

2025 Grant Guidelines

City's Initiative



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



haa houston
arts
alliance

2025 Grant Guidelines

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All images featured are sourced from the final reports submitted by grant recipients.



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About

Houston Arts Alliance

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.

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 that vitalize neighborhoods.

City's Initiative Grant Program

Use this guide as a resource to assist with your application to the City's Initiative grant program. It contains all the information prospective applicants need to apply.

The City of Houston provides all funds for this program. The specific source of funds is the **Hotel Occupancy Tax**. It is important to note that legal, contractual requirements state the City's Initiative grant program must be administered separately from other HOT-funded grants overseen by HAA.

Funds dedicated for the City's Initiative grant program cannot be diverted in any way to other grant programs, including SACI (Support for Artists and Creative Individuals), Festival, Support for Organizations, and Let Creativity Happen.

Funding for the City's Initiative grant program will support arts and cultural programming that is accessible to the Houston community and its visitors.

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 de 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–viernes, 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. CDT, 713-527-9330.

Application Deadlines

This application has multiple deadlines each year.

In fairness to all applicants, we cannot accept late or incomplete applications. If the applicant does not provide the complete set of information in the appropriate format by the deadline, the application may be deemed incomplete and ineligible. No deadline extensions will be granted. Once applications are submitted, they cannot be revised in any way.

Round 1

March 24–April 22, 2025, at 11:59 PM CDT

Application submissions for this deadline should only include arts and cultural activities taking place August 1, 2025–August 1, 2026.

Round 2

May 26–June 24, 2025, at 11:59 PM CDT

Application submissions for this deadline should only include projects taking place October 1, 2025–October 1, 2026.

Round 3

August 29–September 27, 2025, at 11:59 PM CDT

Application submissions for this deadline should only include projects taking place January 1, 2026–December 31, 2026.

I Would Like More Assistance / Quisiera Más Asistencia

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

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.

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** at grants@haatxhelp.zendesk.com 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** at grants@haatxhelp.zendesk.com 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, and each inquiry receives a response within three business days.

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**.

Program Overview

The City's Initiative grant program provides funding to individual artists, creatives, and nonprofits for strategic and creative opportunities to engage visitors and residents while building upon Houston's cultural identity and tourism.

Proposed activities should not be a part of the applicant's regular programming or annual schedule of activities or events.

Houston is a true international city, linked by both commerce and culture to countless places around the world. Its growing populations show that Houston is now the single most ethnically diverse major metropolitan area in the entire country. One in four residents is foreign-born, contributing to an ever-changing culture that spurs creative innovation. It is one of the best places in the world for arts, and its creative community represents a strategic opportunity for Houston's civic identity and tourism.

Grant expenses are restricted to project related costs, which include artist fees, and marketing costs. Typical awards are between \$5,000 and \$10,000. A preliminary meeting with grants staff is encouraged to discuss the details of your proposed project and ensure a successful submission at least two weeks prior to the application deadline (listed in a section below).

Schedule a meeting at this link. Any request exceeding \$10,000 requires a preliminary meeting by April 15, 2025. **Only applicants applying under the Art + Disaster Resilience Awareness funding area are eligible to request more than \$10,000 for the 1st round of 2025.**



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

Funding Areas & Success Elements

Art + Disaster Resilience Awareness

Your proposed project should center on heightening awareness and preparedness concerning environmental risks such as the climate crisis, flooding, food deserts, hurricanes, tropical storms, environmental justice, electricity disruption, and related subjects, using your chosen artistic medium. We encourage you to consult [Resilient Houston \(Chapter 2\)](#) and [the Climate Action Plan](#) to better understand and align the proposed project with the city's goals in utilizing arts and culture to increase risk awareness and readiness. These documents highlight the city's commitment to collaborate with artists and creative professionals in educating and engaging the public in flood and climate risk education, mitigation, and adaptation strategies within Greater Houston. And that information should guide proposals for funding.

