

Thrive

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Revisions to pilot guidelines and rubric since October 2021:

- Reworked scoring rubric and guidelines language, in keeping with community feedback, Equity Office consultation, and legal guidance.
- Important terms and definitions added to the glossary.
- Minimum and maximum award amounts revised according to public feedback that \$50,000 is a minimum meaningful award amount.
 - Minimum award amount changed from \$30,000 to \$70,000
 - Maximum award changed from \$50,000 to \$120,000
 - NOTE: this amount is based on financial limitations due to the pandemic, staff recommends that request amounts for this program be as high as \$200,000 in the future when the HOT funding budget allows.
- Program description better reflects the origins and purpose of the program
- Several changes made so that the pilot program is more focused on sustainability rather than just programmatic growth. Growth is still encouraged throughout the program for organizations that are positioned to do so.
- Cohort requirements have been more fully described and participation requirements have been reduced.
- General guidelines language updates to clarify program goals.
- Language added and edited in response to clarify that sponsored projects are ineligible for this program.

For information on anticipated changes to this program after the pilot cycle, please see page 1 of the Additional Materials document.

Thrive

Pilot Year Draft Guidelines- REVISED

FORMATTING WILL BE ADDED ONCE TEXT IS APPROVED

[Cover page]

Thrive: Organizational investment for arts and culture non-profits

Pilot Program

2 Year Contract Term.

Request amounts between \$70,000 and \$120,000 per pilot program year.

Approximately 30-45 contracts awarded.

Pilot Guidelines

For activities taking place (dates TBD)

[Web page link]

[logo] City of Austin [logo] Economic Development Department

thrive

(verb) grow or develop well or vigorously; to prosper

Program Overview

2 Year Contract Term. Approximately 30-45 contracts awarded

Request amounts between \$70,000 and \$120,000 per year

This program seeks to address a long-term need for intentional investment to support and develop arts organizations and cultural institutions of, by, and for communities that are at immediate risk of cultural erasure and displacement within Austin and/or have been institutionally marginalized and underfunded by the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division. Through a combination of funding, peer leadership, and networking model, this program will make Austin's diverse cultures more widely visible and accessible by providing funds to sustain and grow organizations that are deeply rooted in, and reflective of those key constituencies.

To directly address historic inequities in our own funding models and meet our goals of advancing racial equity, priority will be given to arts and culture organizations that are significant contributors to the City's creative vibrancy and heritage. This may refer to arts organizations predominantly led by, and inclusive of, a combination of Black/African American, Native American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander individuals. Organizations that also show a demonstrable commitment to serving and representing the LGBTQIA and disability communities through their work will also be considered.

Key Elements

- Thrive funds organizations that are community-centered and responsive to current social and cultural needs of Austin's diverse communities.
- Applicants who show investment from and into their communities are encouraged to apply.
- Intersectionality in proposals is encouraged.
- Thrive offers a cohort experience that includes peer leadership and networking opportunities. The goal of the cohort is to support organizations in obtaining cultural institution status.
- Successful applicants will select organization improvement goals that will become part of their contract deliverables.

Who can apply

Applicant eligibility criteria is provided in the rubric. Funding is not guaranteed. Funding will be awarded based on the amount of funding requested and application scores.

Eligible Applicants:

- 501c non-profit arts organizations that have been in operation for 5 years or more.

Priority will be given to:

- Organizations that serve and are accountable to communities that are at immediate risk of cultural erasure and displacement within Austin. This includes organizations that directly and substantively serve Black/African American, Native American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander communities.
- Organizations that are representative of communities that experience other forms of institutional marginalization. This includes organizations that directly and substantively serve LGBTQIA and/or disability communities.
- Organizations that embody 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 that have faced barriers in obtaining institutional resources and assets.
- Applicants that show a critical and timely need for meaningful investment.
- Applicants that are ready for investment to ensure long-term sustainability.

This program is *not* a fit for organizations that do not have long-standing relationships with the communities described above.

