



# Catalyst Grant Program Guidelines

## 2025 Cycle



TACA - The Arts Community Alliance  
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Updated: October 3, 2024

## OVERVIEW OF TACA & CATALYST GRANT PROGRAM

The mission of TACA – The Arts Community Alliance – is to support excellence and impact in the arts through grant-making, capacity building, and thought leadership. We envision an innovative, inclusive, sustainable cultural sector, recognized for its essential contribution to a vibrant, prosperous community.

Since its founding in 1967, TACA has worked to establish North Texas' arts community as one of the strongest in the nation. TACA blends financial backing through competitive grants and capacity-building activities, like professional development workshops, to support and strengthen arts organizations. Our growing investment in the arts translates to new premieres and productions, impactful residencies and community initiatives, and more opportunities for artists and audiences to connect – all making North Texas vibrant and a great place to live and work.

TACA is unique in its business model in that it relies on the generous support of individuals, corporations, and foundations to support its mission. TACA is not a foundation and does not have an endowment. Therefore, TACA's available funding can fluctuate from cycle to cycle.

The Catalyst Grant Program is TACA's largest granting program providing unrestricted financial support to local arts organizations. This grant program is designed to be a catalyst in strengthening Dallas' vibrant arts community and to support art that is a catalyst for positive impact and transformation.

## BASIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to apply for funding, an organization must:

- Have 501(c)3 nonprofit organization status as of September 9, 2023, with an explicit organizational focus to provide significant arts programming for live, public audiences in Dallas County;
  - Please note that this is the IRS designation date rather than the filing date
- Present or produce arts programming that includes dance, literary arts, music, theater, and/or visual arts;
- Be able to provide clear financial reports documenting 12 months of prior revenues and expenses.

### INELIGIBILITY:

TACA does not provide funding to the following institutions:

- Colleges/Universities/High Schools/Elementary schools
- Fiscally sponsored organizations
- For-profit arts organizations
- Government entities or "Friends of" organizations
- Nonprofit organizations that do not have an explicit focus on arts programming
- Festivals/Fairs and other "one-time" special events

TACA prohibits the use of its funds for activities, such as:

- cash prizes

- debt retirement
- loan interest, fines, or penalties
- re-granting initiatives

Grant recipients will be required to report their use of TACA’s funds at the end of the grant term.

## REST PERIOD

If your organization has been declined funding from TACA for two consecutive Catalyst Grant cycles, TACA may require your organization to take a one-cycle rest period from applying for a TACA grant. After the rest period, the organization may be re-eligible to submit a LOI.

## APPLICATION CALENDAR

The Catalyst Grant program will offer a single, annual grant cycle for funding, with a pre-application cycle in Fall 2024 and the full application available in Spring 2025. Funding will be awarded once in May 2025.

### 2024 CYCLE (outstanding deadlines)

**April 30, 2024, by 11:59 p.m. CT** | Grant Report Due

### CATALYST GRANTS ANNUAL CYCLE (2025)

<b>Monday, September 9, 2024</b>	Pre-Application Form Opens
<b>Friday, October 18, 2024</b>	Pre-Application Form submission deadline by 11:59 p.m. CT
<b>Monday, February 17, 2025</b>	Full Application available
<b>Tuesday, February 25, 2025</b>	Applicant Information Session
<b>Wednesday, March 26, 2025</b>	Full Application submission deadline by 11:59 p.m. CT
<b>Monday, March 31- Wednesday, May 21, 2025</b>	Review Period
<b>Thursday, May 22, 2025</b>	Notification of grant award or declination
<b>Wednesday, April 30, 2025</b>	Grant Report Due by 11:59 p.m. CT

## PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

### PRE-APPLICATION FORM:

**Organizations interested in applying for a Catalyst Grant are required to submit a digital Pre-Application Form prior to the Full Application process.** The digital Pre-Application Form can be accessed by visiting the TACA Grants Portal at <https://taca.smapply.org>. Before you can access the Pre-Application Form, you will need to log in or create an account in the portal with your own username and password (if you have not already done so in a prior year's application).

The digital Pre-Application Form consists of the following elements:

- Basic organizational information (e.g., mission, history)
- Workforce Information
- [Schedule of Upcoming Programming](#)
- Past Year's Programming Listing
- Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year Profit & Loss (P&L) Statements
- Current Balance Sheet
- Fiscal Year-to-Date Profit & Loss (P&L) Statements
- Current Fiscal Year Operating Budget
- IRS Form 990/990-N e-postcard from most recent filing (if the organization is unaudited)

(\* ) Where applicable, audited financial statements are preferred. If your organization is not audited, you may submit unaudited financial statements.