Your project should create public engagement events or opportunities that are focused on preparedness, mitigation behaviors, adaptive capacity, and post-disaster lessons. Successful projects will find ways to assist people in preparing for possible disasters, dealing with environmental justice problems, improving their ability to handle such challenges, or learning what steps to take after a disaster occurs.

Only applicants applying under the Art + Disaster Resilience Awareness funding area are eligible to request more than \$10,000 for the 1st round of 2025. Requests over \$10,000 require a preliminary meeting with HAA by April 15, 2025.

Example Project

Houston Climate Justice Museum, *"Climate Migration: Displacement, Travel, Home"*, 2022 Round 2 City's Initiative Grantee.

"This is a series of art installations, expert panels, and public engagements that aim to deepen understandings and experiences of climate migration in Houston. As the climate crisis worsens and accelerates, researchers expect unprecedented migration of humans and non-humans from de-stabilized environments to more resilient places. There is currently no legal designation for refugees displaced due to climate change. The Museum seeks to broaden understandings of this emerging phenomenon through engaging multiple sites — The Museum, Rice University Solar Studios, CHAT, and Baker Ripley — to ensure a diverse and varied audience including students, migrants, long-time Houston residents, families, citizen-scientists, and activists."

Funding Areas & Success Elements

Art + Neighborhood Cultural Destinations

Projects must have a primary goal to engage residents of a specific neighborhood or community. Proposed projects should incorporate at least one arts and culture event taking place in the selected neighborhood. This event should actively involve and celebrate the community and residents of that area, highlighting their distinctiveness, history, or contributions to the Greater Houston landscape. Successful projects will strive to aid community growth by using arts to bring people together, foster stronger connections, and celebrate the areas where we reside, labor, and innovate.

Only applicants applying under the Art + Neighborhood Cultural Destinations funding area are eligible to request more than \$10,000 for the 2nd round of 2025. Requests over \$10,000 require a preliminary meeting with HAA by a deadline TBA in advance of the Round 2 application period.

Art + Conference Tourism

Your proposal should entail collaborating with a planned conference or hosting a conference to offer conference attendees, locals, and visitors an activity showcasing Houston artists or cultural attractions. The objective is to broaden the artistic dimensions of the conference's programming.

Only applicants applying under the Art + Conference Tourism funding area are eligible to request more than \$10,000 for the 3rd round of 2025. Requests over \$10,000 require a preliminary meeting with HAA by a deadline TBA in advance of the Round 3 application period.

Example Project

José Hernández López, *"East End Echoes: Houston's Latinx Immigration Through Sound"*, 2023 Round 1 City's Initiative Grantee.

"The East End Echoes project will immerse listeners in the rich history and humanity of the Latinx community in Houston's East End through a GPS-enabled soundwalk experience. By weaving together interviews with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd generation Latinx immigrants, live music performed by local musicians, and sound design, the project empowers East End residents to be the primary voices in sharing their stories, culture, and experiences with the wider community."

Example Project

Christy Poisot, *"2024 Filipino American National Historical Society Conference"*, 2023 Round 1 City's Initiative Grantee.

"The Filipino American National Historical Society Conference is held every two years and Houston has been chosen for 2024! As chair of the conference, author of the Filipinos in Houston book, I want to showcase Houston by lining up educational lectures, performances, a museum exhibit of local Filipino artists, and food. 40+ chapters from all over the United States will converge onto the city to share their stories with Houstonians."

Funding Areas & Success Elements

Successful projects will include the following elements:

Community Engagement

The project should include working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity or special interests.

Measurable (tourism/neighborhood) Impact

The project should attract and be marketed to audiences from outside of the City of Houston either physically or digitally.

Great Social Media Presence

The project should include a comprehensive marketing plan with a clear social media element.

Documented Support of Local Artists and Creatives

A budget that reflects payments to Houston-based artists and creatives.

Clear Alignment with One of the Three Funding Areas

The project scope should fit well within one of the three funding areas listed above.

Application Checklist & Process

Where to apply

Grants Portal

Applications must be submitted online through the [HAA Online Grants Portal](#).

