2027 SPRING MINI GRANT GUIDELINES

Grant applications will be accepted October 1 - October 31, 2026

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

ABOUT THE ARTS COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

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.

ABOUT THIS GRANT OPPORTUNITY

- This Mini Grant program provides project-specific funding for innovative arts initiatives scheduled between **January – June 2027**. This opportunity is designed for Anne Arundel County nonprofits looking to elevate their artistic endeavors or expand their audience reach. Funding is strictly dedicated to well-defined projects within the project period and does not support general operating expenses or ongoing, broad programming.
- **New this year, funding priority will be given to organizations who did not receive a FY26 Mini Grant or FY27 Community Arts Grant, with preference for projects serving underserved audiences or areas of Anne Arundel County with limited art access.**
- Two grant cycles are offered each year (fall and spring). Organizations may only be awarded only one Mini Grant per fiscal year.
- The Mini Grant maximum grant award is $2,500. **There is a 1:1 matching funds requirement that may be satisfied with organizational cash, other grant funds, volunteer hours, and/or in-kind donations, or a combination thereof.**
- 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.
- ACAAC reserves the right to revise these guidelines. This can include making policy or procedure updates, adjusting the timeline, and adding updated, new, or clarifying information.

GRANT TIMELINE

- Grant application cycle opens October 1, 2026, and closes October 31, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Applications must be completed online through the Submittable page at https://artscouncilofannearundelcountynew.submittable.com/submit.
- Grant award letters will be sent to recipients on or before November 30, 2026. Contracts will be sent to recipient organizations and signed through DocuSign.
- The grant award payment will be made by ACH transfer on, or before December 18, 2026. Signed contracts must be received before payment will be made.
- Final reports will be available on July 1, 2027, and are due by August 31, 2027.

REVIEW PROCESS & NOTIFICATION

- 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.
- 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 evaluation criteria which appears on the next page of this document.
- 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.

GRANT ELIGILIBITY & FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

- **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.**
- **Mini Grant funds may not be used to fund:**
    - **free event tickets will not be considered.**
    - **general operating support or broad programming support**
    - **transportation costs**
    - **regranting programs**
- Be incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and 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.

2027 SPRING MINI GRANT APPLICATION PROMPTS & EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION, COMMUNITY BENEFIT, & ARTISTIC INNOVATION:** Describe your project. Please include what need it will fill in the community and how the community will benefit. Funding preference is given to projects that demonstrate creativity, risk-taking, and innovation. (2,500-character limit)		
1A. Clear project description. Explains direct, strong community benefits.	Adequate project description. Mentions general benefits.	Vague or incomplete project description. Fails to identify a clear community benefit.
Excellent/2 points	Satisfactory/1 point	Unsatisfactory/ 0 points
1B. Demonstrates strong artistic creativity, thoughtful risk-taking, and/or innovation.	Shows moderate creativity or traditional artistic approach with limited innovation or risk-taking.	Shows little to no evidence of creativity, risk-taking, or innovation.
Excellent/2 points	Satisfactory/1 point	Unsatisfactory/ 0 points

2. **TARGET AUDIENCE & OUTREACH STRATEGY:** Who is the audience for this project, and how will you reach them? Funding preference is given to projects that reach an underserved audience, projects that enable an organization to expand their audience, and/or programming in areas of Anne Arundel County that have limited arts access. (2,000-character limit)		
Clearly identifies the target audience with a well-defined outreach plan. Aligns with funding preferences by targeting underserved audiences, expanding organizational reach, or delivering programming to areas with limited arts access.	Broadly defines the audience with a general marketing or outreach plan. Reaches a standard audience with limited focus on underserved populations, audience expansion, or areas of Anne Arundel County with low arts access.	Vague, incomplete, or missing audience description and outreach strategy. Fails to demonstrate efforts to reach underserved groups, expand audiences, or serve limited-access regions in Anne Arundel County.
Excellent/2 points	Satisfactory/1 point	Unsatisfactory/ 0 points

3. **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, TIMELINE & LOCATION:** Provide the implementation plan for this project that includes when and where these activities take place. (2500-character limit)		
Provides a comprehensive, realistic implementation plan with a timeline of key activities and well-defined, appropriate venue/location details.	Provides a general project timeline and locations, but lacks detail regarding specific milestones, key dates, or activity locations.	Vague, incomplete, or missing implementation plan. Fails to outline a realistic schedule or where project activities will occur.
Excellent/2 points	Satisfactory/1 point	Unsatisfactory/ 0 points

