



# Advancement Grant

## 2020-21 PANEL HANDBOOK

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT ADVANCEMENT GRANT	2
PROGRAM SUCCESS	2
PANEL SERVICE	2
TIMELINE	3
CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY	4
HONORARIUM	4
PANEL PREPARATION	4
PANEL MEETING LOGISTICS	5
PANEL MEETING COMMENTS	6
REVIEW CRITERIA	7
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	1

## **ABOUT ADVANCEMENT GRANT**

The Advancement Grant offers financial support to Los Angeles County school districts working to provide quality arts education to all students. The goals of the grant are to:

- assist school districts in achieving key action items in their strategic plans for arts education, and
- generate resources, practices, skills or knowledge that will be sustained beyond the term of the grant.

Los Angeles County school districts that are currently partnering with the Arts Ed Collective and will be implementing board approved strategic plans for arts education in 2020-21 are eligible to apply.

## **PROGRAM SUCCESS**

Program success is measured by the increase in quality, quantity and equitable distribution of arts instruction provided in participating districts. These measures have been defined in the Arts Ed Profile report as follows:

### **Quantity**

Our measure of quantity for arts education includes the following variables: the amount of arts education being offered for each discipline; the ratio of credentialed instructors to the student body; the count of types of arts instructors.

### **Quality**

The variables in our measure of quality include all of the following: arts instruction offered as discrete courses and/or integrated into other subjects; shared written curriculum among instructors teaching the same discipline; knowledge-based and/or performance-based assessment tools; technology used in teaching the arts; arts instructors participation in professional development training.

### **Equity**

The question of whether high quality arts education is distributed equally to all students is critical to the mission of the Arts Ed Collective. The measure of equity is analyzed through the following categories: Race/Ethnicity; English Learners; Students on free and reduced price meals; School enrollment; District size.

Funded programs will be asked to report on the progress at the conclusion of the granting cycle.

## **PANEL SERVICE**

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a peer panel of experienced arts and education professionals. The panel may include school district administrators, community arts partners, funders and arts educators.

Peer panelists review, assess and score grant applications. Panelists' assessments and scores become the basis for applicant rankings and funding recommendations. Panelists do not recommend funding amounts or set the cut-off score below which applicants are not funded.

## TIMELINE

Guidelines and Application Released	January 2020
Technical Assistance provided at Application Workshops	February 7, 2020 March 28, 2020
Technical Assistance provided by Arts Ed Collective staff to individual districts through in person meetings and telephone appointments.	February and March 2020
Application Deadline	March 11, 2020
Application Audit Period  Staff audits applications for completeness. Applications submitted late or with section(s) blank will be deemed ineligible.	March 2020
Panelist Orientation	March 26, 2020, 4:00-5:30 pm
Applications delivered to panelists	March 26, 2020
Review Panel convenes and scores applications	April 22, 24, 28 and 30, 2020, 10:00am - 4:00pm
Funders Council meets to approve awards	June 2020
Notification of Awards  Applicants are invited to schedule telephone meetings to receive panel feedback	June - July 2020
Adjusted Budget and Participation Forms are submitted.  Contracts executed between Los Angeles County and participating school districts.	September 2020
Grant Period	July 2020 - June 2021
Grantee Site Visits with Arts Ed Collective staff	November 2020 - April 2021
Final reports due	May 15, 2021

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

It is presumed that panelists will have knowledge of, and connections to, applicant organizations and their representatives. Your qualification to advise the Department of Arts and Culture rests, in part, on your familiarity with the local arts education community.

For this program, a conflict of interest is defined as a current or recent affiliation with an applicant from which you have derived or will derive material benefit. A panelist must not score or otherwise vote on an application if he or she stands to gain personally from a positive or negative review of a given applicant. For example:

- An immediate family member or “significant other” is currently employed by the school district or is a board member.
- You have received fees for services from a school district within the past year.
- You have a contractual disagreement with a school district or its management.

Please complete the provided conflict of interest form in advance of the panel session; forms will be collected at the beginning of the meeting. **Conflicts of interest must be disclosed prior to the panel review.** Please contact Arts Ed Collective staff in advance of the session if you have conflicts of interest with more than one applicant or if you have questions about this policy.