Application Eligibility Checklist

Requirements

Individuals

- Proof of Age
- Proof of Residency
- Work Samples
- Public Presentation
- One Grant Program per Project
- One application per Grant Program
- Applications submitted by Deadline

Organizations

- Proof of Headquarters
- 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status
- Work Samples
- Public Presentation
- One Grant Program per Project
- One application per Grant Program
- Applications submitted by Deadline

Fiscal Sponsors

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 16](#) of this document.

- If your project is awarded, you must maintain residency and/or headquarters and conduct all project activities within the City of Houston for the entire grant term.
- 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.
- 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.
- Applicants may not receive more than one City's Initiative grant in a calendar year.

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.

Application Checklist & Process

Requirements

All fiscal sponsors and their fiscally sponsored projects must adhere to the following requirements in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements in the previous page. *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.
 - 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.



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

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.

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.



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.

What May Not Be Funded

City grant funds may not support the following:

- Any activities taking place outside of the City of Houston limits, including any activities taking place 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.



HCCC Resident Artist, Qiqing Lin. Photograph by Katy Anderson (2023).
Courtesy of Houston Center for Contemporary Craft.

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.
 - Educational based programs, including workshops and youth education initiatives, are not eligible for funding.
 - If you are applying as an arts education program, your application must focus on the public presentation of your programming that is open and marketed to the general public.
 - 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. Fiscally sponsored programs have one additional document, outlined in the next pages.

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.

Proof of headquarters or residence in the City of Houston

Applicants are required to 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. Applicants must upload a current image of official documentation, such as lease or utility, that includes a visible City of Houston address with the applicant or organization name.

The residential, studio, or headquarters address you provide in your Grants Portal profile **must** match the address on the *Proof of Headquarters or Residence* document you upload. If the addresses do not match, the application will be ineligible.

Individuals

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

- Unexpired Texas driver license or Texas identification 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.
- Current deed, mortgage, or a residential/studio lease.
- Current insurance policy or statement.
- Current bank statement.

Required Documents

- Utility bill or residential mail dated within 2025 calendar year. Examples include electric, water, gas, Internet, cable, telephone bills.
- Mail, dated within 2025 calendar year, from a government entity addressed to the individual.

Verification Tool: [Who Is My Council Member](#)

Maps: [2024 to 2028 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/studio lease.
- Current insurance policy or statement.
- Current bank statement.
- Utility bill or residential mail dated within 2025 calendar year. Examples include electric, water, gas, Internet, cable, telephone bills.
- Mail, dated within 2025 calendar year, from a government entity addressed to the organization.

Verification Tool: [Who Is My Council Member](#)

Maps: [2024 to 2028 Council District Maps](#)

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 2025 calendar year. Examples include electric, water, gas, Internet, cable, telephone bills.
- Mail, dated within 2025 calendar year, from a government entity addressed to the fiscal sponsor.

Verification Tool: [Who Is My Council Member](#)

Maps: [2024 to 2028 Council District Maps](#)



Required Documents

Work Samples

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 five individual image or audio files and five PDFs, not to exceed a file size of 100MB each. Applicants are encouraged to include text descriptions to help panelists understand work samples.

[Individuals](#)[Organizations](#)[Fiscal Sponsors](#)

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.



Application Questions

Artistic Programming

Artistic goals, vision, and process are clearly outlined; applicant demonstrates artistic and cultural vibrancy; applicant communicates well-defined public programming that is imaginative and innovative for Houstonians and visitors.



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

Funding Area Description (10 points)

100 words max.

What is your project's designated funding area (art + disaster resilience, art + neighborhood, art + conference)? Explain why you selected this funding area and how it is connected to your project.

Detailed Project Proposal (30 points)

300 words max.

Describe your proposed project in detail. Describe what the project is, when and where it is happening, and who is involved in the project. Things to consider:

- How will arts and culture be infused into the chosen funding area?
- What are the goals of your program? What do you hope to learn, explore, or create?
- What does success look like for this work? What are your indicators for success?
- Share relevant history executing arts and cultural events and/or activities!

Event Locations + Activity Description + Date

Table with up to 10 location entries.

