

FY 2027 Artists-in-Education Grant Program - GUIDELINES

Application Calendar

February 2, 2026	Grant applications available online at hcac.gosmart.org
June 4, 2026	Deadline for applications. Applicants can submit up to 11:59 PM.
July 15, 2026	FY26 Final Report Due* (if applicable)
Early September, 2026	Earliest Announcement of Grant Award or Rejection
July 15, 2026	FY27 Final Report Due

General Information

- The Artist in Education grant is open to all Howard County Public School System's 501c3 K-12 schools and independent 501c3 schools where a PTA is not in place.
- AiE applicants that have received a Cycle 1 grant award may apply to support a new AiE project in Cycle 2, if a second cycle is announced, however, priority will be given to those applicants that did not receive a grant in the first cycle.

The Howard County Arts Council (HoCo Arts) is a private, nonprofit organization established to serve the citizens of Howard County by fostering the arts, artists and arts organizations. HoCo Arts is governed by a Board of Directors who whose members are elected to two-year terms.

To carry out its mission, HoCo Arts awards operating and project grants to eligible organizations. HoCo Arts is authorized by the Howard County Government to administer grant programs for Howard County arts organizations, artists-in-residence in Howard County schools, and key Baltimore City arts and cultural organizations. To better serve Howard County Schools with significant student populations facing increased obstacles to full access to Artist-in-Education grant opportunities, HoCo Arts has developed a new Access Challenge Index (combining the published school profile percentages of students classified as eligible for special program services: FARMS, LEP, and SPED) to identify applicant schools for which grant-funding matches can be waived or limited. HoCo Arts is available to provide technical assistance in completing grant applications. Call 410-313-2787.

HoCo Arts Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain a grant process in accordance with criteria established by the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) and set forth by Howard County Government.
- Develop procedures for submission and funding of proposals.
- Review and evaluate applications for grants funds.
- Select recipients and award grants.

Purpose of the Artists-in-Education Grant Program

- To complement school curriculum by providing opportunities for hands-on experiences in the arts that might not otherwise take place.
- To foster excellence, diversity, and vitality in arts offerings for Howard County students and residents.
- To broaden opportunities for Howard County students, artists and arts organizations.
- To increase the availability of arts activities in Howard County.

Eligibility & Applicant Qualification

- AiE applicant must be a K-12 PTA or school with its own IRS 501c3 designation located in Howard County.
- Applicant school or K-12 educational organization must meet state standards for accreditation as identified by the State of Maryland and the Maryland State Department of Education and may be requested to provide proof thereof.
- Applicant's proposed project must be consistent with the Maryland State Department of Education Fine Arts Standards.
- HCPSS or applicant employees are not eligible to serve as a visiting AiE artist.
- Applicant may apply for arts project funding only, but only direct artistic costs and materials will be considered for funding.
- Applicant must be soundly managed and financially accountable (must provide a copy of the PTSA's current budget).
- Applicant must comply with Title VI, Section 601, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no persons on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination related to the arts.
- Applicant must comply with Title IV, Section 1681, of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 6101, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of age or sex.
- Applicant must comply with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which states that no otherwise qualified person shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination related to the arts.
- Applicant must hold their activities in spaces accessible to those with disabilities. Also, activities must be altered to meet the needs of the visually and hearing impaired upon appropriate notification of need.

Artistic Review Panel

A panel, made up of artists and academics, is appointed to assist HoCo Arts in its decision making. Its function is to review applications, make funding recommendations to the HoCo Arts Board of Directors, and offer policy recommendations.

Applications

- Applicants may submit only one grant application per school year or per grant cycle for one project only. Collaboration between schools is welcome.
- Applications must be submitted by **June 4, 2026 at 11:59 P.M.**
- Applications must be signed by an authorized PTA Officer or Cultural Representative
- A letter of support from the school principal is required for projects involving permanent installations.
- Applicants may be asked to clarify or revise information on the application.
- Late or incomplete applications will be rejected.
- All required attachments and supplemental information must be included.
- Please direct all questions regarding preparation of these forms to HoCo Arts at (410) 313-2787.

