

## Operating Support Grant Guidelines

Mid-Size & Large Budget Organizations

Grant Cycle 2021–2022

### About the Arts Council’s Grants Program

The mission of the Arts Council of Fort Worth is to create an environment that promotes, nurtures, and supports the arts in our community. The Arts Council’s competitive grants program fulfills this mission by supporting local arts organizations and the artistic programming they provide within our city. Arts Council grants are designed to:

- foster a culture of creativity and innovation;
- celebrate community diversity through inclusive artistic expression;
- increase accessibility and encourage broad-based participation in arts activities;
- strengthen the service capacity and business practices of arts providers; and
- promote tourism and economic growth in the City of Fort Worth.

Generous funding for the Arts Council grants comes from the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, corporate donors, foundations, and local individuals.

All grant guidelines and awards are subject to the contractual obligations between the Arts Council of Fort Worth and the City of Fort Worth. These guidelines are subject to change.

### Operating Support Grant Intent

Operating Support Grants provide core mission support through unrestricted funding to established nonprofit arts organizations for general operations, administration, and programming costs incurred during the grant year.

### Timeline

Grant Applications Open	June 3, 2021
Mandatory Applicant Training Webinar	June 10, 2021, 9:30 –11:00 AM CST
Application Deadline	July 30, 2021 by 4:00 PM CST
Period of Performance Begins	October 1, 2021
Award Notification	November 2021
Q1 Service Report Deadline	January 10, 2022 by 4:00 PM CST
Q2 Service Report Deadline	April 11, 2022 by 4:00 PM CST
Q3 Service Report Deadline	July 11, 2022 by 4:00 PM CST
Period of Performance Ends	September 30, 2022
Q4 Service Report & Final Report Deadlines	October 10, 2022 by 4:00 PM CST

## Mandatory Applicant Training Webinar

A representative from all applicant organizations planning to apply for a 2021/2022 Operating Support grant must participate in the Mandatory Applicant Training Webinar. Training participants will walk through the grant guidelines with Arts Council grant program staff, paying special attention to updates and changes. Please [register](#) to reserve your spot. Up to 2 individuals from each organization may participate.

## Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible to receive funding from the Arts Council of Fort Worth Grants Program, an applicant organization must:

- have an annual organizational operating budget of at least \$100,000;
- be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit in good standing with IRS and up to date with Form 990 filings;
- be a nonprofit arts organization whose primary mission is the presentation or production of artistic programming;
- demonstrate active operations and a history of at least 2 consecutive years of related program offerings within the City of Fort Worth;
- have a physical headquarters located within the City of Fort Worth and conduct majority (more than 50%) of its work/outreach/programming within the Fort Worth community OR have a Fort Worth based P.O. Box or residential address and conduct a minimum of 65% of its work/outreach/programming within Fort Worth;
- have a salaried full-time or part-time (15-20 hours per week) administrator that is responsible for and authorized to address the contractual obligations of the Arts Council Cultural Contract and the business management of the organization (artist fees and honorariums do not satisfy paid staffing requirements);
- compensate salaried staff at a rate no less than the federal minimum wage at the time of grant submission; and
- have an active board of directors; and
- meet all compliance measures and be in good standing with the Arts Council Grants Program.

Ineligible applicants include:

- academic institutions and/or their affiliated arts groups;
- fiscal sponsors; or
- governmental agencies;
- places of worship; and
- former Arts Council grant recipients with overdue, unacceptable, or falsified reports.

## Eligible Requests

Eligible uses for Operating Support funding include:

- administrative staff salaries;
- artistic salaries/fees;
- office supplies;
- production costs;
- facility rentals;
- marketing, printing, and other administrative costs; and
- outreach & education.

Ineligible uses of funding include:

- scholarships, purchase awards, or cash prizes;
- capital improvements, endowments, construction, or real property;
- debt reduction, interest on loans, fines, penalties, or costs of litigation;
- benefits or special events planned primarily for fundraising;
- sub-granting programs;
- activities for which college or university students receive academic credit;
- financing of political activities; or
- programming that is made inaccessible to any audience member based on gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, natural hair or hairstyles, traditional ethnic or religious attire, ethnicity, nationality, religion, creed, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other characteristic protected by law, except in projects involving schools or school systems (K-12) or other special populations

## Application Process

Grant requests are accepted once a year in the summer. Grant cycle announcements and deadlines are posted on the Arts Council's website [www.artsfortworth.org/operating](http://www.artsfortworth.org/operating). All applicants must apply for funding online through the Arts Council [grants portal](#). New applicants must register for the site to begin an application.

In addition to completing the narrative portion of the application form, grant applicants are also required to submit the following attachments:

- current board of directors list;
- IRS determination letter;
- current year-to-date statement of activities;
- most recent IRS Form 990 and audit (must be no more than 2 years old); and
- audiovisual presentation.

