



# Reviewer Training

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Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment | January 2026

# Agenda



- Welcome
- AACME
- Austin's Arts and Culture and Heritage Tourism
- Funding Source
- BREAK OUT
  - Elevate Focus of Program and Rubric
  - Heritage Preservation Focus of Program and Rubric
- Tips for providing written and spoken feedback
- Panel Day Logistics
- Ways to get help



The background of the slide features a repeating pattern of the word 'AACME' in a light green, wavy, stylized font. A large, dark green, curved shape, resembling a stylized 'A' or a wave, is positioned on the right side of the slide, partially overlapping the pattern.

# AACME

Established February 24, 2025



# The Creative Reset



Spring-Summer 2025 Community Engagement



Phase 1 Goal: to improve funding programs



11,801 Comments



Updated AACME Funding Programs  
Guidelines

Clearer definitions and criteria  
Simplified processes  
Accessible resources

# Arts, Culture, and Heritage Tourism in Austin



Austin has a vibrant arts and cultural scene that includes:

- Major Cultural Events (ACL and SXSW)
- UNESCO City of Media Arts Designation
- Wide array of creative genres represented:
  - Music
  - Film & Television
  - Visual Arts
  - Comedy
  - Performing Arts
  - Literary Arts
  - And More!
- Historic Assets: 670+ local landmarks and 8 local historic districts
- Travelers in Texas who engage in heritage activities spend on average \$30 more each day, per person, than non-heritage travelers.\*

\*Source: [Making Connections: Heritage Tourism, Historic Preservation and the Texas Heritage Trails Program](#), Texas Historical Commission (September 24, 2020).

# Source of Program Funds



- **Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)**

- State Statute 351.101
- Austin City Code Chapter 11-2-7
  - Cultural Arts Fund
  - Heritage Preservation Fund

(5) Be used for historical restoration and preservation projects or activities to encourage tourists to visit preserved historic sites.

(A) At, or in the immediate vicinity of, Convention Center facilities or visitor information centers;

(B) Located in the areas that would be frequented by tourists and convention delegates;

[Texans for the Arts](#) and [Texas Hotel & Lodging Association](#) for more information on HOT

# Reviewer Responsibilities

- Reviewers are required to
  - Complete training
  - Read and review applications
  - Score
  - Provide Written Comments
  - Participate in virtual panel discussion



# Conflict of Interest

## All Reviewers must:

- Disclose any potential or actual conflicts prior to the assignment of applications in Submittable and,
- Complete each Conflict-of-Interest acknowledgement at the beginning of each application review (see image)
- Recuse themselves from reviewing or scoring any application where a conflict exists
- Avoid advocating for or against any applicant in a way that could compromise the integrity of the review
- Not serve as a Reviewer if they, their immediate family member, or organization is applying for the same grant program track (e.g. an Elevate applicant in the Nonprofit track may serve as a Reviewer in the Individual Artist track or Arts Group track)

Review Panelist hereby acknowledges receipt of the assigned applications, panel orientation materials, panelist Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy, and a copy of the Program Guidelines. Review Panelist agrees to evaluate and score assigned applications consistent with the requirements and procedures stated therein, and any other criteria or evaluation requirements, which may be established by the Economic Development Department within the time frame established by the City.  
(required)

☐ Accept

Conflict of Interest (required) 

☐ I certify that I do not pose a conflict of interest in scoring this application

☐ I pose a conflict of interest in scoring this application



# Conflict of Interest



Any financial association, or relationship with an applicant.



Any situation that places a Reviewer in a position where they feel they cannot be unbiased.

# Application Evaluation

- Score based on program rubric
- Look beyond grantsmanship
- Avoid value judgements on the use of AI
- First-hand experience = ok
- Give yourself time
- Provide constructive comments relative to score
- **Do not contact applicants or other Reviewers.**





# Elevate Grant

Elevate provides one-year grants to individual artists, arts groups, and nonprofits creating vibrant, culturally rich public experiences in Austin.





# Application Evaluation

## Estimated Timeline

- January 12: Receive application/panel assignments
- February 2: Panel discussions begin
- Three days prior to your assigned review date: Preliminary scores and comments due in Submittable

Give yourself time!

January 2026						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11		12	13	14	15	16
17						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1		2	3	4	5	6
7						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28



# Applicant Types

- ① Individual Artists
- ② Arts Groups
- ③ 501(c)(3) Arts Non-Profits



# Elevate Panel Makeup



# Application Components



Non-scored Application  
Introduction Statement



Narrative Questions



Project Budget

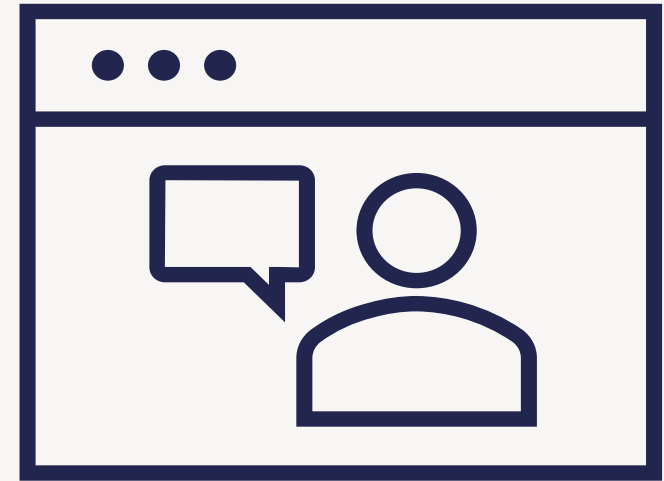


Uploads

# Introduction Statement – Not Scored

Applicant Introduction Statement is a narrative or video to provide additional context about their proposed project or creative work.

This is an opportunity for them to share additional context to their work that they think may be helpful to you as a Reviewer.





