

GRANT WORKSHOP



HOW TO APPLY FOR FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES FUNDING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2026 | 10 A.M. – 12 P.M



ORANGE COUNTY OFFICE OF ARTS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS

CULTURAL FACILITIES FUNDING

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** & **Beatriz Ramirez**

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 FACILITIES FUNDING

Total historical CF Funding: \$16,913,781

66 Projects awarded over 14 years

Grants from \$20,000 - \$2,000,000

Total FY25 CF Funding: \$5,461,181

6 Projects awarded

Grants from \$350,000- \$2,000,000

Pool for FY26 CF Funding: \$4,434,905

Types of projects:

1. Acquisition (building)
2. Equipping
3. Renovation
4. Construction

Minimum: \$15,000

Maximum: \$2,000,000

2026

CULTURAL FACILITIES

Requests Funded in 2025 – \$5,461,181

- Albin Polasek Museum & Sculpture Gardens – \$200,000/ Project \$300,000 (Equipping)
- Blue Bamboo Center for the Arts Inc – \$900,994 / Project \$1,576,922 (Renovation)
- Orlando Family Stage – \$350,000/ Project \$525,000 (Renovation)
- Orlando Museum of Art – \$970,000/ Project \$1,457,500 (Equipping)
- Orlando Philharmonic Plaza Foundation – \$1,040,187/ Project \$1,638,295 (Renovation)
- Orlando Science Center – \$2,000,000/ Project \$3,150,000 (Renovation)

DATES TO REMEMBER

- **Application Opens:** Monday, December 15, 2025
- **Required Virtual Workshop:** Tuesday, Jan 13, 2026, 10-12 p.m. on Zoom (RECORDED)
- **Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline:** Friday, February 13, 2026 @ 5:00 p.m. Submitted in the grant portal.
- **Application Deadline:** Sunday, March 1, 2026 @ 11:59 p.m.
- **Site Visits:** Late March 2026 @ 8:30 a.m. [DATE TBD] **Review panel will tour applicant facilities.**
- **Review Panel:** Late April 2026 [DATE TBD] @ 8:30 a.m. at LOCATION TBD.
- **Advisory Council Approval:** Wednesday, May 13, 2026 @ 8:30 a.m.
- **Board of County Commissioners Approval:** Tuesday, June 16, 2026 @ 9:00 a.m.
- **Award Letters & Contracts Issued:** June 2026
- **Encumbrance Period:** July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027
- **Project Period:** July 1, 2026 – March 31, 2028

3/1/26

Application deadline

April 2026

Advisory Council Review
Panel

June 2026

Approval and
notification of Award

**7/1/2026 –
3/31/2028**

All events must occur in
this time period.

WHAT'S NEW IN FY26/ REMINDERS & CHANGES

1. Request minimum has been lowered to \$15,000
2. Organizations requesting any amount over \$500,000 must provide an audit.
3. Updating/Creating a Central Florida Foundation profile is no longer a requirement.
4. Land Acquisition is no longer an eligible project for this fund.
5. LOI is now submitted through the grant portal & assigned after completing the eligibility quiz.

Changes from FY25

1. Request Cap is \$2,000,000
2. Matching Funds requirement has been reduced! The applicant must provide at least 50% of the request amount, or matching funds of \$0.50 to \$1 of amount requested. Matching funds must be 100% confirmed at the time of application.
3. Panel review will meet in person, but the application review and scoring will be online.
4. All financial statements must be complete and submitted with application to be eligible for this cycle's review.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION ELIGIBILITY*

One application per organization under a single application deadline, for the same organization, project, site or phase. A City government may make an application for more than one project as long as the projects are within separate and distinct departments and do not address the same facility, project, site or phase.

