



2026-2027 MISSION SUPPORT GRANT GUIDELINES

Mission Support Grants offer unrestricted funding to Wake-based arts organizations that provide specific types of arts programming throughout Wake County.

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Direct questions to:
Ragen Carlile, Vice President of Programming
(919) 839-1498 x209 or rcarlile@unitedarts.org

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Primary Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for Mission Support Grant funding, applicants must meet all of these primary eligibility criteria:

- have a primary mission to directly produce, present, or support arts programs;
- be a non-profit arts/cultural organization with 501c3 state and federal tax-exempt status;
- be based and operate most of its programs in Wake County;
- have produced arts programs in Wake County for at least one year;
- be in Good Standing as defined in [General Grant Policies](#);
- maintain a board of directors which meets at least quarterly; and
- have nondiscrimination, conflict of interest, and accessibility policies.

Secondary Eligibility Criteria

In addition, eligible organizations must meet at least one of the following secondary criteria:

- have arts programs specifically designed for youth
- have arts programs that take place in Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Morrisville, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell, or Zebulon
- be a culturally-specific organization as defined by mission and leadership (complete definition below)
- have had 501c3 status for less than eight years

Arts Service Organizations

Nonprofit organizations with a specific mission to provide services or technical assistance to arts organizations and/or individual artists and not to perform, produce, present, or exhibit work, might be eligible to apply as an Arts Service Organization. Contact Ragen Carlile at rcarlile@unitedarts.org to learn more.

Culturally-Specific Organizations

United Arts defines culturally-specific as organizations with specific missions to promote, preserve or enhance the identity and character of one of the following specific cultures: African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American, or Native American. Culturally-specific nonprofit organizations are not designated based on their audiences or students. To qualify as culturally-specific, the leadership of the organization must demographically represent the specific culture identified. Extra funding consideration will be given to culturally-specific organizations. See “Grant Award Decisions” on page 5 for details.

Ineligible Organizations

The following organizations are not eligible to apply for Mission Support Grant funding:

- Organizations that receive direct allocations from the State of North Carolina in Session Law
- Organizations with budgets that exceeded \$2M in the most recently completed fiscal year

GRANT REQUEST AMOUNT

Eligible organizations may request grant funds based on the annual operating expenses from their most recently completed fiscal year.

Annual Operating Expenses	Maximum Grant Request
Less than \$30,000	\$1,500
\$30,000-\$50,000	\$2,000
\$50,000-\$100,000	\$2,500
\$100,000-150,000	\$5,000
\$150,000-\$250,000	\$10,000
\$250,000-\$600,000	\$20,000
Greater than \$600,000	\$25,000

USE OF FUNDS

Mission Support Grant funds can be used for the following expenses incurred July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027:

- Programming expenses
- General operating expenses
- Administration expenses

Mission Support Grant funds cannot be used for:

- Art, music, and dance therapists
- Artifacts
- Purchases of artwork
- Capital expenditures
- Competition prizes
- Contributions to cash reserves and/or endowment funds
- Deficit reduction
- Fundraising Events
- Food or beverages for hospitality or entertainment functions
- Lobbying expenses
- Loan repayments, interest and/or penalties, fines or litigation costs
- Private events closed to the general public and activities restricted to an organization's membership
- Projects of a religious nature designed to promote or inhibit religious belief and/or practice and which have no basic underlying secular theme or topics
- Scholarships and awards for use outside the applicant's programming

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each application will be evaluated and scored according to the following criteria:

- Artistic Merit
- Community Value
- Financial Management
- Organizational Management

APPLICATION PROCESS

Information Sessions

Organizations interested in applying for Mission Support Grant funding are required to attend an information session. Each session will include information about the updated Mission Support Grant guidelines/application and time for questions. Attend a session that best defines your organization's annual operating expenses.

