

Washington State Arts Commission

Creative Districts Capital Project Grant Guidelines FY26-27

Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) administers several grant programs that provide support for arts and culture organizations and arts education. The information below is specifically for Creative Districts Capital Project (CDCP) grants.

All grant proposals must be submitted electronically, through ArtsWA's online form using Submittable. You must create a Submittable username and password before entering your application if you have not used the system before. Use the Organization Identifier to search for your organization to ensure your application is attached to the same account as you've used previously.

Submittable resources:

- [Getting Started as a New Submitter | Submittable Help Center](#)
- [Submittable FAQ](#)

Timeline:

- **September 23, 2025:** application opens
- **November 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.:** application closes
- **January 2026:** preliminary approval notifications sent to applicants
- **February 2026:** recommended projects submitted to ArtsWA Board of Commissioners for approval
- **March 2026:** ArtsWA sends contracts for approved projects and project work begins
- **September 2026:** mid-project update (via Submittable form sent by ArtsWA)
- **June 30, 2027:** all project work complete and Final Report due

[Follow this link to the grant application.](#)

Applications will be accepted between **September 23, 2025 – November 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**

About this grant program

The purpose of the Creative Districts Capital Project (CDCP) program is to enable Washington State's certified Creative Districts to make small-scale capital investments within the boundaries of their Districts. The CDCP program began as a pilot in FY 2021. These projects better enable Districts to increase community visibility, attract visitors, and bring in new activity and revenues. Only Washington State Certified Creative District administering organizations are eligible for this grant program.

Projects may include but are not limited to: ready-to-go investments in wayfinding, lighting, installed signage, frontage improvements, electronic reader-board renovations, pathway connections, public murals and sculptures, visitor kiosks, public performance spaces/stages, and more. Projects should be planned so they will be completed within the biennium, by June 30, 2027.

The state legislature allowed unspent funds from last fiscal biennium to be rolled into this fiscal biennium, bringing the total funding pool to \$445,000. ArtsWA has set the cap for grant requests to \$50,000 per community, regardless of previous funding through this program. The application includes space for each Creative District to identify an additional funding request that will be considered if additional funding becomes available during this biennium (before February 1, 2027). Funding not requested by the closing date of this application may be reallocated as additional funding to those that applied.

Eligible organizations

Only Creative District administering organizations are eligible for the grant. The following types of organizations are eligible for this grant:

- Local governments (cities, towns, and counties)
- Nonprofits
- Special districts such as port, public utility, park and recreation, conservation, and school districts
- Tribal governments

The applicant *must* be the Creative District administering authority. This authority must certify that the final project will produce public benefit for at least five (5) years.

If the Creative District administering authority is not the owner of the property on which the project will be located, they must provide a binding partnership agreement with the property owner for the project to proceed. Applicants must demonstrate that their project will primarily benefit the community at large rather than the participating property owner or owner's clients. All partnerships must provide a copy of an executed joint-operating agreement at the time of application that:

- Demonstrates that the final project will produce public benefit for at least 5 years
- Establishes which party has authority to oversee execution of the project
- Contains a contingency plan to address the possibility of dissolution or other change of ownership, to address how public funds will be protected.

Steps in the grant process

- **STEP 1: Determine whether you have a feasible project and that you can meet all the grant criteria**

Before submitting your grant application, we strongly encourage you to do your homework. Look at our timeline for awarding funds to make sure that it fits with your cash-flow needs. Also, make sure you can certify that you have matching funds available before you submit your application.

Each Creative District may submit up to two (2) project proposals. Each project proposal must be submitted as a separate grant application. For example: If you submit two (2) project proposals, you will submit two (2) grant applications, one per project.

- **STEP 2: Complete your application online**

The CDCP Grant Application is online. To apply, please follow the link at the top of this document.

- **STEP 3: Application review**

All applications must be submitted electronically by November 20, 2025, 5:00 p.m. Grant applications will be reviewed by ArtsWA staff as they are received, through December 2025. If your project is recommended for funding, it will go before the ArtsWA Board of Commissioners at the quarterly board meeting in February 2026.

- **STEP 4: Enter into a contract with ArtsWA**

If your project is approved for funding, ArtsWA will draft a contract with your organization before your project can begin and funds are disbursed.

