



Mayor's Council on the Arts 2026-2027 Annual Grant Program

About Mayor's Council on the Arts

The primary mission of the Lakeland Mayor's Council on the Arts (MCA) Grant Program is to enhance, promote, and support Lakeland's arts community and its associated creative economy. Artistic organizations headquartered within Lakeland city limits are eligible to apply for funding through this process. Eligible organizations may request up to 10% of their prior-year operating expenses, with a maximum grant request of \$75,000. MCA grant funds are approved as part of the City of Lakeland's annual budget. For the 2026–2027 fiscal year, the City of Lakeland allocated \$375,000 to the Mayor's Council on the Arts. Any funds remaining after grant awards are made will be used to support the Council's website and social media management. If total grant requests exceed the amount available in the annual budget, grant awards will be reduced proportionally to fund the greatest percentage of each eligible request possible.

Purpose of the Annual Grant Program

To support the general program activities of organizations that are fulfilling their stated mission and contributing to Lakeland's cultural identity and creative economy through the creation, production, presentation, staging, sponsorship, or delivery of cultural exhibits, performances, educational programs, and events.

Eligibility Requirements

Arts organizations must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be within Lakeland, FL City limits.
- Must be an art-centric organization, as defined in the *Arts-Based Organization Definitions* provided on page 4.
- Must be a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
- Must have three years of valid operating experience.
- To request more than \$5,000:
 - Must have received at least one previous grant from LMCA.
- To request more than \$25,000:
 - Must have completed at least 3 years of programming
 - Employ at least one paid, full-time staff member in a management position



LkldArts.org

Grant Application Process:

To apply, please request an application from the Lakeland City Clerk by emailing:
cityclerk@lakelandgov.net

Eligible organizations will provide narrative responses regarding:

Section	Section Description	Character Limit
Organizational History Total Points Value: 5	- Briefly summarize the organization's history including the year the organization was founded - What are the major accomplishments of the organization?	500 Character Limit
Core Programming Total Points Value: 5	- Briefly summarize your core programming. - Where does your core programming take place? - How many participants do you serve annually?	500 Character Limit
Proposed Programming Total Points Value: 10	- Briefly summarize any and all special programming for which this grant application is intended. - How does the proposed programming strengthen Lakeland's arts and culture community? - How is this programming innovative? And is there any other programming of its kind in Lakeland currently? - How many Lakeland residents do you anticipate reaching?	1,000 Character Limit
Financial Health Total Points Value: 5	- Briefly summarize the financial health and stability of the organization and any financial support existing for your organization. - How financially stable is your organization? - In the past three years have you been unable to complete a program due to lack of funding? If yes, please describe.	500 Character Limit
Evaluation Total Points Value: 5	- Describe and provide examples of the metrics used to evaluate the success of your event, series, or initiative. - What is your plan to evaluate the program? - What metrics are you tracking?	750 Character Limit

Required Attachments to be submitted with application:

- 501(c)3 Letter of Determination
- Most recently completed fiscal year financials
- Current operating budget

Grant Scoring

Grant applications will be evaluated, scored, and ranked by a panel of three or more MCA members who have not submitted a grant application during the current grant cycle. Applications will be evaluated using the MCA 2026-2027 Grant Scoring Matrix provided below. Only applications receiving a minimum score of 70% will be eligible for grant funding.