What Thrive Funds

All contracts funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue are required to:

- Culminate in programs or events that are open and advertised to Austin residents, visitors, and tourists
- Promote and enhance the City of Austin as a cultural destination
- Occur in Austin or its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)

This program will offer additional investment in organization improvement. Examples of organization improvement include:

- Expanding public programming and audiences
- Establishing a reliable physical space for planning and presenting work
- Establishing new and/or more diversified revenue sources
- Cohort participation to advance organization improvement goals

Cohort Participation

The cohort model will:

- Center the expertise/experiences of the funded organizations
- Prioritize organizations' time and availability
- Limit burdensome reporting requirements

Cohort participants will:

1. **Meet with staff:** Meet with Cultural Arts Division staff within the first six months. Awardees will discuss their organization improvement goals and path to becoming a cultural institution. Additional meetings may occur as goals evolve.
The Cultural Funding programs define a "cultural institution" as an entity whose primary mission is to present and produce arts and cultural activities, has a high degree of financial sustainability, and is seen as an indispensable part of a community. It is important to note that an organization can be an indispensable part of the community but has not received the historical financial support necessary to achieve cultural institution status as defined here.
2. **Receive tailored support:** Attend optional trainings, networking events, and other opportunities as relevant to identified goals. Each opportunity will be developed based on interests of cohort participants. Attendance in learning opportunities is not required but will be tracked to assess the areas of improvement for the program. Community has expressed interest in the following topics, and more can be considered as requested:
 - donor cultivation
 - grant writing
 - strategic planning
 - audience development
 - lease negotiation
 - marketing
 - leadership development
3. **Share expertise:** Participate in peer leadership opportunities by sharing expertise with others in the cohort. Cultural Arts Division staff will also seek new ways to promote the work and expertise of the Thrive cohort to audiences within and outside of Austin.
4. **Provide feedback:** See "Reporting Requirements" for more details.

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
- Activities related to the sustainability and growth of the organization.

Eligible Expenses*

- Administrative and creative costs incurred in the preparation and implementation of cultural activities that are open to and marketed to tourists.
- 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.
- Capital expenditures.
- Purchase, repair, construction, or renovation of equipment or property.

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

Other Eligibility Criteria:

- Organization's mission is explicitly rooted in serving 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.
- 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's address is in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA).
- 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 5 years of creative production within Austin.
- 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.
- Applicants who are not receiving City funding for the same activities in the fiscal year in which they are applying.
- Applicants whose average annual Cultural Funding award over time is \$100,000 or less.

Reporting Requirements

Contractors will be required to submit a report annually. To ease reporting requirements, contractors will have the option to participate in conversation-based assessments and reporting with their dedicated City staff person.

Year 1: Interim Report*

The interim report will be used by CAD staff to update and revise your contract as necessary for any year two changes. Disbursement of the remaining 10% of that year's contract will not be issued without approval of the submitted interim report.

Year 2: Final Report*

A final report is due within thirty days of the final program date in year two of the contract. Workshops on how to complete your report will be made available and supporting materials can be found in the Contractor Library.

* See [Additional Program Details](#) for more detailed reporting information.

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.

Funding Timeline

Thrive operates on the calendar year, and it has a two-year cycle:

Year one: Contract start date to TBD

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.

Payment 1: 90% of award amount can be invoiced once contract is in place

Payment 2: 10% of award amount can be invoiced upon approval of interim report

Year two: TBD

Year one awardees will receive the same award in year two, or higher (as funding allows); there is no application process in year two. An awardee can decline year two funding if they wish.

Interim reports and contract updates for year two must be approved by Cultural Funding staff before year two funds are disbursed.

Payment 1: 90% of award amount can be invoiced once contract is in place
 Payment 2: 10% of award amount can be invoiced upon approval of final report

| Program Timeline | |
|------------------|---|
| TBD | Guidelines available |
| TBD | Application workshops begin |
| TBD | Application opens |
| 6 weeks later | Application deadline |
| TBD | Panel reviews begin |
| TBD | Notification of award |
| TBD | Pre-contract workshops |
| TBD | Pre-contract materials due |
| TBD | Cultural Funding staff reviews contract materials |
| TBD | Earliest payments sent (90% of award) |
| TBD | Interim reports due |
| TBD | Interim reports reviewed and year-two contract updates approved |
| TBD | First payments for year-two issued upon report approval |
| TBD | Final reports due |
| TBD | Final payments (10% of award) sent after reports are approved |

Award Amounts

- The award amount in Thrive ranges from \$70,000 - \$120,000 per year of the 2-year contract.
- Applicants will submit a project budget as part of their application demonstrating how they will use the funds.
- If awarded, applicants can choose to decline any portion of funds they 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 www.austincreates.com for links to all open program application portals.

