

# FISCAL YEAR 2026-27

## COMMUNITY ARTS GRANTS GUIDELINES

### WELCOME

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The City of Carlsbad Cultural Arts Office serves to encourage, develop and facilitate an enriched environment of artistic, creative and cultural activity in the City of Carlsbad and the North San Diego County region. The Cultural Arts Office manages funding programs to provide financial support to organizations, schools and individuals for various projects through a competitive application and review process. These projects benefit the community through an array of activities for schools, artists and organizations. The Community Arts Grants program was identified for continued and increasing support by the Carlsbad City Council through the 2018 Arts & Culture Master Plan.

The City of Carlsbad's Community Arts Grants program supports quality arts and cultural programming that promotes the representation and participation of diverse groups of individuals, including and not limited to people of differing abilities, class, generations, ethnicities and races, gender identities, religious or spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, or veteran status.

Our mission supports the following values:

- Provide inclusive opportunities for arts & culture experiences for Carlsbad students and residents reducing/eliminating barriers for participation.
- Provide arts education and lifelong learning opportunities for all ages.
- Support local and regional arts organizations as an important component of the economy and quality of life in Carlsbad and North San Diego County.
- Support arts education in schools and through affiliated organizations.
- Develop and support organizational strength and capacity of Carlsbad arts organizations.
- Encourage new and emerging artists, arts organizations and programs in Carlsbad, CA.
- Celebrate Carlsbad as an exciting, vibrant and creative destination for residents and visitors alike.
- Acknowledge indigenous land and cultural awareness in the Carlsbad community.

### FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 OVERVIEW

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The updated FY 2026-27 guidelines reflect national grantmaking trends and best practices and support funding for artists and arts organizations in Carlsbad and surrounding areas. Guidelines were approved by the City of Carlsbad's Arts Commission on Feb. 5, 2026.

**Important dates for the FY 2026-27 grant cycle application are as follows:**

- **Applications open: Friday, Feb. 13, 2026**
- **Applications due: Friday, Mar. 27, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. PST**
- **Arts Commission Funding Plan review & approval: Thursday, May 7, 2026, subject to change**
- **Funding cycle begins Thursday, Sept. 3, 2026**
- **All projects must be completed by Friday, Sept. 3, 2027**
- **Applications can be accessed [online](#).**

Total funding available for the FY 2026-27 cycle is \$117,128. All final reports are due within 30 days of the completion of the event or **Friday, Oct. 1, 2027** whichever comes first. The first 80% of all funds awarded will be disbursed after agreements are executed and by Thursday, **Sept. 3, 2026**, grant start date; the final 20% once the final report and budget are submitted and approved.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

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Grantees are asked to remain vigilant and informed of health and safety requirements, including mandated protocols as outlined by state, county, local or other governmental bodies always. Failure to do so may result in cancellation of the agreement and grant funds.

## UPDATES FOR THIS YEAR

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- EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND AFFILIATED GROUPS – ARTS IN SCHOOLS: Award funds within the "Educational Institutions And Affiliated Groups – Arts In Schools" category will receive a fixed amount divided between all accepted grantees, with a maximum award of \$3,500 per grant.
- EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS APPLICATION LIMIT: There is a cap on the number of applications for Educational Institutions (Arts in Schools) of (3) three grants per school site. For detailed requirements, please refer to the Arts in Schools Requirements section.
- GRANT ELIGIBILITY: Applicants currently receiving funding from the City of Carlsbad under an active professional services agreement or grant other than a Community Arts Grant are ineligible to apply for a Community Arts Grant.

