



# **GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING**

*July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027*

*(Revised June 17, 2026)*

---



## AGENCY

Established in 1968, the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) is the state agency that invests in the arts across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Investments are made possible through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Commission supports all arts disciplines by distributing grant awards to artists; arts organizations; educational institutions; nonprofits; educators; and local and tribal governments.

## ENABLING LEGISLATION

The Commission for the Arts shall perform among others the following duties: Stimulate and encourage throughout the State public interest and participation in the arts and to make recommendations concerning appropriate methods to encourage participation in and appreciation of the arts to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the State.  
§ 23.1-3223

## MISSION

To invest in the arts in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## STAFF

Colleen Dugan Messick | Executive Director  
Casey Polczynski, Ph.D. | Deputy Director  
Shauna Jones-Friend | Fiscal and Compliance Officer  
Catherine Welborn | Senior Grants Officer  
Lorraine Bruner | Grants and Artist Roster Engagement Coordinator

The FY27 Guidelines for Funding were developed and approved at the December 10, 2025 Commission Board meeting.

Accessibility | Applicants with accessibility questions or who require additional assistance may call 804.225.3132 or email Casey Polczynski, Ph.D., Deputy Director & Accessibility Coordinator at [casey.polczynski@vca.virginia.gov](mailto:casey.polczynski@vca.virginia.gov).



## COMMISSIONERS

Barbara Parker | Chair  
*Collinsville*

Frazier Millner Armstrong | Vice Chair  
*Richmond*

Hayley Allison  
*Richlands*

Raven Custalow  
*Aylett*

Debbie Garrett  
*Buena Vista*

Alex Grabiec  
*Farmville*

Vanessa Thaxton-Ward, Ph.D.  
*Hampton*

Yan Zhao  
*Falls Church*

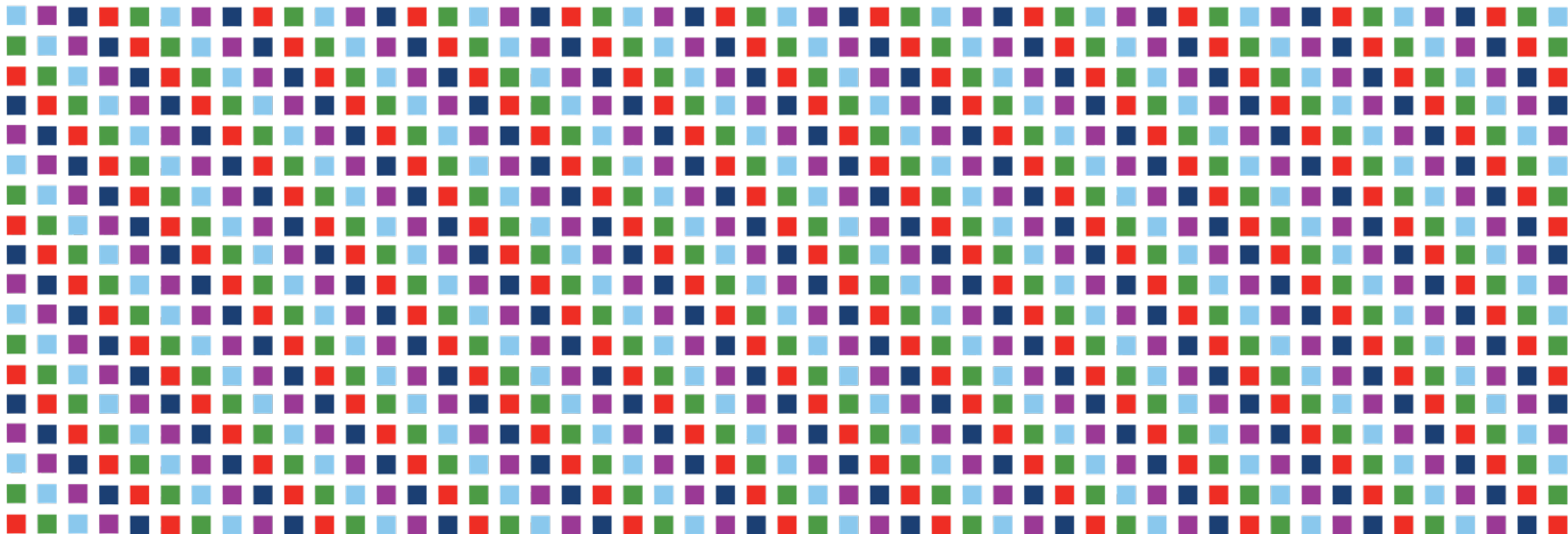


# CONTENTS

- VCA Grant Program Overview ..... 5
  - General Policies and Basic Eligibility.....9
- Partnership Grants ..... 13
  - General Operating Support: Medium and Large Arts Organizations (GOS)..... 14
  - Operating Support for Small Organizations (OSS) ..... 20
  - Creative Communities Partnership Grants ..... 24
  - Capacity Building Grants ..... 26
- Impact Grants ..... 28
  - Community Impact Grants ..... 29
  - Lifelong Learning Grants** ..... 33
  - Accessibility Microgrants ..... 37
  - Artist Catalyst Grants** ..... 40
- Artist Roster Engagement ..... 44
  - Virginia Touring Grants ..... 45
  - Touring Artist Roster ..... 48
  - Arts in Practice Grants ..... 51
  - Teaching Artist Roster ..... 54
- Suggestions for Grant Applicants ..... 57
- Civil Rights Compliance and Appeals Process ..... 59
- Advisory Panels ..... 61



# VCA GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW





## GRANT PROGRAMS

The FY27 Guidelines for Funding, presented in the following pages, describe the grant programs of the Commission. For a quick PDF overview of which grant program might be the best fit for you, [click here](#).

The FY27 Guidelines for Funding cover activities taking place between July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.

This document reflects ongoing feedback and guidance from constituents across the Commonwealth. The agency encourages individuals in Virginia to comment on its programs and services by contacting the Commission office at any time during the year.

### PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

- **General Operating Support: Medium and Large Arts Organizations | GOS**
- **Operating Support Small: Small Arts Organizations | OSS**
- **Creative Communities Partnership Grants**
- **Capacity Building Grants**

### IMPACT GRANTS

- **Community Impact Grants**
- **Lifelong Learning Grants**
- **Accessibility Microgrants**
- **Artist Catalyst Grants**

### ARTIST ROSTER ENGAGEMENT

- **Virginia Touring Grants**
- **Touring Artist Roster**
- **Arts in Practice Grants**
- **Teaching Artist Roster**



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMISSION

### Artistic Excellence

Supporting and stimulating excellence in the arts throughout Virginia as it pertains to public interest and appreciation is the responsibility of the Commission. The Commission supports artistic excellence, encourages innovation in artistic programming, and ensures artistic excellence is available to all Virginians.

While artistic excellence varies in relation to the organization's mission, goals, audiences, and activities, the defining elements include a commitment to innovation; a deep understanding of the particular medium presented to an audience; communication of a vision; and strong technique for both traditional and contemporary art forms.

Artistic excellence is a primary consideration in the decision to fund any arts organization or arts activity. Commission-selected Advisory Panels complete evaluations of artistic excellence through the lens of their own thought leadership and experience in the arts.

### Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion

The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to diversity, opportunity, and inclusion. As a state agency, the Virginia Commission for the Arts invests in opportunities for quality arts experiences made available and accessible to all Virginians. As such, the Commission funds arts organizations, artists, and arts activities that preserve and present the many diverse and vibrant cultures in the Commonwealth.

Commission grantees are also expected to actively seek and create opportunities for diversity and inclusion in their artists, audiences, Boards, and staff. Applications for funding should fully describe all efforts to cultivate diversity, opportunity, and inclusion.

### Accessibility

The Commission believes that all Virginians have the right to access and experience the arts in our Commonwealth. As a state agency, we strive to meet and exceed federal accessibility standards to benefit our communities. All applicants are expected to consider the needs and abilities of special populations when planning their programs.

### Individual Artist Support

The Commission relies on a healthy, vital, and productive arts infrastructure that supports Virginia's individual artists and arts entrepreneurs. The Commission provides leadership in supporting artists and arts professionals in their development and ability to sustain themselves through their work.

### Capacity-Building of Arts Organizations

The Commission provides ongoing support for established arts organizations and helps in the development of new arts organizations which fill a community need. In deciding which



organizations to support, the Commission looks for high standards of artistic quality and management, as well as local commitment to an organization.

The Commission funds organizations that strive for artistic excellence. The Commission defines a “professional” organization as one composed of, hiring, or serving artists who earn or endeavor to earn their living through the practice of their art.

The Commission views its financial assistance role to arts groups as that of a catalyst, helping to strengthen private and local support of the arts. The Commission believes in a diversified funding base for arts organizations, including cash reserve funds; endowment funds; in-kind support; earned income from ticket sales/admission fees; and contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, and government. This philosophy recognizes that government resources are limited while demands for services are high, and that the arts are healthier when open to diverse influences and not financially dependent on any single source of support.

### **Arts Education and Outreach**

The Commission recognizes the essential role of arts learning and education in the intellectual and creative growth of Virginians of all ages. The study of the arts is essential to human development and the education of all citizens, and that study begins through participation. As such, grantees are expected to actively seek and present arts experiences and provide resources and opportunities in which knowledge and appreciation of the arts is bolstered. The expansion of outreach and access to quality arts learning for underserved, under-resourced, and under-represented populations is also considered for funding.



## GRANT PROGRAMS | GENERAL POLICIES

### Basic Eligibility

The Virginia Commission for the Arts awards grants to Virginia organizations which:

- are nonprofit and exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(a), which includes the 501(c)(3) designation of the Internal Revenue code, or are units of government, or are educational institutions, or are local chapters of tax-exempt national organizations
- **General Operating Support: Medium & Large Arts Organization and Operating Support Small Organizations** must have a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, a 12-character alphanumeric value assigned, managed, and owned by the federal government through SAM.gov
- remain in operation for the duration of the grant cycle to receive and apply the funds
- produce, present, or support in Virginia, dance, literary arts, media arts, music, theater, visual, and related arts
- comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and implemented by the National Endowment for the Arts at 45 USC 1110, which provides that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Title VI also extends protection to persons with limited English proficiency (42 USC 2000d et seq.)
- comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, provides that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (20 USC 1681 et seq.)
- comply with The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, provides that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (42 USC 6101 et seq.)
- comply with The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment (Title I); State and local government services (Title II); and places of public accommodation and commercial facilities (Title III) (42 USC 12101-12213).
- comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his/her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (29 USC 794).
- integrate access into all facets and activities of an organization, from day-to-day operations to long range goals and objectives. Access accommodations and services should be given a high priority. All organizations are legally required to provide reasonable and necessary accommodations for staff and visitors with disabilities.



- must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- must maintain complete and accurate financial records related to the funded activities for a minimum of five (5) years following the end of the grant period.
- must have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application

### Ineligible Activities

The Virginia Commission for the Arts does not fund:

- lobbying activities intended to influence a member of Congress or the General Assembly, to favor or oppose any legislation
- activities restricted to an organization's membership
- expenses related to parties, receptions, fundraising campaigns/events, or any associated costs including food, catering, alcoholic beverages, as well as costs for planning, staffing, and supplies for these events
- cash awards, prizes, scholarships, or competitions
- advancement of capital or endowment campaigns
- activities that are primarily religious in purpose
- college or university-based projects that are part of a required course or curriculum that do not involve and serve a significant non-student population, or that are for activities that are otherwise available in the community
- general operating support for historic celebrations or community promotional activities
- fines and penalties, legal settlements, bad debt costs, or deficit reduction
- activities or programs that occur outside of the grant period
- travel, activities, or programs that take place outside Virginia, with the exception of Capacity Building Grants and **Artist Catalyst Grants**
- vocal, dance, and musical ensembles that perform primarily pop, Broadway, or barbershop music, or that focus primarily on competitions

### Application Submission

All applications must be submitted via Foundant, the VCA's online grants system. Applications are due in Foundant by 5:00 p.m. EST on the deadline date published for each individual grant program.

### Actions of the General Assembly

All Commission programs and grant amounts are subject to change, based upon action on the state budget by the Virginia General Assembly and by the Office of the Governor.

### Funding Acknowledgment

The purpose of crediting the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts is to provide citizens with an accurate picture of the broad range of arts activities supported by their tax dollars. Additionally, this acknowledgement serves as an endorsement for the organization and its activity and often leverages additional support.



