



**The  
Pew Center  
for Arts  
& Heritage**

## **Creative Project Grants**

2025 Application Guidelines | Part I

*Eligibility & Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI)*

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## Accessibility

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage is committed to providing accessibility to all applicants.

Staff members at The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage are available to offer guidance throughout the process and can assist applicants who require special accommodation.

Some translation services may be available.

For accessibility accommodations, please contact [help@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:help@pewcenterarts.org) or call 267.350.4902 for assistance.

# From our Executive Director: What's new in 2025

Dear colleagues and Center constituents:

On behalf of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, it's my pleasure to welcome your participation in our 2025 grant application process. In the following pages, you'll find our guidelines for Letters of Intent to Apply (LOIs) for Creative Project grants. These guidelines will walk you through our project eligibility criteria, the first steps to express interest in applying for a grant, and important dates to keep in mind.

In addition to Creative Project grants, we are continuing our *Evolving Futures* funding in 2025 to resource organizations that are ready to adapt their business models for long-term viability, relevance, and success. Please refer to our [Evolving Futures application guidelines](#) for more information about this funding opportunity.

## What's New This Year

In response to feedback from grantees and constituents, we have made several policy and process changes to increase transparency, accessibility, and efficiency in our grantmaking. *These updates include—*

- An [initial inquiry form](#) to make our eligibility requirements easier to understand. The form only takes a few minutes to complete and does not require an online account.
- Fiscally sponsored organizations meeting our threshold eligibility criteria are now welcome to apply.
- Our application forms now ask applicants to answer fewer, more direct questions. By requiring less writing, we hope to reduce the time applicants need to spend on our process.
- Only organizations new to our process will be required to meet with Center staff. Meetings are [optional](#) for returning applicants.
- Capacity building grants for travel, research, and technical assistance with completing our application are now available. Please review our [Capacity Building grant guidelines](#) for more information.
- The introduction of a new category of Planning Grants within our Evolving Futures funding program. Read our [2025 Evolving Futures application guidelines](#) for details.

The Center is committed to supporting our cultural sector's creative and meaningful contributions to the many communities of Greater Philadelphia and to carrying out The Pew Charitable Trusts' strategic goal of fostering a vibrant civic life in the region. In our previous grant cycle, we awarded [39 grants totaling more than \\$10 million](#) to Philadelphia-area organizations and artists—representing a substantial investment in a thriving and diverse local cultural ecology.

In reviewing our guidelines, I hope you will feel encouraged to consider the potential opportunities that the Center's funding offers to your organization and to your audiences. **The arts and humanities matter more now than ever, and your work is critical to the well-being of our society.**

We look forward to hearing from you as we begin a new grantmaking cycle, and we deeply appreciate your participation in the Center's grants process.

With best wishes for your continued well-being,



**Paula Marincola**  
Executive Director

# Before Reading Further: First Steps for All Prospective Applicants

**Whether you're a grantee, returning applicant, or new to The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage ("the Center"), please—**

- Read our [grantmaking strategy](#) and [initial eligibility criteria](#) to explore if we're the right funder for your organization at this time.
- [Submit an Inquiry form](#) to let us know you're interested in applying for a Creative Project grant.
- Quickly review the following points to see if any describe your organization:

***Your organization has never applied to the Center, or it's been over five years since your last application.***

We'll want to talk with you before May 9 to learn about your organization, your history of public arts and culture programming, and your project idea. Set up your meeting now by emailing [apply@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:apply@pewcenterarts.org).

***Your organization's primary mission supports something other than the presentation of art and public history for public audiences.***

Please see our [related FAQ](#) for more information on whether you are eligible to apply.

***Your organization is fiscally sponsored.*** For the first time, the Center is open to funding fiscally sponsored organizations. See our [related FAQs](#) for important information for sponsors and sponsees.

# Creative Project Grant Funding Programs:

## Performance and Exhibitions & Public Interpretation

The Center offers Creative Project grants through two funding areas: **Performance** and **Exhibitions & Public Interpretation** (“EPI”). These grants are designed for Philadelphia-area organizations with operating budgets above \$150k annually, whose mission and defining purpose is the presentation of art and public history programs for public audiences.

