

Arts Education Community Learning

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Support for projects that demonstrate creative and innovative arts learning programming in community settings.

The Arts Education Community Learning (AE-CL) grant program provides funding for single projects that use the arts in creative and innovative ways to offer education in communities or non-traditional school environments. There are no age restrictions. Projects should include hands-on learning experiences focused on performing, visual, traditional folk, and/or literary arts for the participants.

Applications must have a single project focus with outcomes listed for one project only. Applicants should not describe extensive educational programming involving multiple projects offered by the organization. Applicants may not apply for funds for the same project in another Tennessee Arts Commission grant category in the same fiscal year. Funds vary depending on the group being served, refer to the Guidelines below for more detail.

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.

Arts Education Community Learning Guidelines Fiscal Year 2025

Grant Guidelines:

Description

Funds support projects that demonstrate creative and innovative arts education programming in community settings or non-traditional school environments for populations of all ages that directly involve participants in a hands-on learning experience focused on performing, visual, traditional folk, and/or literary arts. Projects must focus on the learning process with opportunities to demonstrate understanding. Examples of projects may include, but are not limited to, after-school programs for children, projects involving adults as the primary learners, community-wide events with strong arts learning components, or short-term teacher training activities. Professional performing, visual, traditional folk, and/or literary artists must be active presenters in the project.

A project may not begin until **July 1, 2024**, and must conclude by **June 15, 2025**.

Applicants may request **up to \$18,000** for:

- innovative arts education programming in community settings or non-traditional school environments for populations of all ages.
- projects serving elementary, middle and/or secondary students through hands-on, experiential arts education programs with each student receiving at least three contact sessions with professional teaching artists involved in the design and implementation of the project. The proposed project must include a strong curriculum-based approach and a thorough assessment plan that measures student learning in the art skills being taught, as evidenced through a well-constructed lesson plan and evaluation tools submitted with the application.

Eligibility

First-time applicants should contact Chris Sweatt, Director of Arts Education, at chris.sweatt@tn.gov or 615-253-8914 prior to submitting an application to verify eligibility. Applicants must be one of the following:

NOTE: Public or private PK-12 schools are ineligible to apply in this grant category. Public PK-12 schools are encouraged to apply to the Student Ticket Subsidy grant program.

Applications must have a single project focus. Organizations with expansive education programs should narrow their focus to one component of their overall educational programming.

Applicants may not apply for funds for the same project in another Commission grant category in the same fiscal year.

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.

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.

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

Affirmative Duty to Report Major Organizational Change

Any grantee shall promptly notify the State in writing of any significant changes in the organization’s structure, leadership or financial circumstances that could affect services provided under the grant contract resulting from this application.

Accessibility

All Tennessee Arts Commission sponsored programs, services, and facilities are fully accessible to all Tennessee artists and citizens. Artists representing Tennessee’s diverse artistic and cultural heritage are urged to apply and participate in programs and activities. 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.

Appropriate Funding

NEW: Funds requested may be listed under 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. Eligible expenses include:

- **NEW:** Permanent education staff salaries including administrators or teaching artists (Based on the percentage of time spent on the project. This is particularly important for applicants that also receive an Operating Support grant covering permanent staff salaries.)
- Contracted professional fees for planning, implementation, or evaluation directly related to the project
- In-state travel and/or lodging for permanent education staff or contracted personnel
- Space rental (for locations not currently being rented by the applicant organization)
- Marketing
- Consumable supplies related to the project

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.

Inappropriate Activities

The following are examples of activities and expenditures not allowable for AE-CL funds. For further information see Funding Restrictions on [Legal Requirements](#).

- Incentives for participation including cash awards
- Projects designed primarily as performances, demonstrations, or exhibits with only minimal impact and limited hands-on participation
- Field trips
- Competitions and/or tours in which students are presenting, performing, and/or exhibiting
- Out-of-state travel
- Individual private lesson instruction
- Payment for apprentices or interns
- Capital outlay for permanent or non-consumable materials or equipment purchases (such as musical instruments, books, cameras, easels, etc.)
- Planned fundraising activities
- After-school clubs
- Scholarships or competitions
- Food
- Grant writing fees
- Non-classical art forms including but not limited to culinary arts, martial arts, healing arts, exercise programs, acrobatics or gymnastics (exceptions exist – contact the Commission for details)
- Payments to an employee or official of the State of Tennessee (Exceptions exist. Contact Commission for details)
- Payments to members of the organization's board
- Guest artists to exhibit, direct, choreograph or conduct productions or performances who are not engaged in active instruction with participants. For example, funds are not eligible to support a guest conductor who travels in to conduct a final showcase, but who has not been active in the learning and rehearsal process; or for a choreographer who supplies their work via video recording for another instructor to translate to students.

