

City of Alexandria Arts Program Grant Frequently Asked Questions and Guidelines

Since 1984, the City of Alexandria has been providing arts grants to ensure access to quality arts programs and events for its residents and visitors.

The amount of available grant funding and qualifications may vary from year to year. Please be sure to review the grant application and guidelines carefully before applying.

About the Arts Program Grant

Arts Program Grants are available for up to \$12,500 and should not exceed 50% of total program budget and require a 1:1 (dollar for dollar) cash match. Arts Program Grants support ongoing or short-term arts programs that engage and benefit the residents of the City of Alexandria. Annual grants fund activities that take place within the City of Alexandria between July 1 – June 30 each year.

What are the goals of the City of Alexandria Arts Program Grant?

The Arts Program Grant has the following goals:

- Ensure that Alexandria residents have access to high-quality and diverse artistic programs that demonstrate excellence and strengthen the city's cultural vitality.
- Promote inclusive, equitable, and community-responsive arts programming throughout the city.
- Support organizations that demonstrate effective financial and organizational management by implementing realistic, mission-focused programs and leveraging qualified leadership to achieve program goals while sustaining the health and well-being of the organization.

What is a “Program”?

A “program” is defined as a series of activities or events which are ongoing during the grant period (July 1 – June 30 each year). Programs do not have to be “new” to be eligible for funding.

It is easy to confuse a “program” with a “project”. Generally, programs occur over time and are developed with a longer time frame in mind and can be a single event or an ongoing series. To clarify the distinction between a project and a program -- a project is the marketing campaign for the production of one play; a program is the annual production of an entire season of plays.

Examples include: an after-school arts education program involving many types of workshops and artistic disciplines; an annual subscription season of performances, and an ongoing Artist-in-Residence series presented at a community center.

Programs have specific goals, objectives, and impacts on the organization, its audiences, participants, and the community. While the content or people involving in program delivery may vary; the original program intent and goals do not change without significant planning or evaluation. Applicants should be able to clearly articulate how the program supports their mission and organizational goals.

Grant Guidelines

In order to be considered for funding:

- Applicants must be a non-profit organization who has been in existence for 1 full year before applying.
- Pass-through grants are not allowed.
- Programs must take place between July 1 – June 30 of each fiscal year.
- Programs must take place within Alexandria's city limits (does not include Fairfax County).
- The applicant has not been in default of payment to any agency of the City of Alexandria.
- Proposed budget provides the required cash match.
- Funding from the City of Alexandria such as, but limited to, the Marketing Fund, the Alexandria City Public Schools and from other Departments, *cannot* be used for the cash match.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.
- The Office has a very broad definition of "arts" which would include culinary arts. The rules of the grant program apply, and culinary arts program would have to demonstrate the artistic merit such as having professional chefs teaching the classes in the same way artists are engaged for other types of programs. The program grant would not fund food trucks events or restaurant crawls.
- City agencies, employees, or volunteers (defined as any agency under the direct control of an elected official, or which reports directly to the City Manager, may not apply for an Arts Grant; they may only play a supportive role in a program proposed by an organization or group.

Grant funds **cannot** be used for:

- Activities intended to *influence, either directly or indirectly, the actions of any public official or body, elected or appointed, in any existing or proposed legislation.*
- Activities *restricted, entirely or substantially, to the membership of the organization.*
- Activities that *do not happen between July 1 and June 30 of each fiscal year.*
- Activities that *take place outside the city limits of Alexandria.*
- Activities associated with a *school's internal arts programs* such as in-school student performances, the purchase of art supplies, or cash awards for student arts competitions and purchases of publications.
- Activities or organizations that *discriminate against or promote discrimination towards other people or groups.*
- *Capital expenditure* is associated with improvement in facilities and/or purchases of equipment.
- Expenses related to *reduction of accumulated deficits or debts.*
- Expenses related to *fund-raising events and receptions.*
- Expenses related to *social functions*, whether an integral part of the project funded by the Office of the Arts.
- Expenses associated with *cash awards, prizes, tuition, or to purchase gift cards.*
- Programs that are essentially *rehabilitative or therapeutic in nature.*
- Programs *designed to achieve goals that are primarily political, religious, or social.*
- Expenses *related to artists, staff and /or board travel and training.*
- Expenses *related to planning initiatives and/or consultant fees.*
- A *Festival* is not considered to be an artistic event.
- *Colleges, universities, and libraries are not eligible to receive arts grants.*

Are there Grant Program Definitions and Terms?

To assist grant applicants, there are grant program definitions and terms that can guide you while you are developing your grant application. Please refer to this tool if you have any questions.

How are applications evaluated?

Applications are reviewed by a Grants Task Force comprised of Arts Commissioners and arts professionals from throughout the region.

The Task Force evaluates each application based on the following criteria:

- **Artistic excellence** and quality of the proposed program or project **(45% of overall score)**.
- **Impact & Engagement** of the residents of the City of Alexandria **(35% of overall score)**.
- **Management and Budget** which considers the feasibility of applicant to successfully implement the annual program or project and overall fiscal responsibility of the applicant with realistic financial goals and strategic planning in support of the project **(25% of overall score)**.

Applications are reviewed individually and scored based on the content of the application and not on the reviewer's personal knowledge of the applicant/organization.

Is there a matching requirement?

Yes, there is a dollar to dollar (1:1) cash match requirement for the Program Grants. No in-kind donations or services can be applied towards the match. The cash match must be met prior to submitting a Final Report at the conclusion of the program. Other funding from the City of Alexandria such as, but not limited to, the Marketing Fund, Alexandria City Public Schools, and other City departments, cannot be used for the cash match.

What are applicants required to do if awarded a grant?

- **THE GRANT CONTRACT:** The approved application form represents an agreement between the City of Alexandria and the applicant. The applicant will comply with all conditions set forth in the application form and any other documents furnished to the applicant related to the grant. Every recipient of a grant is required to respond in a timely manner to all requests for information required by the Office.
- **ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** All grant recipients are required to credit the City of Alexandria in all appropriate printed public relations materials relating to activities supported by the Arts Program Grant.

- **PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ARTS STUDIES:** During the grant period, the Office of the Arts may request grantees to participate in local, regional, or national arts studies. The studies may be related to, but are not limited to audience spending, organization management, or facility usage. Grantees are required to assist the Office of the Arts by completing these studies.
- **FINAL REPORTS:** At the completion of the project a Final Report is required. Grant recipients must submit a final report 30 days after the completion of the project/activities, but no later than June 15 of each year.

How will I know I received a grant award?

The Office of the Arts will inform each grant applicant in writing of the applicant's grant status, method of disbursement, and any additional requirements.

When are the funds available?

The initial payment (50% of the award) is processed upon receipt of the Grant Contract. The final payment (50% of the award) of the award is available after submission and acceptance of the Final Report.

Who can I contact if I have questions or need additional assistance?

If applicants have questions, need assistance, or to inquire about available workshops, please contact anyone at the City of Alexandria Office of the Arts or email Cheryl Anne Colton at: cherylanne.colton@alexandriava.gov. If reasonable accommodation is needed, please call (703) 746-5565; TTY (703) 838-4902.