By the application deadline, applicant must either be:

- A municipality/city government located in Orange County

OR

- An organization that is:
 - Incorporated or authorized as a not-for-profit corporation, in good standing, pursuant to chapter 617, Florida statutes;

AND

 - Designated as a tax-exempt corporation as defined in Section 501(c)3 or (4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, and designated as being in compliance with s. 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, at the time of application

*Subject to additional organization, facility, and/or application requirements

FACILITY ELIGIBILITY*

The applicant's venue for the proposed project **must be located in Orange County**, and by the application deadline, must be **one of the following**:

- An auditorium that is owned and operated by a government entity
- An auditorium that is owned by a government entity that is leased to a not-for-profit organization for operation as an auditorium open to the public
- An auditorium that is owned by a not-for-profit organization situation on publicly owned property with a ground lease that meets the requirements for the "Checklist for Ground Lease"
- An auditorium that is leased from a government entity that in turn has an eligible lease on the building from a private owner
- A museum that is owned and operated by a government entity
- A museum that is owned by a government entity that is leased to a not-for-profit organization for operation as a museum open to the public
- A museum that is owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization and open to the public
- Acquisition must be for auditorium or museum that meets at least one of the above ownership or lease eligibility for a respective auditorium or museum

*Subject to additional organization, facility, and/or application requirements

ADMINISTRATIVE & LEGAL ELIGIBILITY*

Applicant **MUST**:

1. Have ownership or undisturbed use of land and building, or proposal to purchase
2. Retain ownership of all improvements made under the grant (exception: land or building owned by Orange County and leased to an eligible applicant)
3. Have satisfied the administrative requirements of any previous grants received through the Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council
4. Have a maintenance reserve in their budget and refrain from applying for on-going maintenance of current equipment
5. Show community support in donations specifically for this project that matches the request at least \$0.50 for each \$1.00 requested. 100% confirmed cash/pledges by application due date.
6. Have attended a Cultural Facilities Funding workshop for the current funding cycle
7. Provide at least one year of arts or cultural programming in Orange County attracting tourists
8. Complete online application, forms, and provide requested materials, as outlined in these guidelines

***Letter of Intent (LOI) for pre-screening of applicants and/or project eligibility**, by Orange County legal department and/or staff, as needed. Submitted by February 13, 2026. Submit LOI via the grant portal (with project summary, amount requested and project total, project (if awarded), lease/ownership documentation, feasibility and strategic plan (as required), and financial statements).

*Subject to additional organization, facility, and/or application requirements

2026 CULTURAL FACILITIES

Online Application: Narrative Questions

Section 1: Concept (40 points)

- **Need (20 points)**

- Why is the project important to your community?
- The consequence(s) of not doing it, or the opportunities for advancement by completing project

- **Vision (15 points)**

- What is the vision?
- Why is the project important to your mission?

- **Inspire Excellence (5 points)**

- Testimonials of patrons, critics
- How will the project enable further or enhance the artistic excellence of your program?

2026 CULTURAL FACILITIES

Online Application: Narrative Questions

Section 2: Facility (30 points)

- **Process, Design, & Planning (15 points)**

- Design, planning and project scope to address environmental features and sustainability
- How might renovation or technology affect facility's building systems?
- Does equipping include # of units needed and a vendor contract for maintenance fees, equipment upgrades and contract period?
- Provide a timeline of project milestones
- Upload plan/drawing(s) of project

- **Quality (15 points)**

- Show the lifetime estimates of materials for your physical solution, relating to your need and vision
- Provide expertise of vendor(s)

2026 CULTURAL FACILITIES

Online Application: Narrative Questions

Section 3: Management & Budget (30 points)

- **Operational Readiness (10 points)**
 - Board, project team, staff strengths
 - Address project plans & preparation that is complete/confirmed
- **Financial Readiness (15 points)**
 - Form A: Certification from Professionals
 - Form B: Project Budget – Summary (5% contingency recommended)
 - Form C: Matching funds & documentation
 - Form D: Forecast 5-year Operational Budget
 - Requirements: Financial Statements
- **Care & Stewardship (5 points)**
 - Care and maintenance plan
 - Resources to maximize useful life

APPLICATION ITEMS

For all applicants:

- Form A - Certification
- Form B - Budget
- Form C - Match
- Form D - 5-year Operating Projection
- Board form is now a table within the narrative of the application
- Change request form has integrated into the grant portal

For government/municipality applicants:

- Upload a governance /organization leadership chart
- Instead of the Financial Statements' entire audit, include the department budget and that relevant section of the annual tax filing, IRS Form 990.

