



REVISION DATE: March 20, 2024

Nexus Pilot Year Guidelines

Program Overview

- Pilot Program
- \$5,000 award amount.
- Approximately 50 grants are awarded per cycle (This is not a limit)
Two opportunities per fiscal year to apply
- Funds may be used for expenses related to proposed activities

Fall/Winter

For activities occurring between October 1 and March 31

Spring/Summer

For activities occurring between June 1 and September 30, 2024

Grant Webpage

www.austintexas.gov/nexus

Additional Program Details

https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/EDD/CulturalArts/Nexus_HOT/Nexus%202024/UpdatedProgramDetail_Appendix.pdf

Nexus: nurture new and emerging applicants in the creative community

The Nexus grant is designed to nurture new and emerging applicants in the creative community. Funds support creative public activities for the city and its tourists through community-centered arts activities and collaboration.

Collaborations might include activities that involve

- Artists
- Culturally specific groups
- Groups representing LGBTQIA and disability communities
- Nonprofits
- Social advocacy organizations

Key Elements

- Nurtures new and emerging applicants in the creative community.
- Funds community-centered art activities of all kinds.
- Highlights community voices.
- Encourages collaborations where you share decision-making power in the creative direction of the projects.
- Applications are reviewed and scored by an internal panel of City of Austin staff.
- Applicants who prefer to work with a Fiscal Sponsor may do so. Fiscal Sponsorship is not a requirement for applicants.

Who can apply

Funding is not guaranteed if you meet all the minimum requirements. Funding will be awarded to the top scoring applicants

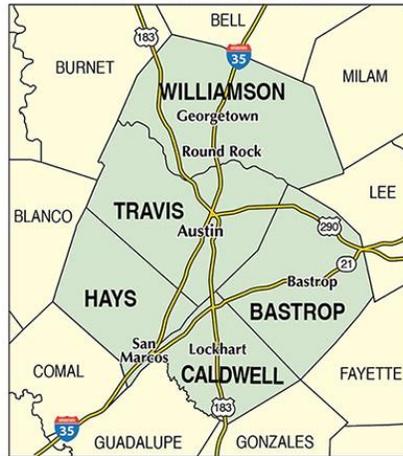
Eligible applicants

Applicant Type	Maximum Annual Expenses	Maximum Request Amount
501(c) nonprofit arts organization	\$150,000	\$5,000
An individual aged 18 or older*	\$150,000	\$5,000
Creative Business*	\$150,000	\$5,000

- Your artistic goals or creative mission is the production of arts and culture activities. This includes organizations that provide professional support to creatives.

- Minimum of one year of operating history in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA), includes:

**Counties Encompassing
Austin-Round Rock MSA**



Source: Texas Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M University

- Travis
- Bastrop,
- Caldwell,
- Hays,
- and Williamson Counties.
- Over 50% of your creative production is within the Austin 10-1 City Council districts or extraterritorial jurisdiction [\(ETJ\)](#).
- Proposed activity meets all program requirements as outlined by the Hotel Occupancy Tax.
 - All events are open to the public
 - Occur within Austin or the Austin ETJ
 - Marketed to tourists
 - Or applicant is an arts service organization
- Funding from this program may not be used toward activities funded by other City of Austin departments/contracts/grants or other Cultural Funding programs within the same fiscal year.
- City of Austin employees are not eligible to apply for funding

Detailed eligibility criteria is provided in the Scoring Rubric below.

*May apply directly or with a Fiscal Sponsor

Priority will be given to:

- Applicants that are representative of, serve and are accountable to communities that are 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. This may include applicants that directly serve Black/African American, Native American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander communities or LGBTQIA+ and/or disability communities.
- Applicants who have never received City of Austin Cultural Funding awards in the last five years.

What Nexus Funds

ALL grants funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue are required to:

- Produce activities that are open and advertised to Austin residents and tourists
- Promote and enhance Austin as a cultural destination
- Occur in Austin or its [extraterritorial jurisdiction \(ETJ\)](#)

Eligible Activities*

- Exhibitions
- Performances
- Workshops and classes that include a performance or exhibition
- Public art projects that are installed on public or private property and accessible by the public

Eligible Expenses*

- Payments to administrators and artists
- Space rentals
- Equipment rentals (not purchases)
- Supplies and materials
- Marketing and promotion expenses
- Insurance costs
- Fiscal sponsor fee, if applicable

* See [Additional Program Details](#) for a more detailed list of eligible and ineligible activities and expenses.