VCA grantees are required to acknowledge funding support in accordance with the specific credit requirements of each grant program:

**Virginia Commission for the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts Funding Acknowledgement:**

- General Operating Support: Medium and Large Arts Organizations | GOS\*  
\*GOS grantees must refer to their Award Letter for specific requirements

**Virginia Commission for the Arts Funding Acknowledgement:**

- Operating Support Small: Small Arts Organizations | OSS
- Creative Communities Partnership Sub-grantees
- Community Impact Grants
- Capacity Building Grants
- Lifelong Learning Grants
- Accessibility Microgrants
- Artist Catalyst Grants
- Virginia Touring Grants
- Arts in Practice Grants

For specific VCA and NEA funding acknowledgement requirements and downloadable logos, visit the VCA's resources [page](#).

**Grant Amounts**

Commission grants to any established arts organization in one year will total no more than 30 percent of that organization's income for the previous year. Refer to each grant category for specific, maximum grant amounts and matching requirements.

Low priority will be given to organizations that do not show strong efforts to seek multiple funding resources, such as ticket revenue, contributed income, or in-kind support. Support for an organization or project does not imply future Commission support. Applications must be submitted each year. All Commission grants are subject to funds available.

**Certification of Assurances**

Each grant application must be signed by an individual with the authority to act on behalf of the applicant organization. Additionally, applicants must attach a signed copy of the Certification of Assurances to the application which is the applicant's agreement to complete what is described in the application and to comply with the grant conditions.

**Reporting Requirements**

When the Commission awards a grant, a letter is sent to the applicant with the payment schedule for that grant. Grantees shall notify the Commission of major changes in activities, budget, leadership, and/or grant contact. Failure to do so may affect continued funding.

The Commission requires a Final Report on each grant within 30 days of the end of the grant period, and no later than June 1. Final Report forms are located on the applicant's dashboard in Foundant. Each grantee must maintain accurate financial records for any activity supported

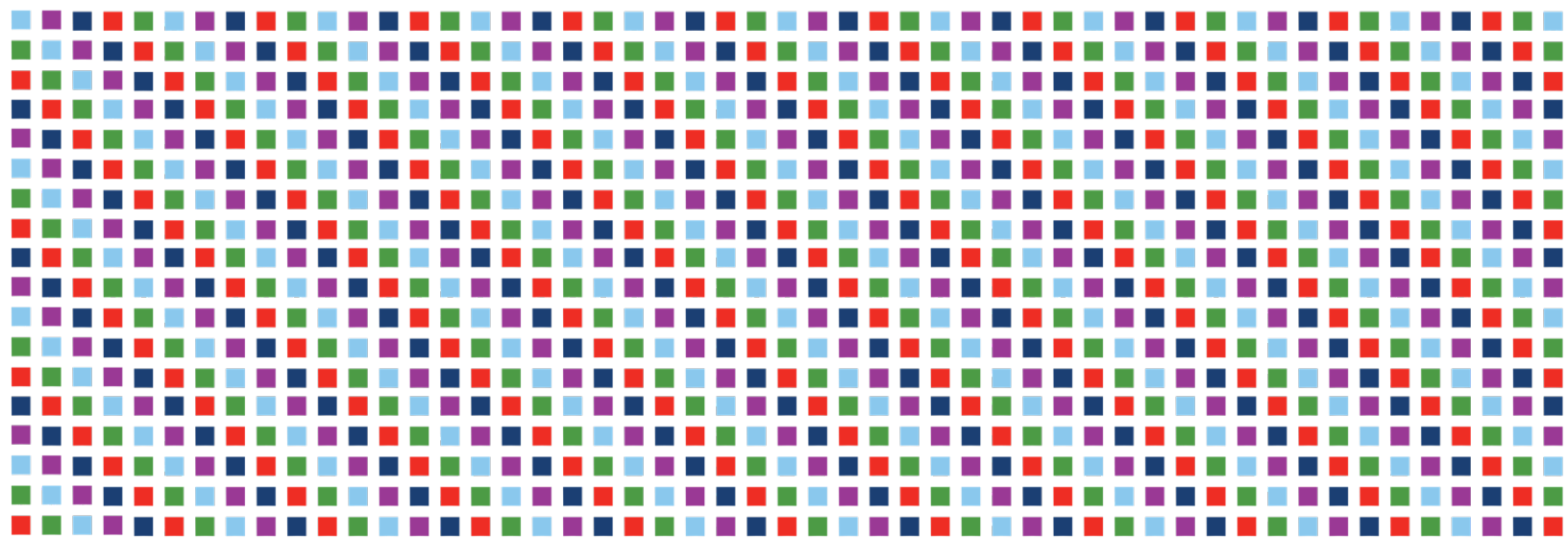


by Commission funds for five years. The Commission or its authorized representative shall have access to these records. These may include audited financials, profit and loss statements, and (in some cases) canceled checks or ACH documentation.

**NOTE:** Organizations with income exceeding \$1M must submit a Board-certified opinioned audit.



# PARTNERSHIP GRANTS





- General Operating Support: Medium and Large Arts Organizations | GOS
- Operating Support Small: Small Arts Organizations | OSS
- Creative Communities Partnership Grants
- Capacity Building Grants

## GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT: MEDIUM AND LARGE ARTS ORGANIZATIONS (GOS)

### Purpose

To invest in arts organizations to advance their artistic excellence, operational excellence, and community engagement and access within their missions. The VCA serves as a partner by providing operating funds to continue, strengthen, and expand arts experiences that benefit Virginians.

### Description

General Operating Support (GOS) is the largest program offered by the Virginia Commission for the Arts. Applicants for this grant must provide more detailed information than those applying for other VCA grants. This additional information helps Advisory Panelists, staff, and the Commission Board gain a thorough understanding of the applicant’s activities, organizational structure, management practices, financial stability, and community outreach. Returning GOS applicants who have been reviewed by an Advisory Panel are encouraged to reference previous reviews that identify opportunities for improvement.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements as listed on page 9 of the Guidelines for Funding
- Virginia organizations whose primary purpose is the arts (units of government, organizations using a fiscal agent, and educational institutions and their private companion foundations are not eligible for GOS)
- Is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- **Have a 12-character Unique Entity ID (UEI) from SAM.gov**
- Is incorporated in Virginia for at least one year prior to application
- Has its headquarters and home season in Virginia
- Has completed three (3) years of programming
- Presents at least three (3) different programs or services for the public each year
- Had a previous year’s unrestricted operating income of at least \$150,000. Organizations with smaller budgets may be eligible for OSS grants or for Community Impact Grants.
- Presents activities in ADA-compliant venue(s) including wheelchair access to restrooms
- Is governed by a Board that meets regularly
- Must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- Must have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application

**NOTE:** First-time General Operating Support (GOS) applicants must contact the Commission staff before applying to confirm eligibility.



Organizations applying for GOS may not apply for:

- Community Impact Grants
- Lifelong Learning Grants
- Arts in Practice Grants

### Additional Requirements

#### ■ Avocational Organizations

Priority in this funding program will be given to organizations that pay artists. Avocational organizations may be funded in this program if they provide specific services or programs that would otherwise not be available in that particular geographic area. Avocational organizations may apply in the other grant programs of the Commission.

#### ■ Festivals

A Partnership-funded festival must:

- be a separately incorporated Virginia organization with a year-round administrative staff
- maintain a primary purpose in the arts
- maintain a year-round presence in the community
- spend the majority of its budget on arts activities
- last longer than three consecutive days
- hire professional artists
- include education and outreach programs as part of the festival

**NOTE:** Other festivals may apply for Community Impact Grants and Virginia Touring Grants, if applicable.

#### ■ Educational Organizations

Organizations that exist primarily to provide arts education must meet the following criteria:

- maintain a diversified funding base, beyond tuition and ticket sales for public performances, that shows widespread community support
- employ teaching artists who are professionals or former professionals in their fields
- offer classes aimed at acquiring skills at ever-increasing levels of difficulty
- offer classes focused on development of skills rather than rehearsals for a performance
- offer scholarships for low-income students with an active effort to recruit students from diverse segments of the community
- present regular opportunities for students to perform or exhibit for the public

#### ■ Vocal, Dance, and Musical Ensembles

Vocal, dance, and musical ensembles that perform primarily pop, Broadway, or barbershop music, or that focus primarily on competitions are not eligible for General Operating Support but may be eligible to apply for Community Impact Grants, if applicable.



## Eligible Expenses

Funding from General Operating Support grants may be used to support most aspects of an arts organization's annual operating expenses (not including capital expenses and/or subgrants), such as:

- Artist fees
- Administrative costs
- Contractual services
- Accessibility services
- Facilities operations (utilities, rent, routine maintenance, etc.)
- Marketing or publicity of events/activities
- Personnel (salaries, benefits, etc.)
- Professional development (workshops, seminars, conferences, excluding credit-earning post-secondary coursework)
- Supplies and materials
- Technical costs
- Travel (domestic) and other operational expenses necessary to deliver arts programs and services

## Application Deadline

The Commission awards all General Operating Support Grants for a one-year period. Each grantee is required to apply annually. Organizations that have been funded by the Commission in the General Operating Support category in the current year will be notified by the Commission in mid-December regarding information requirements for the application deadlines. All new applicants must contact the Commission before applying to determine eligibility.

**Short Form Applications are due February 1, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. EST**, for expenses occurring between July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.

**Long Form applications are due March 1, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. EST**, for expenses occurring between July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.

## Required Attachments

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

- Eligible Income Worksheet
- Virginia W-9 Form
- Signed Certification of Assurances (**NOTE:** This form will be assigned as a follow-up document in Foundant if the applicant is awarded funding.)



Applicants must generate and upload the following support documents:

- Two documents reflecting artistic excellence
- List of programs from the current and most recently completed fiscal or calendar years
- List of staff (paid or volunteer) and their roles
- List of Board members highlighting officers and including members' affiliations
- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter
- Profit & Loss Statement / audit from the most recently completed fiscal or calendar year
- Balance Sheet from December 31, 2025
- Current year (projected) budget

### Reporting Requirements

If the grant is awarded, the organization must submit a partial year-end Final Report no later than June 1, 2027. The GOS Final Report Part II is due no later than October 1, 2027. Failure to submit a Final Report by the deadlines will impact future funding. If an organization undergoes a substantive change in its mission, program, artistic leadership, or management during the grant period, the Commission must be notified immediately. If, in the opinion of the Commission, such changes alter the purpose for which the grant was awarded, the Commission may require the organization to submit justification for continuing to receive the grant fund.

### Amount of Assistance

Organizations approved for funding will receive no more than 10 percent of their previous year's total unrestricted operating income, less Commission support, commissions to artists, flow through monies to artists or organizations for exhibition or gift shop arts sales and/or regranted funds to other organizations, facility rental income for non-arts activities, money paid to the organization for out-of-state trips or tours by the people taking the trips or tours, money raised for endowment/capital purposes in the previous year, and dividend/interest income. Most organizations will receive less than the maximum, and no organization is guaranteed a specific funding amount. If approved, minimum grant awards will be \$5,000 per year.

### Criteria for Evaluating Applications

- Artistic Excellence
- Operational Excellence
- Community Engagement and Access

**Artistic Excellence (30 points)** is measured by the quality of an organization's artistic work and how effectively its programming reflects a clear artistic vision aligned with its mission and goals. Because artistic excellence varies across disciplines and cultural traditions, applicants are evaluated in the context of their stated mission, audiences, and community role.

Reviewers assess intentional artistic planning, strong artistic leadership, and programming that contributes meaningfully to the cultural life of the communities served, including how organizations support and sustain the artists involved in their work.



**Operational Excellence (30 points)** is measured by the organization’s capacity to operate effectively and sustainably in support of its mission. Reviewers assess leadership and governance, financial stability, and the systems the organization uses to plan, manage, and evaluate its operations. This includes the strength and clarity of Board and staff roles, the organization’s fiscal position and revenue diversification, and the use of a Board-approved strategic planning process that guides decision-making and long-term sustainability.

**Community Engagement and Access (40 points)** is measured by how effectively an organization understands and serves its communities by offering inclusive, relevant, and accessible arts experiences. Reviewers consider how clearly the applicant defines its communities, how well programming aligns with community interests and needs, and the organization’s commitment to reducing barriers to participation. Reviewers also assess the organization’s strategies for engaging new and underserved groups, providing arts education and lifelong learning opportunities, and using feedback to continually improve accessibility and engagement.