# Elevate Scoring Criteria



Creative Work – Up to  
50 Points



Capacity – Up to 30  
Points



Public Connection –  
Up to 20 Points

# Creative Work – Up to 50 Points

- 2 Questions:
  - Q1 – three scoring criteria (NP: 10/10/10) or (AG/IA: 5/10/15);
  - Q2 – two scoring criteria (NP/AG/IA: 10/10)
- Mission or artistic vision is culturally significant and community-rooted
- Activities reflect the people, places, histories and cultures of Austin
- Creative work reflects clear intent, authentic perspective, and meaningful cultural expression



# Non Profit (NP) Question 1 : What is the applicant's mission or artistic vision and what is the programming you do to support that mission? (up to 30 points)



	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Share your mission and describe the creative programming activities that supports it.</i></b>	Mission and vision are clearly stated and aligned with the applicant's creative work.	Mission and vision are stated and shows some connection to the applicant's creative work.	Mission and vision are somewhat vague or broad; Narrative or work samples show limited alignment between purpose and impact.	Mission and vision are missing, unclear, or disconnected from the described work.
	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Identify who your work impacts and how they engage with it.</i></b>	Clearly identifies specific communities impacted. Describes multiple, meaningful modes of engagement (e.g., co-creation, feedback loops). Demonstrates a strong understanding of community voice and needs. Narrative response and work samples show deep, sustained commitment to serving the stated community with examples of impact or leadership.	Identifies relevant impacted groups, though may be somewhat general. Describes clear engagement methods (e.g., events, outreach, participation). Narrative response and work samples show some examples of impact.	Lists who is impacted broadly, but lacks clarity or specificity. Engagement is mentioned but vague, passive, or one-directional (e.g., "audiences attend"). Little evidence of intentional design for access. Narrative response and work samples lack supporting detail or examples.	No clear identification of who is impacted or why it matters. Engagement is missing or unclear. Response may feel disconnected from community or public purpose.

## NP Question 1 : What is the applicant's mission or artistic vision and what is the programming you do to support that mission? (continued)

	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Explain the artistic values, traditions, or focus that guide your mission.</i></b>	<p>Has distinct artistic values or traditions (e.g., cultural lineage, aesthetics, forms).</p> <p>Shows strong alignment between artistic values, traditions or focus and mission.</p> <p>Includes innovation, or intergenerational knowledge.</p>	<p>Describes artistic influences, but the meaning or background is not fully explained</p> <p>Shows strong alignment between artistic values, traditions or focus and mission.</p> <p>Reflects some awareness of tradition or community.</p>	<p>Shows limited insight into artistic roots, traditions, or direction.</p> <p>Mission is present but underdeveloped or unclear.</p> <p>Little evidence of artistic focus.</p>	<p>Artistic values are missing, unclear, or overly broad. Response lacks connection to mission or artistic direction.</p> <p>Narrative is unclear or unfinished.</p>



# Arts Group/Individual Artist Question (AG/IA) 1 : What is the applicant's mission or artistic vision and what is the programming you do to support that mission? (up to 30 points)



	5 points	4 points	2 points	1 point
<b><i>Share your mission and describe the creative programming activities that supports it.</i></b>	Creative mission and artistic vision are clearly stated and aligned with the applicant's creative work.	Creative mission and artistic vision are stated and shows some connection to the applicant's creative work.	Creative mission and artistic vision are somewhat vague or broad; Narrative or work samples show limited alignment between purpose and impact.	Creative mission and artistic vision are missing, unclear, or disconnected from the described work.
	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Identify who your work impacts and how they engage with it.</i></b>	Clearly identifies specific communities impacted. Describes multiple, meaningful modes of engagement (e.g., co-creation, feedback loops). Demonstrates a strong understanding of community voice and needs. Narrative response and work samples show deep, sustained commitment to serving the stated community with examples of impact or leadership.	Identifies relevant impacted groups, though may be somewhat general. Describes clear engagement methods (e.g., events, outreach, participation). Narrative response and work samples show some examples of impact	Lists who is impacted broadly but lacks clarity or specificity. Engagement is mentioned but vague, passive, or one-directional (e.g., "audiences attend"). Little evidence of intentional design for access. Narrative response and work samples lack supporting detail or examples.	No clear identification of who is impacted or why it matters. Engagement is missing or unclear. Response may feel disconnected from community or public purpose.

AG/IA Question 1 : What is the applicant’s mission or artistic vision and what is the programming you do to support that mission? (continued)



	15 points	10 points	5 points	1 point
<i><b>Explain the artistic values, traditions, or focus that guide your mission.</b></i>	Has distinct artistic values or traditions (e.g., cultural lineage, aesthetics, forms). Shows strong alignment between artistic values, traditions or focus and creative mission. Includes innovation, or intergenerational knowledge.	Describes artistic influences, but the meaning or background is not fully explained Shows strong alignment between artistic values, traditions or focus and creative mission. Reflects some awareness of tradition or community.	Shows limited insight into artistic roots, traditions, or direction. Creative mission is present but underdeveloped or unclear. Little evidence of artistic focus.	Artistic values are missing, unclear, or overly broad. Response lacks connection to creative mission or artistic direction. Narrative is unclear or unfinished.

## Creative Work - Question 2: What is your proposed activity and how does it reflect the people, places, or cultures of Austin? (up to 20 points)



	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Describe your proposed activity and how it reflects Austin's people, places, or cultures.</i></b>	Clearly defined public activities. Strong ties to Austin's diverse communities or to uniquely Austin traditions, histories, or cultural expressions. Highlights community relevance or collaboration with local people or places.	Outlines the proposed activity. Demonstrates relevant connection to Austin's culture or communities, though may be less specific. Reflects some awareness of place or local context.	Activities are described with minimal detail. Mentions Austin in broad terms with minimal connection to specific people or places. Limited reflection of how the activity fits into Austin's cultural fabric.	Activity is vague or unclear. Little or no reference to Austin's people, places, or cultures. Response appears disconnected from local context. Or public activities are not listed or are unclear.

	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Explain how your activities reflect creative intent, authenticity, and cultural significance.</i></b>	Clearly describes the creative vision and cultural perspective expressed through the proposed activities. Demonstrates originality and a strong commitment to advancing cultural expression. Activities show a clear connection to community or lived experience.	Identifies creative intent and cultural perspective, though details may be less developed. Shows some effort toward originality and cultural expression. Demonstrates some connection to community or lived experience.	Mentions creative intent or cultural perspective but lacks clarity or depth. Relies on general statements without showing how activities express cultural meaning. Minimal insight into who benefits or how the work connects to community.	Response is vague or missing details. Little or no mention of creative intent or cultural perspective. No clear alignment with cultural expression or innovation.