## ELIGIBILITY FOR ALL APPLICANTS; IMPORTANT: READ CAREFULLY

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All applicants, including fiscal agents and school-affiliated groups, must comply with the following:

- Nonprofit Status: Applicants must be recognized as nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or the California State Franchise Tax Board. A complete Statement of Information should be on file with the California Secretary of State. This statement should be filed within the first 90 (ninety) days of incorporation and updated in accordance with state law.
- Tax Identification: Applicants must provide their Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) from the IRS. Information will be checked through GuideStar's Charity Check.
- PLEASE NOTE: all organizations, including schools, must submit the names and contact information for the authorized signatories. Applications that do not identify the correct signatories for an organization or school will not be accepted.
- Specific exemptions for Educational Institutions: Educational institutions are exempt from the need for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) but are still eligible to apply.
- Partnership Projects: For projects involving partnerships, only one (1) application is allowed. If a school partners with an arts organization or artist, a signed agreement between the parties is required, with the school as the lead applicant.
- Must not be currently receiving funding from the City of Carlsbad under an active professional services agreement or grant other than a Community Arts Grant.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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When applying, organizations must ensure the following:

- Proof of nonprofit status: Provide evidence of nonprofit status or details of a fiscal agent.
- Statement of Information: Submit a current California Statement of Information reflecting Active Status, along with a list of Authorized Signatories, their signing authority, and the type of authority (individual or joint).

## GUIDELINE APPENDICES

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- Appendix 1 – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
- Appendix 2 – Ineligible Organizations and Activities

## FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 FUNDING CATEGORIES

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Funding is structured by the classification of each organization, then according to available categories. Applicants may only apply to one category per grant cycle:

- Arts Organizations or Fiscal Agents of Organizations - \$7,500 maximum award per grant
- Emerging Arts Organizations - \$5,000 maximum award per grant
- Educational Institutions and Affiliated Groups (Arts in Schools) - \$3,500 maximum award per grant. Three (3) grants maximum per school site per year.

## ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

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- Arts organizations must be registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations for at least three (3) years as of Jan. 1, 2026.
- Applicants may only submit one (1) application per funding cycle and cannot apply to multiple categories.
- Arts organizations grants - \$7,500 maximum award per grant.
- All arts projects require the participation of a professional artist or an outside subject matter expert.
- Arts projects will be defined as programs, activities, and events primarily designed to be arts focused. These projects may be presented in person, or virtually if any government issued health mandates are in effect.
- Arts project grants awards must be used for specific art project support and cannot be used for general operating support.

## EMERGING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

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- Emerging arts organization must be based in Carlsbad, CA.
- These grants are for smaller nonprofit organizations that are relatively new to the nonprofit community.
- Emerging arts organizations - \$5,000 maximum award per grant.
- Must have a nonprofit 501(c)(3) status of three (3) years or less.
  - If 501(c)(3) status has not yet been attained, please provide proof of acting in alignment with the IRS definition of a nonprofit: possessing a nonprofit established mission, an advisory committee or a board of directors, and a history of activities directly related to the purpose of eligibility to attain nonprofit status.
  - Additionally, emerging arts organizations aspiring to a nonprofit status must apply through a fiscal agent.
  - Fiscal agents will be responsible for receiving awarded funds and dispersing them with a service fee of no more than 10% of the amount awarded to the applicant.
- Projects must take place within Carlsbad, CA city limits and be accessible to the public, and benefit the community of Carlsbad.
- Projects must be representative of at least one (1) of the following mediums/forms of artistic expression:
  - Dance
  - Original music composition/lyrics
  - Spoken word/poetry
  - Visual Arts that utilize sustainable or recycled materials

## FISCAL AGENT REQUIREMENTS

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- Individuals or organizations in the process of applying for nonprofit status may apply through a fiscal agent.
- Any partnership between an individual, educational institution or organization must include a letter of agreement from the partnering entities.
- Fiscal agents will be responsible for receiving awarded funds and dispersing them with a service fee of no more than 10% of the amount awarded to the applicant.
- Organizations that act as fiscal agents are still eligible to apply for a Community Arts Grants for their organization.

## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND AFFILIATED GROUPS – ARTS IN SCHOOLS

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- Arts in Schools requests are only available to nonprofit schools or school-affiliated groups in Carlsbad, CA.
- Arts in Schools are defined as programs, activities, and events that are primarily designed to be arts focused.
- Arts in Schools grants - \$3,500 maximum award per grant with a maximum of three (3) grants per school site per year.
- Individual schools and entities representing a school (such as foundations, booster organizations etc.) can submit a maximum of three (3) grant applications from the categories below. See FAQ's for further information on acceptable categories:
  - Performing arts
  - Visual arts
  - Nontraditional arts, such as culinary, digital, creative writing, etc.
  - STEAM projects with a focus on the arts
  - Arts initiatives focused on arts careers and development of arts skills. Can include arts management, non-performance skills such as design, costuming, stagecraft, career talks or coaching by subject matter experts
  - All three (3) submissions cannot be from a single art form within a category. (e.g. three dance projects in performing arts)
- In-school grant projects utilizing teaching artists as part of the grant may not use a full-time hourly or salaried employee(s) of the respective school district to lead activities, performances, or projects; however, they may utilize teaching artists employed by other school districts.
  - Out-of-school programs utilizing teaching artists as part of the grant may utilize teaching artists that are employed by any school district.

- All partnerships must include a signed letter of agreement from the partnering entities.

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

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### FY 2026-27 Grant Cycle Schedule

Feb. 13, 2026	Applications Open
Feb. 18, 2026	Applicant Workshop virtual.
Feb. 18 - Feb. 27, 2026	Technical assistance meetings available by appointment
Mar. 27, 2026	Application Deadline: applications must be submitted electronically to City by 11:59 p.m.
Mar. 30 – Apr. 17, 2026	Submitted materials are reviewed and scored by a peer panel consisting of local and regional artists, arts professionals, and educators
May 7, 2026	Funding plan presented to Arts Commission for review and approval
June 4 – July 3, 2026	Begin email notifications to Grantees of award and City create and route DocuSign agreements for electronic signatures.
Sept. 3, 2026	Project/activity period opens.
Sept. 3, 2027	Project/activity period closes.
Oct. 1, 2027	All FY 2026-27 Final Reports are due. Grantees complete a Final Report within thirty (30) days of the program end date or by Oct. 1, 2027, whichever comes first.

## APPLICANT WORKSHOPS AND ONE-ON-ONE APPOINTMENTS

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Application information and links, including online tutorials, will be available on the Community Arts Grants application portal. The following resources will be available for applicants in the fiscal year 2026-27 cycle:

- The **Applicant Workshop** will include a general overview of the grant process, application and procedures. **New applicants are required to attend.**
- **Technical Assistance Meetings** – Applicants may schedule a 30-minute appointment with grant program staff to answer questions about the process, application or other topics. These appointments will be dependent on staff capacity and availability. Applicants are required to attend the Applicant Workshop prior to the appointment. To schedule a one-on-one appointment, please contact Program Manager Krystal Roa:
  - Email: [krystal.roa@carlsbadca.gov](mailto:krystal.roa@carlsbadca.gov)
  - (442) 339-5611 (office) | (442) 245-0502 (mobile)
- Please note that staff will review applications for effective and impactful delivery of information and ensure completeness and clarity of the information supplied. Staff will not provide feedback on content, programming, or other project details.

## PANEL REVIEW AND SCORING OF APPLICATIONS

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Submitted applications are reviewed and scored by a virtual peer panel of local and regional artists, arts professionals, and educators. The panelists' scoring will inform a funding plan for review and final approval by the Carlsbad Arts Commission.

## SCORING RUBRIC FOR ALL CATEGORIES (EXCEPT EMERGING ARTISTS)

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Application scores will be based on the following criteria aligned with the Community Arts Grants mission. Panelists will be asked to undertake the following scoring recommendations and directives:

- Panelists will score applications on how closely the project(s) achieve the goals of the respective grant category.
- Panelists may be asked to convene to discuss the application's merits.
- Award amounts are determined via a formula that takes into consideration the total amount of available funds, the average scores of the applicants, and an assigned percentage based on those scores.

The scoring of applications will be based on the following criteria, with a maximum score of 50 points. The examples provided are for informational purposes only and are not meant to be exhaustive:

- **Quality of Program(s) (10 points)**
  - Reinforce accessible artistic and cultural opportunities and experiences for Carlsbad residents.
  - Provide arts education and lifelong learning opportunities for all ages.
- **Community Impact (30 points)**
  - Celebrate and promote Carlsbad as an exciting, vibrant, and creative destination for our community, students, as well as visitors and tourists throughout the world.
  - Support local and regional arts and cultural organizations as an important component of the economy and quality of life in Carlsbad and North San Diego County.
  - Accessibility of program for participants and audience members, including economic limitations under the Americans

with Disabilities Act.

