YOUTH ARTS ENGAGEMENT GRANT

to support arts learning for youth outside of traditional school hours

FISCAL YEAR 2027

WHAT IS IT?

Youth Arts Engagement Grants support arts learning projects for young people that occur outside of traditional school hours.

WHAT DOES IT FUND?

Youth Arts Engagement Grants support projects that...

- focus on young people, ages 24 and under,
- occur outside of traditional school hours (before/after school and/or during school holidays/breaks), and
- center arts learning practices.

Such projects should also...

- provide opportunities for creative expression in safe and nurturing environments,
- honor youth voices, narratives, and perspectives, and
- utilize the assets of the community being served.

Projects may take place in...

- arts venues,
- community centers,
- school sites, and
- other youth-oriented settings.

Arts learning projects feature sequential, hands-on learning through the arts to develop artistic skills, processes and creativity. Artistic and/or cultural discipline(s) may include, but are not limited to dance, literary arts, media arts, music, theatre, traditional and folk arts, and visual arts. Arts learning projects include specific objectives, outcomes and methods of evaluation that are well defined and relevant for the learners involved.

AWARD AMOUNT

Organizations can request $2,500 to $5,000.

There is no cash match required for this grant opportunity.

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APPLICATION & REVIEW TIMELINE

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 – June 30, 2027

PRIMARY STAFF CONTACT

Chaz Salazar (he/him)
Arts Learning Coordinator
Phone: (602) 771-6517
Email: csalazar@azarts.gov

YOUTH ARTS ENGAGEMENT GRANT

WHO'S IT FOR?

Eligible applicants for Youth Arts Engagement Grants include:

- Arizona nonprofit organizations* with tax-exempt status
- schools/school districts
- units of government

See FAQ #1 on page 9 for more information on eligible organizations.

** An unincorporated organization without tax-exempt status may apply through a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.*

APPLICATION LIMITS

An organization may submit only one application per fiscal year.

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. (See FAQ #8 on page 10 for more information.)

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHING ARTISTS

Individual teaching artists or arts organizations may be listed as partners on a maximum of three (3) funded arts learning grant applications (both Lifelong Arts Engagement and Youth Arts Engagement) in a given fiscal year. If the number of applications on which a given individual teaching artist or arts organization is listed as a partner exceeds the total number that may be funded for that fiscal year, they will be asked to advise the Arts Commission on which application(s) will be withdrawn from consideration. The Arts Commission requests that prospective applicants consider this restriction before applying.

Teaching artists are encouraged to seek out partnerships with eligible organizations, schools, or units of government. The entity you partner with will then serve as the direct applicant. When building a partnership with an organization, school, or unit of government, make sure they are not applying to the Youth Arts Engagement Grant for a different project or to another grant program through the Arizona Commission on the Arts.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Grant funds may be used for any of the following (this list is not comprehensive):

- artist, consultant, and other fees
- administrative costs related to the project
- materials or supplies
- in-state travel costs
- technology
- documentation
- evaluation

Grant funds cannot be used for any projects, or days of a project, that take place before the start date of the fiscal year (July 1, 2026). If your full project timeline starts before or ends after the funding period, you are still eligible to apply and should articulate the full timeline in your application, but should only request and use grant funds for project activities taking place within the funding period.

YOUTH ARTS ENGAGEMENT GRANT

GRANT TIMELINE



Funds are delivered approximately 6-8 weeks after all necessary paperwork has been submitted by the grantee. This includes the award agreement, state W-9 and payment form.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

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

Request Accommodations

If you require accommodation in completing the application, or otherwise participating in the grant application process, please contact the Arts Learning Coordinator, Chaz Salazar at (602) 771-6517 or csalazar@azarts.gov.

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 a https://azarts.gov/grant/youth-arts-engagement/.

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.

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

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.

HOW TO APPLY

When you're ready, go to https://azarts.gov/grant/youth-arts-engagement/ and click on "Apply Now." 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.

APPLICATION

ORGANIZATION/SCHOOL INFORMATION

Organization/School information collected in this section of the application is used solely for internal and reporting purposes and will not be considered during the application review.

- Organization/School Name
- Organization/School Mission Statement
- Primary Point of Contact
- Secondary Point of Contact
- Authorizing Official
- IRS Letter of Determination (if applicable).
- Fiscal Sponsor Letter of Agreement (if applicable).

