



The  
Pew Center  
for Arts  
& Heritage

## **Creative Project Grants**

2026 Application Guidelines | Part II

*Advancement to the full Application*

*These Application Guidelines represent the second phase in the Center's application process for Creative Project grants. They are for use by organizations whose 2026 Letters of Intent to Apply (LOIs) have been approved for advancement.*

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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 [apply@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:apply@pewcenterarts.org) or call 267.350.4900 for assistance.

# Next Steps in the Application Process

## TALK WITH US

*(Required for applicants who haven't submitted a full application in the last 5 years or are fiscally sponsored; optional for returning applicants.)*

During this meeting, we'll prioritize two things:

1. Sharing feedback from the evaluators who reviewed your LOI. This year, we asked evaluators to pose questions that arose for them as they read your proposal. We hope you'll find the evaluators' questions useful as you draft your full Application. Please schedule your meeting by June 18, 2026.
2. Discussing your draft project budget. Our grantmaking panelists study budgets closely, looking for the stories they tell about your project priorities. In our discussion with you, we'll raise any questions that reflect past panelists' concerns. We may suggest targeted revisions. Please send a draft budget to [aunkovic@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:aunkovic@pewcenterarts.org) (EPI) or [mhenderson@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:mhenderson@pewcenterarts.org) (Performance) at least two business days before your scheduled meeting.

*All grantees will receive an additional 20% for general operating support in addition to their grant award. Grantees may elect to use their gen-op supplement for any aspect of their project or operations.*

## SECURE LETTERS OF COMMITMENT FROM YOUR COLLABORATORS

Now is a good time to notify your primary collaborators that your grant proposal has advanced. Letters of Commitment from these collaborators should detail the scopes of work, timeline for their involvement, and agreed-upon fees. (No letters are required from members of your staff.)

## APPLY FOR RESEARCH AND TRAVEL FUNDS, IF NEEDED

Small research and travel grants, ranging from \$2,000–\$4,000, are available to help organizations fund the exploratory phases of a project, as well as to support travel for consultation with chosen collaborators. These grants are designed for use before September 2026. **Please click [here](#) for parameters, then [here](#) to fill out the simple application.**

