Elevate

Elevate: funding for cultural productions

- Pilot Program
- Annual Term, 2-Year Review Panel Cycle
- All awards are dependent on HOT funding.
- 501(c) Arts Organizations:
  - Contracts funded between $30,000 and $75,000
  - Estimated 100 contracts awarded. This is not a limit.
- Individual Artists and Arts Groups:
  - Contracts funded between $10,000 and $25,000
  - Estimated 50 contracts. This is not a limit.
- For activities taking place (dates TBD)

elevate

(verb) raise or lift (something) up to a higher position

Last updated 11/10/22

Program Overview
Annual Term, 2 Year Review Panel Cycle
Contracts funded between $10,000 and $75,000

Elevate: Amplifying equity in Austin's diverse arts and cultural sector

This program seeks to provide funding in support of arts and cultural organizations, individual artists, and arts groups that produce culturally vibrant and diverse artistic content for the public. This funding broadly supports the creative, administrative, and operational expenses incurred in the production of creative activities and events for the people of Austin and its tourists. This investment in Austin's cultural producers will elevate the City's diverse arts and culture tourism sector, amplify equity, and prioritize inclusive programming.

Priority will be given to those who have been at immediate risk of cultural erasure and displacement within Austin and/or have been institutionally marginalized and under-funded by the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division.

Key Elements

- Applicants must have a one-year history of operating in the cultural sector in the Austin metro area and must produce public arts/culture activities (within the Austin 10-1 districts and ETJ) that add to the City's diverse arts and culture tourism sector.
- Applicants who prefer to work with a Fiscal Sponsor may do so. Fiscal Sponsorship will not be a requirement for applicants.
- Awards will be based on the application and alignment with the program's funding priorities. Operational budget will not be the primary factor in determining award amounts.
- Applications will be reviewed and scored by review panels, reflective of the program's priorities.

Who can apply

Applicant eligibility criteria is outlined in the table below. Funding is not guaranteed if you meet all the minimum requirements; rather, funding will be awarded based on the overall score of your application which includes consideration of our funding priorities.

Eligible applicants:

- An individual or collaborating individuals over the age of 18 with an annual operating budget below $500,000 *
- 501(c) non-profit arts organization
- Non-501(c) arts organization*
- A creative group with an annual operating budget below $500,000 *

May apply directly or with a fiscal sponsor
Must apply in the Individual Artists or Arts Groups category.

Priority will be given to:

- Projects that invest in local artists
- Projects that engage in meaningful community-based partnerships
- Projects that elevate creative innovation
- Applicants and projects that demonstrate a measurable commitment to the equity goals and principles of the City of Austin's Equity Office through representation in leadership and program development
- Applicants who represent the diverse cultures of Austin, particularly those who are from backgrounds that have been historically under-represented in Austin's Cultural Funding programs

What Elevate Funds

While Elevate supports a breadth of creative projects, *all* projects funded by HOT revenue are required to:

- be open and advertised to Austin residents, visitors and tourists
- promote and enhance Austin as a cultural destination
- occur in Austin or its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)

Eligible Activities*

- Operations related to the organization's ability to produce public events
- Exhibitions
- Performances
- Workshops, classes, and camps that include a performance or exhibition that is open to and marketed to tourists
- Public art projects that are installed on public or private property and accessible to the public

Eligible Expenses*

- Administrative and creative costs incurred in the preparation and implementation of cultural activities that are open to and marketed to tourists (including artists' salaries)
- Costs related to improving the organization's ability to produce cultural events
- Insurance costs
- Subscription costs or license fees for software needed to complete contracted activities
- Fiscal sponsor fee, if applicable

* See Additional Program Details for a more detailed list of eligible and ineligible activities and expenses.

Other Eligibility Criteria

- One year of operating history in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA)
- 51% or more of the application's creative production is within the Austin 10-1 districts or extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ)
- Applicants who are not receiving City funding for the same activities in the fiscal year in which they are applying.

Funding Availability

Participation in this program is not guaranteed, nor is there a commitment to fund this program at previous or current levels. If the applicant applies to and is approved for funding in multiple Cultural Funding programs, they may receive only one award. Awards received from this program may not be used toward activities funded by any other City of Austin programs. Program and funding availability is subject to Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue. Only one application per organization is allowed (sponsored projects do not count toward this limit).

Funding Timeline

Elevate has a two-year cycle.

Year one: The program application opens to the public. Applications are reviewed for eligibility by Cultural Funding staff. Eligible and complete applications are scored during a panel review process. Award amounts of approved applications are then determined using a funding matrix.

Year two (interim year): Applicants who were awarded in year one may apply for a second year of funding. Scores from the review panel in year 1 are retained and there is no second panel review. Year 2 proposed activities should be similar in project scope to activities in year one. Acceptance of interim year applications is contingent upon completion of the previous contract. Applications are reviewed again for eligibility by Cultural Funding staff and award amounts of approved applications are determined again using a funding matrix.

Elevate Program Timeline (All dates are TBD)
Guidelines available
Application workshops begin
Application opens
6 weeks later - Application deadline
Panel reviews begin
Notification of award
Pre-contract workshops
Pre-contract materials due
Cultural Funding staff reviews contract materials
Earliest payments sent (90% of award)
Final report due
Final payment (10% of award) sent after report is approved
Repeat Cycle for Year 2 without panel review

Award Amounts

- The award amounts in Elevate ranges from $10,000 - $75,000
- Applicants will submit a project budget as part of their application demonstrating how they will use the funds.
- If awarded, you can choose to decline any portion of funds that you don't need.
- Applicants are not required to find matching funds, although it is encouraged.
- We also encourage contractors to pay all who work on the project an equitable wage.
- Any unused funds will have to be returned at the time of reporting.

