CITY OF RIVERSIDE
ARTS & CULTURE GRANT GUIDELINES

The City of Riverside Arts & Culture Grant is to support eligible non-profit arts and cultural organizations within our community. The level of City of Riverside Arts & Culture Grant award amounts may vary from year to year based on funding allocations, as well as the number of eligible applicants.

Through the Arts & Culture Grant Program, the City of Riverside seeks to:

1. Sustain professional development of established arts and cultural institutions based in and serving the City of Riverside;
2. Assist the operational and development of small to mid-sized arts and cultural organizations;
3. Encourage and support the contribution of excellence and diversity to the richness of the community's cultural life; and
4. Encourage and support administrative and fiscal excellence in non-profit arts and cultural organizations.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Arts & Culture Grant Program offers general operating support to established City of Riverside artistic and cultur-al non-profit organizations that have developed a broad range of programming and have contributed sub-stantially to the cultural life of the community.

Funding Cycle
Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028.

Funding Amounts
Will vary depending on the number of qualified applications. The total amount for this Fiscal Year 2026-2027 is $410,050 and for Fiscal Year 2027-2028 is $414,151. Funding awarded will be for BOTH Fiscal Years.

First-Time Applicants
In addition to the information requested in this application, financial statements, budget and description of op-erations/programs for the past three (3) years must be submitted for review and evaluation by the grant panel.

BUDGET CATEGORIES

Level 1
Organizations with expenses between $9,000 - $100,000 in the last completed fiscal year may apply for a grant up to 20% of their previous year's income.

Level 2
Organizations with expenses of $101,000 - $249,000 in the last completed fiscal year may apply for a grant up to 15% of their previous year's income or $20,000, whichever is greater.

Level 3
Organizations with expenses of $250,000 + in the last completed fiscal year may apply for a grant up to 10% of their previous year's income or $30,000, whichever is greater.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

1. Managerial and Fiscal Competence
2. Programming Excellence
3. Community Impact/Outreach
4. Marketing

CONDITIONS FOR FUNDING

The City of Riverside Arts & Culture Grant Program funds general operating support, including:

1. General operating expenses
2. Administrative salaries
3. Development of marketing/promotional materials
4. Purchase or repair of equipment
5. Retention of professional services (accountant, etc.)

The City of Riverside Arts and Culture Grant Program does NOT fund:

1. Debt from past fiscal years
2. Endowment Funds, Benefits or Fundraising Events
3. Individuals (scholarships, fees, tuition, etc.)
4. Payment to any organization's Board of Directors for duties performed as a board member
5. For-profit organizations
6. Programs inaccessible to the public
7. Projects with religious or sectarian purposes

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

1. Have primary mission to create, produce, present, provide, or support arts and culture services for the public.
2. The non-profit organization must be located in the City of Riverside and not receive any other General Fund allocations for the same purposes as the City of Riverside Arts and Culture Grants from any City of Riverside department or agency.
3. Funds are designated solely for operating support of non-profit arts organizations. For-profit organizations and educational institutions are not eligible for City of Riverside Arts and Culture Grant funds.
4. The applicant organization must be a California non-profit corporation and hold 501(c)(3) certification from the Internal Revenue Service.
5. The organization must offer an annual series of arts and cultural activities (such as exhibitions and performances) in the City of Riverside, which are open and accessible to all.
6. The organization must have performing, producing, or presenting history of not less than three years, with minimum expenses of approximately $9,000 in the last fiscal year. The most recent year must include artistic and/or cultural programming in the City of Riverside.
7. No matching funds are required. However, the organization must demonstrate its capability to match a City of Riverside Arts & Culture Grant award on a dollar-for-dollar basis. A "match" includes earned income, cash contributions, and grants. Note: "In-Kind" contributions such as the dollar value of volunteer services do not constitute a match for this grant.
8. The organization must have satisfied the evaluative requirements of any previously awarded funding from the City of Riverside.
9. City of Riverside Arts & Culture Grant funds must be expended by June 30 for each fiscal year.
10. Recipient organizations agree to participate in City of Riverside activities that will serve to recognize, promote or assist either the City or the organization.
11. Work in one of the following disciplines: Architecture, Curatorial Arts/Museums, Dance, Design (includes Fashion, Industrial, and Costume), Interdisciplinary, Literary Arts, Media Arts and Film, Music, Performance Art, Photography, Public Art, Theater, Visual Arts OR serve as an arts service organization.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND FUNDING DISCLAIMERS

