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Expanded Access to Arts and Culture (EAAC)
Grant Program - Cycle Three
Application Review and Scoring Handbook

May 2026 Draft

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I. Purpose

Thank you for your commitment to assisting with the Expanded Access to Arts and Culture (EAAC) Grant Application review process! This handbook includes the steps that will be followed to facilitate a transparent and competitive review and scoring process and is an attachment to the grant guidelines.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

There are multiple parties involved in facilitating the grant application review process. General roles and responsibilities are identified below.

Parks, Recreation and Arts Commission (Commission)

1. Oversee implementation of the scoring process to ensure that grant applications are reviewed in a transparent and competitive process.
2. **Hear and consider appeals.**

Commented [SM1]: Need legal clarification; can appeals be heard by a subcommittee of PRAC members?

Application Review Committee (ARC) Members

1. Apply to be on the ARC.
2. Complete required training and conflict of interest reporting.
3. Review this handbook, grant guidelines and scoring rubrics.
4. Review and score applications using scoring rubrics.
5. Participate in discussion and submit final scores.

Parks, After School, Recreation and Community Services (PARCS) Department

1. Share the ARC application widely to ensure the ARC composition is diverse and representative.
2. Ensure ARC members meet the requirements that are outlined in the grant guidelines.
3. Schedule training for ARC members and track training completion.
4. Schedule and facilitate ARC review meetings as part of a public process.
5. Assign ARC groups and applications for review using a randomized process.
6. Facilitate a structured, transparent and competitive scoring process following the ARC handbook and the grant guidelines.



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7. Collect and monitor conflict of interest disclosures and assign alternate scoring members as necessary, consulting with the City Attorney’s Office as applicable.
8. Collect and anonymize scoring sheets.
9. Distribute scoring sheets to applicants upon completion of Cycle Three.
10. Track attendance and process stipends for ARC members who complete all requirements of service.
11. Respond to questions or issues not contemplated in this handbook using sound professional judgement. Any such actions shall be documented to ensure transparency.

III. ARC Member Application and Selection

1. Interested applicants shall complete an application, and shall:
 - a. Be available to attend all required trainings and meetings. PARCS will provide a preliminary schedule during the application process.
 - b. Meet the criteria for reviewers outlined in the grant guidelines.
 - c. Submit the ARC application on time.
 - d. Disclose potential conflicts of interest at the time of application, and throughout the review and scoring process.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to a transparent and competitive process.
3. Not be a board member, officer, Executive Director and/or staff of applicant organizations or fiscally sponsored organizations that are applying for funding.
4. PARCS will review the applications and make selections based on the information provided by applicants. Interviews may be required.
5. Applicants or fiscal sponsors that submit a grant application will not be permitted to participate on the ARC.
6. Any interested party not selected to participate in the ARC may appeal to PRAC.

IV. Conflict of Interest

For the purposes of this process, a potential conflict of interest may be economic, personal, professional, relational or otherwise. The conflict or perceived conflict may include sources of income, personal finances, real property, investments, employment, related businesses, loans, gifts, charitable fundraising/donations, amorous relationships, familial relationships, personal relationships or any other



interest not listed that may lead to the perception of bias or predetermination in application review. An undisclosed conflict may compromise the integrity of the process - when in doubt, ARC members should choose to recuse.

V. Required Training

Prior to initiating scoring, all ARC members and PARCS staff involved in facilitating the process will be required to complete the following training:

1. Implicit bias and ethics in public service
2. An orientation on fair and impartial grant application review
3. The ARC Handbook
4. Conflict of Interest disclosures

VI. ARC Member Commitment

It is estimated that participation in the ARC will require a time commitment of **approximately 38 hours or more** over a several-week period. ARC members will receive a stipend for their completion of training, reviewing, and scoring grant applications. ARC members who do not complete the entire service will not receive a stipend.

