



STATE-LOCAL PARTNERS

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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STATE-LOCAL PARTNERS

DEADLINE: June 5, 11:59 PM

Grant Request Amount: \$75,000

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

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.
 - a. 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.
5. Applicant organization must be designated by their County Board of Supervisors to serve as the State-Local Partner in the county. Multi-county Partnerships must be designated as the State-Local Partner by the county Board of Supervisors in all counties represented. Funding is prorated based on the number of counties in the partnership. Multi-county Partnership applicants must give evidence of service and program equity to all participating counties.

Eligible Request Amounts

Applicant organizations can request up to \$75,000 for a one-year Grant Activity Period.

Funding Restrictions

- For applicant organizations with total revenue **below** \$250,000, there are no funding restrictions.
- 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.

Matching Funds

This program requires a 1:1 match of award funds for organizations with total revenues (TRs) of \$1,000,000 or more in their most recently completed fiscal year. See the [2025 Grants Manual](#) for clarification on eligible match sources.

Background & Purpose

The **State-Local Partners** (SLP) program provides general operating support and technical assistance for county-designated local arts agencies. The purpose of the program is to foster cultural development on the local level through a partnership between the State and the counties of California. The nature of this partnership includes funding, information exchange, cooperative activities, and leadership. The partnership enables individuals, organizations, and communities to create, present, and preserve the arts of all cultures to enrich the quality of life for all Californians.

A **local arts agency** is defined as the official county-designated organization that supports arts and cultural activity in service to individuals and communities throughout an entire county. Local arts agencies provide financial support, services, and/or other programming to a variety of arts organizations, individual artists, and the community. A local arts agency can be a unit of local government or a nonprofit organization.

The CAC’s [Strategic Framework](#), adopted in 2019, indicates two aspirational areas regarding the agency’s relationship with its SLPs, both of which have been addressed by Council action in the last year and are furthered in these program guidelines:

- State-Local Partner Funding

Conduct a review to determine a timeline and process for increasing the amount of funding granted to the SLPs. This timeline should include a detailed process for assessment,

capacity building, bolstered support, and compliance checks, as well as a plan for establishing participation by and benefits for all 58 counties.

- State-Local Partner Capacity Building

Increase technical assistance and training to SLPs that meets the unique needs of each organization, as identified by research and evaluation. Ensure that SLP contracts are written to require adherence to key CAC policies and expectations, clearly outlining the role of the state-county partnership. Develop strategies to align SLP priorities with the priorities of the CAC, while allowing for flexibility and self-determination. Support the development and implementation of local plans that result in consistent quality and equity of service across counties.

In 2023, the Council voted to increase the annual maximum request amount for the SLP grant to \$75,000, in recognition of the outcomes of the SLP Equity Impact Assessment and the need for increased ongoing funding to support SLP work. State-Local Partners serve as **Poetry Out Loud** partners and will receive financial support of \$5,000 through this grant program (also included in the maximum request amount) to facilitate an annual Poetry Out Loud program throughout their county, either through direct programming or in partnership with another local organization/agency. Poetry Out Loud funds will not be based on panel ranking.

Program Administration

Funding for general operating support is awarded as a contract between the State-Local Partner grantee and the California Arts Council. State-Local Partner grantees will be expected to:

- Maintain an accessible public office operated by, at minimum, one full-time equivalent (FTE) staff position. In unique situations, exceptions can be made, given that all programs and services are accessible to the public.
- Provide financial support, services, and/or other programming to a variety of arts organizations, individual artists, and the community.
- Prioritize engagement and support for arts organizations, individual artists, and community members representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index.
- Administer a county-wide Poetry Out Loud competition – engaging a minimum of two school or community partner organizations – to determine a county champion and provide for the transportation of that champion and the champion’s chaperone to the State Finals competition in Sacramento.
- Host meetings for the CAC as needed.
- Actively promote CAC grant opportunities, including providing in-person and/or online workshops and other technical assistance to applicants and grantees.
- Collect data on communities served and constituent needs, values, and opportunities to support CAC evaluation and development of new grant programs and initiatives in alignment with the Council’s 2025 strategic priorities.
- The applicant must complete general operating support activities aligned with the program’s purpose by September 30, 2026.
- Submit a final report on overall program impact no later than 30 days after the end of the grant activity period.

The CAC will:

- Distribute funds to the SLPs for program execution.
- Elevate the work of State-Local Partners to elected officials, organizational partners, and community members.
- Engage regularly with the SLPs in cohort meetings to answer questions and give CAC updates.
- Provide trainings on how to identify and engage arts organizations, individual artists, and community members representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index.
- Support the SLPs in managing their county Poetry Out Loud competitions, including providing resources, technical assistance, specific requirements, and timelines.
- Release final report template no later than 60 days prior to the deadline and provide technical assistance as necessary for their completion.
- Support SLPs in planning and implementing data collection, and aggregate and analyze the data that is able to be collected to report back to the SLP cohort, Council, and the public.