Other UPLOADED DOCUMENTS:

1. Lease/ownership of land/building
2. Board minutes
3. Design/Drawing of the project
4. Feasibility study (for construction or acquisition)
5. Strategic Plan (renovation or construction), or explanation of status
6. Financial statements: audit (or level of statements required by operating budget revenue), IRS, Form 990, and self-reported, Board-approved Statement of Activities and Statement of Financial Position (if audit fiscal year end is 6 months or older).
7. First-time applicants must complete IRS W-9 form, a payee registration form with United Arts
8. ACH enrollment form, for payment processing (with bank account confirmation or canceled check)

2026 CULTURAL FACILITIES

Mandatory attendance for applicants:

Site Visits:

Date: TBD Late March, HOLD 8:30 a.m.– 12 p.m.

Location: TBD

- Suggested representative(s) from applying Organization:
ED, Board Chair, Contractor, Architect, Designer, Grant Writer
- Panelists will participate in a site visit tour review (to be scheduled by applicants) for 15-20 minutes at each site.
- Applicant conducts tour of area for the proposed project and presentation for the panel, allowing some time for panel questions.

Review Panel:

Consists of at least 5 council members, 3-4 industry experts, and 1 previous CF grantee.

- Scores determine ranking and funding:
- Each panelist votes, unless conflict of interest
- 1-minute introduction of applicant updates, 14-19 minutes of panel discussion

2026 CULTURAL FACILITIES

If Awarded:

- **Mandatory contract meeting** (with United Arts of Central Florida)
- Insurance and bond requirements must be met/maintained for full term of project
- Plan for acknowledgement to Orange County Arts & Cultural Affairs
- Identify or establish separate bank account for TDT grant tracking
- File ACH enrollment form for electronic payment processing
- **Reports required for agreement acceptance and each pay request.**
- Payments: First (25%), interim (up to 65%), and final (10%). Funding may not be available until July/Aug 2026.

Final Report must be inclusive of all project expenditures, reporting, documentation, and final payment will be paid out in reimbursement, upon review and final report compliance.

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FACILITIES

INSURANCE

Insurance Requirements:

- **Commercial General Liability: \$1,000,000**
- **General Automobile Liability: \$500,000+**
- **Worker's Compensation & Employer's Liability: \$100,000** as required by State of Florida
- **Employee Dishonesty/Crime Insurance: Equal to or greater than 65% of the award**
- **Additional coverages at approx. 2% of project cost:**
 - **Payment & Performance Bonds:** Equal to the value of the entire project budget
 - **Equipment Floater/Installation Risk/ All Risk**
- United Arts of Central Florida and Orange County Florida are both additional insured per terms of the agreement.
- United Arts in Certificate of Insurance (COI) with current address 3025 Edgewater Dr. Orlando FL 32804 Outreach@UnitedArtsCFL.org.

