WELCOME

On behalf of the Grants and Professional Development team, thank you for joining the hundreds of community members, artists, nonprofit professionals, scholars, arts educators and cultural workers of Los Angeles County who have served as panelists for the Arts Commission, now the Department of Arts and Culture. We greatly appreciate your generous contribution of time, energy, and passion serving in this critical role for the Community Impact Arts Grant application review process.

This Panelist Handbook provides details regarding panel service to support your successful participation and review of the applications. CIAG supports the work community-based organizations, institutions of higher learning and municipalities are invested in to ensure that residents have access to arts and culture as a resource for their overall wellbeing. We look forward to a wonderful day of discussion. Thank you for your dedication to the arts and public funding for the arts!

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*Please note that most correspondence will come from ciag@arts.lacounty.gov
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ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

The Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture advances arts, culture, and creativity throughout Los Angeles County. We fulfill our mission by providing services and support in areas including grants and technical assistance for nonprofit organizations; professional development opportunities; commissioning civic artworks and managing the County’s civic art collection; implementing countywide arts education initiatives; research and evaluation; career pathways in the creative economy; free community programs; and cross sector creative strategies that address civic issues. This work is framed by the County’s Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative and a longstanding commitment to fostering access to the arts. www.lacountyarts.org

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY IMPACT ARTS GRANT PROGRAM

The Community Impact Arts Grant (CIAG) program provides $750,000 in financial support for exemplary arts projects produced by nonprofit organizations, municipalities and institutions of higher learning whose primary mission is outside the arts. This is the program’s fifth year and future funding will be determined by the LA County Board of Supervisors at a later date.

CIAG recognizes the value of the arts as a vital tool for civic problem solving across a range of issue areas. The program seeks to support the complex arts ecology of Los Angeles County by increasing access and strengthening the quality of arts programming wherever it happens – in health nonprofits, the human service sector, criminal/restorative justice, community/economic development, or environmental justice, to name a few. This grant is designed to promote and highlight cross-sector strategies and support organizations that provide high-quality arts programs as part of their larger mission to provide services to individuals and in the community.

PANEL SERVICE

The Department of Arts and Culture believes that better decisions come from having diverse voices at the table. Panelists reflect the county’s diversity and geography as well as a range of professional and lived experiences. Through a participatory grantmaking panel, applications are reviewed and scored based on grant review criteria. The scores and reviews are the basis for recommendations for funding that are approved by the Arts Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

PANEL LOCATION AND PARKING

Our offices are located at 1055 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 800, Los Angeles, CA 90017. Free validated parking will be offered at the lot next door located at the Piero Apartment Building at 609 South Bixel, Los Angeles, CA 90017. If the lot is full, mention the Department of Arts and Culture (or Arts Commission) to the attendant. We have paid parking spots reserved in the lot. Do not park in the lot in our building as we cannot validate parking.

PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

Applications are reviewed and scored through a participatory grantmaking panel. The peer review panel is made up of artists, arts and nonprofit professionals, social service providers, community members, and others with knowledge and professional qualifications in the arts, social service and nonprofit sectors. Panelists reflect the county’s diversity and geography as well as a range of professional and lived experiences and have familiarity of Los Angeles County arts and social service sectors. Grant review panels reflect the diversity of the region as well as the various professional groups encompassed by the arts and social service sectors, such as practitioners, administrators, board members, and educators.
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 Arts Commission rests, in part, on your familiarity with the local arts and social service sectors.

The Department of Arts and Culture defines conflict of interest 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 a grant application if she/he/they 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 organization or is a board member.
• You have served on the organization’s board of directors within the past year.
• You have received fees for services from an organization within the past year.
• You have a contractual disagreement with an organization or its management.
• You are an unpaid volunteer who serves as or holds a formal position with the organization.

PANELIST INSTRUCTIONS
Prior to beginning the application review, please read and complete the following steps:

1. **Register as an LA County Vendor**: [https://www.lacountyarts.org/county-vendor-information-and-resources](https://www.lacountyarts.org/county-vendor-information-and-resources). This is required to receive the $200 panelist stipend.
2. **Review the list of applicants and complete the Conflict of Interest form**. Contact staff in advance of your panel meeting to disclose conflicts of interest with applicants and/or if you have questions about this policy. If you determine that there is a conflict with more than two applications, please contact me as soon as possible and I will try to switch you to a different panel.
3. **Review and Sign the Memorandum of Understanding – Community Impact Arts Grant Panelist Participation Form**. Once complete, scan and email the document to grants staff at ciag@arts.lacounty.gov.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS
Your responsibilities as a panelist are to review application materials, score them, comment on their excellence and merit based on the review criteria, and participate in the panel discussion.

