



OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURE
CITY OF SEATTLE

Cultural Facilities Fund 2025 Guidelines

APPLICATION OPENS: May 20, 2025

APPLICATION CLOSES: Aug. 5, 2025

Grant Overview

The Cultural Facilities Fund supports Seattle arts, heritage, cultural, and arts-service organizations with their facility projects. Our goal is to create better access for people who have been unfairly excluded from owning, managing, or leasing property. We know that communities most affected by structural racism and oppression have had the least access to controlling cultural spaces, so we're focusing on projects that work to change this.

This program has been on pause since the pandemic. In 2025, to create greater equity and access, we are re-opening the program as part of a combined application with our Centering Art & Racial Equity grant.

For information and assistance with the application, eligibility, or online technical support, contact the Cultural Facilities Fund Project Manager at CulturalFacilitiesFund@seattle.gov or Ashraf Hasham, Partnerships, Education, and Grants Manager at 206-514-1057.

We have interpreters who can speak to you in your language, including American Sign Language (via video). Just call us and tell us what language you speak. Expect a short pause while we find an interpreter to join the call.

Grant Purpose

Our cultural spaces define the social character of our neighborhoods. They are the brick-and-mortar portals to the creative vibrancy our city has to offer. The Cultural Facilities Fund supports capital projects that improve Seattle's arts and cultural spaces in significant and lasting ways. This grant helps arts, heritage, cultural, and arts-service organizations tackle historical inequities. It focuses on meeting the needs of communities most affected by structural racism and oppression, while also promoting accessibility and inclusion within these organizations and across the city.

Application

Apply online through the City of Seattle's grant portal:

https://seattle.fluxx.io/user_sessions/new

For organizations interested in applying to both the Cultural Facilities Fund and the [Centering Art & Racial Equity Grant](#), these two grants share the same online application.

If you don't have computer or internet access, let us know and we'll work with you to find options that might work.

Due Date

Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2025, 5 p.m. Pacific

Please allow ample time to complete your application. Applications submitted after the 5 p.m. Pacific deadline will not be accepted.

Eligibility

- You must be an incorporated Seattle-based art, cultural, heritage, or arts-service organization.
 - You may be incorporated as a not-for-profit organization or be fiscally sponsored by a nonprofit.
 - You may be incorporated as a for-profit organization. But your gross annual revenues for the most recently completed fiscal year may not exceed \$5,000,000.
- You must represent communities most impacted by structural racism and oppression, and/or demonstrate a commitment to being an anti-racist organization through an intersectional lens.
- You must have at least a three-year history of providing public benefit to Seattle residents.
- Site control:
 - For “pre-capital” expenses, such as feasibility studies, architectural or engineering services, no site control is required.
 - For facility improvement, building renovations, and other explicitly capital projects, you must control the facility through ownership or a lease (at least five (5) years of site control, which can be a combination of years remaining on a lease and a unilateral option to extend).
- You must demonstrate a record of on-going artistic or cultural accomplishments in Seattle.
- You must have a Federal Tax ID number, City of Seattle Business License, and be based in the city of Seattle.

Your project must:

- Occur [within Seattle City limits](#).
- Have at least 50% funding for the project in place (not including this request) before applying **for requests over \$25,000**. This funding can take the form of approved grants,

individual pledges, organizational cash on-hand (this must be cash that is literally “in the bank”), and/or in-kind contributions of both labor and materials.

- Begin after January 2026 and be completed before December 31, 2027. If the proposed project is part of a larger capital campaign, the larger campaign can have dates the begin or end outside of January 2026 – December 31, 2027. The specific activity funded through this award, however, must occur within these dates.

Your **project** should address at least two or more of the following priorities:

- Increase investment in communities most impacted by structural racism and oppression
- Urgent need for remodeling or renovation of existing facilities, or creation of new facilities
- Improvements to a historic building
- Allow for significant organizational growth
- Expand accessibility per the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Address building, fire, or energy code requirements/updates
- Have broad or deep community impact

Funding

Applicants may request up to \$50,000 to support direct project expenses. Selected awards may be less than requested amounts.

