



INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS SUPPORT GRANTS

FY27 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

APPLICATION DEADLINE | 5 P.M. ON FRIDAY,
October 16, 2026

WWW.VIRGINIABEACH.GOV/CULTURE



CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH
**Cultural
Affairs**

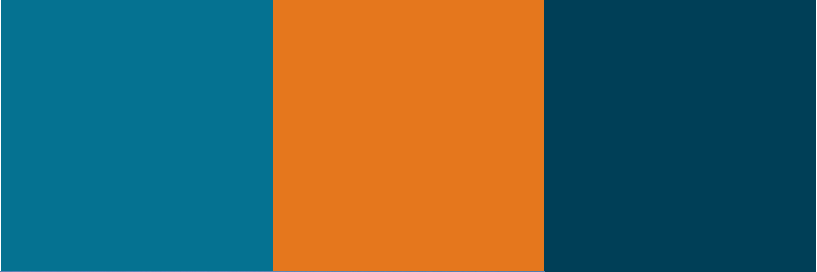


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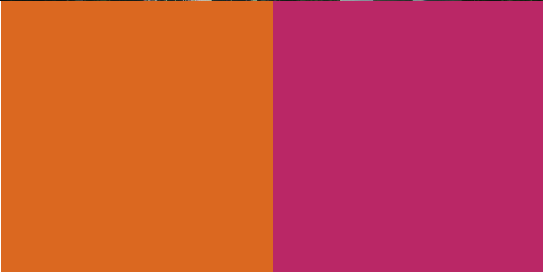
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Pennant, Lin Emery





A NEW ERA FOR THE ARTS IN VIRGINIA BEACH

The arts have long been a vital part of Virginia Beach's cultural identity. Virginia Beach has played a pivotal role in the history of music and the arts, making significant contributions to hip hop and music production, fostering a vibrant visual arts community, hosting impactful cultural events and festivals, providing comprehensive art education, and maintaining a strong commitment to cultural diversity and inclusion.

In 2015, Virginia Beach took a bold step forward by launching Arts Plan 2030, a visionary roadmap designed to shape the future of the arts in the city. The plan laid out an ambitious agenda to expand access, support artists and arts organizations, and elevate the visibility of the arts as an integral part of Virginia Beach's community fabric.

A key milestone in realizing the vision of Arts Plan 2030 came in July 2024, when the Virginia Beach City Council took a monumental step of approving a dedicated revenue source to support arts and culture. By allocating 20% of admission taxes to arts funding, the Council ensured a sustainable financial foundation for the City's artistic growth. This pivotal decision brings the aspirations of Arts Plan 2030 into reality, marking a transformative moment in the history of the arts in Virginia Beach. The newly secured funding not only underscores the city's commitment to fostering creativity but also ensures that future generations will continue to benefit from a thriving, dynamic arts ecosystem.

This funding builds on these foundational steps, further supporting local artists and community-based projects, and bringing the vision of a more vibrant, inclusive, and creative Virginia Beach to life.

Through this new funding, City Council approved two new pilot grant programs to support individual artists and neighborhood arts initiatives.

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 and area non-profit organizations, as well as the department-led initiatives that engage residents and visitors in meaningful arts, heritage, and cultural experiences.

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.



Photo by David A. Beloff © ~ PhotoBloggingBeloff.com

*Virginia MOCA's Boardwalk Art Show and
King Neptune by Paul DiPasquale*



INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS SUPPORT GRANT OVERVIEW

The Virginia Beach Individual Artists Support Grants are designed to support artists by offering resources to enhance their artistic practice, achieve professional growth, build their portfolios, and engage with the community to contribute to the cultural vibrancy of Virginia Beach.

PURPOSE

- To provide financial support to individual artists for the creation and development of original work.
- To encourage artistic innovation and professional development.
- To foster a dynamic and inclusive cultural environment in Virginia Beach.
- To be a flexible and accessible grant program.

