



Philippine Cultural Center Dancers

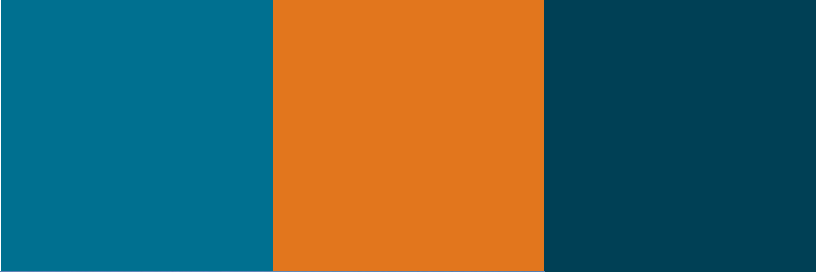
Community Cultural Arts Grants

FY27 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

DEADLINES | **August 14, 2026, November 6, 2026
and February 5, 2027**

WWW.VIRGINIABEACH.GOV/CULTURE





Pennant, Lin Emery

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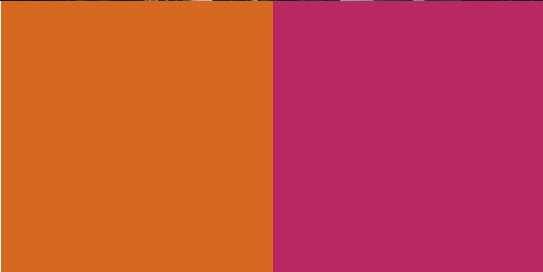
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Mille Colori, Dale Chihuly

Wings, Lin Emery

VIRGINIA BEACH ARTS AND HUMANITIES COMMISSION

The Virginia Beach Arts & Humanities Commission is dedicated to fostering a vibrant cultural community by supporting and promoting excellence in the arts and humanities. The Commission plays a vital role in enriching the lives of Virginia Beach residents by ensuring access to diverse and meaningful cultural experiences.

Key Objectives

- **Advocacy:** Championing the value of the arts and humanities to strengthen community engagement and public support.
- **Leadership Support:** Empowering arts organizations with resources, guidance, and leadership development to ensure their long-term sustainability and growth.
- **Program Development:** Providing funding and assistance to expand arts and humanities programs that serve all Virginia Beach residents.

By enhancing Virginia Beach's cultural identity, the Commission celebrates the city's diversity and fosters creativity that inspires pride, unity, and community connection.

VIRGINIA BEACH CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

As Virginia Beach continues to grow in population and visitation, having a vibrant, thriving cultural scene is a necessity and provides well-rounded and diverse options for tourists and residents.

The Virginia Beach Cultural Affairs Department is making a more vibrant Virginia Beach - using art and culture as tools for revitalization, to cultivate community pride and create new landmarks through creativity.

Arts-based, community-led transformation is happening throughout Virginia Beach thanks to the strong partnerships developed between Cultural Affairs, the Arts and Humanities Commission and area non-profit organizations, as well as the department-led initiatives that engage residents and visitors in meaningful arts, heritage, and cultural experiences.

The Cultural Affairs Department supports various initiatives, including public art, cultural programs, and neighborhood-based art projects, to ensure that art remains accessible and engaging for everyone. Its efforts are aligned with the goals of Virginia Beach's Arts Plan 2030, which envisions a city where arts and culture thrive as essential components of everyday life.

One by one Cultural Affairs' exciting projects are changing the face of our city and establishing Virginia Beach as the leader in the arts and culture in Virginia.

Skate Park, Jeff L.Hall





COMMUNITY CULTURAL ARTS GRANT OVERVIEW

The Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission's Community Cultural Arts Grant Program is designed to aid in building cultural equity in the arts in Virginia Beach by providing support for arts-based projects that reflect the changing communities in which we live through innovative, culturally rooted, and/or participatory projects with the goal of bringing the community together to celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity. The grant also recognizes a need to support emerging organizations and existing organizations which are not historically/typically represented in traditional local funding infrastructures or are representative of a cultural/ethnic community that is typically underinvested within traditional local funding infrastructures.