## HONORARIUM

In appreciation of the time and energy panelists dedicate to the panel review process, panelists receive an honorarium of \$200. Forms will be collected at the beginning of the panel meeting. The honorarium check will be mailed to the address specified on the invoice form within 4-6 weeks of submission of the invoice. Please note that the invoice form requires an LA County vendor number, ***panelist must register as a vendor prior to submitting the invoice.*** Instructions for registering as a vendor can be found on our [website](#).

## PANEL PREPARATION

Prior to the panel meeting **please read and evaluate all of the applications that you have been assigned.** Panelists are expected to be familiar with the contents of each application by reviewing all assigned applications **in advance of the meeting to ensure enough time to score the application appropriately based on the review criteria** on the day of the panel meeting. No time will be provided for reading applications on the day of the panel meeting. There are no lead readers.

Arts Ed Collective staff will host a panel orientation prior to the panel meetings. It is highly recommended that you participate in this orientation. Directions for participation will be sent via email.

Panel Orientation  
Thursday, March 26  
4:00-5:30 pm

Panelists should evaluate the application in light of the Arts and Culture’s review criteria (page 7) and your knowledge of the arts education field. **Each application should be considered on its own merits.** While an application with grammatical or spelling errors does impact scoring insofar as it fails to convey vital information, do not make any point deductions on the basis of “looks” alone.

As you review applications please keep in mind:

- Grants must be matched at least dollar-for-dollar by the applicant.
- Awards are made on the basis of merit, not need.

In order to be fully prepared for the panel, please take notes and enter preliminary scores for all assigned applications within the online Panelist Evaluation Form provided through Fluid Review.

All applications assigned to your panel(s) are viewable in the list of Advancement Grant applications in your panelist dashboard in the Fluid Review (<https://www.lacountyarts.org/apply>). Simply click on each application from the Reviewer Summary. Read, review, and submit preliminary scoring decisions for each application **prior to your panel meeting on the panel evaluation form in Fluid Review**. Following your assessment of all applications assigned to you, it is **recommended that you download each application and your scores from Fluid Review** in order to easily access the application materials, notes and initial scores during the meeting. The day of the panel meeting, panelists should have all materials available either as printed copies or by accessing the materials digitally using a personal laptop or other electronic device via the downloaded applications or wireless connection in Fluid Review.

If you have questions about an application please request clarification from Arts Ed Collective staff rather than contacting the applicant.

## **PANEL MEETING LOGISTICS**

**Please remember to bring paper or digital copies of your reviewed applications and completed evaluation forms on the day of the panel meeting.**

Arts Ed Collective staff will moderate the panel meeting.

1. Panelists are provided with a light breakfast and coffee, tea and water. Staff and panelists introduce themselves. The moderator will collect conflict of interest forms, honorarium invoices.
2. Arts Ed Collective staff who serve as district liaisons will be present during the panel conversation as listeners.
3. All panelists discuss each applicant’s alignment to the review criteria. All panelists are expected to provide comments on each application.
4. Following discussion of each application, panelists report a preliminary score.
5. After all applications have been reviewed, the moderator will average the scores and generate a table with the first round of scores, ranked from highest to lowest. Each panelist reviews his/her score of each applicant for accuracy.

If there is a wide disparity between the highest and lowest score given to an application, additional discussion and individual score adjustments may be made. Panelists as a body may also elect to raise the score of an applicant. When consensus is reached the moderator tallies final scores and final score sheets are submitted in Fluid Review.

At the conclusion of the panel meeting, panelists share ideas for improving the process. Arts and Culture values the perspectives of panelists and relies upon them to suggest ways to make this public grant program more responsive to applicants' needs.

## **PANEL MEETING COMMENTS**

It is part of Arts and Culture's mandate to foster excellence in the arts in the County of Los Angeles. Therefore, the Department views the peer panel process as not only a means to allocate grant funds but also to assist in the growth of the school districts through helpful feedback about their management and programs. Comments and advice given by a panel of peers carries tremendous weight with the applicants.

Arts and Culture encourages panel comments that are balanced, acknowledge strengths and identify weaknesses of the application, offer constructive suggestions for improvement, and convey respect at all times.