For non-art and -history organizations, please see our [related FAQ](#) for more information on whether you are eligible to apply.

Both Performance and EPI funding-areas support projects based in a specific discipline, as well as those that are multi- or interdisciplinary. [Contact us](#) if you would like help determining which funding area best suits your project.

### Performance

The Performance funding area considers projects that include original works or new treatments of existing works in all forms of performance. Works may be live performances in public spaces and venues; may feature or be drawn from film, video, and other moving images interpreted through performative intentions; or may be installations of performance that use experimental media or include technological innovation, archival sources, or virtual programming. We welcome use of participatory strategies that benefit audiences.

### Exhibitions & Public Interpretation (“EPI”)

The EPI funding area considers projects that include public display and/or interpretation of artworks, historical artifacts, scientific objects, living collections, archives, buildings, stories, or ideas; film, video, or other time-based media presentations and technology platforms; and all other forms of exhibitions and public cultural interpretation. Projects may take place live or virtually and may make use of participatory strategies to explore and deepen audience experiences.

# Project Eligibility, Grant Types and Amounts

**Creative Project grants** support art and history-based cultural projects that grow directly out of mission and demonstrate excellence, care, and conceptual rigor. All funded projects must be conceived for and offered to diverse public audiences. Applicants may engage with other organizations as additional venues or project collaborators.

## **Grants are available up to \$300,000 for single organizations whose projects—**

- will be presented publicly to audiences in the five-county Philadelphia region of Pennsylvania (*Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, or Philadelphia county*).
- have adequate administrative structure, staff, and expertise to realize the project to its maximum public impact.
- reflect a commitment to multiple perspectives and inclusive practices in program design, development, and impact.
- demonstrate awareness of leading practices in the field and provide inspirational models for cultural practice in our region and beyond.

*The maximum amount of grant funds you may request is based on your organization’s annual operating expenses and history of funding with the Center. See page 6, [Maximum Grant Requests](#) for detail.*

## **Special Opportunity Grants\* are available up to \$400,000 for single organizations, and \$600,000 for co-applying organizations whose projects *additionally*—**

- represent a demonstrably new level of ambition in content, scope, and scale for applicants;
- are driven by artist/creative practitioners and involve new commissions;
- include one major creative contributor from outside the United States; and
- consider audience experience as integral to the design, realization, and impact of the project.

See our [related FAQ](#) on what it means to “co-apply” for a Special Opportunity grant.

*\*Organizations must have a minimum operating budget of \$1M to apply for a Special Opportunity grant. Consult with Center staff to see if this category is appropriate for your proposed project before applying. See page 6, [Maximum Grant Requests](#) for detail.*

*\*Fiscally sponsored organizations are not eligible for Special Opportunity grants.*

# Ineligible for Creative Project Grants

The following cannot be supported by a Creative Project grant:

- Projects that are not primarily presented for public audiences.
- Individual exhibitions of private collections.
- Acquiring artworks, collections, or property.
- Ongoing seasonal support, festivals, curricula or programming primarily rooted in arts education, or projects whose primary audience is K–12 students.
- A series of events that is not unified by a single, rigorously considered curatorial premise.
- Capital improvements or real estate expenditures; debt service or retirement; endowment funds; receptions and parties. *All Creative Project grants include 20% of additional unrestricted general operating support.*
- Projects that are managed by current employees of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage or The Pew Charitable Trusts; members of such employees' households; or people closely related to such employees through blood, marriage, or domestic partnership.
- Artists nominated for a Pew Fellowship in 2025 may not be commissioned artists or key personnel for projects supported by a Creative Project grant. If awarded a Pew Fellowship, Fellows may not participate in a Creative Project grant application for one year following the start of their Pew Fellowship grant period.

***The Center reserves the right to determine eligibility in all instances.***

# Maximum Grant Requests

## Maximum Allowable Grant Request

The maximum amount of grant funds you may request is based on your organization's 1) annual operating expenses and 2) history of successfully implementing a Center-funded project. Organizations without prior grants from the Center will be limited in their maximum request. (See page 4, [Project Eligibility, Grant Types and Amounts](#) for maximum grant sizes.)

