FESTIVAL GRANT
for arts & culture festivals in Arizona communities

FISCAL YEAR 2027

WHAT IS IT?

A grant is a form of financial assistance. The State of Arizona sets aside a certain amount of money to invest in projects that have strong potential for public benefit.

Through Festival Grants the State of Arizona invests the presentation of quality arts and culture programming through festival activities, connecting artists and culture bearers (or their artistic work) with communities.

WHAT DOES IT FUND?

Festival grants support in-person, virtual, and hybrid festivals.

For the purposes of this grant program, a festival is defined as a periodic celebration or gathering that...

- happens in a condensed period of time,
- features a varied and curated program of events, and
- promotes the artistic and cultural awareness of one or more traditions or disciplines.

Festivals eligible for Festival Grants must...

- demonstrate a thematic emphasis on arts and culture in their programming,
- be publicly available, meaning the general public can attend the festival by paid or free admission,
- last a minimum of one four-hour day, and
- only span the duration of two consecutive weekends.

Seasonal series of presented works, as well as freestanding productions or exhibitions, are not eligible activities for this program. Festival activities can include juried processes, but scholarships, pageants, galas, or standalone award ceremonies are also ineligible. Please see a more detailed list of ineligible expenses at the end of this document.

AWARD AMOUNTS

Applicants may request $1,000 to $5,000.

There is no cash match required for this grant opportunity, however applicants may use the narrative sections of the application to justify their requested award amounts.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Application Due Date
11:59 pm, April 16, 2026

Grant Review Panel Convened
June 2026 (dates TBA)

Grantees Notified
August 2026

Funding Period
July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027

*Festival activities must take place during the funding period. (Grant funds may function as a reim*bursement.)

PRIMARY STAFF CONTACT

Brad DeBiase
Organizational Programs Senior Manager
Phone: (602) 771-6534
Email: bdebiase@azarts.gov

FESTIVAL GRANT

WHO IS IT FOR?

Eligible applicants for Festival Grants include Arizona-based...

- Nonprofit organizations* with tax-exempt status
- Units of government (local or Tribal)
- Local arts agencies
- Tribal cultural organizations
- University/college departments

** An organization without tax-exempt status whose project would otherwise be eligible may apply through a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.*

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Contracted Artistic Services & Artist Fees

Includes artist stipends, travel, and lodging.*

Production Expenses

Includes space/venue rental, materials, equipment rental, sanitation services, and insurance.

Marketing/Promotion

Includes printing and advertising materials, digital operations and live streaming services.

Accessibility Services

Includes closed captioning, interpretation, and translation services, visual enhancements, signage, flooring, and listening guides.

* *Per diem payments to cover an individual's meals are not eligible expenses and should not be included in your application materials.*

GRANT TIMELINE



Funds are delivered approximately 6-8 weeks after all necessary paperwork has been submitted by the grantee. This includes the Award Agreement and State W9 forms via Adobe Sign, and the Payment Form in Survey Monkey Apply.

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BEFORE YOU APPLY

Applicants are encouraged to do the following prior to beginning their application:

Request Accommodations

If you require accommodation in completing this application, or otherwise participating in the grant application process, please contact Organizational Programs Senior Manager Brad DeBiase at bdebiase@azarts.gov or (602) 771-6534.

Obtain a Fiscal Sponsor Letter of Agreement (if applicable)

Organizations without tax exempt status that are applying with a fiscal sponsor must upload a Fiscal Sponsor Letter of Agreement. This official letter, signed by authorizing officials from both the applicant organization and the fiscal sponsor, must state that the fiscal sponsor agrees to receive grant funds on behalf of the applicant, deliver them to the applicant, and maintain appropriate financial records.

Prepare Narrative Responses

You can type your proposal narrative or you can upload audio recordings of your responses. For each narrative question you will find a maximum word count (not character) and a maximum recording length. If you share your proposal narrative via audio recordings, keep it simple and to the point. Don't worry about impressing the panelists with your recording technique, just make sure we can hear and understand you. All audio files must be uploaded as MP3 files (.mp3).