# Capacity – Up to 30 Points

- 2 Questions, and Budget Table:
  - Q3 – three scoring criteria (NP: 10/10/5) or (AG/IA: 10/10/5);
  - Budget Table and Q4 – two scoring criteria (NP/AG/AI: 5)
- Leadership or team demonstrates understanding of and connection to the communities served
- Budget and staffing are suited to the project's scope and goals



## NP Question 3: Describe your experience producing creative work or offering public experiences in Austin. (up to 25 points)



	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Introduce your key team members, their expertise and their role in the proposed activity.</i></b>	Staff/board/volunteers/creative contributors have relevant experience or qualifications (could be lived or professional experience). Narrative and work samples demonstrates thoughtful alignment between staff/ board/ volunteers/ creative contributors and proposed activities.	Describes qualifications or experience that generally support the proposed activities. Description of administrative and/or creative support is sufficient, but may lack key roles or specifics.	Team members are named, but roles, relevance, or experience are unclear. Limited connection to proposed work.	No relevant staff or board information provided.

	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Describe your team's connection to the community served.</i></b>	Narrative and work samples clearly describes the team's deep, ongoing relationships with the community served Team includes primarily members who are from, reflect, or are rooted in the community served Shows trust, reciprocity, or shared history with community members	Narrative and work samples explain a relevant and respectful connection to the community Team includes some members who are from, reflect, or are rooted in the community served Some evidence of collaboration or responsiveness to community needs.	Narrative and work samples show a connection to community that is general, indirect, or short-term Relationship with the community is mostly one-directional (e.g., service delivery) Little evidence of shared decision-making or representation	Connection to the community is unclear, minimal, or missing Team appears disconnected from those served No demonstration of community presence, input, or alignment



## NP Question 3: Describe your experience producing creative work or offering public experiences in Austin. (up to 25 points)



	5 points	4 points	2 points	1 point
<b><i>Highlight one or two examples of similar work you've completed successfully in Austin.</i></b>	<p>Narrative and work samples provide clear evidence of at least 1 successful public event in Austin of similar scope as the proposed activity.</p> <p>Clear alignment with proposed work; includes details (scale, audience, outcomes).</p> <p>Shows strong understanding of local context, permitting, or logistics.</p>	<p>Narrative and work samples provide examples with some detail or clarity.</p> <p>Past events are generally aligned with proposed activity.</p> <p>Demonstrates experience and familiarity with producing public facing activities in Austin.</p>	<p>Some experience in producing creative work, but may lack public-facing or Austin-based examples.</p> <p>Potential is visible, but alignment with proposed activity is unclear.</p>	<p>Examples provided have no connection to the proposed activities;</p> <p>Or no examples of past public events.</p>

## AG/IA Question 3: Describe your experience producing creative work or offering public experiences in Austin. (up to 25 points)



	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Introduce your key team members, their expertise and their role in the proposed activity.</i></b>	Lead applicant and creative contributors have relevant experience or qualifications (could be lived or professional experience). Narrative and work samples demonstrates thoughtful alignment between creative contributors and proposed activities.	Describes lead applicant and creative contributors' qualifications or experience that generally support the proposed activities. Description of administrative and/or creative support is sufficient, but may lack key roles or specifics.	Lead applicant and creative contributors are named, but roles, relevance, or experience are unclear. Limited connection to proposed work.	No relevant lead applicant or creative contributors information provided.

	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b><i>Describe your team's connection to the community served.</i></b>	Narrative and work samples clearly describes the deep, ongoing relationships with the community served Applicant and creative contributors include primarily members who are from, reflect, or are rooted in the community served Shows trust, reciprocity, or shared history with community members	Narrative and work samples explain a relevant and respectful connection to the community Applicant and creative contributors include some members who are from, reflect, or are rooted in the community served Some evidence of collaboration or responsiveness to community needs	Narrative and work samples show a connection to community that is general, indirect, or short-term Relationship with the community is mostly one-directional (e.g., service delivery) Little evidence of shared decision-making or representation	Connection to the community is unclear, minimal, or missing Applicant and creative contributors appear disconnected from those served No demonstration of community presence, input, or alignment

AG/IA Question 3: Describe your experience producing creative work or offering public experiences in Austin. (up to 25 points)



	5 points	4 points	2 points	1 point
<b><i>Highlight one or two examples of similar work you’ve completed successfully in Austin.</i></b>	<p>Narrative and work samples provide clear evidence of at least 1 successful public event in Austin of similar scope as the proposed activity.</p> <p>Clear alignment with proposed work; includes details (scale, audience, outcomes).</p> <p>Shows strong understanding of local context, permitting, or logistics.</p>	<p>Narrative and work samples provide examples with some detail or clarity.</p> <p>Past events are generally aligned with proposed activity.</p> <p>Demonstrates experience and familiarity with producing public facing activities in Austin.</p>	<p>Some experience in producing creative work, but may lack public-facing or Austin-based examples.</p> <p>Potential is visible, but alignment with proposed activity is unclear.</p>	<p>Examples provided have no connection to the proposed activities;</p> <p>Or no examples of past public events.</p>

## Question 4: What is your Proposed Project Budget? (up to 5 points)

	3 points	2 points	1 point
<i>Explain how your budget supports your project.</i>	Budget is clear.	Budget is mostly understandable, but some key details are missing.	Budget lacks specificity.

	2 points	1 point
<i>Describe other resources that will allow you to successfully complete this activity including in-kind support and funding sources beyond the grant request.</i>	Applicant describes other funding sources and in-kind support.	Does not provide descriptions for other funding sources or in-kind support.



# Application Portal

[← Back to List](#) < 1 of 1 > Jane Doe Accept Application Scoring Info Label More ▾

INDIVIDUAL TEST APPLICATION

Complete the budget table with ways you will use this grant to produce your proposed activities.

Download Maximize

	A	B	C
			expenses can be provided)
2	Payments to Artists	5000	
3	Payments to Admin Support		
4	Marketing		
5	Venue/ Office rental		
6	Production Fees		
7	Supplies/materials		
8	Accessibility Services		

## 9: Budget

How will the applicant use their funds to produce their activity?