Applicants may submit for one of two tiers of funding. In Tier One, applications for up to \$25,000 will be considered. In Tier Two, applications for greater than \$25,000 and up to \$50,000 will be considered. There are different “match” requirements for applicants in each tier. Applicants should bear in mind that in both tiers, priority will be given to projects that can demonstrate broad support, including financial.

Tier One

Applicants requesting **up to \$25,000** will not have any matching requirement, or need to demonstrate other committed funds for the project.

Tier Two

Applicants requesting **greater than \$25,000 and up to \$50,000** will need to demonstrate that at least 50% of the total project budget is confirmed prior to applying to the Cultural Facilities Fund. In other words, if your total project campaign is \$500,000, you must have at least \$250,000 already committed from other sources, and you may ask us for up to \$50,000. This commitment can take many forms. You may count other contributed income that has been pledged or approved, general volunteer hours at \$35 per hour, discounts on professional labor (for example, pro bono or partially discounted architects’ fees) at that professional’s stated rates, and discounts on materials (not including build discounts from vendors).

Eligible expenses include:

- Capital expenses for an arts, heritage, or cultural space project
 - This includes pre-capital expenses, such as Feasibility Studies, Design and Engineering Services, or Project Management
 - Traditional capital expenses such as material purchases, construction labor, tenant improvements, etc.
- Property acquisition
- Emergency or unexpected repairs (including vandalism)
- Staff salaries as directly related to the capital project (for instance, a percentage of an executive director's salary, equal to their time dedicated to the capital project).

This grant does *not* fund:

- Non-capital related expenses
- General, ongoing facility maintenance and/or regular repairs
- General operating expenses or program expenses
- The purchase of portable equipment
- Work completed before the award of funds
- Projects located outside the City of Seattle

If you are awarded, receipt of funds is dependent upon completing the necessary contracting and/or invoicing and reporting documents.

Information Workshops

Join a virtual workshop to learn more about this grant and how to submit your best application. The first hour of each workshop will focus on applying for our Centering Art & Racial Equity Grant. If you are also interested in learning about this Cultural Facilities Fund grant, you should plan to stay for the full 90 minutes.

Workshop 1

Thursday, May 29, 2025 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Pacific

[RSVP to 5/29](#)

Workshop 2 ASL-interpreted

Monday, June 2, 2025 from 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Pacific

[RSVP to 6/2](#)

Workshop 3

Tuesday, June 24, 2025 from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Pacific

[RSVP to 6/24](#)

Workshop 4

Wednesday, July 9, 2025 from (1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Pacific

[RSVP to 7/9](#)

Evaluation Criteria

The Cultural Facilities Fund invests in the broad cultural community, and with a particular focus on helping organizations reflecting communities that have faced historic and current barriers to purchasing and stewarding cultural space. Through this, and all our programs, we are committed to removing barriers to participation and involving cultures, audiences, and artists who have been most impacted by the City's history of racism and inequitable investments.

In addition to the program goals of funding projects from communities that have been the most impacted by our shared history of structural and institutional racism, the following four (4) core evaluation criteria are considered in the review of applications. Organizations will be selected by an independent peer review panel of cultural workers, artists and community representatives who will evaluate applications on:

1. Impact of the Project and Public Benefit (40 points)

Excellent (38-40), Very Good (35-37), Good (31-34), Adequate (21-30), Questionable (11-20), Unacceptable (0-10)

- The project supports the organization's ability to address historical inequities in meeting the needs of communities most impacted by structural racism and oppression and advancing the goals of racial equity within the organization and the City as a whole.
- Demonstrates important impact for the organization and its ability to serve its community.
- Improves access to cultural opportunities for under-represented communities.
- Shows the project will contribute to the viability and accessibility of the organization, neighborhood, community and/or region; demonstrates how the community will benefit from the funded project.

