GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

2025 Grant Guidelines

Deadline: June 5, 2025

The mission of the California Arts Council, a state agency, is to strengthen arts, culture, and creative expression as the tools to cultivate a better California for all.

Learn more at www.arts.ca.gov

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GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

DEADLINE: June 5, 2025, 11:59 PM
Grant Request Amount: up to $30,000
Grant Activity Period: October 1, 2025- September 30, 2026

Apply at: calartscouncil.smartsimple.com

Please refer to the California Arts Council Grants Manual for all policies, procedures, and resources for applicants and grantees.

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Program Timeline

Application Opens	April 2, 2025
Application Deadline	June 5, 2025
Panel Review	Approx. July - August 2025
Funding Decision	Approx. September 2025
Funding Notification	Approx. September 2025
Grant Activity Start	October 1, 2025
Estimated Arrival of Funds	Approx. January 2026 - March 2026
Grant Activity End	September 30, 2026
Final Report Deadline	October 30, 2026

Eligibility

Organizations eligible to apply include:

1. Nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), California organizations
2. Units of municipal, county or Tribal governments
3. Fiscally sponsored organizations
4. **Arts service/network organizations** with total revenue of **$5 million or below**
5. **Arts producing or presenting organizations** with total revenue (TR) of **$1.5 million or below**

Non-eligible applicants include:

1. Organizations that are registered and primarily operate as for-profit corporations/entities, even if they have a fiscal sponsor.
    a. This includes LLCs and any for-profit entities (including 'charitable arms or branches').
2. Non-art organizations that do not offer ongoing art activities and/or services
3. Individuals
4. State agencies
5. Federal agencies
6. Elementary and secondary schools (public, private, charter)
7. School districts
8. County offices of education
9. Parent-teacher associations (PTAs)

10. Booster clubs

Eligibility Requirements

. **Applicant organizations and fiscal sponsors must meet the requirements below:**

1. Have a principal place of business in California and a California address.
2. Have a minimum two-year history of consistent arts programming and/or services **prior** to the application deadline.
3. Demonstrate proof of nonprofit status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or section 23701d of the California Revenue and Taxation Code.
   o Eligible applicant organizations without non-profit status, please see *Fiscal Sponsor Requirements* in the 2025 Grants Manual.
4. Have "active status" with the California Secretary of State (SOS) showing evidence of "good standing" at the time of application.

Eligible Request Amounts

- Applicant organizations can request up to $30,000 for a one-year funding cycle

Funding Restrictions

- Organizations who have applied for the 2025 cycle of State-Local Partners are not eligible for General Operating Support.
- For applicant organizations with total revenue **above** $250,000, the sum of requests during the same year of funding cannot exceed **50%** of the total revenue from the most recently completed fiscal year.
   o The CAC's definition of Total Revenue is the total cash inflow from your organization's most recently completed fiscal year. Cash inflow/income includes all earned income (ex: ticket sales) and contributed income (ex: grants, donations/contributions, one-time organizational funding, operational grants). Re-granting and pass-through funding are excluded from the organization's total revenue calculation.

Matching Funds

- A one-to-one match is required for this grant for organizations with a total revenue **above $250k**. See the 2025 Grants Manual for clarification on eligible match sources.

2025/26 Funding Priorities

- Organizations serving historically and systemically underserved communities located in the lower two quartiles of the Healthy Places Index, including rural and inland areas, as well as regions with a history of low investment from the CAC;
- First-time grantees, who have not previously received direct CAC funding (except for organizations whose only previous CAC funding was a Cultural Pathways grant); and
- Small organizations with Total Revenues of $250,000 or below.

General Operating Support grantees can receive up to two consecutive years of funding, followed by a one-year break, starting with the 2025/2026 funding cycle. **Past general operating grantees are eligible to apply for this round of General Operating Support.**

Background & Purpose

The California Arts Council's Strategic Framework prioritizes racial equity and broad geographic reach into communities of all sizes and needs. Recent data and community input demonstrate the need for greater access to general operations funding in support of maintaining California arts and cultural organizations during times of uncertain economic growth.

The General Operating Support grant program provides direct funding to arts and cultural organizations in support of ongoing operations.

Arts organizations defined: An arts and cultural organization is defined as an entity with a primary purpose of providing arts, creative, or cultural programming/services. Assessed by CAC staff, this purpose is determined by the organization's mission, purpose statement, and/or by its summary of core organizational programs and services.

