The
Pew Center
for Arts
& Heritage

Creative Project Grants
2025 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 2025 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 help@pewcenterarts.org or call 267.350.4902 for assistance.

Before Reading Further:
Next Steps for All Applicants

MEETINGS

We recommend that you act promptly to schedule a time to meet with Center Program staff. Meetings are required for all first-time applicants and highly recommended for returning applicants. Draft project budgets must be submitted in advance, and budget review is a part of all meetings. Feedback from LOI evaluators will also be shared during meetings.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS

Organizations that indicated at the LOI stage that they wish to apply for Technical Assistance funds for assistance in preparing this application should make their formal requests before **Thursday, June 26, 2025**. Click here for **detail and the brief application form**.

BUDGETS

Your budget should reflect the priorities that you identify in your narrative. Be sure that all fees and honoraria appropriately reflect scopes of work, parity, and recognition of each collaborator's contributions to your project. Peer review panelists are arts and culture practitioners. They will recognize where narratives and budgets are not aligned or where budget numbers are inflated. Use the "Budget Notes" column to annotate your budget, explaining how you arrived at figures in each line-item.

As well as discussing draft budgets with you during meetings, Program staff will conduct additional reviews of budgets after applications are submitted. You may be asked to make targeted revisions to your budget or to remove ineligible expenses.

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.

Please note that Center grants don't fund staff salaries, parties, receptions, or permanent structures.

WORK SAMPLES

Strong video, audio, and images will bring your proposed project to life for peer review panelists. Work samples should illustrate the aesthetic nature of your project and offer clear evidence of quality and rigor.

Use the text boxes that accompany each work sample to describe what you want Panelists to notice. Do not use promotional videos, trailers, samplers, or heavily edited video or audio as work samples.

Do not include marketing materials, reviews, or press clips as work samples.

Next Steps for All Applicants

(continued)

RECONNECTING WITH COLLABORATORS, SECURING LETTERS OF COMMITMENT

Now is the time to notify collaborators that your grant proposal has advanced and to agree on their timeline, scopes of work, and fees, all of which must be detailed in Letters of Commitment.

THE SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL

Some projects scheduled to culminate in 2026 may be reflections on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. If your project has an association with this document, the application will ask you to describe your point of view and contribution to marking the semiquincentennial. Is this founding document integral to the ideas your project will explore? If not, there is no need to reference the semiquincentennial.

EVALUATION

Project evaluation is strongly encouraged. Evaluation can take many forms, some of them internal to your organization. We encourage structured plans for both qualitative and quantitative evaluation so that what you learn from this project can inform your future efforts.

FINANCIAL REVIEW OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

If the Center has notified you that your organization remains under financial review, your application is provisional. Review of your application by the grantmaking panel is contingent upon submission of the financial materials that have been specifically requested of your organization.

Application Process

The following are the next steps in the Center's application process:

STEP ONE
Schedule your meeting by July 11. Email <u>apply@pewcenterarts.org</u> to schedule.
(Meetings are required for first-time applicants, recommended for returning applicants.)

STEP TWO
Submit your completed <u>Budget Template</u> to <u>apply@pewcenterarts.org</u> *two business days before your meeting.*

STEP THREE
Meet with us before July 18.

STEP FOUR
Applications are due July 25 by 4 p.m. EST

Corrections may be requested of applicants *between July 28–August 4 or at contracting.*

Notification Dates and Grant Periods

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.

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

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

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

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 (mid-June 2025). Please contact apply@pewcenterarts.org if you are uncertain of this figure.

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

How are maximum grant requests determined?

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

Organizations without prior grants from the Center are not eligible for the maximum allowable grant 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 operating 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 operating expenses.

Submitting the Creative Project Grant Application

The application form is available in the Center's **Application Portal** as of June 18, 2025. The application requires responses to questions, an explicated budget, work samples, and uploads of letters of commitment and other supplementary PDFs. See pages 7–14, *Application Form Contents and Required Uploads*, for what is required on each page of the application.

How are applications evaluated?
All applications are reviewed—and all grants are determined—by a diverse panel of arts and culture practitioners with deep and broad expertise, called the peer review panel. Please see page 15, *Peer Review Panel Meeting, Application Scoring*, and *Evaluative Criteria* for complete information on how the panel determines grant recipients.

Application Form Contents and Required Uploads

The following pages represent 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 operating expenses for fiscal years 2024, 2023, and 2022
  Subsidiaries of parent organizations and universities, please enter the operating expenses of your subsidiary only.

- Letter of Commitment from Board Chair **(PDF upload)**
  Upload a succinct letter stating your governing board's commitment for the full term of the project, authored by the Board Chair. For academic institutions, these letters should be authored by the dean of the applying school and copied to the provost. Fiscally sponsored organizations need not upload a document here.

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 for Center staff and panelists to identify 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.

  A thoroughly detailed breakdown of activities in your timeline—including key planning activities, milestones, and the names of collaborators involved at specific stages of preparation—will strengthen your proposal. Please also include the anticipated dates when the project will be accessible to the public.

- The dates when your work on the project will start and end
  Allowable grant period extends from November 1, 2025–June 30, 2028.

- 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"

This page asks you to answer questions that tie to the Center's evaluative criterion: *Excellence*.
See pages 15–17, <u>*Peer Review Panel, Application Scoring, and Evaluative Criteria*</u>, for details about how your responses will be assessed.

