



MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF
**CULTURAL
AFFAIRS**

Houston Arts and Cultural Stabilization Grant Program Guidelines Call for Applications Guidelines

Deadline EXTENDED: 11:59 p.m. CST, Friday, June 30, 2023. July 10, 2023

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and City Council approved \$5 million for the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) Arts and Cultural Stabilization Grant program. Funded through the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the grant program will provide immediate and short-term financial assistance to the Houston arts and culture sector impacted by the global coronavirus (COVID-19).

To assist the arts and cultural sector in a strong and equitable recovery, MOCA, in collaboration with Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA), will distribute the federal ARPA funds via an open application. M-AAA, the regional arts organization that empowers community through art for the six-state region that includes Texas, is a trusted partner with a track record of helping the city efficiently distribute federal funds.

Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA) strengthens and supports artists, cultural organizations, and communities throughout our region and beyond. We value equitable policies, inclusive practices, and celebration of the rich diversity of our region.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Houston Arts and Cultural Stabilization Grant (ACSG) is to be a resource for 501(c)(3) nonprofit Houston arts and culture organizations that were economically impacted by COVID-19. Organizations may leverage these grants to strengthen their operations during and after the pandemic between July 1, 2021, and December 31, 2023.

This grant program will provide financial support to 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts and cultural organizations [located in the city of Houston](#) that primarily produce, present, or exhibit the arts, with a preference for those with arts in their mission statement. For more information, [see Who Can Apply?](#) below.

The program intends to support day-to-day business expenses related to staff salaries and Houston-based contracted artists who carry out the organization's programming. Funds can also be used to support marketing expenses associated with the organization's programs. [For more details, see Program Eligibility.](#)

M-AAA will incorporate principles of cultural equity, access, and inclusion in its implementation of the Houston ACSG. Therefore, M-AAA presents this non-matching grant opportunity broadly. [For more information, see Review Criteria and Process.](#)

Awards will be made to organizations located within the City of Houston as defined by the [City Council 2020 to 2024 District Maps](#), which can be found online at www.houstontx.gov/council/whoismymcm.html.

This program will disburse grants of up to \$100,000 each to no less than 46 grantees. M-AAA intends to make awards that impact a broad constituency. We encourage applications from a variety of organizations including:

- Organizations that serve populations that are underserved, such as those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by external forces (e.g., cultural representation/relevance and accessibility); and
- Organizations with budgets of all sizes.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Applicant organizations *must*:

1. Be a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization;
2. Be a nonprofit organization that has its own Board of Directors with its own established bylaws, and manages its own budget independent of a parent organization;
3. Be incorporated within the state of Texas and has a majority of its operations occurring in the city of Houston as defined by the 2020-2024 [Council District Maps](#) [<https://www.houstontx.gov/council/whoismymcm.html>];
4. Self-attest that, barring unforeseen circumstances, it will remain in operation through calendar year 2023;
5. Be registered and in good standing with the [Texas Office of the Secretary of State](#) [<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/sosda/index.shtml>]. This will be verified through a search of [SOSDirect](#) [<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/sosda/index.shtml>];
6. Have at least a three-year history of arts programming prior to the application deadline; programming is not required to have taken place during consecutive years. If the applicant's programming was affected or suspended due to COVID-19, the application may reference 2020 or 2021 programming that was canceled or reimaged due to the pandemic. Virtual programming, planning, and COVID-19 recovery activities are considered to be programming. You may also choose to list arts programming from a recent year other than 2020 or 2021. For the purposes of defining eligibility, "three-year history" refers to when an organization began its arts programming and not when it incorporated or received nonprofit, tax-exempt status;
7. Compensate all professional artists or supporting professional personnel at no less than the prevailing minimum compensation in accordance with [Part 505 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#) [<https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=pt29.3.505&rgn=div5>];
8. Apply directly on its own behalf. Applications through a fiscal sponsor/agent are not allowed;