## APPLY FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS, IF NEEDED

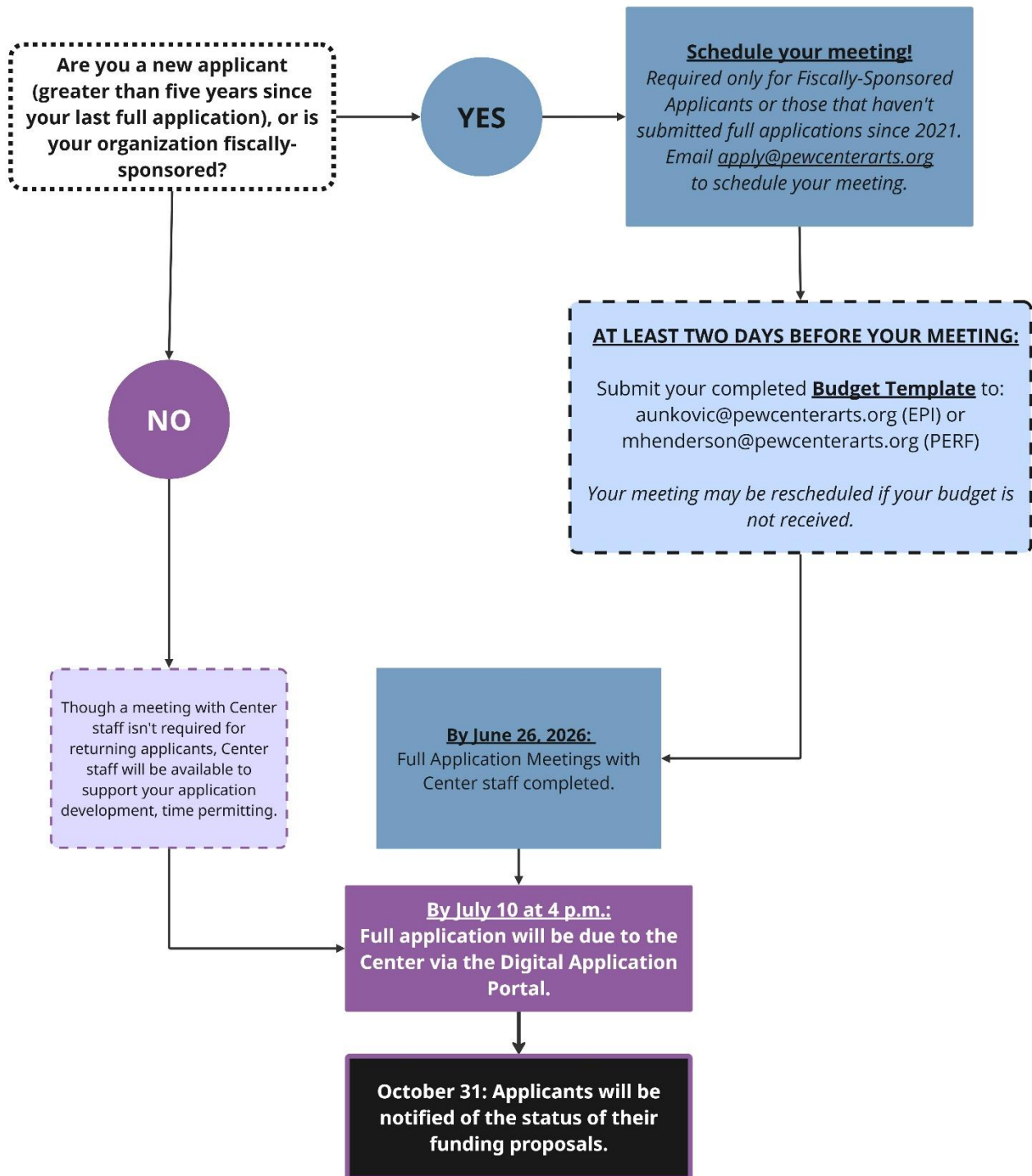
We offer technical assistance funds in amounts up to \$1500 to assist organizations with managing and completing the full Creative Project grant application. Priority will be given to organizations with annual expenses of less than \$500,000 and to those without development staffs. Funds can be used to hire an outside grantwriter, to translate materials, or for other expenses directly related to completing the application. These grants are designed for use before July 31, 2026. **Please click [here](#) for parameters, then [here](#) to fill out the simple application.**

## Important Dates and Deadlines

- **By June 18, 2026: Schedule your meeting.** *(Required for fiscally sponsored organizations and organizations that have not submitted full applications in the last 5 years.)*  
Click [here](#) to schedule with Alec Unkovic (EPI) or  
Click [here](#) to schedule with Murph Henderson (Performance)
- **Two business days before your meeting:** Submit your completed Budget Template to [aunkovic@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:aunkovic@pewcenterarts.org) (EPI) or [mhenderson@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:mhenderson@pewcenterarts.org) (Performance).  
Use the template linked [here](#).
- **By June 26, 2026:** Complete your meeting with Center staff.
- **By July 10, 2026** at 4 p.m. EDT: Submit your application.  
*Corrections may be requested of applicants between July 13–July 22 or at contracting.*
- **By October 31, 2026:** Applicants will be notified of the status of their funding proposal.
- **November 1, 2026:** Project expenses may begin to be allocated to grant funds if they are part of your approved project budget.
- **December 2026:** The Center will announce all grants publicly.
- **April 1, 2027:** Public events that are part of a Creative Project grant may begin to take place.
- **June 30, 2029:** All 2026 Creative Project grants must close.

View the [map of our application process](#) on the following page for another view.

# Process Map: Full Application Phase



# Grant Amounts and Maximum Requests

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

Your maximum funding request appeared in the message that informed you of LOI approval (late May 2026). Please contact [apply@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:apply@pewcenterarts.org) if you need clarification.

