



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
**DEPARTMENT OF
ARTS & CULTURE**

SANANTONIO.GOV/ARTS

Texas Commission on the Arts' (TCA) Cultural Districts and Project Grants

Cultural Districts Overview

Cultural districts are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. Unique to the character, community and resources available locally, cultural districts can become focal points for generating businesses, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development and fostering civic pride. Not only do cultural districts create an avenue for supporting and marketing local cultural nonprofits and businesses, but they also help revitalize neighborhoods to increase the quality of life for residents.



TCA Cultural Districts Designation Program

[TCA](#), as authorized by House Bill 2208 of the 79th Texas Legislature, facilitates and manages a [Cultural Districts Program](#) to designate districts in cities across Texas.

Goals of the Program:

1. Recognize thriving creative hubs that attract artists and cultural enterprises to the community
2. Encourage business and job development
3. Address specific needs of a community
4. Establish tourism destinations
5. Preserve and reuse historic buildings
6. Enhance property values in a responsible way
7. Foster local cultural development

There are currently [40 TCA-designated cultural districts](#) in Texas, including three in San Antonio: [King William](#), [Old Spanish Trail](#) and [Zona Cultural](#).

TCA Cultural District Designation Process

Established nonprofit arts organizations within a culturally rich area can submit for an application for a geographic area to be designated by TCA as a Cultural District. This annual

application process starts on January 31, with a Letter of Intent to apply submitted by the applicant agency, with a deadline for the [Cultural Districts Application](#) of June 15.

In order for a Cultural District to be deemed successful in pursuit of a TCA-designation, the district must showcase proficiencies including:

1. A unique and authentic identity **that highlights what is special about the district and the community is in place.**
2. Community support **of the district is in place to ensure continued success.**
3. Strategic partnerships **have been brokered that result in a variety of resources.**
4. **Inclusive** cultural and strategic planning **has been completed that articulates a vision for the cultural district and the broader community.**
5. **A district has sustainable** artist live/work spaces **that provide artists with a productive environment.**
6. A local developer has committed to the cultural district **and understands the power of arts and culture in community and economic development.**
7. Anchor institutions and special events **are in place and they are the cornerstones of the community and the district.**
8. Artists are partners, **not products, and are valued as members of the community.**
9. Artist recruitment is an organized effort **that shows how a community is willing to welcome new artists and facilitate their establishment.**
10. Events and venues are accessible **to ensure that participation available to all of the community and visitors.**
11. Clear signage **is in place so visitors and the community can recognize the boundaries. The signage can be enhanced with distinctive logos, maps and other visual materials.**
12. A user-friendly website **with comprehensive information about the district is available for the community and for visitors.**
13. Marketing and promotion **efforts are in place to attract visitors, potential residents and new businesses.**
14. Strong amenities **such as restaurants, lodging and recreation bolster the efforts of the cultural district.**

TCA Cultural District Project Grants

Anchor arts organizations and agencies located in a TCA-designated Cultural District are eligible to apply for Cultural District Project Grants of up to 50% of a project's budget, with the grant amounts starting at \$3,000 and not exceeding \$250,000. These project assistance grants are provided on a short-term basis and may include administrative costs directly related to the

project. This program is designed for projects within a district that focus on significant cultural tourism impact*. These projects should serve at least one of the following:

1. High-quality arts programming that will attract a significant number of visitors from 50 miles or more outside the community (i.e., blockbuster art exhibitions, national or regional premieres, major festivals)
2. Enhancements to the cultural district to make it more accessible, attractive, cohesive-looking, and safe for visitors
3. Improved signage and wayfinding for the district
4. Promotion of the district; this may include the district's website, branding, and marketing
5. Organizational support for the management and operations of the district (TCA Cultural District only)

Only one application may be submitted each June 15 deadline for projects beginning September 1 of the same year and ending August 31 of the next year.

**These grants may include capital improvements.*



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City of San Antonio Cultural Districts Grants

OVERVIEW

The Department of Arts & Culture’s Cultural Districts Grants provide \$2,500 matching grants to nonprofit arts agencies toward the development of applications for TCA’s two Cultural District programs: (1) the TCA Cultural District Designation and (2) the TCA Project Grant. Along with the \$2,500, successful applicants also receive an official City endorsement of their TCA application and marketing support for their district or project.

The Cultural District Grant continues the Department’s commitment to support, promote and grow the city’s cultural fabric and identity with the vision of San Antonio internationally celebrated as a confluence of living arts and authentic cultures.

Below are the general policies and eligibility requirements which at a minimum all applicants must meet to be eligible for funding:

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Be an established nonprofit arts organization in a proposed or established Cultural District.
2. Be an arts and cultural organization whose mission and actual operations (as articulated within its mission statement) is the creation, education, preservation, presentation of arts or cultural programming.
3. Be a San Antonio based IRS recognized 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit in “good status” as a nonprofit corporation and up to date with IRS 990 filings.
4. Be in good standing concerning all contract agreements with the City of San Antonio.
5. Be incorporated in Texas.
6. Have an active Board of Directors that meets regularly.
7. Have eligibility status established with the Department of Arts & Culture upon submission of Intent to Apply, prior to submission of application.
8. Have fulfilled all its outstanding contractual obligations to the State of Texas

9. Comply with regulations pertaining to federal grant recipients including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988.
10. *If applying for Cultural District Project Grant from the TCA, arts organization MUST be part of the TCA designated Cultural District where the grant will be used.