Some applicants find it helpful to develop their responses using word processing software, outside the application platform. This allows them to draft responses with team members and monitor their word counts for each question. A Word document version of the narrative questions can be downloaded at https://azarts.gov/grant/festival.

Create or Update the SurveyMonkey Apply Account for Your Organization

You will submit your application through an online submission platform called SurveyMonkey Apply. Prior to applying, all new applicants will need to register their organization at https://azarts.smapply.io/.

If your organization already has an account, we encourage you to confirm that all information is up to date and add/remove any team members as needed.

WHERE IS MY ORGANIZATION'S ACCOUNT?

When you log-in to SurveyMonkey Apply, look for your name in the upper left corner of the screen. When you click on your name, you will see the organization(s) you are associated with. Click on the name of the organization to enter your organization's account.

For instructions on how to create or update your account, visit our applicant resources page: https://azarts.gov/grants/applicant-resources/.

APPLICATION LIMITS

Across grant programs, the Arizona Commission on the Arts limits the number of applications an organization may submit per funding period. Organizations applying for a Festival Grant in Fiscal Year 2027 may not apply for any other Arts Commission grants (e.g., Creative Capacity Grants, Youth Arts Engagement Grants, etc.).

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HOW TO APPLY

When you are ready, go to https://azarts.smapply.io/prog/festival_grant/ (or scan the QR code to the right) and click on "Apply." You do not have to complete the application in one session; at any point you can save a draft of your application and complete or submit it later.

THE APPLICATION

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Information collected in this section of the application is used for internal and reporting purposes only.

- Organization name and (if applicable) DBA
- Primary point of contact
- Secondary point of contact
- ADA Coordinator contact info

  Grants from the Arts Commission require compliance with the regulations of Section 504 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA Coordinator is the person who can answer questions about or facilitate requests for accessible programs and services; no special training or certification required.
- Festival website
- Nonprofit status (and file upload)

  You will be required to upload an IRS determination letter OR a fiscal sponsor letter of agreement in the "Nonprofit Status" section. Units of government are exempt from this requirement.

FESTIVAL OVERVIEW

- Festival name
- One sentence description (150 words max)
- Festival dates and times (or usual calendar placement)
- Projected number of participants (or average annual attendance)
- Organization mission statement (150 words maximum)

FESTIVAL FORMAT

- In-person
- Virtual
- Hybrid

In-person festivals that possess virtual components (e.g. livestreaming performances) would be considered "Hybrid", and applicants should select the "Virtual" option if their festival activities are presented exclusively through digital platforms.

SURVEYMONKEY APPLY TECHNICAL SUPPORT

If you encounter any technical issues with the online application platform, click on the info icon (like the one on the right) in the black ribbon at the top of the application page. You can then select to explore the platform's FAQ page or submit a request for technical assistance.

Note: technical support hours are Monday to Friday from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm **Eastern Time**, and Sundays from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm **Eastern Time**.

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NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. Describe your festival in its entirety, including your processes for identifying and selecting the artists/culture bearers who will be engaged. (400 words maximum **or** 3-minute audio limit)
2. How does your festival promote awareness and appreciation for particular artistic disciplines, traditions, or cultural communities? Describe what participants will learn and gain exposure to through festival activities. (400 words maximum or 3-minute audio limit)
3. Provide an outline of your festival's timeline, detailing your processes for planning, outreach, implementation, production, and post-production work. (400 words maximum **or** 3-minute audio limit)
4. What communities will you engage through your festival, and how? Please define these communities, considering "community" broadly, beyond simple age- or location-based groups. What demographics and sociocultural identities would you expect to be represented among festival producers, personnel, and attendees? (400 words maximum **or** 3-minute audio limit)
5. **In addition to** ADA compliance, please describe how your organization will create the conditions to support participation and access for people of all abilities. How will your organization ensure that your festival's programming, facilities, and venues provide wide-ranging accommodations? (400 words maximum **or** 3-minute audio limit) See FAQ for additional details.