9. Have and provide a valid EIN which will be verified using the [IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search Tool \[https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-exempt-organization-search\]](https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/tax-exempt-organization-search);
10. Be in good standing regarding City of Houston requirements (e.g., property taxes, personal property, grounds for debarment). and be in good standing with the City of Houston and M-AAA, with no overdue or delinquent reports and/or documentation; and
11. Commit to [M-AAA's Grantee Assurance of Compliance and Federal Suspension and Disbarment Policy \[https://www.maaa.org/assurance-of-compliance/\]](https://www.maaa.org/assurance-of-compliance/)

Those that are not eligible to apply include:

- Individuals;
- Nonprofits with a 501(c)3 status that are hospitals or hospital foundations; public, private, and charter primary and secondary schools; and school foundations;
- Post-secondary education institutions and foundations;
- For-profit organizations;
- Organizations whose primary focus, programming, and mission is not specifically arts or culture related;
- Government agencies and university/community college departments and affiliates;
- State arts agencies;
- Organizations that have permanently closed;
- Organizations currently in a bankruptcy proceeding;
- Organizations that are debarred or suspended from receiving federal funds;
- Auxiliary or friends groups;
- Fiscal sponsors/agent; or
- Public television and other public media organizations.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Funding is available to support Houston-based artist contracts and the services the artists provide for specific activities critical to the organization's day-to-day operation and programming and at least one other functional areas of business listed below:

- Salary support, full or partial, for one or more positions that are crucial to the organization's mission. These may be existing jobs, new jobs, or the restoration of jobs that were furloughed or eliminated due to the pandemic; and/or,
- Marketing expenses for public-facing events.

Documentation including payroll register, contracts of events, residencies, or contracts that were paid in part or in full following their cancellation/termination due to COVID-19, that took place after July 1, 2021 are required at the time of application.

Grant funds must be used for expenses incurred starting on or after July 1, 2021, and must be totally expended on or by December 31, 2023.

WHAT MAY NOT BE FUNDED?

Funding is not available for:

- Contracts with artists who reside outside the City of Houston as defined by the 2020-2024 [Council District Maps: https://www.houstontx.gov/council/whoismycm.html](https://www.houstontx.gov/council/whoismycm.html);
- Compensation for the applicant’s Board of Directors;
- Subgranting or regranting through programs the applicant manages; and
- Expenses for projects that are not part of the day-to-day business and programming of the organization, including those associated with benefits or fundraising events.

NOTE: If your organization is receiving or has received federal ARPA relief from a federal agency, a state Agency, or the U.S. Small Business Association, the organization may not use this grant funding for the same purpose(s) during the same period of time. Each grant should be tracked to its own eligible expenses and the funds kept separate from other awards (no commingling of funds toward the same expense in the same time period). Grantees should implement their own internal tracking to prove that no double charging took place.

REVIEW CRITERIA AND PROCESS

The application includes a set of need-based assessment criteria. Applications will be ranked by objective scores and funding will be awarded to the top 2% of applications. The next highly ranked applications will enter into a lottery process, from which grantees will be drawn and awarded until the funding runs out. Each question is scored and M-AAA staff will review applications for eligibility and completeness.

M-AAA strives to ensure that organizations across all arts and culture disciplines, led by every race, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability status, and socioeconomic class have access to this funding. The demographic surveys included in the application are optional, but these factors are included in the rating scale, so we ask applicants to provide as much information as possible.

Emphasis will be given to:

- Organizations with arts in their mission statement;
- Organizations that are located in one of the [10 Complete Communities \[https://www.houstoncc.org/\]](https://www.houstoncc.org/): Acres Homes, Alief/Westwood, Fort Bend, Gulfton, Kashmere Gardens, Magnolia/Manchester, Near Northside, Second Ward, Sunnyside, and Third Ward;
- Organizations that are located in one of the [Seven State Certified Cultural Districts \[https://www.houstontx.gov/culturalaffairs/\]](https://www.houstontx.gov/culturalaffairs/): Arts District Houston, Midtown Cultural Arts & Entertainment District, Theater District Houston, Houston Museum District, East End Cultural District, Third Ward Cultural District, Fifth Ward Cultural District;
- Organizations that represent or are in service to under-resourced populations and communities including: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ+ communities, low-income communities, individuals with disabilities, individuals in institutions, individuals below the poverty line, individuals with limited English proficiency, military veterans/active duty personnel including the National Guard and Reserves, and youth at risk.