Award Amounts

The Nexus award is \$5,000.

- Applicants will submit a budget as part of their application to show how they will use the funds.

- If awarded, the applicant can choose to decline any portion of funds that are not needed.
- Applicants are not required to find matching funds, although it is encouraged.
- We encourage grantees to pay all who work on the project an equitable wage.
- Any unused funds must be returned with the final report.

Funding Availability

- The pilot year will have two opportunities to apply.
- The dates of applicant’s proposed activities will determine when to apply. (See chart below)
- Successful applicants can receive Nexus funds once per fiscal year.
- Funding from this program may not be used toward activities funded by other City of Austin departments/contracts/grants or other Cultural Funding programs within the fiscal year.
- Program availability and the total amount available are subject to the availability of funding from Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenue.
- Applicants cannot receive funding for activities within the same fiscal year (sponsored projects do not count toward this limit).

Timeline

	Spring/Summer Cycle	Fall/Winter Cycle
Activities Occurring	June 1 – September 30, 2024	October 1 –March 31
Deadline	May 14	August
Application Opens	April 16	July
Application Workshops	March and April	July
Awards Announced	May 31	September
Grant Agreement Materials Due	June	September
Payment 1 of 2 - 90% of Award	Up to 4 weeks after entering into grant agreement	Up to 4 weeks after entering into grant agreement
Final Report Due	October 31	April 30

Payment 2 of 2
(Final 10% of Award)

Upon approval of final report

Upon approval of final
report

How to Apply

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

Application Materials

You will need to upload the following required documents to the Nexus application. Document templates will be available online at www.AustinTexas.gov/Nexus.

- 3 Work Samples
- IRS Determination Letter if applicable
- Most recent 990 if applicable. If you do not have a 990 or 990EZ, you can submit your most recent financial statement.

Application Assistance

Application assistance, workshops, and other grant information will be shared on our website.

Drop into Virtual Open Office Hours (see schedule below) or email our Community Amplifier, Almost Real Things or City 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.

General information

www.AustinTexas.gov/Nexus

[Additional Program Details](#)

Community Amplifier

Almost Real Things

Provides application workshops and one-on-one application support.

For workshop schedule and one on one support visit communityamplifier.org or email Hello@AlmostRealThings.com

Virtual Open Office Hours on Zoom

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month and every Tuesday when the grant is open
10 am –12 pm

No appointment necessary!

Get the link: <https://bit.ly/EDDopenoffice>

Staff Contact for Nexus

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For language access support contact Carlos Soto at (512) 974-9313 or by email at carlos.soto@austintexas.gov

How Applications Are Reviewed

- Applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of City of Austin staff.
- Applications that meet the requirements outlined in these guidelines and receive the highest scores will receive an award.
- The number of awards that are approved is subject to the availability of funds.
- We anticipate that most applications will not receive the maximum number of points available.

NEXUS RUBRIC

ELIGIBILITY – reviewed by program staff

<p>Creative Mission or Primary Body of Work</p>	<p>501(c) applicants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant’s primary artistic goals and creative mission is the production of arts and culture. This includes organizations that provide professional support to creatives. <p>Creative Business and Individual Applicants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Over 50% of their body of work is the production of arts and culture activities.
<p>Applicant Type</p>	<p>Applicants must meet the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant is not a City of Austin employee; and is: <input type="checkbox"/> An Incorporated, tax exempt, 501(c) arts organization; or <input type="checkbox"/> A creative business or individual artist with annual expenses of \$150,000 or less. These groups may choose to apply with a Fiscal Sponsor, but it is NOT required.
<p>Annual Expenses</p>	<p>What were your total annual expenses for your artistic practice in your most recently completed fiscal year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant’s most recently completed fiscal year’s annual expenses are \$150,000 or less
<p>Geographical Eligibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The business address is in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA). This may be your personal residence. <p><i>Address is verified as in the MSA using this link: https://geomap.ffiec.gov/ffiecgeomap/</i></p> <p><i>Address is verified as in the MSA using this link: https://geomap.ffiec.gov/ffiecgeomap/</i></p>
<p>Production History</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Minimum of one (1) year of creative production within Austin or the metropolitan statistical area. <input type="checkbox"/> 50% or more of your creative activities are within the Austin 10-1 City Council districts or extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)
<p>HOT Compliance</p>	<p>Will the proposed activities be open and accessible to tourists?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All proposed activities are open to the public and marketed to tourists. <p>View Hotel Occupancy Tax Statute</p>