Organizations must have a minimum operating budget of \$1M to be eligible for the *Special Opportunity* grant category.

**All Creative Project grantees will receive an additional 20% for unrestricted general operating support.**

### *For Subsidiaries of a Nonprofit*

Maximum grant requests for subsidiaries of a nonprofit (such as independent cost-centers parented by a university or college) are based on the operating expenses of the applying subsidiary, not of the parent. Please see our [related FAQ](#) on applicants of subsidiaries.

### *For Fiscally Sponsored Organizations*

Maximum grant requests for organizations that are fiscally sponsored will be limited to 25% of their annual operating expenses. Please see our [related FAQs](#) for fiscally sponsored applicants.

## When will I know how much I can apply for?

Should you be invited to submit a full application, the Center will inform you of your maximum funding request for the proposed project at the time you are notified of LOI approval (*mid-June 2025*). This notification date may be delayed, dependent on your timely response to questions that may arise during your organization's financial review. (See page 7, [Financial Eligibility Review](#).)

**All grant requests are subject to review and approval by Center staff.**

**Applicants are encouraged to begin the Center's financial eligibility review process as early as possible to ensure that the Center may communicate your maximum grant request in a timely manner.** See the [next page](#) for details.



# Financial Eligibility Review

*This page has been updated on April 29, 2025, to reflect applicant feedback.*

**The Center conducts financial reviews of all applicants. Eligibility for a Creative Project grant is contingent upon sound finances and tenable evidence of organizational stability.**

Financial reviews occur concurrently with the first phase of the application process (*Eligibility & Letter of Intent to Apply*). Reviews may take up to six weeks depending on 1) if you are a first-time applicant; 2) the availability of your FY24\* financial reports; 3) the complexity of your organization’s financial situation; and 4) your response time when we make inquiries.

Our goal is to inform your organization of the outcome of the financial review when we notify you that your LOI has been approved or declined (*mid-June 2025*). To help us meet this goal, **please begin our financial review process as early as possible.**

**Financial eligibility, and the review process, differs for fiscal sponsors and sponsees.**

Both fiscal sponsors and sponsees must have a minimum operating budget of \$150,000 (as of FY24 at least, and continuing into FY25). **Please read our [related FAQ](#) for important information.**

## How to begin the Center’s financial review process

Organizations are asked to provide financial audits, reviews, or externally prepared compilation reports for fiscal years 2024\*, 2023, and 2022. *Audits are strongly preferred.* Please do not submit your organization's Form 990s.

Applicants with an established [Application Portal](#) account should log in and navigate to the “My Financials” tab to upload PDFs of required materials.

### **\*Availability of financial reports for FY24**

For organizations that will not have a final copy of their FY24 financial report by the LOI deadline (*May 15*), the Center will accept a draft for application purposes only. Should your organization be recommended for funding, the Center will require a final financial report for FY24 in order to award the grant. Grant determinations will be made this fall, by October 31. For guidance, please contact [gdelluomo@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:gdelluomo@pewcenterarts.org).

## How the Center determines financial eligibility

All financial reports will first be reviewed by external accountants. These accountants look for positive or improving trends across three-years in 1) your monthly working capital (*calculated without donor restrictions*) and 2) changes in unrestricted surplus/deficit.

Organizations showing ongoing deficits greater than 10% will be referred to external financial consultants who have expertise in arts and cultural nonprofit finance. You may be contacted with questions—or to request a discussion with our consultant—before the Center determines whether your organization may apply.

# Grant Periods, Notification Dates, and Deadlines for 2025 Creative Project Grants

## Grant Periods and Notification Dates

Because we understand that creating substantive work for audiences takes time, we offer grant periods that extend across multiple years.

The implementation period for 2025 Creative Project grants begins **November 1, 2025** and ends by **June 30, 2028**.

Public events that are part of a Creative Project grant may not take place before **April 1, 2026**.

