of Public Resources (25 points)

Applicant demonstrates the ability to steward public resources; details show appropriate preparation to complete proposed activities; and the budget is feasible and demonstrates investment in artists and local talent.

Overall Proposed Project Timeline & Budget Table
20 points | 100 words max.
Please describe the overall proposed timeline for your project, including the expected timeline for development, execution, and final public presentation. Include details about the project budget and a short description of how City grant funds will be used.

Artist Fees
5 points
The applicant demonstrates investment in individual artists and artistic practice through the payment of artist fees (collaborators, contractors, etc.), as indicated in the project budget. If this criterion is met, all five points are awarded. If it is not met, zero points are awarded.

Yes   No

Support for Organizations Grant Program

Tina Hernandez, *'Nichos of the Afterlife'* (2023). Kismet Boutique, Houston, TX. Courtesy of the artist.

Overview

The **Support for Organizations** grant program accepts 501(c)(3) nonprofit and fiscally sponsored applications annually to support arts and cultural activities that are open to the public. There are three different categories within the Support for Organizations grant program. All grant amounts listed below are dependent on Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) projections being realized.

Applicants in Categories 1 and 3 must be arts or history organizations with an art form, history, or preservation named in the purpose/mission statements found on pages 1 or 2 of their most recently made public 990 form OR they must be museums, as defined by the International Council of Museums in 2007: "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of its society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment."

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Support for Organizations Grant Program

Program-Specific Requirements

Category 1

— Applicants must be 501(c)(3) organizations, in existence for at least one year, with the arts named in its mission. This is verified by an HAA staff review of an applicant's 990 on the IRS website.

— Applicants may apply for up to $125,000 or a maximum of 20% of the organization's operating expenses, excluding the value of in-kind contributions.

Category 2

— Applicants must be fiscally sponsored, a non-arts-specific 501(c)(3) organization with arts-specific programming, or a 501(c)(3) organization with the arts named in its mission but with less than one year of operations.

— Applicants may apply for up to $62,500 or a maximum of 10% of the arts program budget, excluding the value of in-kind contributions.

Category 3

Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) organization, in existence for at least five years and with the arts named in its mission, providing public programs throughout each calendar year and offering free and discounted programs. This is verified by an HAA staff review of an applicant's 990 on the IRS website.

— Applicants may apply for up to $1 million or a maximum of 3% of the organization's operating expenses, excluding the value of in-kind contributions.

— Applicants must have operating expenses over $10 million, less in-kind contributions and direct financial support from other City of Houston sources, as demonstrated in SMU DataArts reporting. This is calculated as an average over the most recently completed three fiscal years and verified with the organization's audit.

— Fiscally sponsored organizations are not eligible.

Application Checklist

Details about required documents are provided in the Common Information section on page 6.

Completed application form

Proof of residency

Work samples (A maximum of 10 documents can be uploaded to the online application.)

Financial document: SMU DataArts Funder Report OR budget table in the online application (based on financial history). See the Financial Reporting Requirements for Organizations section on page 18.

Eligibility verification documents

For Category 3 only:

Audited or reviewed financial statements

A signed statement from the Chief Financial Officer detailing additional direct support received from other City of Houston sources in fiscal year ending 2023 (i.e., Houston First, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development).

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Support for Organizations Grant Program

Review Criteria
Applications are scored on a 100-point scale.

Artistic Programming (45 points)

Applicant demonstrates artistic and cultural expertise; has documented past success and demonstrated ability to execute the proposed activities; public programming is imaginative, innovative, and relevant for Houstonians and visitors; work samples demonstrate artistic vision and ability to execute proposed activities.

Artistic Programming
45 points | 750 words max.
Please share what the review panel should know about the organization's artistic programs. Consider the following questions to help shape your narrative:

— What are the primary activities of the organization? Describe the major programs open to the general public.

— What work is your organization most proud of? What are the organization's accomplishments? What plans is the organization excited about?

— Does your organization provide a new or distinguishing perspective on the arts?

— If the arts are not the mission of your organization, describe your artistic programming, and describe how it fits within your larger organizational work.

— Describe key exhibitors/presenters, artists, and other collaborators.

Public Benefit (30 points)

Project connects to a defined community; applicant demonstrates effective strategies in marketing and audience engagement that are inclusive and publicly accessible; how is the project inviting to it's community and the broader public?

Community Engagement
15 points | 550 words max.
Describe your community(ies)! How does your project meaningfully connect with your defined community(ies)? Consider the following questions to help shape your narrative:

— How does your organization reflect, build, and/or empower your defined community(ies)?

— How does your organization listen and respond to the community(ies)?

— Have you recently worked with your key constituency(ies) to negotiate a challenge? Tell us about it!

— Is the organization reflective of its key constituency and are their needs reflected in its operations?

Programs Inclusivity
5 points
Does the organization's mission specifically reference a commitment to serving historically underserved communities defined by race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, or nationalities?

Yes   No

Support for Organizations Grant Program

Programs Access

Accessibility of arts and cultural programming is a key value of the City of Houston's arts investment priorities.

— How will you promote the organization's work? Include information such as promotional mediums you will use to market your programming/events (i.e. social media platforms, fliers, posters, newsletters, etc.)

— How have you maintained or expanded access across levels of ability, lived experience, geography, and other diversities? Does the organization reduce barriers to participation through ticketing or other strategies?

— How does the organization's work highlight Houston as an arts and cultural tourist destination?

Stewardship of Public Resources (25 points)

Note: *Support for Organizations,* Categories 1 and 2, have a different set of stewardship assessment questions from *Support for Organizations,* Category 3. Stewardship is an objective assessment, as described in the Common Information section on page 6.

