Administering Organization Grant
Individual Artists Fellowship

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**

Administering Organization Grant
INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP

DEADLINE: June 5, 2025, 11:59 PM
Grant Request Amount: Variable depending on population of region
Grant Activity Period: October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2027

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. October 2025
Grant Activity Start	October 1, 2025
Estimated Arrival of Funds	Approx. January 2026 - March 2026
Grant Activity End	September 30, 2027
Interim Report Deadline	October 30, 2026
Final Report Deadline	November 1, 2027

Eligibility

Organizations eligible to apply include:

- Nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), California organizations
- Units of municipal, county or Tribal governments

Non-eligible applicants include:

1. Fiscally sponsored organizations
2. 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').
3. Non-art organizations that do not offer ongoing art activities and/or services
4. Individuals
5. State agencies
6. Federal agencies
7. Elementary and secondary schools (public, private, charter)
8. School districts
9. County offices of education
10. Parent-teacher associations (PTAs)
11. Booster clubs

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant organizations 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.
4. Have "active status" with the California Secretary of State (SOS) showing evidence of "good standing" at the time of application.

Administering Organization Eligibility Requirements

In order to serve as an Administering Organization, applicant organizations must have existing capacity in the following areas:

- Administering regranting programs to individuals, including developing grant guidelines, managing a competitive application and adjudication process and providing direct grant payments to artists and cultural practitioners
- Providing regional outreach and marketing and in-person/virtual technical assistance to grant applicants
- Employing an online grants management system to administer the grant application, management and payment process

Eligible Request Amounts

Applicant organizations may apply to serve one of the eight geographic regions and will indicate in their application which region they intend to serve. Applicant organizations can request up to the amounts listed below, with a baseline amount of $300,000 increasing based on regional population tier. Awards may differ from requested amounts based on panel rank and available funding. **Total program allocation will be voted on by Council once the state budget is finalized.**

The eight geographic regions are as follows:

- **Region 1: Upstate (Maximum Request Amount $300,000)**

To serve Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, and Yuba counties

- **Region 2: Capital (Maximum Request Amount $300,000)**

To serve Alpine, El Dorado, Sacramento, Solano and Yolo counties

- **Region 3: Bay Area (Maximum Request Amount $700,000)**

To serve Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Sonoma counties

- **Region 4: Central Valley & Eastern Sierra (Maximum Request Amount $450,000)**

To serve Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare and Tuolumne counties

- **Region 5: Central Coast (Maximum Request Amount $300,000)**

To serve Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Ventura counties

- **Region 6: South- Los Angeles (Maximum Request Amount $1,000,000)**

To serve Los Angeles County

- **Region 7: Inland Empire & South Coast (Maximum Request Amount $700,000)**

To serve Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange counties

- **Region 8: Far South (Maximum Request Amount $450,000)**

To serve Imperial and San Diego counties

A map illustrating all eight regions and 58 counties can be found here.

Funding Restrictions

Applying for the Administering Organization Grant-Individual Artists Fellowship does not restrict an organization from applying for other CAC grants.

Matching Funds

Matching funds are not required for this grant.

Background & Purpose

The California Arts Council (CAC) is a statewide agency committed to serving California artists, arts organizations, and communities of all sizes and needs. Guided by racial equity principles, the CAC continuously evaluates its grantmaking practices to ensure fair and inclusive funding opportunities that sustain a vibrant, safe, and resilient creative ecosystem across the state.

Through regionally based Administering Organizations (AOs), the Individual Artists Fellowship (IAF) program uplifts and celebrates California artists across all disciplines and traditions, highlights their excellence and acknowledges their leadership in shaping traditional and contemporary cultures.

For this grant, excellence is defined by:

- A unique artistic vision
- A sustained commitment to creative practice
- Engagement with and impact on the cultural ecosystem

Program Goals

The CAC will select eight (8) Administering Organizations (AOs) to design and implement a two-year fellowship program that supports individual artists and culture bearers across all disciplines. This initiative is dedicated to ensuring equitable access to resources by reaching artists in all 58 counties. By providing unrestricted funding, the fellowship empowers artists at pivotal moments in their careers, enhancing their ability to contribute meaningfully to California's diverse communities. Investing in individual artists and culture bearers through this program strengthens artistic expression, creative practice, and community collaboration statewide.

Program Administration

Administering Organizations (AO)

The AOs will be responsible for the planning and implementation of the Individual Artists Fellowship program in their region, including but not limited to:

- Develop clear application processes and timeline that include managing the collection and screening of applications from individual artists and culture bearers and award management
- Provide access and support for individual artists and culture bearers throughout the course of the application, award, and evaluation processes
- Engage in robust, culturally and discipline-specific engagement and outreach to ensure comprehensive geographic reach within the service area
- Develop an adjudication process that includes peer review panels convened by the AOs and based on the following review criteria:
  - **Creative Vision:** Artist effectively communicates their personal story, artistic medium or practice, and long-term aspirations for their work.
  - **Aesthetic Excellence**: Artistic work and/or examples of cultural practice demonstrate strong alignment with the components of the Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change[1], including commitment, communal meaning, disruption, cultural integrity, risk taking, sensory experience, emotional experience, openness, coherence, resourcefulness, and stickiness.
  - **Community Engagement and Social Impact**: Artist effectively communicates their engagement with their community(ies) and the positive social impact their work has had locally, regionally, and/or statewide, addressing themes including but not limited to race, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Convene fellows at least once over the course of the grant activity period to engage in networking and co-learning
- Provide platforms including but not limited to virtual or print publications, exhibits, or performances to increase the visibility of the work of the fellows
- Participate in program evaluation including but not limited to feedback and data collection
- Provide both interim and final reports 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.
- 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.

