

# GRANT WORKSHOP



## HOW TO APPLY FOR FY26 CULTURAL TOURISM FUNDING

# ORANGE COUNTY OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS

## CULTURAL TOURISM FUNDING FOR 2025–2026

### **Supported by Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Revenues\***

- Office/Council created in Aug 2001, led by **Vicki Landon**, Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs & Advisory Council, with **Meghan Dawson**, Administrative Office Coordinator
- Fiduciary & Grant Management: United Arts of Central Florida, **Trudy Wild**.

### **MISSION**

**“To elevate Central Florida’s arts & culture to that befitting a world-class community.”**

### **INTENDED OUTCOMES**

- **Enhance the Orlando area’s arts and cultural identity**
  - **Present quality arts and cultural experiences**
  - **Promote tourism**

# HISTORY OF CULTURAL TOURISM FUNDING

TOTAL FUNDING 2003-2025: **\$56,218,364**    TOTAL FUNDING 2025: **\$4,614,619**

**40** grantees:

- **13** small awards - **\$510,266**
- **6** medium awards- **\$505,920**
- **21** large awards - **\$3,598,433**

Total number of orgs who applied: **42**

Total project budgets of accepted: **\$40,219,3235**

## **FY2025 Grantee Event durations**

- **7** \_ 1-day to 2-week events
- **2** \_ 6-week to 2-month events
- **13** \_ 4- to 8-month events
- **18** \_ 12 months full season/year-long events

**22%** of all funded events ranged from 1 day to 2 months long

**78%** of all funded events were 4-12 months long

# WHAT'S NEW IN FY26/ REMINDERS & CHANGES

**NOTE: Panelists require complete applications and timely financial reporting in order to assess applications. Failure to provide all requirements by the application deadline will result in the applicant's ineligibility for that funding cycle.**

**NEW!** The request amount is limited to 35% (Small), 30% (Medium), and 25% (Large) **of the average operating revenue (cash) from the previous 3 years' IRS Form 990.**

- Use the form "Calculate Maximum Request Amount" to determine the maximum request amount and financial statement requirements for your request

**NEW! Increased funding caps for each request level:**

- Large Request: \$190,000 (Previously \$175,000)
- Medium Request: \$100,000 (Previously \$90,000)
- Small Request: \$55,000 (Previously \$50,000)

**NEW!** – There is now a section in the online application to enter Board of Director Information. We are moving away from requiring organizations to update their Central Florida Foundation Profile. All of the required materials for the FY26 Cultural Tourism Funding application will be uploaded or included within the online application.

# WHAT'S NEW IN FY26/ REMINDERS & CHANGES | 2

- **NEW** – Maximum request amount will be generated from 3-year operating revenue averages from IRS form 990. There is a new form to collect this information.
- **NEW** – Max levels for small, medium, and large orgs have increased to \$55K, \$100K, and \$190K.
- **NEW** – At least Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet statements are now a required part of the application process.
- **NEW** – Organizations that receive this award MUST post their events online on ArtsinOrlando.com with the OCACA Category Tag. Failure to post can delay funding.
- **Reminder – Score threshold\***: The scoring threshold remains at the original minimums for funding eligibility.
  - Score requirements are: 70 for small requests, 75 for medium, 80 for large
- **Reminder – A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is required for each applicant.**

# WHAT'S NEW IN FY26/ REMINDERS & CHANGES | 3

## TRANSLATION OPTIONS

- **Application**

- Using the Google Translate integration on the application portal will translate questions to Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Portuguese, and more.
- Simply click on the select language icon and select your preferred language.

- **Resources**

- Workshop materials and additional support can be found on the United Arts website, [UnitedArtsCFL.org](http://UnitedArtsCFL.org)
- When viewing resources on a browser, locate the ReachDeck icon or browser settings. Once there, select the translate button.

## REQUEST LEVELS

- The maximum request amount will be generated from 3-year operating revenue averages. These Requests are limited to 35% (Small), 30% (Medium), and 25% (Large).
- Total funding pool: **\$5,500,000**
- Amount in each funding pool TBA; Totals are based on a percentage of total requests in each.