### PRE-APPLICATION INTERVIEW:

As part of the Pre-Application Process, the TACA Grants Committee reserves the right to meet with any organization that submitted a Pre-Application Form if they are new to TACA's Grant process or if there are any questions/concerns about the organization's eligibility or organizational health.

### ELIGIBILITY REVIEW & NOTIFICATION:

Pre-Application Forms are reviewed by TACA staff and the TACA Grants Committee to determine if the applicant organization meets the eligibility criteria. Based upon the Pre-Application Process, organizations that submit a Pre-Application Form will be notified of their eligibility to apply for a Catalyst Grant. Eligible organizations will subsequently be given access to the full application.

### PROGRAM OBSERVATIONS:

TACA requires the Pre-Application so that Reviewers can observe applicant programs, so submitting accurate information on Upcoming Programming is essential. Please note that TACA cannot guarantee what programming is observed by reviewers.

## **FULL APPLICATION PROCESS**

The full application will be available to access in the TACA Grants Portal approximately 5 weeks before the grant deadline. For specific dates, please see the 'Application Calendar' section of these grant guidelines.

### **FULL APPLICATION:**

The full application is comprised of two primary components: (1) evaluative criteria narratives and (2) application attachments.

#### **Evaluative Criteria Narratives**

The full application consists of narrative sections that tie directly to our evaluative criteria, which can be found under the 'Evaluative Criteria & Review Process' section of these grant guidelines. There is also an optional narrative section to include any additional information you would like TACA reviewers to know.

#### **Application Attachments**

To supplement the information provided in the main application, applicants must also submit the attachments below:

- Schedule of Upcoming Programming Information
- Past Year's Programming Listing
- Current Fiscal year Budget
- Current Balance Sheet
- Workforce Information
- Supplemental Materials

#### **SMU DataArts Cultural Data Profile (CDP) Survey & Funder Report**

The CDP is no longer a requirement for the Catalyst Grant application. Instead, we are asking applicants to include some additional data on attendance, participation, and finances directly within the application itself, but it will be significantly simpler than the CDP. We are working on a new collaboration with Data Arts outside the grant cycle to ensure that Dallas remains well-represented in arts conversations nationwide.

### **APPLICATION SUBMISSION:**

All application materials must be submitted via the TACA Grants Portal by the deadlines outlined in the 'Application Timeline' section of these grant guidelines.

Please make sure you receive an email confirmation after submitting your application. Late applications will NOT be accepted.

## **EVALUATIVE CRITERIA & REVIEW PROCESS**

All grant applicants are reviewed through a multi-step process using the following weighted evaluative criteria:

### **EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:**

#### **ARTISTIC MERIT & IMPACT (60%)**

TACA evaluates an organization's Artistic Merit & Impact according to the following:

- Produces/presents public arts programming and education programming of exceptional quality and impact
- Creates meaningful and transformative arts experiences
- Demonstrates a commitment to innovation and creative risk-taking
- Demonstrates a commitment to supporting local Dallas/North Texas-based artists

#### **COMMUNITY ACCESS & INCLUSION (25%)**

TACA evaluates an organization's level of Community Access & Inclusion according to the following:

- Makes intentional effort to eliminate barriers and increase access to organizational programming (For example, relatability and cultural diversity of programming, affordable attendance costs, diverse programming locations, mediums used, etc.)
- Demonstrates a formal commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) through policies and practices (For example, organization has board-approved EDI policy published publicly; formal plans and progress made to increase racial diversity at staff/Board levels)
- Intentionally engages and advances the narratives of historically underrepresented or marginalized communities (including ALAANA – African, Latinx, Arab, Asian, Native-American, LGBTQ+, differently-abled communities)

#### **FISCAL & ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH (15%)**

TACA evaluates an organization's Financial & Organizational Health according to the following:

- Evidence of reasonable operating metrics (For example, sources/uses of revenue, expense management, liquidity, key financial metrics, etc.)
- Demonstrates thoughtful and realistic short-term and long-term financial and organizational plans
- Effectively partners/collaborates with other organizations

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

The review process consists of a Staff Review, Panel Review, and TACA Grants Committee Review before presentation for approval to TACA's Board of Directors. Details of each review phase are outlined below:

## **STAFF REVIEW:**

Upon receipt of the applications, TACA staff will review applications for completeness. When necessary, applicant organizations will be asked to revise application materials or supply additional information. **Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.** Applicants that do not submit all of the required support materials by the appropriate deadlines will not be eligible for further consideration. Applications submitted to TACA become the property of TACA.