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 Contact for Thrive

Sarah Corpron
Cultural Funding Specialist
Sarah.Corpron@AustinTexas.gov

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](#).

THRIVE RUBRIC

ELIGIBILITY SCREENING – reviewed by COA staff

| Mission 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. |
|------------------------|---|
| 501(c) status | 501(c) non-profit organizations registered with current 990's, and an active volunteer board that meets three or more times per year. 501(c) status can be new but must be active at the time of application. |
| Geographic eligibility | Applicant's address is in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA). <i>Address is verified as in the MSA using this link: https://geocoding.geo.census.gov/geocoder</i> |
| Production History | 51% or more of the application's creative production is within the Austin 10-1 districts or extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and a minimum of 5 years of creative production within Austin. |
| Key Constituencies | Organization's mission is explicitly rooted in serving 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. Documentation provided clearly shows that service to these key constituencies is the primary purpose of the organization. <i>Applicants will be asked to identify and name these communities. This information will be referenced for later sections of the scoring rubric.</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. |
| Current City support | Applicants who are not already receiving City funding for the same activities in the fiscal year in which they are applying. |
| Historic City support | Applicants whose average annual Cultural Funding award over time is \$100,000 or less. |

Throughout the rubric “key constituencies” will always refer to the communities identified by the applicant during the eligibility screening

| Category | Criteria |
|----------------------------|--|
| Operations | <p><u>Key Constituencies</u></p> <p>Please identify your key constituencies and provide information about applicant’s service to them.</p> <p>For the purposes of this program, key constituencies 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>Mission, vision, and production history will be used to verify this answer.</p> |
| | <p><u>History of Service</u></p> <p>How did the needs of your key constituencies inform the founding of your organization? In what ways has your organization maintained a responsive approach to their needs?</p> <p>Your answer should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your organization’s specific history in direct service to your 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 |
| | <p><u>Cultural Leadership</u></p> <p>Who holds power in your organization and how do they represent your community?</p> |
| Cultural and Social Impact | <p><u>Cultural Activities</u></p> <p>What are your proposed activities?</p> <p>Your answer could address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist accessible activities that you produce • Description of proposed activities, participant(s), etc. • Working with the community |
| | <p><u>Relevance and Responsiveness</u></p> <p>How is your proposal relevant to the current social and cultural needs of your community?</p> |

| Category | Criteria |
|----------|---|
| | <p><u>Intersectionality and Inclusion</u></p> <p>The City values intersectionality.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In what ways is intersectionality a key component of your activities?</p> |
| | <p><u>Community Relationships</u></p> <p>In what ways does your community invest in your organization?</p> <p>Examples of relationship-oriented contributions include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteers • mentorships or partnerships • collaborations with community members/leaders • Audience participation <p>Examples of asset-based contributions include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cash donations • paid services • ticket sales • donations of goods |
| | <p><u>Opportunity creation / Community benefits</u></p> <p>In what ways is your organization investing in your community?</p> <p>Include information on the systemic and long-term benefits your organization’s programming has for the community.</p> <p>Examples of investment into your community can include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leadership roles • Job creation • social services • career development • networking • education • mentoring or partnerships • providing free or low-cost spaces • other (describe) |

| Category | Criteria |
|----------|--|
| | <p><u>Accessibility</u></p> <p>Does your proposal include specialized programming or accommodations for individuals with disabilities?</p> <p>Does your proposal include specialized language access accommodations or programming for non-English speaking communities?</p> <p><i>The panel will consider how these options are represented in your budget.</i></p> <p><i>Accessibility accommodations that are “upon-request only” are admirable but will not be considered a specialized service.</i></p> |
| | <p><u>Cultural Institution Status</u></p> <p>a) [budget table]</p> <p>b) How will these funds be used to move your organization closer to becoming a cultural institution?</p> <p>This may include bringing back operations and activities reduced during the pandemic, improving and sustaining existing operations, and/or developing new initiatives and operations.</p> <p>A cultural institution will have reliable and consistent access to multiple types of sustaining financial, and physical assets. See Additional Program Details document for full definition of cultural institution.</p> |

DK