



Develop Grant Guidelines

Professional Development Grants *for Artists & Arts Organizations*

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

- [Develop Grants Webpage](#): Download the application question list, register for an orientation or workshop, and view a list of key dates—including 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

Develop Grant Overview

- Funding up to \$1,500 for professional development (activities that improve artistic skills or expand business and professional capacity). A public presentation/exhibition is not required.
- Open to Santa Cruz County artists and arts organizations.
- Visit our website for a list of [recently funded artists and activities](#) (scroll down to Develop grants).

Grant Program Objectives

We provide funding for artists and arts 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
- Engage new audiences in the arts
- Expand equitable access to 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

Our Develop 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) ¹	up to \$1,000
Regular Pool	up to \$1,500

¹ **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.

- **Residence/location:** Individual applicants must reside in Santa Cruz County; nonprofit organization applicants must be primarily based in Santa Cruz County.
- **Multiple grants:**
 - Applicants may only submit one application for one grant per cycle (Create or Develop, not both).
 - **NEW:** Current Support grantees are now able to apply for Develop grants again, but remain ineligible for Create grants.

- **Returning applicants:** Applicants are eligible to receive up to two consecutive Develop grants and then are required to skip a year before re-applying.
- **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.
- **Develop Grants Do Not Fund:**
 - Any projects, programs, activities, or expenses that took place before grants are awarded.
 - School programs (the Arts Council funds school programs through our Arts Ed program).
 - Tuition for college/university classes.
 - Universities and colleges (even if they are serving as a fiscal sponsor for an arts program).
 - Culinary arts or healing arts professional development.
 - Capital improvements, construction, or renovation projects.
 - Government departments, boards, or programs.
 - Research (other than research related to professional development).
 - Foundations that do not produce arts programming.
 - 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 three criteria are used to evaluate Develop 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.

➤ **Artistic Commitment** (50 of 150 points):

Note: The Artistic Commitment criteria is scored on a yes/no basis.

- Do individual applicants demonstrate commitment to the development of their artistic practice? Relevant experiences or activities could include education, apprenticeships, a description of their methodology or approach, etc. If not actively pursuing opportunities to develop their artistic practice, does the applicant provide a reasonable explanation why?
Do organizational applicants demonstrate commitment to the development of their organization, with relevant steps towards building capacity?

- **Impact on Artist / Organization** (50 of 150 points):
 - Does the applicant clearly articulate their vision and long-term goals as an artist or arts organization?
 - Does the applicant explain why they have chosen to pursue these activities at this time over other options?
 - Are the chosen activities appropriate to the applicant's development as an artist or arts organization at this time?
 - Do support materials (work samples, supporting documents) align with the applicant's description of their development?
- **Management & Planning** (50 of 150 points):
 - Are specific details for the proposed activities provided? Details could include the timeline or dates, workshop title, consultant name, type or brand of equipment, etc. If specific details are not yet available, does the applicant provide a reasonable explanation why? Do organizational applicants include a list of participants, if applicable?
 - Is the budget realistic and complete, aligning with the description of the proposed professional development activities?

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 proposed budget, a complete application will include work samples and/or supporting documents. See the Review Criteria section above for more guidance on how support materials will be evaluated.

Work Samples & Supporting Documents:

- Submit up to 3 items total (uploads or links) that best represent your work and support your proposal.
 - Work samples support your responses about your artistic development. Examples: photos, written samples, or audio/video links that are publicly accessible.
 - Other supporting documents can provide additional context. Examples: Letters of support, reviews, 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 3 total items allowed.
- Images and Documents:
 - Uploads are accepted in the following formats: jpg, pdf, doc, docx, png, jpeg

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.