The Arts Ed Collective staff will take notes on comments made during the panel meeting. Sessions are not taped and comments are not attributed to specific panelists. Applicants are encouraged to make phone appointments with the staff to discuss panel comments.

## REVIEW CRITERIA

All Funding Requests must demonstrate the following to be eligible for funding:

### **Criterion 1: STRATEGIC DIRECTION (35 points maximum)**

Arts education goal(s) for the upcoming year are described in detail and are included in an active district plan such as the Strategic Plan for Arts Education or the Local Control Accountability Plan. All district plan(s) are clearly cited. There is a clear and compelling justification of why this is the right time to embark on this aspect of the district's arts education plan, how this project builds upon past successes, and how it moves the district towards providing arts education for all students. It is clear how the project initiates or expands strategies for advancing arts education in the district. The proposed project is clearly aimed at generating resources, practices, skills or knowledge that will be sustained beyond the term of the grant. The district has a strong plan for completing the strategy or assuming the full ongoing cost.

### **Criterion 2: QUALITY OF PROJECT PLAN (30 points maximum)**

The project is thoughtfully designed and clearly described. The project plan identifies specific activities that can be realistically accomplished with the designated resources and timeline. The project activities clearly reflect the district goals and strategies. The proposal conveys overall clarity and coherence.

### **Criterion 3: QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION (10 points maximum)**

There is a clear and specific plan to monitor project results. The project has measurable goals and a clear and appropriate evaluation methodology in place that uses qualitative and quantitative data to address the quantity, quality, or equitable distribution of arts instruction offered in the school district. The evaluation methodology is appropriate to the anticipated outcomes.

### **Criterion 4: PERSONNEL CAPACITY (15 points maximum)**

Professional staff with strong qualifications are in place to manage and implement the project. District administration has an identified role and there is evidence of support from multiple levels of district leadership. Staff providing instruction or professional development has demonstrated expertise. Community arts partners have been approved for the Community Arts Educators Directory. The roles and responsibilities of the staff, district administration, and proposed partners are clearly defined.

### **Criterion 5: FISCAL CAPACITY (10 points maximum)**

Project expenses are clearly described and calculated accurately. Specific activities have been appropriately budgeted. The costs are consistent with equivalent programs or services in the arts education field. A minimum of one to one matching funds are committed and identified.

### **Priority Point Area 1: STUDENT POPULATION (8 points maximum)**

Districts serving large student populations will earn priority points for supplemental funding as follows:

- Enrollment of 10,000 – 19,999 = 4 priority points
- Enrollment of 20,000 or greater = 8 priority points

### **Priority Point Area 2: UNDUPLICATED PUPIL COUNT (4 points)**

Districts with an Unduplicated Pupil Count equal to or greater than 71% will earn 4 priority points for supplemental funding.

**TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 112\***

\* Scores over 100 may receive more than the funding request.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### APPLICATION REVIEW

- Q: I don't think this application is eligible, based on my reading of the guidelines. Should I still review the application?**
- A: Go ahead and review it. If the consensus of the panelists is that the application is ineligible, it will not be considered for funding.
- Q: This applicant really needs/doesn't need this money. May I factor this into my score?**
- A: No, you may not. Assess applications according to merit, not perceived need.
- Q: Can I factor into the scoring any misspellings, poor grammar, etc.?**
- A: While a poorly presented application does impact scoring insofar as it fails to convey vital information, do not make any point deductions on the basis of "looks" alone.

### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Q: I know the district and school staff. Is there a conflict of interest?**
- A: If you feel capable of objectively assessing the school district and you have not materially benefited from your association with them for the past 12 months, there is no conflict of interest.
- Q: I've been in discussions with the district's staff members about a joint project a few months from now. Do I need to excuse myself from the discussion?**
- A: Yes. If it is possible that you may derive future material benefit from an upcoming collaboration, you may not score their application.

### LOGISTICS

- Q: May I keep the applications after the session?**
- A: Yes. However, staff will collect the evaluation forms at the end of the panel meeting.

### EMERGENCIES

- Q: It is the morning of the panel. I or my child is severely ill. What do I do?**
- A: While it is important to have all panelists present at the session, if you can't attend, you can't. Please leave a voicemail on the Department's main line (213) 202-5858 in advance of the session.