



# METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

## Thrive Project Grant Criteria & Guidelines

**FY26 GRANT CYCLE | FOR ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE Fall 2025 – June 2026**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE August 15, 2025, 11:59 p.m.**

Submit all applications online at <https://mnac.submittable.com/submit>

For application assistance or for first time applicants, please contact us at  
[Arts.Grants@nashville.gov](mailto:Arts.Grants@nashville.gov).

### Metro Nashville Arts Commission

Mailing Address:

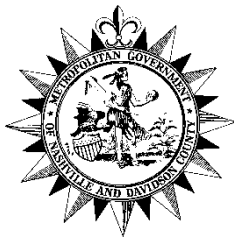
P.O. Box 196300

Nashville TN 37219-6300

615.862.6720 phone | 615.862.6731 fax

[arts@nashville.gov](mailto:arts@nashville.gov) | [metroartsnashville.gov](http://metroartsnashville.gov)

@metroartsnash on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter



*Funding for this program is provided by the Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County.*

## Nondiscrimination Policies, ADA Compliance & Accessibility

The Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, or ability in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities. Discrimination against any person in recruitment, examination, appointment, training, promotion, retention, discipline, or any other employment practices because of non-merit factors shall be prohibited.

Questions, concerns, complaints, requests for accommodation, or requests for additional information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act may be forwarded to Metro Arts' ADA Compliance Coordinator:

Vivian Foxx, Metro Nashville Arts Commission, P.O. Box 196300, Nashville, TN 37219-6300  
Vivian.Foxx@nashville.gov, (615) 862-6721, TTY Relay Service 800-848-0298

Individuals who have a hearing impairment and require auxiliary aids and services for effective communication in the programs, services, or activities of the Metro Nashville Arts Commission are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance Coordinator. This notice can be made available in alternative formats through the office of the ADA Compliance Coordinator, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

**INTERPRETATION SERVICES:** Should an individual need language interpretation, Metro Arts will secure assistance using a Metro approved over-the-phone or in-person interpretation service.

Si necesita ayuda con el idioma, háganoslo saber. Obtendremos un intérprete que puede ayudarnos a comunicarnos entre nosotros.

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة لغوية ، فالرجاء إخبارنا بذلك. سوف نحصل على مترجم يمكنه مساعدتنا في التواصل مع بعضنا البعض.

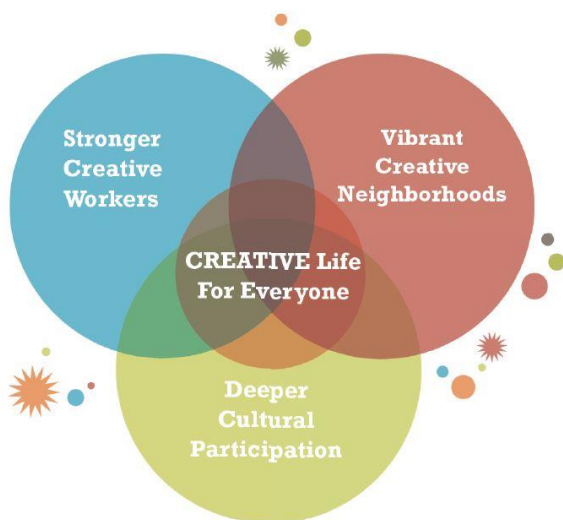
Ji kerema xwe em bizanin eger hûn bi alîkariya inglîzî re pêdivî ye. Em ê wergirtineke kurdî bibînin ku dikare alîkariya me bi hev re biaxivin.

Forward inquiries concerning nondiscrimination policies, other than ADA compliance, to:

Metro Human Relations Commission, 150 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave N., Suite 217, 37201. P.O. Box 196300, Nashville, TN 37219-630

## About Metro Arts Grants

### A Creative Life For Everyone



Metro Arts’ grant programs funds nonprofit organizations of all sizes and disciplines and project-based grants through funding allocated by the Metro Council. Our grant programs support creative work that addresses one or more of the community outcomes we seek to achieve:

- Stronger Creative Workforce
- Vibrant, Creative Neighborhoods
- Deeper Cultural Participation

Metro Arts is guided by a [cultural equity statement](#). Metro Arts programs seek to make opportunities and resources available to all Nashvillians in an equitable way.

