



## 2025-26 Grassroots Arts Program Guidelines

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Since 1977, the North Carolina Arts Council's Grassroots Arts Program has provided North Carolina citizens with access to quality arts experiences. The program distributes funds for the arts in all 100 counties of the state primarily through partnerships with local arts councils. The Lee County Arts Council (LCAC) serves as the N.C. Arts Council's partner in awarding subgrants to local organizations for arts programs in Lee County.

### **Eligibility for Application**

- All organizations that have been in operation for at least one year.
- Applicants must be a nonprofit organization with a 501(c)3 Federal tax-exempt status or have another nonprofit organization serve as its fiscal agent. Organizations that are nonprofit in nature may also receive Grassroots Arts Program subgrants. Contact the LCAC for more information.
- All organizations must physically reside and carry out project within Lee County.
- Projects must take place between July 1 and June 30.
- Organizations that receive general support funds through the NC Arts Council or the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources are not eligible for Grassroots funds.
- Individual artists are not eligible to apply for Grassroots Arts funds.
- Applications and support materials must be completed and received by the grant deadline.

### **Timeline**

- Monday, June 2, 2025: Application Period opens.
- Friday, August 29, 2025: Applications are due by 11:59 pm.
- November, 2025: Applicants will be notified.
- All projects must take place between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026 (this means you can apply for a project that may have already happened before you are notified).
- All grant funds must be spent during this granting period (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026). Report any issues or unused funds to the LCAC by April 15, 2026 and return any unused funds by May 15, 2026.
- Final Reports are due June 30, 2026.

### **Information Session**

The Lee County Arts Council will host an optional Grassroots Arts Program Grant information session to help potential grantees familiarize themselves with the program and prepare their applications. The session will be held via Google Meeting on Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. Register for the session [HERE](#). Details about joining the meeting will be automatically emailed to those registered.

### **Funding Guidelines**

Grassroots Arts Program funds may be used for expenditures to conduct quality arts programs or operate an arts organization. Typical uses of Grassroots money include:

- Program expenses such as professional artists' fees and travel, space rental, advertising, marketing and publicity, website and electronic media, scripts, costumes, sets, props, music and equipment rental.
- Examples of arts programs that are commonly supported with Grassroots funds include performances; festivals; art exhibitions; art camps and after-school programs; artist residencies for K-12 schools; artist fees for classes and workshops; marketing expenses for art walks and studio tours; royalties, props, sets and costumes for theater performances; equipment or space rental for arts programming; etc.

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- Limited operating expenses for qualified arts organizations that are not already receiving operating support from the N.C. Arts Council or N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.
- Grant Amount: There is no set grant amount, but past grants have ranged from \$500 to \$3,000. For exceptional projects, more may be awarded.

### **Funding Policies**

- Tribal organizations that receive grassroots funds must represent state or federally recognized tribes.
- Colleges, universities and libraries may receive grants for arts programs that are community based or generate regional arts involvement. Grants may not support their internal programs, administration or operation expenses (library books, band activities, equipment purchases).
- Grassroots funds may not be awarded to individuals.
- Grassroots funds may not be used to purchase artwork, art supplies or equipment.
- Grassroots funds may be used for student transportation to regional arts exhibits and programs on a limited basis.
- Grants may not be awarded for prizes, competitions, scholarships, tuition or financial awards.
- Religious organizations or churches may not receive Grassroots funds unless the programs are presented outside regular church services, engage the larger community and do not contain religious content.
- Grassroots funds may not be used for activities associated with a school's internal arts programs, such as in-school student performances, the purchase of art supplies, or student arts competitions and publications.
- Municipalities (city/county government) and community organizations may receive grants for arts programs that use qualified artists to conduct programs that involve the greater community. Grants may not support internal programs, administration or operating expenses.
- Organizations with an annual operating budget of more than \$2M may not request operations support, only programmatic support.
- Grassroots Arts Program money **may not** be used for the following kinds of expenditures:
  - Art, music, and dance therapists
  - Artifacts
  - Capital expenditures
  - Fundraising events
  - Food or beverages for hospitality or entertainment functions
  - Internal school programs such as band activities or equipment or choral activities
  - Lobbying expenses
  - Oral history and history projects
  - Interest on loans, fines or litigation costs

### **Matching Requirement**

The Grassroots Arts Program legislation requires that the grant be matched dollar for dollar with cash from local sources during the applicable fiscal year. Neither Grassroots allocations nor the matching funds may be used to match any other N.C. Arts Council grant. All matching funds must be documented as part of the final report for the grant at the end of the fiscal year.

### **Racial and Cultural Diversity Requirement**

The N.C. Arts Council works to provide a representative portion of grant funds for arts programming that reflects the racial and cultural diversity of the state. The LCAC is required to spend 43% of its annual county allotment for programming that reflects African American, Asian American, Latinx, and Native American cultures, based on the percentage of each population in Lee County.

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The applying organization does not have to be an arts organization, but the funds must be used for arts programming. This requirement is met through supporting arts programming conducted by artists, ensembles, or organizations of color. It is not reached by counting or estimating the percentage of audience members or participants of color.

### **Applicant Evaluation**

Applications are reviewed by a panel of volunteer community members. The panel evaluates each application based on the subgrant guidelines and the following criteria:

- **Artistic Merit** – The main artistic idea of the project is relevant and interesting to the public or the arts sector. The application includes an explanation of the organization’s proposed arts activity, event, or project.
- **Community Engagement** – The application identifies the communities, audiences or participants who will benefit from the project and explains why it will be meaningful to them.
- **Program Management** – The project description is detailed and describes activities, timeline, promotion and evaluation strategies.
- **Financial Accountability** – The financial information is detailed; project income is realistic and includes a mix of revenues; and project expenses and payments to artists are clear.