# DATES TO REMEMBER

- **Application open:** Thursday, May 30, 2025
- **Application deadline:** Tuesday, July 15, 2025, 11:59 pm
- **Last date to submit for staff review:**
  - Full Narrative June 23, 2025
  - Partial Narrative, forms, or financials: July 7, 2025
  - (Note: UA Staff will **not** be in the office June 30 to July 4 with only limited access to the system, except for technical issues.)
- **Deadline for Staff questions:** Friday, July 11, 2025 @ 3 pm
- Public **Review Panel Meeting:** Sept 18, 2025, 8:30a-1:30p
- **Advisory Council Meeting:** September 23, 2025, 8:30-10a
- **Board of County Commissioners' Approval and notification of award:** October 28, 2025
- **Funding period:** November 1, 2025, to April 15, 2027
- **Program Dates:** January 1 to December 31, 2026
- **Final Report:** April 15, 2027, or 45 days after the applicant's selected project period ends

**7/15/25**

Application deadline

**9/23/2025**

Advisory Council Review  
Panel

**10/28/2025**

Approval and  
notification of Award

**1/1/2026 –  
12/31/2026**

All events must occur in  
this time period.



# ELIGIBILITY

## WHO CAN APPLY?

Arts and cultural organizations must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Cultural nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation registered and in good standing with the State of Florida and the IRS, OR, an American Alliance of Museums (AAM)-accredited museum that meets all other requirements the same as a 501(c)(3); AND are current/in compliance with any open Orange County grants.
- An organization must be a 501c3 for at least three years at the time of application date to apply for Cultural Tourism
- Successfully delivered an event or series of events in Orange County within the last five years, drawing significant tourist interest and enhancing the region's cultural appeal.
- The arts and culture event for which you are applying will take place in ORANGE COUNTY and will be accessible and promoted to the public.
  - The project occurs within the Project Period of Nov. 1, 2025, to Feb 28, 2027, with actual event(s) that occurs between January 1 to December 31, 2026.
  - The arts and culture activities proposed are NOT a supplementary event at a non-arts conference, professional meeting, reunion, or other similar gathering.



# ELIGIBILITY | 2

## WHO CAN APPLY? CONT..

- Show community support through donations, specifically for this project, that match the requested amount at least dollar-for-dollar (1:1 Cash Match for Large Request; other in-kind portions for Medium and Small)
- Attend a Cultural Tourism Funding workshop. This is mandatory for first-time applicants and applicants that have not been awarded in the previous cycle.
- Have a checking account with a licensed financial institution.
- Currently prepare at least quarterly financial statements (Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Statement) that are reviewed and approved by the board (either signed statements or shown in board minutes to have been approved); and provide year-end financial statements **within nine (9) months of fiscal year-end** (whichever level of financial statements are required, based on the revenue average of the three most recently completed IRS Form 990s).
- File an annual IRS Form 990 (also acceptable: 990-EZ, 990-N with additional financial statements or documentation of annual revenue), **also subject to the requirement to be filed within nine (9) months of fiscal year-end, regardless of IRS-granted extension.**

# CRITERIA FOR FUNDING

## **UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES/EXPENDITURES**

### **ORANGE COUNTY FUNDING MAY NOT BE USED FOR:**

- General operating or administrative costs not specifically identified with the project
- Out-of-county staff travel
- Mortgage payments
- Past-due debts, contingencies, fines and penalties, interest
- Space rental, improvement or maintenance not specifically identified with the project
- Private entertainment, food and beverages, including alcohol
- Lobbying expenses or political activities
- Advertising which does not mention the specific project activities or omits required logos
- Activities that are restricted to an organization's membership or other private or exclusive participation
- Prizes or awards
- Contributions and donations
- Endowment contributions
- Any other expenses not specifically identified with the project

# CRITERIA FOR FUNDING | 2

## MATCH REQUIREMENTS

- Provide audit-ready documentation for every cash item listed as “confirmed,” such as:
  - Grant award letters: contributions, written or emailed pledges to support the project; sponsorship agreements; etc., which must contain:
  - Donor/Company name and contact information,
  - Amount of the contribution/award,
  - Date of pledge, check, award, appropriation,
  - Date by which the contribution, award or pledge will be paid and
  - Use or purpose for the funding — must be intended specifically for the project.
  - Must include any restrictions on the funding, such as third-party approval process, acknowledgement requirements, specific premiums of value such as tickets, advertising space, etc.
  - Identify all Matching Fund documentation clearly.
  - Orange County Funds may not be used to match OC funds (such as Venue Subsidy or Blockbuster).

## WHEN MUST MATCH FUNDS BE SUBMITTED?

Submit Form B: Matching Funds Summary and required documentation of confirmed match items by the application deadline. Only items supported by audit-ready backup documentation will be considered for the applicant’s Question 10: Matching Funds score.