Their answer should address payment to artists and/or administrators and:

1. Estimated expenses related to providing specialized accessibility and/or language access services
2. Estimated expenses related to marketing to current or new audiences
3. Explanation of expenses to produce your activities
4. Budget should be reflective of this application

Select the score that best fits the Budget response. \*

# Public Connection – Up to 20 Points

- 1 Question
  - Q5 – three scoring criteria (NP/AG/IA: 5/5/10);
- Programs are welcoming and accessible to a wide public
- Activities foster community belonging and cultural connection across Austin's populations



## Question 5: How will you market your proposed activities? (up to 20 points)

	5 points	4 points	2 points	1 point
<b><i>Describe how you connect with residents, and visitors and tourists.</i></b>	Provides a clear plan to reach all three groups (residents, visitors and tourists). Strategies show understanding of audience differences and access needs.	Reaches at least two groups with some thoughtful detail (residents, visitors and tourists). Efforts are relevant and likely effective, but may lack audience tailoring.	Focuses on just one group or offers vague or minimal outreach plans. Shows limited understanding of audience range.	Outreach is unclear, or incomplete. Doesn't meaningfully address how to reach any specific group Lacks strategy, or audience awareness.
	5 points	4 points	2 points	1 point
<b><i>How are you promoting Austin as a cultural and creative destination?</i></b>	Clearly shows how the work is rooted in or reflects Austin's cultural and creative character. Highlights specific people, places, traditions, or creative movements unique to Austin. Demonstrates a strong sense of place, history, or community connection.	Describes how the work aligns with or contributes to Austin's cultural and creative scene Includes relevant cultural and creative elements, though not deeply explored. Shows some awareness of place, history, or community connection.	Mentions Austin, but connection to cultural or creative identity is vague. Description lacks specific examples or cultural context Focus is more on creative output than place, history, or community connection.	No clear connection to Austin's cultural or creative identity. Response is vague or incomplete.

# Question 5: How will you market your proposed activities? (up to 20 points)



	10 points	7 points	4 points	1 point
<b>Share your outreach and marketing efforts, especially how you reach underserved communities.</b>	<p>Clearly outlines a strategic outreach plan using multiple ways to reach people (e.g., social media, flyers, email newsletters, local media, community events).</p> <p>Uses tools that are accessible, culturally relevant, and targeted to underserved communities (e.g., language access, neighborhood-based outreach, partnerships).</p> <p>Demonstrates strong awareness of audience's communication barriers and explains how the approach addresses them.</p>	<p>Describes effective outreach using more than one method (e.g., digital and in-person strategies).</p> <p>Includes some tailored approaches for underserved groups.</p> <p>Shows some awareness of audience's communication needs or barriers.</p>	<p>Mentions outreach, but methods are limited or general</p> <p>Reaches people in only one or two ways, with little explanation.</p> <p>Minimal understanding of audience's communication needs or barriers.</p>	<p>Outreach efforts are minimal, unclear, or missing.</p> <p>No specific plan for reaching underserved communities.</p> <p>Audience's communication needs or barriers not mentioned.</p>



# Heritage Preservation Grant

Serves to promote tourism through historic preservation projects and activities inclusive of all stories rooted in history and heritage.






# Application Evaluation

## Estimated Timeline

- January 20: Receive application/panel assignments
- February 13: Preliminary scores and comments due in Submittable
- February 17: Panel discussions begin

Give yourself time!

January 2026						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19		20	21	22	23
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31						

February 2026						
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14	15		16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Printable Calendars from [printcentral.com](http://www.printcentral.com)

# Review Process

## PRE-PANEL

- Interdepartmental staff review

## Panel Types

- Heritage Events (with or without a historic designation)
- Capital Improvement Projects

## Preservation expertise

- Preservation architects, museum educators, historians, tourism professionals

# Program Overview & Eligibility



**Program description:** Heritage Preservation Grant aims to preserve and promote preservation projects, expand access to historic spaces and heritage resources, showcase local stories rooted in history, support the creative economy to attract and expand audiences and engage tourists seeking authentic experiences.

## **Applicant type:**

- 501(c)(3) nonprofits **OR** For-profit business
- Must have 2 years of operating in the City of Austin / MSA
- Project / event site must be in Austin or Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
- Project / event site must be open and advertised to tourists, visitors, and residents
- Preservation projects and programs must highlight storytelling and invite tourists to explore historic sites



# Project Types

## Heritage Events

- Includes historic research, develops a tourism itinerary, promotes tourism and untold stories of the location
  - **Designation:** Not required
  - **Award Amount:** Up to \$50,000
- Includes historic research and highlights the history of the site
  - **Designation:** Required local, state or national designation or Council-approved heritage districts
  - **Award Amount:** Up to \$150,000

**Term:** 12 months

### **Eligible Activities:**

- Heritage events, festivals, or programs
- Heritage, historic, or interpretative exhibits
- Tour Development: historic, heritage, legacy business

## Capital Improvement Projects

- **Award Amount:** Up to \$250,000
- **Designation Required:** Historic Designation and Owner Authorization
- **Term:** 24 months
- **Eligible Activities**
  - ADA exterior access
  - Façade elements
  - Foundation stabilization
  - Masonry rehabilitation / repair
  - Professional preservation services and consultants
  - Interior improvements (NEW): electrical, mechanical, flooring, safety upgrades with sensitive treatment paired with exterior proposal

# Additional Capital Project Requirements



- ☐ Site must be **designated** historic, contributing to a historic district, **or eligible for designation** ([local](#), [state](#), or [national](#))
- ☐ **Owner authorization** required
- ☐ **One complete bid package** with bids from a contractor, (Preservation) architect, and subcontractor(s)
- ☐ Interior projects must include a **sensitive treatment** plan and **pair an exterior project** proposal
- ☐ **Must comply** with [City of Austin Historic Design Standards](#) and/or [The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#)
- ☐ **Architect recommendations required** to demonstrate compliance with historic design standards

# Grant Eligible & Ineligible Expenses (Sampling)



## Eligible (Sampling):

- ☐ Marketing and advertising promotions
- ☐ Project insurance
- ☐ Historic research and/or historic designation
- ☐ Production or performance fees
- ☐ Permits or equipment rentals
- ☐ Professional services from Preservation Architects, Interpretative Planners, Architectural Historians

## Ineligible (Sampling):

- Capital projects that do not meet local or national preservation standards
- Consultants who are also employees
- Curriculum development or programming, scholarly or academic research, payments to students or interns tied to class credit, and any related activities
- Capital projects with no owner authorization
- Food and hospitality
- New building construction or expansion
- Landscaping

# Application Components



Non-scored Application  
Introduction Statement



Narrative Questions



Project Budget



Uploads

# Introduction Statement – Not Scored

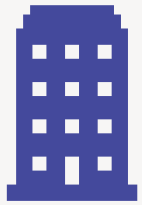
Applicant Introduction Statement is a narrative or video to provide additional context about their proposed project or work.