- Event Description
- Event Address
- Event Date

Application Questions

Public Benefit

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 (25 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)?
- What are the shared interests or challenges that exist within the community(ies) the applicant will address?
- Are you engaged in any artist collaborations or community partnerships in the production and presentation of this project?

Promotion and Access (15 points)

200 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 will this highlight Houston as an arts and cultural tourist destination?
- How have you maintained or expanded access to your work across levels of ability, lived experience, geography, and other diversities?

Application Questions

Stewardship of Public Resources

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 (10 points)

Using the Budget Table in the [Grants Portal](#), provide a detailed full-cost budget for the proposed arts and cultural programming. Include details about the project budget and descriptions of how City grant funds will be used.

How to Use the Budget Table

Use the income and expenses table example in the following page as a reference for how to report the full-cost of your proposed arts and cultural programming through the [Grants Portal](#).

Income Section: In this section, you will add all 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 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 HAA grant. Be sure to review the What May Not be Funded Section of the grant guidelines to ensure only eligible expenses are listed under this column.
- In the “Other Funds” column you should list all the 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.

Application Questions

Income

Source	Description	Amount Request	Other Funds
Contributed: City of Houston	HAA Grant	\$10,000	\$500
Contributed: Foundations	Houston Endowment		\$500
Contribute: Corporations	Texas Commission on the Arts		\$1,000
Contributed: In-kind donations	Donations		
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	\$2,000	
Artistic Personnel	Artist Fees	\$5,000	
Administrative Personnel	Admin Salaries	\$3,000	
Technical Personnel	Technical Personnel		\$1,000
Production Expenses	Production Expenses		\$1,000
Other Expenses			
Other Expenses			
Other Expenses			
Other Expenses			
Total		\$10,000	\$2,000

Application Questions

Overall Proposed Project Timeline (5 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 has demonstrated payment to artists through the budget table within the application.

Yes

No



Monica Villarreal, 'Reflection of Coatlicue (Reflection of our mother the creator and destroyer),' 'Overlapping Territories' (2022). Photograph by Paul Hester. Courtesy of Diverse Works.

Review Process

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



1. HAA Staff

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 date of notification. Applicants may only be prompted to cure the following:

- Illegible or unacceptable proof of age documentation.
- Illegible or unacceptable proof of residency documentation.
- Unacceptable Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement

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.

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

Review Process

2. Peer Panel

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 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 this [dashboard](#). HAA Committee and Board 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 approval. The Committee and Board do not alter the recommendations from the panel's adjudication.

3. Award Determination

The HAA staff takes the panel recommendations and assesses the grant program's city funded allocation to determine the number of grants that may be funded. To learn more about how our funding works and the allocated percentages to all our grant programs visit [HAA's Funding webpage](#).

4. HAA Grants Committee

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 does not alter the recommendations from the panel's adjudication.

5. City of Houston

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



After Decisions Are Made

Grant Award Notifications

HAA will email final decisions to applicants. These award notification emails will include instructions about receiving panel feedback and, if the grant is awarded, details on completing contracts, payment schedules, and more.

Contracts will be **voided** if they are not signed within 120 days of receipt. Also, contracts with Conditional Approval status will be voided if the requested information to resolve the status is not provided within 120 days. Be sure to read the notification and contract for specific grant term details.

The City of Houston will publicly announce grant recipients, and HAA will echo this announcement via its own social media channels and newsletter. The grant term is one year from award notification.

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.

Applicants with overdue final reports are not eligible to apply for new funding. Additionally, payments on current grants may be withheld while an applicant remains in Non-Compliant status.

Required Public 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.

Appealing an Eligibility Decision

The appeals process aims to ensure procedural fairness and consistency. It does not override the panel's original decision but rather confirms whether HAA Grants staff conducted the eligibility verification process correctly.

To appeal an eligibility decision, applicants must submit a written request to the Grants Department at grants@haatx.com within **five (5) business days** of receiving an ineligibility decision notification. The request must clearly state the reason for the appeal. For complete details on the appeals process, please refer to the [Appeals Guidelines document](#).