ARTIST ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Open to individual artists who have been Virginia Beach residents for at least 2 years.
2. Applicants are at least 18 years of age by the application due date.
3. The applicant must provide a street address within the Virginia Beach city limits for your home or permanent studio/rehearsal space in your name. A post office box, temporary rehearsal space or studio under a name other than the funded artist does not fulfill the residency requirement. (Two forms of documentation are required.)
4. In the past three years, the applicant must have created and presented their own original works to the public or performed for the public (documentation required; this should be documented in a CV or Resume)
5. The applicant must have a professional portfolio that includes published and/or publicly displayed work.
6. Demonstrate a clear investment of time and resources into the creation of new work.
7. Applicants cannot have received this grant award in the prior 2 years.

Timeline: Projects must be completed within 12 months following grant award.

ELIGIBLE ART FORMS

Visual arts, performing arts (dance, music, theatre including playwriting), digital, film/video, folk/world/traditional arts, native/indigenous arts, literature.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The funding provided by the Artists Support Grant can be used for the following eligible expenses:

1. Completion/Presentation of a New Work — Cost of resources necessary to complete or present a significant new work (e.g., purchasing art supplies, shipping artwork to exhibitions or galleries).
2. Career Promotion — Projects aimed at advertising artists' work and/or demonstrating their skill level (e.g., websites, portfolios, audio-visual documentation, and online presentation).
3. Training — Costs to attend a class or workshop (in-person or virtual) aimed at either enhancing the artist's skill level or professional development (e.g., a master class or workshop taught by acknowledged authorities in the applicant artist's medium).
4. Documentation — Costs associated with documenting your work, such as hiring a photographer or videographer.

MAXIMUM GRANT AWARD

The maximum amount of funding an individual artist can apply for and receive is \$4,800.

NOTE: Grant recipients will receive a 1099 Form.

MATCHING FUNDS

Matching funds are not required in this category.

Only one application will be accepted from an artist (or coalition of artists) in a funding cycle.

GRANT RESTRICTIONS

Funding may NOT be used for:

1. Personal expenses: Funds cannot be used for personal living expenses, such as rent, grocery, or utility bills.
2. Any items not directly related to an artist's personal, professional, artistic, or project development.
3. Grant funds may not pay for projects for which the main intent is fundraising or charity, the presentation of other artist's works, including curation, archiving, journalism (where the applicant's work is not the primary content,) or a commission.
4. No part of the grant may be used for reimbursement of expenses prior to the applicant's award notification date.
5. Purchase of equipment not related to a larger project or performance.
6. Purchase of food or beverages.
7. Debt repayment.
8. Unapproved travel.
9. Tuition for formal education.
10. Projects that support or oppose a particular candidate for public office or other political activities.
11. Commercial ventures such as manufacturing products for sale, unless directly related to the approved artistic project.

Any funds not expended for the purposes of the grant as applied for must be returned to the City of Virginia Beach.

Funding from this program may not be used toward activities already funded by the City of Virginia Beach within the fiscal year of grant award.

Scope of work and final event details will be determined after awards are official and during the contracting phase.

GRANT WORKSHOPS

Cultural Affairs will offer multiple Grants Preparation Workshops that provide an overview of the FY27 Individual Artists Support Grants Program and include step-by-step directions for completing the application. All artists applying for a grant are encouraged to attend one workshop. Workshops will be held virtually via MS Teams and should last no more than one hour.

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.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The applications for the Artists Support Grant will be evaluated based on the following criteria, with each criterion weighted as indicated:

Artistic Quality: (20 points)

- Evaluation of the originality and excellence of the artist's work.
- Consideration of the artist's creative vision and innovative approaches.
- Assessment of the artist's technical skills and craftsmanship.

Professional Growth: (25 points)

- Clear demonstration of how the grant will enhance the artist's professional opportunities.
- Evidence of the artist's dedication to pursuing a professional artistic career.

Project Viability: (25 points)

- A well-structured project plan with a realistic timeline.
- A detailed and feasible budget outlining how the grant funds will be used.
- Assurance of the artist's ability to complete the project within the grant period.
- Meets eligibility requirements and application is complete with all supporting materials.

Career Impact: (20 points)

- Assessment of the grant's potential impact on the artist's career trajectory.
- Explanation of how the grant will help the artist reach new audiences, acquire new skills, or create significant new work.