Deadlines

The deadline for submission is **June 4, 2026 at 11:59 P.M.**

Review Process & Notification

Applicant may be asked to clarify and/or revise their application. Applicant must meet all revision deadlines after submission, as specified in writing, or the application will be withdrawn. The Artistic Review Panel will deliberate and make its recommendations to the HoCo Arts Committee on Grants. The Committee on Grants will present these recommendations to the HoCo Arts Board of Directors for approval. Organizations will be notified by mail as to the disposition of the application after a final vote by the Board of Directors. All decisions of the HoCo Arts Board of Directors are final. If approved for funding, the organization must submit a signed Letter of Agreement, and any outstanding materials or final reports, if applicable, before grant funds are released.

Conflict of Interest

To ensure that all HoCo Arts review panels are free from conflicts of interest and the appearance of such conflicts, panelists are required to disclose any current or prospective affiliations they or their immediate family members have with an applicant. “Affiliations” applies to employment, board memberships, independent contractual relationships, substantial contributor relationships, or other relationships. In addition, panelists are required to disclose any past or current adversarial relationships with actual or potential applicants. HoCo Arts panel and board members are not permitted to participate in discussions or votes relating to any applicant with whom they have an affiliation.

Changes

Grant recipients must notify the HoCo Arts in writing if a significant change is made in any HCAC funded program or project. HoCo Arts reserves the right, at the discretion of the Committee on Grants and the Board of Directors, to alter the amount or disbursement dates of a grant award if a significant change is made to the operations or project of an organization once a grant has been awarded. Unused project funds must be returned to HoCo Arts.

Restrictions and Accountability

Grants may not be applied to capital improvements, purchase of land or real property, tuition assistance, refreshment costs, travel, fundraising, or pre-existing expenses, debts, or obligations incurred by the organization. HoCo Arts does not fund projects retroactively.

The Howard County Government may ask to examine or audit all pertinent books, records, and accounts of grant recipients. In addition, grant funds may not be used to make contributions to any persons who hold, or are candidates for, elected office; to any political party, organization, or action committee; or in connection with any political action campaign or referendum, or lobbying activities.

Fraud and Misrepresentation

If awarded, the grant funds shall be used only for purposes outlined in grantee's grant application on file with HoCo Arts. Grantee certifies that all of the information and representations contained in the application are and remain true and complete in all material respects. Should it come to the attention of HoCo Arts that any materials submitted by the grantee are fraudulent or misrepresented in any manner, this agreement is null and void and the grantee acknowledges that any remaining grant funds not yet disbursed are forfeited and that the grantee is responsible for reimbursing HoCo Arts for funds already disbursed.

Reporting

A detailed final report on use of the approved funds for the project must be filed with the HoCo Arts within 30 days of the project's completion. The final report must be typewritten. An up-to-date financial statement from the most recent fiscal year, signed by the PTA's Treasurer must accompany the report. Please attach any publicity materials with the final report and indicate where the Howard County Arts Council is acknowledged.

***Future applications will not be considered unless a complete final report is submitted and approved by HoCo Arts.**

Attribution

If a grant is awarded, credit must be given to the Howard County Arts Council, and the Howard County Government on all materials related to the project, including brochures, news releases, programs and other materials. When no printed information is used, oral credit must be given.

Ownership

Upon acceptance of a grant award, the school agrees to treat original artwork with appropriate care and maintenance. Prior permission to dispose of original artwork from a residency must be obtained from HoCo Arts.

HoCo Arts retains the right to exhibit, perform, publish and/or reproduce original artwork resulting from a funded residency.

Budget Size and Matching Requirements

- HoCo Art's grant program is a competitive process. Receipt of a grant award does not imply or guarantee future awards will be made.
- No grant may exceed half of the total budget of the applicant's proposal* or half of the total HoCo Arts funds available for the Artists-in-Education grant program.
- HoCo Arts does not fund travel, capital expenses, budget deficits, fundraising events/activities, purchases of permanent equipment or projects whose primary function is not artistic.
- Student assessed fees cannot be used for matching funds.

For every dollar requested or awarded, the applicant must provide a 1:1 cash match.* In determining the amount of the grant request and the required match, requests should be calculated on the total allowable cash expenses of the project. In-kind donations and services cannot be used to match HoCo Arts grant funds.

