



Culture For All.

CULTURAL VISION GRANT GUIDELINES and FAQs

Commitment to Cultural Equity: In June, 2019, ASC formally adopted our [Statement on Cultural Equity](#) in which we commit to “cultural equity in all ASC investments, governance and administrative policies and practices.” With that commitment, we are particularly interested in supporting Cultural Vision Grant applications led by, celebrating and nurturing people who are Seniors, Disabled, Immigrants, Low-Income, Women and Girls, LGBTQIA, and those of African, Latino(a), Asian, Arab, and/or Native American descent.

Purpose: The Cultural Vision Grant program directly responds to the Charlotte Mecklenburg community’s interest in arts, science, history and heritage programming that builds strong communities and demonstrates innovative, relevant and transformative cultural expression as outlined in [Imagine 2025](#). ASC seeks to support high quality arts and culture projects presented within Mecklenburg County by Creative Individuals or Nonprofit Organizations that advance one of the following goals:

- Building Community by connecting individuals across points of difference
- Building Community by nurturing, celebrating and supporting authentic cultures and creative expression
- Increasing Relevance by using arts, science and history to address complex community issues
- Increasing Innovation by supporting the creation of new and groundbreaking work

Successful applicants will demonstrate a commitment to quality and clear intention toward at least one of the objectives above and a capacity for success. Grants of up to \$10,000 will be awarded. Grantees will be required to provide matching dollars toward the project expenses. Generally, applicants will be required to match dollar-for-dollar in cash or a combination of cash and in-kind.

Additional Panel Considerations:

We support programming with, by and for under-invested populations, which may include people who are: Seniors, Disabled, Immigrants, Low-Income, Women and Girls, LGBTQIA, and those of African, Latino(a), Asian, Arab, and/or Native American descent.

We recognize a need for projects that will occur in Charlotte/Mecklenburg communities beyond the Center City area.

We seek programs that engage communities in scientific and historic curiosity.

We look for participatory audience experiences.

Funding Partners: Cultural Vision Grants are funded through the generous support of donors to the ASC Annual Fund Drive, the City of Charlotte, and the towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Pineville, Matthews, and Mint Hill. These funds are leveraged with a grant from the Grassroots Arts Program of the North Carolina Arts Council, a state agency. As a Designated County Partner of the North Carolina Arts Council, ASC is responsible for the local distribution of Grassroots Arts Program funds. Recipients will be responsible for complying with all North Carolina Arts Council and ASC paperwork.

Eligibility: Please consider applying if your project meets the following criteria:

- The project is an arts, science, history or heritage project that takes place in Mecklenburg County.
- The project is beginning between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. Funded projects must also conclude before June 30, 2023.
- At the time of application, applicant is either an individual with a primary residence in Mecklenburg County or a Mecklenburg County-based, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that is in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). (Groups that do not have tax-exempt status may apply through a Mecklenburg based fiscal sponsor organization – see FAQs).

- Collaborative projects are welcomed. Organizations working together should identify a single organization who will serve as the grant applicant and fiscal sponsor.
- Religious Organizations and Institutions of Higher Education may apply provided the project reaches the broader community and does not contain religious content.

Restrictions:

- Organizations or individuals that will have a current and active ASC Operating Support or Cultural Vision Grant at the time their proposed Cultural Vision Grant project begins are not eligible to apply for Cultural Vision Grants. Note: These organizations may serve as a partner or fiscal sponsor.
- Projects that are religious in nature or specifically serve only church membership or faculty/student body are not eligible.
- Projects that involve work with preK-12 children during the school day are not eligible to apply.
- Organizations or individuals that have delinquent paperwork for a previously funded ASC grant are not eligible to apply.
- Generally, ASC will not consider multiple requests from the same applicant (with the exception of large 501(c)(3) organizations with multiple locations such as the library system, YMCA, or college/university). Please contact the Grants Office at (704) 335-3050 to discuss eligibility of multiple requests.

How to Apply:

- **Initial Application Deadline: Monday, March 1, 2021 at Noon.** All applicants must submit an initial application using our online application form by the published deadline in order to be considered for a Full Application. Please note that initial applications submitted after the published deadline cannot be accepted.
- **Conversation with ASC Program Staff: The week of March 8, 2021.** You will be asked to submit your availability for this conversation in the initial application. An ASC staff member will contact you to confirm the time for a phone interview if necessary based on your submitted materials.
- **Invitation to Full Application: The week of April 12, 2021.** A panel of subject matter experts and community representatives reviews each application. The panel deliberates on each proposal's alignment with the goals of the Cultural Vision Grant, and selects which will be invited to the full application. Included in this invitation will be specific guidance on the funding amount the applicant may request. Note that some applicants may be invited to apply for a grant amount less than the full need indicated in the initial application.
- **Full Application Draft Review:** All applicants invited to submit a full application will meet with the program director for consultation while preparing their full application. Drafts will be submitted by clicking the "Email Draft" button from inside the Full Application form online and should be directed to liz.fitzgerald@artsandscience.org. The consultation meetings will be scheduled to occur before May 19.
- **Full Application Deadline: Friday, May 28, 2021 at Noon.** All applicants are required to apply through our online application system. You will be given access to the online Full Application after review of your initial application by an ASC Program Director. **Unfortunately, applications received after this day and time cannot be accepted.**
- **Award Notification: By July 1, 2021.**