PROJECT INFORMATION

- Project Title (10 word limit)
- Project Summary (75 word limit)

  Provide a brief snapshot of your project.
- Proposed Start and End Date of Project
- Partner Organizations (if applicable)
  Please list any organizations that are collaborating on this project.

NARRATIVE

Project Overview (300 word limit, 3 minute audio limit)
Provide a detailed description of your proposed arts learning project. This overview should help panelists understand the general outline for your proposed arts learning project. Focus on the who, what, where, and when of your proposed project. Include details of the arts learning project including what types of artistic disciplines will be at the center of the project, how long the program will be, how often the community of learners will meet and how long each class will be (e.g., The community of learners will meet weekly for eight weeks for 2 hours per week).

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**.

APPLICATION CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Community of Learners (300 word limit, 3 minute audio limit)

What specific population(s) of learners are central to this project? Describe their assets and what they bring to the project. (Review FAQ #2 on page 9, "What is asset-based vs. deficit-based language?," for more information on definitions and best practices.)

If your project requires a process of selection (i.e., an audition or application) and/or a cost to participate, how are you ensuring all learners can participate? Describe how the project is supporting all who are interested in participating. (200 word limit, 2 minute audio limit)

Integrity of Project (300 word limit, 3 minute audio limit)

How will the work you propose reflect or respond to this community of learners? How does the community of learners have a voice and agency in the development and implementation of the project?

Project Team (300 word limit, 3 minute audio limit)

Who on your team, including teaching artists and/or partners, will lead this work? Describe their assets, qualifications, and what they bring to the project. Why are they a strong fit for the project and community of learners involved?

Project Learning Outcomes (200 word limit, 2 minute audio limit)

List three arts learning outcomes this project will achieve. Outcomes should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. If this is an ongoing project, describe how the project will build on or responds to previously conducted work.

Project Evaluation (200 word limit, 2 minute audio limit)

What method(s) will you use to evaluate how well the project achieved these outcomes? If there is previous evaluation work that has informed the proposed project, please share those results here.

Project Setting (150 word limit, 2 minute audio limit)

Where is the work taking place? Describe how this location is accessible to the community of learners and why it is important to the proposed project.

Project Timeline Table

Use the table provided to create a detailed timeline for the activities that will occur within the proposed start and end date of the project. Activities can include planning the project, proposed project activities, and any evaluation or assessment.

Your timeline should convey a sense of the project's arc, from its beginning to its end. Note: while grant funds cannot be used for any project activities that take place outside the funding period, please articulate the full project timeline here.

Project Timeline Narrative (200 word limit, 2 minute audio limit)

The Project Timeline Narrative should correspond with and provide context for the Project Timeline Table. Be as specific as possible about how often and how long project activities will take place, along with proposed dates. Explain how your timeline will provide enough time to foster learning amongst the learners.

APPLICATION CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

PROJECT BUDGET

Grant Amount Requested

Enter the grant amount you are requesting for this project. Schools/organizations can request $2,500 to $5,000.

Project Expenses Table

In the **first column,** list all expenses related to the project.

In the **second column**, provide a short explanation of the expense.

In the **third column**, note what type of funding will cover the expense (YAE Grant, Other Grant Funds, Tax Credit, Cash, In-Kind, etc.).

In the **fourth column**, provide the monetary amount of each expense.

Please list only expenses related to your project. A full organizational budget is not needed.

Youth Arts Engagement grant funds can only be used for project activities taking place in the funding period (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027).

Additionally, please thoroughly review the funding restrictions listed on page 8 of these guidelines.

Project Expenses Narrative (200 word limit, 2 minute audio limit)

The Project Expenses Narrative should align with the Project Expenses Table. Be as specific as possible about the eligible expenses the Youth Arts Engagement grant would cover. This is your opportunity to bring your project's expenses to life, as if you were explaining them to the grant review panel.

Other things to consider:

- If your total project expenses exceed the grant amount requested, explain the additional funding sources you noted in the third column of the table.
- If your project requires a cost to participate, explain how those fees will be used.
- If your project starts before and/or ends after the funding period, explain how those expenses will be covered.

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 of Proposed Project

Application demonstrates a strong arts learning project.

What panelists will be considering: *Does the application clearly outline the important details of the arts learning project?*

Integrity of Proposed Project

Application demonstrates an asset-based premise that centers the voice of the learners.

What panelists will be considering: *Does the application articulate the specific assets and contributions of the community of learners and collaborators involved? Does the application articulate how the proposed project reflects or responds to the community of learners involved? Does the community of learners have a voice and agency in the development and implementation of the project?*

Potential Impact

Application centers expected benefit to learners.