- **STEP 5: Begin project**

Your project can begin after your grant contract is signed with ArtsWA. This will likely be in March of 2026.

- **STEP 6: Submit reimbursement materials**

This is a reimbursement-style grant. That means no advance payments, but we've worked hard to make the paperwork straightforward. Reimbursements can be submitted to ArtsWA on a mutually agreed-upon schedule, but no more frequently than quarterly. Grant contracts will contain the reimbursement schedule. Please request a reimbursement form from us by email when you are ready.

- **STEP 7: Submit final report**

When your project is complete (by or before June 30, 2027), submit your project Final Report to ArtsWA. This is an additional form in Submittable. Please request this form from us by email when you are ready.

Project length

All project work must be completed by June 30, 2027. Final reports and reimbursement may happen past that date if needed, but no later than July 9, 2027.

Grant funding is reimbursed

Grant dollars are reimbursement only. This means that project work must be completed and properly documented before you receive grant dollars. Partial reimbursements may be requested throughout the course of a grant project on a quarterly basis if sufficient match is also concurrently documented. Please request a reimbursement form from us by email when you are ready.

Prevailing wages

CDCP projects are subject to Washington State prevailing wage laws. See [Washington State Department of Labor & Industries' website](#) for more information.

Archeological surveys may be required

To protect archeological and cultural resources that may be damaged by construction, grant recipients must fill out a cultural resources form if they are disturbing land or buying land for later construction.

Governor's Executive Order 05-05 requires ArtsWA to send the information to the state Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and to consult with Native American Tribes. If a project is determined to affect resources, grant recipients may be required to conduct a professional survey or perform mitigation actions.

Please visit the [Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's Web site](#) for more detailed information.

Survey and Inventory Standards: [Washington State Standards for Cultural Resources Reporting](#).

Project funding amounts and match requirements

All Districts can apply for up to \$50,000 in grant funds, regardless of previous grant funding, for this fiscal biennium. The application includes space for each Creative District to identify an additional funding request that will be considered if additional funding becomes available during this biennium (before February 1, 2027). Additional funding request amounts are not limited, and can take your total requested amount over \$50,000 in total, but still require a 100% match. Funding not requested by the closing date of this application may be reallocated as additional funding to those that applied.

The CDCP grant requires a 100% match, meaning the applicant must contribute at least the same amount as the grant. The match may be any ratio of in-kind-to-cash. Grant requests are eligible for match reduction if the communities qualify. See next section in the grant guidelines for instructions about how in-kind donations can be used.

Please note that ArtsWA does not guarantee that you will receive the maximum amount you have requested for this grant.

Applicants must secure the required match before the Commission awards the grant. ArtsWA grants are intended to be the last source of funding for a project.

To be eligible, all matching resources must be:

- An integral and necessary part of the approved project.
- Part of the work identified in the application and grant agreement.
- Allocated for eligible work types or elements.
- Committed to the project. ArtsWA rules governing projects apply to the grant applicant's match.

Matching resources must not be used as match in another agency or board-funded project.

Eligible match

A sponsor's matching share may include one or more of the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds: council or voter
- Donations: the value of using cash, equipment, labor, land, materials, property rights, or services
- Force account: the value of using sponsor's equipment, labor, or materials
- Proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment

Not allowed as match

- Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that already has been reimbursed or used as match in another ArtsWA project shall not be used as a match on this ArtsWA project.)
- Costs that are not eligible for grant assistance.
- Costs that are not necessary or an integral part of the project scope.
- Costs associated with meeting a mitigation requirement unrelated to the funded project.

Eligible costs

Capital budget funds may generally be used to pay for the following construction-related expenses incurred by the grantee:

- Design, architectural, and engineering work
- Artist fees
- Building permits/fees
- Archeological/historical review
- Construction labor and materials
- Demolition/site preparation
- Capitalized equipment
- Information technology infrastructure (cables and wiring)
- Construction management (*from external sources only*)
- Initial furnishings
- Landscaping
- Real property when purchased specifically for the project, and associated costs

Ineligible costs

All grants are intended to fund "bricks and mortar" projects. Therefore, the following costs are not eligible for reimbursement and *cannot be used to match state funds*:

- Internal administrative activities
- Project management (from any sources)
- Fundraising activities
- Feasibility studies
- Computers or office equipment
- Rolling stock (such as vehicles)
- Lease payments for rental of equipment or facilities

- Mortgage or property leases (including long-term)
- Moving of equipment, furniture, etc., between facilities

Match availability and certification

To help ensure projects are ready for implementation upon approval, applicants must have matching funds available for expenditure before the Arts Commission approves funding. All applicants are required to sign and submit Certification of Match forms to ensure their projects are included in the funding recommendations. ArtsWA advises applicants to plan for projects whose match depends on citizen votes or passage of ballot measures. This certification is required with project application.