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

## How were maximum grant requests determined?

The maximum amount of grant funds you may request is based on your organization's 1.) annual expenses and 2.) history of successfully implementing a Center-funded project. The maximum amount will help you decide what grant-level your project requires. All grant requests are subject to approval by Center staff. Applicants without a history of prior panel-adjudicated grants from the Center will not be eligible for the maximum funding request.

### ***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 annual expenses of the applying subsidiary, not of the parent organization.

### ***For Fiscally Sponsored Organizations***

Organizations that are fiscally sponsored may not request more than 25% of their annual expenses.

# Submitting the Creative Project Grant Application:

## APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

The following pages detail the content of the online application form.

### Application Page 1 – Applicant Overview

#### ***Applicants are asked to provide—***

- Organization name, founding year, and county
- Organization mission statement (*in 175 words or fewer*)
- Numbers of full-time employees and annual public attendees
- Total annual expenses for fiscal years 2025, 2024, and 2023.  
*Subsidiaries of parent organizations and universities, please enter the annual expenses of your subsidiary only.*
- Letter of Commitment from Board Chair **(PDF upload)**  
*Upload a brief letter from your Board Chair, stating your governing board's commitment for the full term of the project. For academic institutions, these letters should be authored by the Dean of the applying school and copied to the Provost. Fiscally sponsored organizations do not need to upload a document here.*

# APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

(continued)

## Application Page 2 – Project Overview & Timeline

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

- **Project Title and Project Summary** (*in 75–100 words or fewer*)  
*Prepare this summary to serve as a quick reference that identifies the main activities and purpose of your project.*
- **Timeline**  
*The application form provides a table to detail your project timeline. Dates included may precede the grant period.*  
  
**Panelists study timelines closely.** *Please use your timeline to break down the activities and milestones of your project in detail. Be sure to include--*
  - ✓ *Key planning activities*
  - ✓ *Dates when the project will be accessible to the public, culminating events, and*
  - ✓ *The names of the specific collaborators involved at each stage of preparation.*
- **The dates when your work on the project will start and end**  
*The allowable grant period extends from November 1, 2026–June 30, 2029. Your end-date should follow evaluation of the project and completion of any documentation funded by the Center.*
- **Contact information of the director of the project.**
- **The amount of grant funding you are requesting.**  
*You may request up to the approved ask-amount sent to you by email.*

# APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

(continued)

## Application Page 3 – Questions that address “Excellence”

Answer the following questions that relate to Excellence, one of the Center’s evaluative criterion.

Would you like to know how Excellence will be assessed? See pages 15–17, [Who Evaluates Applications, and How?](#), for details.

- Answer the following questions.
- **Please do not include links to external websites or references to past support from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.** Evaluators and panelists are instructed to disregard Center grant history as an indicator of a competitive proposal.
- Word-limits for each answer are in parentheses.
  1. *Describe your project and its focus. What will you create, produce, or present? How does this work align with your mission?* (325 words)
  2. *What are the primary components of the project?* (325 words)
  3. *Who are the primary creative collaborators for this project? Why did you choose them?* (400 words)
  4. *How do multiple perspectives and inclusive practices inform your conceptual/artistic goals for this project?* (150 words)
  5. *How do you position this project in relation to work in the field that inspires you?* (250 words)
- **If community members will help to author, design, or create this project, please answer the following questions. Please leave this section blank if your project will not be developed in dialogue with the community. (One combined answer of 300 words or fewer)**
  - a) *Who will serve as your community collaborators? What parts of the project will community partners author, design, and/or create with you?*
  - b) *What relationship already exists between your organization and members of the partner community? If it’s a first collaboration, what steps have you taken to prepare for this exchange?*
- **Object checklist (PDF upload)**  
*Optional, and for projects primarily featuring exhibitions. If applicable, you may upload a working object checklist of artifacts, artwork, or other objects to be included in your exhibition project.*

# APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

(continued)

## EXCELLENCE: WORK AND SITE SAMPLES

When choosing samples, do your best to reflect the aesthetic of the project you'd like us to fund, as well as the site where the public will encounter it. Panelists understand that your samples cannot reflect work that you have not yet begun to create.

