



Fiscal Year 2026

(July 1, 2025 — June 30, 2026)

**GRANT GUIDELINES
AND APPLICATION INFORMATION**

Applications must be filed by September 12, 2025, at 5 PM

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**GRANT GUIDELINES
AND APPLICATION INFORMATION**

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I. Goals

A. Support for the Arts

The City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts ("Commission") recognizes the important role cultural activities play in determining quality of life. To that end, it has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to support the arts. The following goals are set forth in the furtherance of this commitment:

1. To create a climate within the City of Fairfax ("City") conducive to the growth and development of City artists and arts organizations through public and private support.
2. To foster the development of excellence and diversity in the arts ensuring that a varied program of cultural activities is available to satisfy the interests of City residents.
3. To guarantee to all artists and arts organizations an open and fair policy that assures equal access to City arts resources.
4. To encourage development of public/private partnerships in support of the arts.

B. Methods of Expressing Support

1. The Commission provides facilities, financial and technical support, and services to artists and cultural organizations to help them establish themselves in the City.
2. The Commission celebrates and champions artistic excellence.
3. The Commission encourages growth in artistic creativity, quality, and innovation.
4. The Commission is committed to making art accessible to everyone.
5. The Commission invests in the arts by supporting and encouraging full participation in a creative culture that will benefit all residents.

II. General Policies Pertaining to All Applicants

A. All applicants must:

1. Be eligible for support in FY 2026. (See “Part IV—Eligibility for Support” below.),
2. Propose activities, events, presentations, or programs (“projects”) that occur (or occurred) between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026,
3. Complete the Commission’s online interactive, fillable grant application in full; and,
4. File the application no later than September 12, 2025, by 5 PM. Late applications will not be considered.

B. Additional materials may be submitted by mail or in person, delivered to:

The City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts
10455 Armstrong Street, Suite 123
Fairfax VA 22030

III. Eligibility for Support

A. General Criteria for All Applicants

1. The Commission’s grant program provides funding to an applicant not otherwise funded by the City of Fairfax through a direct grant from the City Council, except:
2. The Commission does not fund an applicant that has violated a condition the Commission imposed in connection with any previous Commission grant (permanent ban); and
3. The Commission imposes a 1-year ban in consideration of an application from an applicant with an incomplete final report for a Commission grant awarded in FY 2025. (See Part XIV.)

- B. An applicant's proposed project must present or support an arts-related project¹, subject to the following conditions:
1. for a live-performance indoor project, the applicant must propose a venue in, near, or adjacent to the City (priority is given to all projects performed in the City);
 2. for a live-performance outdoor project, the applicant must propose a City venue;
 3. for a virtual project, the applicant must be headquartered or reside in the City and present the initial performance on a City-approved platform;
 4. for a no-contact project, the applicant must be headquartered or reside in the City and propose a venue in the City;
- C. An applicant must also:
1. provide access to the project at reasonable or no cost; if a fee will be charged, the applicant must provide three examples of the fees charged for similar projects by similar sponsors in the metropolitan area,
 2. demonstrate artistic skills and professionalism that are appropriate for the type and nature of the organization,
 3. consider the needs and abilities of special populations when planning a proposed project, including factors such as age, gender, race, special needs, and socio-economic status,
 4. seek funds in support of a specific project (as distinguished from general operating funds) that results in a product or service that will be available to the public for the benefit of the City and its residents,
 5. comply with applicable conditions and requirements, including filing a complete and signed online application.

¹ Examples of arts-related projects are ones that involve the literary arts, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. The expectation is that all projects are open and available for public viewing, attendance or participation, where practicable.

IV. Additional Criteria for an Organization

- A. To be eligible to receive a Commission grant, an organization must satisfy the General Criteria for All Applicants in Part III-A; and,
- B. Be a not-for-profit organization, exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, and categorized as a 501(c)(3) entity, or provide evidence of a pending application for tax exempt status. Or the applicant must be an educational institution or a local chapter of tax-exempt national organization.

V. Additional Criteria for an Individual

- A. To be eligible to receive a Commission grant, an individual must meet the General Criteria for Applicants in Part III-A; and,
- B. Be a practicing artist who is producing, composing, writing, presenting, or supporting dance, literary arts, media arts, music, theatre, visual arts, or related arts.

VI. Ineligible Expenses and Activities

- A. Grant funds awarded by the Commission are to be applied *only* to direct costs of a specific activity, event, presentation, or exhibition.
- B. The Commission does not fund:
 - 1. general operating expenses;
 - 2. costs of parties, receptions, fundraising benefits, food, drink, catering, gifts, awards, etc.;
 - 3. endowments or capital campaigns;
 - 4. activities that are primarily religious in purpose;
 - 5. school, college or university-based projects that are part of a required course or curriculum, and that do not involve and serve a significant non-student population;
 - 6. requests to reduce or eliminate existing deficits;

7. projects that take place outside the City, subject to the limited exceptions in Part III;
8. marketing and promotional efforts; and,
9. grant applications that are filed late, not signed, handwritten, not filed electronically, or incomplete.