All funding approvals and awards are contingent on the budget allocated to Metro Arts each year. Funding is not guaranteed, and overall funding may vary from year to year.

## About Metro Arts

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Metro Nashville Arts Commission or “Metro Arts” is the Office of Arts & Culture for the city of Nashville and Davidson County. Metro Arts is a branch of Metro Government that strives to ensure that all Nashvillians have access to a creative life through community investments, artist and organizational training, public art and creative placemaking coordination, and direct programs. We believe that arts drive a more vibrant and equitable community. Metro Nashville Arts Commission was established by Metro Ordinance in 1978.

## Thrive Community-Based Art Projects

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Metro Arts' Thrive grant connects artists and/or organizations with the community to create investments, cultural connections, and transformations. Thrive empowers artists and organizations to strengthen and cultivate communities in Davidson County. Thrive supports artist-led, community-based art projects that include collaboration between artists and community partners and organizations. This category is open to individual artists, nonprofit organizations, and art collectives or teams. Individual artists, artist collectives, or community organization(s) with lead artists or artist teams may apply for Thrive project funding.

Thrive project proposals may request up to \$15,000.

Successful projects will align with Metro Arts' mission and Thrive goals and objectives by:

- Impacting neighborhoods or communities
- Actively engaging residents through community input in project planning, decision-making and artmaking
- Exhibiting and promoting cultural equity in project design, process, and content

Thrive Project proposals must include:

- Project narrative
- Project timeline
- Specific funding request (up to \$15,000), project budget and budget narrative
- Identified lead artist

To create a more equitable process, you may provide answers to the project narrative question in one of three ways:

- Written
- Audio recording, limit of five (5) minutes
- Video recording, limit of five (5) minutes

## Additional Requirements

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- The proposed project or program must take place in Davidson County.
- All Thrive projects must obtain all permits, licenses, and permissions necessary for their project and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County and any of its entities will not be held accountable for the failure to have these documents when required. Applicants are highly encouraged to research the process for obtaining any permits and regulatory requirements on the front end in order to effectively plan project timelines and execute the project on the proposed timeline.
- All Thrive projects that propose to work directly with minors (defined as persons under age 18) must have background checks for all adults. The applicant will be required to submit an attestation form that attests that all adults who participate in the programming or instruction of minors have satisfactory background checks within the last 5 years. This

includes the lead artist, contract artists, organization staff or others involved in the project work.

## Eligibility Criteria for Thrive Project Funding

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Individual artists, artist teams or collectives, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for Thrive grants. To receive a Thrive grant, applicants must meet the criteria for one of the following eligibility groups:

- Individual Artist
  - Artists are defined as practitioners in a specific artist genre, including but not limited to dance, film and media arts, craft, literary arts, music, performance art, multidisciplinary work, theater, or visual arts.
  - Artist must be 18 years of age or older.
  - Artist must live or primarily work in Davidson County.
  - Individual artists must apply with a fiscal sponsor (details below).
- Artist Collectives
  - Artist Collectives are art organizations, neighborhood groups, or artist teams that do not hold nonprofit 501c3 status.
  - Artist Collectives must have a lead artist identified to lead the project.
  - Artist Collectives must be located in Nashville/Davidson County.
  - Artist Collectives must apply with a fiscal sponsor (details below).
- Nonprofit Organizations
  - Organizations must have a business address located in Davidson County and operate most of its programs in Nashville.
  - Organizations must have a lead artist identified to lead the project.
  - Organizations must submit their IRS Letter of Determination with an effective date of exemption of July 1, 2024, or earlier.

Individuals or entities that cannot receive a Thrive Grant include:

- Employees of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County or Metro Nashville Public Schools.
- Members of the Metro Nashville Arts Commission, or a submission with immediate family or household members serving on the Commission.
- Elected officials of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County or Metro Nashville Public School Board.
- Colleges or universities.

Only one Thrive submission per applicant. Multiple Thrive submissions from the same applicant will not be accepted. If you serve as the lead artist or applicant on multiple applications, you must select one application for consideration. Metro Arts staff will notify applicants who are deemed to have more than one application.

Organizations cannot receive a Thrive and Metro Arts Operating Support grant in the same grant cycle. Organizations may only receive one grant from Metro Arts in any given cycle and should only apply for one grant. Contact Metro Arts if you need assistance determining which grant is most appropriate for your organization.