2. Feasibility and Organizational Capacity (25 points)

Excellent (24-25), Very Good (22-23), Good (19-21), Adequate (14-18), Questionable (8-13), Unacceptable (0-7)

- Includes a realistic, reasonable, and relevant project budget
- Demonstrates a broad base of support from the community and from other supporters
- Demonstrates organization fiscal stability and accountability
- Offers a feasible project plan that can be completed within eligible project timeframe.
- Shows evidence of project leaders' qualifications and experience for implementation of project

3. Importance of the Project in Relation to a Stated Cultural Mission (25 points)

Excellent (24-25), Very Good (22-23), Good (19-21), Adequate (14-18), Questionable (8-13), Unacceptable (0-7)

- Clearly describes the organization's mission and goals.
- Demonstrates how the project will serve the organization's mission and goals.

4. Urgency of the Project (10 points)

Excellent (10), Very Good (9), Good (7-8), Adequate (5-6), Questionable (3-4), Unacceptable (0-2)

- Addresses the urgency of the project for the organization and for the community

Timeline

This timeline is subject to change.

- **August 2025:** An independent panel of arts administrators and community representatives will participate in a reviewer orientation which includes racial equity and implicit-bias training.
- **August – September 2025:** The peer panel will review and score applications based on the program's priorities, eligibility, and criteria.
- **September 2025:** The panel meets to discuss applications and submit their final rankings.
- **October 2025:** The Cultural Investments Committee of the Seattle Arts Commission, along with ARTS Leadership, will review final rankings and recommendations. ARTS' Director will make the final funding recommendations approval.
- **November 2025:** Applicants are notified whether they have been approved for funding or not.
- **November 2025:** Awarded organizations will work with ARTS Staff to develop a scope of service representing the public benefit connected with the funding and enter into contract before year-end deadlines in early December 2025.
- **2026 – 2027:** Awardees carry out projects and ARTS Staff will work with awarded organizations to complete necessary paperwork to receive payment and provide progress reports along the way.

Application Outline & Components

For the first time, organizations interested in applying to both the Centering Art & Racial Equity grant and the Cultural Facilities Fund may submit a single application and be considered for both opportunities. Or you may choose to only apply to one program. Please refer to the Centering Arts & Racial Equity Application Preview document and/or the Cultural Facilities Fund Application Preview document for a complete listing of the application questions.

Core Information – Both Applications

- Organization Information
- Fiscal Sponsor Information (if applicable)
- Community Involvement and Demographics

Centering Art & Racial Equity Application Questions

Only required for those applying to this program:

- Aims and Actions
- Programming Form and Links
- Financial Organization Information
- Racial Equity Self-Evaluation

Cultural Facilities Application Questions

Only required for those applying to this program:

- Project Information
- Facility Project Budget
- Image Work Samples

Application To-Do

We encourage you to:

- **Read the guidelines, check your eligibility, and follow the online instructions carefully.**
- **Explore the online application early** so you can plan ahead.
- **Attend an information session** where you can ask and hear other applicant questions, *especially if you are a first-time applicant.*
- **Check-in with the project manager for this program before you start applying** to ensure you are properly registered in the City of Seattle's online grant portal and so you receive important updates related to this opportunity.
- **Contact the project manager with any questions**, or to review a portion of your draft application as early as possible before the deadline. We are happy to assist, but last-minute help is limited due to timing and volume of requests received. Email is the best way to reach us—we can schedule time to chat virtually or over the phone.
- **Schedule plenty of time** to complete this application before the deadline, especially if you're also applying to the Centering Art & Racial Equity grant.
- **Prepare and connect with others in your organization** as early in the process as possible so that they also have enough time to provide the information needed.
- **Be clear and concise** in your application. Panelists review hundreds of them.
- **Save often and be sure to re-read and preview your work** before you submit.
- **Submit your application early** so you have time to deal with any potential technical issues.
- Make sure you **attach the required attachments** before submitting.
- **Breathe.** You've got this!

Obligation of Award Recipients

If selected for funding, you must meet the requirements listed below.

Acknowledgement

When you receive funding from the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, you must acknowledge our support in printed materials, signage visible to the public, via social media, or in other ways appropriate to the project. We will supply preferred wording and logos in electronic format.

Public Benefit

State law authorizes the purchase of services on behalf of the public, but not the donation of public money to organizations or individuals. If you are funded, you must provide public benefits to residents of Seattle as a condition of your funding.

