

2026 Grant Guidelines

Annual Grants



Zine Fest Houston, ZFH 2024.
Orange Show Center for Visionary
Art, Houston, TX. Photo courtesy of
Festival grantee Zine Fest Houston.



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arts
alliance

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All images featured are courtesy of City-funded grant recipients and sourced from materials submitted to HAA.

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 about HOT funding, visit the [HAA Funding page](#).

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** ([p. 27](#))
- **Festival** ([p. 30](#))
- **Support for Organizations** ([p. 33](#))

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.

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 grant programs, can be found within this document. More details on the City's Initiative and Let Creativity Happen grant programs are available on [HAA's Grant Opportunity page](#).

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

Asistencia en español está disponible previa solicitud, y el personal de HAA brinda asistencia técnica a personas con discapacidades. Si tiene alguna pregunta o necesita asistencia, por favor envíe un correo electrónico al [Support Desk](#) o llame 713-527-9330 de lunes–viernes, 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. CDT.

Which Annual Grant Program is Right for Me?

What 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.

2026 Support for Artists and Creative Individuals

For: Individuals only

Award amount: Up to \$15,000

Opens: June 16, 2025

Deadline: July 25, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. CDT

Grant term: January 1–December 31, 2026

Grant funding provided from cash in hand.

2026 Festival

For: Individuals; 501(c)(3) and fiscally sponsored organizations

Award amount: Up to \$10,000

Opens: June 16, 2025

Deadline: July 25, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. CDT

Grant term: January 1–December 31, 2026

Grant funding provided from cash in hand.

2026 Support for Organizations

For: 501(c)(3) and fiscally sponsored organizations only

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 16, 2025

Deadline: July 25, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. CDT

Grant term: January 1–December 31, 2026

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

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](#) or call 713-527-9330 on Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. CDT.

La asistencia en español está disponible previa solicitud, y el personal de HAA está disponible para brindar asistencia técnica a personas con discapacidades. Si tiene alguna pregunta o necesita asistencia, por favor envíe un correo electrónico al [Support Desk](#) o llame 713-527-9330 de lunes–viernes, 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m. CDT.

Workshops provide instructions for applying and helpful 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 quick and thorough responses, 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](#).

Information Common to All Grant Programs

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



The Puppet & Its Double Theater, 'The Selfish Giant' (2024). Asia Society Texas Center, Houston, TX. Photo courtesy of Asia Society Texas / SO grantee.

Grants Funded by Cash in Hand vs. Projections

Grants Funded by Cash in Hand

Based on community input requesting greater stability, Festival 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.

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 through the [Support Desk](#).



Kathak Dance Collective, 'Satrangi re...Shades of Love' (2024).
Wortham Center, Houston, TX. Photo courtesy of Indo-American
Association / SO grantee.

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 14](#).

- 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.
- 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".

Application Checklist & Process

For Fiscally Sponsored Projects:

Requirements

All fiscal sponsors and their fiscally sponsored projects must adhere to the following requirements in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements above. Note that individual applicants are not required to have fiscal sponsorship for the Festival or SACI grant programs.

- The applicant or collective seeking fiscal sponsorship and the fiscal sponsor must demonstrate residency and/or headquarters within the City of Houston limits.
- The fiscal 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:
 - 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 is providing additional services, such as accounting or administration, the overhead fee may not exceed 15% of the City grant if awarded.



Diane Gelman, 'EAT!!!' (2025). Acrylic on foam and resin.
 Bay 200 Gallery at The Silos at Sawyer Yards, Houston, TX.
 Photo courtesy of the artist / SACI grantee.

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.



Lee's Golden Dragon Lion and Dragon Dance Association, Winter Festival Lunar New Year (2024).
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Houston, TX. Photo courtesy of MFAH / SO grantee.

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 events that City-funded grants support include art exhibitions; film screenings; music, dance, and theater performances; online arts programming; literary readings and publications; arts festivals. Examples of eligible live virtual events include livestreamed concerts or performances; virtual artist talks; 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.

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

Applicant are 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.