VII. Evaluation Criteria; Related Matters

NOTE: Priority will be given to new, innovative, and emerging arts activities and events that will be available to the public for the benefit of the City.

- A. The Commission reviews grant applications at its October meeting and uses the following criteria to determine if support of an applicant with City resources is warranted.

Will the proposed project:

1. be a new, innovative, or emerging arts activity?
2. be available to the public for the benefit of the City?
3. add to the City's vibrancy by encouraging economic vitality and civic engagement?
4. serve the needs of the City's residents and be accessible to them?
5. provide an opportunity for the applicant to demonstrate artistic excellence and professionalism?
6. contribute something that is needed to expand the City's existing cultural arts offerings?

- B. Awards are subject to the availability of funds for grants.
- C. Awards are subject to the project's consistency with the City's public health and safety guidelines.

VIII. Guidelines for Grant Recipients

A. Changes in a Project

After a grant recipient agrees to the specified terms and conditions, no substantial changes in the project, personnel, or budget may occur, unless approved in advance and in writing by the Commission. The applicant that signs the contract agrees to uphold its conditions and is legally responsible for compliance. All project dates, including the period required to implement and complete the funded project, must fall within FY 2026 (July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026), unless an extension has been approved.

B. Cancellation of a Project

Cancellation of a funded activity or event requires notification and explanation to the Commission and a return of all funds received. If the grant recipient, then wishes to substitute an alternative event due to unforeseen circumstances, the grant recipient must notify the Commission, return the initial grant distribution, and submit a new grant proposal for review and approval.

C. Unobligated and Unspent Funds

A grant recipient must return to the Commission any grant funds that remain unobligated and unspent by June 30, 2026.

IX. Distribution of Grant Funds

A grant recipient will receive 75% of total grant funds upon selection and receipt by the Commission of a signed contract and required documents (e.g., IRS Form W-9 from individual grantees). The remaining 25% will be distributed upon the grant recipient's completion and submission of a complete and timely-filed final report. (See "Final Reporting Requirements" in Part XII.)

X. Acknowledgment

A grant recipient must acknowledge in all published material that the funded activity or event is partially supported by a Commission grant. The purpose of crediting the Commission is to provide City residents with an accurate picture of the broad range of arts activities supported by their tax dollars. The Commission will provide grant recipients with its logo and text for funding credit.

Acknowledgment is to be included in the grantee's published materials including, but not limited to, programs, print and online publications, educational materials, brochures, posters, news releases, websites, catalogues, and videos.

XI. Recordkeeping

A grant recipient must maintain accurate and sufficient financial records for any project supported by a Commission grant. The Commission or its authorized representative shall have access to these records upon request.

XII. Final Reporting Requirements

A. Form and Content of Final Report

A grant recipient's final report, which is a summary of the funded project, must be submitted using the Commission's Final Report form, and include:

1. name and address of the grant recipient;
2. contact person, title, preferred telephone number and email address;
3. project name, date, and location;
4. grant distribution, including:
 - a. the total amount of the grant as awarded and, if the total amount was not received due to a final report filing penalty, the amount received;
 - b. a breakdown of expenses;
 - c. how grant funds were spent;
 - d. the number of attendees;
 - e. the number of performers;

- f. a copy of promotional materials and the event program highlighting acknowledgment of funding from the Commission;
- g. an assessment of the project or event; and,
- h. a signed Certification of Assurances.

B. Filing Deadline

- 1. A grant recipient must file a final report with the Commission within 60 days of completion of the funded project. Exceptions will be made for projects presented within the 60 days of the June 30, 2026, deadline, as determined and agreed upon by the grant recipient and the Commission. The Commission does not accept final reports via fax.
- 2. A grant recipient that files a final report after the 60-day deadline, but no later than June 30, 2026, at 5 PM, will be considered to have filed a late final report.
- 3. A grant recipient that does not file a final report by June 30, 2026, at 5 PM will be considered to have filed an incomplete report.

XIII. Financial Penalty for a Late or Incomplete Final Report

In the event of a late or incomplete final report, the Commission withholds the final 25% of the award.

XIV. Effect of a Late or Incomplete Filing on Grant Eligibility

A grant recipient that filed a late final report (after the 60-day deadline but no later than June 30, 2025) for an FY 2025 grant, is eligible to file a grant application for FY 2025.

A grant recipient that fails to file a final report for an FY 2025 grant is not eligible to file a grant application in FY 2026 (one year of ineligibility).

XV. Completion of the Mandatory Interactive, Fillable Application

The Commission's project grant application is an online, fillable form that has highlighted fields for entering text. An application is not considered complete and ready for review unless every field in the form is filled in. Responses should be as brief and concise as possible; however, they should provide sufficient explanation for panelists who have no prior knowledge of the applicant. The application cannot be saved, so an applicant is advised to consider completing the form in one sitting and typing the responses in a Word document and proofreading them before copying and pasting them into the form.

XVI. Contact Information

For questions about applying for a Commission grant or completing the application, please contact the Commission staff at 703-273-6097 or via email at megan.dubois@fairfaxva.gov.