PRE-PANEL
Staff will host a panel orientation prior to the panel meeting on Tuesday, February 11, Tuesday, February 25 and Tuesday, March 10 at 12 noon PST. It is highly recommended that you participate. Call-in information will be sent via email.
APPLICATION REVIEW
Prior to the panel meeting, read and evaluate all assigned applications and application materials via the Fluid Review system – see Panel Reviewer Guide. We estimate that the review time for each application (application narratives, supplemental materials such as the Federal Form 990 and Letters of Recommendation/Reviews, scoring and comments) will take an average of 30-45 minutes per application. In your analysis, assess the strengths and weaknesses of each application and make note of this in the review sheet. This will also facilitate more time for discussion on the day of the panel meeting. No time will be provided for reading applications during the panel meeting. Note: Artistic documentation (work samples) will be reviewed briefly on the day of the panel.

As you review applications please keep in mind:
• Awards are made on the basis of merit, not need.
• Grants must be matched at least dollar-for-dollar by the applicant organization.
• Reimbursable activities must take place between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

SITE VISITS
Panelists are encouraged to conduct site visits with applicants prior to the panel meeting and if time permits. Applicants submit a list of workshops, performances, exhibitions or events in the application, where you will find the organization’s contact information for arranging complimentary tickets (if applicable and available) and/or other site visit information. We also encourage you to visit the organization website for additional information.

If interested, contact Department of Arts and Culture staff. Please respect any limitations or restrictions placed on you as a panelist as we respect organizational legal and privacy concerns. Applicants are not required to provide tickets.

POST-PANEL
A representative from each grant panel appears before the Arts Commissioners to present a panel report communicating their perceptions of the panel and answers Commissioners’ questions. Arts Commissioners review scores and comment summaries. This Arts Commission meeting takes place on May 11, 2020. At the end of the panel meeting, the panel will discuss who is available and interested in presenting on that day. Notes and suggested talking points will be provided.

A PRIMER FOR APPLICATION REVIEW
Read through this Panelist Handbook and Reviewer Guide. Contact staff if you have any questions. Important links and information for accessing the applications will be sent to you via email. The below is a list of the items you will need to access before the application review. Items 1-5 are available on the CIAG panelist webpage at: https://www.lacountyarts.org/ciag-panelists. NOTE: Item 6 was included in the confirmation email with instructions for logging into the Fluid Review online grant portal.

1, 2, 3. CIAG Panel Review Guidelines, CIAG Program Guidelines and Sample Application – These are the official application guidelines and criteria that were provided to applicants in order to complete the application along with a sample online application.

4. CIAG Cultural Equity and Inclusion (CEI) Resources – A list of helpful resources covering topics such as implicit bias and cultural competency and links to articles that address grantmaking through the lens of cultural equity and inclusion.
5. **Conflict of Interest form** – To disclose or decline conflicts with the applicants in your panel.

6. **Applicant Roster** – Includes the names of all the organizations in your panel pool, in the order in which they will be discussed on the day of panel. *Sent via email as an attachment.*

**APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

2020-21 CIAG applications were received in October 2019. Eligible applications are reviewed in February and March, and the panel's recommendations will be considered at the Arts Commission meeting in May 2020, with a final review and approval by the Board of Supervisors in July 2020. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in July 2020.

The official public grant announcement will be posted on [lacountyarts.org](http://lacountyarts.org) in summer 2020.

<table>
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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application Deadline</td>
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<td>Panel Meeting</td>
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<td>Earliest Announcement of Award or Rejection</td>
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All organizations and projects in this applicant pool are eligible for review. It is up to panelists to evaluate the diverse range of projects against the application requirements detailed in the Community Impact Arts Grant Program Guidelines.

As outlined in the guidelines above, the LA County Department of Arts and Culture has integrated Culturally Equity and Inclusion (CEI) in the application and review process. For additional details about CEI, please reference the CEI Resources document.

**REVIEW CRITERIA, SCORING & COMMENTS**

Panelists' assessments and scores are the basis for applicant rankings and recommendations to the Arts Commissioners. Panelists do not recommend funding amounts or set the cut-off score below which applicants are not funded.

**REVIEW CRITERIA POINT REDISTRIBUTION**
The maximum point total for Artistic Merit – Criterion 1 has been changed from 40 to 35 and point distribution for Knowledge of Target Constituents and Needs – Criterion 5 has changed from 20 to 25.

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<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Readiness/Management Capacity</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Project Plan</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Quality of Project Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Target Constituents and Needs</td>
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**UPDATED APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

Additionally, the application now includes additional questions so that applicants can address
how the values of cultural equity and inclusion are integrated and reflected. To view the application, click here.