Two options for organizations with budgets under \$150,000:

- Wednesday, February 11 at 11:00 am
- Saturday, February 14 at 10:00 am

Two options for organizations with budgets above \$150,000:

- Thursday, February 12 at 11:00 am
- Tuesday, February 17 at 4:00 pm

All sessions will be held virtually via Zoom. Register for a session at <https://forms.gle/8W7UTxwjTpFMe1Zu8>. Details about joining meeting will be automatically emailed to those registered.

Application Review Appointments

United Arts staff is available for individual applicant appointments to review drafts of application materials and to provide feedback. Appointments are available March 11-27, 2026. Please use this link to schedule a phone appointment: <https://calendly.com/rcarlile-1/feedback-on-draft-of-grant-application>

Application

The application for 2026-2027 Mission Support Grant funding is available online via Submittable at: <https://unitedarts.submittable.com/submit/769d705f-cdd2-4671-b1ed-5d5c3f5620e5/2026-27-mission-support-grants/eligibility>

Organizations with expenses greater than \$150,000 will be required to answer all questions. Organizations with expenses less than \$150,000 will see a condensed version of the application, with certain narrative and financial questions not required.

A preview of the application is available in the Appendix.

Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2026 before midnight

REVIEW PROCESS

Staff Review

Applications are first reviewed by United Arts staff to confirm eligibility and for completeness. Only complete applications are forwarded to grant panel members for review.

Grant Panels

Eligible applications will be separated into two groups based on budget size – organizations with annual operating expenses less than \$150,000 and organizations with annual operating expenses greater than \$150,000.

Organizations with budgets of less than \$150,000 will be reviewed by a panel knowledgeable about smaller arts organizations. These United Arts staff, board members, and community members will evaluate each application based on established criteria.

Organizations with budgets of greater than \$150,000 will be reviewed and scored by a panel of United Arts board members, Wake County appointees, and community members from a variety of artistic disciplines and nonprofit/business expertise who reflect the diversity of the region. These volunteers will evaluate each application based on established criteria.

Both panels will make funding recommendations to the United Arts Board of Directors.

Financial Review Panel

The finance review panel is responsible for evaluating the financial health of each applicant. To determine this, the finance review panel will review financial statements, IRS Form 990, and narrative responses to evaluate the following:

- Accumulated deficits and/or debts
- Plans for reducing any deficits and/or debts
- Fundraising and administrative costs that exceed 25%
- Financial stability of the organization

If questions or concerns arise about an applicant's financial health, they may be asked to provide additional information. Not satisfying the financial criteria could be grounds for not receiving funding.

Grant Award Decisions

Funding recommendations, based on grant panel scores, panel notes, and available funds, are submitted to United Arts' Board of Directors for final approval.

If recommended for funding by the grant panel, applicants who meet the definition of "culturally-specific" as defined on page 2 will receive a supplement of \$1,000, which will be added to their grant award.

The role of the grant panels is advisory to the Board; the power to make decisions on both policy and funding rests with the Board, whose decisions are final.

TIMELINE

January 12, 2026	Guidelines and application published
February 11-17, 2026	Information Session/Application Workshop
March 11-27, 2026	Application review appointments
April 3, 2026	Application deadline
May - June 2026	Application review/Panel meetings
June 2026	United Arts Board of Directors final approval of grant awards
June 2026	Grant notifications emailed
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	Grant Period

APPENDIX: PREVIEW OF MISSION SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATION

Below is a preview of the Mission Support Grant application to familiarize yourself with the format and questions. Applications must be submitted online via:

<https://unitedarts.submittable.com/submit/769d705f-cdd2-4671-b1ed-5d5c3f5620e5/2026-27-mission-support-grants/eligibility>

Eligibility Form for Mission Support Grants 2026-27

Organizations who meet all primary eligibility requirements and at least one of the secondary eligibility criteria are eligible to apply for Mission Support Grant funding. Guidelines, including a preview of the full application, are available [here](https://unitedarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-2024-Mission-Support-Grant-Guidelines.pdf) (<https://unitedarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-2024-Mission-Support-Grant-Guidelines.pdf>).