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CULTURAL

FACILITIES

PAYMENTS

- Agreement – Acceptance of award/execution
- Pay request **required** for each disbursement
- Change Request Form **required** for dates, scope, budget or leadership changes from proposed project (prior to pay report)

Payment 1, 25% of award:

- Due 45 days after BCC approval/contract issued
- Submit project updates, 100% of match confirmed, insurance/bonds, separate bank account

Payment 2, and possibly more interim payments, up to 65% of award (may be adjusted to multiple payments, depending on project timing & cash flow needs):

- Due halfway through projects (or to be adjusted to project timeline/payment needs)
- Submit interim report, at least 100% of match confirmed, updates/status report, budget, expenditures/receipts, insurance/bonds, bank statements, proof of recognition/site signage

Final Payment, 10% of award:

- Due 45 days after completion of project and last day of project period
- Submit final report; proof of match received/paid, grant & match expenditures, all recognition, reports, photos, lien releases, payment reconciliations, and bank account balance.
- Final payment is paid in reimbursement after all is complete

UNALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES FOR CF FUNDING

No Facilities project expenditures will be allowed for the following, from COUNTY funds or from matching funds:

1. Grantee operational support
2. Debt reduction; mortgage payments, past due debts, fines and penalties, interest.
3. Expenditures for space rental, improvement, or maintenance not specifically identified with the project.
4. Private entertainment, food and beverages, including alcohol.
5. Expenditures associated with lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state, or local legislation, the judiciary branch, or any County agency.
6. Advertising that does not mention the specific project or omits required County recognition.
7. Activities that are restricted to an organization's membership or other private or exclusive participation, which shall include restricting access on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, handicap or marital status.
8. Prizes or awards, scholarships, donations, regranteeing or endowment contributions.
9. Feasibility studies.
10. Expenditures incurred or obligated prior to or after the grant period; or prior to the execution of the Grant Award Agreement; Projects which are restricted to private or exclusive participation.

MATCH REQUIREMENTS

- Match must be at least \$0.50:1, or one-half applicant dollar for every one County dollar requested.
- Matching funds must be specifically related to the project for which grant funds are being requested.
- Required documentation for the match is listed below and on the application.

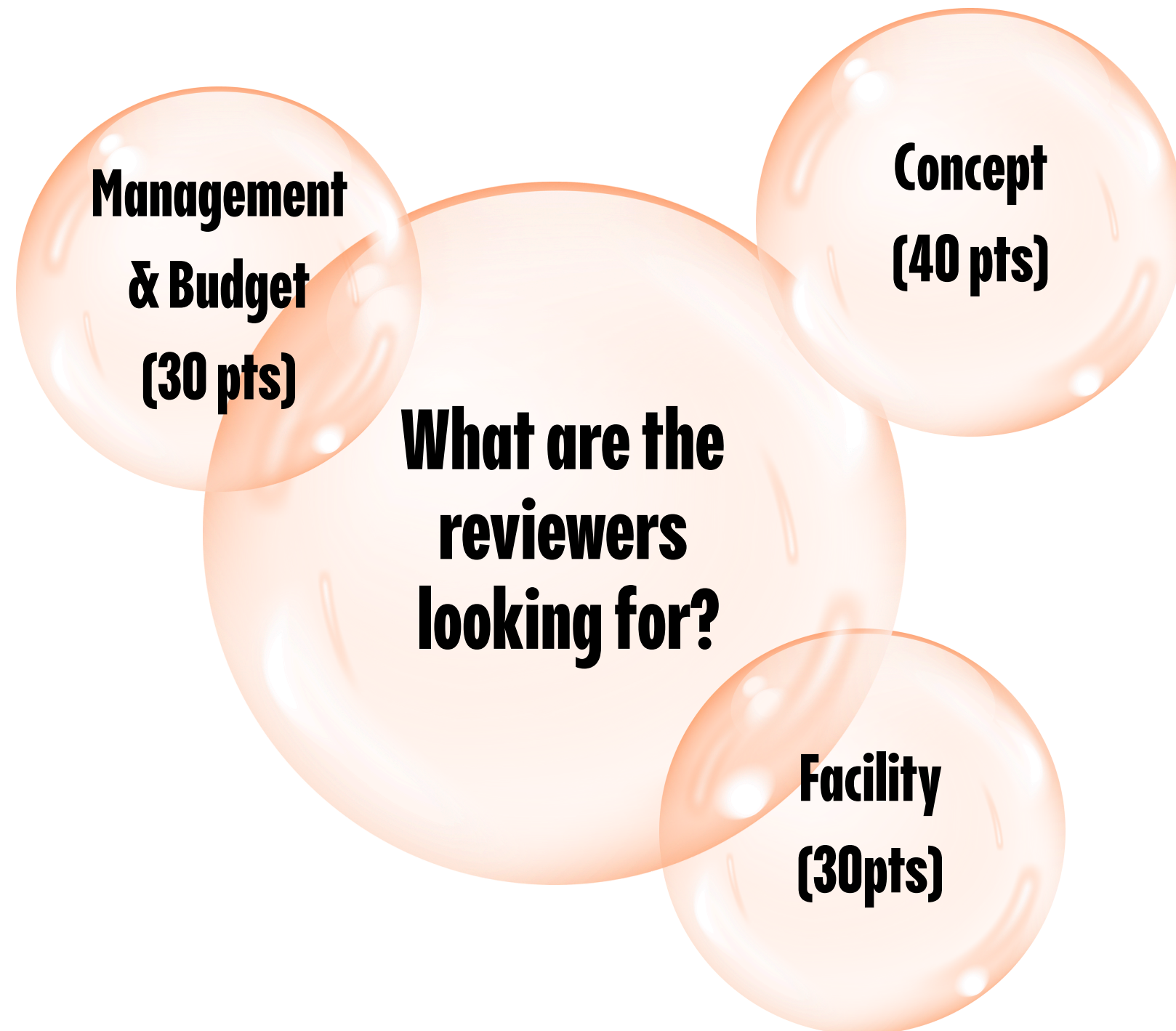
Match must be 100% complete and confirmed at the time of application.*