- Answer the following questions. Please do not include links to external websites. 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? If your project relates to the semiquincentennial: what is your contribution/perspective on this anniversary?* (325 words)

    3. *Who are the primary creative collaborators for this project? Why did you choose them?* (400 words)

    4. *How does this project reflect multiple perspectives and inclusive practices?* (150 words)

    5. *How do you position this project in relation to work in the field that you admire or that inspires you?* (250 words)

- If community members will help to author, design, or create this project, additionally answer these questions *(in one combined answer of 300 words or fewer)*:

    a) *What community (communities) will serve as your collaborators? What parts of the project will community members author, design, or create with you?*

    b) *What relationship already exists between your organization and members of the partnering community? If it's a first collaboration, what steps have you taken to facilitate this exchange?*

- **Object checklist** **(PDF upload)**
  <u>*Optional*</u> *for projects featuring exhibitions. If applicable, you may upload a list of artifacts, artwork, or other objects to be included in your project.*

Application Form Contents and Required Uploads

Excellence: Work and Site Samples

When choosing samples, do your best to reflect the aesthetic and creative quality of the project, 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 illuminate 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.

  - 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 the sample takes place, the name(s) of artistic project personnel featured in the sample.

INELIGIBLE WORK SAMPLES

The following are not acceptable samples:

- Trailers, promotional video, or montages of moving-image or audio material

- Reviews, press, or marketing collateral

- Work created when a project collaborator/artist/curator was a student

- Samples over five years old, unless discussed with and approved by Center staff

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 which relate to the Center's evaluative criterion*: **Ability to Realize Project.** See pages 15–17, *Peer Review Panel, Application Scoring and Evaluative Criteria,* for details about how your responses will be assessed.

- 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:

    a) How will you minimize possible physical, technical, financial, or social obstacles that might compromise the success of your collaboration with community members? (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.

- **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, accolades, or recommendations are necessary.

Page five additionally asks you to provide—

- **Select Programming History (PDF upload)**
  Provide a one-to-two-page summary highlighting projects completed by your organization in the last three years. Note any specific projects that have prepared you 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, which relate to the Center' evaluative criterion: *Impact*.
See pages 15–17, *Peer Review Panel, Application Scoring and Evaluative Criteria*, 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 equity, access, 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 *(in one combined answer of 300 words or fewer)*:

    a) *Why have you chosen to work with this community?*

    b) *Did you design this project to address specific needs and concerns in the community? If so, what are they, and how do you plan to address them?*

    c) *Will you continue to engage or work with this community 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 **apply@pewcenterarts.org**.

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

- Fees and Honoraria
- Production Expenses
- Travel and Subsistence/Housing
- Documentation
- Marketing, Communication, and Engagement
- Other Direct Costs
  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 assumed funding or additional income that your organization plans to put toward project costs. Include grants and contributions, cash allocations, and earned income. While you may record in-kind contributions, list their monetary value as **zero.**

Application Form Contents and Required Uploads

(continued)

Budgeting Recommendations

The Center encourages applicants to consider the following when drafting a project budget:

Fees and Honoraria

Apply fair and equitable compensation. Payment to project-based collaborators should be appropriately calibrated to the quality, effort, and time contributed. **Permanent staff salaries and benefits are not eligible grant expenses.**

Production

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).

Documentation

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

Marketing, Communication, and Engagement

Our grants fund projects that center audiences. Be sure that your budget reflects realizable goals for reaching your chosen publics. Please allocate a proportionate percentage of the total project budget— and grant request—to public engagement, marketing, and communications expenses.

Evaluation

What forms of assessment would be most useful to your organization? Please design qualitative and quantitative evaluations that are likely to strengthen your future efforts. Consider low-budget and in-house as well as external forms of evaluation.

Peer Review Panel Meeting and Application Scoring

Peer Review Panel

All applications are reviewed—and all grants are determined—by a diverse panel of arts and culture practitioners. Panelists 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 and to introducing peer practitioners to the important work of this cultural community. Panelists are chosen for their expertise in the areas of practice reflected in the applicant pool.

Panelists' names are published on our website once grants are publicly announced. Visit our website for examples of past application panelists. **Staff of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage and of The Pew Charitable Trusts do not serve as panelists and do not determine grant recipients.**

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 focusing on the Center's evaluative criteria. *(See the next page for these criteria.)*

Center staff members facilitate the meetings but neither participate in discussion nor have a 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 scores 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

Creative Project Grant 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 and scoring.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANT INDICATORS

*Indicators of **Excellence**:*

- The project has a clear central focus and is artistically and/or programmatically substantive.

- The form that the project will take is clearly described.

- Creative personnel are thoughtfully chosen, appropriately diverse, and of distinction.

- The project reflects multiple perspectives and inclusive practices in its design.

- The project is resonant with the artistic and cultural practice that inspired it.

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 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.

- The project budget is realistic, fair, and sufficiently detailed and supports the activities and priorities described in the application.

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

- The applicant demonstrates an understanding of opportunities and possible barriers (e.g., physical, technical, financial, social) that may facilitate or inhibit the engagement of the intended community.

Creative Project Grant Evaluative Criteria

(continued)

*Indicators of **Impact**:*

- Intended audiences are identified.

- The intended impacts of the project are clear and articulated.

- DEAI and other considerations about inclusivity and access have shaped approaches to engagement.

- Budget for marketing and communications is appropriate.

- The success of the project is defined. 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** 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)*

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Program Modifications

As of their release date in June 2025, 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 appear 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.