Funding Requirements & Structure

Each Administering Organization will regrant fellowship awards to provide unrestricted funding in support of the fellows' artistic practice. The following three tiers of funding should be made available. Each AO will make grants to a minimum of three fellows in each career tier.

Awards will be funded at the full dollar amount for each tier, partial awards will not be made.

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[1] See "Aesthetic Perspectives," Americans for the Arts, 2017.
https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/Aesthetic%20Perspectives%20Full%20Framework.pdf

CAC Emerging Artist Fellows - $5,000

Emerging artists are those in the beginning stages of making their work public and engaging the larger community in their practice. Individuals at this career stage may have had a few public showings of their work, but do not yet have ongoing resources or support.

CAC Established Artist Fellows - $10,000

Artists in the Established tier regularly make their work public and engage the larger community in their practice. Individuals in this tier can give multiple examples of artistic and/or cultural works that have made significant social impact.

CAC Legacy Artist Fellows - $50,000

Artists in the Legacy tier can point to a significant body of work, produced over a substantial period of time, that has engaged their communities and that has made significant social impact. Artists in this tier may be able to point to Emerging and Established Artists that they have mentored or otherwise positively influenced.

- AOs may use up to 20% of the grant award for administrative costs and costs associated with program design and implementation, including convening and publication and/or production costs to support visibility of fellows' work.
- AOs will regrant the remaining 80% of funds to individual artists and culture bearers in their region(s).
- Fellowship awards will provide unrestricted funding to be used in support of the fellows' artistic practice.
- Any state funds regranted through this program must be in compliance with the CAC's Grant Opportunity statement: In alignment with our mission and vison, the CAC does not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in its internal operations or in its stewardship of public funds.

The CAC will:

- Distribute funds to the AOs for regranting and program administration
- Engage regularly with the AOs to provide feedback and approve the program design, application, selection criteria and timeline, including plans for engaging diverse communities
- Review and contribute to the AOs' contract language (including processes for conflict resolution)
- Convene the AOs regularly during the grant period for sharing of challenges, learnings, and strategies
- Conduct a program evaluation to document the impact of the program.
- Collaborate on joint marketing efforts for each region's AO fellowship and ensure the CAC website is regularly updated with accurate and current information

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.

Interim Report

Provide an interim report summarizing grant-funded activities and accomplishments within 30 days of the midpoint of the grant activity period (or by the stated deadline). Grantees who do

not submit reports by the posted deadlines may jeopardize their organization's opportunity for future funding from the CAC. Interim reports are only required for multi-year grant programs.

Final Report

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

The application must demonstrate a clear understanding of the organization's financial health, strategic direction, leadership, and key personnel. The application should clearly showcase the organization's ability to maintain effective and sustainable management, leadership, and oversight of the fellowship program.

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 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.
5. Provide brief biographies of all project administrators, consultants, and other individuals to be compensated through this CAC grant award. Each biography should include the individual's proposed role, as well as their experience and expertise relevant to the development and implementation of the fellowship program.
6. Provide a current list of Board of Directors, Commissioners, Committee, or other appropriate members of your governing body.

Organizational Capacity and Readiness

The application must demonstrate the organization's historical capacity, experience, and readiness to effectively administer grant programs.

Application Questions and Required Documents

1. Describe your organization's history of working in the nonprofit arts and culture sector in California, including at least two years of experience elevating diverse communities across the state or your region, and at least two years of grants management experience.
2. Describe your organization's administrative and organizational capacity to administer grant programs, including application submission and review processes, financial tracking, and grants management capability.
3. 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.

Program Design and Implementation

The application must demonstrate the organization's ability to design and implement an effective program, including a clear strategy for outreach, engagement, and ensuring broad participation. This should highlight the organization's approach to reaching diverse communities, addressing their specific needs, and ensuring the program's success through thoughtful planning, execution and evaluation.

Application Questions and Required Documents

1. Specify clear objectives that address the program goals and include a realistic timeline of activities that support the realization of those objectives.
2. Detail how programs and/or services will provide engagement and access throughout the geographic service area.
3. Complete a detailed project budget, including all expenses relevant to the stated project activities, and include rates of pay that appropriately compensate the labor of all

individuals working on the project. Provide details for each line item to be funded by this grant. Consult the [What We Do Not Fund](#) resource document and do not include items listed in the document.

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:

Gabrielle Rosado
she/her
Arts Program Specialist
California Arts Council
artsfellowsgrant@arts.ca.gov