GENERAL POLICIES

The following policies apply to the Department of Arts & Culture's Cultural District Grant:

1. **Funding Cycle** – All applications will be administered for a funding cycle that begins with the opening of the City's Intent to Apply in October and is completed by July of the following year with submission of an awardee's application to TCA.
2. **Funding Process Suspension/Cancellation** – The City reserves the right to suspend, defer or cancel all or part of the funding process at any time.
3. **Funds Availability** – All initial or continuation of awards are contingent on availability of City funds and appropriation by City Council.
4. **San Antonio Arts Commission (SAAC)** – Members of the SAAC can apply and/or be part of a collaborative application for funding from DA&C, but must recuse him/herself from any votes, and cannot discuss their application with any other SAAC member (including ad-hoc members of committees) during the application and review process. Any violation of this activity may disqualify the application.
5. **Compliance** – All awarded organizations must comply with the program's funding requirements and contract obligations.
6. **Online Intent to Apply and Application** – All applicants will be required to register and create an account in the City's data system of choice and to submit an Intent to Apply and application through this system.

ASSURANCES

All applicants for funding programs must execute an Assurances Form certifying that s(he) is authorized to submit a Proposal and that, at the time of application, the applicant assures that:

1. The activities and services for which financial assistance is sought will be administered by the applicant organization.
2. As a party to any resultant contract, the applicant understands and agrees to comply with the Non-Discrimination Policy of the City of San Antonio contained in Chapter 2, Article X of the City Code and further, shall not discriminate based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, age or

disability, unless exempted by state or federal law, or as otherwise established in such contract.

3. It will not identify the City as a funding provider for any events and activities for which City has not authorized funding. Only events and activities identified in the contract shall be authorized for funding by the City.
4. It will maintain auditable financial records reflecting Generally Accepted Accounting Principles related to its overall activities, submit itemized reports or expenditures as required by established City procedures, and submit timely reports reflecting the progress made in achieving its approved goals and objectives.
5. As a party to any resultant contract Applicant understands and agrees to comply with the City of San Antonio policy to provide a work environment to all employees and applicants free of **employment discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment**. In addition, any behavior, regardless of intent or severity, that could be deemed inappropriate workplace behavior, but may not legally constitute **employment discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment**, is prohibited. **Harassment and sexual harassment** are forms of discrimination that violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (as amended), the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), and related State of Texas statutes. Retaliation against employees for opposing alleged **employment discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment** or for filing a charge, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) investigation, proceeding, or hearing is prohibited. Applicant shall comply with this policy in all interactions with Applicant's employees, subcontractors, artists, and volunteers, if any, while Applicant is under Contract.

RESTRICTIONS

Department of Arts & Culture funding cannot be used to support:

1. Government institutions and departments including operating expenses for government operated facilities including, but not limited to, salary support and facility costs
2. Capital improvements and Purchase of real property
3. Benefits or fundraising events and costs of social functions, parties, receptions, fundraisers, or galas
4. Cash prizes
5. Programs that are essentially recreational, rehabilitative, or therapeutic
6. Political purposes for or against a political candidate, ballot measure or bill
7. Adversarial proceedings against the City of San Antonio
8. Projects, productions, workshops and/or programs that include obscene material as defined in Section 43.21, Penal Code of Texas
9. Deficit or debt reduction efforts

10. Religious institutions and/or programs to support a religion
11. Operating expenses for home offices
12. Cultural Districts located outside the City of San Antonio

GRANT AWARDS

The Department of Arts & Culture awards grants to arts organizations that:

1. Successfully meet the department's Cultural District Grant requirements
2. Submit a Letter of Intent and application to TCA for Cultural District designation and/or TCA Cultural District Project Grant

Such approved uses of Department of Arts & Culture Cultural District funding include:

1. Marketing activities including, but not limited to, marketing plan development, graphic design, website development and management, promotional material, videography and photography, and printing costs
2. Subcontractor and facilitator fees and travel expenses including lodging and per diem
3. Research fees and associated costs, including but not limited to, development of an inventory of all cultural assets in the area
4. Expenses related to community engagement

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Before an applicant applies for a Cultural District Grant, an Intent to Apply must be submitted to the Department of Arts & Culture via sanantonio.gosmart.org.

