



ARTS & CULTURE

ARTS FUNDING GUIDELINES

CULTURAL HERITAGE GRANTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1

Department of Arts & Culture Mission Statement.....	Page 3
Access Statement.....	Page 3
Restriction on Communications.....	Page 3
Contact Us.....	Page 3

SECTION 2

Grant Program Overview.....	Page 4
Eligibility.....	Page 4
Grant Restrictions.....	Page 4
Grantee Requirements.....	Page 4
Grant Amounts.....	Page 4
Application Access.....	Page 4
Application Evaluation.....	Page 5
Funding Recommendations.....	Page 5
Contract Term.....	Page 5

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Terms.....	Page 7
Appendix B: Operational Grants Guidelines.....	Page 8

SECTION 1

Department of Arts & Culture Mission Statement

The City of San Antonio's Department of Arts & Culture strives to enrich the quality of life of San Antonio residents and visitors by investing in the production of arts programming and helping people experience art in San Antonio. As a leader in arts & culture, the Department of Arts & Culture provides grants to individual artists and nonprofit organizations, manages two free art galleries, and welcomes film productions from around the world.

Access Statement

Department of Arts & Culture grant programs are open to all people regardless of race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, physical ability, and socioeconomic status.

The City of San Antonio ensures meaningful access to City programs and services by reasonably providing translation, interpretation, and other accommodations upon request. To request any of these services contact the Department of Arts & Culture at ArtsFunding@sanantonio.gov or at 210.207.6968. Providing at least 72 hours' notice will help ensure availability of your request.

Restriction on Communication

Applicants (and their stakeholders) are prohibited from discussing grant status with members of the San Antonio Arts Commission, its Arts Funding Committee, and/or elected City officials and their staff during the restriction period (application opening date until the contract is posted as City Council agenda item); violation may result in application disqualification.

Contact Us

City of San Antonio

Department of Arts & Culture

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SECTION 2

Cultural Heritage Grants

Grant Program Overview

Cultural Heritage Grants provide operational support to small and mid-size community-based arts and cultural organizations whose work preserves, promotes, and revitalizes a distinct cultural heritage. With revenues from the Hotel Occupancy Tax, the Cultural Heritage Grants support the continuity of San Antonio's cultural identity. This grant is not exclusive to any specific race, ethnicity, or culture.

A. Eligibility

- Must be a current Department of Arts & Culture Operational Grantee
- Community-based arts and culture organizations with a three-year average of operating expenses up to \$3,000,000; *Three-year averages are calculated by the Department of Arts & Culture using 990s previously submitted to the department for the current Operational funding cycle*
- Organization exists to preserve, promote, and revitalize a distinct cultural heritage
- All of organization's programming exemplifies the continuity, visibility, and vitality of a distinct cultural heritage

B. Grant Restrictions

- One application per agency

C. Grantee Requirements

- Utilize the online grant management system
- Must comply with federal, state, and local non-discrimination laws
- Programs must be open and accessible to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background
- Provide information to Visit San Antonio and make reasonable efforts to be available to journalists interested in highlighting the agency and its programming in a positive light
- Timely completion of reporting per contract

D. Grant Amounts

Up to 20% of an agency's three-year average of operating expenses, not to exceed \$150,000. *Three-year averages are calculated by the Department of Arts & Culture using 990s previously submitted to the department for the current Operational funding cycle.*

E. Application Access

The Cultural Heritage Grant application is available to Operational grantees via the grants management system, GO Smart. Confirm and/or update existing organizational profile and complete the Application in its entirety and submit by the closing date.

F. Application Evaluation

Cultural Heritage Grants are competitive. Applications are evaluated using three grant criteria: Mission & Cultural Focus, Cultural Heritage Programming, and Use of Funds.

G. Funding Recommendations

Department of Arts & Culture staff develop funding recommendations. Staff sends Funding Notification Letters to applicants via email. City Council approves funding recommendations.

H. Contract Term

Awarded grantees will be issued contracts following approval by City Council. The contract term will cover expenses for FY 2026 (October 1, 2025–September 30, 2026). Contracts will detail grant payment schedule, compliance, and reporting requirements.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: KEY TERMS

Terms are specific to Cultural Heritage Grants

Access

Open to all people regardless of race, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, physical ability, neighborhood, and socioeconomic status.

Accessibility

Advances access along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meaning of compliance to include the legal provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act but also the elements of Universal Design.

Community-Based

A grassroots approach to arts and cultural programming that prioritizes community, collaboration, civic engagement, and access. Programming is often free or low-cost and is held in public, accessible spaces encouraging broad participation, and showcases long-standing cultural traditions and creative expressions.

Cultural Heritage

The shared traditions, practices, objects, beliefs, and values passed down through generations that give a community its unique identity and sense of belonging. Cultural heritage holds symbolic, historical, and social significance, which fosters unity and continuity within the community. Cultural heritage manifests across diverse art forms (music, dance, visual arts, storytelling) via community-centered programming.

Heritage Stewardship

The intentional practice of preserving, promoting, and revitalizing the unique attributes of a cultural heritage—both tangible and intangible—for future generations.

Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)

A tax paid by those staying in San Antonio hotels. The Texas Tax Code Section 351.101 (A)(4) (<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/?tab=1&code=TX&chapter=TX.351&artSec=>) HOT funding may be used for the “encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts.” In September 2012, the San Antonio City Council adopted a set of financial policies for the HOT Fund which includes 15% to support the Arts (after the debt service transfer).

APPENDIX B: OPERATIONAL GRANTS GUIDELINES

Operational Grants

Excerpt from Arts Funding Guidelines for Nonprofits & Artists

- Operational support for nonprofit San Antonio-based organizations producing exemplary arts and culture programming for locals and visitors
- Funded by revenue from the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)
- Three-year grant cycle with annual renewal process
- Annual grant entry process for newly eligible applicants who have not been funded by the City of San Antonio
- Grant allocation based on organizational budget, prioritization, and availability

A. Operational Grant Eligibility

1. San Antonio-based 501(c)3 nonprofit
2. In good standing with Federal, State, City of San Antonio, and Department of Arts & Culture
3. Minimum three years of operational history
4. Articulated mission and operational evidence of producing arts and cultural programming that benefits and contributes to the cultural fabric of San Antonio
5. Annual operating expense between \$50,000 and \$15,000,000
6. Active board of directors with a commitment and plan to build a board and/or leadership reflective of San Antonio's demographic diversity
7. Written policy outlining process and payment for professional artists and their work
8. Dedicated full-time administrator for business management and contractual grant obligations
9. Priority given to existing grant-funded agencies

C. Restrictions

1. Cannot be a fiscal sponsor
2. Cannot be a majority arts presenting organization
3. One application per organization

D. Grantee Requirements

1. Utilize the online grant management system
2. Contract information session attendance and contract compliance
3. Consistent mission and demonstration of programming that benefits and contributes to the cultural fabric of San Antonio
4. Arts and culture programming open to all members of the public
5. Articulated audience targets
6. Attendance reporting
7. Quarterly operational reporting
8. Timely completion of reporting per grant requirements