



PROJECT GRANT POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission was created in 1979 and is composed of eleven members appointed by City Council. To be eligible for appointment, each commissioner maintains a primary residence in the City of Virginia Beach. Commissioners serve four-year terms and are eligible for reappointment for a total of two consecutive terms (eight years). At the discretion of the City Council, in order to maintain rotation balance, terms may be staggered to one-year, two-year, three-year or four-year terms.

The Commission exists to assist the growth of worthwhile programs in the arts and humanities in the City of Virginia Beach. Toward this end, the Commission provides financial assistance to organizations in the form of project grants, for activities serving the citizens of Virginia Beach. These grants are supported by taxpayer revenues from the citizens of Virginia Beach in an annual appropriation from City Council. A small portion of the funds available for grants may be supported by a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

GENERAL POLICIES

PURPOSE OF PROJECT GRANTS

To increase access to quality cultural programs for all citizens of Virginia Beach.

DESCRIPTION

- This grant program supports a wide variety of artistic and cultural activities.
- The Commission **does not fund general operating support** for cultural organizations, and funding **will not exceed 50% of the total cost of the project.**
- There is no guarantee of funding or of increases in grant awards year-to-year. Projects that receive funding one year may or may not receive funding the following year.

ELIGIBILITY

- The scope of the Commission is limited to organizations, which have, as a stated purpose in their mission statement, the furtherance of the arts and humanities through the provision of programming and/or services.
- Applicant organizations must be not-for-profit and exempt from federal income tax under Section 501, which includes the 501(c)3 designation of the Internal Revenue Code, or units of government, or educational institutions, or local chapters of tax-exempt national organizations.
- Applicant organizations must submit proof of nonprofit tax-exempt status or pending application.
- Applicant organizations must comply with all current and applicable laws and state and federal nondiscrimination acts (including, but not limited to, Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Immigration and Control Act of 1986).

Eligible activities include projects, programs, and/or performances:

- In the arts or humanities;
- Taking place within the City of Virginia Beach (for programs that extend beyond the city limits, only those portions that take place within the City will be eligible for funding);
- That are open to the public and publicized as such, to the greatest extent possible.

Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission assistance cannot be used to fund the following items:

- General operating support, annual budgets, endowments or capital expenditures;
- Projects outside the City of Virginia Beach;
- Individuals (although funding may be obtained through an eligible sponsoring organization);
- Pass-through granting to other organizations without a clear and concise project proposal;
- Non-artistic portions of festivals or community celebration events;
- Academic programs that are not principally public service programs;
- Programs that are restricted to an organization's membership;
- Programs that are essentially performances for studios or organizations where only students who pay a fee may participate;
- Costs of parties, receptions, fundraising benefits and other social activities;
- Prizes (cash and non-cash) and awards;
- Permanent acquisitions (for example, buildings and land);
- Capital improvements, new construction, renovation or restoration;
- Non-expendable supplies and equipment (for example, copy machines, building supplies, musical instruments) (Props, costumes, rented equipment, etc. are considered expendable items);
- Investments or contingency funding (for example, accounts earning interest);
- Deficits;
- Basic operating expenses such as rent and utilities, unless directly related to the arts project the organization is presenting.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING APPLICATIONS

- Quality of the program;
- Extent to which the proposed project meets the demonstrated needs of the community;
- Service to the public, including the number of people served;
- Managerial and fiscal competence of the organization, including the capability of the organization to carry out the proposed project(s);
- Nature and extent of other available public and private support, whether monetary, in-kind, membership, or other;
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposed project;
- Implementation of a strategic plan.

The Commission funds organizations that provide quality programs and services to the citizens of Virginia Beach. The Commission views its assistance to organizations as that of a catalyst, helping to augment and strengthen private support of the arts and humanities. The Commission believes in a diversified funding base for cultural organizations, and that such funding demonstrates community support for the project. Organizations receiving funds from the Commission are expected to earn as much income from ticket sales/admission fees as feasible. Strong applicants will demonstrate the strength and diversity of support for the project within the community, and the proposed benefits of the projects to the citizens of Virginia Beach. Applicants should also document their efforts to make their programs sustainable.

