



# Create Grant Guidelines

## Project Grants *for Artists & Organizations*

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**Applications are due on Wednesday, March 19 by 5pm.**

Please plan to submit your application well before the 5pm deadline in case of technical difficulties or other issues.

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### Quick Links

- [Create Grants Webpage](#): Download the application question list, register for an orientation or workshop, and view a list of key dates—including drop-in office hours, the application deadline, and when decision emails are sent out.
- [Grants Portal](#): Apply for a grant, complete your final report, and download copies of your previous applications.

**QUESTIONS?** Email Tamara Liu, Grants Program Manager:

[grantsprogram@artscouncilsc.org](mailto:grantsprogram@artscouncilsc.org)

## Create Grant Overview

- Funding up to \$3,000 for arts and/or cultural projects open to the public in Santa Cruz County during the grant period (July 2025 - June 2026).
- Open to Santa Cruz County artists, arts organizations, and non-arts organizations working in collaboration with artists.
- Visit our website for a list of [recently funded artists and projects](#) (scroll down to Create Grants).

## Grant Program Objectives

We provide funding for artists and organizations in Santa Cruz County to:

- Support the creation and presentation of artistically excellent work
- Increase the success of artists and the sustainability of arts organizations
- Expand equitable access to the arts
- Engage new audiences in the arts
- Increase social impact through the arts

### Definitions

*Equitable access:* improving disparities in representation and access to the arts.

*Social impact:* advancing racial justice and/or social issues.

## Awards

The Create grant program is competitive with approximately 25-30% of applications funded. Partial funding will be offered to some applicants.

Grant Maximums	
First-Time Applicant Pool (optional) <sup>1</sup>	up to \$1,000
Regular Pool	up to \$3,000

<sup>1</sup> **First-Time Applicant Pool:** Those who have never applied for an Arts Council grant are encouraged, but not required, to apply in the First-Time Applicant Pool. The First-Time Applicant Pool only includes other first-timers and is evaluated separately, offering a higher chance of receiving a grant award.

## Eligibility Criteria

If you have questions about eligibility, please contact [grantsprogram@artscouncilsc.org](mailto:grantsprogram@artscouncilsc.org).

- **Residence/location:**
  - Individual applicants must reside in Santa Cruz County; nonprofit organization applicants must be primarily based in Santa Cruz County.
  - Projects must be open to the public and exhibited in Santa Cruz County.
- **Multiple grants:**
  - Applicants may only submit one application for one grant per cycle (Create or Develop, not both).
  - Current Support grantees are ineligible for Create grants.

- **Previous final reports:** Required reports for previous Arts Council grants must be completed. If you have a final report outstanding and plan to complete it before the new grants are awarded, you are welcome to apply. You will not be able to receive the new grant until your previous final report has been submitted.
- **Tannery art installations and campus events:** Public art that will be installed at the Tannery Arts Center and events on the Tannery campus have a separate approval process. Please contact [grantsprogram@artscouncilsc.org](mailto:grantsprogram@artscouncilsc.org) before applying for a Create grant for an installation or event at the Tannery. This does not include events in the studios.
- **Create Grants Do Not Fund:**
  - Any projects, programs, activities, or expenses that took place before the start of the grant period.
  - Arts/cultural projects not advertised or open to the public.
  - School programs (the Arts Council funds school programs through our Arts Ed program).
  - Universities and colleges, unless they are providing fiscal sponsorship for one arts program only.
  - Culinary arts or healing arts projects.
  - Capital improvements, construction, or renovation projects.
  - Government departments, boards, or programs.
  - Foundations that do not produce arts programming.
  - Research, debt retirement, fundraising or benefit events, social services, political or religious advocacy, or for-profit organizations.

## Review Process

Proposals are reviewed and scored by the Grants Program Manager and members of the Grants Committee, composed of majority BIPOC community volunteers with diverse arts backgrounds. The Grants Committee considers the scores and comments and makes funding recommendations to the Arts Council Board of Directors for approval.

## Review Criteria

The following criteria are used to evaluate Create grant applications; we highly recommend you review them carefully as you work on your application.