Intent to Apply Requirements:

1. Applicant organization's name
2. Applicant's mission statement
3. List of Applicant's board members and schedule of board meetings
4. IRS Determination letter proving 501c3 status
5. Cultural District's name and boundaries
6. Brief explanation/history of the area proposed for Cultural District or area established as Cultural District

Once the Intent to Apply has been received and reviewed by the Department of Arts & Culture, the applicant may submit an application that includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

1. **Outline Timeline and Budget of TCA process:** Provide a detailed timeline of what the organization and/or Cultural District will follow in order to plan and prepare for their TCA application. In addition, provide a budget of any expenses related to the Cultural District designation pursuit or the Cultural District Project, including a highlight of what the Department of Arts & Culture Cultural Districts Grant will be applied to.
2. **Justification of Cultural District Grant Request:** Describe why the arts organization and/or Cultural District should receive the Department of Arts & Culture's Cultural District Grant.
3. **Proof of coordination with other Arts Agencies:** Applicant is required to get letters of support for the cultural district from all City-Funded Arts agencies located within the district. List can be found on Department of Arts & Culture website or may be requested by emailing arts@sanantonio.gov.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

After the Intent to Apply and the application for the Cultural District Grant is received by the Department of Arts & Culture, all applications will be reviewed by an independent panel of at least three persons which may include San Antonio Arts Commission and Committee members, City staff and industry experts. Applications will be reviewed and scored based on criteria including, but not limited to:

1. Did the applicant meet all application criteria, including securing letters of support from all nonprofit arts organizations in the District?
2. Does the applicant clearly detail the history and importance of the proposed or existing Cultural District?
3. Does the applicant's planned use of the Department of Arts & Culture Grant demonstrate an appropriate use of funds from a business and fiscal perspective?
4. Is the applicant's timeline for developing a TCA application for a Designation or Project Grant achievable?

MARKETING & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Recipients of the Department of Arts & Culture's Cultural District Grant must:

1. Include Department of Arts & Culture logo on Cultural District/Project websites and marketing materials
2. Add arts organization and Cultural District events on SanAntonio.gov/Arts events calendar

3. Mention Department of Arts & Culture in any news releases or media interviews regarding the Cultural District/Project
4. Tag Department of Arts & Culture on Cultural District/Project social media posts
5. Add Department of Arts & Culture on Cultural District/Project and applicant media lists
6. **Community Meetings** – Invite Department of Arts & Culture to any community meetings regarding Cultural District/Project via arts@sanantonio.gov. Provide Department with a copy of the presentation made at community meeting, advertising and description of advertising activity for the meeting as well as sign-in sheets from the meeting
7. Send Department of Arts & Culture final TCA application, including any attachments or audiovisual components, and proof of receipt by TCA via arts@sanantonio.gov by July 10th
8. Provide Department of Arts & Culture a report and corresponding receipts of how matching funds and City of San Antonio Cultural District Grant were used in the development of TCA’s application via arts@sanantonio.gov
9. Provide Department of Arts & Culture the final version of the TCA-required [annual report](#) via arts@sanantonio.gov

CULTURAL DISTRICT TIMELINE

The following timeline outlines processes for the Department of Arts & Culture and TCA.

Department of Arts & Culture’s Cultural District Grant	
Activity	Date
Intent to Apply on sanantonio.gosmart.org opens	Oct. 1
San Antonio Cultural District Grant Workshop	Oct. 15
Deadline for Intent to Apply on sanantonio.gosmart.org	Oct. 21
Applicant receives notice of eligibility from Department of Arts & Culture / San Antonio Cultural District Grant Application opens	Nov. 20
Deadline for San Antonio Cultural District Grant Application	Dec. 20
Evaluation panel reviews applications	January
San Antonio Arts Commission Arts Funding Committee votes on panel recommendations	Feb. 6
If approved, Arts Funding Committee recommendation presented to San Antonio Arts Commission	Feb. 11
If approved, Department’s matching grant awarded as well as Letter of Endorsement and marketing activities.	Feb. 11 – June 15
TCA Cultural District Designation	
Activity	Date
Letter of Intent submitted to culturaldistricts@arts.texas.gov	Jan. 31
Development of TCA application . TCA and Department of Arts & Culture	Jan. 31 –

staff will accept draft applications for review and comment up to two weeks before the deadline. To submit draft to TCA, send an e-mail to draft@arts.texas.gov and request a draft review. Include your organization name and the name of the proposal you want reviewed. Commission staff are also available to consult with applicants by telephone at 512/463-5535 or 800/252-9415 (message line), or in person by appointment at 920 Colorado, 5th floor, Austin, Texas. The staff's role is to assist the applicant in making the best presentation for funding. Staff will not write the application or determine funding request.	June 15
Submit Application to culturaldistricts@arts.texas.gov and culturaldistricts@sanantonio.gov	June 15
Applicant informed of TCA decision	Fall
If approved, Cultural District receives TCA designation and Department of Arts & Culture promotes through marketing and media relations strategies	Fall
TCA Cultural District Project Grant	
Activity	Date
Eligible arts organizations notified of Call for Grant Applications through TCA portal	Spring
Development of TCA application	Spring – June 15
Submit application in TCA portal and to culturaldistricts@sanantonio.gov	June 15
Applicant informed of TCA decision	Fall
If approved, Cultural District receives TCA designation and Department of Arts & Culture promotes through marketing and media relations strategies	Fall
City and TCA Designation	
Activity	Date
Submit Annual Report to culturaldistricts@sanantonio.gov and culturaldistricts@arts.texas.gov	Every June following Designation