### Application Page 4 – Excellence: Work & Site Samples

*This page will ask you to—*

- Provide up to **15 recent samples** that will help panelists to visualize your proposed project. Your samples can be made up of any combination of images, video (please use only continuous footage, not trailers); audio, or text.
- *Plan to include—*
  - Work samples for key artistic project personnel. Prioritize samples that align with what the artists will contribute to your proposed project.
  - 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. What would you like the panelists to focus on or understand? *(in 75 words or fewer)*
  - Provide context for the sample *(in 75 words or fewer)*.  
*For example, the location where the sample takes place, the name(s) of artistic project personnel featured in the sample.*
  - *Note: Please do not reference past support from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage in your description or relevance text.*

# APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

(continued)

## INELIGIBLE WORK SAMPLES

The following are not acceptable samples:

- Trailers, promotional videos, heavily edited clips, or montages of moving-image or audio material
- Links to websites
  - Please upload stand-alone work samples; do not link to samples embedded on website pages that contain additional content.
- Reviews, press, or marketing collateral
- Work created when a project collaborator/artist/curator was a student
- Except in specific cases, samples over five years old. Please discuss such cases with Center staff.
  - ***If you submit a sample that is more than five years old, take care to define its relevance to the current project. Remember: panelists are evaluating your project, not an artist's career or the history of your organization.***

# APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

(continued)

## Application Page 5 – Questions that address “Ability to Realize Project”

**This page asks you to answer questions that provide information on your key project collaborators.**

Answer the following questions that relate to Ability to Realize, one of the Center’s evaluative criteria.

Would you like to know how Ability to Realize will be assessed? See pages 15–17, [Who Evaluates Applications, and How?](#), for details.

- **Answer the following questions. Please do not include links to external websites. Word-limits for each answer are in parentheses.**
  1. *Who is the project manager? Please outline the project manager’s scope of work.* (225 words)
  2. *What are the roles and responsibilities of each of the primary contributors to the project? Who will make artistic and administrative decisions?* (400 words)
  3. *Please tell us about how your recent work has prepared you to undertake this project.* (200 words)
  
- **If community members will help to author, design, and/or create this project, please answer the following question. Please leave this section blank if your project is not developed in dialogue with the community.**
  - a) *What possible financial, physical, technical, or social obstacles are you anticipating as you approach your collaboration with community members? What steps will you take to minimize these potential stumbling blocks and address collaborators’ needs?* (200 words)

# APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

(continued)

## Application Page 5 – Key Project Collaborators

Page five will ask you to provide letters of commitment (as PDF uploads) and concise background narratives for each primary, non-staff project collaborator identified in your proposal. These letters should come from your lead artists, curators, lead production personnel, and chosen venue.

*Artists nominated for a Pew Fellowship in 2026 may not be commissioned artists or key personnel for projects proposed for support by a 2026 Creative Project grant. If awarded a Pew Fellowship, Fellows may not participate in a Creative Project grant application for one year after the start of their Pew Fellowship grant period.*

- **Letters of Commitment (PDF upload)**

Each letter should outline 1.) scope of work, 2.) fees for project involvement, and 3.) timeframe for work. *Your collaborators may also want to describe their particular interest in the project. Letters should be clearly sourced from the participant’s email address or signed, on stationery.*

- **Background Narratives**

Please highlight (*maximum 150 words*) specific expertise from each collaborator that will enrich your project and contribute to its success. No biographical data or accolades are necessary.

*Page five additionally asks you to provide—*

- **Select Programming History (PDF upload. Please use a font 11-point or larger.)**

Provide a one-to-two-page summary highlighting projects completed by your organization in the last three years. Note any specific projects that have strengthened your capacity for the project you propose. This list should include project titles, dates and venues, brief project descriptions, names of lead artists/collaborators, and attendance totals.

# APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

(continued)

## Application Page 6 – Questions that address “Impact”

Answer the following questions that relate to Impact, one of the Center’s evaluative criterion.