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT & SCORING
Panelists should consider each application on its own merits. The 100-point scoring system assigns a greater maximum point value to artistic merit than to the other criteria as the Arts Commission believes artistic quality to be a fundamental consideration. If you have questions about an application, please request clarification from grants staff rather than contacting the applicant organization directly.

Assign a preliminary score for each review criteria and notes that correspond to each score prior to the panel meeting in the Fluid Review system.

APPLICATION COMMENTS
The Department of Arts and Culture seeks to foster excellence in the arts throughout the County of Los Angeles. The peer panel process is not only a means to allocate grant funds but also to assist in the administrative and artistic growth of the applicants through helpful feedback about organizational and program management. Comments and advice given by the peer panel carries tremendous weight with the applicants.

We encourage panel comments that convey respect at all times, are balanced, acknowledge strengths and identify application weaknesses offering constructive suggestions for improvement.

Department of Arts and Culture staff will take notes on comments made during the panel meeting. Applicants are encouraged to make phone appointments with the grants staff subsequent to the award notifications to discuss panel comments in greater detail. NOTE: Audio from panels is recorded to assist staff in compiling notes, but comments are not attributed to specific panelists and the audio is not shared.

PANEL PREP & MEETING LOGISTICS
Once your application review and scoring are complete, download the Panelist Review form from Fluid Review to your device or bring printouts to the panel meeting. See the Panel Reviewer Guide for instructions.

On the day of the panel, please be sure to bring:
1. A laptop, tablet or iPad with downloaded applications and/or printouts of each application.
2. PDF or printouts of preliminary scores and comments for each application on your scoresheets.

PANEL MEETING LOGISTICS
Grants and Professional Development staff will facilitate the panel meeting.
• Panelists are provided a light breakfast, coffee, tea and water. The day begins with staff and panelist introductions and the collections of required forms, if not emailed prior to the panel meeting.
• Panelists review the applicant’s artistic documentation as a group. When panelists feel they have seen enough of the sample as to form a judgment, they raise their hands to indicate they are ready to move on.
• Panelists then discuss the application as a group for a maximum of 15 minutes.
Panel discussion follows the order of the review criteria beginning with artistic documentation/merit and working through the remaining review criteria: organizational readiness, management capacity, project plan, project evaluation and knowledge of target constituents and needs. Organizational effort in cultural equity and inclusion will also be discussed. All panelists are expected to provide comments for each application.

- Following the application discussion, panelists report a total score for each applicant.
- After reviewing several applications, the panel will either break for lunch or elect to work through lunch. Lunch is provided by the Department of Arts and Culture at 12 noon. **IMPORTANT: Please notify grants staff if you have any dietary restrictions/allergies.**
- After the applications have been reviewed, staff calculates an overall score for each applicant (an average of all panelist scores) and generates a table for review, with first round scores ranked from highest to lowest.
- Panelists review her/his/their score for each applicant for accuracy and personal consistency. Additional discussion and individual score adjustments may be made at this time, especially if there is a wide disparity between the highest and lowest score given to an application. The panelist body may also elect to raise the score of an applicant.
- Once consensus is reached, staff tallies final scores and collects any score sheet printouts.
- At the conclusion of the panel meeting, panelists share ideas for process improvement with staff. The Department of Arts and Culture values the perspectives of panelists and relies upon them to improve the grantmaking and panel processes.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Q: I don’t think this application is eligible for Department of Arts and Culture support, based on my reading of the guidelines. Should I still review the application?
A: Go ahead and review it, taking note of your thoughts. All applications included in the review are eligible.

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 the application’s merit, not perceived need. All nonprofit organizations need funds.

Q: Can I deduct a standard number of points for applications with misspellings, poor grammar, etc.?
A: While a poorly presented application does impact scoring insofar as it fails to convey vital information, and speaks to organizational readiness, do not make any point deductions on the basis of “looks” alone.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Q: I know the executive director and a few of the board members. Is there a conflict of interest?
A: If you feel capable of objectively assessing the organization and you have not materially benefited from your association with the executive director/board members for the past 12 months, there is no conflict of interest.

Q: I’ve been in discussions with the organization’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 vote on the organization’s application.

**EMERGENCIES**
Q: It is the morning of the panel, I or my dependent family member is severely ill. What do I do?

A: Please make every effort to honor your commitment to serve on the grants panel. While it is important to have all panelists present, emergencies happen. If you cannot attend, please leave a voicemail on the Department of Arts and Culture’s main line (213) 202-5858 in advance of the meeting – before 9:30 AM – on the day of the panel.

Thank you for your service!
The Department of Arts and Culture envisions a region in which arts, culture, and creativity are integral to every aspect of civic life for all people and communities.