

nexus

(noun) a connection or series of connections linking two or more things

Program Overview

Annual term, two opportunities per fiscal year to apply

\$5,000 grants

Nexus: nurture new and emerging applicants in the creative community

The Nexus program is designed to nurture new and emerging applicants in the creative community in support of creative public programming for the city and its tourists through community activation and collaboration. Nexus will prioritize applicants who are new to City funding, particularly those who have been at immediate risk of cultural erasure and displacement within Austin and/or have been institutionally marginalized.

Key Elements

- This program is intended to nurture new and emerging applicants in the creative community.
- This program funds community-centered art projects of all kinds.
- 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

Applicant eligibility criteria is outlined below, with greater detail provided in the Scoring Rubric 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:

- 501(c) nonprofit arts organization
- An individual artist aged 18 or older*
- A creative business*
- Applicant's most recently completed fiscal year's budget is \$150,000 or less
- One year of operating history in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA)
- 51% or more of the applicant's creative production is within the Austin 10-1 districts or extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)
- Applicant has not already received or is not currently receiving City funding for the same activities in the fiscal year in which they are applying

**May apply directly or with a fiscal sponsor*

Priority will be given to:

- Applicants that 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.
- Applicants who have never received City of Austin Cultural Funding awards in the last five years.

What Nexus Funds

While Nexus supports a breadth of creative projects, *all* grants funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue are required to:

- Be 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 that is open to and marketed to tourists
- Public art projects that are installed on public or private property and accessible by the public

Eligible Expenses*

- Administrative expenses and artist fees (including staff hours and contractor costs)
- 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.

Funding Availability

Nexus operates on the City's fiscal calendar, which is October 1 – September 30. The pilot year will have two opportunities to apply.

The dates of applicant's proposed activities will determine when to apply. Successful applicants can receive Nexus funds once per fiscal year.

Funding awards allocated from this program may not be used toward activities funded by any 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. Only one grant per organization is allowed (sponsored projects do not count toward this limit). If the applicant applies to and is approved for funding in multiple Cultural Funding programs, they may receive only one award.

Timeline

	Fall/Winter Cycle	Spring/Summer Cycle
Activities Occurring	October 1 - March 31	April 1 – September 30
Deadline	August 15 @ 5pm	February 2024
Application Opens	July 2023	January 2024
Application Workshops	July 2023	January 2024
Awards Announced	September 2023	March 2024
Grant Agreement Materials Due	September 2023	March 2024
Payment 1 of 2 - 90% of Award	Upon Entering into grant agreement	Upon Entering into grant agreement
Final Report Due	April 30, 2024	October 31, 2024
Payment 2 of 2 - Final 10% of Award	Upon approval of final report	Upon approval of final report

Award Amounts

- The request amount in Nexus is \$5,000.
- Applicants will submit a project budget as part of their application demonstrating 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 also encourage grantees to pay all who work on the project an equitable wage.
- Any unused funds must be returned at the time of final 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 applications.

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 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.

Almost Real Things

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Staff Contact for Nexus

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Virtual Open Office Hours on Zoom

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month
No appointment necessary!
Get the link:
<https://forms.office.com/g/aRE3DXn1Cw>
10 am –12 pm

How Applications Are Reviewed

Applications will be reviewed and scored by an internal panel of staff from the City of Austin. 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.

NEXUS RUBRIC

ELIGIBILITY – reviewed by COA staff

Applicant Type	Applicant is either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A 501(c) nonprofit organization- An individual or collaborating individuals aged 18 or older*- creative business* *May apply directly or with a fiscal sponsor
Existing City Support	Applicants who have not already received or are not currently receiving City funding for the same activities in the fiscal year in which they are applying.
Geographical Eligibility	Applicants that demonstrate a minimum of one year of operating history in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA). <i>Address is verified as in the MSA using this link: https://geomap.ffiec.gov/ffiecgeomap/</i>
Production History	51% or more of the applicant’s creative production is within the Austin 10-1 districts or extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).
Operating Budget	Applicant’s most recently completed fiscal year’s budget is \$150,000 or less
Project Date	Project dates fall within the upcoming grant term. <i>Fall/Winter Cycle: October 1 – March 31</i> <i>Spring/Summer Cycle: April 1 – September 30</i>
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.

Category	Criteria
Operations	<p><u>Mission and Key Constituencies</u> 15 points</p> <p>What is the applicant’s mission, vision, and primary production history? Please identify your key constituencies and provide information about the applicant’s service to them.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Organization’s mission, vision, and production history will be used for this response.</p> <p>Individual applicants and creative businesses, should provide their creative mission, artistic vision, and production history for this response.</p>
	<p><u>First-time Applicant</u> 10 points</p> <p>Have you received City of Austin Cultural Funding in the last 5 years? This would not include relief or recovery funding.</p> <p>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.</p>
	<p><u>CULTURAL LEADERSHIP</u> 15 points</p> <p>Who holds power in your organization and how do they represent your community? (2,000-character limit, including spaces)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your response could include: • Executive and Creative Leadership • Board of Directors and/or Advisory Board • Creative Advisors
	<p><u>Budget</u> 10 points</p> <p>How will you use these funds to produce your event?</p> <p>Your answer could address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of expenses in production of activities - Uploaded Budget Form should be reflective of this narrative <p>Application reviewers will review this response in addition to the uploaded Budget Form to review the applicant’s financial history and financial practices.</p>
	<p><u>Cultural Activities</u></p>

Cultural and Social Impact

10 points

What are your proposed activities?

Your answer could address:

- Description of proposed activities, participant(s), etc.
- Tourist accessible activities your produce
- How equity work is centered in your proposal
- Working with diverse communities

Creative Collaboration

10 points

Provide the name(s) of creative collaborator(s). Describe your collaborator's role in the development and implementation of your proposed activities.

Write "N/A" if you are not applying with a collaborator.

Accessibility & Language Access

10 points

Describe your organization's specialized programming and accommodations for individuals with disabilities, if any.

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

10 points

Describe your organization's specialized language access accommodations or programming for non-English speaking communities, if any.

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

Programmatic Reach/ Marketing

10 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 and equity of the City's cultural community.

Possible Points Available	
Operations	50
Cultural and Social Impact	50
Total	100