



FY27 Individual Artist Projects Grant

For dance, folk and traditional arts, literary arts, music, and theater projects

City of Berkeley | Civic Arts Grant Guidelines

[APPLY HERE](#)

Important Dates (Subject to change)

Applications Open	January 5, 2026
Apply Before	March 4, 2026, 11:59 pm
Grant Review Panel Meeting	April - May 2026
Grants Subcommittee Meeting – Funding Recommendations	June 5, 2026
Civic Arts Commission Meeting – Grant Awards Approval	June 24, 2026, 6:00 pm
Grant Activity Period	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027
Final Report Due	July 30, 2027

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose – Why these grants are offered.

The Civic Arts program supports a culturally vibrant and diverse arts ecosystem within the City of Berkeley by funding grants to artists, arts organizations, and festivals.

Individual Artist Project grants support artists living in Berkeley with project-based funding. Projects must include original work created during the Grant Activity Period and a public presentation that engages Berkeley residents in a meaningful way.

1.2 Land Acknowledgment

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this uncended stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

1.3 Cultural Equity Statement

The City of Berkeley Civic Arts program commits to equity within the arts and culture sector by consistently evaluating its programs and practices. The City recognizes the multiple benefits the arts provide, regardless of race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Beyond ensuring access to the arts, the City of Berkeley commits to supporting artists and arts organizations that represent diverse cultures, life experiences, and socio-economic backgrounds. The City supports the empowerment of perspectives and identities that have been historically and systemically underrepresented.

1.4 Eligibility – Who can apply?

Applicants must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Individual artist and *not* applying as a partnership, group, or collective
- Resident of the City of Berkeley
- Artist working in film and new media, multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary arts, social practice, or visual arts
- 18 years of age or older

NEW: This grant category is discipline-specific. **You must select the primary artistic discipline that aligns with your proposed project. If you applied for this grant in FY26, you are not eligible to apply in FY27.**

The following disciplines are considered for the FY27 and FY26 grant cycles:

FY27 (*this application period*):

- Dance
- Folk and Traditional Arts
- Literary Arts
- Music
- Theater

FY26 (*previous application period*):

- Film and New Media
- Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Arts
- Social Practice
- Visual Arts

1.5 Eligibility – Who can't apply?

- City of Berkeley employees employed at the time of the application or during any part of the Grant Activity Period
- Full-time students enrolled at the time of the application or during any part of the Grant Activity Period
- Individual Artist Project grantees from the last two grant cycles (previous two Fiscal Years)
- Artists with proposed projects in film and new media, multidisciplinary / interdisciplinary arts, social practice, and visual arts
- Individuals who do not live in the City of Berkeley
- Organizational applicants (for example, festivals, nonprofit organizations, businesses, etc.)

1.6 Who is encouraged to apply?

- Artists in any phase of their artistic career including emerging, midcareer, and established artists
- Individuals representing systemically marginalized identities, including but not limited to: Arab, MENASA (Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian); Asian; Black, African American; California Native American, Indigenous, Tribal; Disabled; Elders, Seniors; Latinx, Chicanx;

LGBTQIA2S+; Low Income; Neuro-Divergent; Pacific Islander; People of Color; Trans and/or Non-Binary People; Immigrants (Documented and/or Undocumented), Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants; Unhoused; Unsheltered; Veterans; or Youth 18 years of age or older

1.7 Grant Amount

The Individual Artist Project grant is a **\$5,000** award.

Ten (10) awards will be given in this grant category, totaling a \$50,000 allocation for individual artists.

Final award amounts are contingent upon City Council's adoption of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget and Civic Arts Grants allocation; amounts are subject to change.

1.8 Funding Use – Grant money can be used for these things.

A project budget is not required for this application. Examples of eligible expenses for this funding include, but are not limited to:

- Artist fees
- Equipment rentals
- Living expenses during the Grant Activity Period (for example, rent, utilities, childcare, etc.)
- Stipends for collaborators
- Supplies and materials needed for the project
- Venue or studio fees

1.9 Funding Use Restrictions – Grant money can't be used for these things.

Grant funds may not be used for the following:

- Expenses incurred outside of the Grant Activity Period
- Joint projects funded by two or more Individual Artist Project awards
- Political advocacy or lobbying
- Project production and presentation activities outside of the City of Berkeley
- Projects for which the main intent is curation, archiving, or journalism

1.10 Project Requirements

- All project components must be completed within the Grant Activity Period (July 1 – June 30)
- Public presentation. A public presentation of the new artwork within the City of Berkeley is required. The presentation must engage a defined Berkeley audience/community in a meaningful way.
 - Presentations may include but are not limited to: performing arts productions; visual art presentations, exhibitions or public art projects; social practice projects; media arts or film screenings; literary readings; or artist talks.

