

# Arts Access

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## Support for arts projects that focus on increasing access to underserved and underrepresented people.

This grant category offers direct support for arts projects that focus on increasing access to underserved and underrepresented people which may include ethnic groups\*, people with disabilities, people age 60 years and older, and active duty/veterans and their families.

*\*Ethnic groups are defined as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or other groups that constitute less than the state's current majority population.*

Funding will depend upon an organization's rating in the review process and upon the total amount of funds available to the Commission for grant allocation. This grant program is competitive, and most grant requests are not fully funded.

Proposed projects or programming must involve one or more Tennessee Arts Commission recognized art forms, including: visual arts, craft, media, design, music, theater, dance, folk and ethnic, or literary arts. If eligible, Arts Access applicants may also submit applications in the Arts Education, Project or Operating Support and the Arts Build Communities categories. Note that Arts Education-based projects, especially those primarily serving youth, must be submitted in one of the Arts Education grant categories.

*Arts Access projects are supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.*

### Description

The Arts Access Grant (AA) category offers direct support for arts projects which focus on increasing access to underserved and underrepresented populations which may include ethnic groups\*, people with disabilities, people age 60 years and older, and active duty military/veterans and their families.

*\*Ethnic groups are defined as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or other groups that constitute less than the state's current majority population.*

Proposed arts projects must involve one or more of these recognized art forms: visual, craft, media, design, music, theater, dance, folk or literary arts.

The following are examples of activities and expenditures that are consistent with the funding philosophy for AA:

- Contracted artists fees for professional artists
- Master classes, workshops, programs, projects or activities involving artists
- Specific aspects of workshops, festivals and conferences
- Public performances, productions and exhibitions produced by the applicant
- Exhibitions of art by professional artists
- Promotion, publicity and newsletters
- Materials and supplies needed for participants in the proposed art project
- Administrative and artistic staff support (except for applicants who apply for or receive operating support from the TN Art Commission in other grant categories).
- Technical/production support

- Payments to members of the organization's board
- Insurance Premiums
- Endowments
- Honoraria
- Office space rental
- Janitorial service and general physical plant maintenance
- Food and hospitality
- Permanent equipment purchases
- Scholarships and subsidized programming
- Payment of accumulated deficits
- Capital improvements
- New periodicals, books, etc. (such as vanity publications)
- Out-of-state travel
- Scholarly arts-related research and writing
- Cash awards
- Purchase of local public art
- Legal fees
- Planned fundraising events
- Events to which the general public is not invited
- Consultant fees for technical assistance

**A project may start no earlier than July 1, 2024, and must end no later than June 15, 2025.**

Funds awarded to a single organization in this category range in amounts from: **\$1,000 to \$25,000** for arts organizations & for non-arts organizations. [See Glossary to define arts organizations and statewide organization.](#)

Funding will depend upon an organization's rating in the review process (see Evaluation Criteria below) and upon the total amount of funds available to the Tennessee Arts Commission for grant allocation. This grant category is competitive.

**NEW:** Funds requested may be listed in up to four different expense categories in the Commission Funds Requested column in the budget. However, applicants are encouraged to request to spend the grant funding in as few expense categories as possible.

While there is no match requirement, **the budget section requires that you include your entire projected budget.** Applicant Cash Participation may be listed in multiple expense categories. Please itemize all expenses and income sources that support the proposed fiscal year under the appropriate categories. Note: these figures can be projected figures assuming the project is approved. [See Budget Line Item Definitions for guidance on how to fill out the application budget.](#)

An organization may submit only one AA application for any given fiscal year. AA applicants may also apply in the following grant categories for distinct activities (grant eligibility requirements apply):

- Arts Project Support
- Rural Arts Project Support
- Arts Build Communities
- Partnership Support
- Major Cultural Institution
- Small Urban Partnership Support/Small Rural Partnership Support
- Creative Placemaking categories
- Arts Education categories (if eligible)\*

primarily serving youth, must be submitted in one of the Arts Education grant categories.