Each bulleted question is scored on a scale of 1-4: 1 - Weak, does not meet criteria; 2 - Fair, meets the review criteria to a limited degree; 3 - Good, meets the criteria to a significant degree; 4 - Exemplary, meets the criteria to the highest degree.

- **Project Design & Planning** (50 of 150 points):
  - Is a clear vision for the project communicated?
  - Are plans described for securing key personnel, venues, permits, funding, partnerships, etc?
  - Does the applicant share appropriate marketing and/or outreach plans to reach the intended audience?
  - Is the project timeline well-thought-out and achievable?
  - Is the project budget realistic and complete, aligning with the project description?

- Is there demonstrated ability from the artist(s) and/or organization to deliver on the proposed project?
  - Do support materials (artistic bio / resume, work samples, supporting documents) strengthen the case for the project?
- **Equity & Accessibility** (50 of 150 points):
- Does the applicant communicate a basic understanding of equity?
  - Is a thoughtful and appropriate plan provided to improve representation and access to the arts through the proposed project (for artists, audience members and/or participants)?
  - Does the applicant specify which communities will have improved access or representation? Examples include but are not limited to: people of color, LGBTQIA+, those with disabilities or neurodiversity, low socio-economic classes, residents of different geographic locations, unhoused community members, immigrants, etc.
- **Artistic Excellence** (50 of 150 points):
- Is a clear definition of artistic excellence provided?
  - Does the proposed project align with the description of artistic excellence?
  - Do work samples also support the description of artistic excellence?

In addition to the three review criteria, further consideration will be given to: applicants in the neighborhoods most impacted by inequities as indicated by the California Healthy Places Index (HPI). HPI is determined by mapping 23 key drivers of health outcomes — like education, job opportunities, and clean air and water. [Click here for more information on HPI.](#)

## Application Support Materials

In addition to written responses and a project budget, a complete application will include work samples and/or supporting documents, as well as a 1-page artistic resume or bio. See the Review Criteria above for more guidance on how support materials will be evaluated.

### Work Samples & Supporting Documents:

- Submit up to 5 items total (uploads or links) that best represent your work and relate to your project.
  - Work samples serve as the key indication of artistic excellence. Examples: photos, written samples, or audio/video links that are publicly accessible.
  - Other supporting documents provide additional context and/or illustrate the quality and effectiveness of your community outreach. Examples: Reviews, letters of support, brochures, programs or flyers
- Video/Audio:
  - Video/audio clips cannot be uploaded. If you'd like to include video/audio work samples, please provide publicly accessible URL links.
  - If the video/audio is longer than 3 minutes, please provide start/finish times for a 3-minute segment.
  - Video/audio links are included in the 5 total items allowed.
- Images and Documents:
  - Uploads are accepted in the following formats: jpg, pdf, doc, docx, png, jpeg

### **1-page Artistic Resume or Bio:**

- Artists should include a resume or bio reflecting their work as an artist.
- Organizations should include a resume or bio for the lead artist on the project.

### **Restrictions**

- Awarded funds must be used within the grant period of July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026. Any extensions must be approved by the Grants Program Manager.
- Awarded funds are intended for the use of work described in the grant application. If there are significant changes, please inform the Grants Program Manager as soon as you are aware of them.
- Grants are provided for direct use by the awarded applicant. These funds are not transferable to other organizations or individuals.
- Unused funds or funds not used in accordance with the grant agreement must be returned to Arts Council Santa Cruz County.

### **Grantee Responsibilities**

- Recognize the Arts Council in promotional materials.
- Retain and submit financial records (receipts, invoices, etc.) for the funded project.
- Submit a final report no later than 30 days after the completion of the project, including expense records documenting how grant funds were spent.

### **Public Records**

Arts Council Santa Cruz County keeps information submitted as part of a grant application confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

### **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

Arts Council Santa Cruz County is committed to providing services and making resources available to every resident of Santa Cruz County without regard to ethnicity, color, creed, religion, age, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, military status, marital status, political opinion, national origin, familial status, mental and physical disability, or source of income.