



2026 Spring Mini Grant Guidelines

Grant applications will be accepted October 1 - October 31, 2025

Be sure to sign up for Arts Council of Anne Arundel County emails at <https://www.acaac.org> to stay abreast of any program changes.

About the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County

- **Our Mission**

Our mission is to provide leadership, funding, and support that promotes artistic excellence and historic preservation and to advocate for resources and education that expand arts opportunities for all, helping to create an enriched and healthy community.

- **Our Vision**

We envision Anne Arundel County as a place where artists are inspired and creativity thrives, where arts and culture bring people of all backgrounds together to enrich, bind, and celebrate our community.

- **Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**

The Arts Council of Anne Arundel County is committed to advancing and modeling equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in all our programs and services and those of our grantees. We are dedicated to embracing equity and non-discrimination regardless of race, religious creed, color, age, gender expression, sexual orientation, class, language, and/or ability.

About this Grant Opportunity

The Arts Council of Anne Arundel County's Mini Grant program is designed to support innovative, well-defined, arts-related projects, preferably within underserved communities. Two grant cycles are offered each year (fall and spring) and grants are awarded to eligible organizations and/or programs on a dollar-to-dollar (1:1) matching basis. The Spring Mini Grant is designed to support projects that will occur between January and June of 2026. The 1:1 matching funds requirement may be satisfied with organizational cash, other grant funds, volunteer hours, and/or in-kind donations, or a combination thereof. The maximum award amount for the Mini Grant is \$2,500. New partnerships with other arts or community organizations are encouraged to engage more residents in cultural and artistic activities. ACAAC is available to assist applicants with outreach and marketing to potential partners and audiences within Anne Arundel County. Organizations may only apply for one Mini Grant per fiscal year.

The Arts Council of Anne Arundel County is committed to supporting the diversity of artists and arts organizations in Anne Arundel County through its grant programs. This includes prioritizing artistic activities that promote these ideals and are accessible to all. Mini Grant applications for projects that reflect these goals, including partnerships among grantees for these purposes, are highly encouraged.

Grant Timeline

1. Grant application cycle opens October 1, 2025.
2. Grant application period closes October 31, 2025, at midnight. Applications must be completed online through the ACAAC's Submittable Page, available at <https://artscouncilofannearundelcountynew.submittable.com/submit>.
3. Grant award letters, including a request for electronic banking information (if applicable), will be sent to recipients on or before November 21, 2025. Contracts will be sent to recipient organizations and signed through DocuSign.
4. The grant award payment will be made by ACH transfer on, or before December 5, 2025. Signed contracts must be received before payment will be made.
5. Final reports will be available on July 1, 2026, and are due by July 31, 2026.

Grant Eligibility and Funding Priorities

To be eligible, all organizations must:

- Be incorporated in Anne Arundel County as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and/or have a significant physical presence in Anne Arundel County.
- Have operated for one full fiscal year at the time of application.
- Be governed by a legally liable board of directors acting under a mission statement and budget specific to the organization.
- Be up to date with all reporting requirements for previously ACAAC awarded grants.
- Be able to document current Good Standing Status with the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation at the time of application.
- Public, private, and charter K-12 schools and pre-schools are not eligible to apply. Schools seeking grant funding are eligible for grants through the ACAAC Arts in Education program.
- Requests to fund free event tickets will not be considered.
- Requests to fund general operating support or programs that are already part of an advertised season will not be considered.

Preparing Your Application

The Mini Grant application is available on ACAAC's Submittable page, which is located online at <https://artscouncilofannearundelcountynew.submittable.com/submit>. The application and, if funded, the final report must be submitted through this grant management system. If you have not previously used Submittable, you will need to set up an account and password. When creating an organizational account, we highly recommend that you tie it to an organizational email such as 'info@yourartsorganization.org' rather than a personal email address.

Be sure to read through the questions before starting and allow yourself plenty of time to gather the supporting documentation. The application is structured to provide a framework to tell your story and give our reviewers a clear picture of your project.

Best practices for successfully completing your grant include:

- Assign an individual responsible for managing the grant as your primary contact for this application. This is not necessarily your Executive Director, but rather the individual ACAAC will be communicating with for the duration of your grant's performance period.
- Before you begin, review the rubric at the end of this document to ensure you have a clear understanding of how scoring priorities will impact evaluation of your grant.
- If others from your organization will also be working on the application, utilize the Submittable "Invite Collaborators" function. The tab is located at the top of the application, below the banner heading. Up to three additional individuals can assist with the application.
- Be clear, specific, and thorough in your responses, and whenever possible, provide detailed evidence to support your request.
- Reach out to Ashley Matthews, Grants Manager, at ashley.matthews@acaac.org/410-222-8079 for assistance at any time during the grant application period.