This is an opportunity for them to share additional context to their work that they think may be helpful to you as a Reviewer.





# Heritage Preservation Grant Scoring Criteria



Preservation Impact – Up to  
36 Points



Tourism Impact – Up to 36  
Points



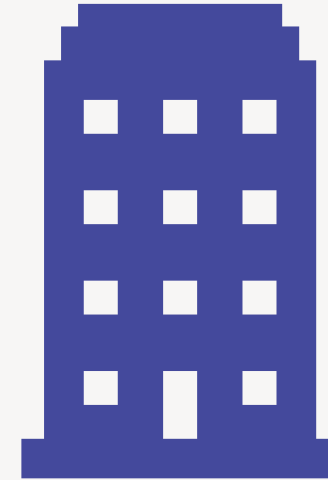
New Voices, Historic Places  
– Up to 18 Points



New Local Historic  
Designation – Up to 10 Points

# Preservation Impact – Up to 36 Points

- Site Background
- Project Details, Team, and Budget
- Bid Package (Capital Projects Only)
- Historic Standards and Urgency (Capital projects only)
- Long Term Preservation (Capital Projects Only)
- Preservation and Untold Stories (Heritage Events Only)



# Preservation Impact: *Heritage Event*



	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
PRESERVATION IMPACT (up to 36 Points MAX)	0 - 1 Points	2-4 Points	5-7 Points	8-9 Points
<p><b>PRESERVATION:</b> Site Background (Points = up to 9)</p> <p>Provide a brief history and description of the location and its past and current uses.</p> <p><b>Required:</b> Historic Photos, Documents</p> <p>If funding is awarded, explain how visitors will learn about the location's history.</p>	<p><b>No information and documentation</b> on the location, its historic and current use.</p> <p>No information provided on how visitors will learn about the location's history.</p>	<p>Parts of the information and documentation is <b>unclear</b>. Minimal or unclear information on the location and its historic and current use. Historic photos and documentation are not clearly relevant.</p> <p>Minimal or unclear information provided on how visitors will learn about the location's history.</p>	<p>Information and documentation is <b>generally clear</b>, with minor gaps or areas needing clarification. Generally clear information on the location and its historic and current use. Historic photos and documentation generally support the narrative and are relevant.</p> <p>Includes information on how visitors will learn about the location's history, though the approach may lack specificity or depth.</p>	<p>Information and documentation is complete and <b>clearly</b> described. Logical alignment of the location and its historic and current uses. Historic photos and documentation are relevant and clearly support the narrative.</p> <p>Clear explanation of how visitors will learn about the location's history with specific, feasible methods tied to the location.</p>

# Preservation Impact: *Heritage Event*



	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
PRESERVATION IMPACT (up to 36 Points MAX)	0 - 1 Points	2-4 Points	5-7 Points	8-9 Points
<p><b>PRESERVATION:</b> <b>Project Details and Team (Points = up to 9)</b></p> <p>Provide a detailed description of the work and how funds will be spent.</p> <p>Describe the project management team. List similar projects each key team member has completed.</p>	<p><b>No information</b> on the project description and/or missing information on how the funds will be spent.</p> <p>Missing or incomplete team roster, minimal qualifications provided, and/or no similar project examples provided.</p>	<p>Parts of the information is <b>unclear</b>. Minimal or unclear project description with limited detail and/or missing information on how the funds will be spent.</p> <p>Unclear team roster identified and/or team roster lacking detail. Team roster includes brief qualifications and/or minimal project examples.</p>	<p>Information is <b>generally clear</b>, with minor gaps or areas needing clarification. Mostly detailed project description and information on how the funds will be spent.</p> <p>Complete team roster with defined roles, adequate bios with relevant experience, and good examples of comparable projects.</p>	<p>Information is complete and <b>clearly</b> described. Exceptionally detailed project description and information on how the funds will be spent.</p> <p>Highly qualified team with extensive experience, detailed professional bios with specialized skills, and extensive portfolio of relevant projects.</p>

# Preservation Impact: *Heritage Event*



	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
PRESERVATION IMPACT (up to 36 Points MAX)	0 - 1 Points	2-4 Points	5-7 Points	8-9 Points
<p><b>PRESERVATION:</b> <b>Project Budget (Points = up to 9)</b></p> <p>Complete the Project Budget Table and include a detailed description for each item.</p>	<p><b>No information</b> or severely incomplete project budget table. The project budget table has no connection to the narrative response.</p>	<p>Parts of the information is <b>unclear</b>. Some expenses listed but incomplete breakdown, and/or descriptions for budget items are vague. The project budget table shows minimal connection to the narrative response.</p>	<p>Information is <b>generally clear</b>. Most expenses listed and include detailed descriptions, with minor gaps or unclear elements. The project budget table and narrative response correspond.</p>	<p>Information is <b>clear and complete</b>. Exceptionally detailed project budget table with itemized expense breakdown. The project budget table and narrative response clearly correspond.</p>