What panelists will be thinking about: *Are the objectives, outcomes, and methods of evaluation well defined and relevant for the learners involved?*

Viability

Application demonstrates a strong project plan and appropriateness of budget.

What panelists will be considering: *Does the application demonstrate substantial evidence that the proposal will be realized within the proposed project timeline? Do the expenses described appear appropriate to the proposed project?*

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 arts learning specialists from communities throughout the state. 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 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.

YOUTH ARTS ENGAGEMENT GRANT

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

This program does not fund the following:

- Projects that take place during traditional school hours and seek to supplant arts programs, curriculum or arts educators.
- Strictly field trip or performance-based activities. (See FAQ #3 on page 9 for more information)
- Producing organizations to tour or present themselves.
- Support for individual professional development activities.
- Support for projects which would otherwise be eligible for a Festival Grant.
- Funding for insurance.
- Food and beverages for any purpose.
- Fundraising projects.
- Awards and competitions.
- Indirect costs.
- Organizations and schools that received Arts Commission funding in Fiscal Year 2026, but failed to file a final report.
- Applications submitted by for-profit organizations.
- An individual may not apply to the Youth Arts Engagement Grant directly or as an individual with fiscal sponsorship.
- 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.
- 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.

This list is not comprehensive.

ARIZONA COMMISSION ON 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.

ARIZONA COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

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

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS

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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What types of organizations can apply for Youth Arts Engagement Grants?**
   Eligible organizations include arts and cultural organizations, community-based service organizations, libraries, neighborhood centers, parks and recreation departments, social service organizations, university/college departments, PreK-12 schools or school districts who serve youth 24 and under outside of traditional school hours.

   An organization without tax-exempt status may apply through a nonprofit fiscal sponsor.

2. **What is asset-based vs. deficit-based language? How can we address various inequalities in our narrative?**
   Asset-based language focuses on the unique attributes the participants bring to the project (passionate, capable, thriving) as opposed to deficit-based language that define people and places by perceived insufficiencies (like at risk, lacking, marginalized, under served). Let's not define people and places by their deficits. This reinforces negative stereotypes and is not conducive to the type of arts learning this grant program seeks to support. Deficit-based language also contributes to a dynamic where learners are not seen as partners, but as objects of charity. If you're talking about a problem, use language that reflects that systematic disparities and community wide problems in fact have systemic causes, that these are not self-caused problems, and explicitly describe those systems whenever possible.

3. **Are field trips or strictly performance-based projects eligible for this grant?**
   No. While a field trip or culminating performance may be a part of the project, it should not be the primary focus. This grant program supports arts programs that seek to activate youth voices, narratives, and perspectives. It is important to articulate how a community of learners has a voice and agency in the development and implementation of the project. This grant values active participation over exposure or passive engagement.

4. **Can a school district and a school within that district both apply?**
   An individual school and a school district may each submit separate applications, but they must be for completely distinct and separate projects and be for projects that occur outside of traditional school hours.

5. **When should I contact my district about applying for this grant?**
   We recommend contacting the Grant Department or Fiscal Office at your district 2-3 months prior to the grant deadline.

6. **Can my organization apply for both a Youth Arts Engagement Grant and a Lifelong Arts Engagement Grant?**
   No. Though an organization may be eligible for more than one arts learning grant program, the Arts Commission limits the number of applications which may be submitted by an applicant to one arts learning grant program within the same funding period. An applicant who applies to the Lifelong Arts Engagement Grant program in Fiscal Year 2027 may not apply for a Youth Arts Engagement Grant that same year.

7. **I'm an arts organization; am I eligible to apply directly and serve as a partner in another project?**
   Arts organizations are eligible to apply directly to the Youth Arts Engagement Grant program. As outlined above, as a direct applicant an arts organization may only receive one Youth Arts Engagement grant per fiscal year. Those arts organization may still serve as a partner in a different project, but all applications, including the one submitted directly, count toward the total partner limit of 3 arts learning applications (both Lifelong Arts Engagement and Youth Arts Engagement) per fiscal year. This is to address the competitive nature of this grant program.

8. **My organization is eligible for other Arts Commission grants; can I apply to those?**
   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 Creative Capacity Grant program or the Festivals Grant program in Fiscal Year 2027 may not apply for a Youth Arts Engagement Grant that same year.