What May Not Be Funded

City grant funds cannot support the following:

- Any activities taking place outside of the City of Houston limits, including activities taking place in outlying suburbs. Your program location must be represented by a Houston city council member, verified through the online Council Member mapping tool. **All funded activities must take place within City of Houston limits.**
- Activities taking place outside the respective grant term. Note that the grant term for these 2026 annual grants is January 1, 2026–December 31, 2026.
- 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 families.
- Houston Arts Alliance employees, Board members, and their immediate families.
- Grants to K-12 public, private, or charter schools.
- Educational programs such as workshops or youth education programs. Note:
 - 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 youth-specific and gender-specific programs.

What May Not Be Funded

- Competitions, award ceremonies, scholarships, cash prizes, fundraising activities and events, sports and recreation activities, or parties and private celebrations.
- 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.
- Meals, refreshments, and catering expenses.
- Capital expenses such as the purchase of real estate, construction or renovation, modifications to spaces, or equipment that becomes a permanent part of the applicant's operation.

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.

Required Documents

Proof of residence in 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 applicants must provide current calendar year (2025) 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.
- Utility bill or residential mail dated within 2025 calendar year. Examples include: electric, water, gas, internet, cable, or telephone bill.

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

Required Documents

Proof of headquarters in 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.

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

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 commercial/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, or telephone bill.
- Mail, dated within **2025** calendar year, from a government entity addressed to the organization.

Fiscal Sponsors

Requirement:

Fiscal sponsors must also provide proof of headquarters within the City of Houston limits with **current calendar year** documentation addressed to the sponsor by name.

Acceptable documents include:

- Current deed, mortgage, or a commercial/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, or telephone bill.
- Mail, dated within **2025** calendar year, from a government entity addressed to the organization.

Required Documents

Work Samples

Applicants must upload documentation of their work meant to demonstrate consistent, 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 100 MB each. Applicants are encouraged to include text descriptions to help panelists understand work samples.

HAA's [work samples page](#) has more guidance on choosing files that effectively showcase your work to panelists.

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 .PNG or .JPG 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.

Financial Reporting Required for Organizations

Organizations must meet one of three financial reporting requirements:

- **Organizations and fiscally sponsored projects with at least one year of financial history** must generate and submit a Funder Report through third-party financial reporting platform [SMU DataArts](#), and the sponsored applicant must fill out the budget table in the online application.
- **Fiscally sponsored programs with no previous financial history** must fill out the budget table in the online application, and the fiscal sponsor must submit a Funder Report through SMU DataArts.
- **First-year organizations with no previous financial history, or that have an IRS tax exemption less than one year old**, must fill out the budget table in the online application.

Contact HAA if you encounter issues submitting your Funder Report through SMU DataArts. You can also email the [SMU Support Center](#) or call 877-707-3282 for technical assistance or data entry questions from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET, Monday–Friday. SMU DataArts has interpretation services available in over 30 languages upon request.

SMU DataArts Required Reporting

Support for Organizations: Categories 1, 2, 3, and Festival applicants must complete a [Cultural Data Profile \(CDP\)](#) for the fiscal year ending in 2024. While only one CDP is required, the platform will share with HAA up to three years of data, if available.

Financial Reporting Required for Organizations

[SMU DataArts](#) uniformly collects data about arts organizations' finances and programs. This uniformity allows 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 financial and non-financial data you entered across the entire CDP to ensure consistency across sections. If you receive an error, it must be addressed for the survey to be marked complete.
- You may either address 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 you may address all at once. If an error occurs that you believe is not applicable to your organization, please call the [SMU Support Center](#) at 877-707-3282.
- If your organization's primary mission is not arts- or culture-centric, you will [only enter data for the arts and cultural project](#) and classify it 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](#).

- CDP data is also used in Support for Organizations (SO) review criteria. SO grant amounts are calculated based on organization operating expenses, less in-kind; therefore, it is essential you enter in-kind expenses correctly. Refer to this knowledge base article: [What are in-kind contributions, and how do I record them in the Data Profile?](#) SMU DataArts also 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 FY 2024 financials, 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 2024 in your SMU 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. [See this article for step-by-step instructions on running a Funder Report..](#)
4. Once you have generated the Funder Report for the City of Houston, HAA will be able to retrieve the report within the SMU DataArts platform. You do not need to attach the exported Funder Report PDF file to your application, but we recommend you save it for your records.
5. **Important to note:** If you make 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.