Organizations eligible to apply in more than one grant category in a single fiscal year must submit applications for unrelated, separate and distinct projects. Organizations may not apply in different categories to support different activities of the same project or event.

#### Eligibility Requirements

An organization is eligible to apply for funding if the organization is legally chartered in Tennessee, has an active IRS 501(c)3 status, can provide a current copy of the organization's bylaws, and an Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Failure to provide all nonprofit status documentation will result in the application being disqualified.

**Unique Entity ID (UEI):** All applicants are required to have a Unique Entity ID. [UEI information and application instructions can be found here.](#)

Arts organizations that receive revenue directly from a "New Specialty Earmarked Plate" under T.C.A 55-4-301 (a)(1) are ineligible for Commission grant funding.

Additional eligibility requirements and funding restrictions may apply. Please see [Legal Requirements](#) for further details.

**Debarment and Suspension.** Grantees are required to sign contracts certifying to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it, its current and future principals, its current and future subcontractors and their principals are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal or state department or agency.

The Tennessee Arts Commission reserves the right to deny any application, if the proposed activity is outside of the scope or spirit of the agency's mission, purpose, or this grant program.

#### Evaluation Criteria & Panel Review

Commission staff will contact all applicants and inform them of the advisory panel review schedule. Advisory panels reviewing grant applications for this program use the following evaluation criteria citing evidence that:

- The proposed project demonstrates artistic, cultural and/or educational value while increasing access to underserved/underrepresented people (i.e., the community being served) (10 points)
- The proposed project advances the organization's mission to the community being served (10 points)
- The organization understands and is responsive to the diverse interests and needs of the community it serves by having a board that is reflective of the project or community population it is projecting to serve (10 points)
- The proposed project supports the work of artists through payment of fees, services or appropriate benefits (10 points)
- The organization understands and acts as an advocate for the public value of the arts in the community (10 points)
- The planning procedures are comprehensive, inclusive and communicated (10 points)
- The organization understands principles of documentation and evaluation and results are used to guide future planning and programming (10 points)
- The organization understands and demonstrates the value of public and private partnerships (5 points)
- The organization demonstrates financial stability and a broad base of financial support (5 points)
- The organization's ability to carry out proposed project based on history of Commission funding (10 points)
- The organization's application is well planned, addresses all questions, and is correct and complete in all information provided (10 points)

The Tennessee Arts Commission reserves the right to deny any application, if the proposed activity is outside of the scope or spirit of the agency's mission, purpose, or this grant program.

#### Accessibility

Organizations are urged to consider contracting with diverse artists, artists living with disabilities, and/or artists representing Tennessee's diverse artistic and cultural heritage. No person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, religion or sex shall be excluded from participation in, or be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination of services, programs and employment provided by the Commission and its contracting agencies. If an individual believes they have been subjected to discrimination, they should contact the Commission's Director of Arts Access, [Kim Johnson](#) (615) 532-9797.

#### Deadline and How to Apply

1. First time applicants must "register" (see step #2) and complete an "organization" and "people" profile (steps #3-5) before applying for a grant. Returning applicants are advised to check the "organization" & "people" profile, and if correct proceed to apply for a grant (step #6).
2. [Register](#) to use the [Online Grants System](#). **You are strongly advised to register well in advance to the application deadline.** Anyone registering close to the deadline date can expect delays in the processing of their grant application.
3. Log in to the [Online Grants System](#) to complete your "Organization" profile. Then begin an application for a AA grant.
4. Use the "Organizations" tab on the left-hand menu to ensure that the profile is complete and accurate. This information is as important as the application itself. Incomplete or erroneous data will impact your chances for funding. To edit the profile, click the "Edit" button at the top of the Organization screen.
5. Use the "People" tab on the left-hand menu to ensure that your "People" profile is complete and accurate. This information will also be used in the review of the application. To edit the profile, click the "Edit" button at the top of the screen.
6. When both your "Organization" and "People" profiles are complete and accurate, select the "Apply for Grants" tab, scroll down the page to Apply for Annual Grant, open an application and choose the AA grant application.
7. Complete all of the application fields.
8. Create and upload required attachments.
9. Submit by **Tuesday, January 16, 2024, by 11:59 p.m. (CST).**

**NOTE:** The forms in this portal do not auto-save. Always click the "Save" button before navigating away from the form you are editing to save your work.