Organizational History Total Points Value: 5	How has this organization contributed to the Lakeland Creative industries and arts community within the last three years?	How has this organization fostered collaboration with other members of the Lakeland creative industries and arts community?	How has the financial status of the organization changed over the last three years?	How does the organization work to attract and impact new audiences?
Core Programming Total Points Value: 5	Is the organization part of the creative industries or the arts community?	Does the organization benefit the community through their mission?	Does the organization further the LMCA goal of growing and enriching the arts community in Lakeland?	Does the organization help establish Lakeland's reputation as a destination for the creative industries and the arts?
Proposed Programming Total Points Value: 10	Is the purpose of the event, series, or initiative a contribution to the creative industries/or the arts community in Lakeland?	Does this event, series or initiative benefit the community through its purpose?	Does this event, series, or initiative further the LMCA goal of growing and enriching the arts community of Lakeland?	Does the event, series, or initiative help establish Lakeland's reputation as a destination for the creative industries and the arts?
Financial Health Total Points Value: 5	Is the organization financially stable??	Has the organization been unable to complete a program due to lack of funding?	How has the financial status of the organization changed over the last three years?	
Evaluation Total Points Value: 5 (Sliding Scale)	(0-1 point) Examples do not address or inadequately address success metrics.	(1-2 points) Examples minimally address success metrics.	(2-3 points) Examples adequately address success Metrics.	(3-5 points) Examples are thorough and fully describe metrics as they relate to the LMCA application.

The organization's eligible grant award will be calculated by multiplying the total application score by the total amount requested. For example, if XYZ Organization requests \$10,000 and receives a score of 89% based on the Grant Scoring Matrix, the organization's eligible grant award would be \$8,900. If the total score-adjusted grant requests for all eligible applications exceed the amount of funding allocated by the City Commission, all award amounts will be reduced proportionally by the same percentage to remain within the available funding. Questions regarding the grant program should be directed to the City Clerk's Office at cityclerk@lakelandgov.net or 863-834-6210.

Definitions of arts-based organizations:

- **Dance** - organizations that promote excellence in dance. This includes producing dance companies and other organizations with dance programming.
- **Literature** - organizations that promote excellence in the literary arts. This includes small presses, non-commercial publishing houses, professional literary groups, and other organizations with literary programming.
- **Media Arts** - organizations that promote excellence in film, video, radio and television. This includes film and video festivals and media art exhibitions, conferences and seminars.
- **Multidisciplinary** - organizations that are producing two (2) or more separate artistic or cultural disciplines.
- **Museum** - organizations that are primarily educational and aesthetic with proposals focused on the applicant's collections and/or exhibits. This includes zoos, botanical gardens, arboretums, nature centers and aquariums.
 - Museums may include but are not limited to the following:
Art Museums; Historical Museums; Multidisciplinary Museums; Science Museums (Botanical Gardens, Zoos, Arboretums, Nature Centers and Aquariums); and Youth and Children's Museums.
- **Music** - organizations that promote excellence in music performance and creation, includes both vocal and instrumental music. The Music discipline includes but is not limited to chamber or jazz ensembles, choral groups, community bands, orchestras, opera and world music ensembles.
- **Presenter** – organizations that enter into agreements to provide performances or other cultural activities. The organization generally does not create, rehearse, cast or have artistic control over the performance or activity.
- **Theatre** disciplines support producing theatres and other organizations that promote excellence in theatre performance. Musical theatre can be included in this discipline.
- **Traditional Arts** - organizations that preserve and present traditional arts from specific cultural groups in Florida. This includes performances, exhibitions, festivals and other programming featuring traditional artists and their work. This discipline's goals are to support programming of traditional artists in a public venue and to foster recognition and awareness of traditional arts.
 - Note: The Traditional Arts discipline is NOT intended for programming that focuses primarily on the following activities: research for scholarly purposes only; historical presentations; re-creations or re-enactments; cultural appropriation and revivalism, tourism and contemporary studio crafts or reproductions.



• **Visual Arts** - for organizations that promote excellence in the visual arts through activities such as:

- lectures;
- publications;
- exhibitions;
- educational programs;
- artist workshops; and
- professional development for visual artists.

Accessibility and Non-Discrimination

The Division of Arts and Culture is committed to making the arts and culture accessible to everyone.

Organizations seeking support for activities are required to be open and accessible to all members of the public, regardless of sex, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, age or marital status.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, transportation and telecommunication. The ADA extends the requirements under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, to all activities of state and local governments and places of public accommodation operated by private entities, including places of public display. The 504 Self Evaluation Workbook which can be used as a reference and downloadable Disability Symbols can be found at dos.myflorida.com/cultural/info-andopportunities/resources-by-topic/accessibility/