Please note: All proposed artwork installed on or within City-owned property must be temporary and not permanently installed. These public art projects must be reviewed and approved by the Civic Arts Commission and its Public Art Subcommittee. This process, found in the Community Initiated Public Art Proposals Guidelines, must be accounted for in the project narrative and completed before the project starts. This applies to murals, sculptures, displays, and similar project proposals.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 Grant Application Materials

All application materials must be submitted electronically before the deadline. The Individual Artist Project grant application consists of the following components:

- Proof of Berkeley residency
 - Examples include a current lease agreement, utility bill, or property tax bill.
 - Unhoused and unsheltered artists may provide a letter from a Berkeley-based shelter or a Berkeley-based homeless service program as proof of Berkeley residency.
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)
- Work samples and descriptions
- Narrative questions

2.2 Grants Management System

All application materials must be submitted electronically using the grants management system, [Submittable](#). Technical assistance creating a Submittable account or navigating this platform is available through [Submittable's Customer Support](#).

Please note: Paper or physical applications are not accepted at this time.

2.3 Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for grant program-specific inquiries is available from Civic Arts staff by email, phone or virtual appointment. Technical assistance can provide guidance around eligibility, application requirements, or review criteria.

Application resources available on the [Civic Arts website](#) are a FAQs (frequently asked questions) page and a recording of the Grant Program Webinar.

Staff contact: Hilary Amnah, Grants Program Lead

hamnah@berkeleyca.gov

510-981-7539

[Schedule a virtual appointment](#)

2.4 Accommodations for Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations to apply should make their requests to the Civic Arts staff at civicarts@berkeleyca.gov. Staff works with the Disability Compliance Program (ada@berkeleyca.gov) to review and fulfill the request. **Disability-related accommodation requests should be made at least 72 hours in advance of deadlines or meetings.** TTY users can dial 7-1-1 to be connected to a specially trained communications assistant from a [state relay provider](#).

2.5 Translation Services

Translation services for the grant guidelines are available upon request. Requests can be emailed to Civic Arts staff at civicarts@berkeleyca.gov. If the application is submitted in a language other than English, a third-party translation service will be used to translate application answers into English for Grant Review Panelists.

3. EVALUATION AND SCORING

3.1 Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by Grant Review Panelists using the following criteria:

Artistic Practice and Experience (30%)

- Work samples demonstrate high-quality or promise
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae (C.V.) demonstrates high-quality or promise through its artistic history and accomplishments
- Reasoning for how funding will enhance, develop, and/or transform the applicant's artistic practice is compelling

Project Narrative (30%)

- Project goals, plan, timeline, and how funds will be spent demonstrate clarity and feasibility
- Project processes demonstrate originality, skill, and depth of concepts
- Proposed final work is impactful for the artist and City of Berkeley

Cultural Equity (30%)

- Applicant clearly conveys how their personal experiences and/or identities are rooted in and reflective of historically marginalized communities
- Applicant demonstrates an appropriate relationship between their creative practice and a historically marginalized community(ies)

Community Impact (10%)

- A venue for the required public presentation is identified; feasibility of using identified venue is articulated
- Proposed public presentation is appropriate to the project goals and engages a defined Berkeley audience/community in a meaningful way

3.2 Scoring Scale

Grant Review Panelists use the following scale to assess how well the application meets the review criteria. Numerical values are calculated to the appropriate weight for each criterion.

5	Exceptional	meets review criteria to the highest degree
4	Strong	strongly meets review criteria
3	Good	adequately meets review criteria; average
2	Fair	moderately meets some of the review criteria; needs some improvement
1	Underdeveloped	minimally meets the review criteria; greatly needs improvement
0	Weak	does not meet any elements of the review criteria

4. REVIEW PROCESS

4.1 Eligibility Screening

Civic Arts staff reviews each application submitted before the deadline for eligibility. Eligible applications are evaluated by a Grant Review Panel in accordance with the review criteria.

4.2 Grant Review Panel

The Grant Review Panel is comprised of individuals located in the greater Bay Area with diverse backgrounds in the cultural sector. Individuals apply to be included in the panelist pool through an open call. The Civic Arts Commission approves the pool of individuals that can be selected to serve as a panelist.

