

COLLABORATION GUIDELINES

Overview

The City of Austin Museums & Cultural Programs (MCP) initiates its programs in response to a community need. Non-profits, community groups and individuals may suggest a collaborative program that is relevant to MCP and Austin Parks & Recreation Department (PAR) mission, values, and audience. Collaborations are city-sponsored programs hosted by the MCP site and presented in tandem with the collaborator. All collaborations are to be **offered to the public free of charge** and collaborators “volunteer” their service at no cost to the department. In turn, the City of Austin and the Parks Department facility provides the resources for production, marketing, and implementation of the program. If the suggested program meets the requirements and can be supported by its budget and capacity, the specific MCP site may engage in a collaboration. Collaborations require a customized agreement outlining the terms of participation. Liability insurance and background checks may be required.

Individuals or organizations may submit the collaboration request to their preferred MCP site for consideration. Once your request is received, staff will review the form and will be in contact as soon as possible. Applications should be submitted 3 months in advance of the proposed program. The division utilizes a holistic review process to determine goodness of fit. This review process may take up to 6-weeks. Please refer to the [MCP Collaboration Guidelines](#) listed below for more information.

Please note: The City of Austin MCP division considered all applications, but only accepts a limited number of collaborations each year.

Application and Evaluation Process

- **Submission of Collaboration Request:** Interested parties must initiate the collaboration process by submitting a Collaboration Application to the selected site. This form is also accessible through the official website and serves as the initial step to propose a one-time or limited public program or service.
- **Evaluation by Collaboration Review Team:** Collaboration requests will be evaluated by our dedicated programming staff approximately every 3 weeks. This team comprises experienced Museum and Cultural Programming staff members with expertise in programming and community engagement.
- **Approval/Denial Notification:** Once the evaluation is complete, if the request has been approved, a designated staff member will contact the individual who submitted the Collaboration Application.
- **Program Coordination Assignment:** Upon approval, an MCP staff member will be assigned to coordinate the planning and execution of the approved program or service. This staff member will act as the main point of contact and collaborate closely with the proposing individual or organization.

COLLABORATION GUIDELINES

- **Six-Month Planning Horizon:** Our site operates on a proactive planning approach, scheduling programs and services six months in advance. Approved collaborations will be slotted into a Museums & Cultural Program site's programming calendar in alignment with this planning horizon.
- **Collaborative Program/Service Implementation:** As the program or service date approaches, the assigned MCP staff member will work closely with the proposer to ensure seamless execution. This collaborative effort aims to deliver a high-quality experience to our community members and ensure compliance to city, department, and division parameters. Changes in the scope of proposed program, non-compliance to said parameters, or available resources may result in the delay or cancellation of the program. Program staff will work with applicant to refer them to other programmatic opportunities such as rentals.
- **Evaluation and Feedback:** Following the conclusion of the program or service, an evaluation will be conducted. This evaluation process involves MCP staff and collaborating partners. Community feedback will be collected to assess the impact, effectiveness, and alignment with our goals.

Criteria for Consideration

To be considered, collaboration requests with external entities must meet these criteria:

Mission Alignment

- Does the request resonate with the mission, vision, and purpose of the target site?
- Will it cater to the site's key audience and be accessible to patrons?
 - [Asian American Resource Center](#)
 - [Dougherty Arts Center](#)
 - [George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural, and Genealogy Center](#)
 - [Mexican American Cultural Center](#)
 - [Zilker Hillside Theatre](#)
 - [Elisabet Ney Museum](#)
 - [O. Henry Museum](#)
 - [Old Bakery and Artisan Emporium](#)
 - [Susana Dickinson Museum](#)

Community Impact

- Does the request address a known unmet need or demonstrate a new need?

COLLABORATION GUIDELINES

- Is the impact broad or focused on a specific group?