Program Goals

This grant supports the well-being of California's cultural vitality by helping sustain a robust and diverse arts workforce and infrastructure. Funds may be used to support any eligible expenses associated with the general operations of an arts or cultural organization, including but not limited to rent, utilities, and staff salaries. Applying for this grant does not restrict an organization from applying for other CAC project-based grants. General Operating grants are intended to support the applicant organization in carrying out its mission. Funding is not intended to support a specific project.

Reporting Requirements

- Reports are filled out and submitted within the grant application portal, using the CAC provided format. The application owner will receive an email when reports are available in the Requires Attention section of the application owner's account.
- Provide a final report summarizing grant-funded activities and accomplishments within 30 days of the end of the grant activity period (or by the stated deadline). Grantees that do not submit reports will be ineligible to apply for future funding opportunities.

Grant Application Questions & Review Criteria

Application questions and required documents pertaining to each review criterion are included below.

Detailed instructions are available at calartscouncil.smartsimple.com.

Application Summary

Provide a brief summary of your proposal indicating how CAC grant funds would be used. This description will be used to introduce your proposal to the review panel. If funded, this description may be used as the Scope of Work in your grant contract and will be binding. It may also be edited by CAC and used to summarize your proposal in public documents. Please review the [What We Do Not Fund](#) resource document before completing this section.

Centering Equity and Accessibility

The application must demonstrate your organization's experience, capacity, and commitment to engaging and uplifting historically under-resourced, excluded, and erased artists, audiences, communities, and cultural practices. This dedication should be evident throughout the proposal.

The application must also demonstrate that the programs, services, information, and facilities—including online spaces—will be accessible to individuals with disabilities, such as those who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, or who have physical, visual, developmental, learning, or cognitive disabilities, as well as mental or chronic illnesses.

Application Questions and Required Documents

1. Describe your organization's equity and accessibility goals.
2. What does your organization do to achieve these goals?
3. How does your organization determine progress in achieving these goals?
4. Describe your organization's approach to ensuring that people with disabilities are able to fully participate in all programs and services.

Management and Leadership

Application must demonstrate effective management practices.

Application Questions and Required Documents

1. Complete a two-year budget snapshot table. Provide revenue and expense amounts. Address any significant changes in line items from one year to the next and explain anticipated surpluses or deficits.
2. Please provide the total amount of pass-through funds your organization manages. This includes grant funds passed to fiscally sponsored organizations. This total should not be included in your organizational Total Revenue calculation.
3. Please provide the total amount of funds used for regranting in the field. This total should not be included in your organizational Total Revenue calculation for this application.
4. Provide numbers of each of the following:
   a. Number of full-time staff
   b. Number of part-time staff
   c. Number of volunteers (providing significant administrative/operational support)
5. Provide a list of each key individual involved in administrative, artistic, or programmatic leadership positions within your organization. Include name, title, relevant experience, and role.
6. Provide a current list of Board of Directors, Commissioners, Committee, or other appropriate members of your governing body.
7. Provide a summary of your organization's current strategic plan or existing priorities and goals to strengthen organizational capacity, ensure proper leadership and staff support, implement effective governance policies, and maintain a structure that supports your work as an arts and cultural organization.

8. Complete a matching funds table, if applicable. Indicate the source type, identify the source, enter the amount, and indicate the status of matching funds (Committed, Pending, or Projected).

Arts & Cultural Engagement

The application must demonstrate how your organization is responsive to the needs and priorities of the community(ies) it serves through delivering quality programming, services, and culturally relevant outreach strategies to engage systemically marginalized communities

Application Questions and Required Documents

1. Describe the arts and cultural programs and services your organization offers and the community(ies) it serves.
2. Describe your organization's culturally relevant and responsive outreach strategies.
3. How do you collect input from audiences/communities you serve to inform your organizational strategy and programming?
4. Provide at least one (1) but no more than five (5) support materials that best portray your organization and its work. These may include artistic work samples, letters of support, marketing materials, and/or partnership agreements. Samples must have been created within the past three years and should be relevant to this grant opportunity.

Staff Assistance

Before contacting staff, check [FAQs](#) to see if application questions can be answered. If staff assistance is still required for guidance or clarification, email is the best way to contact Program Specialists. **We recommend that you contact staff well in advance of the deadline to ensure you can be accommodated.** People who identify as Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, or have difficulty speaking may dial 711 to reach the California Relay Service (CRS). Large print is available upon request. Translation services are also available upon request.

Organizations seeking technical assistance should contact:

Leslie Giovanini
she/her
Arts Program Specialist
California Arts Council
genopsgrant@arts.ca.gov