



Support **Grant Guidelines**

General Operating Support Grants *for Arts Organizations*

Applications are due by 5pm on Wednesday, October 11.

Please plan to submit your application well before the 5pm deadline in case of technical difficulties. Late applications are not accepted.

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Quick Links

- [Support Grants Webpage](#): Download the grant guidelines and application question list, read the FAQ, check important dates, and register for the grants orientation.
- [Grants Portal](#): Apply for a grant, complete your final report, and download copies of your previous applications.

QUESTIONS? Email our team at grantsprogram@artscouncilsc.org:

Tamara Liu, *Grants Program Manager*

Anthony Rocha, *Grants Program Associate*

Timeline

[revised 9.1.23]

August 29 10:30am-12pm	Zoom Grants Orientation: registration encouraged here <i>(orientation will be in English; Spanish translation available if requested in advance)</i>
August 30	Application opens in the grants portal
September 6 - October 6	Drop-in office hours in Watsonville, Santa Cruz, and on Zoom (see our Support Grants Webpage - Key Dates section for details)
Wed. October 11 5pm	Application Deadline <i>(no late applications accepted)</i>
January 12, 2024	Grant decision notifications sent to all applicants
January / February 2024	Grant award letters and payments sent
January - December 2024	Grant Period <i>(when all grant funds must be used)</i>

Grant Program Overview

General operating support for Santa Cruz County nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts organizations of all budget sizes. Annual grants range from \$3,000 to \$7,000 with applications accepted once per year. First-time applicants are welcome to apply.

Visit our website for a list of [2023 Support grantees](#).

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: how you are improving disparities in representation and access in the arts.

Social impact: how you are advancing racial justice and/or social issues in your community.

Awards

This Support grant cycle will be competitive (similar to last cycle), with an estimated 66% of applications funded. Grants of \$3,000-\$7,000 will be awarded to arts organizations of all budget sizes. Grant award size will be based on results of the review process.

The top-scoring arts organizations will also be considered for two-year grant awards (grants automatically renewed for a second year, though funding level is subject to change based on available grant funds). When considering two-year grant awards for the top-scoring applications, the Equity & Accessibility score will be weighted.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicant eligibility is based on the following criteria. If you have questions about eligibility, please contact grantsprogram@artscouncilsc.org.

- Applicant must:
 - Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or have a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization;
 - Have as its primary mission the development and delivery of arts and/or cultural programming to the public;
 - Be based in and produce the majority of its work in Santa Cruz County;
 - Have a board-approved non-discrimination policy.
 - Have completed required reports for previous Arts Council grants.
 - Submit only one application for one Arts Council grant per cycle.
- **Support Grants Do Not Fund:**
 - Capital improvements, construction, or renovation projects.
 - Government departments, boards, or programs.
 - Foundations that do not produce arts programming.
 - Social services, political or religious advocacy, or for-profit organizations.
 - School programs (the Arts Council funds school programs through our Arts Ed program and SPECTRA grants).
 - Culinary arts or healing arts organizations.
 - **NEW:** Universities and colleges, unless they are providing fiscal sponsorship for one arts program only.

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 Support grant applications; we highly recommend you review them carefully as you work on your application.

NEW: The Grants Program Objective criteria has been eliminated. Artistic Excellence has been expanded to Artistic Excellence & Relevance with additional items being scored. The Equity & Accessibility criteria rubric has also been expanded significantly.

NEW: Each bulleted item 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 Excellence & Relevance** (50 of 150 points):
 - Is a clear vision of artistic excellence articulated?
 - Does the organization's programming align with their vision of artistic excellence?
 - Does the applicant demonstrate a strong understanding of the audience and/ or participants they engage? (in terms of geography, age, race/ethnicity, etc.)

- Does the applicant clearly explain how their programming and engagement strategies are relevant and responsive to their community?
 - Do support materials (work samples, supporting documents) also support the descriptions of artistic excellence, programming, and community engagement?
- **Impact, Strategy & Sustainability** (50 of 150 points):
- Is the organization's ability to fulfill its mission evident throughout the application?
 - Are the organization's goals clearly described, with short-term goals for 2024 aligning well with their long-term goals/strategy?
 - Does the applicant demonstrate awareness of the organization's strengths?
 - Does the applicant identify the organization's biggest risks/challenges, as well as appropriate strategies to address them?
 - Do budget and financial documents demonstrate sound financial management?
- **Equity & Accessibility**¹ (50 of 150 points):
- Does the applicant communicate a strong understanding of equity?
 - Do staff, board, artists and key collaborators include diverse representation from marginalized / underrepresented communities?
 - Does the organization provide accessible opportunities for diverse community participation by audience, participants, collaborators, and/or supporters?
 - Does the organization demonstrate past (recent) commitment to equity through specific strategies, activities or achievements?
 - Are future goals related to equity clearly articulated, with specific strategies in place for the coming year?
 - Does the applicant specify which marginalized communities will have improved access to the organization's programming through those strategies? 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.
 - Is the organization's commitment to equity and accessibility evident throughout the application, including the support materials?

NEW: For all applications, further consideration is given to: organizations whose programming primarily takes place in neighborhoods most disproportionately 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, a complete application will include financial documents, as well as work samples and/or supporting documents. See the Review Criteria section above for more guidance on how support materials will be evaluated.

Financial Documents

- Profit & Loss Statement (statement of activities) and Balance Sheet (statement of financial position) for most recently completed fiscal year, or board-approved audit.
- Current fiscal year budget (with actuals to-date, if available).

Work Samples and Supporting Documents

- Submit up to 5 items total (uploads or links) that best represent your work and support your proposal.
 - *Work samples* serve as the key indication of artistic excellence. Examples: photos, written samples, or audio/video links that are publicly accessible.
 - *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.
- Images and Documents:
 - Uploads are accepted in the following formats: jpg, pdf, doc, docx, png, jpeg.
- 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.

Restrictions

- Grants are provided for direct use by the awarded applicant. These funds are not transferable to other organizations or individuals.
- Awarded funds must be used within the grant period of January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024. Any extensions must be approved by the Grants Program Manager.
- Unused funds or funds not used in accordance with the grant agreement must be returned to Arts Council Santa Cruz County.

Grantee Responsibilities

- Include Arts Council Santa Cruz County's logo in the footer of your website.
- Report on your previous grant as part of the Support grant application each year.
- Retain and submit financial records in the event that they are required for an audit.

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.