



**Hillsborough  
County Florida**  
Arts Council

## FYE 2026 CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES TIMELINE

**Grant applications open online: Monday, January 6, 2025, 9 a.m.**

Go to: <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/HILLSBOROUGHARTSCOUNCIL/Participant>

**Cultural Development Remote Grants Workshop, Tuesday, January 7, 2025 at 11 a.m.**  
Registration required.

**Deadline:** All applications must be submitted in the online grant system by Friday, January 24, 2025 at 5 p.m. Deadlines will not be extended, and partial or incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

**Board Review and Scoring of Applications: Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 11 a.m.**

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### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Arts Council of Hillsborough County (Arts Council) is committed to facilitating the participation in cultural programs by all individuals in Hillsborough County. The Arts Council encourages funding requests from cultural organizations with programming that not only serves diverse audiences but also reaches geographically diverse communities. In addition, it is the intent of the Arts Council to encourage the development of both cultural and administrative operations of local organizations. Funds provided through this grant program should also enhance organizational ability to attract new and increased funding from other sources.

Cultural Development Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to nonprofit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) Florida corporations that meet the eligibility requirements and provide cultural programming in Hillsborough County. Funding is awarded for general

program support based on overall quality of Access & Community Engagement; Artistic & Cultural Vitality, and Organizational Capacity. The Council anticipates total grant requests will exceed funds available; consequently, requests are generally not fully funded.

An organization applying for a grant must have as its primary mission the delivery of cultural programs. Cultural disciplines encompass, but are not limited to, architecture, crafts, creative writing, dance, history, literature, media arts, music, photography, theatre, traditional arts, visual arts, and the execution, exhibition, or presentation of such allied cultural forms.

### **BASIC ELIGIBILITY**

**All** applicant organizations **must** meet the following eligibility criteria at the time of application.

- Applicant organization must be registered as an active nonprofit Florida corporation with the Florida Division of Corporations with a principal address in Hillsborough County.
- Programs, services, and events are open to the public and benefit residents of Hillsborough County.
- Fifty percent of an organization's events occurred in Hillsborough County in the 12 months prior to application (a touring production counts as a single event).
- Organizations must show in their budget that they are capable of at least a dollar-for-dollar match for the grant amount requested from the Council. No in-kind contributions will be considered as part of this match.
- Organization must provide a **complete copy** of the most recently filed IRS Form 990 or IRS Form 990EZ which must be dated within 18 months prior to application deadline date. No 990 postcard filings will be accepted.
- Organizations that have not fulfilled contractual grant agreements with the Arts Council of Hillsborough County in previous years are not eligible for funding.
- Applications from municipalities, governmental entities, educational institutions, and fiscal agents will not be accepted.

### **APPLICATION RESTRICTIONS**

Organizations that currently receive other funding from Hillsborough County are not eligible (does not include capital project funds).

Organizations may submit only **one** application, but multiple programs within the organization may be included.

## **SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must also meet these additional eligibility requirements based on organization revenue:

### **Organizations with less than \$100,000 revenue on their most recently filed 990 or 990EZ (refer to Part 1, Line 12 of IRS Form 990 or Part 1, Line 9 of IRS Form 990EZ):**

1. Must be registered as an active nonprofit Florida corporation with the Florida Division of Corporations for one year. If the applicant is registered but their status is not "active," the application will be deemed ineligible.
2. Have tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code for one year. Status must be in good standing at the time of application.
3. Must have completed one full season of programming in Hillsborough County in the 12 months prior to application.

### **Organizations with more than \$100,000 revenue on their most recently filed 990 or 990EZ (refer to Part 1, Line 12 of IRS Form 990 or Part 1, Line 9 of IRS Form 990EZ):**

1. Must be registered as an active nonprofit Florida corporation with the Florida Division of Corporations for two years. If the applicant is registered but their status is not "active," the application will be deemed ineligible.
2. Have tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code for two years at the time of application. Status must be in good standing at the time of application.
3. Must have completed two full seasons of programming in Hillsborough County in the 24 months prior to application.

### **What Constitutes a Full Season of Programming?**

A full season of programming must be comprised of at least three unique events with paid attendance in Hillsborough County.

- Multiple performances of the same show count as one event.
- Performances at festivals, charity events, etc. should not be counted as an event.
- Paid attendance does not apply to museums, galleries, annually recurring festivals or other cultural organizations that have no admission charges.

## **FUNDING LEVELS**

The amount that may be requested is determined by funding levels which are based on the organization's revenues for the most recently completed fiscal year per Part 1, Line 12 of IRS Form 990 or Part 1, Line 9 of IRS Form 990EZ. Qualifying revenue is exclusive of capital, endowments, in-kind or restricted funds.

- **Level 1:** Organizations with revenue under \$100,000 may apply for up to \$15,000 for general program support.
- **Level 2:** Organizations with revenue between \$100,000 and \$399,999 may apply for up to \$20,000 for general program support.
- **Level 3:** Organizations with revenue of more than \$400,000 may apply for up to \$25,000 for general program support.

## GRANT FUNDS

This is a reimbursement-based grant. Grant funds must be used for general program support expenses as detailed in the proposal budget. The grant period begins Oct. 1, 2025, and ends Aug.15, 2026. Costs incurred prior to or after this period will not be reimbursed.