Match breakdown example of \$250,000 request; requires a minimum of \$125,000 match; Total project of \$375,000 or more.

Request Amount from Orange County/TDT	Match Category	Minimum Requirement	Match must be <i>at least</i> ... \$0.50 dollar to \$1 dollar requested	Notes	Sample Match
\$250,000	Cash	50%, or more	\$62,500- \$125,000+	Cash = MINIMUM 50% of the match	\$81,000
	Pledges	0-50%; no more than 50% of the match	\$0 to \$62,500	Pledges &/or In-kind = MAX 50% of the match	\$31,596
	In-Kind goods & services	0-50%; no more than 50% of the match	\$0 to \$62,500		\$12,404
					\$125,000

*Both grant award and matching funds must be 100% committed (contracted) or expended within the encumbrance period of one year, by June 30, 2027.

EVALUATION BREAKDOWN



Proposed evaluation sections for Scoring:

- **Concept (40 points total)**

- Need – 20 points
- Vision – 15 points
- Inspire Excellence – 5 points

- **Facility (30 points total)**

- Process/Design/Planning* – 15 points
- Quality* – 15 points

- **Management & Budget (30 points total)**

- Operational Readiness – 10 points
- Financial Readiness – 15 points
- Care & Stewardship – 5 points

Total: 100 points

***Technical panel review members lead discussion, but all panelists vote**

EVALUATION BREAKDOWN | 2

EVALUATION MATRIX

[CLICK HERE FOR THE EVALUATION MATRIX](#)

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

Example: Q1 Need

The matrix will indicate how many points are awarded, with a score of 1-5 (5 as highest), and the multiplier (4 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 with a score of 1.

Panelists will have variable scoring online to indicate 1-20 points total, following 1-5 level matrix



Score
1 (lowest) to
5 (highest)

		Concept (40 points)
		Need (20 pts)
		Multiplier
		x4
5	Excellent	This fulfills a great need in our community and will make a sizeable difference in the impression of Central Florida as an international Cultural destination.
4	Above Average	Fulfills need and will make a regional impact
3	Average	This will make some improvements in our community offerings.
2	Below Average	Some of this is already available in our community.
1	Poor	Not needed in our community at all.