*Project expenses incurred starting November 1, 2025 may be allocated to grant funds if they are part of your approved project budget.*

**Applicants will be notified of the status of their funding proposal by October 31, 2025.**

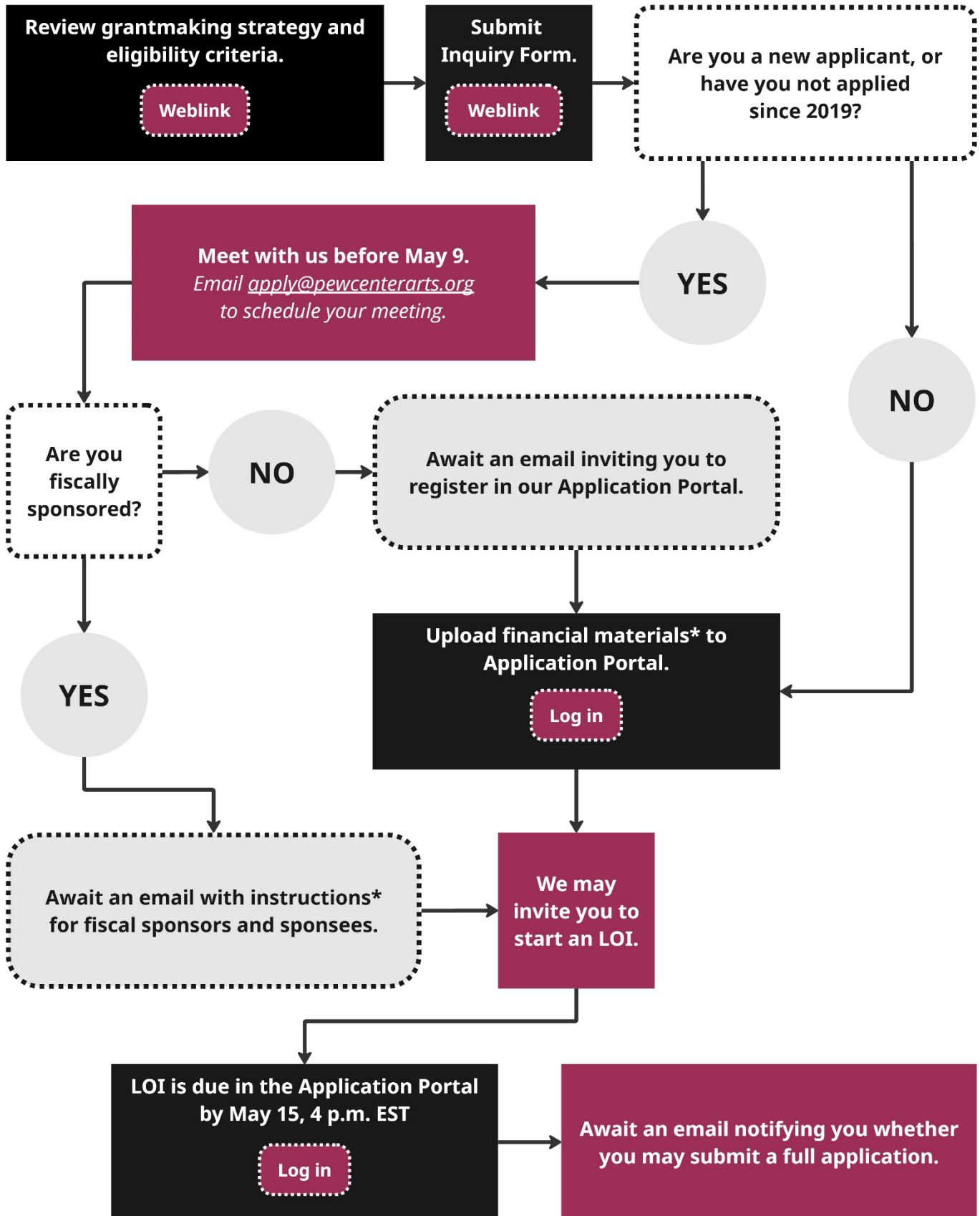
**The Center's public announcement of all grants will be made in December 2025.**

## Application Process Deadlines

- New applicants (*or organizations that have not applied since 2019*) must meet with Center staff by **May 9, 2025**.
- The LOI is due **May 15, 2025, at 4 p.m., EST**.
- Applicants invited to proceed to the full application will be notified in **mid-June 2025**. (*Part II of the Creative Project grant application guidelines will be published at that time.*)
- The full application is due **July 25, 2025, at 4 p.m., EST**.