**NOTE:** Organizations with annual income over **\$1 million** (for the previous two consecutive years) must submit an opinioned, audited financial statement from the most recently completed fiscal or calendar year. If the audit is not complete by the grant deadline, a Board-approved Profit and Loss Statement from the most recently completed fiscal or calendar year can be submitted; however, the organization will be required to submit an audit prior to the Advisory Panel screening session.

### Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Applicants submit the information requested by the Commission online by the deadline.
2. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be reviewed, will be returned to the applicant with an explanation, and will not be funded.
3. Applications are made available to the members of an Advisory Panel electronically.
4. Advisory Panelists independently review each application prior to the Advisory Panel Screening Session.
5. The Advisory Panel meets with two members of the Commission staff. Commissioners may attend Advisory Panel Screening Session as silent observers. The Advisory Panel makes its recommendations after group discussion.
6. The Commission Board then reviews the recommendations of the Advisory Panel and staff and takes final action on the applications.
7. Applicants are notified of Commission action by email following vote at the Commission Board meeting and pending enactment of the fiscal year budget per the General Assembly and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Partnership Agreement.
8. The Commission will pay the award in full by early September. The Commission reserves the right to use an alternative payment schedule in special circumstances.



- 9. GOS Final Report Part I (narrative) must be submitted after the completion of all funded activities or by June 1, 2027. GOS Final Report Part II (financials) must be submitted by October 1, 2027. Failure to submit a Final Report by the deadline will impact future funding.



## OPERATING SUPPORT FOR SMALL ORGANIZATIONS (OSS)

### Purpose

To invest in arts organizations to advance their artistic excellence, operational excellence, and community engagement within their missions. The VCA serves as a partner by providing operating funds to continue, strengthen, and expand arts experiences that benefit Virginians.

### Description

This grant program provides general operating support for small, nonprofit arts organizations with annual cash income of \$20,000 - \$150,000, that have arts as the core of their mission and provide public access to ongoing arts programs.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements as listed on page 9 of the Guidelines for Funding
- Virginia organizations whose primary purpose is the arts (units of government, organizations using a fiscal agent, and educational institutions and their private companion foundations are not eligible for OSS)
- Is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- **Have a 12-character Unique Entity ID (UEI) from SAM.gov**
- Is incorporated in Virginia for at least one year prior to application
- Has its headquarters and home season in Virginia
- Has completed two (2) years of programming at the time of application
- Presents at least three (3) different programs or services for the public each year
- Had a previous year's unrestricted operating income of at least \$20,000, but no greater than \$150,000
- May not have a combined deficit exceeding 20% of its total income across the two most recently completed fiscal or calendar years. This deficit is calculated as the total amount by which the organization's expenses have exceeded its revenues during this period
- Presents activities in ADA-compliant facilities, including wheelchair access to restrooms
- Is governed by a Board that meets regularly
- Must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- Has no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application

**NOTE:** Organizations applying for OSS may not apply for Community Impact Grants



## Additional Requirements

### ■ Avocational Organizations

Priority in this funding program will be given to organizations that pay artists. Avocational organizations may be funded in this program if they provide specific services or programs that would otherwise not be available in that particular geographic area. Avocational organizations may apply in the other grant programs of the Commission.

### ■ Festivals

A Partnership-funded festival must:

- be a separately incorporated Virginia organization with a year-round administrative staff
- maintain a primary purpose in the arts
- maintain a year-round presence in the community
- spend the majority of its budget on arts activities
- last longer than three consecutive days
- hire professional artists
- include education and outreach programs as part of the festival

**NOTE:** Other festivals may apply for Community Impact Grants and Virginia Touring Grants, if applicable.

### ■ Educational Organizations

Organizations that exist primarily to provide arts education must meet the following criteria:

- maintain a diversified funding base, beyond tuition and ticket sales for public performances, that shows widespread community support
- employ teaching artists who are professionals or former professionals in their fields
- offer classes aimed at acquiring skills at ever-increasing levels of difficulty
- offer classes focused on development of skills rather than rehearsals for a performance
- offer scholarships for low-income students with an active effort to recruit students from diverse segments of the community
- present regular opportunities for students to perform or exhibit for the public

### ■ Vocal, Dance, and Musical Ensembles

Vocal, dance, and musical ensembles that perform primarily pop, Broadway, or barbershop music, or that focus primarily on competitions are not eligible for General Operating Support but may be eligible to apply for Community Impact grants, if applicable.



## Eligible Expenses

Funding from OSS Grants may be used to support most aspects of an arts organization's annual operating expenses (not including capital expenses), such as:

- Artist fees
- Administrative costs, personnel (salaries, benefits...)
- Contractual services
- Accessibility services
- Facilities operations (utilities, rent, routine maintenance...)
- Marketing or publicity of events/activities
- Professional development (workshops, seminars, conferences, excluding credit-earning post-secondary coursework)
- Supplies and materials
- Technical costs
- Travel (domestic) and other operational expenses necessary to deliver arts programs and services

## Required Attachments

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

- Signed Certification of Assurances
- Virginia W-9 Form

Applicants must generate and upload the following support documents:

- List of staff (paid or volunteer) and their roles
- List of Board members highlighting officers and including members' affiliations
- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter
- Profit & Loss Statements / audits from the two most recently completed fiscal or calendar years
- Balance Sheet from December 31, 2025
- Current year (projected) budget

## Application Deadline

March 1, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. EST, for expenses occurring between July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.

The Commission awards all Operating Support for Small Organization (OSS) grants for a one-year period. Each grantee is required to apply annually.



## Reporting Requirements

If the grant is awarded, the organization must submit a partial year-end Final Report no later than June 1, 2027. The OSS Final Report Part II is due no later than October 1, 2027. Failure to submit a Final Report by June 1 will impact future funding. If an organization undergoes a substantive change in its mission, program, artistic leadership, or management during the grant period, the Commission must be notified immediately. If, in the opinion of the Commission, such changes alter the purpose for which the grant was awarded, the Commission may require the organization to submit justification for continuing to receive the grant fund.

## Amount of Assistance

Award amounts are based on previous year's income:

- \$3,000 (previous year's income \$20,000 - \$74,999)
- \$4,000 (previous year's income \$75,000 - \$150,000)

## Criteria for Evaluating Applications

Commission staff reviews submitted applications for eligibility, completeness, and accuracy.

## Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Applicants must complete and submit the online application to the Commission by the deadline.
2. The Commission staff reviews each application for eligibility, completeness and accuracy. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be reviewed, will be returned to the applicant with an explanation, and will not be funded.
3. The Commission staff makes recommendations for each application.
4. The Commission Board reviews the staff recommendations and takes final action on the applications.
5. Applicants are notified of Commission action by email following vote at the next Commission Board meeting and pending enactment of the fiscal year budget per the General Assembly.
6. The Commission will pay the grant amount in full by early September. The Commission reserves the right to use an alternative payment schedule in special circumstances.
7. OSS Final Report Part I (narrative) is due June 1, 2027; OSS Final Report Part II (financials) is due no later than October 1, 2027. Failure to submit a Final Report by the deadline will impact future funding.



# CREATIVE COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

## Purpose

To encourage local and tribal governments to support the arts.

## Description

The Commission will match, *up to* \$4,500, subject to funds available, the tax monies given by independent town, city, county, and tribal governments to independent arts organizations. The funding, which does not include school arts budgets or arts programming by local governments, committees or councils of government, nor departments such as parks and recreation, may be sub-granted either by a local arts commission/council or directly by the governing body.

## Eligible Applicants

Independent city, town, county, or tribal governments in Virginia.

## Eligible Activities

Grants to independent, ADA-compliant arts organizations for arts activities in the locality, including activities that provide opportunities for underserved, under-resourced, and under-represented communities. The Commission does not match payments paid to performers or arts educators through CCPG funding. Local or tribal governments seeking such funding should apply to the Virginia Touring or Arts in Practice Grant programs.

## Deadline

April 1, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. EST for local and tribal government grants awarded in FY27.

**NOTE:** A local or tribal government that has not approved its budget by the grant deadline may apply conditionally and confirm the application as soon as possible.

## Amount of Assistance

Up to \$4,500, subject to funds available. Local government (excluding tribal) match must be from local government funds; federal funds may not be included.

## Criteria for Evaluating Applications

- Clearly defined policies and procedures for awarding local funds to arts organizations
- Demonstrated community impact

## Application/Review Process

1. Applicants must complete and submit the online application to the Commission by the deadline.
2. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be reviewed, will be returned to the applicant with an explanation, and will not be funded.



3. The Commission staff makes recommendations on levels of funding for each application.
4. The Commission Board reviews the staff recommendations and takes final action on the applications.
5. Applicants are notified of Commission action by email following vote at the Commission Board meeting and pending enactment of the fiscal year budget per the General Assembly.

### Payment Process and Reporting Requirements

After confirmation of the grant award, each local or tribal government must complete the online Final Report/confirmation form that demonstrates its governing Board has appropriated and distributed the matching funds and the funds from the Commission. This confirmation must include the appropriate page of the local government's approved FY27 budget and a copy of the check(s) to the sub-grantee(s).

**NOTE:** The locality must issue payment in full to the subgrantee, which includes both the VCA portion and the locality's match. The Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) sends its match to the locality, which is then responsible for sending the entire payment to the subgrantee.

There are **two acceptable methods to verify full payment** to subgrantees:

1. **Two-Payment Method:** The locality issues payment for its portion first and, once VCA funds are received, forwards the VCA match to the subgrantee. In this case, the VCA will send a second report form to verify the payment of VCA's match.
2. **Single-Payment Method (Preferred):** The locality pays the subgrantee in full by combining both the locality and VCA portions in a single payment. This approach streamlines the process, eliminates the need for a second payment, and removes the requirement for additional VCA payment verification once funds are received.

Although the Final Report and verification of payment are not due until February 1, 2027 (by 5:00 p.m. EST), localities are encouraged to complete the report as soon as possible. Submitting early allows VCA to process its match sooner, which helps ensure subgrantees receive their full payments without delay.

The Commission will pay the grant match in full after receiving this confirmation. The deadline for the Final Report/Confirmation is February 1, 2027, by 5:00 p.m. EST. Failure to submit a Final Report by February 1 will result in the loss of the grant.

**NOTE:** If the local or tribal government receives more than \$750,000 in yearly federal expenditures from Commonwealth agencies, they must submit a Single Audit Report.



# CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS

## Purpose

Capacity Building Grants help Virginia arts organizations enhance artistic quality, strengthen community engagement, and improve management capabilities by providing access to external expertise.

## Description

Capacity Building Grants provide targeted assistance for Virginia arts organizations seeking to strengthen their internal operations and sustainability. These grants help organizations access specialized expertise or training that supports strategic growth, improved management, and long-term effectiveness.

## Eligible Applicants

Virginia organizations whose primary purpose is the arts (units of government, organizations using a fiscal agent, and educational institutions and their private companion foundations are not eligible).

## Eligibility Requirements

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements as listed on page 9 of the Guidelines for Funding
- Are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Are incorporated in Virginia for at least one year prior to application
- Have their headquarters and home season in Virginia
- Have a previous year's unrestricted income of at least \$20,000, but no greater than \$750,000
- Present activities in ADA-compliant facilities, including wheelchair access to restrooms
- Are governed by a board of directors that meets regularly
- Must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- Have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application

## Eligible Activities (for the grant period of July 1, 2026 – June 15, 2027)

- 1) Short-term consultations focused on specific artistic or organizational challenges or opportunities, with the staff of the applicant organization implementing the resulting action plan.

**Examples include but are not limited to:** board and audience development; strategic or business planning; internal controls and financial policy reviews; cybersecurity assessment; ticketing/donor/project-management software implementation roadmap; marketing, branding, and/or communications planning; earned-revenue feasibility and pricing strategy; fund development; community engagement plan; ADA/accessibility audit; succession or leadership transition planning; or other capacity- building priorities identified by the applicant.



- 2) Sending administrators, staff, board members, and other authorized representatives to conferences, seminars, institutes, or other professional development opportunities designed to strengthen organizational sustainability, leadership capacity, and overall effectiveness.

**Examples may include but are not limited to:** sector-wide arts convenings, discipline-specific institutes, fundraising and development intensives, technology or digital engagement workshops, and other learning experiences that build skills and networks to benefit the organization and its community. Grant funds may be used for registration, travel, lodging, and per diem expenses.

### Application Deadline

Applications open May 15, 2026, and will be reviewed by staff on a rolling, first-come, first-served basis until all funds are awarded. Applications must be submitted at least two weeks before the proposed activity to allow for review and approval. Early submission is encouraged.