General Guidelines for 2026 Spring Mini Grant Recipients

All grant recipients are required to:

- Acknowledge funding by the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County whenever and wherever credit is given. Use of the ACAAC logo and verbiage should be in accordance with the guidelines available at <https://www.acaac.org/grants/logo-recognition/>.
- Complete the online final report form by July 31, 2026.
- Notify Ashley Matthews (ashley.matthews@acaac.org) in writing as soon as possible at if there is a significant change regarding the grant funded project, and/or to the recipient organization's operations.

All applicants must meet Maryland State Arts Council guidelines for accessibility/anti-discrimination:

- Must comply with Title VI, Section 601, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no persons, on the grounds of race color, or national origin, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination related to, the arts.
- Must comply with Title IV, Section 1681, of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 Section 6101, which prohibit discrimination based on sex or age. 3. Must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991.
- Must prohibit discrimination based on: (a) political or religious opinion or affiliation, material status, race, color, creed, sexual orientation, or national origin; of (b) gender expression, sex, or age, except when age or sex constitutes a bona fide occupational qualification; or (c) the physical or mental disability of a qualified individual with a disability.

Conflict of Interest Policy

To ensure that all Arts Council of Anne Arundel County review panels are free from conflicts of interest and the appearance of such conflicts, panelists are required to disclose any current or prospective affiliations they or their immediate family members have with an actual or potential applicant. 'Affiliations' applies to employment, board memberships, independent contractual relationships, substantial contributor relationships, or other relationships. In addition, panelists are required to disclose any past or current adversarial relationships with actual or potential applicants. Panel members, as well as board members, are not permitted to participate in discussions or votes relating to any applicant with whom they have an affiliation.

Review Process and Notification

1. Applicants will receive an email confirmation after their application has been received. If the application deadline has passed, applicants will not be notified if the application is incomplete or does not comply with the guidelines.
2. The grants review panel, comprised of ACAAC staff members, will review all qualified, complete applications prior to the date indicated in the timeline. Each proposal will be reviewed individually by all members of the review panel and will be evaluated on its overall impact to the organization as well as how the specific project will benefit the community. The review panel will score each application using the rubric which appears on the last page of this document.
3. All applicants will be advised electronically of the status of their application. Successful grantees will also be informed of the anticipated date of receipt of grant funds that have been awarded.

Appeals Process

ACAAC makes every effort to ensure fair and equitable distribution of grant monies based on stated criteria. Therefore, dissatisfaction with the denial of an award or with the amount of an award is not sufficient reason for an appeal. However, a grant request may be reconsidered if a procedural impropriety or error has affected its review.

Based on the above, if an applicant believes there is legitimate reason for an appeal, the following steps must be taken:

1. The applicant must discuss the problem with the Grants Manager who handled the application.
2. To pursue an appeal, the applicant must write a letter to the April Nyman, ACAAC President & CEO within 15 days following receipt of the grant award or denial letter requesting a reconsideration of the Arts Council's decision and stating the grounds for the request.
3. The applicant will receive written notification on the determination of the appeal within 30 days of the receipt of the written request for reconsideration.

2026 Spring Mini Grant Scoring Rubric

Each bullet is scored from 0-2:

- 0 = Does not satisfactorily meet criteria
- 1 = Partially meets criteria but does not yet fully meet criteria
- 2 = Fully meets criteria

Criteria 1 [10 pts]

Project Information

- Project fills a demonstrated need in the community
- Project fits within the organization(s) mission and goals
- Organization and its partners have the capacity to develop and deliver programming
- Project demonstrates creativity, risk-taking, and/or innovation
- Project has a clear and realistic implementation plan

Criteria 2 [10 pts]

Outreach and Community Impact

- Applicant is engaging with other community partners to complete project
- Will reach a wide, diverse, or new audience
- Will be accessible to all members of the community
- Will use effective methods of marketing to reach and expand target audience
- Organization will measure programmatic impact and success

Criteria 3 [10 pts]

Budget

- Leverages income from other sources, including in-kind donations
- All expenses are reasonable and appropriate
- ACAAC request will support completion of the project
- Budget clearly demonstrates a 1:1 match
- Adequate funding is allocated to support marketing to diverse audience