Program Requirements

- serve a population defined by the organization's mission
- have a clear beneficial educational focus which demonstrates thorough planning and implementation
- include an instructional component that clearly defines the goals and objectives of the project, provides learners with historical and/or social context, and demonstrates and/or reinforces the skill sets needed for the artistic medium being used. The instructional component details the content of the project – how subject matter will be taught and reinforced, the goals of the project, hands-on activities, and any problem-solving or critical thinking components. A sample lesson plan or content outline from one class session must be submitted with the application.
- include an evaluation component that measures the planning, implementation, and successes of the program and addresses plans for improvements or expansion of future projects. Evaluations should effectively measure the goals and outcomes of the project. Recently funded continuing projects must demonstrate to what extent outcomes were met.

Matching Funds & In-kind Contributions

Arts Education Community Learning grants do not require a dollar-for-dollar match; however, applicants are asked to show a match in the application as part of the Entire Project Budget, if applicable. In-kind contributions cannot be used for matching purposes but may strengthen the application. In the space provided for in-kind contributions, show the monetary value of services and supplies donated to the program free of charge.

Evaluation Criteria

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 to the community being served (10 points)
- proposed project advances the organization's mission to the community being served (10 points)
- organization understands and is responsive to the diverse interests and needs of the community it serves (10 points)
- proposed project supports the work of artists through payment of fees, services or appropriate benefits (10 points)
- organization understands and acts as an advocate for the public value of the arts in the community (10 points)
- planning procedures are comprehensive, inclusive and communicated (10 points)

planning and programming (10 points)

- organization understands and demonstrates the value of public and private partnerships (5 points)
- organization demonstrates financial stability and a broad base of financial support (5 points)
- 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)

Deadline & How to Apply

1. For new applicants, contact Director of Arts Education Chris Sweatt at chris.sweatt@tn.gov or 615-253-8914 to verify eligibility.
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 into the **Online Grants System** to complete your "Organization" profile and begin an application.
4. Use the "Organizations" link to the left in your Online Grants System portal to ensure that the record is complete and accurate. This information is as important as the application itself, and incomplete or erroneous data will impact your chances for funding. To open the record for completing/editing, click the "Edit" button at the top of the Organizations screen.
5. Use the "People" link to ensure that the record is complete and accurate. This information will also be used in the review of the application. To open the record for editing, 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 again and click the "Apply for an Annual Grant" link listed on the page.
7. Complete all of the application fields.
8. Create and upload required attachments.
9. **The deadline for this grant is Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 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 that 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 pre-populate in the organization name field on any newly opened application. To change to another associated organization, simply delete the pre-populated name and type in the correct organization.

Required Documents

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.
2. **Evaluation Tools:** Upload one sample of each type of evaluation tool that will be used during the project as one uploaded document. Do NOT include several completed evaluation instruments as part of the application.
3. **Lesson Plan or Content Outline:** Insert one sample lesson plan for one lesson that will be taught as part of the proposed project (limit 5 pages). Do **NOT** send lesson samples for the entire project or for more than one lesson.

version of a lesson plan but should still include instructional objectives and method(s) of assessment.

4. **Schedule:** Outline the schedule of activities with as much detail as possible, such as the daily and/or weekly schedule for both students and staff.
5. **Board of Directors List: Only nonprofit organizations with 501(c)3 status upload this document.** Note that Commission staff may request that grantees provide additional information about the board including but not limited to contact information and occupation during the grant period.

The board list (at the time of application) must include only 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.**

6. **Corporation Annual Report: Only nonprofit organizations with 501(c)3 status upload this document.** In lieu of the report required to be filed annually with the Secretary of State's Office, 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](#).

If applicable, create and upload the following documents in the **Documents** section (below the Required Documents section) of your Annual Application in the Online Grants System. Please note that you will **NOT** be prompted to upload these documents in the system, but these documents may be required based on your application type.

1. **Evaluation Summary: Only required for continuing projects** funded in the last fiscal year. Provide qualitative and quantitative data collected from evaluations from the previous year's funded project.
2. **Optional Material:** It is strongly encouraged that the applicant uploads support materials that showcase the project.
 - Support materials can include but are not limited to: artist resumes, reviews, clippings, photos, brochures, artistic samples, and links to videos directly related to the application proposal.
 - 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.

If applicable, create and upload the following document in the **Organization** profile of your portal in the Online Grants System.

1. **Bylaws: Only nonprofit organizations with 501(c)3 status upload this document.** Upload the most recent copy of the Bylaws of the organization in the Organization profile.

For Projects Occurring

FY2025: July 1, 2024-June 15, 2025

Application Dates & Deadlines

Application Open as of 11/1/2023

Application Deadline is January 16, 2024

[Apply Now](#)

Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit arts or non-arts organizations or local government agencies

Funding Requests

Up to \$18,000

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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