**Follow the [map of our application process](#) on the next page for specific steps.**

# Application Process Map: Creative Project Grants



See [page 7, Financial Eligibility Review](#).

# Submitting the Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI)

Prospective applicants that meet the Center’s initial eligibility criteria will be invited to submit an LOI.

Once you are notified of your invitation, log in to the Application Portal and look for the “Start LOI” button. For help accessing the portal, or questions about registering, email help@pewcenterarts.org.

## Who evaluates LOIs?

The Center recruits a diverse group of arts and culture professionals to evaluate LOIs. These Evaluators are chosen for their expertise in the areas of practice reflected by the projects in the applicant pool. All Evaluators come from outside of the Center’s funding region. LOI Evaluators change from year to year, though some may serve in multiple years. **Staff of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage and of The Pew Charitable Trusts do not serve as evaluators.**

*Evaluator names appear on our website once grants are publicly announced. Visit our website for examples of past LOI Evaluators and Application Panelists.*

## How are LOIs evaluated?

LOI Evaluators first review mission statements, narrative question responses, and work/site samples. They are then asked to use the following scale to respond to the questions, “*Does this project grow directly out of the organization’s mission? Does it demonstrate sufficient excellence, care, and conceptual rigor to recommend going forward to the full application?*”

- Absolutely yes
- Yes, with some reservations
- No, not at this time

**Organizations whose LOIs receive positive evaluations will be invited to submit a full application.**

# LOI Form Contents and Required Uploads

The following pages represent the content of the online LOI form.

## LOI Page 1 – Applicant Overview

*Applicants are asked to provide—*

- Organization name, founding year, and county
- Contact information of the primary contact and the project director *(may be the same person)*

### ***For fiscally sponsored organizations only:***

- Name and contact of fiscal sponsor
- Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement **(PDF upload)**  
*Upload the signed agreement with your fiscal sponsor. Terms of the sponsorship agreement must be clear and mutually agreed-upon between parties. Fiscally sponsored organizations that are invited to submit a full application may include a sponsorship fee of up to 12% in the project budget.*
- Do you intend to apply for Technical Assistance funds? (See our related FAQ)  
*(Yes or No question)*

## LOI Page 2 – Project Overview

*This page asks you to share the following about your proposed project:*

- Project Title *(or working title)*
- A one-sentence project description  
*(Think of this as a quick reference for Center staff and LOI Evaluators to identify the main activities and purpose of your project.)*
- The dates when your work on the project will start and end  
*(See [page 8](#) for the 2025 grant periods.)*
- Whether your project is associated the 2026 United States Semiquincentennial  
*(Yes or No question)*

# LOI Form Contents and Required Uploads

(continued)

## LOI Page 3 – Mission and Narrative

*This page will ask you to—*

- Provide your organization’s mission statement (*in 175 words or fewer*)
- Answer the following three narrative questions (*in one combined answer of 1000 words or fewer*):
  1. *Describe your project and its focus. What will you create, produce, or present?*
  2. *With whom will you work, as far as you know?*
  3. *Given what you know now, what about this project would interest your intended audiences, including a diversity of communities?*

### **Questions for Special Opportunity Grant Applicants only:**

*Additionally answer these questions (in one combined answer of 300 words or fewer):*

- *Who is your major creative contributor from outside the U.S.? How did you arrive at the selection of this contributor?*
- *How is the intended experience of your audience incorporated into the project design from its inception?*
- *How are artists and creative practitioners driving this project?*

### **For co-applying organizations only:**

*Additionally answer (in 150 words or fewer):*

- *Please outline how creative and administrative responsibilities will be assigned and how decisions will be made.*

# LOI Form Contents and Required Uploads

## Work and Site Samples

When choosing samples, do your best to reflect the aesthetic and creative quality of the project and the site where the public will encounter it. Evaluators do understand that your samples cannot reflect work you have not yet made.