### Assistance Amount

- Up to \$1,500 per year for a single organization; no matching funds required.
- **Up to \$3,000 per year for an activity serving multiple organizations; no matching funds required. Examples include: Professional development activities provided to several organizations within the same geographic area, or activities involving a statewide network of organizations working in the same artistic discipline.**

### Required Attachments

Applicants must generate and upload the following documents:

- Profit & Loss Statement from the most recently completed fiscal year
- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

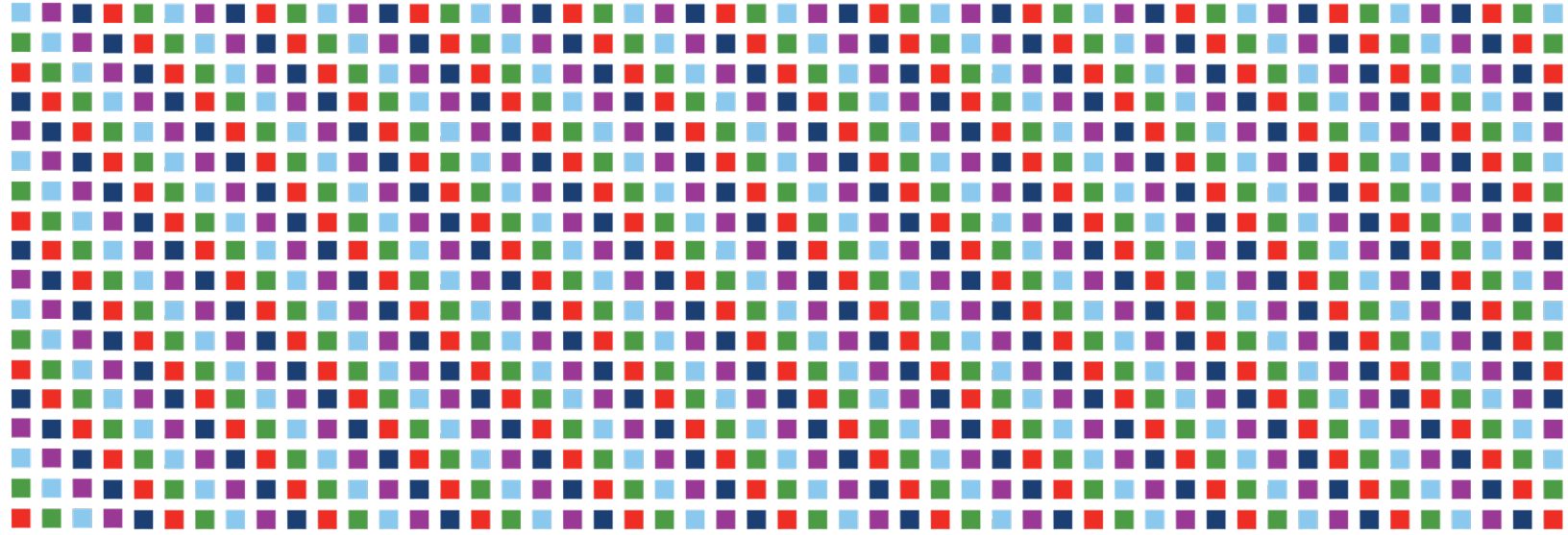
- Capacity Building Budget Form
- Signed Certification of Assurances Form
- Virginia W-9 Form

### Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Applicants must complete and submit the online application to the Commission at least two weeks before the proposed grant activity will begin.
2. Commission staff will review applications for completeness and eligibility.
3. Capacity Building Grants are not automatic. Confirmation/grant award letters are generally emailed two weeks after receipt of a completed and approved application.
4. The Commission will authorize payment in full upon receipt of a Final Report, which is due within 30 days after the activity ends and no later than June 16, 2027, for activities taking place between June 1, 2027 – June 15, 2027. The Final Report must include a brief summary narrative of the completed activity, and a financial report with copies of invoices and payment receipts. Failure to submit a Final Report by the deadline will result in the loss of the grant.



# IMPACT GRANTS





- Community Impact Grants
- Lifelong Learning Grants
- Accessibility Microgrants
- Artist Catalyst Grants

## COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANTS

### Purpose

To facilitate new and innovative art-based projects or services that reach and impact communities, including those that are underserved, under-resourced, and under-represented.

### Description

Community Impact Grants fund high-quality creative arts programming, creation of new work, expansion of successful arts projects, and/or arts-based services to the field. Impact Grants support any artistic discipline and on any scale. There is a 1:1 required cash match for the grant.

### Eligible Applicants

- Virginia nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations
- Units of local and tribal governments
- Higher educational institutions presenting the arts

### Eligibility Requirements

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements as listed on page 9 of the Guidelines for Funding
- All programming/services will take place in ADA-compliant facilities
- Must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- Must have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application

### NOTE

- Groups without tax-exempt status may apply using a Virginia Fiscal Agent (see details below).
- Organizations applying for Community Impact Grants may not apply for GOS or OSS.
- General operating support or annual budgets for established organizations are not considered projects and are ineligible.
- Applications from colleges/universities should be for activities not otherwise available in the community.
- Projects from colleges/universities that are primarily for academic credit are not eligible.
- Applications for traditional learning environments, including Pre-K-12 and lifelong learners with identified learning goals, must be filed under the Arts in Practice Grant program, if applicable.



- Individuals may not apply.
- Generally, the Commission will not support the same project for more than three years.

### Eligible Activities

Community Impact Grants provide support for a wide range of new and expanded arts programs that drive impact, including, but not limited to:

- New or expanded performances, exhibitions, screenings, conferences, readings, public art projects, and festivals that focus on engaging new and underserved, under-resourced, and under-represented audiences or communities
- Program enhancements that enable participation of individuals with disabilities
- Commissions of new works of visual, performing, and media arts
- Public art projects that commission an artist for the creation of new work that engage the community in the planning, presentation, and/or fabrication

### Fiscal Agents

A nonprofit, tax-exempt Virginia organization or unit of government may act as fiscal agent for a Community Impact Grant request by an organization that is not tax exempt or not incorporated in Virginia. \* The fiscal agent must complete and sign the application and, if a grant is received, is legally responsible for the completion of the project and for the proper management of the grant funds. The Commission requires that a fiscal agent have a written agreement with the individual or organization that will actually administer the project, to avoid misunderstandings. The Commission requires a signed copy of the written agreement between the two parties as part of the application. The fiscal agent may not have a staff member affiliated with any aspect of the project, either as an employee or in a policymaking role such as serving on the Board.

**NOTE:** \*The Commission will also accept Fractured Atlas and Women In Film & Video as fiscal agents for Community Impact grants only, as approved by Commission vote. Fractured Atlas and Women in Film & Video are the only exceptions for fiscal agents outside of Virginia.

### Application Deadline

April 1, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. EST for the grant period of July 1, 2026 - June 15, 2027.

### Assistance Amount

Generally, the grant amounts will be between \$1,000 and \$5,000. Applicants may submit more than one application for a combined total of no more than \$5,000 and must provide at least a 1:1 cash match of the requested grant.

### Cash Match

Grant awards to organizations must be matched 1:1. For example, if an organization requests \$1,000 from VCA, it must have at least \$1,000 in cash income from another source towards the expenses of that same project. Sources of matching funds may include revenue from the project activities such as ticket sales; contributions from individuals, foundations, or corporations; government support from federal, state, or local sources, or cash from the organization's own accounts.



### In-kind Support

In-kind contributions cannot be counted as part of a cash match. In-kind contributions are the dollar value of materials and services that are provided to a project at no cash cost from sources other than the applicant, e.g., volunteer hours or donated space. However, it is important to document and include information on in-kind contributions as part of the application budget. In-kind donations help to demonstrate a community’s support of a project.

### Criteria for Evaluating Applications

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is interested in innovative, collaborative arts programs and/or services with the following priorities:

**Artistic Excellence** - Relative to the budget size of the organization, the extent to which the applicant demonstrates a committed effort to provide its audience/community with an innovative, impactful and quality artistic experience.

**Operational Excellence** - The extent to which the applicant can demonstrate sound fiscal and project management.

**Community Engagement and Access** - The extent to which there is an active, two-way engagement between the applicant and the audience/community in the planning, participation, and evaluation of the proposed activity, including intentional strategies to reach new, under-resourced, and/or under-represented communities.

### Required Attachments

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

- Project Budget Form
- Signed Certification of Assurances
- Virginia W-9 Form

Applicants must generate and upload the following documents:

- Artist(s) bios
- Two documents reflecting artistic excellence
- Profit and Loss Statement or audit from the most recently completed fiscal or calendar year
- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter
- Fiscal Agent Agreement (*if applicable*)

### Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Applicants must complete and submit the online application to the Commission by the deadline.
2. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be reviewed, will be returned to the applicant with an explanation, and will not be funded.



3. Commission staff forwards applications to members of the statewide, multi-disciplinary Advisory Panel to review prior to the Advisory Panel Screening Session.
4. The Advisory Panel meets with two members of the Commission staff. Commissioners may attend Advisory Panel Screening Session as silent observers. The Advisory Panel makes its recommendations after group discussion.
5. The Commission Board then reviews the recommendations of the Advisory Panel and staff and takes final action on the applications.
6. Applicants are notified of Commission action by email following vote at the next Commission Board meeting and pending enactment of the fiscal year budget per the General Assembly.
7. The Commission will pay the grant amount in full by early September. The Commission reserves the right to use an alternative payment schedule in special circumstances.
8. Final Reports must be submitted 30 days after the completion of all funded activities or by June 1 at the latest. Failure to submit a Final Report by the deadline will impact future funding.



## LIFELONG LEARNING GRANTS

### Purpose

To facilitate and support arts learning for students, educators, youth, and adult citizens, reaching those who are underserved, under-resourced, and under-represented, by providing opportunities to work with highly qualified professional teaching artists in traditional and non-traditional learning environments.

### Description

Lifelong Learning Grants fund sequential hands-on learning programs and experiences designed to encourage 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 programs include specific objectives, outcomes and methods of evaluation that are well defined and relevant to the learners involved.

### Eligible Applicants (Serving Underserved, Under-Resourced, and Under-Represented)

- Virginia federally tax-exempt schools (public, public charter, private, alternative, special education schools, homeschools, career and technical centers)
- Virginia nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations
- Virginia units of local and tribal governments (including libraries, departments of parks and recreation, and correctional facilities, etc.)

**NOTE:** Applicants receiving FY27 General Operating Support (GOS) or FY27 Community Impact Grants may not apply for Lifelong Learning Grants.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements listed on page 9 of the Guidelines for Funding
- All programming must take place in Virginia ADA-compliant facilities
- Must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- Must have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application

### Eligible Activities

Lifelong Learning Grants support hands-on, multi-session arts instruction and experiences for learners of all ages and disciplines, including intergenerational programming. Programs must provide sustained, skill-building experiences that develop knowledge and abilities over time rather than through a single exposure event. Applications must clearly articulate measurable learning objectives and describe how participant outcomes will be assessed. Applicants may request support for arts learning programs that serve diverse communities of learners, including but not limited to the following:

- New or expanded in-school, after-school, or summer arts education programs.
- New or expanded workshops, including intergenerational programming, based upon identified learning goals. Grant funding supports multi-day projects.
- New or expanded training for artists or arts educators, or arts integration professional development for educators who work with Virginia's Pre-K-12 students.



**NOTE:** Virtual programming is not allowed. The Commission will not fund the same project for more than three consecutive years unless the applicant demonstrates program expansion, redesign, or measurable growth in impact.

### Teaching Artist Selection

Teaching Artists may be selected as follows:

- Independent Teaching Artists may be proposed in the application with supplemental documentation required to support the artist's qualifications or
- VCA Teaching Artists may be proposed as program facilitators. Visit VCA's online [Teaching Artist Roster](#) to identify potential teaching artists.
- Teaching Artists who have demonstrated experience working with underserved, under-resources, and under-represented communities such as but not limited to diverse ethnic populations, people with disabilities and people age 60 years and older to name a few.

### Eligible Expenses

Grant funds may be used for expenses directly related to the implementation of the proposed arts learning project. Eligible expenses include:

- Teaching Artist fees (must represent at least 50% of the total project budget)
- Administrative expenses directly associated with the project (e.g., project staffing, program coordination, documentation, evaluation)
- Materials, supplies, and equipment necessary to carry out the project
- Travel expenses directly related to project activities

### Application Deadline

This grant will be awarded on a rolling first-come, first-served basis for two grant cycles until funds are exhausted. Applications for a given cycle must be submitted no later than four (4) weeks before the grant activity will take place.