Any Panelist who has a conflict of interest with an application(s) must recuse themselves from reviewing that application(s). **A ‘conflict of interest’ is defined as a situation in which a Panelist has a competing professional, financial, or personal interest that could impair their ability to perform their evaluation responsibilities objectively.**

The Grant Review Panel meeting is public and facilitated through a Zoom Webinar. All applicants receive information regarding the panel meeting’s date, time, and order in which applications will be reviewed. Applicants are encouraged to attend the panel meeting.

Applicants are permitted three (3) minutes at the end of the panel’s discussion of their application to clarify any aspects that may have been misunderstood by the panelists. The allotted three minutes may not be used to communicate additional information not included in the application.

Applicants may request their panel comments after they receive official notice of award or decline.

4.3 Civic Arts Commission Approval

After the Grant Review Panel meets to review all applications, the Civic Arts Commission’s Grants Subcommittee meets to develop funding recommendations based on scores and availability of funds. The Subcommittee ensures proposed grant awards are aligned with granting policies and guidelines before sending the recommendations to the full Civic Arts Commission.

Funding recommendations by the Grants Subcommittee are sent directly to applicants and are made public at least five (5) days prior to the Civic Arts Commission approval. The Civic Arts Commission reviews the funding recommendations and votes on final approval.

4.4 Appeal Process

Applicants who have evidence of misconduct or technical error in the panel review process may appeal the Grant Subcommittee’s proposed funding scenario by completing an appeal form. Appeal forms must be received at least 10 days in advance of the June 24, 2026 Civic Arts Commission meeting. Applicants can email appeal forms to civicarts@berkeleyca.gov.

Once an appeal form is received, Civic Arts staff reviews the appeal form for evidence of misconduct or technical error. If misconduct or technical error is evident, the appeal is reviewed by the Grants Subcommittee, and forwarded to the Civic Arts Commission for final appeal decision.

Please note: Dissatisfaction with a final score or award amount is not grounds for appeal.

5. GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

5.1 Invoicing

Grantees must complete a Demographics Survey to receive their grant award invoice from Civic Arts. Staff will provide an invoice for 100% of the grant amount following City Council's approval of the Fiscal Year's budget and after July 1.

Please note: Grantees should be aware of the tax implications for awarded funds and maintain documents required for state and federal income taxes.

5.2 Final Report

All grantees must submit a completed Final Report form within 30 days after the Grant Activity Period ends. **Final Reports are due by July 30** unless otherwise noted. The Final Report demonstrates how the grant-funded project was developed and implemented. The Final Report also includes quantitative questions and space to make suggestions for improving the program. Grantees who do not submit a Final Report are ineligible from applying for any future Civic Arts grants.

5.3 Grant Activity Period Extension Requests

Grantees who experience circumstances that prevent them from completing their project before the end of the Grant Activity Period (June 30) may request a Grant Activity Period Extension. A Grant Activity Period Extension may be requested for up to one (1) year beyond the original end-date. **Extension requests must be received before June 30 and approved by Civic Arts staff.**

5.4 Artist Showcase

Individual Artist Project grantees are required to participate in an Artist Showcase to present their final project processes and products as a cohort. The Artist Showcase is an opportunity to see other grantees' work and share their work with the Civic Arts community. The Artist Showcase may be recorded and used for Civic Arts promotional purposes.

5.5 Acknowledging City Support

Grant recipients must acknowledge the City's financial support by using the phrase "Supported in part by a Civic Arts Grant from the City of Berkeley" or including the "City of Berkeley" in lists of supporters. Grantees must display the [City's logo](#) in all promotional materials and media.

5.6 City Permits and Permissions

Receiving a grant does not imply that Civic Arts or any other City department will produce, exhibit, or promote artwork(s) created with grant funds. It is the responsibility of the grantee to secure a venue and appropriate insurance for public presentations.

The grantee is solely responsible for securing the necessary City permits or approvals for project elements such as publicly installed art, street closures, sound amplification in public space, or murals. Planning for this should be reflected in the application narrative.

All proposed artwork installed on or within City-owned property must be temporary and not permanently installed. These public art projects must be reviewed and approved by the Civic Arts Commission and its Public Art Subcommittee. This proposal review process, found in the [Community Initiated Public Art Proposals Guidelines](#), must be completed before the project starts. This review and approval process

applies to murals, sculptures, displays, and similar projects.

5.7 Incomplete Projects

Failure to complete the grant-funded project, required public presentation, Final Report, or participate in the Artist Showcase will result in a forfeiture of grant funds. Grantees with incomplete projects must return their awarded funds to the City of Berkeley.