Beware—clicking the back navigation button on your web browser will exit you from the system and you will lose your work.

**Association or Connection to Multiple Organizations:** If you are associated with more than one organization, the organization that you were originally associated with will prepopulate in the organization name field on any newly opened application. To change to another associated organization, simply delete the prepopulated name and type in the correct organization.

#### Required Documents in the Application

You will be prompted to create and upload the following documents in the **Required Documents** section of your Annual Application in the Online Grants System.

1. **Proof of Arts Advocacy.** Advocacy is educating and communicating to the public, including public officials, the importance of the arts and how public support of the arts can and has impacted your community. Examples of arts advocacy proof may include membership in Tennesseans for the Arts, copies of **recent** letters or emails (within the last 12 months) to state legislators and other state/local elected officials, photos of state/local elected officials at the applicant's arts events, newspaper articles or social media posts that create awareness about public support for the arts through the organization's activities (news articles that primarily market events are not acceptable), promoting the Specialty License Plate program and other pertinent print materials. **Proof of advocacy must be demonstrated by the applicant organization.** Applicants may **not** submit advocacy efforts conducted by contracted personnel. Multiple examples of arts advocacy will strengthen the application, but only one example that proves advocacy is required.



**this document.** The board list (at the time of application) must include the following:

- Full Name
- Email address
- Number of years on the board
- Length of term(s)

**NOTE:** Double check your board list to make sure it has all 4 pieces of the required information. If your organization's bylaws do not require term limits, include a statement on the Board List indicating this. **Legal requirements state that Commission funds granted to an organization may not be used as a payment of any kind, for any purpose, to members of an organization's board.**

3. **Corporation Annual Report: Only nonprofit organizations with 501(c)3 status will be prompted to upload this document** (as required to be filed annually with the Secretary of State's Office). In lieu of the report, you may also submit a copy of the email verification issued by the Secretary of State's office or [a copy of the online verification sheet maintained by the Secretary of State's Office found here](#). Entities of government do NOT submit.

#### Required Documents in the Organization Profile

You will **NOT** be prompted to upload these documents in the **Organization Profile**, but these documents may be required based on your applicant type.

**Recent Bylaws.** All Nonprofit, 501(c)3 applicants must upload the most recent copy of their bylaws to their online Organization Profile during registration, prior to submitting their application.

#### Additional Documents

You will **NOT** be prompted to upload these documents in the system, but these documents may be required based on your applicant type.

**Optional Materials.** These include proof of advocacy, project examples, artistic samples. These documents can be uploaded in the "**Documents**" section below the "**Required Documents**" section of your application. Accepted file types include .pdf, .jpg, or .png. For video and audio samples, provide links to projects in the section labeled "Optional Material Link(s)" below the "Documents" section.

#### For Projects Occurring

FY2025: July 1, 2024 - June 15, 2025

#### Application Dates & Deadlines

Application Open as of 11/1/2023

Application Deadline 1/16/2024

#### Eligible Applicants

501(c)3 Nonprofit organizations legally chartered & headquartered in Tennessee

Entities of Local Government within Tennessee

#### Funding Requests

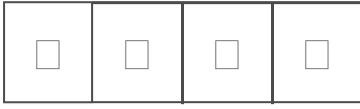
Arts Organizations & Non-Arts Organizations up to \$25,000. This grant does not require a match.





**Address:** 401 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Nashville, TN 37243  
**Phone:** 615-741-1701

For accessibility accommodation requests including alternate digital formats, captioning, ASL, and assistive technologies please contact Kim Johnson, Director of Arts Access, 615-532-9797.



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