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# ARTS & CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

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## 2023 Grant Guidelines

***Deadline: June 6, 2023***

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](http://www.arts.ca.gov)

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# **ARTS & CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT**

## **2023 GRANT GUIDELINES**

**DEADLINE:** June 6, 2023 11:59 PM

**Grant Awards:** Up to \$30,000

each year for two years

**Estimated Total Number of Grant Awards: 315**

**Grant Activity Period: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2025**

**Estimated Arrival of Funds: 1<sup>st</sup> year funds: December 2023-  
January 2024; 2<sup>nd</sup> year funds: December 2024-January 2025**

**Eligible applicants will apply for funding based on the tier  
structure below:**

Tier	Organization Total Revenue	Number of Awards Possible	Anticipated % of funding
1	Below \$250k	173	55%
2	\$250k to \$1m	79	25%
3	\$1m- \$1.5m	63	20%

**Matching Funds:** No match required for organizations with operating budgets less than 200% of maximum per year grant amount (i.e., less than \$60,000 per year). 1:1 match required for organizations with budgets at least 200% of the maximum per year grant amount (\$60,000 or more per year).

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Apply at: [calartscouncil.smartsimple.com](https://calartscouncil.smartsimple.com)

## **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 **Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Support** grant program provides direct funding to arts and cultural organizations in support of ongoing operations.

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.

## **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.

## **Ineligible Organizations**

- Organizations applying for the CAC's Statewide and Regional Networks, State-Local Partners, or Cultural Pathways grant programs
- Organizations that do not have principal place of business in California
- Public and private colleges and universities
- K-12 school districts
- County Offices of Education
- Social services or non-arts/cultural nonprofits
- Organizations with Total Revenue (TR) greater than \$1,500,000 in the last completed fiscal year

## **Eligible Organizations**

- **501(c)(3) organization as applicant or fiscal sponsor -** Non-governmental applicant organizations must 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.
- **Local government** - An arts-based unit of municipal or county government; or a tribal government
- **Applicant organizations using fiscal sponsors** - An applicant organization that is without nonprofit status must use a California-based fiscal sponsor with a federal 501(c)(3) designation to apply for funding. For-profit businesses and individuals may not use a fiscal sponsor to apply to CAC organizational grants. Types of applicant organizations eligible to apply using a fiscal sponsor include, but are not limited to artist collectives, guilds, and 501(c)(6) organizations.
  - A CAC [Letter of Agreement](#) form is completed and must be signed between the fiscal sponsor and the applicant organization by a representative from both parties and submitted with the application. A blank signature field will not be accepted. **If a grant is awarded, the fiscal sponsor becomes the legal contract holder with the**

**California Arts Council. The CAC form is required, no other letters will be accepted to substitute this requirement.**

- A fiscal sponsor change is not permissible during the Grant Activity Period, with rare exceptions.
- Fiscal sponsors must have a minimum two-year history of consistent engagement in arts programming and/or services prior to the application deadline. (Acting as a fiscal sponsor to arts and cultural organizations is considered an arts service.) See additional information on the use of [CAC fiscal sponsors](#).

## **Eligibility Requirements**

- **California-based** - Documentation of being a California-based nonprofit arts/cultural organization; an arts-based unit of municipal or county government; or a tribal government, or nonprofit social service organization with regular ongoing arts programming and/or services and a principal place of business in California.
- **Arts programming** - Applicants must have a minimum two-year history of consistent engagement in arts programming and/or services prior to the application deadline.
- **Certificate of good standing** - Nonprofit organizations and fiscal sponsors (if applicable) must have “active status” with the California Secretary of State (SOS) showing evidence of “good standing” at the time of application. You can verify your organization’s status by conducting a search using the SOS online [Business Search](#) tool. An indication of “active” (versus “suspended,” “dissolved,” “cancelled,” etc.) confirms that your nonprofit corporation exists, is authorized to conduct business in the State of California, has met all licensing and corporation requirements, and has not received a suspension from the Franchise Tax Board.

## **Eligible Request Amounts**

Applicant organizations can request up to \$30,000 each year for two years. Funding is contingent upon availability of funds and passage of the state budget for 2023-24 and 2024-25. Funds will be paid out at \$30,000 during the first program year and \$30,000 during the second program year, contingent on passage of the state budget for each year.

## **Funding Restrictions**

- Statewide and Regional Networks, State-Local Partners, and Cultural Pathways applicants are not eligible for Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Support grant funds in the same fiscal year.
- For organizations with total revenue above \$250,000, the sum of requests for CAC grants during the same year of funding cannot exceed 50% of the total

revenue from the most recently completed fiscal year, with the exception of applications for Administering Organization grants.

- Applicants to this program are not restricted from applying for and receiving additional CAC project grants.