<p>Existing City Support</p>	<p>Applicant must meet all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant is not receiving Nexus fund in the same fiscal year as Thrive or Elevate funds <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant is not receiving a grant for the same proposed activity from another City of Austin department in the same fiscal year <input type="checkbox"/> If the applicant is receiving a grant from other Economic Development Department programs, it must be for other activities and expenses unique to that award
<p>Activity Location</p>	<p>Where will your proposed activities occur?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant’s proposed activities must occur within the Austin 10-1 districts or extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).
<p>Project Date</p>	<p>When will your proposed activities occur? Project dates fall within the upcoming grant term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fall/Winter Cycle <i>October 1 – March 31</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Spring/Summer Cycle <i>April 1 – September 30</i>

NEXUS RUBRIC – 100 Possible Points

SCORING CRITERIA (reviewed by City of Austin staff)

First-time Applicant

In the last 5 years (2019-2024), how many City of Austin Cultural Arts Division Grants (Thrive, Elevate, Nexus, Core, Community Initiatives,

Up to 10 points

Capacity Building, or Cultural Heritage Festivals Program) have you received? This would not include other City of Austin Economic Development Department Grants.

If the application is on behalf of a sponsored project, the response should be based on the sponsored project's funding history, not the fiscal sponsor's.

**Key
Constituencies
& Creative
Mission**
Up to 15 points

Identify your key constituencies. How do you serve them through your artistic goals, creative mission, and experience producing public events?

For the purposes of this program, key constituencies that will be prioritized are community groups that are 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 constituencies are not necessarily just your audience. It may also include others who are deeply impacted by your work, like participating artists, staff, creative advisors and/or community groups, etc.

Answer must include:

- Identify your key constituencies (see [Additional Program Details](#) for definition)
- Creative mission and/or artistic goals

**Cultural
Leadership**
Up to 15 points

Who holds decision-making power in your creative practice and how do you/they represent your key constituencies?

Your answer could include:

- You, the individual artist applicant
- Executive and Creative Leadership
- Advisory Board
- Creative Advisors

**Cultural
Activities**
Up to 10 points

What are your proposed public activities?

Your answer should address:

- Description of proposed activities (who, what, when, where)

- Desired outcome or impact of your proposed activities, including how equity is centered.
- How key constituencies are involved in the development of the activities

Creative Collaboration

Up to 10 points

Provide the name(s) of creative collaborator(s) and their role(s) producing your proposed activities.

Accessibility

Up to 10 points

Describe the specialized accommodations and/or programming for individuals with disabilities that you intend to provide at your proposed activities, if any.

Your answer should address:

- Specific services or adaptations you will provide
- Name(s) of service provider and/or participation of a trained professional in administering services or adaptations

Accessibility accommodations that are “upon-request only” are not considered to be specialized.

Hosting activities in an ADA accessible facility, by itself, is also not considered to be specialized.

See [Additional Program Details](#) for more information on Accessibility resources

Language Accessibility

Up to 10 points

Describe the specialized language access accommodations or programming for non-English speaking communities that you intend to provide at your proposed activities, if any.

Your answer should address:

- Specific services or adaptations you will provide (including the language(s) they will be provided in)
- Name(s) of service providers and/or participation of a trained professional in administering services or adaptations

Accessibility accommodations that are “upon-request only” are not considered to be specialized.

Marketing
Up to 10 points

Describe how you will market your proposed activities.

Your answer should include your **marketing platforms** (ex: social media, web, newsletter, print, radio/tv, etc.) and specialized marketing efforts to reach:

1. Audiences within **your** key constituencies
2. **New** audiences within the City of Austin's Priority Key Constituencies
3. Audience members with disabilities and/or audience members whose primary language is not English
4. Tourists

*An applicant's key constituencies are **NOT** required to align with the City's priority key constituencies (as defined in the [Additional Program Details](#)) to receive points for Item 1. **HOWEVER**, Item 2 requires the applicant to reach **NEW** audiences within the City's priority key constituencies that are **not reached through Item 1**.*

*Utilizing two or more forms of social media (ex: Facebook and Instagram) will only count as **ONE** marketing platform.*

Budget
(NOT A
NARRATIVE -
Just the budget
table)
Up to 10 points

How will you use this grant to produce your proposed activities?

Your 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