- Cycle 1: Opens July 1, 2026 – December 1, 2026 (for activities taking place August 1, 2026, through June 15, 2027)
- Cycle 2: Opens January 1, 2027 – May 1, 2027 (for activities taking place February 1, 2027, through June 15, 2027)Materials, supplies, and equipment necessary to carry out the project

**NOTE:** Applicants may only apply for one (1) Lifelong Learning Grant per fiscal year.

### Assistance Amount

Grants are available in amounts up to \$4,000 and require a minimum 10% cash match of the total project expenses.

### Cash Match

Lifelong Learning Grants require a minimum 10% cash match of the total project expenses. The maximum grant request is \$4,000.



Sources of matching funds may include project-generated income; contributions from individuals, foundations, or corporations; government support from federal, state, or local sources; or cash from the organization's own accounts. In-kind contributions may not be used to satisfy the cash match requirement.

**Example:**

If the total project budget is \$4,400, the applicant may request \$4,000 from the Commission and must provide at least \$400 in cash match.

If the total project budget is \$2,200, the applicant may request up to \$2,000 and must provide at least \$200 in cash match.

**In-Kind Support**

In-kind contributions cannot be counted as part of a cash match. In-kind contributions are the dollar value of materials and services that are provided to a project at no cash cost from sources other than the applicant, e.g., volunteer hours or donated space. However, it is important to document and include information on in-kind contributions as part of the application budget.

**Criteria For Evaluating Applications**

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is interested in innovative and collaborative arts education programs and/or services with the following priorities:

**Lifelong Learning Impact** – The extent to which the applicant demonstrates intentional strategies to reach underserved, under-resourced, and under-represented communities.

**Artistic Excellence** – The extent to which the Teaching Artist demonstrates well documented artistic expertise, along with a strong commitment to delivering impactful, high-quality arts programming.

**Accessibility Impact** – The extent to which the applicant demonstrates specific engagement with underserved, under-represented, and under-resourced communities which may include but is not limited to ethnicity, people with disabilities, people age 60 years and older, and active-duty military/veterans and their families.

**Required Attachments**

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

- Project Budget Form
- Signed Certification of Assurances Form
- Virginia W-9 Form

Applicants must generate and upload the following documents:

- Residency/Workshop Lesson Plan
- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter

Applicants must also generate and upload the following documents if not using an artist from the VCA Teaching Artist Roster:

- Teaching Artist(s) Resume(s)
- One Letter of Reference
- Three Documents Reflecting Artistic Excellence



### Reporting Requirements

If a grant is awarded, applicants must submit a Final Report within 30 days of completing their grant activities. The Final Report will require receipts, narrative responses, and/or other documentation of the grant activities (photos/videos).

### Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Applicant must complete and submit the online application to the Commission four weeks before the activities take place.
2. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility prioritizing underserved, under-resourced, and under-represented populations.
3. Lifelong Learning Grants are not automatic. Confirmation/grant award letters are generally emailed two weeks after receipt of a completed and approved application
4. **Payment will be made in full following award approval, typically within 30-45 days.**
5. If any applicant receiving subsidy for a Lifelong Learning grant has actual income in excess of expenses, the applicant must use these additional funds for other arts activities, and the Commission must approve the use of these excess funds up to the amount of the grant.
6. Grantees must submit a Final Report within 30 days of program completion and no later than June 1, 2027. For activities taking place between June 1 – June 15, 2027, Final Reports will be due on July 16, 2027. Failure to submit the Final Report will affect future funding.



## ACCESSIBILITY MICROGRANTS

### Purpose

To make the arts accessible to all Virginians by supporting improvements in an organization's space, facilities, or programming.

### Description

The Accessibility Microgrant provides funding up to \$2,000, with a 10% (1:10) cash match requirement, for projects that meet a specific accessibility need in an organization's arts offerings. In-kind or federal matches will not be accepted. Funds will be distributed on a rolling basis in two cycles throughout the fiscal year; once funds are depleted for a given cycle, no more projects will be approved.

This grant supports a wide variety of projects, including minor, non-transformational facilities improvements. While it does not fund construction or installation, it may fund supplies, like signage, that would later be installed.

### Eligible Applicants

Virginia nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations whose primary purpose is the arts (units of government, organizations using a fiscal agent, and educational institutions and their private companion foundations are not eligible).

### Eligibility Requirements

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements listed on page 9 of the Guidelines for Funding
- Has identified an accessibility need in a way that demonstrates an organizational commitment to improving access, which could include a self-assessment, community partnership, audit, or staff review. If a self-assessment is used, eligible documents may include the Open Door Arts and Culture Accessibility Self-Assessment, the NEA 504 Self-Assessment Workbook, or other comparable documents.
- Organizations may only receive one Accessibility Microgrant in each fiscal year. Additional applications will not be accepted.
- Must have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application.

### Eligible Activities (for the grant period of July 1, 2026 – June 1, 2027)

**Accessible Programming:** Accessibility-related supplies and services that make arts programs accessible to people with disabilities, whether temporary or ongoing. Activities of this kind might include:

- Printing programs, sheet music, and other materials in braille or large print
- Accessibility training or audits
- Use of captioning or speech-to-text apps
- Transportation/mobility assistance services
- Website accessibility improvements
- Tactile art supplies



- Staff training in accessibility protocols
- Other inclusive programming

**Equipment Purchases:** Grants may support purchases of equipment that would allow people with disabilities to better access arts programming. These might include:

- Other inclusive programming
- Adaptive touchscreen interfaces
- Assistive listening systems or devices
- Electronic drawing tablets
- Sensory feedback tools
- Adaptive styluses
- Haptic metronomes
- Other adaptive art materials

**Facilities Enhancements:** Grants may support limited and non-constructive improvements that increase accessibility in commonly-used spaces. Enhancements of this kind might include:

- Installing accessibility signage in your interior or exterior space
- Modifying existing signage in/around restrooms, fountains, and/or quiet rooms
- Purchasing tactile or contrast floor indicators at slope changes
- Installation of Braille plaques

### Application Deadline

This grant will be awarded on a rolling basis in two cycles. No more grants will be awarded in a given cycle once funding is depleted. Applications for a given cycle must be submitted no later than two (2) weeks before the grant activity would take place.

- Cycle 1: July 1, 2026 - December 1, 2026
- Cycle 2: January 1, 2027 - June 1, 2027

### Assistance Amount

This grant provides up to \$2,000, with a 10% (1:10) cash match requirement, for approved projects. Funding is provided in the form of reimbursement after the grant activities take place.

### Cash Match

Grant awards to organizations must be matched 1:10. For example, if an organization requests \$1,000 from VCA, it must have at least \$100 in cash income from another source towards the expenses of that same project. Sources of matching funds may include revenue from the project activities such as ticket sales; contributions from individuals, foundations, or corporations; government support from federal, state, or local sources, or cash from the organization's own accounts.



## Criteria for Evaluating Applications

The Virginia Commission for the Arts will evaluate applications based on the following:

**Feasibility of Project Proposal** – Given the proposed project, the extent to which the applicant demonstrates their ability to effectively carry out all activities within funding, time, or staff constraints.

**Impact on Organizational Accessibility** – The extent to which audiences and/or artists will be able to access the applicant’s offerings and programs more easily after the successful completion of the project.

**Engagement with Disability Community** – The extent to which the applicant can demonstrate that their project has been informed by people with disabilities or disability experts (including tools developed by those people). Examples of successful engagement include community partnerships, ongoing relationships, or programming that serves people with disabilities.

## Required Attachments

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

- Project Budget Form
- Signed Certification of Assurances Form
- Virginia W-9 Form

Applicants must generate and upload the following support documents:

- One piece of documentation that the applicant engaged with the disability community in planning their project. Eligible documentation could include, but is not limited to:
  - Receipt of completion of an accessibility self-assessment, which may include the NEA Section 504 Workbook or Open Door Arts Accessibility Self-Assessment
  - Feedback from an audience member, patron, or caregiver (with personally identifying information removed)
  - Results of an accessibility audit performed on your organization
- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter

## Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Applicants must complete and submit the online application to the Commission by the deadline (2 weeks before the proposed grant activity will begin).
2. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility.
3. Accessibility Microgrants are not automatic. Confirmation/grant award letters are generally emailed two weeks after receipt of a completed and approved application.
4. The Commission will reimburse all funded expenses within 30 days of the grantee’s submission of a complete Final Report, which includes receipts. However, the Commission reserves the right to use an alternative payment schedule in special circumstances.
5. Final Reports must be submitted 30 days after the completion of all funded activities. Failure to submit a Final Report by the deadline will impact future funding.



## ARTIST CATALYST GRANTS

### Purpose

To assist Virginia artists in advancing their creative practice.

### Description

The Artist Catalyst Grant offers one-time support of up to \$500 to help artists reach a new point in their development, either by enhancing their craft, accessing a unique opportunity, engaging with the public, or completing a significant project. As a guiding principle, the funded activity should serve as a catalyst, helping to enhance the artist's practice or career trajectory. Requests most likely to be awarded will clearly articulate compelling before-and-after impact, demonstrating how this investment enables new skills, opportunities, visibility, or momentum that would not occur without the grant.

### Eligible Applicants

- Practicing artists who are actively engaged in the creation and/or presentation of artistic work. Eligibility may be demonstrated through a current CV/resume, exhibition or performance history, and documentation of your work.
- Legal resident of Virginia
- Applicants must be 18 years of age at the time grant activities begin
- Applicants must plan to remain a Virginia resident during the grant period
- Full-time students are ineligible to apply
- VCA Roster Artists are ineligible to apply

### Eligibility Requirements

- Must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- Must have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application
- If your project involves a performance or display of your work to an audience, that activity must be open to the general public (not limited to membership), and must be held in an ADA-compliant facility.

### Eligible Activities

Artist Catalyst Grants fund a variety of activities improving the artist's career or practice, including professional development, self-promotion, equipment purchases, or networking. This may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- Attending a masterclass, conference, or networking meetup that sparks new ideas
- Developing a website, portfolio, or marketing materials to attract new commissions, employers, or partners
- Taking on a temporary apprenticeship or residency with a mentor or collective
- Shipping, freight or preparation costs
- Event rental or facility fees



- Investing in equipment, materials, or other purchases that are integral to the opportunity. The grant may cover up to \$500 toward a larger purchase, with total cost not to exceed \$3,000. Equipment purchases should be clearly justified as essential to the proposed opportunity or professional advancement.
- Showcasing your work to new audiences in ways that deepen public engagement and visibility
- Only activities/expenses incurred in the project time frame may be listed as a project expense or income on project budget information.

In addition to the VCA's ineligible activities (page 10), this grant does not fund:

- Virtual programming
- Ongoing expenses like rent, studio fees, web hosting, subscriptions, or regular lessons
- Activities or expenses that you would normally do as a part of your job, even if as an artist
- Activities that could be supported by your employer should instead be requested under a Capacity Building Grant. i.e. conferences or professional development opportunities
- Travel costs such as meals, hotels, or transportation
- Activities that take place outside of the United States
- Anything related to credit bearing curricular work in a school college, or university
- Anything barred by state or federal law, including lobbying or political advocacy

### Application Deadline

This grant will be awarded on a rolling (first-come, first-served) basis in two cycles. No more applications will be accepted in a given cycle once funding is depleted. Applications for a given cycle must be submitted no later than two (2) weeks before the grant activity would take place.

- Cycle 1: October 1, 2026 - November 1, 2026, for activities taking place November 15, 2026 through June 15, 2027
- Cycle 2: March 1, 2027 - April 1, 2027, for activities taking place April 15, 2027 through June 15, 2027

**NOTE:** Applicants whose submissions were received after funding was depleted (not those which were denied), may reapply in the next cycle. Individuals may only receive one Artist Catalyst Grant within any two-year period. Additional applications will not be accepted.

### Assistance Amount

This grant provides \$500, with no matching requirement. If approved, funding is provided as a single payment following the close of the application cycle.

**NOTE:** Please note that funding may not be disbursed prior to when the proposed activities take place, therefore applicants should be prepared to cover costs upfront.

### Criteria for Evaluating Applications

The Virginia Commission for the Arts will approve or reject applications based on the following:



**Eligibility** –Whether or not the applicant meets the requirements to apply, including Virginia residency, age, student status, and status as a practicing artist. A practicing artist is defined as someone who earns at least some of their income from their artistic practice and who has been engaged in their art form for a significant period of time.