## **Small Organization Support**

This program continues a commitment to support organizations at or below a total revenue of \$250,000 for the last fiscal year, anticipating that at least 55% of program grants will be awarded within this tier.

## **Matching Funds**

No match required for organizations with total revenues less than 200% of maximum annual grant amount (i.e., less than \$60,000 per year), although they are encouraged to report matching funds to the CAC if possible, which will help meet the state's match requirement. 1:1 match required for organizations with budgets at least 200% of the maximum annual grant amount (\$60,000 or more per year).

If applying for multiple CAC grants in a single fiscal year, distinct matching funds must be identified within each application, if applicable. State funds cannot be used to meet the match. The status of each source must be specified as either projected, pending, or committed.

Matching funds can be met with any combination of in-kind and cash sources.

Click [here](#) for additional information on CAC in-kind contributions.

## **Online Application Portal**

Applications will be available online through the CAC's online grants management system at [calartscouncil.smartsimple.com](http://calartscouncil.smartsimple.com). Only applications submitted through the system by the deadline will be accepted. **It is recommended that new applicants create an online profile well in advance of the application deadline.** More information can be found on the [Grant Resources](#) page of the CAC website.

## **Application Review Criteria**

A review panel will adjudicate complete and eligible applications based on the following criteria. Application questions and required documents pertaining to each review criterion are included below. Detailed instructions are available at [calartscouncil.smartsimple.com](http://calartscouncil.smartsimple.com).

**Centering Equity for an Inclusive Arts Landscape:** In this section, organizations will demonstrate understanding, capacity, and ongoing commitment to building equity across the arts through inclusive policies, practices, projects, partnerships, and leadership. Organizations will also demonstrate how they serve and prioritize communities with the highest levels of need as indicated by the California Healthy Places Index (HPI).

## *Application Questions and Required Documents*

1. What has inspired your organization to incorporate or evolve policies/programming that uses the arts as a tool to transform and/or express culture?
2. Describe the approaches your organization has taken or will take to center, uplift, and involve historically under-served communities that fall within the lowest quartile of the [California Healthy Places Index](#) (HPI) in your region.
  - a. The term “under-served communities” refers to populations disproportionately impacted by systemic exclusion in policy settings or historical decision-making processes.
  - b. Neighborhood by neighborhood, the HPI maps data on social conditions that drive health — like education, job opportunities, clean air and water. This data is used by community leaders, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders to compare the health and well-being of communities, identify health inequities, and quantify the factors that shape health.
3. How does your organization represent and create equitable opportunities for historically excluded artists, cultural practitioners, or arts and cultural practices?
4. Describe the actions you have taken to build trust and ongoing relationships with the identified communities, artists, and cultural practitioners.
5. Address how you:
  - a. Plan to evaluate success for the proposal and what success will look like.
  - b. Will listen and respond to the diverse needs of the communities and artists/ cultural practitioners throughout the project.

### **Management & Leadership:** Demonstrates effective management.

Organization is economically vulnerable or at risk of closure due to economic hardship. When applicable, fiscal sponsor demonstrates effective fiscal management and sound relationship with the applicant organization.

## *Application Questions and Required Documents*

1. Provide a brief biography for each key individual (artistic, technical, or administrative) involved in your organization. Include name, title, relevant experience, and role.
2. Complete a two-year organizational 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.
3. Complete a matching funds table, if applicable. Indicate the source type, identify the source, enter the amount, and indicate the status (Committed, Pending, or Projected).

### **Arts & Cultural Engagement:** Uses culturally relevant and responsive outreach strategies to engage systemically marginalized communities.

Organization is responsive to the needs and priorities of the community(ies) it serves through its programming and services.

### *Application Questions and Required Documents*

1. Describe the arts and cultural programs and services your organization offers that engage and support the community(ies) it serves.
2. Describe the culturally relevant and responsive outreach strategies for engagement that your organization uses.
3. Describe the arts and cultural priorities of your organization, including a) how it collects input from the audiences/community(ies) it serves to identify these priorities, and b) what actions are being taken to address these priorities.
4. Provide at least one (1) but no more than three (3) work 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.

**Accessibility and Accommodations:** Demonstrates that its programs, services, information, and facilities where funded activities are to take place, including online spaces, will be accessible for individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, have difficulty speaking, have a physical disability, visual disability, developmental disability, learning disability, mental illness, or chronic illness.