FESTIVAL BUDGET

Budget Form

All applicants must submit a complete project budget using the form embedded in the application.

Budget Narrative

Please use this space to describe the festival budget, including eligible fees, any anticipated income, and any substantial in-kind support. This is your opportunity to bring your festival budget to life, as if you were explaining it to the grant review panel. You may also use this Budget Narrative section to provide reasoning for how you have arrived at certain itemized dollar amounts. (300 words maximum)

See FAQ on page 8 for additional details.

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EVALUATION CRITERIA

Your organization's application materials will be reviewed by an independent panel according to the following criteria. Please note: need is not a criterion. Application merit is based upon strength of response in relation to the review criteria.

Quality Arts and Culture Programming

Does the application clearly describe the festival's arts and culture programming and the artist/culture bearers who will be engaged? Does the application make a compelling case for what it hopes to make available to festival participants and attendees and how? Does the application outline in detail the structure and timeline of the festival's programming/activities?

Community Benefit

Does the application define the communities the festival hopes to directly serve, interact, and engage with? Does the application clearly outline how this will happen? Does the application thoughtfully address access and participation for people of all abilities?

Viability

Does the application demonstrate substantial evidence that the festival activities will be realized within the funding period? Does the proposed budget appropriately reflect the scope of work described in the application? Does the application clearly explain how project activities will be produced and delivered?

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

All applications are subject to a public review process. Applications are first reviewed by Arts Commission staff for completeness and eligibility. Applications that are incomplete or submitted after the due date are considered ineligible for panel review and funding.

Eligible applications are then evaluated by independent review panels made up of individuals from communities throughout the state who work in or adjacent to the arts. They evaluate each application on its own merits and solely on the basis of the published evaluation criteria.

Panelists first review applications individually. They then meet as a body to discuss the applications and finalize assessment as a group. This meeting is open to the public and while applicants are not permitted to participate in the discussion, they are encouraged to attend or listen-in online. Applicants being reviewed will be notified when panel dates are set. At the conclusion of their deliberations, the panel submits their funding recommendations to the Arts Commission's Governor-appointed board of commissioners for approval.

ARIZONA COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

We imagine an Arizona where everyone can participate in and experience the arts.

One of 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies across the United States, the Arizona Commission on the Arts is a 59-year-old agency of the State of Arizona and a leading force in the creative and professional development of Arizona's arts sector. Through robust programs, research initiatives and strategic grantmaking, the Arts Commission catalyzes arts-based partnerships that strengthen Arizona communities through the arts.

For more information, contact us at (602) 771-6501 or email info@azarts.gov or visit www.azarts.gov. To request this or any other publication in an alternate format, contact the Arts Commission offices. An equal employment opportunity agency.

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FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

This program does not fund the following:

- Entities submitting an application for an FY2027 Creative Capacity Grant, Youth Arts Engagement Grant, or Lifelong Arts Engagement Grant (see FAQ for more information).
- Applications submitted by businesses and for-profit organizations. School districts that would otherwise be eligible for Arts Learning grants.
- An organization's season or seasonal series of presented work.
- Projects involving construction of facilities.
- Debt reduction.
- Food and beverages for receptions and hospitality functions.
- Fundraising projects and events, including galas.
- Scholarships, pageants and/or standalone award ceremonies.
- Producing organizations to tour or present themselves.
- Conferences, symposiums, and other academic functions not available to the general public.
- Religious institution-led or religious group-sponsored projects not open to participation by non-congregants.
- Religious institution-led or religious group-sponsored projects whose primary purpose is the religious socialization of individuals, or which exist as parts of religious sermons or services.
- Equipment/capital expenditures.
- Lobbying expenses.
- College or university-sponsored projects not open to participation by the general public.
- Staff or board member salaries of the applicant organization.
- Re-granting, including use of funds toward cash prizes.
- Indirect costs.
- Grant administration, overhead or processing fees taken by an umbrella/parent organization as a percentage of the total award, with the exception of fiscal sponsors.
- Any costs other than eligible fees.