ArtsWA may declare projects ineligible if there is no guarantee that matching funds are available. Those projects may be passed over in favor of projects with the match in place. Such decisions are based on the Arts Commission's confidence in the applicants' ability to have the match in place when required.

Eligible in-kind donations

You may apply in-kind donations toward your match requirement. Eligible donations include property, labor (except when donated by applicant's paid staff), materials or equipment if their value can be properly assessed and documented. For example, the value of donated real estate must be documented by an appraisal performed by a certified professional appraiser or county assessment.

Professional labor is calculated as the rate a volunteer would normally charge for their services (must be documented with invoices). Nonprofessional labor is calculated at current WA State minimum wage (\$16.66/hr. in 2025). However, we reserve the right to make the final determination regarding the acceptability of in-kind contributions.

You can accept in-kind donations that exceed your grant amount if it will help you to complete your project.

Match reduction

Some local agencies may reduce their match in the CDCP if they meet the match reduction criteria below as a community in need. To determine eligibility, applicant must refer to the [United States Census Bureau's Quick Facts website](#) to find appropriate median income information about their community. Accurate median income information is also included in your zip code demographic report from Thurston County Economic Development Council (that was distributed to your District for the most recent Annual Report). Both of these sources are accepted. Other sources of data will not be accepted. ArtsWA will verify applicant's request for match reduction before granting the request.

- **Communities in need:** A city, town, Tribe, or eligible special purpose district with a median household income in their ZIP code(s) of 99.99% or less than the current state median household income, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. See our policy below for complete details.

Communities in need

If the grant applicant administrator is in a city, town, Tribe, or eligible special purpose district with a median household income less than 99.99% of the state median household income (\$94,952 as of 2023), the applicant's match is identified in Table 1.

Table 1. Minimum Match for Communities in Need Jurisdiction's Median Household Income as a Percent of State	
Median Community Household Income relative to State Household Income	Minimum Match Required
0-65%	50% of required match
65-80%	65% of required match
80-99.99%	80% of required match

Policy intent

- Reduce the match required for smaller jurisdictions whose ability to raise match is constrained.
- For a low-income jurisdiction (city, town, Tribal area, eligible special purpose district) of any population size, reduce the match required for projects in a ZIP code or census block where the income is less than the jurisdiction as a whole.

Application process

Applicants will submit their application via our online form (see link to application at the top of this document). All grant proposals are reviewed by ArtsWA staff. The evaluation meeting notes and most of the application materials are open to the public.

Some sections of the application will require document uploads. Please save forms or documents on your computer, complete, and then upload in the areas provided. All documents required for your project must be completed and submitted with the application. Failure to provide the requested documentation or providing inaccurate information may result in the proposal being disqualified.

Applicant Information and Organization Identifiers

These sections include basic information concerning your organization, including contact information and other pertinent data. This section must be completed in its entirety.

ADA Compliance

This section addresses ADA compliance standards for projects that receive ArtsWA grant funds.

Conflict of Interest

This section provides transparency about individuals involved with your project. Conflicts of Interest do not prevent applications from being considered for funding.

Contact Information

This section includes contact information for the individuals directly involved with your project.

Project Information and Project Budget

Please answer thoroughly and to the best of your ability. Provide cross streets if there is no project address, the parcel number(s) of the project site, the name(s) of any organizations that will be doing the work, and their contact information.

When listing your project budget, *please use eligible costs only*. This will be different from your *total* project budget and includes only capital costs that this grant can reimburse. For more information about what costs are eligible, please refer to above section.

Supplemental Documents

This section of the application is where you will upload any additional supporting documents for the application. Examples include: letter(s) of support from your community, preliminary designs, feasibility studies, project plan, archeological survey(s), etc.