Assistance: In an ongoing effort to assist applicants with the development of requests for funding, applicants are encouraged to attend a grant workshop or consult with ASC staff while crafting your Initial Application. We are glad to provide guidance and suggested revisions to the proposal to make the request as competitive as possible. Additionally, those applicants who are invited to submit a Full Application will meet for a draft review with an ASC Program Director as they develop their final submission.

Application Link and Workshop Registration:

<https://www.artsandscience.org/grants/grants-for-individuals/cultural-vision-grants/>

Q: How will my application be reviewed?

A: Cultural Vision Grant applications will be evaluated in two stages. First, ASC staff will review initial applications for eligibility and the application review panel will evaluate potential for success based on two key criteria:

VISION – Evidence that the project will advance the Cultural Vision Grant’s objectives to build community and increase relevance and innovation in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg community.

LEADERSHIP - Evidence that the project has the creative leadership and committed partnerships necessary to bring community building experiences or relevant/innovative experiences to fruition.

Second, select candidates will then be invited to submit a full application for funding consideration. The full application will require further detail on vision and leadership, as well as the following criteria:

AUDIENCE– Evidence that the project has a defined audience and concrete plans to engage that audience.

IMPACT– Evidence of metrics and measures for success that directly align with Cultural Vision Grant goals.

BUDGET– Evidence of a clear summary of the projected revenue and expenses.

Final awards will be determined based on panel evaluation and available funds. All requests will not be funded. Some requests may receive partial funding.

Applications will be reviewed by your responses to open-ended style questions within the application and submission of required attachments to include bios of key project contributors and letters of support or participation from project partners. Applicants will also submit evaluation plans and a budget using the templates provided.

Cultural Vision Grant panelists are not required to attend activities and may not necessarily be familiar with your organization. Therefore, as you prepare your application, it is important to clearly articulate the value, impact, and quality of the project.

Q: How much can I request?

A: Applicants will be asked to provide information about anticipated budget and sources of financial support when submitting their Initial application. ASC will use this information to direct applicants as to how much they may request in their formal application (no greater than \$10,000). This is a competitive process and applicants are encouraged to develop a strong initial application and be realistic with regard to funding expectations. Every application will not receive funding, and not all that receive funding will receive their full request.

Q: Am I required to match the grant?

A: Applicants are required to leverage the investment by providing a match equal to the grant amount. This may be a cash match, in-kind support, or a combination of the two. If this match is a barrier for an individual or a small/ emerging organization, you are encouraged to contact grants@artsandscience.org to discuss your options. Applicants should project fundraising efforts, if they do not have the cash on hand. Please notify ASC staff if your source of matching funds will be a North Carolina Arts Council grant.

Q: What is a Fiscal Sponsor?

A: The Fiscal Sponsor (or Fiscal Agent) is an organization that agrees to accept and be responsible for grant monies on your behalf. The Fiscal Sponsor must be a Mecklenburg County-based non-profit organization. Groups that do not have tax-exempt status will need to apply through a Fiscal Sponsor. All grant payments will be made payable to the Fiscal Sponsor organization. It is the applicant’s responsibility to identify a Fiscal Sponsor and to outline specific responsibilities of each party.

Individuals with a primary residence in Mecklenburg County may apply directly to ASC, or through a Fiscal Sponsor.

Q: What is in-kind support?

A: In-kind support is defined as anything provided to the project (space rental, supplies, printed materials, volunteer time, etc.) at no cost to the applicant. All contributions should be given an appropriate cash value. Commonly used in-kind support includes volunteer time. The estimated dollar value of volunteer time by the Independent Sector is \$21.36/hour.

Q: How will I receive funding, if awarded?

A: Funding schedules will vary, depending on both the scope and duration of the project proposal. Submission of initial paperwork will be required for a first installment, and final report submission will be required before final payments are made. Most often, funding is distributed with 50% up front and 50% when the final report is completed.

Q: What types of projects have been funded in the past?

A: Descriptions of the Cultural Vision Grants awards can be found in ASC News Archives.

Q: What can Cultural Vision Grant dollars be used for?

A: ASC funds can be used for program-related fees & contracts, marketing & advertising expenses, expendable supplies & materials, space rental, etc. If you are unsure if you can use grant funds for a specific expense, please see the list of ineligible costs below or contact the Grants Office at 704-335-3053.