### LOI Page 4 – Work and Site Samples

*This page will ask you to—*

- Provide **five recent samples** that illuminate your proposed project.  
*The five samples can be made up of any combination of **images, audio, video, or text.***
- *Plan to include—*
  - Work samples for key artistic project personnel.
  - A sample of past work from your organization.
  - One or more images of the site(s) where project activities will take place.  
*(For example, the theater, empty lot, gallery, garden, street, website, etc.)*
- *For each sample you will be given space to—*
  - Describe why the sample is relevant to the project (in 75 words or fewer).
  - Provide context for the sample (in 75 words or fewer).  
*(For example, the location where sample takes place, the name(s) of artistic project personnel featured in the sample)*

#### The following are not acceptable samples:

- Promotional audio or video, trailers, samplers or montages
- Reviews, press, or marketing collateral
- Work created when a project collaborator/artist/curator was a student
- Work samples over five years old

**Have questions or trouble choosing samples? We're here to guide you.  
Contact us by emailing [apply@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:apply@pewcenterarts.org).**

# Contact Us

Contact us by emailing [apply@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:apply@pewcenterarts.org) with questions or meeting requests.

Center staff members meet with all new applicants and are available to offer requested guidance to any applicant throughout the process.

## Center Program Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Paula Marincola** (*she/her*)

INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PROJECT GRANT PROGRAMS

**Luis Croquer** (*he/him*)

PROGRAM OFFICERS

**Zach Blackwood** (*he/him*)

*Community Connection and Audience Participation*

**Murph Henderson** (*she/her*)

*Performance and Program Administration*

**Alec Unkovic** (*he/him*)

*Visual Art and Creative Practices*

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

**Alfiatul (Alfi) Nurdin** (*she/they/dia*)

## Program Modifications

As of their release date in April 2025, these guidelines represent the complete instructions for project eligibility and the Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI) process for Creative Project grant applicants. Initial eligibility criteria for all applicants appears online at <https://www.pewcenterarts.org/apply>. The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage and The Pew Charitable Trusts reserve the right to change and/or modify these guidelines at any future time in response to experience gained from operations, input from applicants and grantees, external evaluations, and the community. Prospective applicants will be alerted to updates to the guidelines in a timely manner.



# Applicant FAQs

## **My organization’s primary mission supports something other than the presentation of arts and history projects for public audiences. Can we apply for a Creative Project Grant?**

Organizations such as *libraries, arboreta, zoos, science centers, community development and social service organizations* may be invited to apply if they have a demonstrated record of producing work related to art and public history for public audiences. If you are new to the Center, our program staff will be in touch to schedule a conversation about the alignment between your mission, your arts and culture programming, and your presentations to public audiences. Our staff will also ask you if your organization has the appropriate artistic, curatorial, and producing personnel to realize the project you envision.

Applicants from within universities/colleges or that are subsidiaries of a nonprofit may be eligible if they are independent cost-centers with missions tied to the public presentation and the interpretation of art or public history.

**Please note:** *Non-art and non-history organizations are not eligible for Evolving Futures grants.*

## **What do you mean by “demonstrated record of producing work related to art and public history for public audiences”?**

*The Center looks for a record of your past programming that conveys organizational readiness illustrated by—*

- Your organization has a minimum of 2 years of arts and culture programming.
- Your arts and culture programming for public audiences reflects professional standards of production and compensation.
- Your organization offers arts and culture programming on a regular basis.
- Your organization has produced arts and culture programming at a scale that demonstrates readiness to undertake the proposed project.

## **Am I required to meet with Center staff before submitting the LOI?**

If your organization has never applied to the Center—or if it’s been over five years since your last application—you must schedule a meeting with Center staff. We’ll want to talk with new applicants before May 9 to learn about your organization, your history of public arts and history programming, and your project idea. Set up your meeting now by emailing [apply@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:apply@pewcenterarts.org).

Meetings for recent, returning applicants are optional; however, it’s always our pleasure to speak with you about your plans. Would you like to have a preliminary meeting to explore a project idea? If so, please send a meeting request to [apply@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:apply@pewcenterarts.org).