REVIEW, SCORING, AND DECISION PROCESS

REVIEW PANEL:

Applicants must have at least one representative to attend in-person

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 will be considered by the full Advisory Council for funding recommendations.
- For funding consideration, a final score of 80.000 or greater is required.
- **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 early June.

REMINDER! - Lobby Blackout from application due date through final 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. Clear! Talk to your audience (panel). Address what is requested (specific answers to narrative, include all requirements).
2. Concise! Character counts; be succinct, not verbose.
3. Compelling! You’re the experts at what you do. Make your case and make it sell.
4. Why should this project be funded?
5. How does this help Orange County achieve its mission and the goals of this funding program?
6. Make sure Board and financial statements are timely.
7. Check spelling/grammar on application, arithmetic on forms.
8. Present a balanced budget with 100% match confirmed.
9. Don’t BOLD everything – Use CAPITALS and exclamation points sparingly!
10. Use labels, subheads to highlight topics; use bullets to list points.
11. Proofread! Have someone else read the grant for clarity.
12. Check uploads! Make sure all are included and none are too low quality, too small or upside down
13. Submit application ahead of deadline - March 1, 2026
14. **For assistance**, contact Trudy Wild Trudy@UnitedArtsCFL.org **or** Beatriz Ramirez Beatriz@UnitedArtsCFL.org

Q&A

For more information, please download the complete guidelines.

[FY26-OCACA-CULTURAL-FACILITIES-GUIDELINES-FINAL.PDF](#)

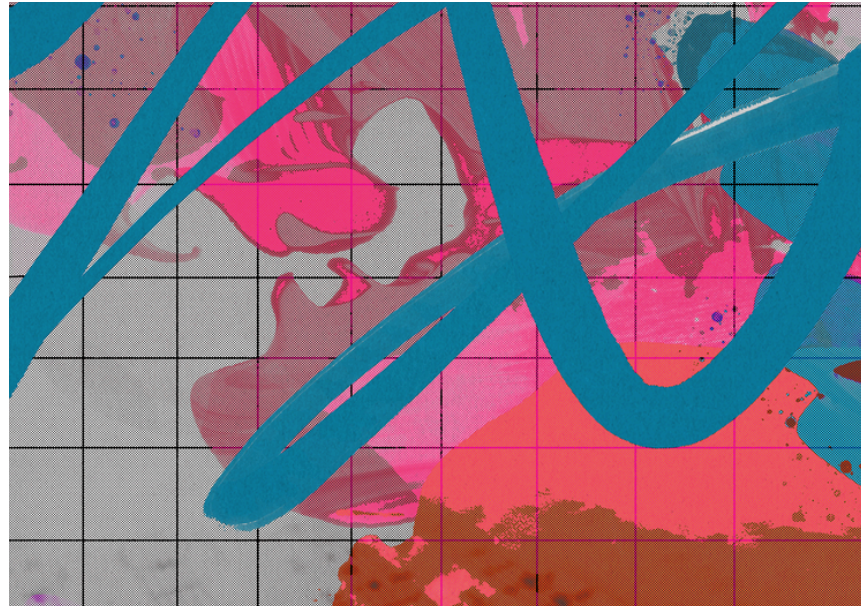
Access more grant information below;



Cultural Facilities Funding

Our Cultural Tourism and Cultural Facilities Funding elevates the status of Central Florida's arts and culture to that befitting a world-class community.

UA United Arts of Central Florida / Jan 15



THANK



Information on Orange County Arts and Cultural Affairs

Vicki Landon, Administrator

Vicki.Landon@OCFL.net

Phone: (407) 836-5540

Questions on Application, Grant Portal, and Review

Trudy Wild, Director, Public Grants & Advocacy, UA

Trudy@UnitedArtsCFL.org

Phone: (321) 972-9837

YOU!



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