### *Application Questions and Required Documents*

1. Describe your organization's approach- including allocation of financial resources - to ensuring the accessibility of programs and services and inclusion of people with disabilities. Describe both physical and communication accessibility, including in-person and online activities. Describe how your organization offers people with disabilities a way to request an accommodation to access programs and services. Consider organizational personnel and any partnering organizations, as well as the participants and beneficiaries of arts programming and services, including creatives with disabilities and potential audience members, in your response.
2. Identify the primary individual who will be responsible for managing accessibility for your organization. This may be a program manager, accessibility coordinator, or other staff member of the applicant organization. Include their name, title, phone number, and email address in the fields provided.

### **Panel Adjudication and Ranking Scale**

Panelists review and rank applications and work samples using a 6-point ranking scale that can be viewed at [this link](#).

## California Arts Council Decision-making

The final authority for grant awards is the appointed Council. After receiving and reviewing recommendations from Council committees, the Council will vote on final funding awards at a public meeting. Awards may differ from requested amounts based on panel rank, available funding, and passage of the state budget.

## Program Timeline

Application Opens	April 25, 2023
Application Deadline	June 6, 2023
Panel Review	Approx. June – July 2023
Funding Decision	Approx. August 2023
Funding Notification	Approx. August 2023
Grant Activity Period	October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2025
Estimated Arrival of Funds	1 <sup>st</sup> year funds: December 2023 – January 2024 2 <sup>nd</sup> year funds: December 2024-January 2025
Interim Report Deadline	October 31, 2024
Final Report Deadline	October 31, 2025

## 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 are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, or have difficulty speaking may dial 711 to reach the California Relay Service (CRS). Large printis available upon request. Translation services may also be available upon request.

Organizations seeking technical assistance should contact:

Leslie Giovanini  
she/her/hers  
Arts Program Specialist  
California Arts Council  
[genopsgrant@arts.ca.gov](mailto:genopsgrant@arts.ca.gov)

## Governor of California

Gavin Newsom



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## Arts Council Members

Consuelo (Chelo) Montoya, Chair

Vicki Estrada, Vice Chair

Gerald Clarke

Caleb Duarte

Ellen Gavin

Leah Goodwin

Alex Israel

Phil Mercado

Roxanne Messina Captor

Nicola Miner

Olivia Raynor

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**Executive Director**, Jonathan Moscone

**Chief Deputy Director**, Kayla Ungar

**Deputy Director**, Ayanna L. Kiburi, M.P.H.

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### Office Hours

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

**Purpose:** The California Arts Council (CAC), a state agency, was established in January 1976 to encourage artistic awareness, participation, and expression; to help independent local groups develop their own arts programs; to promote employment of artists and those skilled in crafts in the public and private sector; and to enlist the aid of all state agencies in the task of ensuring the fullest expression of our artistic potential.

**The Council:** The appointed Council of the CAC consists of 11 members. The Governor appoints nine members, the assembly Speaker appoints one member, and the Senate President pro Tempore appoints one member. Council members serve without salary, elect their own officers, and meet throughout the state to encourage public attendance. This body sets policy and has final approval of CAC grants.

**Native Land Acknowledgement:** The California Arts Council stands in solidarity with all of California's Indigenous people. We acknowledge that our work takes place on the now occupied traditional lands of the Miwok, Maidu, and Nisenan people, who are the past, present, and future stewards of this place. We make this first step in our journey to develop relationships and cultural competencies to truly support native sovereignty.

**Mission:** Strengthening arts, culture, and creative expression as the tools to cultivate a better California for all.

**Vision:** A California where all people flourish with universal access to and participation in the arts.

**Racial Equity Statement:** As California's state arts agency, the California Arts Council is committed to racial equity both internally through our work environment, and externally through our programming.

- We are committed to ensuring that every policy enacted reflects democratic principles of equity and justice.
- We understand that enacting policy in a just and equitable manner considers critical issues of implicit bias and discrimination that requires concerted and purposeful action.
- We believe that bringing together Council, staff and other partners with differing backgrounds and life experiences will enhance our ability to increase opportunities for all arts service organizations to succeed.
- Policies, programs, and activities will be administered to identify and avoid discrimination and barriers to access, and to avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on communities of color.
- Accountability to our grantees is of central importance to us. We understand the significance of evaluating the impact of our policymaking on grantees over time and utilizing this evaluation in the development of new policy initiatives.
- We are committed to the just and equitable disbursement of resources.
- We will obtain the following information when relevant and appropriate in order to utilize data to evaluate the impact of our equity goals: population served and/or affected by race, color, national origin, and income level, which will include diverse communities across the state such as: communities of color, racially and ethnically diverse individuals, tribal communities, immigrant and refugee communities, and communities that have principal languages other than English.

For the CAC, racial equity is a continual practice in listening, learning, and implementing. The CAC's Racial Equity Statement demonstrates a deeper commitment for us to do better for the field and our staff.