Community Impact: (10 points)

- Preference for projects that engage with or benefit the local community.

- Explanation of the project's potential to enrich the cultural landscape of Virginia Beach.
- Consideration of how the project will reach and impact local audiences.

SELECTION PROCESS

Initial Screening: Applications will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility.

ADVISORY PANELS

Advisory Panels consisting of arts and community leaders assist the Cultural Affairs Department in awarding grants. Panel members are selected on the basis of resumes and recommendations, with respect to their expertise in the arts, knowledge of relevant community issues, ethnic and gender representation of the City of Virginia Beach, ability to work with others in a panel situation, and their willingness to devote the time required to review applications and attend project activities. Cultural Affairs Department solicits qualified panelists annually.

Final Decision: The highest-scoring applications will be recommended for funding, subject to final approval by the Cultural Affairs Director.

Please note that there may not be enough resources to meet applicant demand. Additional variables may come into factor, i.e. the available funding, the number of applications submitted, the applicant's score and the number of applicants awarded funding. Cultural Affairs reserves the right not to award an artist if the Advisory Panel determines that a standard of excellence is not demonstrated by the applications received.

TIMELINE

Application Deadline: 5 p.m. on Oct. 16, 2026 (Additional rounds will be announced, if funds remain)

Notification of Award: By approximately November 30, 2026.

Project Start Date: Once grant agreement has been signed.

Project End Date: Twelve months after grant award.

AWARD NOTIFICATION, GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENTS

Applicants will be notified of award by email and/or mail. Grant recipients will receive a grant agreement to be completed and signed before the grant award can be processed.

Once reviewed and executed, grant agreement will be sent to the Finance Department for processing and payment. In order to receive a grant payment from the City of Virginia Beach, recommended artists must sign a grant agreement and become a City of Virginia Beach vendor, meaning you are able to do business with the City of Virginia Beach and can receive payment.

To become a vendor of the City, an individual will submit a completed W-9. Please note that payments can take up to 8 weeks.

Major changes in the proposed activities or budget must be submitted to the Cultural Affairs Department (CAD) in writing and approved at least 30 days in advance of the effective date of the change. After submitting the signed contract, the grant recipient (artist) should be aware that it takes approximately 8 weeks to receive initial payment.

If a grant recipient fails to adequately satisfy contract requirements, the City has the right to terminate the contract without further obligation. Failure to submit the final report will result in forfeiture of final payment and exclusion from eligibility for five (5) years.

REPORTING & ACCOUNTABILITY

Final Report: Submit a comprehensive final report within one month of project completion, including a narrative of the project's impact, financial accounting, and visual documentation (photos, videos).

Public Presentation: Recipients may be asked to present their completed projects to the community in a public forum, exhibition, or performance.

SITE MONITORING

The CAD monitors funded projects during the course of the contract cycle. Grantees must give CAD three-week advance notification of the dates, times, and venues of CAD-supported activities. Failure to provide notification will result in the withdrawal of funds.

GENERAL POLICIES

PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

For all projects funded by the Cultural Affairs Department, a credit line and the City of Virginia Beach Cultural Affairs logo must be included in all advertising, promotions, and other publicity, or presented verbally at events at which no printed program is used.

Materials and/or photos citing CAD must be submitted with the final report and the City logo must be clearly reproduced and legible.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ADA COMPLIANCE

Contractors are required to hold their activities in physically accessible spaces, and all funded organizations must provide written statements describing their adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Office of Accessibility assists individuals and organizations in making arts activities accessible to older adults, people with disabilities, and those in institutions. You may contact the NEA at 202-682-5532 or <https://www.arts.gov/impact/accessibility/publications-checklists-and-resources>.

Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook, is designed to help organizations comply with Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Copies of the book can be downloaded here: <https://www.arts.gov/about/>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUIREMENT

Please be aware that City documents are public documents subject to the Freedom of Information Act. As such, your application and all of its contents may be subject to disclosure and public review. Should you be awarded a grant, the grant agreement will also be subject to the same regulations.