Program Evaluation, Outcomes, and Metrics

Long-term metrics for SLP success will include, but will not be limited to, the following:

Qualitative Outcomes

- Local communities feel ownership of SLP strategic visions and empower SLPs to equitably advance their work.
- Individual artists, culture bearers, and arts organizations feel effectively supported by their county SLPs.
- Each SLP can clearly communicate needs and opportunities of their work, including action plans to respond to those needs and opportunities.
- SLPs have the financial resources, knowledge and support, and staff capacity to effectively and equitably achieve program goals.

Quantitative Outcomes

- Total number of grants and grant dollars to organizations; of those, number of grants and grant dollars to organizations representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index.
- Total number of grants and grant dollars to individual artists and culture bearers; of those, number of grants and grant dollars to individual artists and culture bearers representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index.
- Total number of community members engaged (as participants, audience, and volunteers); of those, number of community members engaged (as participants, audience, and volunteers) representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index.
- Total number of arts organizations contracted for programming; of those, number of arts organizations contracted for programming directly representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index.

- Total number of artists directly employed; of those, number of artists directly employed who identify as representing communities residing in the lowest quartile of the California Healthy Places Index
- Total number of CAC grant applications supported through SLP technical assistance
- Total number of community feedback opportunities (including surveys, listening sessions, focus groups, etc.); of those, number of community feedback opportunities offered in languages in other than English
- Number of events; of those, number of free events
- Number of nonprofit organizational partners
- Number of governmental agency partners

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.

Arts Programming, Services, and Networking

Organization serves as a cultural resource for individual artists, arts organizations, social service organizations with ongoing arts programming, the general public, and the broader arts ecosystem of the county. Organization prioritizes engagement and support for arts organizations, individual artists, and community members representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index. Organization contributes to community arts development and maintains an active relationship with the county government.

Application Questions and Required Documents

1. Which of the following programs and services are provided by your local arts agency? If your organization does not provide programming or services in one or more areas, what is the reasoning for that?
 - a. Direct programming (including arts presenting facility management; arts learning programming; arts production or festivals, etc.)
 - b. Grantmaking to arts organizations and/or individual artists
 - c. Networking, mentoring, and advocacy
2. Please provide a detailed description of the core programs and services your local arts agency provides for your county or counties.
3. How does your organization, through its programming and services, prioritize engagement and support for arts organizations, individual artists, and community members representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index?
4. Describe your local arts agency's implementation plan for the Poetry Out Loud program. If designating another organization to implement the program, please describe the process for selecting that organization, and their implementation plan.
5. Provide at least one (1) but no more than three (3) samples that best portray your organization and its work. These may include artistic work, press materials, flyers, brochures, programs, newsletters, audio, video and other marketing pieces. Samples should have been created within the past three years and be relevant to this grant opportunity.
6. County Government Resolution: Attach a current Resolution from the County Board of Supervisors designating your organization as the official State-Local Partner. The Resolution must include the Grant Activity Period.

Community Engagement and Social Impact

Reach and depth of engagement across the entire county is demonstrated. Creation, presentation, and/or preservation of diverse arts and cultural practices represented in the county is evident in demographic and programmatic data provided. Programs and services respond to community needs, values, and priorities. Development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services involve significant community participation, particularly from individuals and organizations representing historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index.

Application Questions and Required Documents

1. For the county or counties served by your local arts agency, briefly describe:
 - geographic characteristics
 - demographic characteristics
 - economic base

- cultural diversity
 - creative community
 - any other cultural identifiers
2. Describe the arts and cultural priorities of your county, including how your local arts agency has collected input from local residents—particularly those from historically under-resourced communities, especially those residing in the lower quartiles of the California Healthy Places Index—to identify these priorities, and how your local arts agency is addressing these priorities.
 3. Letters of Support: Please provide up to two signed letters from key stakeholders, partners, or collaborators. Letters should substantiate the quality of the organization, its programs and services, and affirm the organization’s impact on its constituents.
 4. Grantmaking Report (if applicable): Provide a list of current grant programs, number of grants, and total program allocations, if applicable.

Management and Leadership

Ability of applicant organization to fulfill programs and services is clearly identified in the proposal. Strategic plan includes actions to strengthen organizational capacity, diversify revenue sources, increase staff and board leadership representation of communities to be served, and ensure appropriate compensation for staff. Effective governance policies and organizational structure are evident and consistent with what is possible given the organization’s budget. Overall fiscal and managerial health of applicant is evident.

Application Questions and Required Documents

1. Describe your local arts agency’s public office, operating hours, and staffing structure.
2. Provide a brief biography for each key individual (artistic, technical, or administrative) involved in your organization. Include name, title, relevant experience, and role. (Demographic information and identity indicators optional.)
3. Provide a current list of Board of Directors, Commissioners, Committee, or other appropriate members of your governing body. For each individual, provide:
 - name
 - expertise
 - role on governing body
 - professional affiliations
 - city of residence
 - county of residence
4. (Demographic information and identity indicators optional.)
5. Strategic Plan - Executive Summary: Provide the executive summary for your organization’s current strategic plan. If a current strategic plan is not in place, describe any existing policies and/or procedures, and timeline for developing a strategic plan.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

9. 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).

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:

Jonathan Estrada

he/him

Arts Program Specialist

California Arts Council

slpgrant@arts.ca.gov