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 Festival and Support for Artists and Creative Individuals applicants.

How to complete 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, add all of your funding sources, including the amount you are requesting in your grant application. In Row 1, "Contributed - City of Houston," enter your request under the "Amount of Request" column. In Rows 2–9, 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, list out all of your expenses for the project or programming.

- In the "Amount of Request" column, you should only list the expenses that will be covered by the City grant.
- **Note:** Be sure to review the *What May Not be Funded* section on [pages 12–13](#) of the grant guidelines to ensure only eligible expenses are listed under this column.
- In the "Other Funds" column, 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."
- In the "Description" column, use the text box in each row to provide details about the income or expense line item. SO 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 in order for HAA Grants staff to perform the objective financial assessment:

1. What are the total assets as of June 30, 2024?
2. What are the total liabilities as of June 30, 2024?
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?

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	Sample Space City Corp.		\$500
Contributed: In-kind donations	Donations		\$1,000
Contributed: Government	Texas Commission on the Arts		\$1,000
Contributed: Other			
Earned: Admission			
Earned: Classes/Workshops			
Earned: Other			
Total		\$10,000	\$3,000

Expenses

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

Review Process

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

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 application fields, documentation, and reporting must be completed to be considered for funding. 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 Grants Portal](#).

The notification will provide applicants with the opportunity to cure missing or incorrect documentation within four (4) 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. Concerns regarding eligibility determination must be resolved following the grants appeals process, which may be requested at any time through the [Support Desk](#) or by calling 713-527-9330, ext. 6.



Sandra de la Rosa, *'Paper Wings'* (2024). Laser-cut paper. TANK Space at Spring Street Studio, Houston, TX. Photo courtesy of the artist / SACI grantee.

Review Process

Objective Criteria

- **Programs Inclusivity:** For the Festival and Support for Organizations grants, 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:** For the Support for Artists and Creative Individuals grant, staff will verify evidence of payment to artists in the application budget. For Festival and Support for Organizations, staff will verify using the DataArts Funder Report and application budget.
- **Stewardship of Public Resources:** For applicable 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.

The panel's ranked scores are combined with the objective measures in the application to determine the final ranking on a 100-point scale (details of each 100-point scale can be found in the respective grant program sections 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 an array of identities, perspectives, and professional expertise, ensuring they are able to properly assess merit in each of the applications requesting City funds.

HAA invites everyone with arts experience to be part of the panel process by [applying here](#). For FY 2024 panelist data, please refer to the [Annual Grants Impact Report](#).

Creative Impact Boost Grant 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 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 Creative Impact Boost Grant 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.

Last year, 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 FY 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](#).