Whether submitted through the grants portal or mailed, all attachments must be received by the application deadline. Due to public health concerns, we are no longer accepting hand delivered submissions. Attachments received after the application deadline will not be considered and related applications will be marked incomplete and ineligible for review.

Mailed attachments should be addressed to:

Arts Council of Fort Worth  
ATTN: Grants Program  
1300 Gendy St  
Fort Worth, TX 76107

Once applications are received, each application is reviewed for eligibility and completeness by Arts Council grant program staff. Once this process is complete, the applications are assigned to a panelist evaluator for in-depth review.

## Audiovisual Presentations

Each application must include submission of a separate audiovisual presentation. Audiovisual presentations are viewed by evaluators to provide an overview of the applicant organization and/or proposed programming, expanding on and enhancing information already shared in the narrative portion of the application.

Accepted presentation formats include:

- digital video files (such as .mp3, .mp4, .wmv);
- CD/DVD/Video; or
- flash/thumb drive.

The following formats will not be accepted:

- PowerPoint;
- YouTube links; or
- Vimeo clips.

Your presentation must:

- be labeled with the grant cycle and the applicant organization's name;
- last no longer than 5 minutes in duration;
- begin on Track 1 or at the natural beginning of the chosen media; and
- only feature programs and operations that have taken place within the past 3 years.

Presentation tips:

- test A/V materials multiple times on different systems prior to submission;
- include items that demonstrate programming diversity, audience reached, and impact;
- do not read scripts during the presentation; and
- do not summarize your grant.

Digital audiovisual submissions may be shared via email or Dropbox with [grants@artscouncilfw.org](mailto:grants@artscouncilfw.org) by the grant deadline. Arts Council staff will make every effort to confirm receipt of A/V material submissions. Applicants who choose to submit via email are strongly urged to do so prior to the deadline. If A/V materials not received for any reason, including technical error, by the deadline, will be deemed ineligible. It is the applicant's responsibility to follow-up prior to the deadline, should a confirmation email not be received.

## Advice & Assistance

Arts Council staff are available year-round to assist with the application process and provide feedback on draft proposals, in advance of the application deadline. Draft applications are accepted for review and feedback up to 2 weeks before the application deadline. Due to the volume of requests, application assistance will not be available the final week before the deadline, however technical support related to the grants portal will be provided.

To submit a draft application, send an e-mail to [grants@artscouncilfw.org](mailto:grants@artscouncilfw.org) with your organization name and a request for review. Arts Council staff is also available to consult with applicants via telephone at (817) 298-3037. The staff's role is to assist the applicant in making the best presentation for funding. Staff will not write the applications or prepare attachments for applicants.

## Panelist Selection

Grant evaluation panels provide the Arts Council with expert guidance so that award decisions can be made objectively. The purpose of each panel is to provide qualitative and professional evaluations of applications based on the application review criteria.

Arts Council grant review panels are composed based on diversity in artistic discipline and may be current or past artists or arts administrators of various roles. Panels also include a representative from the City of Fort Worth. The number of reviewers within each panel varies according to the number of applications received for each grant type. Evaluators must be North Texas residents. Arts Council Board Members are not allowed to serve as panelists during their term on the Board of Directors.

Additional considerations include:

- professional qualifications;
- broad-based knowledge of the nonprofit arts industry;
- experience with nonprofits of varying size;
- diverse representation of gender, race, and disability, analogous with city demographics;
- geographic location (residential and professional); and
- potential conflicts of interest.

Panelist nominations/applications are accepted year-round and may be made by any individual or organization in Fort Worth. Self-nominations are permitted. Nominations and application forms may be obtained on the Arts Council website at [www.artsfortworth.org/volunteer](http://www.artsfortworth.org/volunteer) or by contacting Arts Council staff. Submitted panelist applications are reviewed by Arts Council program staff for eligibility and appropriate fit within panel composition. Proposed panelists are presented before the Arts Council Board of Directors for final approval. Submission of a nomination or application to serve on an Arts Council grant panel does not guarantee selection. Selected panelists are formally notified via email of their acceptance on the panels.

All panelists serve single year terms. Panelists may be asked by Arts Council staff to serve consecutive terms to take advantage of their expertise and experience on the panels. In the event of unexpected vacancies, Arts Council staff may appoint substitute panelists from a group of previously approved panelists.

Prior to the review sessions, panel members participate in a mandatory evaluation training session. During the training session, panelists are familiarized with grants program policies and procedures, as well as guidelines for objective evaluation of applications. Panelists are welcome to consult with Arts Council staff about the grant process or funding policies any time throughout the grant year.

## Panel Review Process

Panelists are charged with reviewing each application within their designated grant pool online prior to the grant review sessions, paying special attention to their primary and secondary reviewer assignments. As primary reviewers, panelists will serve as discussion leaders during the panel review sessions. As secondary reviewers, they will serve as backup discussion leaders should the primary reviewer not be able to attend the session for any reason.