Metro Arts will review additional grant criteria eligibility issues not listed here on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Metro Arts with any questions regarding eligibility.

### **Fiscal Sponsors + Thrive Project Grants**

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Metro Arts can only distribute grants to nonprofit organizations. Individual artists or artist collectives who are not registered Tennessee 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations must work with a fiscal sponsor to receive Metro Arts Thrive funding. Fiscal sponsor organizations must have an IRS Letter of Determination with an effective date of exemption of July 1, 2024, or earlier.

Individual artists and artist collectives must identify a fiscal sponsor organization to receive and administer their grant award. Metro Arts will not match or assign artists with fiscal sponsors, but applicants may ask Metro Arts for assistance in identifying potential fiscal sponsors.

Fiscal sponsors and applicants must complete a Letter of Fiscal Sponsorship and Agreement that affirms the sponsor's intent to serve as a sponsor for the specific artist and project. The Agreement will also outline respective roles and responsibilities, including fund disbursement, reporting, and other logistics. A resource guide including these required documents is available on the Metro Arts website. Fiscal sponsors must have a Submittable account and be added as a collaborator on the application.

Metro Arts will provide fiscal sponsors \$750 for administrative support costs. This amount will be allocated in addition to the approved grant amount (for example, if the approved project budget is \$15,000, the total grant will be \$15,750). Fiscal sponsors may opt to not receive the administrative support allocation. Applicants that hold 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and therefore do not utilize a fiscal sponsor are not eligible to receive the administrative support allocation.

Serving as a Fiscal Sponsor for Thrive artists does not disqualify an organization from receiving a grant from Metro Arts (Operating Support or its own Thrive grant).

### **Eligible Expenses**

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Metro Arts grant funding can only be used to pay for certain expenses. Eligible expenses are those that are directly related to the proposed project or program. Examples of eligible expenses include:

- Artist fees
- Project/program supplies
- Performance/venue/facility fees
- Marketing and promotion

- Equipment rental and/or purchase
- Events costs or costs related to community engagement activities

Thrive project funds CANNOT be used for:

- Payments to any individual employed by Metro Nashville Government or Metro Nashville Public Schools, or payments to any Arts Commissioners
- General operating expenses of an organization
- Capital improvements
- Purchase of real property
- Reduction of debts
- Activities or programs with religious intent, study, or practice
- Political lobbying activities
- Creation, installation and maintenance of public artwork. Public art is defined as artwork that is accessible to the public and created through a public process that considers the social and physical context of the site.

Please contact us with questions about eligible expenses.

### **Grant Cycle Time Frame**

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All FY26 grant activities must take place between the effective date of the contract, which is defined as the date the contract is signed by all required parties and filed with the Metro Clerk, and June 30, 2026. Final reports and closeout forms are due July 15, 2026.

### **How to Submit an Application**

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Metro Arts utilizes an online application system called Submittable. All applications must be completed and submitted using this system. The Metro Arts grant application portal can be accessed at <https://mnac.submittable.com/submit>. Keep in mind that submitted applications are considered public record and can be reviewed by the public.

Submittable is a non-Metro based platform. Specific questions related to your Submittable account or troubleshooting Submittable issues must be done through the Submittable platform.

### **Application Deadline**

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All applications must be submitted by August 15, 2025, at 11:59 PM. Please submit early to avoid any last-minute technical difficulties. Metro Arts is not responsible for technical difficulties with the Submittable platform.

### **Application Checklist**

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- ☐ Read the FY26 Thrive Grant Guidelines.
- ☐ If you have any questions, please contact [arts.grants@nashville.gov](mailto:arts.grants@nashville.gov) before applying. First time applicants are encouraged to contact Metro Arts before applying.
- ☐ Fill out an application on Submittable, including answering all required questions.
- ☐ Upload all required documents, including:

- If applying with a fiscal sponsor, all required documents including Letter of Fiscal Sponsorship and Agreement, IRS Letter of Determination.
- If applying as a nonprofit applicant, IRS Letter of Determination.
- Background check attestation, if project directly engages minors.
- ☐ Submit application.