# Preservation Impact: *Heritage Event*

	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
PRESERVATION IMPACT (up to 36 Points MAX)	0 - 1 Points	2-4 Points	5-7 Points	8-9 Points
<p><b>PRESERVATION:</b> <b>Preservation and Untold Stories (Points = up to 9)</b></p> <p>How does your project or event connect to the historical significance of your chosen location and bring forward untold stories associated with it?</p> <p><i>Answers should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify a proposed location and explain its historical significance;</li> <li>- Describe the specific historic event, person, community, group, or aspect of city history that your project will highlight;</li> <li>- Explain how your project will uncover and present untold stories associated with the location.</li> </ul> <p><b>Required:</b> Historic photos, archives, maps, materials, oral histories, or other documents</p> <p>Demonstrate how your project will promote and benefit the tourism and hospitality industry.</p> <p><i>Answers should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include the development of a printed and digital itinerary for visitors, a site map, and a listing of nearby historic museums, sites, or attractions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>No alignment or explanation</b> of how the project or event connects to the historical significance of the chosen location, or the historic significance is not explained.</p> <p>No information on how the project will uncover and present untold stories associated with the location. Missing, incomplete, or insufficient information and historic documentation demonstrating historical significance and untold stories.</p> <p>No information or connection to tourism benefits. Does not include visitor guide plans of nearby historic museums, sites, and/or attractions.</p>	<p>Parts of the information is <b>unclear or minimal</b>. Proposed location is identified but minimal alignment or explanation of how the project connects to the historical significance of the chosen location.</p> <p>Minimal information on how the project will uncover and present untold stories associated with the location. Identifies some untold stories, but explanations are general, lack detail, and/or are not clearly connected to the chosen location. Historic documentation is limited and/or does not clearly demonstrate significance or connection.</p> <p>Minimal information or connection to tourism benefits. Minimal information on visitor guide plans and minimal awareness of nearby historic museums, site, and/or attractions; plans lack sufficient detail or integration.</p>	<p>The information is <b>generally</b> clear, with minor gaps or areas needing clarification. Identifies proposed location with good explanation of how the project connects to the historical significance of the chosen location. Generally clear information on how the project will uncover and present untold stories associated with the location. Identifies some untold stories effectively with clear connections to historical context. Historic documentation is adequate and demonstrates significance and connection.</p> <p>Clear information and connection to tourism benefits. Outlines visitor guide plans with clear concepts and shows integration with nearby historic sites and museums.</p>	<p>The information is complete and <b>clearly</b> described. Clearly identifies proposed location with clear and logical explanation of how the project connects to the historical significance of the chosen location; connection is strong, well-supported relevance (event, person, group, city). Identifies compelling historic event, person, community, group, or city history aspect with detailed, well-researched background. Identifies innovative approach to uncovering multiple untold stories, with strong connections to historical context. Historic documentation is thorough and demonstrates significance or connection.</p> <p>Identifies multiple ways project will benefit tourism. Outlines visitor guide plans with clear concepts and shows strong integration with nearby historic sites and museums. Includes comprehensive plan for all required deliverables.</p>



# Preservation Impact: *Capital*



	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
PRESERVATION IMPACT (up to 36 Points)	0 - 1 Points	2-4 Points	5-7 Points	8-9 Points
<p><b>PRESERVATION:</b> <b>Site Background (Points = up to 9)</b></p> <p>Provide a brief history and description of the site, including its architectural style, key features, and its past and current uses.</p> <p><b>Required:</b> Historic Documentation and Photos</p> <p>If funding is awarded, how will visitors learn about the location's history?</p>	<p><b>No information and documentation</b> on the site, including its architectural style, key features, and its historic and current use.</p> <p>No information provided on how visitors will learn about the location's history.</p>	<p>Parts of the information and documentation is <b>unclear</b>. Minimal or unclear information on the site, including its architectural style, key features, and its historic and current use. Historic documentation and photos are not clearly relevant. Minimal or unclear information provided on how visitors will learn about the location's history.</p>	<p>Information and documentation is <b>generally clear</b>, with minor gaps or areas needing clarification. Some alignment on the site, including its architectural style, key features, and its historic and current use. Historic documentation and photos generally support the narrative and are relevant. Includes information on how visitors will learn about the location's history, though the approach may lack specificity or depth.</p>	<p>Information and documentation is complete and <b>clearly</b> described. Logical alignment of the site, including its architectural style, key features, and its historic and current uses. Historic documentation and photos are relevant and clearly support the narrative.</p> <p>Clear explanation of how visitors will learn about the location's history with specific, feasible methods tied to the location.</p>

# Preservation Impact: *Capital*

	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
PRESERVATION IMPACT (up to 36 Points MAX)	0 - 1 Points	2-4 Points	5-7 Points	8-9 Points
<p><b>PRESERVATION:</b> Project: Details, Team, Budget and Bid Package (Points = up to 9)</p> <p>Provide a detailed description of the work and how funds will be spent.</p> <p>List the project team. Identify the project manager, preservation architect, and contractors responsible for planning, oversight, and carrying out the work.</p> <p><i>Answers should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include short bios, relevant skills, and websites for each key team member.</li> <li>- List similar preservation projects each key team member has completed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Required:</b> Complete Bid Package and Complete Budget Table</p>	<p><b>No information</b> on the project description and/or missing information on how the funds will be spent.</p> <p>Missing or incomplete cost breakdown.</p> <p>Missing or incomplete team roster, minimal qualifications provided, and/or no similar project examples by the team.</p> <p>Missing or severely incomplete bid package and/or project budget table.</p>	<p>Parts of the information is <b>unclear</b>.</p> <p>Minimal or unclear project description with limited detail, some cost listed but incomplete breakdown.</p> <p>Unclear team roster identified and/or team roster lacking detail. Team roster includes brief qualifications without preservation focus and/or minimal project examples.</p> <p>Minimal or unclear bid package and/or project budget table.</p>	<p>Information is <b>generally clear</b>, with minor gaps or areas needing clarification. Mostly detailed project description with a clear cost breakdown.</p> <p>Complete team roster with defined roles, adequate bios with relevant experience, and good examples of comparable projects.</p> <p>Bid package and project budget table complete and correspond; minor elements may be missing.</p>	<p>Information is complete and <b>clearly</b> described. Exceptionally detailed project description and thorough itemized cost breakdown.</p> <p>Highly qualified team roster with extensive experience, detailed professional bios with specialized skills, and extensive portfolio of relevant projects.</p> <p>Bid package and project budget table complete and correspond.</p>