Once eligibility is determined, the full application will be made available.

If you have questions about any of the eligibility requirements, please contact Ragen Carlile at rcarlile@unitedarts.org (<mailto:rcarlile@unitedarts.org>) before proceeding with the full application.

Which info session did you attend? (required)

- February 11 for orgs with budgets less than \$150k
- February 14 for orgs with budgets less than \$150k
- February 12 for orgs with budgets greater than \$150k
- February 17 for orgs with budgets greater than \$150k
- I did not attend an info session this year.

Is the applicant a non-profit organization with 501c3 state and federal tax-exempt status? (required)

- Yes
- No

Does the applicant have a primary mission to directly produce, present, or support arts programs? (required)

- Yes
- No

Is the applicant based in Wake County? (required)

- Yes
- No

Does the applicant operate most of its programs in Wake County? (required)

- Yes
- No

Has the applicant produced at least one year of arts programming in Wake County? (required)

- Yes
- No

Does the applicant receive a direct allocation from the State of North Carolina in Session Law? (required)

- Yes
- No

Did the applicant's budget exceed \$2M in the most recently completed fiscal year? (required)

- Yes
- No

SECONDARY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA: Which of the following best describes the applicant? (required)

- has arts programs specifically designed for youth
- is a culturally-specific organization; culturally-specific organizations have missions to promote, preserve, or enhance the identity and character of African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American, or Native American cultures; culturally-specific organizations have leadership that demographically represents the specific culture identified
- has arts programs that take place in Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Morrisville, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell, or Zebulon
- has had 501c3 nonprofit status for less than eight years
- None of these

Save Draft

Submit Form

Drafts may be visible to the administrators of this program.

2026-27 Mission Support Grant Application

Applicant Name (required)

Limit: 300 characters

Primary Address (required)

City (required)

Zip Code (required)

Website (required)

Contact Name (required)

Contact Title (required)

PREVIEW

Telephone (required)

Email Address (required)

Year Organization Incorporated (required)

Employer Identification Number (EIN) (required)

Also called Federal Tax Identification number

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) (required)

The federal government uses a number called a Unique Entity Identifier to uniquely identify business entities. To find or request your UEI, please visit [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

Letter of Federal Tax Exemption (required)

Upload a file. No files have been attached yet.

Acceptable file types: .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg

North Carolina Charitable Solicitation License (required)

Choose File

Upload a file. No files have been attached yet.

Acceptable file types: .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg

Upload your current license or a letter from the North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State stating that you meet the qualifications for an exemption from the provisions of the Charitable Solicitation Act. More information is available at the Secretary of State's website: <https://www.sosnc.gov/divisions/charities>.

If a copy of your current North Carolina Charitable Solicitation License is not available, please explain.

What were your operating expenses your most recently completed fiscal year? (required)

- Less than \$150,000
- Greater than \$150,000

Look at your Profit & Loss Statement from your most recently completed fiscal year to determine your annual expenses.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

Please provide the following information about your Board of Directors and staff.

How many people are currently serving on your Board? (required)

How many Board meetings do you have each year? (required)

What percentage of Board donate cash to the organization? If not 100%, please explain. (required)

For most recently completed fiscal year.

Board Composition (required)

This question is for larger orgs only.

Limit: 500 words

What is the current demographic makeup of your Board and how is it reflective of the Wake County population? What are your goals regarding Board diversity? Describe specific efforts made in recent years toward diversifying your Board.

Board List (required)

Select up to 2 files to attach. No files have been attached yet. You may add 2 more files.

Acceptable file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx

Upload a current list of Board of Directors. For each board member, include name, address, business affiliation, age range, race, and any other identifiers. A list of advisory board members, if relevant to your program, may also be uploaded.

Number of Full-Time Paid Employees (required)

Do not include artists.

Number of Part-Time Paid Employees (required)

Do not include artists.

Number of Contracted Staff (required)

Include paid administrative interns, if relevant. Do not include artists.