- Encouragement of programs that promote the representation and participation of diverse groups of individuals, including and not limited to people of differing abilities, class, generations, ethnicities and races, gender identities, religious or spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations and veteran status.
- **Organizational Capacity (10 points)**
  - Provide evidence of organizational strength and capacity to support the scope of the project/activity.

#### OTHER REVIEW AND SCORING INFORMATION

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- Cultural Arts Office staff will review applications after the deadline.
- Applications deemed eligible will be forwarded to scoring panelists and reviewed within the context of the project or program as outlined in the application.
- Incomplete applications, or applications with incorrect information, will be deemed ineligible.

#### AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

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Upon approval of your application:

- **Legal Agreement with the City of Carlsbad:** To proceed with your project, you must first enter into a legal agreement with the City of Carlsbad. City will route the agreement using DocuSign to obtain secure electronic signatures, and the commencement of your project is contingent upon the execution of this agreement.
- **Non-Profit Corporation Signing Authorities:** All agreements MUST be signed by two officers listed on the Statement of Information filed with the California Secretary of State for your organization (or as listed on the most recent board roster). These officers should be those who are authorized to enter into legally binding agreements on behalf of your organization, such as CEO, CFO, Treasurer, Secretary.

One corporate officer from each of the following groups must sign the agreement:

<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>
Chairman,	Secretary,
President, <b>or</b>	Assistant Secretary,
Vice-President	CFO <b>or</b> Assistant Treasurer

Otherwise, the corporation must attach a resolution certified by the secretary or assistant secretary under corporate seal empowering the officer(s) signing to bind the corporation.

You can verify your status with the California Secretary of State and see the officers listed on the Statement of Information at this website: [Search | California Secretary of State](#). Further documentation of signature authorization will be requested if the most recent Statement of Information has not been filed.

#### Specific Entity Requirements:

- **Fiscal Agents:** The agreement must be signed by two officers from the fiscal agent's organization, as per organization's Statement of Information.
- **Educational Institutions:** A Signature Delegation Form must be completed by the school principal and a district representative (e.g., Assistant Superintendent).
- **School-Affiliated Groups (i.e., school booster groups):** Follow the same signature requirements as nonprofit organizations.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Applicants who have been granted funding in previous cycles must meet all requirements from those past agreements before they are eligible to receive a new agreement for the FY 2026-27 cycle.

#### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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Grant recipients are required to maintain three (3) years of accounts, records and evidence pertaining to costs incurred and revenues acquired under the respective grant program. Grantees should be able to provide upon request:

- Accurate, current and complete disclosure of revenue and expenses for the project.
- Records that adequately identify the sources and application of funds for grant sponsored activities.
- Accounting records supported by source documentation – invoices, receipts, bank statements, etc.

- All awardees must provide documents within thirty (30) days of receipt of request. This includes but is not limited to agreements, revised project forms, final reports, and financial accounting.

## **PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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- Grant recipients must acknowledge the Cultural Arts Office for its support of the project in printed, electronic and/or broadcast promotions.
- The following acknowledgment along with a City of Carlsbad Cultural Arts logo must appear on all printed and electronic materials: “This program is funded in part by the City of Carlsbad’s Cultural Arts Office.” This logo and guidelines for acknowledgment are available on the Community Arts Grants [webpage](#) or upon request.
- Grantees who fail to provide public acknowledgment may be denied future project funding.

## **PROMOTION BY CITY**

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- Grantees are required to keep the Cultural Arts Office informed of all program dates and times.
- If the grantee wishes to participate in promotion through approved city channels, they may opt-in as part of the agreement. All participation in promotion through the city’s social media channels and other outlets, is subject to staff review, editing and approval prior to promotion.
- Grantees are encouraged and expected to:
  - Give notifications and invitations to the Cultural Arts Office staff that will be extended to the Carlsbad Arts Commission at least two (2) weeks in advance of program.
  - Extensively promote funded events and projects with appropriate verbiage as indicated in “Public Acknowledgement” stipulated above.