**Impact on Artistic Practice** – Feasibility of the project and whether or not the proposed activity or purchase will help enhance the applicant’s creative practice. Successful applicants will communicate the difference in their career prospects, skills, or network before and after grant activities take place.

### Required Attachments

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

- Project Budget Form outlining the total expenses associated with your project, including self-funded and grant-funded costs as applicable
- Signed Certification of Assurances Form
- Virginia W-9 Form

Applicants must generate and upload the following support documents:

- Current Virginia driver’s license, utility bill, or voter registration card
- Exhibition record or CV/resume
- High-quality photo or video documentation of your artform (within the past 5 years)
- Your professional website, social media accounts, or other web platforms showcasing your work

### Reporting Requirements

If a grant is awarded, applicants must submit a Final Report within 30 days of completing their grant activities. The Final Report will require narrative responses and/or other documentation of the grant activities (photos/videos).

**NOTE:** As grant payments are made in advance, awarded applicants must retain receipts, payment records, or any other documentation for grant-funded expenses and provide them upon request if needed.

### Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Applicants must complete and submit the online application to the Commission by the application cycle deadline. Applications that are submitted after funding is depleted will not be reviewed.
2. VCA staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be reviewed, will be returned to the applicant with an explanation, and will not be funded.
3. Approvals are made by VCA staff. If awarded, a confirmation/award letter will be sent to the applicant by email.

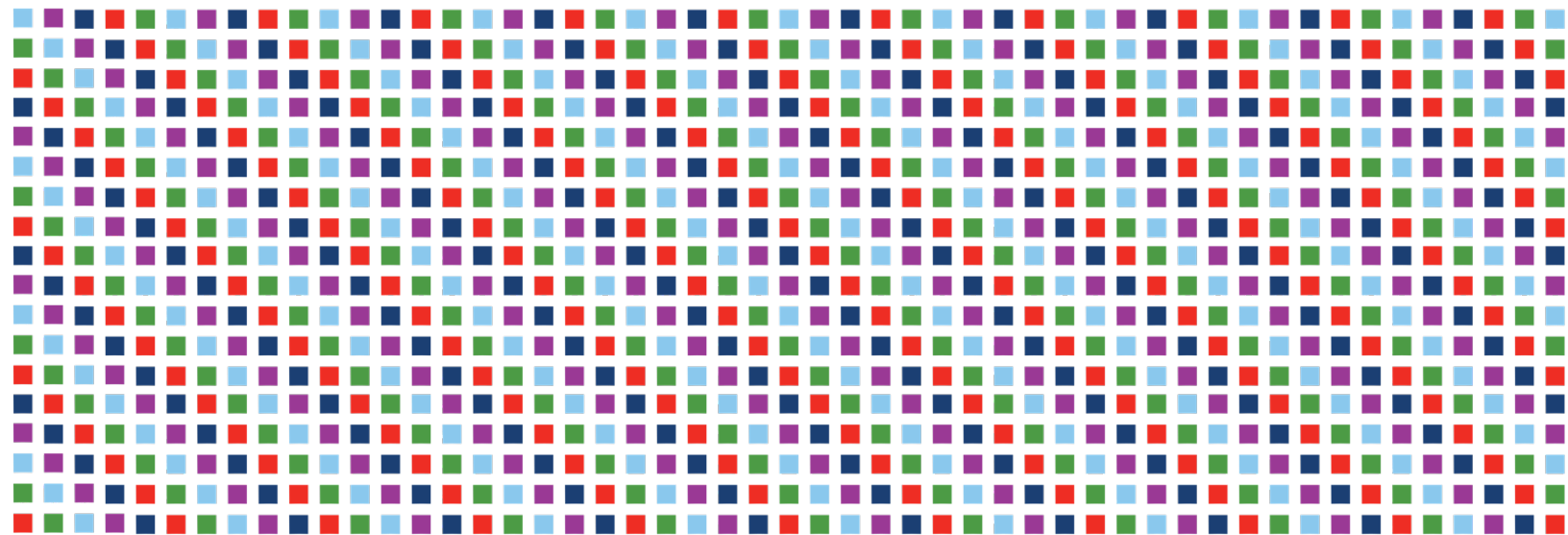


4. The Commission will pay the grant amount following the close of the application cycle. However, the Commission reserves the right to use an alternative payment schedule in special circumstances.
5. Final Reports must be submitted 30 days after the completion of all funded activities. For activities taking place between June 1 and June 15, 2027, Final Reports will be due on June 16, 2027. Failure to submit a Final Report by the deadline will impact future funding.



# ARTIST ROSTER

## ENGAGEMENT





- Virginia Touring Grants
- Touring Artist Roster
- Arts in Practice Grants
- Teaching Artist Roster

## VIRGINIA TOURING GRANTS

### Purpose

To expand access to high-quality arts performances throughout Virginia.

### Description

Virginia Touring Grants help ensure that Virginians have access to dynamic and engaging performances. These grants support in-state touring by reimbursing eligible organizations up to 50 percent of the performance fees when showcasing artists from the [VCA Touring Artist Roster](#). VCA Touring Artists book performances with Virginia Presenters that take place at least 30 miles from the Artist’s home base. This long-standing program broadens the reach of the arts and creates new opportunities for Virginia artists, arts organizations, and audiences throughout the state.

### Eligible Applicants

- Virginia nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations
- Virginia units of local and tribal governments (including libraries, departments of parks and recreation, correctional facilities, etc.)
- Virginia federally tax-exempt schools (public, public charter, private, alternative, special education schools, homeschools, career and technical centers, colleges, and universities)

### Eligibility Requirements

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements as listed on page 9 of the Guidelines for Funding
- All programming must take place in Virginia ADA-compliant facilities
- Must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- Must have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application

### Eligible Activities

- In-person programs taking place in Virginia between July 1, 2026 - June 15, 2027
- Programs listed in the Touring Artist Roster which take place at least 30 miles from home base of the VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble
- Programs must be open to the public, and the Presenter must provide community-wide publicity. Elementary and secondary schools, senior living facilities, correctional facilities, and hospitals are exempt from this requirement.



## Application Deadline

Virginia Touring Grants are rolling grants that open March 1, 2026. Applicants must apply at least two weeks prior to the activity, and before the deadline of December 1, 2026 by 5:00 p.m. EST.

## Amount of Assistance

Up to 50 percent of the performance fee for touring programs listed on the Touring Artist Roster, subject to the overall funding limit allocated for each VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble. Virginia Touring Grant awards are made to the Presenter (not to the VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble), who is responsible for compensating the VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble in full. Grant awards are a minimum of \$100 and maximum of \$7,500 per performance.

## Cash Match

Grant awards to organizations must be matched 1:1. For example, if an organization requests \$1,000 from VCA, it must have at least \$1,000 in cash income from another source towards the expenses of that same project. Sources of matching funds may include revenue from the project activities such as ticket sales; contributions from individuals, foundations, or corporations; government support from federal, state, or local sources, or cash from the organization's own accounts.

## Required Attachments

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

- Signed Certification of Assurances
- Virginia W-9 Form

Applicants must generate and upload the following documents:

- Signed contract between the VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble and Presenter
- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter

## Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Each December, the Commission posts an online Touring Artist Roster, listing eligible Artists/Ensembles and descriptions of their touring programs for the following July 1 - June 15 touring season.
2. Applicants must upload signed contracts with their selected VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble in the application. All negotiations regarding type and schedule of activities, fees, technical needs, and promotional efforts are the responsibility of each VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble and the Presenter, and the resulting arrangements must be included in the contract. Travel, lodging, and all other local fees are the responsibility of the Presenter. Each contract must contain the VCA contingency clause: "This contract is contingent upon receipt of a Virginia Touring Grant award in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_ from the Virginia Commission for the Arts."



3. Applications are made available online March 1. Presenters apply online for Virginia Touring Grants, including copies of signed contracts with touring artists/ensembles, to the Commission at least two weeks before an event and no later than December 1. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility.
4. Virginia Touring Grants are not automatic. Confirmation/grant award letters are generally emailed two weeks after receipt of a completed and approved application.
5. Presenters must submit a Final Report in Foundant within 30 days after each event. Failure to submit a Final Report by the deadline will impact future funding.
6. Payment will be made in full approximately 30-45 days after the receipt of the Final Report.
7. If any Presenter receiving subsidy for a VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble has actual income in excess of expenses, the Presenter must use these additional funds for other arts activities, and the Commission must approve the use of any of these excess funds up to the amount of the grant.



# TOURING ARTIST ROSTER

## Purpose

To identify and promote professional Virginia Touring Artists who are committed to showcasing their artistry across the commonwealth.

## Description

The VCA Touring Artist Roster is a resource for organizations applying for [Virginia Touring Grants](#) or seeking high-quality performing artists. This vetted list encompasses a variety of performing arts disciplines, with each artist recognized for captivating diverse audiences through their programming. Artists awarded inclusion onto the Roster receive an allocation specifically designated for Virginia Touring Grant requests for the upcoming touring season. VCA Touring Artists book engagements with Presenters, who then apply for Virginia Touring Grants. The VCA does not act as a booking agent. Artists are responsible for developing effective marketing strategies and creating promotional materials to build their tours and connect with Presenters.

## Eligible Applicants

Virginia-based performing artists and performing arts ensembles.

**NOTE:** Individual students or organizations whose members are primarily Pre-K-12 or undergraduate college students are not eligible for inclusion in the Touring Artist Roster.

## Application Deadline

July 15, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. EST, for the FY28 touring season of July 1, 2027 - June 15, 2028.

## Renewals

Current VCA Touring Artists must apply annually to maintain inclusion on the Roster for the following touring season. Applicants are designated to SHORT or LONG form applications based on a three-year cycle and the effective utilization of their touring allocation. VCA Touring Artists must provide updates for their VCA webpage on an annual basis, if applicable.

**NOTE:** A VCA Touring Artist may be removed at the discretion of Commission staff, due to unresponsiveness or inability to utilize their allocation over a two-year touring season. VCA Touring Artists who have been removed may reapply after two grant cycles.

## Allocations

- Solo/duo performers will generally be recommended for an allocation between \$2,000 and \$2,500 during their first year on the Touring Artist Roster.
- Ensembles will generally be recommended for an allocation between \$3,000 and \$4,000 during their first year on the Touring Artist Roster.
- Subject to available funding, touring allocations for current VCA Touring Artists/Ensembles may increase or decrease based on their utilization of funds from the previous touring seasons.



## Criteria for Evaluating Applications

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is interested in high-quality artists and ensembles that exhibit the following:

- Artistic Excellence
- Effective Management and Marketing Strategies
- Evidence of Presenter Interest
- Unique contribution to the VCA Touring Artist Roster

## Required Attachments

Applicants must generate and upload the following documents:

- Three recent work samples representative of the applicants live performances/programs
- Artist and management bios
- Three documents reflecting Presenter interest
- Touring history (2025 – 2027)
- Marketing/promotional sample

## Application/Review Process for Inclusion onto the Touring Artist Roster

1. Applicants must complete and submit the online application to the Commission by the deadline.
2. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be reviewed, will be returned to the applicant with an explanation.
3. Commission staff forwards the applications to members of a statewide, multidisciplinary Advisory Panel prior to the Advisory Panel Screening Session.
4. The Advisory Panel meets with two members of the Commission staff. Commissioners may attend Advisory Panel Screening Session as silent observers. The Advisory Panel makes its recommendations after group discussion.
5. The Commission Board then reviews the recommendations of the Advisory Panel and staff and takes final action on the applications.
6. Applicants are notified of Commission action by email following vote at the next Commission Board meeting following the Advisory Panel Screening Session.
7. In December, the Commission will post the FY28 Touring Artist Roster on its website detailing eligible artists, ensembles, and their touring programs. Artists awarded inclusion onto the Touring Artist Roster will contact potential Presenters to secure bookings for the FY28 touring season (July 1, 2027 – June 15, 2028).



8. The Commission reserves funding for each VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble to book performances with potential Presenters for the FY28 touring season. VCA Touring Artists draft contracts with Presenters, who then apply for Virginia Touring Grants from March 1, 2027, to December 1, 2027.
9. If a VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble has used all of their original touring allocation, they may encourage Presenters to apply to the Commission's "waitlist" for performances taking place December 2, 2027 - June 15, 2028. Waitlist applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis and available funding is determined on December 1 based upon the by the amount of remaining or unused funds by other VCA Touring Artists/Ensembles. Waitlist applications are due two weeks before the intended performance date and no later than December 1, 2027. It is the responsibility of the VCA Touring Artist/Ensemble to explain that waitlist funding is not guaranteed. VCA Touring Ensembles with allocations of \$25,000 or more are ineligible for waitlist funds.