Grant review process is public. During the panel review process, the merits of the proposals and the accomplishments of the artists and organizations are thoroughly discussed. Applications will be compared to other proposals, as well as appraised within the context of the applicant's arts or cultural discipline or field. Because of potential public and media interest in this process and its results, applicants should assume that the panel responses, deliberations, evaluations, or results would not be confidential. The final deliberation and scoring process of the panel is held in closed session.

There is limited funding available for distribution. Many worthy programs, organizations, and artists cannot be funded. The receipt of past funding, organizational fiscal need or the merit of an applicant is not a guarantee of funding.

REVIEW PROCESS

Panels for the City of Riverside Arts & Culture Grant may include individuals from inside and outside the City of Riverside. Grant panelists review and evaluate grant applications, compiling a total point score. Applicants will be notified of the grant panel meeting date.

CRITERIA

Grant Panelists evaluate applications according to the criteria listed below.

MANAGERIAL AND FISCAL COMPETENCE

1. Professional development of management and staff
2. Staff composition (full-time, part-time, contract, volunteer, etc.)
3. Relationships between board, management, staff, volunteers, peers and community
4. Qualifications and background of management and professional staff
5. Active involvement in long-range planning
6. Stability of board and staff
7. Completeness, clarity, and accuracy of grant proposal
8. Administration of previous City of Riverside funding, if applicable
9. Proven ability to attract public/private partners
10. Consistency of programs with the organization's mission
11. History of balanced budgets and plans for long-range financial stability and artistic growth
12. Presence and history of a diversified base of financial support from the local community
13. Consistency of programs with the organization's mission
14. Presence of an active and effective fund development program
15. Capacity of organization and/or staff to achieve goals

PROGRAMMING EXCELLENCE

1. Involvement and professionalism in planning and implementing programs
2. Quality, historical background and expertise of programmers
3. Reviews and other indications of how past programs have been received
4. Demonstrated desire to improve the quality of programs
5. Programming that encourages broad artistic/cultural expression
6. Utilization of new or emerging artists
7. Presentation of new and original programming
8. Efforts to reach beyond conventional limits of art forms and/or cultural expression
9. Artist's compensation
10. Focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion

COMMUNITY IMPACT

1. Unique programs and activities, which do not duplicate others already in place
2. Accessibility to all members of the community
3. Community interest in the organization
4. Growth in public attendance, participation, and support
5. Contribution to quality of life and overall cultural vitality of the community
6. Extension of free or discounted services to under-served audiences
7. Benefit to new and under-served audiences, including youth, elderly, disabled, groups/populations or geographic areas not reached by existing programs
8. Efforts to attract new audience
9. Inclusiveness

MARKETING

1. Evidence of strategic approach toward marketing and audience development
2. Utilization of multiple resources
3. Efforts to understand current audience base
4. Efforts to identify potential audience
5. Quality of marketing materials, including online resources
6. Maintenance and accessibility of online resource

GRANT TIMELINE

Application Available	Wednesday, July 1, 2026
Grant Questions Due	Wednesday, July 8, 2026
Grant Questions and Answered by	Friday, July 10, 2026
Grant Application Due	Monday, July 27, 2026 at 4:00 PM (No late applications accepted)
Grant Application Review Panel	Week of August 3, 2026
Grants Awarded Notification	Friday, September 25, 2026

Applications are to be submitted to SpecialEvents@RiversideCA.gov