## **FINAL REPORTS, SITE VISITS AND PROGRAM ATTENDANCE**

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The Cultural Arts staff may monitor grant projects during the grant cycle, including potential site visits. The reports of these visits will be included in grant application files and may provide a basis for evaluation of future requests.

Grantees will have an option to replace digitally submitted final reports with in-person site visits and/or interviews. Pending any health and safety mandates and protocols as outlined by state, county, local or other governmental bodies, these site visits/ interviews may be conducted by Cultural Arts staff and/or Arts Commissioner(s), as available, and appropriate to each grant. Grantees may still opt to submit on-line final reports in consultation with staff. In all cases, grantees will still be required to submit final budget forms digitally for staff review and approval.

All final reports are due within thirty (30) days of the completion of the event or Friday, Oct. 1, 2027, whichever comes first, to receive the final award payment. Excessively late submission of a final report may result in action taken per contract.

## **ASSISTANCE**

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Cultural Arts Office staff are always available to assist applicants. Please contact Cultural Arts office at 442-339-2090 or email [arts@carlsbadca.gov](mailto:arts@carlsbadca.gov).

## **POLICIES**

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- Once submitted, applications may be moved into a different category at the discretion of Cultural Arts staff. Notification will be made to the applicant.
- The City of Carlsbad reserves the right to limit funding amounts to any applicant, regardless of eligibility or panel score, based on fiscal year limitations.
- Cultural Arts Office staff actively review and evaluate all aspects of the funding program and process. Updates may occur throughout the funding calendar. Cultural Arts staff will provide information on program updates, to all grantees when they are implemented.
- Any significant changes or amendments by the grantee to approved projects must be submitted in writing to the Cultural Arts Office by the grantee before any grant funds are used, and before the execution of any altered activity. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in purpose, scope, services, target audiences, intended timeline, personnel, location, date, activities, or budget. This requirement will be included in the agreement.
- The Cultural Arts Office reserves the right to review, cancel or reallocate project funds significantly altered or shifted from stated goals in the original approved application and/or revised project form. Canceled funds must be returned to the Cultural Arts Office within thirty (30) days of written notification.
- No two (2) entities (organization or school/affiliated groups) may apply for funding for the same project.
- Applicants may only apply to one (1) category per funding cycle.

## OTHER INFORMATION

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### Carlsbad Arts Commission Meetings:

Carlsbad Arts Commission meetings are public, and information is available on the city website. **A meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2026, to approve the FY 2026-27 Community Arts Grants Funding Plan.** For more information about the duties of the Carlsbad Arts Commission and its meetings, visit the Arts Commission [webpage](#).

## HOW TO APPLY

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### Application

All applications must be submitted online. The application is comprised of approximately five (5) main sections, some of which include long answer sections and attachments. The application is available at the Community Arts Grants [webpage](#).

- **Organization Information:** An updated Statement of Information and approved signatories must be submitted for applications to be accepted.
- **Project Information and Narrative**
- **Project Support Information**
- **Budget:** A budget form and sample can be found at the Community Arts Grants [webpage](#).
- **Signatory Information** as described in the section titled "Agreement Requirements for Grantees."

## APPENDIX 1: COMMUNITY ARTS GRANTS FAQ'S

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### Are there any organizations that are ineligible to receive Community Arts Grant funding?

Yes. For-profit organizations are ineligible to receive funding through the Community Arts Grants program. This includes for-profit schools and businesses.

### Can I apply to more than one category?

No. Unlike previous grant cycles, artists and organizations may only apply to one (1) category per fiscal year grant cycle.

### What projects are eligible for the Emerging Arts Organization category?

Projects must be representative of at least one (1) of the following mediums/forms of artistic expression:

- Dance
- Original music composition/lyrics
- Spoken word/poetry
- Visual Arts using sustainable or recycled materials
- Ethnic or indigenous art forms
- Digital art forms such as film, animation, etc.