Would you like to know how Impact will be assessed? See pages 15–17, [Who Evaluates Applications, and How?](#), for details about how your responses will be assessed.

- **Answer the following questions. Word-limits for each answer are in parentheses.**
  1. *Who is this project for? Given what you know now, what about this project would interest your target audiences? (400 words)*
  2. *How will considerations of access, equity, and inclusion guide your approach to audiences? (200 words)*
  3. *What is the effect you want this project to have on its audiences? How will you assess and measure that impact? (200 words)*
  4. *How will you document your project? How might you share this documentation? (200 words)*
  
- **If community members will help to author, design, and/or create this project, please answer the following questions. Please leave this section blank if your project will not be developed in dialogue with the community. (Answer in one combined answer of 300 words or fewer.)**
  - a) *Tell us about the community with whom you’ll work.*
  - b) *Is this a collaboratively designed project? How does it address specific needs and concerns in the community?*
  - c) *Will this work continue in a similar or different form after the project is complete?*

# APPLICATION FORM CONTENTS AND REQUIRED UPLOADS

(continued)

## Application Pages 7 and 8 – Project Budget and Additional Income

### Project Budget

**Download and complete this [Budget Template](#).** At least two business days before your meeting with Center staff, send your completed Budget Template to [aunkovic@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:aunkovic@pewcenterarts.org) (EPI) or [mhenderson@pewcenterarts.org](mailto:mhenderson@pewcenterarts.org) (Performance).

The Budget Template and online Application form ask you to budget according to the following categories:

- **Fees and Honoraria**

*Apply fair and equitable compensation. Panelists appreciate explanations of fee structures, especially when fees vary among collaborators. Payment to project collaborators should be appropriately calibrated to the quality, effort, and time contributed. Permanent staff salaries, fees, and benefits are not eligible grant expenses. Staff of the applicant organization may not be paid to participate or perform in funded projects.*

- **Production Expenses**

*While we understand that certain projects may have components that have an extended life beyond the project (e.g., semi-permanent exhibitions and other markers), we prefer that structures erected using Creative Project grants remain on view only for periods equivalent to our grant period (maximum 3 years).*

- **Travel and Subsistence/Housing**

- **Documentation**

*Consider ways that documentation can be shared with external audiences to extend the life of the project.*

- **Marketing, Communication, and Engagement**

*Center grants prioritize public audiences. Please make sure to allocate a proportionate percentage of the total project budget—and grant request—to a range of efforts designed to reach your intended audiences. Consider what outside expertise or services (e.g., web design, public relations, photography) and communications platforms (online advertising, outdoor signage, etc.) may be needed to support your marketing strategies and engagement goals.*

*Budget categories continue on the following page →*

- **Other Direct Costs**

*Applicants may want to include funds for evaluating your project. What forms of assessment would be most useful to you? Please design qualitative and quantitative evaluations that are likely to strengthen your future efforts. Consider in-house as well as external forms of evaluation.*

*Fiscally sponsored applicants may include, under “Other Direct Costs,” up to 12% of their requested grant amount as a fee for their sponsor.*

### **Using Budget Notes**

Panelists examine budgets closely. Annotate your budget by using the “Budget Notes” column within the Application form. Explain how you arrived at figures in each line-item.

### **Additional Project Income**

If your total project budget is larger than your grant request from the Center, list any confirmed and projected funding, as well as additional income that your organization plans to put toward project costs. Include grants and contributions, cash allocations, and earned income.

While you may list in-kind contributions, their monetary value should always be reflected as **zero**.

# WHO EVALUATES APPLICATIONS, AND HOW?

## Peer Review Panel

All applications are reviewed—and all grants are determined—by a diverse panel of arts and culture practitioners. Panelists currently come from outside of the Center's funding region. The choice to work with panelists from outside the region reflects the Center's commitment to avoiding conflicts of interest, as well as its commitment to bringing a field-wide lens to the discussion. Panelists are chosen for their expertise in the areas of practice reflected in the applicant pool.