Note: Incomplete applications or applications not meeting all criteria will not be considered for funding. Applicants will not have an opportunity to resubmit missing information.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

- Application available online Thursday, June 1, 2023.
- Application information session Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. CDT
- Application due by 11:59 p.m. CDT on ~~Friday, June 30, 2023~~. Monday, July 10, 2023
- Applications reviewed by M-AAA staff for eligibility and completeness in July and August 2023.
- Funding notification will be made on or before Monday, August 28, 2023.
- Grant agreement and funding distribution will take place on or after September 5, 2023.
- Grant period of activity spans July 1, 2021 through December 30, 2023.
- Final Report documentation due no later than January 31, 2024.

Applicants may consult with M-AAA staff prior to applying, but staff members will not review or provide comments on draft materials.

Once submitted, the application is reviewed by M-AAA staff with respect to the above-mentioned criteria. Applicants will be notified of their application status in writing on or before Monday, August 28, 2023, via email.

GRANT AMOUNT AND TERMS OF SUPPORT

- Each applicant may submit one application for a grant amount of up to \$100,000;
- Funding awarded through this program must be reflected in the submitted documentation of payroll register, contracts for events, residencies that were paid in part or in full following their cancellation/termination due to the COVID-19, or that took place, or are planned to take place between July 1, 2021, and December 31, 2023;
- Expenses in the reimbursement grant budget must represent the actual costs for expenses incurred prior to June 1, 2023. Proposed expenses that are incurred after the execution of the grant agreement must reasonably reflect the actual costs for allocated expenses between June 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023. The rationale for all costs, including descriptions of how the activities or projects that were canceled or affected by COVID-19, must be explained in the budget narrative.
- The amount awarded toward an applicant organization's reimbursement request will depend on the size of the organization's budget based upon the average of the organization's expenditures listed on its three most recent filings of IRS Form 990/990-EZ (Line 18., Total Expenses). The chart below shows the maximum amount that can be reimbursed for expenses incurred in part or in full due to COVID-19, prior to June 1, 2023:

Average Organizational Budget range based on three most recent IRS Form 990 Filings	Maximum Reimbursement Amount for Losses	Maximum Grant Award
\$25,000 up to \$500,000	100%	\$ 100,000
\$500,001 to \$5,000,000	75%	\$ 100,000
More than \$5,000,000	60%	\$ 100,000

- Cost share/matching funds are not required;
- Applicants are encouraged to request a grant amount that is reflective of their overall capacity;
- All grant funds must be spent on or after July 1, 2021 and on or before December 31, 2023. Funds expended post-award must be reflected in the documentation submitted with the final report. Funds awarded but not spent or documented during the eligible grant period (July 1, 2021-December 31, 2023) must be returned to M-AAA on or before January 30, 2024; and
- This is a one-time grant opportunity, and may not be renewed or extended.

CONTRACTING AND PAYMENT

Grantees will receive grant agreement packages and initial payments in September 2023. Funding will be distributed through two payments:

1. 80% upon execution of the Grant Agreement; and
2. 20% upon successful review of the Final Report documentation submitted by the grantee, which is due no later than January 31, 2024.

GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS

Grantees will be required to:

- Fully execute a Houston ACSG Agreement provided by M-AAA, which indicates compliance with established program rules and requirements per M-AAA's Grant Terms and Conditions and Assurance of Compliance.
- Have a Unique Entity Identification number (UEI) at the time of award. It is a free process and can be done by visiting [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).
- Expend grant funds beginning July 1, 2021, and totally expend them on or by December 31, 2023.
- Complete and submit a Houston ACSG Final Report provided by M-AAA on or before January 31, 2024, for funds expended post award and an impact statement or video (less than 3-minutes in length) for reimbursed funding.
- Retain all records, receipts, and proof of expenses for a minimum of three years following the grant period and provide these documents to M-AAA or the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs upon request.

FINAL REPORTING

M-AAA will provide an online Final Report form. Grantees must complete and submit the report on or before January 31, 2024. The Final Report form requires information regarding the positions and salaries, and other areas paid from the funds. Grantees must maintain records that accurately reflect the work performed by artists, and/or salaried employees that are charged, in full or in part, to the funds. Documentation and/or a short 3-minute video will be required in the Final Report form. Further, grantees must maintain all documentation related to the grant for three-years following the submission of the Final Report.

APPEALS PROCESS

Award decisions are discretionary and are not subject to appeal. Given the expedited nature of the review, M-AAA will not provide review comments for any applications.

RECORD KEEPING

M-AAA, the Houston Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs, or any duly authorized representatives, shall have access to any books, documents, papers, and records maintained to account for funds expended under the terms and conditions of this grant for the purpose of making audit, examination, excerpts, and transcripts. All related financial records must be maintained by the grantee for three-years following completion of the grant period between July 1, 2021, and December 31, 2023. All documentation must be retained in accordance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200.334.

M-AAA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Grantees must comply with the federal policies and legal requirements, statutes, and regulations as stated in [M-AAA's Assurance of Compliance](#).

Grantees are required to make accommodations for constituents with disabilities at grant-funded activities upon request. The National Endowment for the Arts has [resources to assist arts organizations in making accommodations](#).

Grantees must compensate all professional performers and related or supporting professional personnel at no less than the prevailing minimum rate of compensation. This requirement is in accordance with the regulations issued by the Secretary of Labor in part 505 of Title 29 of the [Code of Federal Regulations](#). Part 505 does not provide information on specific compensation levels.

Grant awards are considered income. Grantees are responsible for all tax obligations under federal, state, and local laws. M-AAA recommends that all recipients consult a tax accountant or local Internal Revenue Service office with questions or concerns regarding deductions and reporting.

Grantees who fail to properly acknowledge M-AAA and the Houston Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs support in programs, websites, press releases, and other communications materials for the supported activities may not be considered for other funding opportunities.

All changes related to grant funding must be submitted in writing to M-AAA staff in a timely manner. Awards may be revised or revoked in light of such changes.

HOW TO APPLY

Refer to the Houston ACSG Application At-A-Glance to prepare your responses in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or a similar note-taking application to ensure you have a backup for reference as you proceed. While draft applications can be saved online, technology is not flawlessly reliable. We strongly recommend you prepare your narrative responses before working in the online application form.

Data entered into the online form can be saved for editing later by clicking "Save my progress and resume later" at the top or bottom of the application form webpage. Each time you save your

application you will be asked for an email address and a password. And each time you save your application you will be sent an email with new instructions on how to resume your draft application. To resume the most recent version of your application refer to the most recent email in your inbox or bookmark the “thank you for saving/resume your application” webpage.

If you have accessibility needs for an alternate format or process for completing the application please contact: Angelette Severt, Operations and Accessibility Coordinator at angelette@maaa.org or (816) 421-1388 ext. #216.

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. CDT on ~~Friday, June 30, 2023~~ Monday, July 10, 2023 through M-AAA’s online application form found here:

<https://www.tfaforms.com/5064179>

We urge you to submit your application early to ensure your materials are properly received. The application platform may experience slower processing times when user traffic is higher as the deadline nears. The form will close promptly at midnight.

*Questions? Concerns? Contact: Christine Bial, Director of Arts and Humanities Grant Programs
(816) 421-1388, ext. #227 or grants@maaa.org*