Review Process

3. HAA Grants Committee and Board Review Process

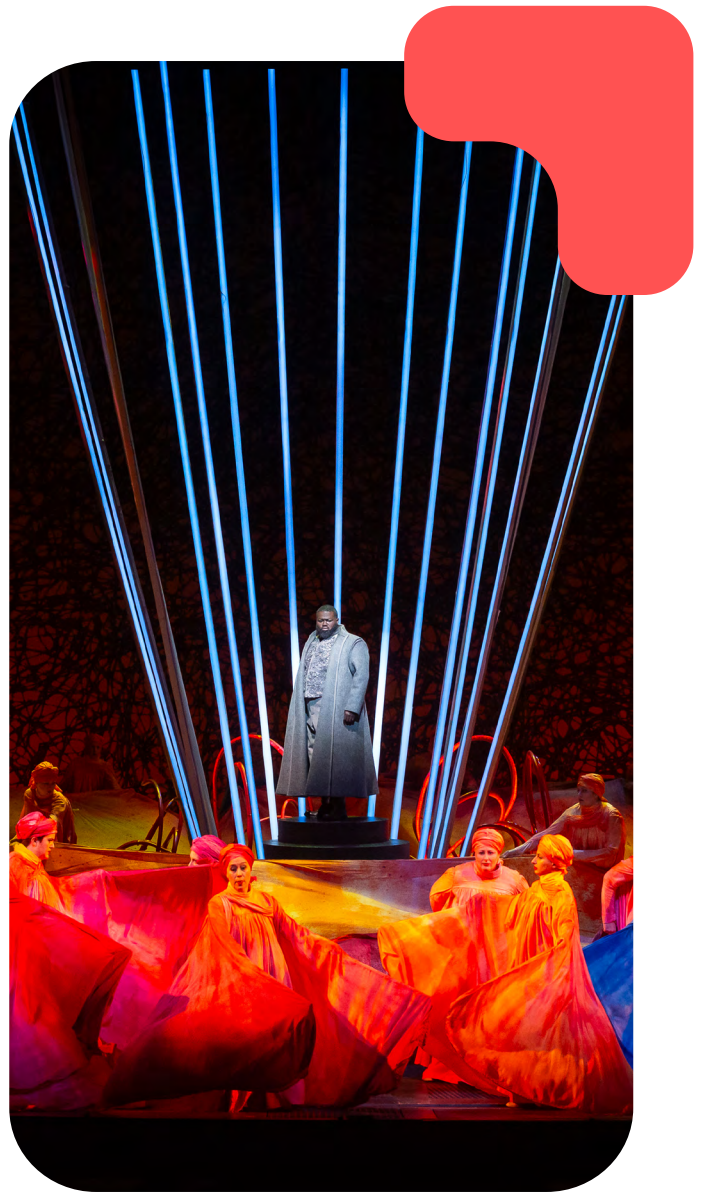
Peer panel recommendations are forwarded to Houston Arts Alliance's Grants Committee, which reviews and votes to ensure the panel process was followed with integrity. The Grants Committee then sends its approval to the HAA Board of Directors for its review of the process. The Committee and board do not 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 39](#). 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.



Richard Wagner, 'Parsifal' (2024). Brown Theater, Houston, TX. Russell Thomas and supporting cast pictured. Photo courtesy of Houston Grand Opera / SO grantee.

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.

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.

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](#).

After Decisions Are Made

Final Reporting

Final Reports can be submitted anytime after completing the public presentation. Reports are due through the [Grants Portal](#) within 30 days of the grant term's end date. Grantees must post their City-funded event to the [Cultural Events Calendar](#). Be sure to save the event's URL after posting, as it will be needed for the Final Report. Visit the [Final Report web page](#) for more details.

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

Appealing a 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 within five (5) business days of receiving an ineligibility notification to HAA's Grants Division at grants@haatx.com. The request must clearly state the reason for the applicant's appeal. For complete details on the appeals process, please refer to the [Appeals Guidelines document](#).

Support for Artists and Creative Individuals Grant Program



Nathaniel Donnett, *'Nebula'* (2023). Mixed media. 10' x 13'. University Museum at Texas Southern, Houston, TX. Courtesy of the artist / SACI grantee.

Overview

The **Support for Artists and Creative Individuals** grant program (SACI) 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.

Support for Artists and Creative Individuals Grant Program

SACI 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 online application form
Proof of Residency
Work samples (maximum 10 uploads)
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 these 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 (e.g., social media and digital 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; shows appropriate preparation to complete proposed activities; 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 sample budget table on [page 21](#).

Overall Proposed 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 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

Festival Grant Program



I Love The Nickel Community Block Party (2024).
Louis White Grocery, Houston, TX. Festival performers pictured. Photo courtesy of Ashley Ruiz–Urban Healing HTX / Festival grantee.

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, creating vibrant opportunities and experiences for residents and visitors.

Festival is defined as an annual or biannual celebration or immersion around a unifying theme or programmatic focus, featuring varied and curated events.

This grant is funded by cash in hand.

Festival Grant Program

Festival Program-Specific Requirements

For this grant program, a festival is defined as:

- An annual or biannual celebration.
- An immersive experience centered around a unifying theme or programmatic focus.
- Featuring a varied and curated program of events.
- Occurring within a specific, condensed timeframe, such as one day or over the course of a week.
- Open to the public.