*Panelists' names are published on our website and in the press releases that announce our grants each cycle. [Visit our website](#) for a list of past application panelists.*

**Staff of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, the Barnes Foundation, and The Pew Charitable Trusts do not serve as panelists and do not determine grant recipients. All applications and submissions to the Center are considered confidential.**

## Panel Meeting and Application Scoring

The Peer Review Panel meets over 2–3 days for group discussion and to score applications. The panel chair leads the discussion, which is framed by the Center's evaluative criteria. (See the [next page](#) for these criteria.)

Center staff members facilitate the meetings but neither participate in discussion nor vote in final evaluations.

Applications are reviewed one-by-one, each on its own merits, and not compared.

After each application is discussed, panelists assign three scores each—one for Excellence, one for Ability to Realize, and one for Impact--using the ranking scale below.

## Ranking Scale

- 5.0** Outstanding in relation to all the evaluative criteria
- 4.0 – 4.9** Very good to excellent in relation to the majority of the evaluative criteria
- 3.0 – 3.9** Fair to competent: meets some evaluative criteria
- 2.0 – 2.9** Insufficient competence: does not meet a sufficient number of evaluative criteria
- 1.0 – 1.9** Does not meet the criteria for funding

## EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Panelists provide three scores, one each for **Excellence**, **Ability to Realize Project**, and **Impact**. Panelists are given the following list of “indicators” to guide their discussion, evaluation, and scoring.

### CREATIVE PROJECT GRANT INDICATORS

#### *Indicators of **Excellence**:*

- The project has a clear central focus and is artistically and/or programmatically substantive.
- The project is mission-aligned.
- The form that the project will take is clearly described.
- Creative personnel are thoughtfully chosen, have relevant experience, and are of distinction.
- The goals of the project reflect multiple perspectives and inclusive practices.

*If the applicant indicated that community members will help to author, design, or create their project—*

- Community collaborators and what they will contribute are clearly described.
- Relationship with community collaborators is realistic.

#### *Indicators of **Ability to Realize Project**:*

- The project budget is realistic, fair, and sufficiently detailed and supports the activities and priorities described in the application.
- The applicant has identified a project manager with relevant experience. The project manager’s scope of work is appropriate to achieving project goals.
- The roles and responsibilities of the project team are appropriate and clearly defined.
- The applicant can manage financial and administrative requirements of the project.
- Past work indicates that the applicant is well positioned to undertake this project.
- *If the applicant indicated that community members will help to author, design, or create their project—* The applicant demonstrates an understanding of possible obstacles (e.g., physical, technical, financial, social) that may either facilitate or inhibit the engagement of the intended community collaborators.

# CREATIVE PROJECT GRANT EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

(continued)

## *Indicators of **Impact**:*

- Intended audiences are identified.
- The intended impacts of the project are articulated.
- Considerations for an accessible, equitable, and inclusive audience experience have guided approaches to audiences.
- Budget for marketing and communications is appropriate.
- The success of the project is defined. Any plans for qualitative and quantitative evaluation are well considered.
- Documentation and knowledge-sharing plans are appropriate.

*If the applicant indicated that community members will help to author, design, or create their project—*

- Rationale for choosing community collaborators is clear.
- Specific needs and concerns in the community have been considered, and plans to address them are viable.

# Contact Us

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

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

## Center Program Staff

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Christina Vassallo** (*she/her*)

PROGRAM OFFICERS

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

*Fellowships*

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

*Performance and Program Administration*

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

*Visual Art and Creative Practices*

## Program Modifications

As of their release date in May 2026, these guidelines represent the complete instructions for the full Application process for Creative Project grant applicants. Initial eligibility criteria for all applicants appears online, and Part I of the Center's Application Guidelines appears at <https://www.pewcenterarts.org/apply>. The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, the Barnes Foundation, 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.

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage is autonomous in our grantmaking. The Barnes Foundation, our operating partner, has no influence over grantee selection and is ineligible to apply for Center grants while acting in this capacity.