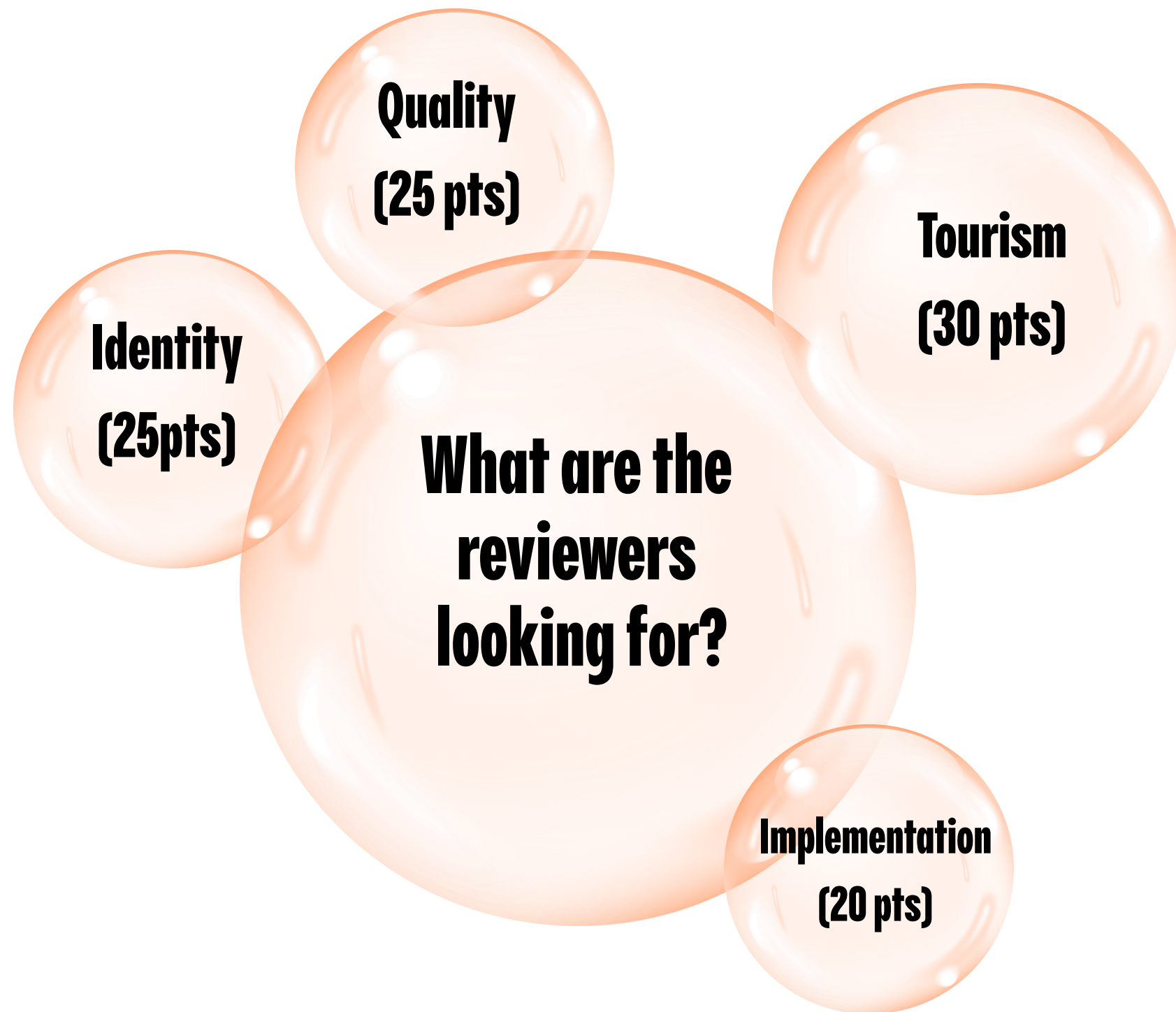
**NOTE: An application may be submitted without confirmed Matching Funds, or with less than their entire request amount, however, the match score is based on the amount of match confirmed, and the start date of the event. The more that is confirmed at the time of application, the higher the score. Be aware of how much match will be available for use for events that occur early in the year.**

If awarded a grant, at least half or 50% of the matching funds must be committed before the first disbursement can be made.

At the time of the second disbursement for the grant award, the grantee must have 100% of their award amount confirmed.

By the final payment, the entire matching funds must be paid to the grantee and fully documented as paid in full.