Grant panels convene in October to review submitted applications. Prior to the review discussions, panelists complete Conflict of Interest disclosures and are reminded of the goals and objectives of their role as volunteer reviewers. All efforts are made to seat panelists who do not have any conflict of interest within the panels. In the case that a conflict of

interest is revealed on the day of the review, the panelist in question is required to remove themselves from the discussion during review of that application and will not be allowed to score that application.

Due to the volume of requests, Operating Support applications are reviewed by 2 separate panels. Applications are grouped by budget size for review. Applicant organizations with the largest operating budgets being reviewed by one panel, while the applicant organizations with the smallest operating budgets are reviewed by the other.

Applications are reviewed in order alphabetically. Each application review begins with a presentation of the applicant's submitted audiovisual attachment; exactly 5 minutes are allotted for this observation. Arts Council staff will stop the presentation at 5 minutes regardless of whether or not the presentation has concluded. No exceptions. Immediately following the audiovisual review, panelists are allowed 7 minutes to discuss the organization and/or proposed programming's strengths and weaknesses. Each discussion is led by the panelist assigned to the relevant application. Panelists are instructed to present criticisms in a constructive manner and maintain a professional demeanor during the entirety of the review.

Arts Council staff keeps time and directs the panel discussion to ensure that all discussions are active and consistent with the evaluation criteria. Arts Council staff does not contribute to the evaluation discussion or score applications. Arts Council staff can, however, provide factual clarifications, application updates (such as major staffing changes) and current or past grant program compliance information. Panel comments are recorded by Arts Council staff. Immediately following each discussion, Arts Council staff provides an oral overview of key panel comments for reinforcement and necessary correction. After each review is completed, panelists record their scores for the relevant application on the ballots provided. Panelists do not make recommendations on dollar allocations or funding decisions.

## Evaluation Criteria

Applications are evaluated and scored by panelists on the merits listed below. Awards are not based on need.

Artistic Merit/Mission	50 points
Impact	25 points
Capability	25 points
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100 points

Artistic Merit/Mission:

- Does the organization demonstrate progress against their stated mission and goals?
- Does the organization and its artistic staff demonstrate innovation, excellence, and creativity in mission-driven programming?
- Does the organization engage quality outside artists/present quality artworks that advance the mission of the organization?
- Does the program have importance to the artistic field, artists, audience, and/or community?

Impact:

- Does a program or initiative noted in the application address underserved populations?
- Does the organization present art works that are inclusive of all members of the community or are used to tell stories that are inclusive of all members of the community?
- Does the organization have key metrics and evaluation plans to track success against stated goals?
- Does the organization offer programs that are relevant to the broader community?

- Does the organization make efforts to reach new audiences and offer programs that attract both visitors and residents?
- Do the organization’s activities have local, regional, national and/or international impact?
- Does the organization generate economic growth for the City of Fort Worth?

Capability:

- Is there stability within the organization and its leadership?
- Does the organization have the administrative capacity to carry out its goals today and plan for tomorrow?
- Does the organization have financial stability, including diversified revenue sources?
- Does the organization present a clear, realistic budget?
- Does the organization have consistent and reliable methods for planning and implementation of programs?
- Is there evidence of support from the community?
- Is the board actively involved in the organization?
- Does the organization have a defined strategy for growth and/or sustainability?

## Awards

Operating Support award maximums are determined through a percentage of the applicant organization’s operating budget from the previous year, as listed below. Typical awards do not reach stated maximums.

Operating Budget > \$1 million	Maximum Operating Support = 5% of Operating Budget
Operating Budget = \$450,000–\$999,999	Maximum Operating Support = 10% of Operating Budget
Operating Budget = \$100,000–\$449,999	Maximum Operating Support = 15% of Operating Budget

Awarded funds can only be expended on the proposed activities that take place within the City of Fort Worth.

Grant awards are determined by the following factors:

- amount of funding available;
- number of eligible applications;
- review panel scores; and
- award compliance (including timely submission of required reports from previous grant years).

Once average panel scores are finalized, awards are allocated by Arts Council staff through use of predetermined funding matrices. Funding matrices are developed prior to the grant review sessions to ensure award allocations are fair and replicable. Matrix award values are based on available funds and the number of eligible applications within each grant pool. Total funds requested traditionally exceed the funds available. As such, few applications receive the requested amount of funding. Funding is not guaranteed. Award determinations are approved and finalized by the Arts Council Board of Directors.