# ARTS IN PRACTICE GRANTS

## Purpose

To expand access to high-quality artist-led residencies throughout Virginia.

## Description

Arts in Practice Grants help ensure that Virginians can experience enriching educational programming through dynamic artist-led residencies. This grant program is designed to reimburse eligible organizations for up to \$2,000 that partner with artists on the [VCA Teaching Artist Roster](#). Arts in Practice activities must be facilitated in-person but may vary in duration and format. These activities are designed to support a diverse range of learning environments for participants of all ages, and/or professional development opportunities for educators.

## Eligible Applicants

- Virginia federally tax-exempt schools (public, public charter, private, alternative, special education schools, homeschools, career and technical centers, colleges, and universities)
- Virginia nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations
- Virginia units of local and tribal governments (including libraries, departments of parks and recreation, correctional facilities, etc.)

**NOTE:** Organizations receiving GOS grants may not apply for Arts in Practice Grants.

## Eligibility Requirements

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements as listed on page 9 of the Guidelines for Funding
- All programming must take place in ADA-compliant facilities in Virginia
- Must not be under current debarment or suspension from federal funding
- Must have no past due Final Reports to the VCA at the time of application

## Eligible Activities

- In-person residencies led by VCA Teaching Artists, taking place in Virginia between July 1, 2026 - June 15, 2027.
- Activities may include workshops, community arts projects, or professional development for arts educators, and must include a participatory component.
- Programs must be open to the public, and the applicant must provide community-wide publicity. Elementary and secondary schools, senior living facilities, correctional facilities, and hospitals are exempt from this requirement.

## NOTE

- Arts in Practice Grants are not intended to support concerts, assemblies, or field trips.
- Assessment is required to measure residency effectiveness in meeting program goals.



## Application Deadline

Arts in Practice is a rolling grant program that opens June 1, 2026. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis by Commission staff until April 1, 2027. Applicants must apply at least two weeks prior to the activity.

## Amount of Assistance

Up to \$2,000 for residency or workshop fees with VCA Teaching Artists, subject to the overall funding limit allocated for each VCA Teaching Artist. Arts in Practice awards are made to the partnering organization applying for the grant (not to the VCA Teaching Artist), who is responsible for compensating the VCA Teaching Artist in full.

**NOTE:** Arts in Practice grants support contracted professional fees, travel expenses, and supplies related to the proposed grant activity. Project expenses are negotiated between the organization and the VCA Teaching Artist. Professional fees must equal or exceed 50 percent of the total grant request.

## Cash Match

Arts in Practice Grants require a minimum 10% cash match of the total project expenses. If the total expenses exceed this amount, applicants may still request up to \$2,000 but must provide a cash match source (not from the VCA Teaching Artist) equal to 10% of their total project expenses.

### Example:

If the total project budget is \$2,353, the applicant may request \$2,000 from the Commission and must provide at least \$353 in cash match.

If the total project budget is \$2,000, the applicant may request up to \$1,800 and must provide at least \$200 in cash match.

Sources of matching funds may include project-generated income; contributions from individuals, foundations or corporations; government support from federal, state, or local sources; or cash from the organization's own accounts.

## Required Attachments

The following forms are provided by the Commission via upload in the online grant application:

- Project Budget Form
- Signed Certification of Assurances
- Virginia W-9 Form

All applicants must generate and upload the following documents:

- Signed contract between the Teaching Artist and Facilitator
- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter

## Application/Review/Payment Process

1. Applicants may reach out to VCA Teaching Artists on the online Teaching Artist Roster, and secure bookings for residencies and workshops taking place July 1, 2026, - June 15, 2027.



2. Applicants must upload signed contracts with their selected VCA Teaching Artist in the application. All negotiations regarding type and schedule of activities, fees, technical needs, and promotional efforts are the responsibility of each VCA Teaching Artist and the applicant, and the resulting arrangements must be included in the contract. Each contract must contain the VCA contingency clause: “This contract is contingent upon receipt of an Arts in Practice Grant award in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ from the Virginia Commission for the Arts.”
3. Applicants must complete and submit the online application to the Commission at least two weeks before the proposed residency/workshop.
4. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility.
5. Arts in Practice Grants are not automatic. Confirmation/grant award letters are generally emailed two weeks after receipt of a completed and approved application.
6. Payment will be made in full following award approval, typically within 30-45 days.
7. Applicants must submit a Final Report within 30 days after the completion of the activities. Failure to submit the Final Report will affect future funding.
8. If any applicant receiving subsidy for an Arts in Practice grant has actual income in excess of expenses, the applicant must use these additional funds for other arts activities, and the Commission must approve the use of any of these excess funds up to the amount of the grant.



# TEACHING ARTIST ROSTER

## Purpose

To identify and promote professional Virginia Teaching Artists who are committed to enhancing arts education across the commonwealth.

## Description

The VCA Teaching Artist Roster is a resource for organizations applying for [Arts in Practice Grants](#) or seeking high-quality teaching artists. This vetted list encompasses a variety of arts disciplines, with each artist recognized for expertise in their field and ability to develop and implement audience-specific arts curricula. Artists awarded inclusion onto the Roster receive an allocation specifically designated to Arts in Practice Grant requests for the upcoming grant cycle. VCA Teaching Artists book engagements with partnering organizations, who then apply for Arts in Practice Grants. The VCA does not act as a booking agent. Artists are responsible for developing effective marketing strategies and creating promotional materials to facilitate residencies and connect with partnering organizations.

## Eligible Applicants

Individual teaching artists as well as nonprofit organizations that provide educational programming and employ teaching artists are eligible to apply.

Applicants must be:

- a Virginia resident and 18 years of age or older at the time of application
- a professional artist skilled in working with children, youth, teachers, adults, seniors, veterans, and/or other populations
- committed to differentiated instruction and effective teaching methods to reach all learners

**NOTE:** Full-time students are not eligible to apply for the Teaching Artist Roster.

## Application Deadline

July 15, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. EST, for FY27 grant activities taking place July 1, 2027 - June 15, 2028

## Renewals

Current VCA Teaching Artists must submit an application annually to maintain inclusion on the Roster for the following grant cycle. Applicants are designated to SHORT or LONG form applications based on a three-year cycle and the effective utilization of their teaching allocation. VCA Teaching Artists must provide updates for their VCA webpage on an annual basis, if applicable.

**NOTE:** A VCA Teaching Artist may be removed at the discretion of Commission staff, due to unresponsiveness or inability to utilize their allocation over a two-year grant cycle. VCA Teaching Artists who have been removed may reapply after two grant cycles.



## Allocations

- New applicants will generally be recommended for an allocation between \$2,000 and \$2,500 during their first year on the Teaching Artist Roster.
- Subject to available funding, allocations for current Teaching Artists may increase or decrease based on their prior utilization of funds from the previous grant cycle.

## Criteria for Evaluating Applications

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is interested in high-quality teaching artists that exhibit the following:

- Artistic Excellence
- Instructional Excellence
- Effective Management and Marketing Strategies
- Evidence of Residency Interest
- Unique contribution to the VCA Teaching Artist Roster

## Required Attachments

Applicants must generate and upload the following documents:

- Three documents reflecting Artistic Excellence
- One document reflecting Instructional Excellence
- Teaching artist(s) resume
- Residency/workshop lesson plan
- Two letters of reference
- Marketing /promotional sample
- Instructional history (2024 – 2026)

## Application/Review Process for Inclusion onto the Teaching Artist Roster

1. Applicants complete and submit the online application to the Commission by the deadline.
2. The Commission staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be reviewed, will be returned to the applicant with an explanation, and will not be funded.
3. Commission staff forwards applications to members of the statewide, multi-disciplinary Advisory Panel to review prior to the Advisory Panel Screening Session.
4. The Advisory Panel meets with two members of the Commission staff. Commissioners may attend Advisory Panel Screening Sessions as silent observers. The Advisory Panel makes its recommendations after group discussion.
5. The Commission Board then reviews the recommendations of the Advisory Panel and staff and takes final action on the applications.



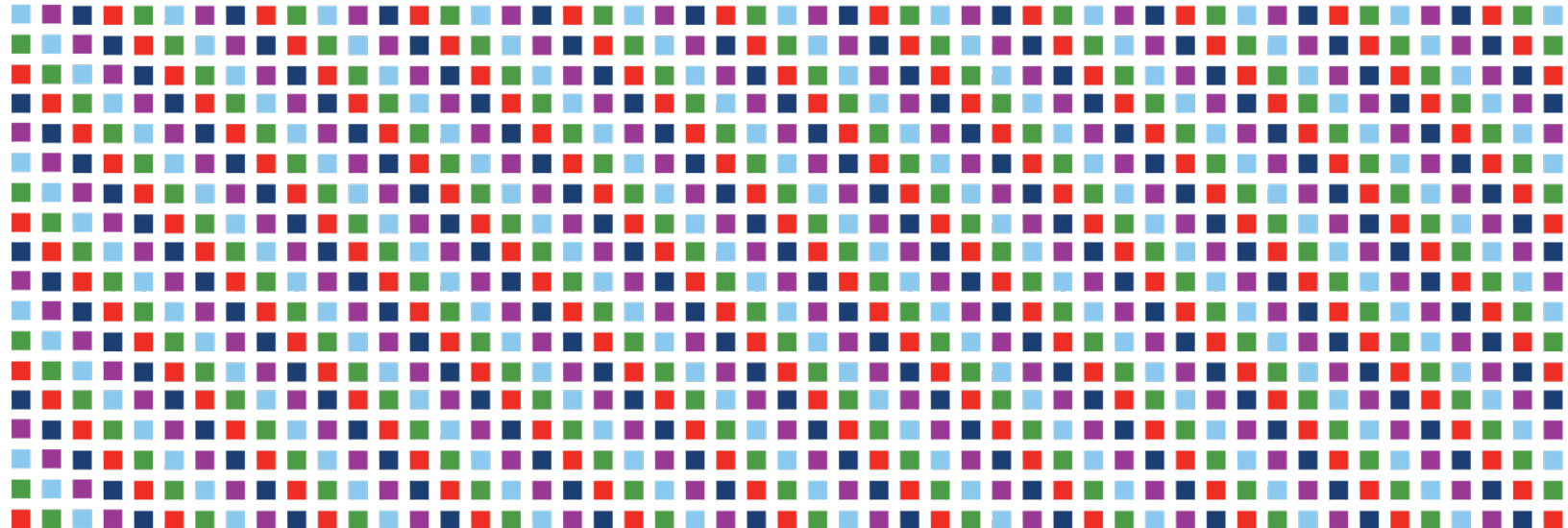
6. Applicants are notified of Commission action by email following vote at the next Commission Board meeting following the Advisory Panel Screening Session.
7. The Commission reserves funding for each VCA Teaching Artist to book residencies with potential applicants for the FY28 grant cycle. VCA Teaching Artists draft contracts with applicants, who then apply for Arts in Practice Grants from June 1, 2027, to April 1, 2028.
8. If a Teaching Artist has used all of their original teaching allocation prior to January 1, 2027, they may reach out to Commission staff to inquire about reserved waitlist funds. If funding is available, they may book additional residencies and encourage organizations to apply to the Commission's "waitlist" on a first-come, first-served basis. It is the responsibility of the VCA Teaching Artist to explain that there is no guarantee of funding in this situation. Waitlist applications are due two weeks before the intended activity date.

### **BACKGROUND CHECK**

If awarded inclusion on the VCA's Teaching Artist Roster, applicants must agree to a national background check to ensure their capacity to work with school-aged students, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities. Questions regarding background checks may be directed to the Commission's staff.