# EVALUATION BREAKDOWN



**Identity** (Q1&2): project (innovation and uniqueness) & response (international/national attention and peer group) Tourism **(25 pts)**

**Quality** (Q3&4): product (artistic excellence) & reputation (professional acclaim) **(25 pts)**

**Tourism** (Q5a&b, 6a&b): marketing and PR plan & projected in-person attendance **(30 pts)**

**Implementation** (Q7, 8a&b, Forms, Financial Statements): outreach & impact, operational & financial readiness, and match **(20 pts)**

# EVALUATION BREAKDOWN | 2

## EVALUATION MATRIX

[SEE GUIDELINES FOR THE FULL EVALUATION MATRIX](#)

Each narrative or forms section has a related section on the Evaluation Matrix

### Example: Q1 Innovation & Uniqueness / Identity: Project

The matrix will indicate how many points are awarded, with a score of 1-5 (5 as highest), and the multiplier (3 for this question).

The matrix lists examples of the content valuation to receive a score of 5, or less requirements for a score of 4, average for a 3, less than average for 2, and barely there would score a 1.

Innovation & Uniqueness		
IDENTITY: Project Q 1		
Score	Points possible	15 (multiplier = 3)
5	Excellent	Breaks new ground and/or is different from what has been done elsewhere or involves taking great risk artistically.
4	Above Average	Stands out creatively from the standard experiences of visitors and residents to similar events.
3	Average	Makes you stop, look and think. <u>Is</u> on the quality level of other similar experiences here or in the state.
2	Below Average	There are other similar experiences locally and this does not stand out.
1	Poor	There are more than enough similar experiences available locally and nationally that it is unlikely anyone would see this event unless they had a personal stake in it in some way.



# REVIEW, SCORING, AND DECISION PROCESS

## REVIEW PANEL:

Applicants are required to attend

**REMINDER!** During the Review Panel meeting, applicant intro/update and responses will be limited to one minute unless the panel requests further clarification

## SCORING & DECISIONS:

- Scores are compiled by calculating the average after the highest and lowest panelist scores are removed.
- The resulting ranking in each request level will be considered by the full Council for funding recommendations.
- **Full funding is considered from the top score down** (highest to lowest scores)
  - Even though an organization has an eligible score, this funding is competitive, and the lowest scores may not be funded
- The final decision is made by the Board of County Commissioners in October.

**REMINDER!** – Lobby Blackout from application due date through final BCC approval; **NO** lobbying of Review Panel, Council members, or BCC. You **MAY** invite them to public events, send e-news, press, etc., **but no private appeals or meetings.**

# TIPS FOR “A-STUDENT” GRANT WRITING

1. Write responses to the questions and reference the scoring Matrix.
2. Correct any typos and grammar; get fresh eyes. (Tip: answer questions outside of the grant portal first)
3. Don't overwhelm – limit use of acronyms, lengthy statistics, long blocks of type
4. DO use brief headers, break up paragraphs (bullets or dash)
5. In Q3 & 4 – Avoid generalized statements and unidentified quotes; if using a quote, identify the source & year of the quote, or add a descriptive reference. If it's too old don't use it.
6. Show what the project is & what you would do with the grant funding.
7. Review high-scoring grants; and prior year scores & comments (available on request
8. Be sure all related website and social media are current.
9. Allow enough time; plan ahead.
10. Ask for help!