Grant funds **may not** be used for the following:

- Programs and projects already initiated or completed, unless funds will be used to expand the program to new audiences or measurably improve its quality.
- Deficiencies in previously completed projects or for unanticipated costs of an ongoing project.
- Benefits and projects planned primarily for fund-raising purposes, i.e. hospitality.
- Private entertainment, food/beverages, plaques, awards, cash prizes, or scholarships.
- Licensing fees of any kind.
- Interest on loans, fines, penalties, or costs of litigation.
- Re-granting.
- Activities for which academic credit is given.
- Projects to reduce existing deficits.
- Projects not open to the general public and/or restricted to an organization's membership only.
- Travel that is not revenue-producing, competition-related, or continuing education.
- Capital expenditures (includes acquisitions, building projects, or renovations).

## APPLICATION MATERIALS (including Support Materials)

All applications and support materials must be submitted in the online grant system before the application deadline. Paper applications will **NOT** be accepted. Once uploaded, the submission is final. No changes may be made to application documents after submission. Avoid technical problems by completing the online forms and uploading files well ahead of the deadline. Deadlines will not be extended, and partial or incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

The application includes:

- Organization Information (general information)

- Organization Profile (demographics)
- Narrative Section
- Organization Operating Budget
- Proposal Budget and Allocations
- Required Support Materials
- Optional Support Materials

### **REQUIRED SUPPORT MATERIAL**

- Most recently filed complete copy of IRS Form 990 or IRS Form 990EZ (must be dated within 18 months prior to application deadline date)
- Board of Directors list with affiliations
- Work Sample
- IRS Letter of Determination
- W9

### **OPTIONAL Support Material**

You may provide up to five optional support material files of letters of commitment from collaborators and/or participating artists. You may also combine them into one pdf document which will count as one support material file. Do not exceed maximum file size per file or you will encounter an error.

### **APPLICATION SCORING**

Applications must earn a minimum average score of 80 to be recommended for funding.

The maximum number of points an application can earn is 100 points. Grant reviewers will individually score each application. The average of the individual panelist scores will determine the final score. The final score is used to determine the percentage of the final grant award.

Applications are reviewed and judged by criteria divided into three categories: 1) Access and Community Engagement, 2) Artistic and Cultural Vitality, and 3) Organizational Capacity. Evidence for meeting the criteria may be found in any portion of an application or associated support materials.

### **ACCESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (45 points)**

The Arts Council defines access & community engagement as an organization's ability to reach diverse audiences across a wide range of the community, providing both a public benefit and access.

### **ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL VIBRANCY (35 points)**

The Arts Council defines artistic and cultural vitality as an organization's ability to create quality, mission-driven work that inspires and challenges the community.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (20 points)**

The Arts Council defines organizational capacity as an organization's ability to manage effectively for today and tomorrow,

The following scoring descriptions will be used:

**Excellent:** The applicant has provided overwhelming and clear evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that all of the funding criteria are met. The plans are clear, well-articulated and appropriate. The budget is realistic, comprehensive, and carefully aligned with the narrative. The support materials are of the highest quality, highly relevant, and lead to a deeper understanding of the organization and its work.

**Good:** The applicant has provided sufficiently clear evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that the most crucial criteria are met. The plans are clear and appropriate but are not always well-expressed. The budget is realistic and reasonably aligned with the narrative. The support materials are of good quality and relevance.

**Fair/Weak:** The applicant has provided limited or very limited evidence in the application that demonstrates that criteria are barely met or not met at all. The plans lack detail and may be hard to understand. The budget has limited detail or is unrealistic and not well aligned with the narrative. The support materials are limited or of poor quality.

## **IF YOU ARE FUNDED - GRANTEE OBLIGATIONS**

### **CERTIFICATES OF INSURANCE**

Please note that if awarded a grant, funded organizations will be required to provide a current copy of certificate of insurance with their grant agreement.

### **REIMBURSEMENT AND OTHER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Complete and detailed financial documentation are required when requesting reimbursement under this program. Also required, are participant and audience numbers including diversity/demographic information. A final report must be provided at the conclusion of the grant period. **Final reports are due no later than Sept. 30, 2026.**

### **CREDITING REQUIREMENTS**

- The funded organization shall make available to the County similar sponsorship benefits as it offers to other sponsors including recognition for the County on event collateral and at the event.
- Awardee must display the Hillsborough County wordmark logo on all printed and digital promotional materials.

- Credit for the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners must be provided on all communications –news releases; print, radio and television advertising; curtain/event speeches; publications; and other marketing materials.
- Samples of the materials showing the wordmark logo should be attached to the Final Report.
- On websites, the funded organization must display the Hillsborough County logo wordmark.
- It is preferred to display the logo, however, when it is not possible to display images, credit should be given through a text statement in the same font size or larger as any other sponsors. Proper text-only credit would read: ***“With the Support of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners.”***
- In all publicity, websites, printed or production materials related to the grant project, the recipient must credit the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners for their support in the same font size, or larger, as any other sponsors. The logo (wordmark) of Hillsborough County should be used where possible and will be provided on request as needed.

### **SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

The funded organization shall make available to the County similar sponsorship benefits as it offers to other sponsors including recognition for the County on event collateral and at the event utilizing the correct logo as described above.

At no charge to the County, the Awardee shall provide access to the events or programs, including reasonable parking access if available, for a maximum of ten (10) staff for purposes of monitoring consistency and compliance with the terms of the grant agreement.

The County may request, at its sole discretion, to be provided a presence at the event (i.e. a vendor table, if applicable) similar to other sponsors and/or vendors to promote County activities, programs and/or items of interest to visitors and residents. This Event Presence will be provided at no charge to the County.