### Important Dates *(dates subject to change)*

Submit application	July 16 – August 15, 2025
Technical review	August 18 – August 22, 2025
Application scoring by review panelists	September 2 – September 12, 2025
Commission approval	September 25, 2025
Award notifications	September 26 – 29, 2025
Contracting and payment processing	October – November 2025
Grant period	Date of contract execution* – June 30, 2026
Final spend date	June 30, 2026
Final closeout report due	July 15, 2026

*\*The grant spending period begins upon the full execution of the contract. Grantees are encouraged to promptly sign and return contracts to avoid delays.*

### Funding Determination

All grant applications are reviewed for technical eligibility by Metro Arts staff. Applicants that fail technical review will have 3 business days to make corrections to their application, if the reason for disqualification is one that can be corrected. Correctable technical review errors include, but are not limited to, missing or deficient supporting documents, incorrect grant-spend period timeline, and incorrect budgets. Please note that not all reasons for technical denial will be able to be corrected. Applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. An application may be disqualified at **any time** if an applicant, proposal, or project is deemed ineligible.

Applicants that advance beyond technical review will be evaluated and scored by grant review panelists.

### Scoring + Funding Formula

Panelists will use a Panelist Scoring Guide to evaluate and score each application. Panelist scores will be combined and averaged to determine the final score.

Applicants may request up to \$15,000. Funding will be allocated based on the panel score and available funding. Funding will be allocated as follows:

- Applications are scored and ranked from highest to lowest.
- Funding is distributed in rank order, starting with the highest-scoring applications, until all available funds are used.



- In case of tied scores: If there are not enough remaining funds to support applications with tied scores, two Metro Arts staff members who were not involved in the FY26 grants process will:
  - Conduct a second review of the tied applications.
  - Create a new ranking of these applications.
  - Distribute the remaining funds based on this secondary ranking.

Eligibility and panel review notes are kept electronically by Metro Arts. After grant awards are announced, applicants may contact Metro Arts staff to obtain a copy of scores and comments for your records.

### **Funding Approval**

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The panelists' scores are reviewed by the Arts Commission Grants and Funding Committee and are used to determine which applications are recommended for funding. The Metro Arts Commission reviews all recommended grant awards and is the authorizing body to approve all awards.

All Commissioners and Panelists are asked to disclose any conflicts of interest prior to reviewing or approving grant allocations. Metro Arts makes every attempt to identify conflicts. If a conflict of interest is identified among a Panelist, the Panelist will not score the application nor participate in discussion of the application. If a conflict is identified among a Commissioner, the Commissioner is required to abstain from allocating an organization's funding or engaging in deliberation of the applicant's award.

### **Award Notification**

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Grant award notifications will be issued through Submittable, including instructions for accepting the grant. Applicants awarded a grant will be required to submit a final budget upon notification of an award. Grant awards will also be publicly announced via press release and posted on the Metro Arts website.

Grantees are responsible for notifying Metro Arts of any changes in contact information during the grant period.

Applicants denied funding will also be notified through Submittable. Applicants that are denied funding may contact Metro Arts for information regarding the denial and additional information.

### **Grant Payments Schedule**

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Awarded grant funds are distributed in one payment for the full grant amount after the execution of the grant contract. Please note that the contracting and payment process typically takes 4-6 weeks as contracts require multiple signatures across the Metro Government. Grantees should return their signed contract and grant spending plan (i.e., final budget) promptly for grant funds to be distributed.

### **Grant Check-in**

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Metro Arts staff will check-in with grant recipients during the grant spending period as it allows both the recipient and Metro Arts to ensure the work is progressing well and confirms that funds are being used in alignment with the grant's objectives.

### **Final Closeout Report**

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Final closeout reports are due on or before July 15, 2026. Grantees should be prepared to report on program goals, outputs and outcomes, participant reach, jobs supported, and other possible metrics. A grant expenditure form and budget narrative are required as part of closeout.

Grantees should maintain financial records that show the use of all grant funds. At Metro Arts' request, grantees may be asked to provide documentation of expenditures including, but not limited to contracts and artist payments, invoices, project expenses and other related expenses.

The artist and fiscal agent (if applicable) will be responsible for completing or confirming all reporting requirements. The fiscal agent must review the reports to ensure they are complete and accurate. If any errors or omissions are identified, both the artist and the fiscal agent share the responsibility for addressing and resolving the issues.