**Funding:** The CAC is a state agency, funded from the state's annual budget process and proceeds from the California Arts License Plate and the Keep Arts in Schools tax return voluntary contribution fund, supplemented by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. Its grants are often matched by foundations, individuals, earned income, government agencies, in-kind contributions, or other organizations.

**Information Access:** Due to the Public Records and Open Meeting Acts, applications and their attachments are not confidential and may be requested by the media and/or public. Meeting dates and locations are posted at [www.arts.ca.gov](http://www.arts.ca.gov). Observers may attend but may not participate in, or in any way interfere with, Council meetings. Each meeting provides a designated time for public comment, although comments may be time-limited.

**Grant Process:** Applications are evaluated by panels of recognized field representatives who rank applications according to program criteria. The CAC staff provides information but not recommendations to the panel. The Council reviews panel recommendations before making final funding decisions. CAC staff is responsible for grant contract administration after Council approval. In dire or unexpected circumstances, the CAC reserves the right to make exceptions to any policy or procedure on a case-by-case basis.

**Requirements:** The CAC provides grant funding to individual artists and is mandated both by federal and state regulations to fund arts organizations that have proof of nonprofit status under sec. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (Fiscal Receivers are eligible in some programs), or under sec. 23701d of the California Revenue and Taxations Code, or entities that are a unit of government; and that comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988; California Government Code secs. 11135-11139.5 (barring discrimination); the Fair Labor Standards Act, as defined by the Secretary of Labor in part 505 of title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulation; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"); the Fair Employment and Housing Act; and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

**Ownership, Copyrights, Royalties, Credit:** The CAC does not claim ownership, copyrights, royalties, or other claim to artwork produced as a result of a CAC grant. However, the CAC reserves the right to reproduce and use such material for official, noncommercial purpose, including but not limited to use on the CAC website, social media and print materials. In addition, the CAC requires documentation of grants activity and appropriate credit for CAC partial support.

## Appendix A: Resources for Applicants

### Grantee Requirements

Awarded grantees must comply with all requirements as stipulated in the grant agreement, including but not limited to the following:

- **Complete contract documents** - Upon notification of grant award, complete all required contract documents in order to receive grant payment. Contract documents must be received by the CAC within 60 days of issuance, or the grant funding may be revoked.
- **Payee Data Record** - Each awarded organization or fiscal sponsor (if applicable) must complete, sign, and submit an STD 204 Payee Data Record as a required contract document before grant funds can be released.
- **Consistent activities** - Carry out activities consistent with the original proposal summary statement and the intent of the application as approved for funding, including in instances where the grant award may be less than the original request amount.
- **Approval for changes** - Programming activities must be completed as proposed. Changes must be proposed in advance and require prior written approval from CAC staff. Requests for changes are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- **Thank you letters** - To better inform our elected representatives of the value of the arts and the use of state funds, grantees are required to include copies of signed letters sent to the Governor, state Senate, and Assembly representatives thanking them for the grant. Local representatives may be found at this link: <https://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>.
- **Use of CAC logo** - Use of the CAC logo is required on all printed and electronic materials and websites (programs, catalogs, postcards, posters, newsletters, leaflets, publications, etc.) that specifically reference this grant.
- **CAC acknowledgement** - The following acknowledgement of CAC funding is required on all printed and electronic materials: "*This activity is funded in part by the California Arts Council, a state agency.*"
- **Final report** - Provide a final report summarizing grant-funded activities and accomplishments within 30 days of the end of the Grant Activity Period. Grantees that do not submit reports by the posted deadlines may jeopardize their organization's opportunity for future funding from the CAC.
- **California Model Agreement (AB20) and indirect costs** - In order to comply with AB20 requirements, University of California and California State University grantees are required to secure an indirect cost waiver from the Regents of the University of California or the Board of Trustees of the California State University.

- **What We Do Not Fund**

Click [here](#) to review the list of activities and expenses that CAC does not fund.

- **In-kind Matching Funds**

Click [here](#) for additional information on CAC in-kind contributions.

- **Fiscal Sponsor Letter of Agreement**

Click [here](#) for the form is required for applicant organizations using fiscal sponsors.

- **Definition of Signature**

Click [here](#) for information on acceptable forms of validation for required signed documentation.

- **Appeals Process**

1. Before requesting an appeal, check that your request qualifies by reading the following. Appeals are only granted if:
  - a. Panel's assessment was based on a misstatement of information in the application that negatively influenced the panel's recommendation; and/or
  - b. Incorrect processing of the required application material, which negatively influenced the panel's recommendation.

**Dissatisfaction with award denial or award amount does not qualify for appeal.**

2. Request an official Appeal Form by emailing the CAC Program Specialist listed on your grant notification letter.
3. Fill out official Appeal Form and email or postmark to the contact listed on the form within 45 days of grant notification.