Applicant demonstrates the ability to steward public resources through fiscal responsibility; applicant demonstrates investment in artists and local talent.

Categories 1 and 2

The grant applicant will answer yes or no the questions below.
14 points

— Does the organization's board review internal financial statements at least quarterly?

— Does the organization reconcile its bank statements monthly?

— Does 100% of the organization's board contribute financially?

— Has the organization posted its annual report, most recently completed 990, and current board list in an online place accessible to the public?

— Has the organization adopted bylaws, and are they reviewed annually?

— Does the organization have a conflict-of-interest policy, and are the directors required to complete annual disclosures under the policy?

— Does the organization have at least one month of operating cash as of year-end (most recent fiscal year)?

HAA staff will conduct an objective assessment of the following items from the applicant's DataArts Funder Report.
6 points

— Is the organization's total working capital a positive number?

— Does the organization spend less than 20% of operating expenses on fundraising?

— Does the organization spend over 50% of operating expenses on programs?

Artist Fees
5 points
The applicant demonstrates investment in individual artists and artistic practice through the payment of artist fees (collaborators, contractors, etc.), as indicated in the project budget. If this criterion is met, all five points are awarded. If it is not met, zero points are awarded.

Yes   No

Support for Organizations Grant Program

Category 3

The Stewardship of Public Resources criterion for Support for Organizations, Category 3, applicants represent additional and higher expectations.
11 points

— Has the organization performed an annual audit of its finances for its fiscal year and/or scheduled an audit for its latest fiscal year?

— Does the organization have an audit committee or other board committee designated to review its audited financial statements?

— Has the organization posted its annual report, most recently completed 990, and current board list in an online place accessible to the public?

— Has the organization adopted bylaws, and are they reviewed periodically and monitored to ensure organizational compliance?

— Does the organization have a conflict-of-interest policy, and are the directors required to complete annual disclosures under the policy?

— Does the organization have a written whistleblower policy, and does the whistleblower policy have an HR specialist and/or independent contact outside of management for reporting purposes?

— Does the organization have a written document retention and destruction policy?

— Did the process for determining compensation for the organization's CEO include review and approval by the organization's board or designated committee and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation or decision?

— Has the organization established an investment policy, and does the investment or finance committee review the current investment strategy at least annually to assess and make changes?

— Does the organization have an employee manual, and has it been reviewed/updated in the past five years?

— On the Financial Statement Disclosure footnote, Liquidity and Availability of Resources, on the organization's most recent audited financials, is the "Total financial assets available for general expenditure" a positive number?

Staff will conduct an objective assessment of the following items from the applicant's DataArts Funder Report.
9 points

— Does the organization have a liquidity ratio of 0.02? (Defined: unrestricted cash and cash equivalents divided by current liabilities)

— Is the organization's debt to asset ratio less than 30%? (Defined: total debt divided by total assets)

— Has the organization reflected a surplus in its unrestricted change in net assets, net of depreciation/amortization in two of the last three fiscal years? (Defined: unrestricted change in net assets plus depreciation/amortization expense)

— Does the organization spend less than 10% of operating expenses on fundraising?

— Does the organization spend over 65% of operating expenses on programs?

— Does the organization have a current ratio of 1.5 or above? (Defined: current assets divided by current liabilities)

Support for Organizations Grant Program

— Does the organization have a viability ratio of 1.25 or above? (Defined: unrestricted net assets plus temporarily restricted net assets/long-term debt)

— Does the organization have an operating reliance ratio of 1.0 or above? (Defined: program revenues divided by program expenses)

— Does the organization demonstrate payment to artists?

Artist Fees

5 points

The applicant demonstrates investment in individual artists and artistic practice through the payment of artist fees (collaborators, contractors, etc.), as indicated in the project budget. If this criterion is met, all five points are awarded. If it is not met, zero points are awarded.

　　　　Yes　　　　　No

Tina Hernandez, *'Nichos of the Afterlife'* (2023). Kismet Boutique, Houston, TX. Courtesy of the artist.

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Awarding for Support for Organizations

The SO grant award amounts are determined based on a formula that uses the organization's operating expenses (subtracting in-kind) and panel rank, which is determined by an application's relative panel score.

Grant scoring is done by panelists, who cannot be staff or board of HAA, to divide responsibilities of designing the competition, which HAA does, and scoring individual applications, which panelists do, to empower the community to select grantees for the upcoming calendar year.

In addition to the panel scores, an objective score is calculated based on data entered by the SO applicant in SMU Data Arts about its financials. The objective score looks at such things as payment to artists and creatives. The objective score is added to the panel score to rank applicants from highest score to lowest. The estimated eligible award amount is then calculated based on the applicants SO category: SO 1 applicants may receive a maximum of 20% of the organization's operating expenses less in-kind, up to $125,000; SO 2 applicants may receive a maximum of 10% of the organization's operating expenses less in-kind, up to $62,500; and SO 3 applicants may receive a maximum of 3% of the organization's operating expenses less in-kind, up to $1,000,000.

The highest ranked organization receives 100% of their estimated eligible award, and every awarded rank receives one percentage point less than the one before, until the awardees reach 50% which is the award minimum. For example, the second ranked applicant received 99% of the estimated eligible award. Once the ranked list reaches 50% of the estimated eligible award, all awardees receive 50%, so that no grant award is lower than 50% of their estimated eligible award in the SO 1 and 2 categories only. In 2023, HAA implemented a $2,000 minimum award for the SO program, to ensure smaller budgeted organizations receive meaningful support. All SO award amounts listed are dependent on annual Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) projections.

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