



PANELIST HANDBOOK

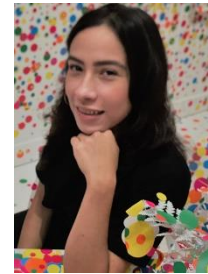
Community Impact Arts Grant

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!



Anji Gaspar Milanović
Director of Grants and Professional
Development

Laura Guerrero Nieto
Senior Program Associate, Grants and
Professional Development

COMMUNITY IMPACT ARTS TEAM

Anji Gaspar Milanović, Director | Grants and Professional Development
amilanovic@arts.lacounty.gov


Marah Morris, Programs Manager | Grants and Professional Development
mmorris@arts.lacounty.gov


Laura Guerrero Nieto, Senior Program Associate | Grants and Professional Development
lguerrero-nieto@arts.lacounty.gov


Ann Jensen, Program Assistant | Grants and Professional Development
ajensen@arts.lacounty.gov


**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 sixth 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 social, criminal and restorative justice, health nonprofits and human service sector, community and economic development, youth services 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, broad geography and a range of professional and lived experiences. Applications are reviewed and scored based on grant review criteria through a participatory grantmaking panel. 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

In light of the public health emergency posed by COVID-19 and in accordance with state and county public health orders, all panels will take place virtually via a private Zoom link. To support clear communication, you might consider logging in online for video and calling in for audio via phone.

Join Zoom Panel Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/94803933724?pwd=elpZWG5WZ0EyNkhPajduUEZmeGIPdz09>

Meeting ID: 948 0393 3724 | **Video Passcode:** CIAG

Phone In:

One tap mobile: +16699006833,,94803933724#,,,,,0#,,414739# US (San Jose)

Dial-In: 1-669-900-6833 US | Meeting ID: 948 0393 3724 | Phone Passcode: 414739 OR Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/abPZd4NcZ0>

PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

Applications are reviewed and scored through a participatory grantmaking panel. This 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>. This is required to receive the \$300 panelist stipend.
2. **Review the list of applicants and complete the [Conflict of Interest form \(COI\)](#).** 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. Upload your completed COI form to the [CIAG Panelist Materials Dropbox](#).
3. **Review and Sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Community Impact Arts Grant Panelist Participation Form.** This is sent via AdobeSign for electronic signature. If you've requested the MOU emailed, once complete scan and upload the document to the [CIAG Panelist Materials Dropbox](#).
4. **Panelist Invoice – [Downloadable from the CIAG panelist website](#).** Once you have your LA County Vendor ID, complete and upload your completed invoice to the [CIAG Panelist Materials Dropbox](#).

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. Below is a list of the items you will need to access before the application review.

Items 1-6 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 [SurveyMonkey Apply](#) online grant portal.*

- 1, 2, 3. [CIAG Panel Review Criteria](#), [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 Panelist \(SMAApply\) Review Guide](#) – Step-by-step login and application review instructions in the online grant management system.
5. [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

2021-21 CIAG applications were received in October 2020. Eligible applications are reviewed in December, and the panel's recommendations will be considered at the Arts Commission meeting in March 2021, with a final review and approval by the Board of Supervisors by July 2021. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in July 2021.

The official public grant announcement will be posted on lacountyarts.org in summer 2021.

Application Deadline	October 2020
Panel Meeting	Winter 2020
Arts Commission Meeting + Panel Presentations	March 8, 2021
Earliest Announcement of Award or Rejection	July 2021
Earliest Beginning Date of Awarded Projects	July 1, 2021

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](#).

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

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

PRE-PANEL ORIENTATION

Staff will host a panel orientation prior to the panel meeting on Friday, December 4 at 10 AM PST and Monday, December 7 at 1 PM PST. These sessions will run a maximum of 1.5 hours. If you are a first-time panelist, it is highly recommended that you participate. Meeting information is the same as the panel Zoom information on page 3 above.

The purpose of this meeting is to maximize your time and will help orient you to the application and the grant review portal. *Staff is always available to review your questions. If you are unable to make one of these sessions, we can set-up a separate time to speak.*

APPLICATION REVIEW PLANNING

We estimate the review time for each application will take an average of 45 minutes. All panel comments and scores are due TWO DAYS prior to your assigned panel, and no time will be provided for reading or scoring applications during the panel meeting.

PANEL ANALYSIS

Prior to each panel, all scores and comments will be evaluated to assess the highest priority items for discussion. The panel meeting will prioritize additional discussion of applications with a wide disparity between the highest and lowest score given and applications that are the lowest scoring.