# SUGGESTIONS FOR GRANT APPLICANTS



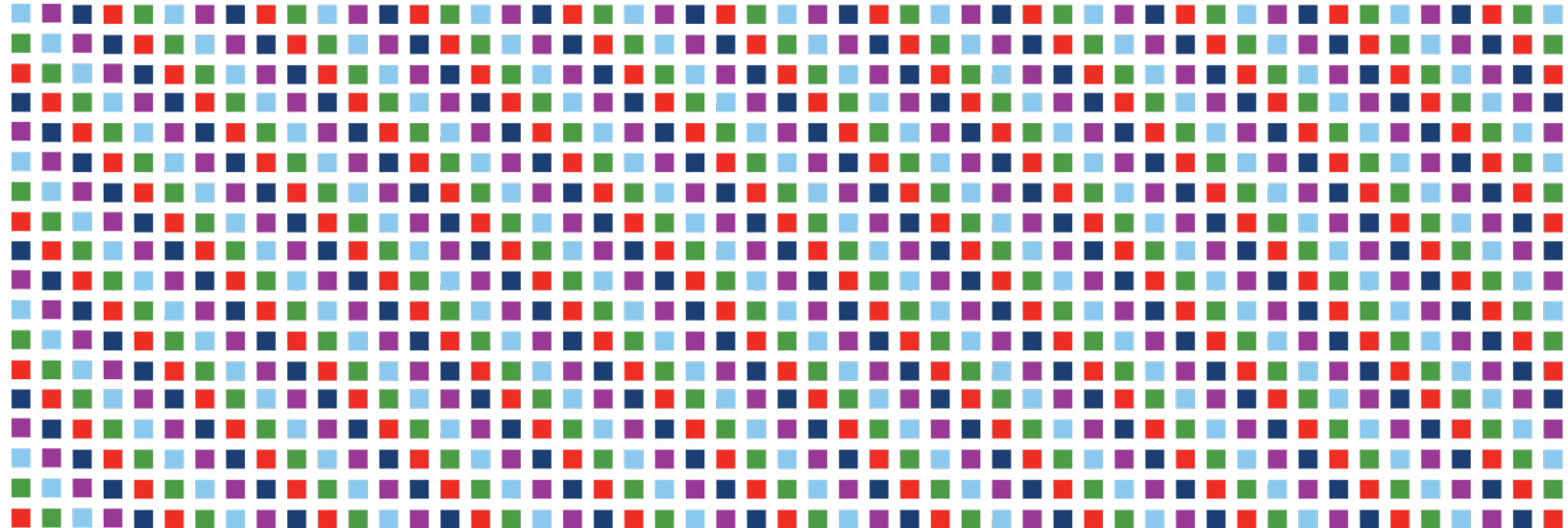


## SUGGESTIONS FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

- Visit the Commission website ([www.vca.virginia.gov](http://www.vca.virginia.gov)) regularly for news, grant applications, deadlines, and Final Report forms. Each year the Commission staff conducts virtual workshops to explain the different grant programs and application procedures. Applicants are encouraged to attend.
- Sign up for the Virginia Commission for the Arts Newsletter [here](#)
- Read the “General Policies” section as well as the Guidelines for Funding for a particular grant program. General Policies apply to all grantees of the Commission.
- If you are a new applicant, contact the Commission staff for information on application procedures and to confirm eligibility.
- In preparing grant applications, do not assume that the application reviewers know your organization firsthand. Tell your organization’s story and the impact it is hoping to achieve in as concise and compelling a manner as possible. Include factual information to support statements of impact.
- Ensure that your budget is clear, concise, and justifiable. Ensure each budget item relates directly to the project activities.
- Provide well-curated work samples. If applicable to the grant program, select recent, high-quality work samples and videos and clearly label each with brief contextual information. Avoid overwhelming reviewers with unnecessary or excessive attachments. Strong, relevant samples can significantly strengthen an application.
- Do not use jargon, buzz words, or insider language in the application.
- Include letters of support from stakeholders, partners, or community leaders to strengthen your application, if applicable. These letters can be beneficial in demonstrating community support or the necessity of the project.
- Proofread, and have others proofread, the application before submitting it. Typos or grammatical errors can detract from the content of your proposal.
- Whenever possible, use quantitative metrics to support your claims. For instance, if your organization previously received a grant, show the measurable impact that funding had.
- Submit applications early to avoid system errors and the risk of technical issues or incomplete uploads. Applicants are encouraged to upload all materials at least 48 hours before the deadline, allow time for troubleshooting, and confirm successful submission.
- Once an application is submitted, inform the Commission promptly of any changes in the address, key personnel, programming, or other pertinent information regarding the grant application. If a grant is awarded, any substantive changes in the activities or budget described in the application must be approved in advance by the Commission staff.
- The Commission staff are available to answer any questions about the grant programs and applications.



# CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE AND APPEALS PROCESS





## COMPLAINTS PERTAINING TO CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

Any person who believes that a grantee of the Virginia Commission for the Arts is not in compliance with either the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may file a written complaint with the Executive Director of the Commission. The letter of complaint must include information about the dates, location, and specific aspects of the grantee's activities that may not be in compliance.

The staff of the Commission will attempt to resolve the matter informally, if possible, by meeting with the grantee, the complainant, and the Office of the Attorney General.

If the Commission determines that the grantee is in full compliance with Civil Rights requirements, the Executive Director of the Commission will inform the grantee and the complainant. If the Commission determines that the matter cannot be resolved informally, the matter will be further considered for suspension or termination of funding.

## APPEALS PROCESS FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

Applicants who believe their applications for funding were rejected for any of the following three reasons may appeal to the Commission for reconsideration:

1. The application was declined on the basis of review criteria other than those appearing in the guidelines;
2. The application was declined due to influence of Advisory Panel or Commission members who willfully failed to disclose conflicts of interest; or
3. The application was declined because erroneous information was provided by the staff, Advisory Panelists, or Commission Board members at the time of review, despite the fact that the applicant provided accurate and complete information on regulation forms as part of the standard application process.

Incomplete applications are specifically denied any appeals process. Dissatisfaction with the denial of an award or the amount of a grant award is not grounds for appeal.

Requests of appeals must be received, in writing, at the Commission office **WITHIN 30 DAYS** of the applicant's notification of a funding award decision. The Board of the Commission will review and act upon eligible appeals at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

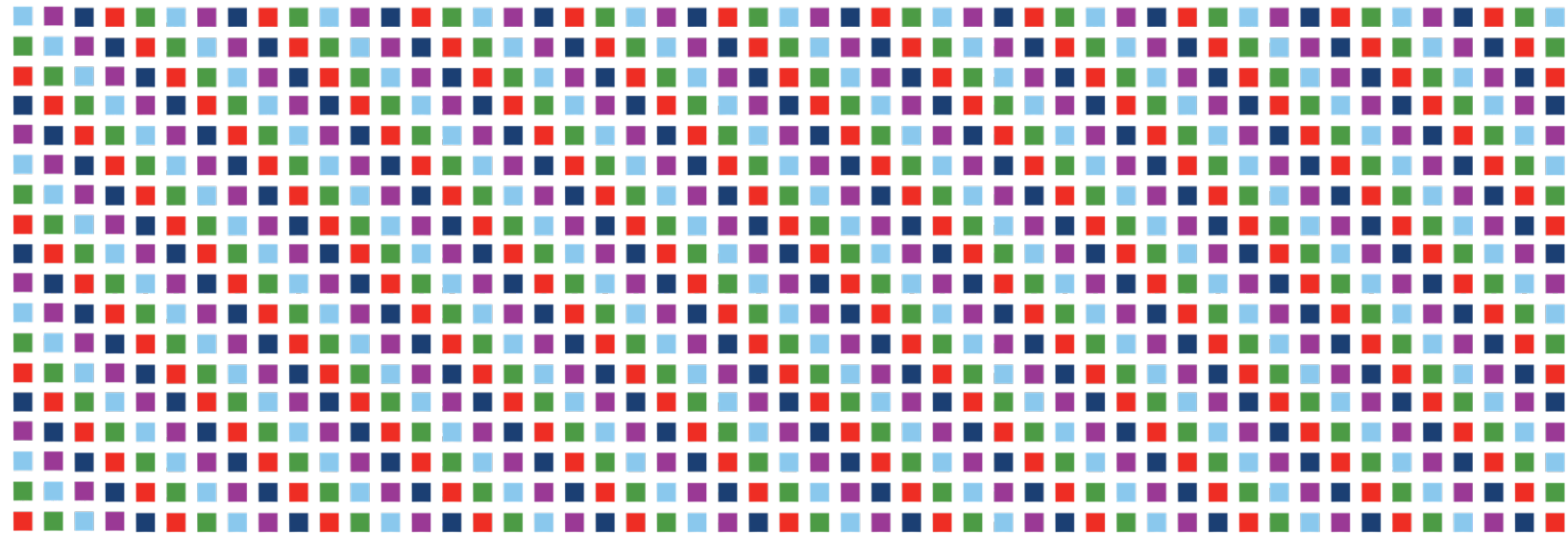
If the Board of the Commission changes a funding decision as a result of an appeal, the timing of the payment of the grant will be at the discretion of the agency's Executive Director.

## APPEALS PROCESS FOR TOURING AND TEACHING ARTIST ROSTERS

Applicants for either the Touring Artist Roster or Teaching Artist Roster may appeal a decision not to be included on the Roster on the basis of the three reasons listed above. The same procedure is followed for these appeals with the exception that applicants have only 15 days from notification to file their appeals because of publication schedules. These appeals will be reviewed and acted upon by the Executive Committee of the Commission.



# ADVISORY PANELS





## ADVISORY PANELS

The role of the Advisory Panels of the Virginia Commission for the Arts is to assist with recommendations and guidance on grant applications. Advisory Panelists evaluate activities funded by the Commission. They are selected for one-year terms and may be re-selected twice to serve a maximum of three years.

Advisory Panelists are leaders in the arts industry who are passionate about the positive impact of the arts on the Commonwealth. Advisory Panelists span expertise across multiple disciplines and include individual artists; educators; community leaders; museum curators; theatre directors; Board leaders; and arts administrators.

Each of the regional and statewide Advisory Panels consists of five to seven members selected by the Commission. Advisory Panelists are chosen for their expertise in the arts, their ability to work with others in a group setting, and their willingness to devote the time required to review applications. In making selections to the Advisory Panels, the Commission attempts to balance knowledge of the different arts disciplines and diverse cultural perspectives.

### Nominations for Advisory Panels

Nominations for the Advisory Panels may be submitted to the VCA at any time during the year. Each nomination must include a brief description of the individual's experience in the arts, an address, and a telephone number. An individual may nominate him or herself.

### Advisory Panelist Eligibility

- individual artists in all disciplines
- artistic directors of arts institutions
- curators and museum directors
- heads of performing arts presenting series
- leaders of arts institutions
- Board leaders of arts institutions
- college faculty in the visual arts, music, theatre, dance, and creative writing
- folklorists
- managers of individual performers and touring companies
- arts educators, school administrators, teachers, and PTA/PTO representatives
- writers and editors
- community leaders with an understanding of the role of the arts in their communities

### Advisory Panelists Demonstrate

- in-depth knowledge in a field of the arts
- familiarity and understanding of a wide variety of arts events in their communities
- ability to work and offer opinions in a committee setting
- willingness to contribute the time necessary to review grant applications and to understand the Commission programs and policies
- ability to attend a one-day Advisory Panel screening session



- access to a computer for Advisory Panel screening session

### Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure for Advisory Panels

Advisory Panelists are required to declare any conflicts of interest with organizations that are applying for funding at the beginning of the review process. In the event of a conflict of interest with an individual or organization, Advisory Panelists must immediately inform VCA staff and not proceed reviewing that application. To ensure that the Commission's decision-making processes are free from conflict of interest and appearance of conflict, the Advisory Panelists will follow these procedures:

If an Advisory Panelist or a member of their immediate family is affiliated with any applicant, either as an employee or in a policy-making role such as serving on the board of directors, they will be recused from the review of that organization. At the Advisory Panel screening session, they will leave the session during the discussion of that application and will not vote.

**Specifically:** Advisory Panelists shall abstain from evaluation, discussion and voting under the following conditions:

- when applications are presented from organizations which employ them or their immediate families; or
- when applications are presented from organizations with which they or their immediate families are otherwise directly affiliated; or
- when applications are presented which are likely to affect them financially

### Conflict of Interest Definitions

**Affiliation:** Includes employment, board membership, officer of the board, policy-making relationships, paid independent contractual arrangements, and other financial affiliations, including status of contributor of more than 5% of an applicant organization's budget.

**Immediate Family:** Includes spouse, domestic partner, children, grandchildren, or household members.

### Conflict of Interest Complimentary Tickets

Monitoring grantee programs and events is not a required part of the Advisory Panel review process. VCA does not consider the offer of complimentary tickets to be a conflict of interest, but rather a part of field work. Typically, these tickets do not include admission to fundraising events, galas, or other social gatherings. Please note that an Advisory Panelist may not formally request complimentary tickets from an arts organization being reviewed.

The [Advisory Panelist Nomination Form](#) can be found on the Commission website under "About/Advisory Panels".

