

# Culture Works Community Arts Grants - Evaluation Criteria

All applicants must receive an average score of at least 70/100 points to be eligible for funding. These 100 points are distributed among three scoring areas: Artistic and Cultural Vibrancy, Community Impact and Engagement (formerly called Public Benefit and Access), and Organizational Capacity. Below, we've provided an overview of the criteria in each category and descriptions of what is considered an "exceptional," "good," or "weak" corresponding application narrative.

## Artistic and Cultural Vibrancy: 35 points

An organization's ability to create quality, mission-driven work that inspires and challenges the community. *Each criterion is worth up to 10 points*

- Quality of the organization's artistic/cultural programming.
- Qualifications of the key personnel responsible for shaping the creative vision of the organization's programming.
- Quality of the plan to measure and evaluate program quality; evidence of the organization's responsiveness to feedback.
- Organization's commitment to evolving creatively and remaining relevant to the community and field in which it operates.

### Exceptional:

- Programming is creative, mission aligned, and demonstrates high professional standards. Programming consistently strives for, and achieves, artistic excellence.
- Program development is led by artistic personnel of the highest caliber, and personnel roles are clearly defined. Artistic personnel resumes/bios demonstrate a history of achievement and extensive experience.
- Program evaluation is well designed to measure program quality and involves a variety of methods and metrics. The organization is intentional about seeking internal and external feedback. Feedback has a meaningful impact on programming.
- The organization is deeply committed to creative evolution. Programming is highly innovative, experimental, and/or timely.

### Good:

- Programming is creative, mission aligned, and meets professional standards.
- Program development is led by qualified artistic personnel, and personnel roles are mostly defined. Artistic personnel resumes/bios demonstrate relevant experience.
- Program evaluation is well designed to measure program quality. The organization provides clear evidence that feedback influences programming.
- The organization demonstrates an awareness of evolving practices within its field and has made an effort keep pace.

### Weak:

- Programming is not well aligned to the organization's mission; or, it raises concerns about "mission drift." The application raises serious questions about the quality of the programming.
- The organization engages artistic personnel with limited qualifications. It is unclear who is involved in program development.

- The program evaluation process is limited or unclear. The organization provides little to no evidence of responsiveness to feedback.
- The organization appears out of touch with its field and/or community. The organization demonstrates a resistance to creative evolution or experimentation.

### Community Impact and Engagement: 45 points

An organization's ability to demonstrate impact and value for community members who engage with arts and cultural opportunities. *Each criterion is worth up to 15 points*

- Organization's understanding of, and responsiveness to, the needs and interests of its target audience(s).
- Organization's commitment to ensuring its programs and services are inclusive and engage diverse audiences.
- Organization's impact (e.g., social, educational, economic) on the larger community.
- Organization's commitment to collaboration within the community.

#### Exceptional:

- The organization understands its target audience in a deep and meaningful way. The organization uses a highly tailored approach to reaching and engaging its audience according to specific needs/interests/behaviors.
- The organization's programs/services are fundamentally inclusive. The organization has a realistic, proactive plan to build equity and inclusion in the coming year.
- The organization has a significant impact in the community, which is well supported by compelling data points, testimonials, etc.
- The organization demonstrates ongoing commitment to collaboration. Collaboration is not only meaningful and mutually beneficial but also inventive/unique/crosses sectors.

#### Good:

- The organization's target audience is defined. The organization demonstrates an ability to effectively reach and engage its target audience.
- The organization demonstrates a commitment to providing programs/services that are inclusive and engage diverse audiences. The organization has a realistic plan to grow in this area.
- The organization provides a clear explanation of its impact in the community. This impact could be better supported with data points, testimonials, etc.
- The organization provides evidence of collaboration. The collaboration seems well suited to those involved but could be improved in terms of creativity or benefit.

#### Weak:

- The organization's target audience is undefined or generic.
- The organization provides little evidence of inclusive programming/services; and/or the diversity of its audience is limited or difficult to determine. The organization does not have a clear plan to grow in this area.
- The organization's impact in the community is limited or unclear.
- The organization provides little evidence of collaboration and seems to operate mostly within a "silo."

## Organizational Capacity: 20 points

An organization's ability to manage effectively and efficiently for today and tomorrow. *Each criterion is worth up to 5 points*

- Quality of the organization's strategic plan and planning process.
- Evidence that the organization recruits and retains a qualified and diverse staff and board.
- Evidence of sound fiscal management and oversight.
- Quality of the organization's plans for financial sustainability.

### Exceptional:

- The organization has a formal, long-term strategic plan. Organizational planning is led by highly qualified personnel. The organization has identified realistic long-term goals and is on track to achieve them within the intended timeframe.
- The organization recruits and retains staff and board members of the highest caliber. Staff and board members reflect the diversity of the community in which the organization operates.
- The organization demonstrates sound fiscal management and oversight. The organization consistently operates with a surplus and maintains a base of unrestricted liquid net assets. The organization has a healthy portfolio of revenue streams
- The organization demonstrates a clear understanding of its financial situation and, thanks to careful planning, is in a strong position for long-term success.

### Good:

- Organizational planning is led by qualified personnel. The organization has identified realistic goals and provided some evidence of progress toward them.
- The organization recruits and retains a qualified staff and board of trustees. Staff and board diversity is limited or undefined.
- The organization demonstrates sound fiscal management and oversight. The organization generally operates with a surplus and maintains a base of unrestricted liquid net assets.
- The organization demonstrates a clear understanding of its financial situation and has a realistic plan for improvement.

### Weak:

- It is unclear who is responsible for leading organizational planning, or their qualifications are limited. The organization's goals are unrealistic or poorly defined.
- The qualifications of the organization's staff and/or board are limited or unclear. The staff and/or board lacks diversity.
- The organization's financial documents raise serious concerns about the organization's fiscal management and oversight.
- The organization's plans for financial sustainability are generic or unrealistic.