Award notifications are sent to each applicant organization via email through the Foundant grant management system. As such, all applicants should add the email address [administrator@grantinterface.com](mailto:administrator@grantinterface.com) to their contact list to ensure timely notification delivery. Application scores and panelist comments for all applicant organizations are then uploaded to the [grants portal](#). For grant recipients, award details and grant agreements stipulating the terms of the award are also made available through the grants portal. Grantees must return the fully executed grant agreement by the stated due date. Grant agreements not received by the deadline will be voided and funding will be reallocated. Grant recipients will also be asked to share photos for promotional use. All awards are made public via the Arts Council website and through various agency publications.

## Matching Requirement

Operating Support Grant recipients are required to procure and provide evidence of a 1:1 cash match of the funds awarded through any combination of earned or unearned income. The grant recipient's failure to meet the match will result in a proportionally reduced grant award and may require reimbursement to the Arts Council.

## Appeals

Written appeals must be submitted to the Chairman of the Board within thirty days of the initial ineligibility notification. Appeals are considered by a review process committee, appointed by the acting Arts Council Board Chair. The review process committee will report its findings and recommendations to the Arts Council Board of Directors for further action. Appeal responses are sent via mail. All decisions of the Arts Council and its Board of Director's are final.

## Payment

Payments are made based on City of Fort Worth mandated payment schedules. All Grants greater than \$10,000 are distributed in quarterly installments payable in January, April, July and October (upon submission of final report) of the funded year. Grants of \$10,000 or less are paid in full in January of the funded year. All payments are contingent upon the satisfactory completion of Arts Council grant requirements, including but not limited to the execution of the grant contract, satisfactory past grant reporting, and completion of any Arts Council site visit action items. All payments are subject to the availability of funds from City contracts. All payments are made via check.

## Acknowledgement

Grant recipients must acknowledge the Arts Council of Fort Worth and the City of Fort Worth in the following ways:

- a credit line and/or Arts Council logo must appear in all published materials and announcements regarding grant-supported activities with language similar to: "[Organization or project] is supported in part by a grant from the Arts Council of Fort Worth";
- one page of each season program or playbill must be reserved for a listing of Arts Council donors; and
- the City of Fort Worth should be recognized whenever Arts Council funding is acknowledged.

Donor listings and logos are available for download at [www.artsfortworth.org/grantee-resources](http://www.artsfortworth.org/grantee-resources).

## Reporting

Grantees are required to submit quarterly service reports throughout the year, sharing presentation numbers, attendance figures (broken down by age group), and percentage of free admission. Grant recipient will also submit a comprehensive final report to the Arts Council detailing the use of funds, additional income sources, activities assessment, and statistical outcomes, at the end of the grant period.

All reports are to be obtained and completed via the online [grants portal](#). Failure to complete reporting requirements as specified below is considered a breach of contract with the Arts Council of Fort Worth:



- each delinquent report will result in a 5 point demerit per day from the organization's next application score (there will be a 2 point demerit if the report is submitted on the due date but past the 4:00 PM deadline);
- organizations with outstanding reports are ineligible to sign any new contracts for funding;
- organizations with outstanding reports are deemed ineligible for funding;
- organizations with 3 or more late reports in the current grant cycle are deemed ineligible for funding for the next grant cycle; and
- failure to submit a final report within thirty (30) days after the contact end date will result in forfeiture of all remaining award payments to the Arts Council of Fort Worth and result in an automatic void of any new/pending award contracts executed between the Arts Council of Fort Worth and the grantee.

## Site Visits

Periodically, Arts Council staff will conduct in-person site visits with awards recipients. During these visits, Arts Council staff reviews financial records for received Arts Council grants. Report forms submitted to the Arts Council are the basis for these reviews. Grantees must show copies of checks, bank statements, and/or other financial documentation that supports the expenditure line items on the report forms. Any pending or future grants are contingent on the satisfactory outcome of the monitoring visit and resolution of any inaccuracies found in the report form.

## Compliance

Arts Council grant recipients are expected to complete funded activities as proposed in the grant application. Award recipients are responsible for informing the Arts Council, in writing, of any substantial or fundamental changes to funded activities. A written request for approval of changes, including related justification, should be sent to the Arts Council prior to the expenditure of grant funds. Approval is not guaranteed.

If the organization's capacity or proposed programming changes significantly, the grant award may be revised or withdrawn. In some instances, awarded funds may be subject to repayment to the Arts Council by the recipient organization.

The compliance measures listed herein are non-negotiable. Any pending or future grants are contingent upon satisfactory compliance with all measures listed above.

## Marketing Support

The Arts Council will share grantee announcements via the Arts Council's social media channels. To request a post, contact Elena Greer, Public Engagement Manager, at [egreer@artscouncilfw.org](mailto:egreer@artscouncilfw.org) and she will happily accommodate your request as her schedule allows. When requesting a post, please provide 2-3 images with credit information, and a short caption (which the Arts Council reserves the right to edit as needed). Please note that the Arts Council will not advertise ticket sales or promote fundraisers.