This list is not comprehensive.

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS

Fiscal Year 2027 grant funds will not be disbursed to organizations that received Arts Commission funding in Fscal year 2026, but fail to file their final report by Monday, September 14, 2026.

Additionally, according to the Arts Commission's enabling statutes, "Notwithstanding any other law, no monies from the Arizona Commission on the Arts may be spent for payment to any person or entity for use in desecrating, casting contempt on, mutilating, defacing, defiling, burning, trampling, or otherwise dishonoring or causing to bring dishonor on religious objects, the flag of the United States or the flag of this state." Recipients of Arts Commission support are further instructed to "take into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public" within funded programs.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **How can I be sure that my project is eligible for this program?**
   If you have reviewed the eligibility criteria listed earlier in this guidelines document and are still unsure if your festival is an appropriate fit for this program, we recommend that you reach out to the program manager to determine if your project is a good fit for the Festival Grant program. Arts Commission staff will provide consultation to determine if your proposed festival activities warrant submitting an application.

2. **My organization is eligible for other Arts Commission grants. Can I apply to those too?**
   No. Across grant programs, the Arts Commission limits the number of applications that may be submitted by a given organization or unit of government to one (1) application per funding period (July 1 – June 30 of the following year). While an organization or unit of government may be eligible for more than one grant program, they may only apply for one of them in a given funding period. As an example, an applicant who applies to the Festivals Grant program in Fiscal Year 2024 may not apply for the Creative Capacity Grant program or a Youth Arts Engagement Grant that same year.

3. **What is meant by "a thematic emphasis on arts and culture" regarding programming?**
   While eligible applicant organizations may not have an expressly arts and culture-focused mission, eligible festival projects must include arts and culture programming as part of the festival's main goals and objectives. Arts and culture programming must be centrally featured as part of your festival's activities and should not be peripheral add-ons to the festival's main emphasis.

4. **What is meant by "In addition to ADA compliance" in the fourth narrative question?**
   Applicants are encouraged to consider how their festival activities and venue create accessible programming beyond baseline needs related to physical mobility. How are intellectual, physical, sensory, and neurodivergent/cognitive needs being addressed for attendees of all ability levels and how is this reflected in your festival's structure? How are interpretation, captioning, and/or visual aid resources being provided? Accessibility considerations may also include bilingual/translation services for printed materials, emergency preparedness plans, tactile resources, and proper disability access symbols included in your festival's marketing and publicity.

5. **My festival utilizes a lot of in-kind volunteer support. How should I reflect this in our budget?**
   The Arts Commission recognizes the significant role of volunteers at festival events. While you are not asked to itemize the dollar value of in-kind support in your budget, you are encouraged to discuss in your Budget Narrative how any substantial in-kind volunteer support helps offset other expenses and contributes to the overall viability of your festival. There are a variety of estimations regarding the dollar value of a volunteer work hour, and the Arts Commission suggests a range of $20.00 to $30.00 per hour based on your festival's need for personnel and the scope of volunteer work. Please contact Arts Commission staff if you would like to further discuss how to account for in-kind support.

6. **My festival isn't taking place until late in the funding period and we are still in a planning phase. Can we still apply for a Festival Grant?**
   Yes. If you are still in a planning phase for your festival activities and do not have certain specific details finalized at the time you are submitting your application, we advise that you offer insight as to how you are making your decisions, what your options may be for a particular unknown, and what your desired outcome(s) may be for items still in development. Offering a high level of detail surrounding your organization's planning and decision-making will at least help a panel understand how your festival will likely come into existence even if certain logistics and details are still in development.