Seattle Business License and Washington State UBI Number Are Required for Payment

If you are awarded funds from us, you must have a Seattle business license and a Washington state Unified Business Identification (UBI) number prior to receiving final payment. The business license and UBI numbers are NOT needed to apply for funds.

Reporting

After funding recommendations are approved, our staff will work with you to go over the required reporting documents for you to receive funding. You will need to sign a contract prior to starting the City-funded portion of your project. Grantees are paid on a reimbursement basis after projects or services are completed and a final report with promotional materials is submitted (approximately 4-6 weeks after paperwork is received.)

Insurance

You will be responsible for securing Liability Insurance for your project, collaborators, and listing the City of Seattle as additionally insured.

Taxes

You are responsible for paying all applicable taxes. At the time of notification, you will need to complete appropriate paperwork and submit an updated W-9.

Our Funding Policies

Commitment to Racial Equity

The Seattle Office of Arts & Culture commits to an anti-racist work practice that centers the creativity and leadership of people of color—those most impacted by structural racism—to move toward systems that benefit us all. We also acknowledge that we are on Indigenous land, the traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples.

We envision a city of people whose success, safety, and health are not pre-determined by their race. A city where all artists, performers, writers and creative workers have the freedom, agency, and platform to share and amplify their stories, art, cultures, and experiences. At the same time, we acknowledge that our actions—both conscious and unconscious, past and present—have benefited some communities while limiting opportunities and outcomes for communities of color. We work toward our vision by addressing and working to eliminate institutional racism in our programs, policies and practices.

In alignment with the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative, we seek new solutions that use arts as a strategy to drive not only our office, but the City as a whole toward racial equity and social justice. We will continue to break barriers and build arts-integrated tools that challenge the status quo and push us toward the inclusive society we envision.

If you have any questions about our commitment or would like to know more about the work we are doing, please call us at (206) 684-7171 or email at Arts.Culture@Seattle.gov.

Grant Appeal Process

You may appeal the recommendations of the independent peer review panel. Appeals must be based solely on the information included in your original application.

Procedure:

- You must first contact the staff member responsible for the program to review the decision and hear a summary of the peer panel feedback: the Cultural Facilities Fund Project Manager at CulturalFacilitiesFund@seattle.gov or Ashraf Hasham, Partnerships, Education, and Grants Manager at 206-514-1057.
- Your appeal must be sent in writing to the Director of the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture within 30 days of formal notice of the decision.
- Our director consults with staff and/or members of the peer panel for input in making the final decision.
- If our director agrees that the award should have been given based on the merit of your original application, you will be awarded a grant.
- A rejection by our director is final and ends the appeal process.
- Our director will notify you of their final decision in writing.

Application materials are public information

Application materials submitted to the Office of Arts & Culture are governed by the Washington Public Records Act and may be subject to disclosure to a third-party requester. To learn more please see [Chapter 42.56 RCW](#) and the City's [Privacy Statement](#).

Discrimination is not allowed on City-funded projects

Applicants receiving funds from the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture must comply with Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 20.44, pertaining to prevention of discrimination in City contracts, and Chapter 5.44, pertaining to license requirements. The complete text of these City codes is available at the City Clerk's office and the Seattle Public Library.

Americans with Disabilities Act applies to City-funded projects

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law ensuring access to services and facilities for people with disabilities. The Seattle Office of Arts & Culture respects the needs of people with disabilities and seeks to make available to applicants, participants and, all interested persons information regarding the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and its applicability to the activities of our agency. For information about public meetings, accessibility, and auxiliary aids, please contact the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture at (206) 684-7171 (voice), or (800) 833-6388 (TDD Relay). This agency complies with all federal, state, and local laws that prohibit discrimination in employment and services.

Supports freedom of expression

The City believes a community that fosters freedom of speech and thought will advance as a society. Artists play an important role in reflecting and challenging the social concerns of the day. The strength of the United States as a nation, rests in its tolerance of divergent opinions and ideas. Government support of the arts must similarly tolerate a spectrum of ideas and encourage freedom of thought.

For additional information about funding opportunities and the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, visit our website at seattle.gov/arts, and [subscribe to our email newsletter](#).