Multiple grant application requests in the same funding cycle are not permitted. Organizations proposing similar projects in the same funding cycle will be encouraged to submit a joint proposal.

The Commission is concerned about on-going support for programs that require the same amount of funding each year from the Commission, which demonstrates that lack of growth or support from other sources. If more applicants could increase their earned and contributed income, VBAHC funds could be freed to support new programs and organizations. The Commission encourages organizations to increase their level of financial self-sufficiency.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In all published materials (inclusive of electronic media) and announcements, regarding the particular activity supported, acknowledgment must be made that **“(organization or activity) is funded in part by the citizens of Virginia Beach through a grant from the City of Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission.”**

All organizations are required to display the Arts and Humanities Commission placard in a visible location at all events funded by the Commission. The placards are distributed to new grantees at the beginning of the fiscal year. All applicant organizations agree to these conditions upon accepting the grant award. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in forfeiture of the grant award, or a less favorable response to future grant requests.

GRANT CONTRACT

Completed applications must be signed by an officer of the applicant organization or an individual authorized to certify the accuracy of the application and attachments, as well as the organization's compliance with all criteria of eligibility for funding. Applicants must attach a signed copy of the "Certification of Assurances and Grant Conditions" to the application and keep a copy on file.

When the Commission awards a grant, a letter is sent to the applicant with a Contract for Services. This contract must be returned to the Commission before payment is authorized.

GRANT PERFORMANCE

Grant awards may only be used for those programs or purposes described in the application and approved in the contract by the Commission. Grantees must notify the Commission, in writing, of any changes in the grant contract. These changes must be approved in advance of the scheduled change through written notification from the Commission.

The Commission will review and act upon the request at its next regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

The Commission requires the submission of a final report from each grantee within 30 days of the completion of the project or **no later than July 15th**. The final report will be measured against the Contract for Services for compliance.

The Commission may require brief, periodic reports from each organization in order to track attendance, services, and audience feedback for projects supported by City funds. Forms and directions for these reports will be provided by the Commission.

Each grantee must maintain accurate financial records for any activity supported by Commission funds. These financial statements are an essential part of the final report. The Commission or its authorized representative may request substantiation for the information provided in the final report, or any additional financial records. Applicants are advised that any program income generated or received by a proposed project must be documented appropriately in the project budget. The Commission will conduct periodic audits of project budgets to ensure compliance and accuracy of reports, for up to three years following the fiscal year. Grantee organizations should maintain records for activities supported by Commission funds for at least three years in the event of such an audit.

DEADLINES

All applications must be submitted via the online portal by **Tuesday, February 6, 2024, by 5:00 p.m.** One original copy of the complete application packet must be mailed or hand-delivered to the following address: **Cultural Affairs Department, 201 Market Street, Suite 204, Virginia Beach, VA 23462**. This is not a postmark deadline. No applications will be accepted or considered after the deadline. No application will be accepted or considered from an organization that has not filed a year-end report (final report) on any previously funded project, unless an extension has been requested in writing, and waived by written notice from the Commission.

Submission requirements include:

- Complete and submit online application;
- One original application complete with all requested attachments;
- Use of only 8 ½ x 11" white paper (except preprinted materials, e.g., brochures);
- All copies should be stapled once in the upper-left hand corner;
- No binders, covers, folders, table of contents, or title pages - these will be removed from the application.
- Do not send additional materials under separate cover.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Online grant application is available on www.virginiabeach.gov/culture. Staff is available for consultation on applications and to review drafts of applications before the application deadline. If assistance is needed, contact the Cultural Affairs Department at least three weeks before the deadline.
2. Organizations planning to apply to the Commission should put the Commissioners and staff on their mailing lists.
3. Remember that your organization is competing with other organizations for limited dollars. It is important that all applications are clear, complete and well written. In addition, reasonable requests and related budgets are essential elements in your grant proposal.
4. Applicants must submit completed application forms by the deadline. NO EXCEPTIONS. The Commission will not accept any application materials by facsimile transmission or any other electronic means (e.g., e-mail).
5. The applicant should retain a copy of the application for their records.
6. Staff reviews each application for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will be reviewed and returned to the applicant with a brief explanation. Applicants will have the opportunity to submit a revised application before the deadline.
7. Applications will be evaluated by all Commission members.
8. Applicant organizations are generally invited to make a short presentation to the Commission regarding their application. Following the presentations, the Commission makes a recommendation of funding on each application.
9. In June, final notification of grant awards is sent via email with instructions to complete an online Contract for Services. Upon approval of the completed contract, checks will be mailed to grantees. No payment will be processed before the beginning of the fiscal year.