**TACA staff do not score applications.** Rather, TACA staff manages all administrative and logistical tasks necessary to conduct a successful panel review, which include:

- Providing panelists with training and materials to ensure that they are able to evaluate applications and performances effectively
- Informing panelists of TACA policies and procedures
- Providing all available objective information regarding applicant organizations to the panel

## **PANEL REVIEW:**

Applicant organizations are organized into panels based on their primary artistic discipline. Applicants are evaluated by panels of volunteer grant reviewers, which are comprised of civic leaders, arts professionals, artists, community and corporate volunteers, arts advocates, and others with arts expertise.

In addition to evaluating submitted application materials, reviewers are required to observe the public programming of applicants in their respective panels throughout the year. TACA believes that by having our panelists observe the programming firsthand, they are better equipped to fairly evaluate applicant organizations and their activities. *These observations figure heavily into the reviewers' Artistic Merit & Impact scoring.*

Reviewers are attentive to the content of the program, as well as the following elements (as demonstrated through the application and observed through attendance):

- Accessibility of relevant information to attendance (ticket purchasing, parking, event details, participants, scheduling, etc.)
- Marketing and promotional messaging about the organization and its events
- Audience and performer demographics
- Attendee experience
- Long term engagement and relationship building efforts with audiences and participants

Panels will convene during each grant cycle to discuss and score each applicant organization based upon their public programming observations, their review of each application, and the panel's discussion.

TACA has a strict conflict of interest policy for reviewers. Reviewers that declare a conflict of interest with a particular organization may not score that applicant or participate in the discussion of that application.

#### **TACA GRANTS COMMITTEE, BOARD REVIEW & APPROVAL:**

The TACA Grants Committee reviews aggregate scores for all applicants and finalizes award recommendations. An organization's recommended award, if any, is determined using a matrix that accounts for the following variables:

- Budget size
- Panel review score
- Quantity of applications received
- Amount of funds available for the grant program

Once award recommendations are finalized, the TACA Grants Committee presents final award recommendations to the TACA Board of Directors for final approval.

#### **AWARD NOTIFICATION:**

Applicant organizations will be notified of TACA funding decisions by the dates outlined in the 'Application Timeline' section of these grant guidelines.

Panel feedback will be communicated to all applicant organizations.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS**

#### **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

TACA Grant Recipients are required to complete and submit a brief TACA Grant Final Report at the end of the grant term. The report form will be available digitally through the [TACA Grants Portal](#). More information on this report form will be provided along with instructions toward the end of the grant term. Completion of the TACA Grant Final Report is required for future funding by TACA.

#### **RECOGNITION REQUIREMENTS:**

TACA receives contributions from generous individuals, corporate, and foundation donors in the community. To reinforce the importance of their gifts, we need TACA's donors to see and understand the connection between their contribution to TACA and TACA Grant Recipients. Public recognition of this grant is important to sustain and encourage future contributions.

If granted, TACA Grant Recipients will be asked to credit and acknowledge TACA's support at the level that best represents the grant amount awarded. More details about recognition requirements will be provided in the Grant Award Agreement at the end of each grant cycle.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**



Organizations interested in applying for a Catalyst Grant are encouraged to thoroughly review the granting guidelines, application requirements, and evaluative criteria before beginning the application process. If you have any questions about eligibility of your organization or the granting process, please contact Yadira Gonzalez, TACA's Programs Associate, at [yadira.gonzalez@taca-arts.org](mailto:yadira.gonzalez@taca-arts.org).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### **How do I complete the digital Pre-Application Form?**

To access and complete the digital Pre-Application Form:

- Visit the TACA Grants Portal at <https://taca.smapply.org/>
- Select "Register" (or "Log In" if you already have an account) and follow the prompts
- Under "Programs," select the Catalyst Grant program and click the red "Apply" button
- Complete the eligibility quiz and the Pre-Application Form tasks, and submit the application

### **Can my organization request a specific grant amount? How are grant amounts determined?**

Applicants do not ask for a specific grant amount. Rather, grant amounts are determined through a tiered system that accounts for your organization's average aggregate score on our evaluative criteria, budget size, the quantity of applications received, and the total amount of funds we have raised to distribute each cycle.

### **Will my organization receive any feedback after each grant cycle is complete?**

Yes – TACA distributes feedback/comments from our grant reviewers to all applicants after each grant cycle.

### **Who reviews applications? Will the reviewers be the same for each cycle?**

Grant applications are reviewed by panels of volunteer grant reviewers, which are comprised of civic leaders, arts professionals, artists, community and corporate volunteers, arts advocates, and others with arts expertise. Generally, we will utilize many of the same grant reviewers for each cycle so they can observe programs of assigned organizations and become familiar with each applicant over a longer period.

Updated: October 3, 2024