# Preservation Impact: *Capital*



	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
PRESERVATION IMPACT (up to 36 Points MAX)	0 - 1 Points	2-4 Points	5-7 Points	8-9 Points
<p><b>PRESERVATION:</b> <b>Historic Standards &amp; Urgency (Points = up to 9)</b></p> <p>Explain how the proposed project aligns with the City of Austin Historic Design Standards and/or The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.</p> <p>Describe how support will help this project. If urgent, describe why.</p> <p><b>Required:</b> Photos of the current condition of the proposed project area</p>	<p><b>No information</b> on how the project addresses local and/or national historic design standards within the narrative response and/or bids.</p> <p>No information on how funding will support the project and/or address preservation urgency, including any threats to the site or project.</p> <p>No information or photos provided of the current condition of the proposed project area.</p>	<p>Parts of the information is <b>unclear</b>. Minimal or unclear information on how the project addresses local and/or national historic design standards within the narrative response and/or bids.</p> <p>Minimal information on how funding will support the project and/or address preservation urgency, including any threats to the site or project.</p> <p>Preservation urgency and treatment approach are not detailed and lack clarity within the narrative or bids. Photos are unclear or insufficient to support the project description.</p>	<p>Information and documentation provided is <b>generally clear</b>, with minor gaps or areas needing clarification. Generally clear information on how the project addresses local and/or national historic design standards within the narrative response and/or bids.</p> <p>Information provided on how funding will support the project and/or address preservation urgency, including any threats to the site or project, but may lack minor details.</p> <p>Photos are mostly clear and support the project description.</p>	<p>Information and documentation is complete and <b>clearly</b> described. Clear and thorough explanation of how the project addresses local and/or national historic design standards.</p> <p>Clear information provided on how funding will support the project.</p> <p>Information clearly describes preservation urgency, including any threats to the site or project.</p> <p>Photos are clear and support the project description.</p>

# Preservation Impact: *Capital*

	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
PRESERVATION IMPACT (up to 36 Points MAX)	0 - 1 Points	2-4 Points	5-7 Points	8-9 Points
<p><b>PRESERVATION:</b> <b>Long-Term Preservation (Points = up to 9)</b></p> <p>Is there a plan that supports the steps needed to preserve the building?</p> <p><b>Upload (if applicable):</b> Preservation Plan, Historic Structure Report, Engineering Report, etc.</p> <p>Why is the proposed project your highest priority right now?</p>	<p><b>No</b> preservation plan provided or plan lacks essential steps. Missing or incomplete priority justification. Little to no evidence of priority.</p>	<p>Parts of the information and documentation is <b>unclear</b>. Basic preservation plan outlined but missing key components, lacks sufficient details, is outdated, or does not clearly relate to the proposed work. Priority reasoning provided but lacks compelling justification. Some evidence of need but insufficient priority demonstrated.</p>	<p>The information and documentation is <b>generally clear</b>, with minor gaps or areas needing clarification. Includes preservation plan with logical steps and reasonable approach that relates to the proposed project. Good justification for project priority with solid reasoning and evidence of need. Demonstrates understanding of timing and resource constraints.</p>	<p>The information and documentation is complete and <b>clearly</b> described. Comprehensive, well-structured preservation plan with detailed sequential steps and contingencies. Compelling, evidence-based priority justification demonstrating timing considerations, risks, and strategic alignment with long-term preservation goals.</p>

# Tourism Impact – Up to 36 Points

**THIS MULTIPLE-CHOICE SECTION WILL BE  
SCORED BY FUNDING STAFF.**

- Storytelling
- Marketing and Advertising
- Broader Tourism Audiences
- Success Measurement and Evaluation



# New Voices, Historic Places – Up to 18 Points

- Community Collaborator(s)
- New Applicant\*
- Access to Heritage Resources – (Heritage Events Only)
- Access to Historic Spaces (Capital Projects Only)



\*Multiple-choice question will be scored by funding staff.



# New Voices, Historic Places



	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
NEW VOICES, HISTORIC PLACES (up to 18 Points)	0 Points	2 Points	4 Points	6 Points
<b>Community Collaborator</b>  <b>Does the project include community collaborators?</b> If yes, how will the partnership reflect community voice, values, and participation in the heritage tourism proposal to expand audience and tourism participation?	No (0 Points)			Yes (6 Points)

# New Voices, Historic Places: *Heritage Event*



	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
NEW VOICES, HISTORIC PLACES (up to 18 Points)	0 Points	2 Points	4 Points	6 Points
<p><b>Access to Heritage Resources</b></p> <p><b>How does your proposed event increase heritage tourism access by providing access to heritage resources and historical information?</b></p>	<p><b>No information</b> on how the event increases access to heritage tourism, heritage resources, or historical information. No examples included such as digital or educational engagement, marketing or promotion, partnerships or collaborations, visitor experiences or events, interpretive materials or wayfinding, or geographic reach and access.</p>	<p><b>Minimal or unclear information</b> on how the event increases access to heritage tourism, heritage resources, or historical information. Minimal information or examples included such as digital and educational engagement, marketing and promotion, partnerships and collaborations, visitors experiences or events, interpretive materials or wayfinding, and/or geographic reach and access.</p>	<p><b>Moderate information</b> on how the event increases access to heritage tourism, heritage resources, or historical information, with minor gaps or areas needing clarification. Includes some examples such as digital and educational engagement, marketing and promotion, partnerships and collaborations, visitors experiences or events, interpretive materials or wayfinding, and/or geographic reach and access.</p>	<p><b>Comprehensive and clear information</b> on how the event increases access to heritage tourism, heritage resources, or historical information. Includes multiple, clear examples such as digital and educational engagement, marketing and promotion, partnerships and collaborations, visitors experiences or events, interpretive materials or wayfinding, and/or geographic reach and access.</p>