APPEAL PROCESS

Applicants may present a request for an appeal. **Incomplete applications are specifically denied any appeal process. Dissatisfaction with the amount of a grant award is not grounds for appeal.**

Requests for appeals must be received, in writing, at the Commission office within 30 days of the applicants' notification of a funding award decision. The Commission will review and act upon the request for an appeal at its next regularly scheduled Commission meeting.

The Commission will not ordinarily review appeals for increased funding due to project changes since the time of application.

SUGGESTIONS TO APPLICANTS

- Applicants should read carefully all information contained within these policies.
- Each applicant should include the names of Commission members and staff on all mailing lists, and regularly notify them of activities and events. The addresses are available from the Cultural Affairs Department or on the Commission's website, www.virginiabeach.gov/culture.
- All Commission meetings are open to the public. Grantee organizations are encouraged to select at least one delegate from their organizations to attend business meetings. The dates and locations of the meetings are available on the Commission's website, www.virginiabeach.gov/culture.
- The Commission encourages anyone to comment on its programs and services by writing the Commission, emailing or calling the Cultural Affairs Department.
- Be aware that each question in the Grant Application is rated on a scale of 1-5 for:
 - Completeness of Application – Has all of the requested information been provided, Does the information

- clearly summarize the scope of the proposed project?
- Significance – Is this project significant for the City? (i.e. Will it serve a substantial number of underserved residents? Will it serve a substantial number of residents in general? What is the economic impact of the project to the City? Will it address a demonstrated cultural need in the City that is not otherwise being adequately addressed? What is the quality of the program?)
 - Goals – Does the project statement provide a clear and concise explanation of the project? Are the goals of the project clear? Are desirable outcomes identified? Do they appear achievable?
 - Implementation – Does the project statement provide a clear description of how the project will achieve the stated goals? Is the chosen project methodology appropriate for the goal described? Is the methodology realistic, understandable, measurable and attainable? Is the organization capable of implementing the project in such a way that its goals can be achieved? Does it embrace collaboration with other organizations? What is the managerial and fiscal competence of the organization, including the capability of the organization to carry out the proposed project(s)? What is the nature and extent of other available public and private support, whether monetary, in-kind, membership, or other?
 - Budget – Does the budget appear to be realistic for achieving the desired goal? Is it a cost-effective project?
 - Sustainability – Does the project require continued funding? If so, has the applicant included an estimated funding plan for subsequent years?

These scoring categories are taken into consideration along with the eligibility criteria, your presentation/interview, evidence of fiscal responsibility and additional information the Commission may request from your organization. Your project's merit and fundability are not solely based on the application alone, but it bears significant impact on the cumulative discussion. Please ensure that your answers are as detailed and complete, backed by facts, numbers, or demonstrated experience as much as possible to ensure robust application evaluation.

Adopted by the Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission, May 12, 1998. Revised July 13, 1999, July 18, 2000. Regional Grant Application adopted by the Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission, February 8, 2001. Revised December 5, 2002, December 5, 2003, December 6, 2004, December 1, 2005, December 1, 2006, December 10, 2007, December 3, 2009, December 2, 2010, December 6, 2012, December 5, 2013, December 4, 2014, December 3, 2015, December 1, 2016, December 6, 2018.