Capacity and Reciprocity

- Can PARD accommodate the request within the current staffing and event space?
- Does the collaboration offer mutual benefits to both parties?
- Capacity considerations:
 - Staffing
 - Parking
 - Space
 - Furniture
 - Equipment
 - Hours
 - Technology
 - Budget
 - Custodial
 - Security
 - Accessibility
 - Marketing and outreach

Timeliness and Controversy

- Does it address a contemporary or emerging issue?
- If this request might be controversial, are there other factors to be taken into consideration such as security needs, communications plans, and executive approval?
- Is the proposed program political or partisan in nature?

Interest

- Will the request attract an audience based on its appeal?
- Have similar collaborations been successful in the past?

Quality

- Is there evidence that the presenter has expertise in their field and has experience delivering engaging and informative programs or library services?

COLLABORATION GUIDELINES

- Have they worked with a Museums & Cultural Program site previously or at other libraries in the area?

Demographic Representation: The evaluation team prioritizes partnerships that serve underrepresented and marginalized communities, ensuring that the services reach those who might otherwise face barriers.

Accessibility: The evaluation team assess partners based on their commitment to accessibility, both in terms of physical spaces and digital content, to ensure inclusivity for all.

Inclusive Programming: Partners who propose programs that promote cross-cultural understanding, inclusivity, and diverse perspectives will be given preference.

Collaborative Vision: The evaluation team values partners who demonstrate a clear understanding of the site's mission and a willingness to collaborate in ways that align with a Museums & Cultural Program site's mission and vision.

Measurable Outcomes: Partners should propose achievable goals and outcomes for the collaboration that can be measured and evaluated for their impact.

Community Engagement: Partnerships that actively involve community members in planning, decision-making, and implementation will be prioritized.

Equitable Opportunity: Collaborations provide valuable resources and community building capacity for partners. The division uses an equitable lens to determine new and recurring collaborations annually.

General Exclusion

In general, a Museums & Cultural Program site **does not accept** Collaboration Requests for:

- **Marketing or graphic design:** Services for marketing or graphic design services, which aim to create promotional materials, advertisements, branding campaigns, or similar initiatives, are not generally accepted.
- **Commercial Promotion:** Collaboration requests that primarily aim to promote or advertise commercial products, services, or businesses.

COLLABORATION GUIDELINES

- **Personal Gain:** Proposals seeking personal financial gain or personal profit for individuals involved.
- **Partisan Political Activities:** Programs or events that are directly affiliated with partisan political campaigns, candidates, or advocacy groups.
- **Illegal or Unethical Activities:** Proposals that involve or promote illegal activities, unethical behavior, or actions that go against a Museums & Cultural Program site's ethical standards.
- **Explicitly Religious Activities:** Programs that are focused solely on religious worship, proselytization, or instruction in religious doctrine.
- **Hate Speech or Discrimination:** Proposals that involve hate speech, discriminatory content, or activities that promote intolerance or harm to any group or individual.
- **Health Claims:** Collaboration Requests that make unsubstantiated health claims, promise medical treatments, or present pseudoscientific information.
- **Costs:** Programs that entail costs or financial burdens for attendees, such as mandatory materials. Collaborations are free and open to the public.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Collaboration Requests that involve conflicts of interest or affiliations that might compromise a Museums & Cultural Program site's integrity or neutrality.
- **Inaccurate Information:** Programs that disseminate false or misleading information that could negatively impact the community.
- **Infringement on Intellectual Property:** Collaboration Requests that violate copyright or intellectual property rights without proper authorization.
- **Explicit Content:** Programs containing explicit, offensive, or adult-oriented content that is not appropriate for a general audience.
- **Solicitation:** Proposals that involve direct solicitations for funds, donations, or personal information from attendees.
- **Unsafe Activities:** Programs that involve dangerous or potentially harmful activities that could pose a risk to participants or attendees.

General Considerations

- Programs and services are scheduled approximately 6 months in advance.
- Programs and services developed by a Museums & Cultural Program site staff take highest priority in a Museums & Cultural Program site's scheduling and development.
- The Collaboration review team prioritizes inquiries from local requestors.
- Programs and services must be free and open to the public.



COLLABORATION GUIDELINES

- If fees are involved, consider other programming options. Consult PARD's [Reservation Page](#) or the City's [Vendor Services Page](#)
- Liability insurance and background checks may be required.