How to Apply

All Cultural Funding program applications are submitted online; there is no paper application. Visit austincreates.com for links to all open program application portals.

- **If you are applying *without* a fiscal sponsor**, you may begin your application as soon as the application is open.
- **If you are applying *with* a fiscal sponsor,** please see your fiscal sponsor before beginning your application.

Application Assistance

Workshops and Videos

Information on application assistance, helpful workshops, and other information will be shared on our website as soon as it is available. Visit www.austincreates.com for the most current information. You can also drop into Virtual Open Office Hours (see schedule below) or email staff your questions at any time. Follow us on social media or sign up for our newsletter to stay in the loop about upcoming workshops.

Staff Contacts for Elevate

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Cultural Funding Specialist
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Virtual Open Office Hours on Zoom

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month
No appointment necessary
http://zoom.us/j/94549263216512-974-7854
Meeting ID 912 1807 0093
10 am – 12 pm

How Applications Are Reviewed

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel. Applications that meet the requirements outlined in these guidelines and receive the highest scores will be recommended for funding. The number of awards that are approved is subject to the availability of funds. Applicants will only receive points that apply to their project; we anticipate that most applications will not receive the maximum number of points available.

For more information about this process, see ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DETAILS.

ELEVATE RUBRIC
ELIGIBILITY – reviewed by COA staff

Mission and Vision statement	Applicant's primary mission and over 51% of their body of work is the production, presentation, or promotion of arts and culture. This includes organizations that provide professional support to creatives.
Applicant type	Applicants must be one of the following • An Incorporated, tax exempt, 501(c) arts organization • A non-501(c) arts organization (but registered as a Non-Profit with the Texas Secretary of State Office as evidenced by the Certificate of Formation) • An arts group, or individual artist. These groups may choose to apply with a fiscal sponsor, but it is NOT required. These groups must have annual operating budget BELOW $500,000.
Geographic Eligibility	Applicant's address is in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA). *Address is verified as in the MSA using this link: https://geocoding.geo.census.gov/geocoder*
Production History	51% or more of the applicant's creative production is within the Austin 10-1 districts or extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and a minimum of one (1) year of creative production within Austin

HOT compliance	Proposed activity meets all program requirements as outlined by the Hotel Occupancy Tax. All events are open to the public and marketed to tourists, or applicant is an arts service organization.
Existing City Support	Applicants who are not already receiving City funding for the same activities in the fiscal year in which they are applying

OPERATIONS

Operations	
	Key Constituencies *15 Possible Points* **Please identify your key constituencies and provide information about applicant's service to them.** Mission, vision, and production history will be used to verify this answer.
	History of Service *10 Possible Points* **In what ways have you maintained a responsive approach to the needs of your key constituencies?** Your answer should include: • Your work or practice has a specific history in direct service to key constituencies • Your organization's founding history and community service goals. • Clear description of how the applicant has directly improved access to opportunities for key constituencies
	Cultural Leadership *15 Possible Points* **Who holds power in your organization and how do they represent your community?**

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Community Voice
5 Possible Points

In what ways is the community involved in the creative direction of your project? In what ways are voices from the community amplified through your project?

Answer may include:
-Stages of the project will include opportunity for input by the community
-How community is involved in the development of the project
-Operationalized equity work within an organization
-Any successes as a representative of community voices.

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CULTURAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Cultural and Social Impact	Cultural Activities *10 Possible Points* **What are your proposed activities?** Your answer could address: • How equity work is centered in your proposal • Tourist accessible activities your produce • Description of proposed activities, Participant(s), etc. • Working with diverse communities
	Budget *5 Possible Points* **Describe the applicant's financial history and financial practices. Please explain significant changes in your Budget, Activity Summary, Operating Budget History, if any.** **How will you use these funds to produce your events?** Your answer could address: - Financial history - Financial management practices - Growth/stability or explanation for downsized scope of work - Critical but atypical expenses in production of activities - Budget should be reflective of your narrative

Programmatic Reach
5 Possible Points

How will the requested funding help you expand your programmatic reach and amplify Austin's diverse arts and cultural sector?

Your answer could address:
- Marketing / Audience Development
- Information on how funding will directly support the diversity of the City's cultural/arts community

Relevance and Responsiveness
5 Possible Points

How is your proposal relevant to the current social and cultural needs of the community?

Inclusion and Intersectionality
5 Possible Points

The City values intersectionality.

The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. Intersectionality is where race, class, gender, and other vulnerabilities overlap. It describes the many ways in which various forms of discriminations can intersect, creating special vulnerabilities for some.

In what ways is intersectionality a key component of your activities?

Community Relationships
5 Possible Points

In what ways does your community invest in your organization?

Examples of relationship-oriented contributions include but are not limited to:
- Volunteers
- Mentorships or partnerships
- Collaborations with community members/leaders
- Audience participation

Examples of asset-based contributions include but are not limited to:
- cash donations
- paid services
- ticket sales
- donations of goods

Upload up to three supporting documents (video, letters or emails of support, etc.)

Opportunity creation / Community benefits
10 Possible Points

In what ways is your organization investing in the community?

Include information on the systemic and long-term benefits that your programming has for the community.

Examples of investment into the communities can include but are not limited to:
- leadership roles
- jobs
- social services
- career development
- networking
- education
- mentoring or partnerships
- providing free or low-cost spaces
- other (describe)

Accessibility
10 Possible Points

Does your proposal include specialized programming or accommodations for audience members with disabilities?

Does your proposal include specialized language access accommodations or programming for non-English speaking communities?

The panel will consider how these options are represented in your budget.

Accessibility accommodations that are "upon-request only" are admirable but will not be considered a specialized service.

	Possible Points Available
Operations	45
Cultural and Social Impact	55
Total	100