Panelists discuss and score the grant using an established rating system. The subgrant panel’s scoring and funding decisions are then presented to the LCAC Board of Directors. The board votes and gives final approval on the subgrant panel’s recommendations.

### **Funding Priorities**

The *first priority* of the Grassroots Arts Program is to provide operating or program support to qualified arts organizations including theaters, symphonies, galleries, art guilds, choral societies, dance companies, folk arts societies, writers’ groups, and arts festivals, among others. Grassroots funds are not generally awarded to arts organizations that receive funding through the N.C. Arts Council’s General Support Program or the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

The *second priority* of the Grassroots Arts Program is to support arts learning and arts-in-education programs conducted by qualified artists. These can be artist residencies in schools, after-school programs, summer camps, or adult arts learning classes.

The *third priority* of the Grassroots Arts Program is to support community, civic and municipal organizations that provide quality art experiences for the greater community. These programs must be conducted by qualified artists.

### **Grantee Requirements**

- *Complete the Grassroots Grant contract.* The contract must be submitted to The Lee County Arts Council with a Certification of No Overdue Taxes.
- *Acknowledge the NCAC’s and LCAC’s support* of their event or projects by including their logos and funding credit lines in all digital, print and promotional materials related to the grant. Proper acknowledgment will be considered during future funding requests.
- *Thank Lee County senators and representatives* in writing for appropriating state funding for the arts. The letter should provide info about how Grassroots funds were used to support your program or project—as well as the community impact of the event. A copy of all the letters to legislators must be included in the subgrantee’s final report.

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- *Submit a final report* providing a detailed description of the funded project, participation statistics and demographics, verification of matching funds and demonstrate examples of the use of the NCAC and LCAC credit line and logos. The report must be submitted by June 30, 2025. Organizations that have not submitted reports for prior grants are not eligible to apply for future requests.

### **How to Apply**

Below is an Application Link to download the Grassroots Grant application you will need to complete and submit by the deadline. If you have any trouble with the links/forms, please contact the Arts Council.

**Application Link:** <https://form.jotform.com/250175262448154>

Are you new to working with the Grassroots Arts Program grant application or need a refresher? If so, our Application Tutorial will help you through the application process. This tutorial provides navigation guidance (tips for moving through the form and saving your work); section-specific instructions (explanations of what is expected in each part of the application plus working templates); and submission and certification (information on how to submit your application, including certification requirements).

Download the Application Tutorial [HERE](#).

### **Questions & Assistance**

If you have questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at (919) 774-6139 or [leecountyarts@gmail.com](mailto:leecountyarts@gmail.com).



## Branding Guide for the 2025-26 Grassroots Arts Program

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### **Logo & Branding Materials**

All grant recipients are required to prominently display The Lee County Arts Council and the North Carolina Arts Council logo with credit line on-site at funded events and in all digital and printed publicity materials. We also encourage you to use this on your website, electronic newsletters, and in as many materials and places as possible. Your display of these items serves to recognize the investment by the North Carolina General Assembly in our grants and programs.

In all communications, **North Carolina Arts Council** should always be written out on first reference. **N.C. Arts Council** is acceptable on second reference. NCAC should not be used.

### **Logos**

To access the logo, control-click the desired image to download. These logos have a transparent background.

- Contact us at [leecountyarts@gmail.com](mailto:leecountyarts@gmail.com) if you need a different version of The Lee County Arts Council logo.
- For alternate versions of the North Carolina Arts Council logo, click [HERE](#).



### **Credit Line**

Printed material and publicity regarding NCAC grants, funded activities, and/or partnerships must contain the following language **with** the appropriate logos (above):

*This project was supported by the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.*

Here is an example for including the logos & credit line on your materials:



*This project was supported by the North  
Carolina Arts Council, a division of the  
Department of Natural and Cultural  
Resources.*



## **Logo Usage**

- Always use the logos in their original proportions.
- The North Carolina Arts Council logo should precede The Lee County Arts Council logo in any design.
- Do not use earlier versions of the logos.
- Maintain a clear space around the logos around all sides.
- Minimum size is 0.5 inches.
- Do not stretch, rotate, or change the colors of the logo.
- Use only approved versions (color, black, and white).

## **Web and social media**

Please make sure that all digital instances of the logos link to the respective website:

- The North Carolina Arts Council logo links to <https://www.ncarts.org/>
- The Lee County Arts Council logo links to <https://www.leecountyartscouncil.org/>

Use the hashtag **#NCArts** and **#leecountyarts** across social media.

We invite you to follow us on social media:

Media	North Carolina Arts Council	The Lee County Arts Council
Facebook	<a href="#">@ncarts</a>	<a href="#">@leecountyarts</a>
Instagram	<a href="#">@ncartscouncil</a>	<a href="#">@leecountyarts</a>
Twitter	<a href="#">@ncartscouncil</a>	

## **Donor recognition**

If you list donor participation on printed materials or your website, you must include the The Lee County Arts Council and the North Carolina Arts Council in the appropriate category (e.g. sponsors, directors, benefactors, etc.)

## **Questions?**

Please contact The Lee County Arts Council with any logo usage questions or requests.

- Telephone: (919) 777-6081
- Email: [leecountyarts@gmail.com](mailto:leecountyarts@gmail.com)