APPLICATION REVIEW, 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.

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, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

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.

APPLICATION REVIEW STEPS

The application review includes: (NOTE: Steps 1 and 2 can be interchanged.)

1. Read the full application.
2. Review artistic samples.
3. Read through supplemental materials. (Federal Form 990 and Letters of Recommendation/ Reviews)
4. Evaluate each application based on each CIAG review criterion and your knowledge of the arts discipline and/or nonprofit field.
5. Provide comments, notes, questions, for each criterion.
6. Assign a score for each review criterion.

REVIEW CRITERIA POINT DISTRIBUTION

CRITERION	TOTAL POINTS	QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	SCORING SCALE
Artistic Merit	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is artistic integrity and professionalism in arts programs and services• Demonstrates cross-sector understanding, showing a clear link between the choice of arts programs, the needs of constituents and the organization's overall mission• Artistic personnel are experienced and knowledgeable	31-35: Outstanding 27-30: Above average 21-26: Average 16-20: Below average 1-15: Poor 0: Doesn't qualify

Organizational Readiness/ Management Excellence/ Fiscal Responsibility	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is clear evidence of resourcefulness to meet internal and external challenges • Staff and volunteers are qualified and involved • Organizational leadership has set realistic goals • Ability to clearly and thoroughly address all application questions 	20: Outstanding 17-19: Above average 15-16: Average 10-14: Below average 1-9: Poor 0: Doesn't qualify
Quality of Project Plan	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a detailed and coherent project plan, including specific activities within a manageable timeframe • Presents a realistic and appropriate project budget including identified sources for the match requirements. 	15: Outstanding 13-14: Above average 11-12: Average 8-10: Below average 1-7: Poor 0: Doesn't qualify
Quality of Project Evaluation	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights a clear and specific plan to monitor project results and is appropriate to the anticipated outcomes 	5: Outstanding 4: Above average 3: Average 2: Below average 1: Poor 0: Doesn't qualify

GRANT REVIEW PORTAL

Application materials are assigned to you in [SurveyMonkey Apply](#). Use the [Panel Reviewer Guide](#) to navigate the portal. In your analysis, assess the strengths and weaknesses of each application and make note of this in the digital review sheet.

APPLICATOIN REVIEW 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.

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 March 8, 2021. 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.

DAY-OF PANEL PREP + MEETING LOGISTICS

Once your application review and scoring are complete, download your Panelist Review form from SurveyMonkey Apply to your device or have printouts available for the panel meeting. See *the Panel Reviewer Guide for instructions*.

PANEL MEETING LOGISTICS

Grants and Professional Development staff will facilitate the panel meeting, beginning with an overview of CIAG, community agreements, virtual meeting etiquette and grounding.

- All required forms should be completed and emailed no later than end of day of the panel meeting.
- Panelists will receive the panel analysis of submitted scores and an overview of the applications requiring additional discussion.
- A panelist can also request additional discussion of an application.
- On average, we will opt to discuss these applications as a group for a maximum of 15 minutes.
 - Panel discussion will follow the order of the review criteria beginning with artistic merit and working through the remaining review criteria: organizational readiness, managerial excellence, fiscal responsibility, project plan, project evaluation and knowledge of target constituents and needs. Organizational effort in cultural equity and inclusion will also be discussed. *Panelists are expected to provide comments for each application.*
- Following the application discussion, panelists can change the score in any/all review criterion.
 - If scores were changed, panelists will re-total the score for the applicant.
- All panelists will report final scores, whether changed or not, for each application in discussion.
- After the applications have been reviewed, staff calculates an overall score for each applicant, the 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. The panelist body may also elect to raise the score of an applicant.
- Once consensus is reached, staff tallies final scores.
- 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, please don't. Base your assessment on 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 holding these things in their complexity and basing your review on what the organization has presented, please review. So long as 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 ill or has COVID symptoms. What do I do?

A: While it is important to have all panelists present, emergencies happen. Please take every reasonable precaution. Contacting your medical provider, following [Department of Public Health](#) recommendations and maintaining community health is of the utmost importance. We appreciate your commitment to this process, and effort to honor your commitment to serve on the grants panel. Should you be unable to attend, please contact Laura Guerrero-Nieto directly via email lguerrero-nieto@arts.lacounty.gov or phone (213) 447-5177.

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.

Los Angeles
County
Arts &
Culture

Los Angeles County
Department of Arts and Culture
1055 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 800
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213-202-5858 lacountyarts.org