Number of Unpaid Staff (required)

Include essential volunteers who function as staff members and unpaid administrative interns, if relevant. Do not include artists.

Notes about Staff Numbers (required)

Please specify the employee/staff positions that are included above. Please also explain any complicated staffing situations that are not easily understood by the numbers alone.

Bios of Lead Personnel (required)

Choose File

Select up to 3 files to attach. No files have been attached yet. You may add 3 more files.

Acceptable file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx

Upload up to three brief bios or resumes of key staff that represent your organization.

Grant Request Amount (required)

Eligible organizations may request grant funds based on the annual operating expenses from their most recently completed fiscal year.

If annual operating expenses are less than \$30,000, then maximum request is \$1,500.

If annual operating expenses are between \$30,000-\$50,000, then maximum request is \$2,000.

If annual operating expenses are between \$50,000 and \$100,000, then maximum request is \$2,500.

If annual operating expenses are between \$100,000 and \$150,000, then maximum request is \$5,000.

If annual operating expenses are between \$150,000 and \$250,000, then maximum request is \$10,000.

If annual operating expenses are between \$250,000 and \$600,000, then maximum request is \$20,000.

If annual operating expenses are greater than \$600,000, then maximum request is \$25,000.

Is your organization culturally-specific as defined by both mission and leadership? (required)

Yes

No

United Arts defines culturally-specific as organizations with specific missions to promote, preserve or enhance the identity and character of one of the following specific cultures: African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American, or Native American. Culturally-specific nonprofit organizations are not designated based on their audiences or students. To qualify as culturally-specific, the leadership of the organization must demographically represent the specific culture identified.

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Please respond to the following narrative prompts about your organization and the arts programming you offer in Wake County.

Mission Statement *(required)*

Limit: 250 words

History/Programming *(required)*

Limit: 500 words

Briefly describe the history of your organization and its core arts programs. Note any significant administrative or artistic changes and/or initiatives that have taken place over the last two years.

Proposed Programming *(required)*

Limit: 500 words

Briefly describe your plans for arts programs that will take place in Wake County between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027. Include anticipated dates and locations of activities.

Artistic Merit (required)

This question is for larger orgs only.

Limit: 500 words

Define your organization's view of programmatic excellence. Describe your organization's programming and how it reflects that view. How does the organization ensure artistic excellence of its programs/events?

Community Value (required)

This question is for larger orgs only.

Limit: 500 words

What niche do you fill in the Wake County arts community? Describe the Wake County community you serve including any relevant demographic, geographic, cultural, economic, or other characteristics as applicable or that are important to your organization.

Diverse Communities (required)

This question is for larger orgs only.

Limit: 500 words

How does your organization serve diverse communities?

Organizational Management (required)

This question is for larger orgs only.

Limit: 500 words

Describe your organization's administrative structure and capacity. Describe how your organization approaches annual programmatic planning and evaluation.

Primary Challenge

Limit: 200 words

Share a challenge that your organization has faced this past year.

Major Success

Limit: 200 words

Share a success or major accomplishment that your organization has experienced this past year.

PROGRAM REACH

For your most recently completed fiscal year, how many individuals were directly engaged in your arts programs?

Separate numbers into two categories: individuals who participated in programs that took place in Wake County and the total number of individuals who participated in all programs, regardless of location. If all of your programming took place in Wake County, then the two columns should contain the same numbers.

This should reflect where your arts programming took place, not where those who participated reside.

Individuals Engaged in Arts Programs



	A	B	C
1		Wake County programs	Total of All Programs
2	Artists		
3	Children/Youth		
4	Audiences		
5	Volunteers		

Program Reach Notes (required)

Limit: 250 words

Please explain or provide any information needed to explain how you captured the numbers of people who were engaged in your arts programming during your most recently completed fiscal year. If you had programming that took place outside Wake County, please specify the location(s).