# Applicant FAQs

(continued)

## Does the Center offer any monetary assistance to its applicants to support their work on the application?

Yes. The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage offers two types of capacity building grants to assist its organizations with our application process: **Research and Travel grants** and **Technical Assistance\* grants**.

Please review our [Capacity Building grant guidelines](#) for information on how to apply.

*\*Priority will be given to applicants with operating budgets under \$500,000, to those with no dedicated development staff, and to first-time applicants.*

## Can I apply for a Creative Project Grant and an Evolving Futures grant in the same cycle?

No. Applicants may choose between Creative Project grants and Evolving Futures grants but can only apply for one grant in the 2025 cycle.

## I have an open grant with the Center. May I apply in 2025?

Applicants may not have an open grant in the project-funding program (*Performance, EPI, or Evolving Futures*) from which they seek funding in the 2025 cycle. Applicants with such open grants must have their final reports approved by the Center to proceed with an application.

## I'm applying as a subsidiary of a nonprofit or a cost-center at a university/college. Is my parent organization the "official" applicant? What else should I consider?

Parent organizations will be the entity entering into the contractual grant agreement with the Center; however, LOIs and applications should make clear that the subsidiary is responsible for proposing and implementing the project.

Subsidiaries invited to apply will be required to provide a letter of commitment from a governing official of their parent organization. Dependent on how your subsidiary fits into the parent organization's structure, the operating expenses for the subsidiary are used to calculate your maximum grant request.

## What does "co-applying" mean for a Special Opportunity grant?

The *Special Opportunity* grant category allows two organizations (*each with a minimum annual budget of \$1M*) to submit a single application proposing a substantive collaborative effort. If awarded, the co-applying organizations enter into separate grant agreements with the Center. Each organization may request up to \$400k in project funds, not to exceed \$600k when combined.

# Applicant FAQs

## For fiscal sponsors and fiscally sponsored organizations (sponsees)

*This page has been updated as of April 29, 2025, to reflect applicant feedback.*

### Who can serve as a fiscal sponsor for a Creative Project grant?

Fiscal sponsors must have a 501(c)(3) designation, a minimum operating budget of \$150k, and be headquartered in the five-county Philadelphia region of Pennsylvania (*Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, or Philadelphia county*). Sponsors must also have a demonstrable record of arts and culture sponsorship.

### How does financial eligibility, and the financial review process, differ for fiscal sponsors and sponsees?

Both the fiscal sponsor and their sponsee must have a **minimum operating budget of \$150,000** (*as of FY24, at least, and continuing into FY25*).

Fiscal sponsors supporting a Center grant must have sound finances and tenable evidence of organizational stability. **To complete the financial eligibility review, fiscal sponsors should send the following materials to [apply@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:apply@pewcenterarts.org) by May 9:**

- The sponsors independently prepared financial audits or reviews for fiscal years 2024-22.
- Statement of activities/financial position, or comparable report, that demonstrate the sponsored organization has an annual operating budget of at least \$150,000 for FY24 and continuing into FY25.

### How many Center-funded projects can one fiscal sponsor support?

The Center does not place a strict limit on the number of projects that a single sponsor can support. Organizations with an open Center grant may serve as sponsors. However, the Center will discuss and consider capacity and equitable access to Center funds with the sponsor before confirming eligibility.

### What role do fiscal sponsors play in the Creative Project Grant application process?

Sponsees must have an established agreement with their fiscal sponsor in place at the time that the LOI is submitted. Terms of the sponsorship must be clear and mutually agreed-upon between parties. Fiscal sponsors are also asked to approve the content of the sponsee's Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI) and application before submission.

### What responsibilities do fiscal sponsors have if my project is awarded the grant?

Should a sponsored project be funded, the fiscal sponsor is the organization entering into the contractual agreement with the Center. The sponsor assumes fiduciary and administrative oversight of the grant and of the required reporting. All grant funds will be paid to the fiscal sponsor.

**Please note:** *Fiscally sponsored organizations that are invited to submit a full application may include a sponsorship fee of up to 12% in the project budget.*