A high strategic priority in the Virginia Beach Arts Plan 2030 is to develop, support and promote greater diversity of arts offerings - particularly in culturally/ethnically specific arts. Actively expanding culturally diverse activities directly fulfills City Council's Goal 7 to be "An Inclusive Community that is Welcoming and Empowers All." The goal of this grant is to foster cultural equity in the arts through:

- Enhancing Understanding
- Nurturing and Celebrating Authentic Cultures
- Increasing Access
- Strengthening Community
- Investing in underserved/underrepresented Communities
- Activating Innovation, non-traditional presentation, and/or participatory experiences that are reflective of the changing communities in which we live.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications for this grant must align with one or more of the following cultural equity outcomes:

1. Enhance understanding of and respect for diverse cultural traditions, heritages, and forms of expression.
2. Nurture, celebrate, and support of authentic traditional cultural presentations and creative modern expression of culture from/by/of populations not typically included in the majority of arts presentation and/or funding opportunities.
3. Increase access to and inclusivity in experiences of culturally rooted arts and creative opportunities for communities that have previously experienced less than adequate representation.
4. Connect individuals from diverse cultures, ages, and economic means in an effort to strengthen communities and/or neighborhoods through the arts.
5. Invest in communities with artists or organizations centered on building individual capacity and potential for economic growth and stability within communities historically experiencing lower levels of public investment.
6. Activate innovation, non-traditional presentation, and/or participatory experiences to provide alternative perspectives that reflect our changing communities.

The grant program is open to 501(c)3 non-profit organizations whose mission is to represent, promote and develop arts programming derived from culturally and ethnically authentic sources, traditions, and inspiration for the purpose of increasing access, equability, and opportunity for artists of culturally/ethnically diverse backgrounds and the surrounding community while increasing understanding and/or collaboration between diverse communities.

Programs must take place within the City of Virginia Beach and be open to the public. Organizations applying must be accommodating, welcoming, and open to people of all ages, abilities, sexual orientation, gender identities, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, religions, languages, socio-economic conditions in their policies, practices, and programs.

Groups representing under-served communities including culturally/ethnically diverse communities are encouraged to apply and will be a priority.

GRANT RESTRICTIONS/INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

This grant will NOT fund:

- General operating support for cultural organizations, and funding will not exceed 75% of the total cost of the project
- A project or organization already funded by the Commission through the "Project Grant"
- Fundraising efforts
- Gifts
- Organization's administrative costs not directly related to the project
- Purchase of administrative equipment or software
- Food related costs
- Activities that do not meet the program alignments projects which do not use the arts and culture as the lens to explore a subject
- Events not open to the public

MAXIMUM GRANT AWARD

Up to a total of \$5,000 per organization per fiscal year. Available funds are allocated on a first come, first-serve basis to qualified applicants following the start of the Commission's fiscal year. (July 1 of every year)

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Applications must be submitted through the Cultural Affairs' grant software, [Foundant](#). Applicants must create an account and follow the directions provided on the website.

TIMELINE

The grant will be awarded in three rounds or until funds are exhausted.

Round 1:

Application Deadline: Friday, August 14, 2026 by 5:00 p.m. EST

Presentation & Decision Date: Thursday, September 3, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. at AHC Business Meeting

Round 2:

Application Deadline: Friday, November 6, 2026 by 5:00 p.m. EST

Presentation & Decision Date: Thursday, December 3, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. at AHC Business Meeting



Dende & Band by Holly Plate

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Round 3:

Application Deadline: Friday, February 5, 2027 by 5:00 p.m. EST

Presentation & Decision Date:
Thursday, March 25, 2027 by
appointment

- To receive funding, your application must be submitted in advance of the activity. Funds are distributed after electronic submission of the final report and receipts in the grant portal.

- Apply for the Cultural Community Arts Grant at:

<https://culturalaffairs.virginibeach.gov/grant-opportunities>

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals submitted to the program will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Quality of Project: clear, well-conceived, authentic relationship to neighborhood or other community of interest, promotes arts participation and community relations.
- Community Impact: project plan describes meaningful efforts to create community participation and reach a diverse audience.
- Feasibility: the organization has experience presenting this and/or other event(s); evidence of community involvement and support; and clear realistic budget for the event.

- Submit completed electronic application in the grant portal with all required documents noted in the application by the previously mentioned deadlines. See TIMELINE.

- An organization representative is encouraged to engage in a call with the Cultural Affairs Grants Manager upon submission.

- The organization representative is welcome to attend the business meeting where the application is being reviewed to answer Commissioner questions. If no representative is available, questions will be sent via email and the applicant organization will have 2 business days to reply. If no reply is received, the application may be denied.

- Questions contact Lisa Wigginton, Deputy Director, at Lwigginton@vbgov.com or call 757.385.2599.