SUPPORT MATERIALS

Upload support materials that highlight your organization's recent activity. Examples include videos, photos, marketing materials, reviews, letters of support, strategic plan, etc. If providing links to videos on YouTube, make sure that videos remain live and viewable through June 2026.

Link to Support Materials #1

example.com

Link to Support Materials #2

example.com

Upload Support Materials

Choose File

Select up to 3 files to attach. No files have been attached yet. You may add 3 more files.

Acceptable file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx, .jpg, .jpeg, .tif, .tiff, .mp3, .mp4, .mov, .zip, .xls, .xlsx

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

An independent audit is required if an organization's actual gross revenue is greater than or equal to \$500,000. An internal review is required for organizations with actual gross revenue less than \$500,000.

All applicants are required to upload a board-approved budget for the current fiscal year and IRS Form 990 from the most recently completed fiscal year.

What is your organization's most recently completed fiscal year?

(required)

- July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025
- January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

This should match the fiscal year of the financial statements uploaded below.

Audit

This question is for larger orgs only.

Choose File

Select up to 2 files to attach. No files have been attached yet. You may add 2 more files.

Acceptable file types: .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg

Upload an audit of your most recently completed fiscal year if your organization's actual gross revenue is greater than or equal to \$500,000.

Internal Review

Choose File

Select up to 3 files to attach. No files have been attached yet. You may add 3 more files.

Acceptable file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx, .jpg, .jpeg, .xls, .xlsx

If your actual gross revenue is less than \$500,000, upload the following items about your most recently completed fiscal year:

1. Profit and Loss Statement
2. Balance Sheet
3. Letter, signed by three board members (including the treasurer), stating that they have reviewed the organization's financial records.

In lieu of an Internal Review, a completed and signed Annual Financial Report that has been submitted to the North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State's Charitable Solicitation Licensing Division for your most recently completed fiscal year may be submitted.

Current Board-Approved Budget (required)

Choose File

Upload a file. No files have been attached yet.

Acceptable file types: .csv, .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg, .xlsx

Upload your board-approved budget for your current fiscal year.

IRS Form 990 (required)

Select up to 2 files to attach. No files have been attached yet. You may add 2 more files.

Acceptable file types: .pdf, .jpg, .jpeg, .tif, .tiff

Upload a copy of the applicant's IRS Form 990, Form 990-EZ, or Form 990-n (e-Postcard) that was filed for the most recently completed fiscal year. Please include either the signatures by both officer and preparer or the IRS Form 8879 for e-file signature authorization.

If the applicant's financial statements or 990 from the most recently completed fiscal year are not uploaded, please explain.

(required)

Change in Net Assets (required)

This question is for larger orgs only.



	A	B	C	D	
1		Fiscal Year	Income	Expenses	Ba
2	Year 1				0
3	Year 2				0

4	Year 3				0
5	Year 4				0
6	Year 5				0
7				Total	0

Please provide your change in net assets for each of the last five years, starting with your most recently completed fiscal year. "Change in net assets" is defined as net income or loss, or revenue minus expenses for each fiscal year. These amounts should come from your audit (Statement of Activities) or internal review (Profit & Loss Statement).

If you had an overall negative change in net assets over the past five years, please explain. (required)

This question is for larger orgs only.

If your balance sheet shows accumulated debt, what is your plan for reducing this debt while continuing to pay your annual expenses? (required)

This question is for larger orgs only.

CERTIFICATION

We certify that:

- The information contained in this application, including all attachments, is true and correct to the best of our knowledge.

- The organization has nondiscrimination, conflict of interest, and accessibility policies.

~~There has been no change to the organization's federal or state tax free status.~~

We certify that the above statements are true. (required)

Signature/Title of Authorizing Official

Person legally able to obligate the applicant. Type in full name; this will qualify as a signature.

Signature/Title of Contact Person (if different from above)

Person submitting this application. Type in full name; this will quality as a signature.

Save Draft

Submit Form

Drafts may be visible to the administrators of this program.

PREVIEW