### What arts organizations qualify to apply in the Emerging Arts Organization category?

- Arts Organization must be based in Carlsbad, CA.
- Must have a nonprofit 501(c)(3) status of three (3) years or less:
- If 501(c)(3) status has not yet been attained, please provide proof of acting in alignment with the IRS definition of a nonprofit; possessing a nonprofit established mission, an advisory committee or a board of directors, and a history of activities directly related to the purpose of eligibility to attain a nonprofit status.
- Additionally, emerging arts organizations aspiring to a nonprofit status must apply through a fiscal agent.

### Is attendance required for the workshops and information sessions?

Applicant workshop attendance or technical assistance meeting is required for all new applicants, applicants who were denied the last cycle, and those applying in the Emerging Arts Organization category. Workshop attendance or technical assistance meetings by returning awardees are highly recommended as an opportunity for staff to guide and assist applicants in the FY 2026-27 Community Arts Grants application process.

### How are final awards decided?

All award amount decisions consider the total amount of funding available, scores from panelists, and the request from the applying entity. After panelists score, Cultural Arts staff will create a funding plan based on these factors, which is forwarded to the Arts Commission for final approval.

### **Can one school site apply for multiple educational institutions (or Arts in Schools) grants?**

Yes. Individual schools and entities representing a school (such as foundations, booster organizations etc.) can submit a maximum of three (3) grant applications per educational institution amongst the list below; all three (3) submissions cannot be from a single medium.

#### **Examples of acceptable mediums:**

- Performing arts
- Visual arts
- Nontraditional arts, such as culinary, digital, creative writing, etc.
- STEAM projects with a focus on the arts
- Arts initiatives focused on arts careers and development of arts skills. Can include arts management, non-performance skills such as design, costuming, stagecraft, career talks or coaching by subject matter experts
- All three (3) submissions cannot be from a single art form within a category. (e.g. three dance projects in performing arts)

## **APPENDIX 2: INELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

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### **The City of Carlsbad will NOT award Community Arts Grants to:**

- For-profit organizations, schools, and businesses.
- Organizations and/or affiliates that are directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.
- Governmental agencies or public authorities.
- Applicants that have a “delinquent” status with the Community Arts Grants funding programs.
- Retroactive funding for completed activities.
- Religious and/or sectarian programming or any programming and/or services solely for the promotion of or consumption by a specific religious order and/or sect.
- Cash reserves or endowments of any kind. Awards are to be expended within the designated funding period.
- Capital expenditures, including construction, renovation, or purchase of real property.
- Applications that do not support nonprofit, public art activities or projects that benefit a for-profit business or activity.
- Projects through a fiscal sponsor that benefit the sponsoring organization or are an extension of the sponsoring organization’s programs or services.
- Support groups and/or nonprofit organizations supporting city departments or facilities.
- General operating costs, including costs associated with the start-up of a new organization.
- Applications to reduce existing deficits.
- Applicants currently receiving funding from the City of Carlsbad under an active professional services agreement or grant other than a Community Arts Grant.

### **Funding may NOT be used for:**

- Fundraising expenses.
- Consultants who are members of an applicant’s staff or board.
- Political campaigns or lobbying activities.
- Payments to students.
- Endowments or endowment campaigns.
- Scholarships, fellowships or tuition assistance.
- Costs incurred before the start of the funded project or outside the funding period.
- Project or activities outside the City of Carlsbad limits.
- Entry fees for competitions or sponsorship fees.
- Pageants, fund-raising events, or hospitality costs.
- Private foundations or other re-granting organizations.
- Religious or doctrinal purposes, although faith-based organizations may apply for program support.
- Publication of manuscripts or compositions not created as part of a grant-supported project.
- Purchase of monetary awards, cash prizes, contributions, or donations.
- Professional development for staff and board members.
- Scholarly or academic research, tuition and activities which generate academic credit or formal study toward an academic or professional degree.
- Creation of textbooks.
- Ongoing, recurring administrative expenses.