

## Volunteer Panelist Job Summary

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Each year, the Arts Council of Fort Worth enlists the aid of individuals from the North Texas community to serve as volunteer grant reviewers. Volunteer panelists play a crucial role in the grant making process by ensuring that grants are distributed to programs and organizations that are most worthy, impactful, and relevant to our community.

The grant panelist role is a serious yet fulfilling commitment that has far reaching effects. Arts Council grant funds come from a variety of sources – the City of Fort Worth, Texas Commission on the Arts, Tarrant County, private foundations, corporations, and individual donors. As a grant panelist, your primary job is to be a good steward of these funds and see that they are used wisely. In doing such, your work allows us to fulfill our mission of creating an environment that promotes, nurtures, and supports the arts in our community.

### **COMPOSITION**

The Arts Council supports the artistic community through two major grant types: Operating Support & Neighborhood Arts Program Support. Applications for support are reviewed by individual panels consisting of 5-7 volunteer grant reviewers from the North Texas community, of various arts related backgrounds and expertise.

Individuals with professional experience in arts administration and/or performance are welcome to apply for a panelist position. All panelists must be able to evaluate applications with a critical, objective eye and have an ability to commit to the workload involved. A passion for the arts is critical.

#### Panel Divisions:

- Panel 1 –Operating Support, Level I
- Panel 2 –Operating Support, Level II
- Panel 3 –Neighborhood Arts Program Support

Panel placement is decided based on expertise, diversity, panelist preference, and conflicts of interest within each panel. Panel assignments are finalized upon the receipt of all grant applications in September.

### **COMMITMENT**

Panelists can expect to spend between 10-20 hours fulfilling their duties as a volunteer reviewers, over the course of 2 months. Total time spent fulfilling program duties is variable, based on the items listed below:

1. Panelist Orientation – (approximately 1 hour)  
Presented as a webinar in late September and early October (two opportunities)
2. Online Application Review – (approximately 1 hr. per application; an average of 20 applications)  
Number of applications for review is based solely the number of applicants applying to each grant pool.  
Review time varies by individual.
3. The Grant Review Session – (approximately 5 hours each review session)  
Half day of review – November 14-16<sup>th</sup> (typically 9:00 AM –1:00 PM).

All panelists serve single year terms and may serve multiple years, as invited back by Arts Council staff.

## **PRE-REVIEW SESSION**

Once applications are submitted in the fall, you will be given access to the online grants portal where you are instructed to review individual applications prior to the November review sessions. On average, each panel is responsible for reviewing approximately twenty applications. Individual panelists are responsible for providing an in-depth evaluation of select applications as a “primary” and “secondary” reviewer. These assignments ensure that each organization’s application receives a fair amount of attention within their grant pool. While each panelist is personally responsible for their assigned applications, panelists are expected to have briefly reviewed all applications in their grant pool.

## **REVIEW SESSION**

During the grant review sessions in November, each panel convenes as a group to discuss and evaluate applications based on artistic merit, capability, and impact. During the review, questions, concerns and accolades are voiced and discussed among the panel. After each application is discussed, panel members assign a score to the application, based on the merits outlined. The number of applications reviewed by each panel is based solely on the number of applicants within each grant pool in the given year.

Once all applications are reviewed, scores are averaged, ranked and methodically assigned an award based on a predetermined matrix. Awards recommendations presented to the Arts Council Board of Directors for final approval. Awards letters and first checks are distributed to grant recipients in January.

## **APPLY TO BE A PANELIST**

1. Complete the Grant Panelist Application form available on the Arts Council website.
2. Contact Arts Council Director of Programs at (817) 298-3037 or [grants@artscouncilfw.org](mailto:grants@artscouncilfw.org) for help with any questions you may have about service on the grants panels.
3. Await approval of your application. If your nomination is approved, you’ll be contacted and sent more information on the Arts Council’s grant programs, the review process, and service timeline. Nomination or submission of an application does not guarantee your position as a volunteer reviewer.

*Thank you for supporting the arts in Fort Worth!*