Application Checklist

Details about required documents are provided in the Common Information section on [page 6](#).

Completed online application form

Proof of Residency or Headquarters

Work samples (maximum 10 uploads)

Eligibility verification documents

Financial document: SMU DataArts Funder Report for the fiscal year ending in 2024 **OR** the budget table in the online application. See the *Financial Reporting Required for Organizations* section on [page 18](#) for more details.

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; 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; the project is inviting to its 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 these 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 (e.g., social media and digital platforms, fliers, posters, newsletters, etc.).
- How have you maintained or expanded access across levels of ability, lived experience, geography, and other diversities? Does the festival 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; shows appropriate preparation to complete proposed activities; budget is feasible and demonstrates investment in artists and local talent.

Overall Proposed Project Timeline and 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



Don X. Nguyen, *The World is Not Silent* (2024). Hubbard Theatre, Houston, TX. Long Nguyen pictured. Photo courtesy of Alley Theatre / SO grantee.

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 2022: *"A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing."*

Support for Organizations Grant Program

SO 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, 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 online application form

Proof of Headquarters

Work samples (maximum 10 uploads)

Eligibility verification documents

Financial document: SMU DataArts Funder Report for the fiscal year ending in 2024 **OR** the budget table in the online application. See the *Financial Reporting Required for Organizations* section on [page 18](#) for more details.

For SO Category 3 only:

Audited or reviewed financial statements

Signed statement from the Chief Financial Officer detailing any additional direct support received from other City sources in fiscal year ending in 2024 (e.g., Houston First, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development)

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)

Programming connects to a defined community; applicant demonstrates effective strategies in marketing and audience engagement that are inclusive and publicly accessible; the programming is inviting to its community and the broader public.

Community Engagement

15 points / 550 words max.

Describe your community(ies)! How does your arts/cultural programming meaningfully connect with your defined community(ies)? Consider these 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?

Program 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

Program Access

10 points / 100 words max.

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 (e.g., social media and digital 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?

- 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)?

Stewardship of Public Resources (25 points)

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

Note: Category 1 and Category 2 organizations have a different set of stewardship assessment questions from Category 3. Stewardship is an objective assessment, as described in the Common Information section on [page 6](#).

Category 1 and Category 2

Applicant will answer yes or no to the questions below.

14 points

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

HAA 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 Funder Report/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* criteria for Support for Organizations, Category 3 applicants reflect additional and more stringent assessment.

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?

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

8 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)

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 Funder Report/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

Support for Organizations Award Structure

SO grant award amounts are determined by a formula that uses the organization's operating expenses (subtracting in-kind) and panel rank, which is based on the application's relative panel score. Grant scoring is conducted by independent panelists; HAA staff and board members cannot serve as panelists. This structure separates the responsibilities of competition design, which HAA handles, from application scoring, which panelists conduct, thereby empowering the community to select grantees for the upcoming calendar year.

In addition to panel scores, an objective score is calculated based on the financial data that SO applicants enter in SMU DataArts. The objective score evaluates a range of factors, such as payments to local artists. This objective score is then added to the panel score to rank applicants from highest to lowest scoring. Next, the maximum eligible award (MEA) amount is calculated based on the applicants' SO category:

- **Category 1 applicants** may receive a maximum of 20% of operating expenses less in-kind, up to \$125,000.
- **Category 2 applicants** may receive a maximum of 10% of operating expenses less in-kind, up to \$62,500.
- **Category 3 applicants** may receive a maximum of 3% of operating expenses less in-kind, up to \$1,000,000.

The highest-ranked applicant receives 100% of its MEA, and each subsequently ranked awardee receives one percentage point less than the previous organization, until awards reach 50%, which is the minimum. For example, the second-ranked applicant receives 99% of its MEA. Once the ranked list reaches 50% of the MEA, all remaining awardees receive 50%, ensuring no grant award falls below 50% of the MEA in Categories 1 and 2 only.

In 2023, HAA implemented a \$2,000 minimum award for the SO program to ensure smaller organizations receive meaningful support. All SO award amounts are subject to annual Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) projections.