The City of SAN DIEGO
Mayor Todd Gloria

News Release

City of San Diego Improves Arts Funding Framework to Ensure Grants Have Greatest Community Impact

STREAMLINED GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS PROVIDES GREATER FLEXIBILITY TO RESPOND TO ARTS COMMUNITY NEEDS

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego is updating its framework for awarding arts and culture grant-funding with a focus on prioritizing projects that have the greatest community impact and ensuring emerging and growing organizations have access to critical funding.

The new framework was approved during Monday's City Council meeting. This puts into practice the Creative City Cultural Plan adopted by the City Council in January 2025, which offered recommendations on how to better support arts and culture organizations at every stage of their growth and development. The program modernization is meant to improve equity and access to support for arts and culture organizations citywide, enhance the clarity and transparency of scoring and funding allocations and improve processes to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens for both applicants and City staff.

"This new framework will help ensure the City's limited arts and culture funding is reaching projects with the greatest community impact," said Mayor Todd Gloria. **"San Diego's arts community is one of the things that makes our city special, and I'm proud of the work our Economic Development team has done to make this process more accessible, equitable, transparent and responsive to the organizations that enhance creativity and culture in communities across our city."**

The new grant funding framework impacts the Organizational Support Program (OSP) and the Creative Communities San Diego (CCSD) program starting in fiscal year 2028, with those applications scheduled to roll out the first week of November. Previously these programs evaluated funding applications regardless of organizational size and relied heavily on a budget-focused scoring system. The new framework provides greater transparency and scores more on a proposal's overall community impact to ensure these annual investments can be more inclusive and responsive to City priorities.

The City of San Diego has a longstanding commitment to investing in arts and culture through funding programs administered by the Economic Development Department's Cultural Affairs division.

"This framework takes a balanced approach by ensuring we're supporting local arts organizations while also cutting the red tape for independent and growing artists," said Christina Bibler, Director of the City's Economic Development Department. **"We're streamlining the grant application process and, ultimately, making it easier to get funding behind projects that will define our community's culture."**

Within the Organizational Support Program (OSP) three new sub-categories have been created for potential grant awardees, including: Strengthening Emerging and Growing Organizations, Organizational Growth and Sustainability and Global Creative City Partners.

Within the Creative Communities San Diego (CCSD) program new funding categories include Community Arts and Creative Spaces, Public Cultural Life and Creative Ecosystem Builder. Funding allocations in FY28 would weigh an application's score and impact (60%) and budget context (40%). The updated guidelines also establish new minimum and maximum award amounts.

Fiscal Year 2028 Grant Allocation Minimum/Maximums

Organizational Support Program (OSP)	FY28 Min/Max Funding Range
Global Creative City Partners	$200,000 - $300,000
Organizational Growth and Sustainability	$30,000 - $200,000
Strengthening Emerging and Growing Organizations	$20,000 - $100,000
Creative Communities San Diego (CCSD)	
Community Arts and Creative Spaces	$10,000 - $100,000
Public Cultural Life	$5,000 - $50,000
Creative Ecosystem Builder	$5,000 - $75,000

Artists and organizations interested in applying for the Organizational Support Program and Creative Communities San Diego grants can look forward to the process opening in early November. The number of awards will be determined based on available funding within the fiscal year 2028 budget.

Cultural Affairs advances the City's arts, culture and creative industries. As a division of the Economic Development Department, Cultural Affairs drives an equitable and inclusive creative economy and arts ecosystem that reflects the region's cultural diversity and works to advance San Diego as a global city. To learn more, visit sandiego.gov/cultural-affairs.


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