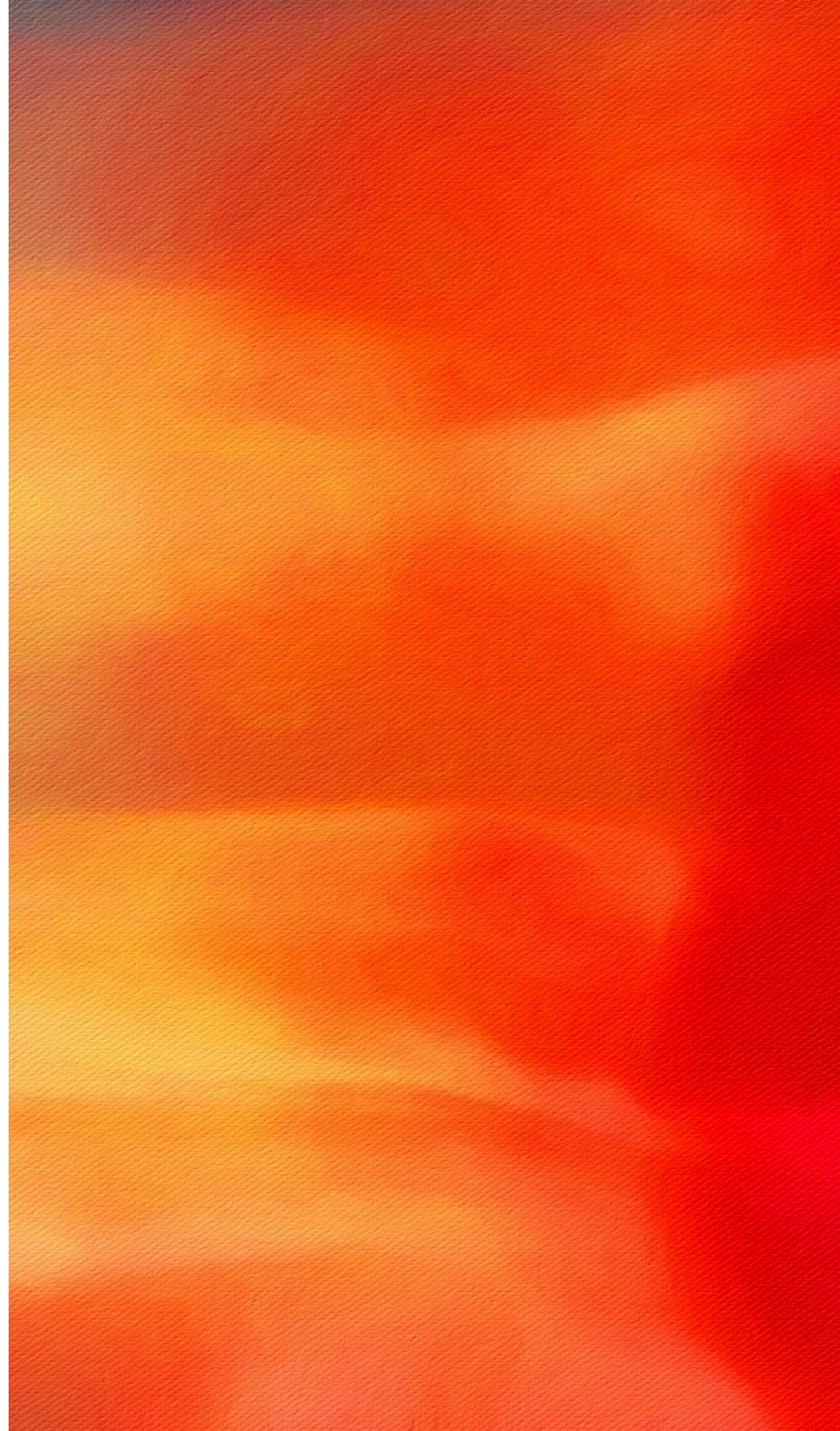


# GRANT ACCESS, FORMS, & TOOLS

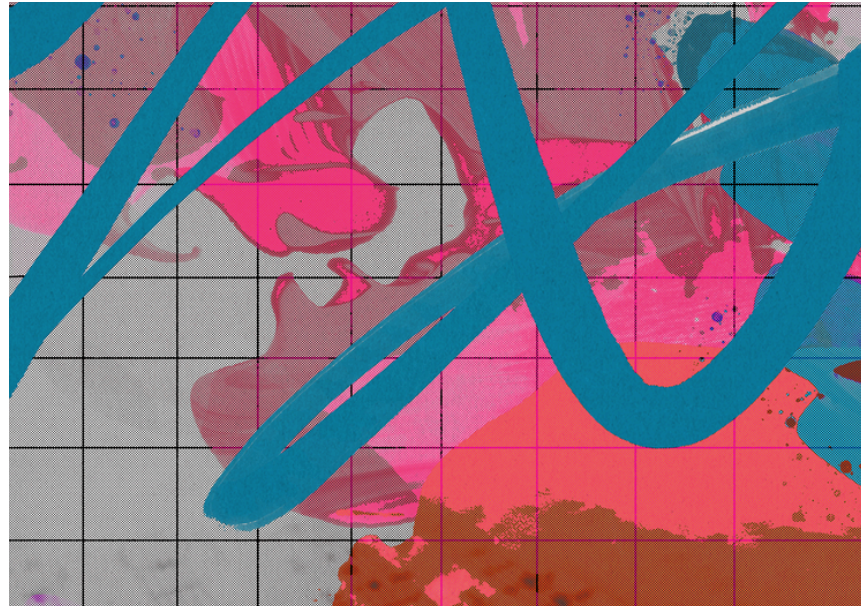
1. How to navigate the Grant Portal
2. Unique Entity ID
3. To start an account or a new grant application Log-on to Foundant  
<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=unitedarts>
4. How to copy a previous application
5. Calculate your economic impact – using the Americans for the Arts Calculator
6. For link to the United Arts website for Orange County Arts & Cultural Affairs grants page – Link: <https://unitedartsCFL.org/grants/> (orange boxes are OC grants)



**Q&A**







**THANK**



Information on Orange County Arts  
and Cultural Affairs

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Questions on Application, Grant Portal,  
and Review

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**YOU!**



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