Metro Arts reserves the right to cancel any grant contract if the project is not administered as proposed in the application and may request the return of all or a portion of the grant funds awarded.

### **Logo Usage and Credit Policy**

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All recipients of Metro Arts funds are required to include the Metro Arts logo on all online or printed publicity materials. The credit policy and logo files are available on the [Partner Tools | Metro Arts Nashville](#) page of the Metro Arts website.

### **Maintaining Good Standing**

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Remaining in good standing with Metro Arts is very important. A grantee maintains good standing by:

- Meeting all requirements stated in the guidelines and grant contract (including spending grant funds as described in the grant contract).
- Following the [Metro Arts logo and credit policy](#).
- Submitting all grant information, documents, and reports on or before the stated deadline.

An artist's or grantee's subsequent grant application may be denied eligibility if any these requirements are not met.

If a grantee loses its good standing status for any of the reasons above, the grantee will be sent documentation in writing of what requirements have not been met and what steps need to be taken to return to good standing. If the grantee is not in good standing at the end of a grant cycle,

future grant contracts may be held until issues may be resolved.

### **Monitoring**

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As a department of Metro government receiving federal funds, Metro Arts is required to review and monitor up to 10% of distributed funds annually. Grantees may be randomly selected to be monitored. If your project is selected, a site visit with Metro Arts staff will be scheduled, at which time you may be asked to provide:

- Year-to-date grant expenditures
- Electronic and printed promotional materials showing Metro Arts logo usage according to the Metro Arts Credit Policy
- Other documentation showing details as required by the Thrive grant guidelines

Metro Arts will provide a detailed list of items that will need to be collected and reviewed prior to the scheduled visit. A written report of the monitoring visit will be provided to the organization after the review is complete. Metro Arts staff may report negative findings to the Arts Commission and Metro's Office of Financial Accountability. Unresolved or recurring negative findings may result in a change to the organization's good standing status.

## Thrive Project Grant Scoring Rubric

### What is the project or program that will be supported by this funding and how will the community and/or the artist be impacted?

Proposal includes clearly defined and detailed description of proposed project work. Demonstrates significant impact (community impact and/or artist value or benefit clearly connected to needs and aspirations).	Proposal includes detailed description of project work. Demonstrates some impact (community impact and/or artist value that is sometimes connected to needs and aspirations).	Proposal includes description of the end goal of the project, but lacks detail about how it will be accomplished or carried out. Demonstrates minimal impact.	Proposal lacks detail about how the project will be carried out or completed. Impact is poorly defined.
Outstanding	Good	Fair	Poor

### What communities will be served by this project, and how will you involve community members in the project planning, decision-making and/or artmaking?

Proposal clearly defines the community served and the process shows authentic community collaboration, where the community is essential in the artist decision-making process. The proposal demonstrates evidence of engaging historically underserved communities.	Proposal defines the community served and the process shows community collaboration, where the community is part of the artist decision-making process.	Proposal generally states what communities will be served and shows some community collaboration. Community is considered or informed of the project.	Proposal does not clearly define the community served and demonstrates minimal community collaboration.
Outstanding	Good	Fair	Poor

### What is the timeline for the proposal?

Timeline as it relates to planning, promotion, implementation, and reflection is realistic and complete. Includes evidence of	Timeline as it related to planning, promotion, implementation, and reflection is complete, but	Timeline lacks detail related to project proposal, is unrealistic and/or lacks narrative that
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intentional planning and realistic goal setting. Clear narrative about each phase of the timeline is accompanied by specific dates and time frames.	with minimal details. Narrative provides some detail about each phase of the timeline.	describes how the timeline will be followed.
Good	Fair	Poor

**What is the budget and how will the Metro Arts funding be used?**

**Include a list of all projected expenses.**

Detailed budget information is included in the proposal and indicates realistic expenses for implementation. Proposed expenses demonstrate thorough planning with regard to project implementation.	Budget information is included in the proposal in broad categories. Proposed expenses generally support project implementation but lack detail.	Proposed expenses show lack of planning or are not aligned with proposed project activities and goals.
Good	Fair	Poor

**For first time applicants or applicants that have never received a Metro Arts Thrive grant:**

**Is there anything else you would like the grant reviewers to know about your work?**

Not scored. Informational.