# New Voices, Historic Places: *Capital*



	Insufficient Evidence	Needs Improvement	Acceptable	Strong
NEW VOICES, HISTORIC PLACES (up to 18 Points)	0 Points	2 Points	4 Points	6 Points
<p><b>Access to Historic Spaces</b></p> <p><b>How does your historic space provide access to local creatives and heritage groups as a venue and/or resource to help support heritage tourism initiatives?</b></p>	<p><b>No information</b> on how the historic space supports local creatives in heritage tourism. Missing or incomplete details about partnerships, affordable access, and/or community programs. No evidence of support like reduced rates, shared resources, events, marketing collaborations, and/or mentorships that help local creatives or heritage groups access the space.</p>	<p><b>Minimal or unclear information</b> on how the historic space supports local creatives as a venue or resource in heritage tourism. Minimal information about partnerships, affordable access, and/or community programs. Minimal or unclear information of support like reduced rates, shared resources, events, marketing collaborations, and/or mentorships that help local creatives or heritage groups access the space.</p>	<p><b>Moderate information</b> on how the historic space supports local creatives as a venue or resource in heritage tourism. Shows evidence of partnerships, affordable access, and/or community programs. Includes examples of support like reduced rates, shared resources, events, marketing collaborations, and/or mentorships that help local creatives or heritage groups access the space.</p>	<p><b>Comprehensive and clear information</b> on how the historic space supports local creatives as a venue or resource in heritage tourism. Clearly demonstrates strong partnerships, affordable access, and robust community programs. Includes detailed examples of support like reduced rates, shared resources, events, marketing collaborations, and mentorships that help local creatives or heritage groups access the space.</p>

# New Local Historic Designation – Up to 10 Points

**THIS MULTIPLE-CHOICE SECTION WILL BE  
SCORED BY FUNDING STAFF.**

- New Local Historic Designation  
(Upload Required)





# Panel Mechanics



# What to Expect: Panel Meeting Day

Please arrive on time

Executive session at 9:00 AM CST

Panel session begins at 10:00 AM CST

Review in order provided by AACME staff

Average 5-8 minutes per application, 10 min. max

Finish around 4:00 PM CST

To get a sense of the session flow, watch the first few minutes of a past review session recording.





# Primary and Secondary

- What is a Primary Reviewer?

1

- What is a Secondary Reviewer?

2

# What to Expect: Panel Meeting Mechanics

- Primary: 30 second intro, 1-2 minutes for comments
- Secondary: 1-2 minutes for comments
- Open to full panel comments
- Finalize score

Elevate panels only are recorded and viewable by applicants



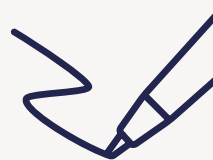
# Giving Constructive Feedback

## Why Feedback Matters

- Helps applicants improve for future submissions
- Be constructive and respectful

## Written Comments

- Start positive, then note areas for improvement
- Use clear, specific language  
*("I did not see evidence of...")*
- Avoid vague statements  
*"Not professional enough"*



## Spoken Feedback

- Stay neutral and respectful
- Reference rubric and prepared comments
- Avoid judgmental or comparative language  
*(Helpful: "I scored this highly because...")*



# Written Feedback Examples

## Good Comments are specific:

### (High Score):

“The application presents a clear artistic vision rooted in dance traditions. Their programming aligns closely with their mission and engages youth in East Austin through free workshops and public performances.

"I gave the application a high score. The application provided a clear and thorough background of the site's history and how tourists will learn about the history of the site. The documentation was clear and relevant to the narrative.”

### Capacity (Mid Score):

“The team demonstrates relevant experience, but roles and responsibilities could be described in more detail. Budget is feasible but lacks explanation of in-kind support.”

### Public Connection (Low Score):

“The proposal would benefit from a more developed marketing plan. There’s limited detail on how the applicant will engage tourists or underserved communities.”

## Less Helpful Comments lack clarity on what to improve in the future

“This project seems low quality.”

“I just didn’t connect with it.”

“Not professional enough.”



# Spoken Feedback Examples

## Good Feedback

“I scored this application highly in Public Connection because the group has strong partnerships with local schools and a bilingual marketing strategy that includes neighborhood-based flyers.”

“For Capacity, I gave a mid-score. While they have a great track record, the team’s connection to the specific community wasn’t clear in the narrative.”

## Not as great comments

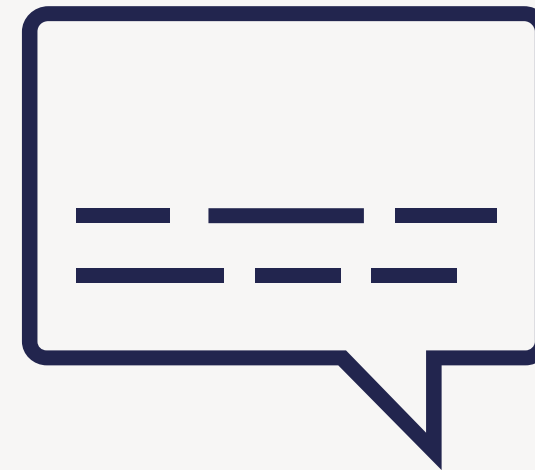
“This one just didn’t feel right to me.”

“They don’t seem ready for this size of a grant.”

“I didn’t like their work.”

## Things not relevant to the scoring rubric

"I don't think their answer was as strong as the previous application's"



# Panel Discussions are on Zoom Webinar

**Invitations will be sent to the email in your Submittable account.**

- Log into Zoom with that email to access the discussion.

## **Reviewer Webinar Experience:**

- Reviewers control their video/audio.
- You can share your screen and speak freely.
- Applicants cannot interrupt or join the discussion.
- Heritage Preservation Grant panels will not be live or recorded.
- Elevate applicants may watch the panel on Zoom, but they will remain in “view-only” mode.
- For Elevate Panels, the Q&A and Chat are disabled.



# Next Steps

1. Sign Reviewer Agreement via DocuSign, on or before January 16, 2026 (to be sent out week of January 12)
2. Complete Financial Information Form via Submittable on or before February 2, 2026
3. Elevate Panel Discussions begin February 2, 2026
4. Heritage Preservation Grant Panel Discussion begin February 17
5. Be on the lookout for an email inviting to join your Panel Team, to receive your panel assignments

# Application Portal



## Welcome

Log in to Cultural Funding Grants Manager to  
continue to Submittable.

Continue

Don't have an account? [Sign up](#)

[Help](#)

OR



Continue with Google



Continue with Facebook

# Contact Us



## Heritage Preservation Grant

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## Technical / Submittable Assistance

The Long Center

[Applicationhelp@TheLongCenter.Org](mailto:Applicationhelp@TheLongCenter.Org)



# Questions?