4. **COMMUNTY PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION:** Community partnerships and collaborations can help expand a project's reach and impact. What community partners will you engage with this project and what are their contributions to the project? (2000-character limit)		
Clearly identifies community partners and details strong, collaborative roles for each. Demonstrates how partnerships will expand the	Lists potential or existing community partners, but details regarding their specific roles, contributions, or exact impact on expanding project	Vague, incomplete, or missing details on community partnerships. Fails to identify collaborators or demonstrate how external partnerships will

project's reach and impact.	reach are general or limited.	support the project.
Excellent/2 points	Satisfactory/1 point	Unsatisfactory/ 0 points

5. EVALUATION, METRICS & BENCHMARKS: How will you measure the success of this project? List up to five anticipated metrics you will use to evaluate the project and the benchmarks you hope to achieve with those metrics. Awarded projects will be asked to report on these metrics and benchmarks in the final project report. (2000-character limit)		
Outlines a clear, realistic evaluation strategy. Lists up to five specific, measurable metrics along with well-defined, realistic benchmarks directly tied to project success.	Identifies metrics and evaluation methods, but proposed metrics or benchmarks are somewhat broad, lack quantifiable targets or detail.	Vague, incomplete, or missing evaluation plan. Fails to provide clear metrics or benchmarks to measure project outcomes and success.
Excellent/2 points	Satisfactory/1 point	Unsatisfactory/ 0 points

6. FY26 ACAAC MINI GRANT RECIPIENT STATUS: To help ensure a wide array of organizations benefit from the Mini Grant opportunity, funding preference will be given to organizations who did not receive a Mini Grant in FY26 (June 2025 - July 2026). Did your organization receive Mini Grant funding from the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County in FY26?	
No/2 points	Yes/0 points

7. F27 ACAAC COMMUNITY ARTS GRANT STATUS: To reach a broad range of community organizations, funding priority will be given to applicants who are not currently receiving FY27 Community Arts Grant funding from the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County. Is your organization receiving funding during FY27 through the Community Arts Grant Program?	
No/2 points	Yes/0 points

8. FINANCIAL LEVERAGE & PROJECT VIABILITY: The application budget leverages income from other sources, including in-kind donations and funding request will support completion of the project.		
Demonstrates strong financial support beyond the grant request. Budget demonstrates that the requested funding ensures the full, successful completion of the project.	Shows some outside funding or in-kind support, but sources are limited. It is unclear whether the project can be fully completed without additional unfunded resources.	Relies entirely on grant funds with no evidence of leveraged income or in-kind contributions or provides incomplete financial information. Fails to show how the grant funds will support project completion.
Excellent/2 points	Satisfactory/1 point	Unsatisfactory/ 0 points

9. BUDGET APPROPRIATENESS & MATCHING FUNDS (1:1 REQUEST): All expenses are reasonable and appropriate. Budget clearly demonstrates the required 1:1 match.		
Proposed expenses are clear and reasonable. Budget demonstrates a full 1:1 match ($1 in matching income/in-kind for every $1 requested).	Expenses are generally reasonable or show minor inconsistencies. Demonstrates a partial or unreliable match (less than 1:1 ratio).	Expenses are unclear or fails to provide a budget breakdown. Fails to show the matching requirement.
Excellent/2 points	Satisfactory/1 point	Unsatisfactory/ 0 points

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:

- Before you begin, review the evaluation criteria 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.
- Reach out to Ashley Matthews, Grants Manager, at ashley.matthews@acaac.org for assistance at any time during the grant application period.

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.

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. 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.
2. To pursue an appeal, the applicant must write a letter to April Nyman, ACAAC President & CEO within 15 days following receipt of the grant award or denial letter requesting a reconsideration of the 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.

GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS

All ACAAC grantees 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.
- Comply with Title IX, Section 1681 et seq. of the Education Amendments of 1972.
- Comply with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 6101-6107.
- Comply with relevant State and federal laws.
- Maintain complete and accurate records of all activities connected with the grant
- Give credit to ACAAC in accordance with published recognition guidelines on our website, whenever and wherever credit is being given.
- Notify the appropriate ACAAC staff person in writing if a significant change is made in any ACAAC-funded program or project.
- In addition to the requirements above, all ACAAC grantees must ensure that any programming remains accessible to all and, if needed, conduct programs in accessible venues other than their own organization to meet accessibility requirements.
- Comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, as amended.
- Prohibit discrimination on the basis of: (a) political or religious opinion or affiliation, marital status, race, color, creed, sexual orientation, or national origin: of (b) gender expression, sex, or age, except when age or sex constitute a bona fide occupational qualification; or (c) the physical or mental disability of a qualified individual with a disability.
- Upon request, submit documentation of operations and compliance with the above.