Q: Can Cultural Vision Grants support Public Art Projects?

A: ASC happily accepts proposals for funding to support Public Art projects, provided they meet the above stated criteria. Public Art gives meaning to spaces by evoking memories, making connections between cultures, exploring differences through illuminating them, telling stories, and provoking thought and discussion. Public Art is not a tool for PR or Marketing or merely beautification or decoration. ASC believes that much of the value of Public Art lies in the process. Therefore, requests for funding to support Public Art projects must:

- Define the community that will engage in and be the beneficiary of the project.
- Display evidence that the community will be **involved** in the identification of the project purpose and concept.
- Display evidence that the community will be **involved** in the artist selection process.
- Display evidence that the selected artist will **engage** the community in the development and/or fabrication of the work.

Requests that do not follow this process will be considered ineligible. Additionally, please note that a common obstacle faced by these type projects is securing a suitable location for the work, especially if the proposed location is publicly owned. If funding is awarded for a Public Art project, the applicant must submit proof that a location has been secured prior to the disbursement of the first payment.

Following is a list of ineligible costs:

- Prizes, including scholarships, tuition or financial awards.
 - Purchase of artifacts or artwork.
 - Capital expenditures – funds for expenses for purchase of buildings or real estate, renovations or improvements involving structural changes, payments for roads, driveways or parking lots, or permanent and generally immobile equipment such as grid systems or central air conditioning. Also includes acquisitions, which are expenses for additions to a collection of art.
 - Contingency funds – funds for an event that may occur but that is not likely or intended.
 - Costs for selling and/or marketing any products or services of the organization unrelated to the funded project.
 - Deficit reduction, bad debts, interest on loans, indirect cost rate expenses, losses on other awards or contracts, or fines, penalties, or litigation costs.
 - Donations and contributions to other organizations.
 - Entertainment costs (costs of amusement, diversion, social activities, ceremonials, and costs relating thereto, such as meals, lodging, rentals, transportation and gratuities) or costs for food or beverages for parties/receptions
 - Fundraising and investment management costs. Events specifically designed to fundraise.
 - Goods or services for personal use of the organization's employees.
 - Lobbying expenses.
 - Organizational establishment or reorganization costs.
 - Acrobatics, Aerobic dance, Beauty pageant, Clowning, Cosmetology, Essay contests, Fashion shows, Juggling, Magic shows, Martial arts, Modeling, Quiz bowls, and Travel presentations.
-

Q: Other than the online application information, can I submit any additional support material?

A: All required and supporting documents and materials must be submitted using our online application system. In some cases, this may require the use of a scanner. Please note that each application is limited to five (5) pages of support material which must be uploaded as a single document. Submissions in excess of this will be deleted at the sole discretion of the Program Director.

Q: I have questions regarding the Accessibility Checklist.

A: Please check the FAQ tab found on the Accessibility Checklist. If your question is still unanswered, please contact the ASC Grants Office at 704-335-3053.

Q: The application asks me to provide my City of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County District numbers. Where do I find these?

A: If you do not know your district information, go to the website below and follow the steps listed:
<http://maps.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/geoportal/>

STEP 1: Input the address and press Enter.

STEP 2: From the drop-down menu, select Voting.

STEP 3: Your County District Number will be located under "Mecklenburg County Commission District". Your City District Number will be located under "Charlotte City Council District."

If your organization or project is not located within the Charlotte city limits, please choose N/A for **City** District Number. County District information assists with the review of your application. In addition, it allows the ASC to track the reach of its investments.

Q: If my organization receives funding, what will we be required?

A: Cultural Vision Grant recipients may be required to do the following:

- Complete and return a Funding Agreement, which outlines the terms and conditions of the award.
 - Submit a copy of a board-approved Conflict of Interest Policy and a No Overdue Tax Debt certification form, per North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management requirements. (If you apply using a Fiscal Sponsor, it is your responsibility to ensure the fiscal organization completes this paperwork).
 - Comply with ASC Marketing Guidelines for Grantees including usage of the ASC and North Carolina Arts Council logos and credit lines in all materials related to the funded project.
 - Comply with all ASC and North Carolina Arts Council policies, and Office of State Budget and Management requirements, where applicable. See www.ncarts.org/guidelines/grant_program.cfm?ID=22 and <https://www.ncgrants.gov/NCGrants/PublicReportsRegulations.jsp> for more information.
 - Submit a final report and all additional paperwork, which may include NC Office of State Budget and Management forms and certification, and project documentation, no later than 30 days after the project has been completed.
 - Comply with ASC requests for evaluation of Cultural Vision Grant objectives, including audience/participant and organizational feedback.
 - Attend an informational session to further detail the requirements listed above.
-

Q: I have more questions. Where can I get help?

A: ASC's Grants and Services staff is available to answer questions as you develop your application. Please contact Liz Fitzgerald in the Grants Office at 704-335-3053.