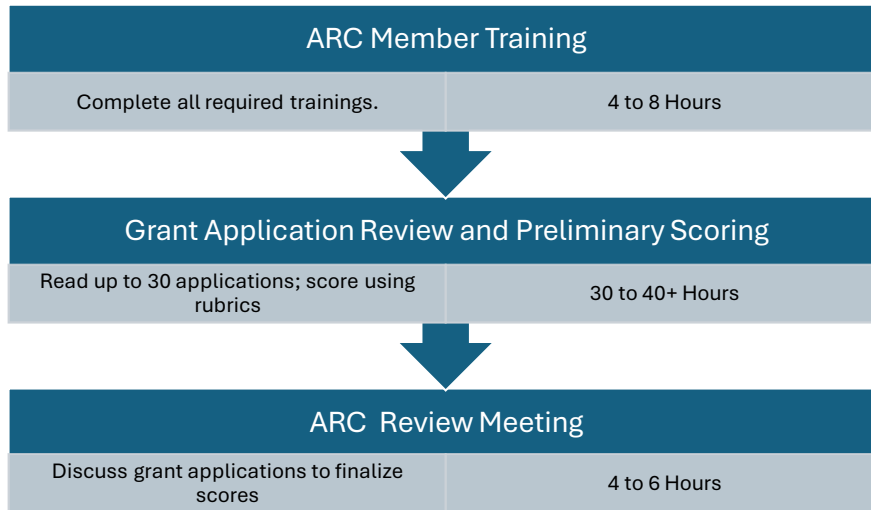




Figure 1 - ARC time commitment throughout the review process

VII. ARC Group Formation (PARCS)

1. There will be a total of thirty (30) ARC members.
2. Using a randomization, twenty-five (25) members will be split evenly between five groups to form Groups A – E.
3. There will be five (5) trained “alternates” available in the event of resignation, illness, recusal or absence.
4. Each grant application will be reviewed by a panel of five (5) members.
5. PARCS may increase the total number of members (above 30) and/or reduce the minimum number of reviewers per group/proposal from five (5) to a minimum of three (3) if it is deemed necessary. This option may be exercised if the number of grant applications received exceeds 150, if several reviewers are unable to fulfill their commitment, or if doing so is determined to be in the public interest to avoid excessive delays due to other unanticipated circumstances. Exercising this option would form up to five additional review groups.

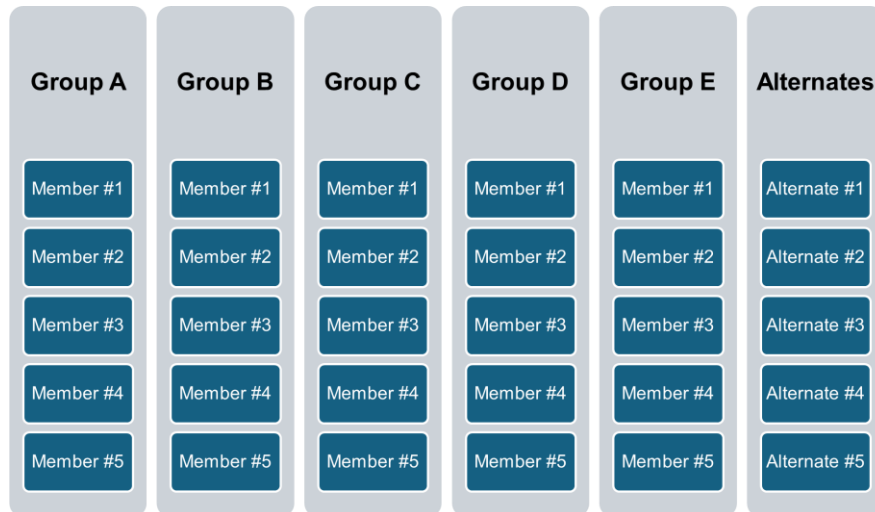


Figure 2 - ARC Grouping



VIII. The Grant Application Review and Scoring Process

Step One: Eligibility Review and Redaction

1. After the application deadline closes, an eligibility review will be completed by PARCS staff to ensure all applications submitted meet the criteria outlined in the guidelines.
2. Applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements will not be scored. PARCS will notify the applicant(s) if they are determined to be ineligible.
3. The results of the review will be documented in writing and may be appealed by the applicant to PRAC.
4. Grant applications will be downloaded and assigned an application number for tracking purposes.
5. Applicant contact information will be redacted. Name of applicant organization and/or fiscal sponsor will not be redacted to allow for conflict recusal. Names of the organization or any individuals that are mentioned within the narrative, budget or other sections of the application will not be redacted.

Step Two: Grant Application Assignment and Initial Review Period

1. Using randomization, up to thirty (30) applications will be assigned to each ARC Group (Groups A-E).
2. After random assignment of grant applications to each group is completed, conflict of interest statements will be reviewed by PARCS staff.
3. A conflict of interest screening list will be provided to each group. The list will include all applicant organizations and names associated with that organization. ARC members will be responsible for reviewing that list and indicating any potential conflicts.
4. If a conflict of interest is identified, the grant application(s) will be reassigned by PARCS to an Alternate.
5. The number of applications each group reviews will vary based on how many applications are submitted. For example: If there are 150 applications submitted, each group will be assigned up to 30 applications to review ($150/5=30$). Applications will be split evenly amongst groups.
6. Copies of redacted applications and review sheets will be provided to reviewers to read and score independently.
7. A minimum of 20 days will be allowed to read and score grant applications.



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8. ARC members shall limit their review to the application materials provided, and shall not independently research, contact applicants, or attempt to guess missing or unclear information using other sources.
9. ARC members shall individually read, evaluate, write comments, and log a preliminary score for each application. In preparation for the discussion meeting, ARC members shall submit the preliminary review sheets by the deadline provided by PARCS.
10. PARCS staff will review the preliminary scores to ensure the review was fully completed. Any scores with an extreme point spread (i.e. one reviewer scored all 1's and one reviewer scored all 5's) will be noted for discussion. Scores between reviewers need not match, but extreme variance in range is a sign that discussion is needed.
11. ARC members shall keep applications and initial scoring confidential during the initial review process.
12. ARC members must complete all reviews to participate in the discussion meeting. Incomplete scoring may be completed by an alternate or excluded from consideration.

Clarifying Questions During the Initial Review Period

1. While reading each proposal, ARC members may submit any clarifying questions they have for the grant applicant by a deadline to be identified using a link provided by PARCS.
2. To ensure a competitive process, questions shall be limited to clarifying in nature and shall not provide an opportunity substantively change a response. Word counts shall be limited to ensure clarifying questions and answers are focused. Examples will be provided as part of training.
3. Questions will be provided to the grant applicant by PARCS, with a minimum of five (5) business days to reply.
4. A copy of all responses received by the deadline will be provided to all ARC members during the ARC review meeting.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Recusal Process

1. If at any point during the initial review process a conflict of interest or the potential perception of a conflict arises, ARC members shall notify PARCS staff immediately of their need for recusal.
2. PARCS staff shall record the recusal and reassign the review to an alternate ARC member.



Step Three: ARC Application Discussion Meeting

1. Each review group will be scheduled for an ARC Application Discussion meeting.
2. The meeting is estimated to last between four (4) to six (6) hours depending on the number of applications under review.
3. The meeting shall be held in a publicly accessible location (City Hall, Community Center, etc.)
4. The meeting facilitator will guide the group through the agenda, allotting equal time for all applications to be discussed one-by-one.
5. An ARC member may verbally comment on all proposals but is not required to do so.

ARC Application Discussion Meeting Agenda

The agenda for each **ARC Discussion Meeting** shall include the following general format:

1. Welcome and Introductions (~15 mins)
2. Overview of the agenda and process (~15 mins)
3. Grant Application Review & Discussion (~90 minutes)
 - Discussion shall be timed to a maximum of 10 minutes per application.
 - Facilitator shall post anonymized preliminary scores for discussion along with any clarifying information received as a result of ARC questions.
 - Following completion of each applications discussion, members shall submit their final scoring sheets.
4. Break #1 (15 Minutes)
5. Grant Application Review & Discussion continued (~ 120 minutes)
6. Break #2 (60 minutes) meal provided
7. Proposal Review & Discussion continued (~ 90 minutes)
8. Closing remarks (15 minutes)



Observation by the Public

1. Members of the public may attend the review meeting(s) online as an observer via zoom.
2. Public comment will not be taken and observer discussion will not be permitted.
3. No actions shall be taken by any party to influence or interfere with the meeting or scoring. If an individual or group willfully interrupts the meeting and order cannot be restored, scoring may be paused and the room may be cleared.
4. PARCS shall make available a viewing location such as a community center for those with limited access to zoom. All efforts will be made to host viewing areas at a separate location from scoring meetings. In all cases, observers shall at all times be mindful of any physical or auditory gestures which may inadvertently influence the process. For example, clapping, snapping, sighing or cheering/booing in response to comments, etc.

Step Four: Score Tabulation and Ranking

1. After all discussion meetings are completed, final scores will be entered into a spreadsheet for each application. This will produce a total score for each application.
2. Total scores will be divided by the number of reviewers to generate an average score for each application. Average scores will be logged to the second decimal (00.00).
3. Grant applications will then be ranked in numerical score order, with the highest scoring grant applications being recommended for funding.
4. The total amount awarded to each grantee will be determined in accordance with the grant guidelines and brought before the Commission via hearing to make recommendations to Council.
5. Tiebreaking: If two or more applications have a tied score, and there is not enough funding for all tied proposals, the proposals selected for funding will be selected using a lottery.

IX. Commitment to a Competitive and Transparent Process

The grant application review and scoring process shall be conducted in a competitive and transparent manner without interference of any kind.

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No form of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or retaliation will be tolerated at any point in the process. Engaging in any of these behaviors may result in dismissal and/or disqualification.