Example:

Total Allowable Project Expenses	HoCo Arts Grant Request/ Award	PTA's Responsibility	PTA Match for Each HoCo Arts Grant Dollar
\$4,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	1:1

***Schools with an Access Challenge Index of 50% or more can apply without a matching requirement for projects up to \$2,500. Any project costs beyond \$2,500 are subject to the matching requirements stated above.**

The grant process is competitive and ALL schools that apply may not get full or even partial funding of their grant request.

Guidelines

- **Each AIE applicant should work closely with the visiting artist and appropriate teacher when developing the project and proposal. Contact both well in advance.**
- **Priority is given to projects that include more than an assembly/auditorium-style performance or presentation.**
- Travel and overnight housing will not be paid for by the HoCo Arts grant.
- Materials/Technical assistance should be listed and are an allowable expense in the grant application.

Below are the guidelines in effect at the Maryland State Arts Council. These are to assist applicants in working with an artist in negotiating a price for the residency. They are intended only as guidelines, not inflexible rules.

Definitions:

Residency: A multi-day stay in the classroom by an artist who may work with students, faculty, and occasionally the larger community to demonstrate an artistic process and/or produce an artistic product. The majority of residency activities must take place in the classroom during regular school day hours. Each residency should include an orientation and planning period and at least one follow-up session.

Length of Residency: This varies widely depending on what the applicant wants to accomplish and the complexity of the project. There have been occasional one-day residencies and some are as long as 6-8 weeks. **Priority is given to residencies of 3 or more days.** AiE grants are competitive; 5 points will be deducted from applicants' score for assembly/auditorium-style projects.

Number of participants: This also varies. The applicant and the school's faculty are the best judges of what will work in the school. For intense learning experiences, students should be pooled in smaller groups, while presentations and assembly performances extend the artist(s)' effect with larger audiences.

For poets/writers = Three full teaching periods (Approx. 50 minutes each)

For visual artists = Three double teaching periods (Approx. 90-100 minutes each)

For performing artists = No guidelines because of differences among disciplines and number of performers. Daily rate can differ significantly for these reasons as well.

In addition to the guidelines stated above, please be aware that, because the program is designed to encourage and recognize each individual's creativity, the use of copyrighted material is strictly prohibited. Copyright law protects a work, in whatever medium, unless it has been placed in the public domain. Owners of copyrights own exclusive right to the reproduction and distribution of their work; therefore, unauthorized use and distribution of copyrighted works is illegal.

Artist Information: Schools interested in residencies may attend the Howard County Arts Council's annual Cultural Arts Showcase held in October each year. The Showcase is a program to assist school and civic organizations in identifying visual, literary and performing artists for workshops, performances, demonstrations, and in-school residencies. Please visit www.hocoarts.org or call 410-313-2787 for more information.

Review Criteria

At a minimum, the Artistic Review Panel will address each of the following questions when the application is reviewed. This information is included to assist the applicant in preparing the application.

I. Artistic Merit

- Is there evidence that the artist, PTA cultural arts representative, and faculty member assisted in conceiving the project?
- What are the stated artistic goals and how will they be achieved?
- What is the artistic product/process?
- What indications are there that this project will have a level of quality appropriate to the purpose of the HoCo Arts Artists-in-Education program?
- How does this project complement the school's curriculum goals?

- Is the project consistent with the Maryland State Department of Education Essential Learner Outcomes for Fine Arts?

II. Technical Merit of Proposal

- Is the application complete?
- Does the narrative clarify goals?
- Is the budget correct?
- Is the writing clear and concise? Grammatically correct?

III. Implementation

- Are goals realistic and achievable?
- Does the project include an orientation, planning period and follow-up session?
- Does the record of the applicant suggest the project will be completed during the grant period and with the funds specified in the award?
- Does the record of the applicant suggest the project and the grant funds will be managed successfully?
- Who will administer the project and what are their skills?
- How will the applicant evaluate the impact of the program?

IV. Audience Development

- How many students will participate directly? Indirectly?
- Does the project include a presentation to parents or larger community?
- If so, what is the projected size of the audience? How did the applicant arrive at this number?

V. Finances

- Are the costs realistic and the request sufficient to complete the proposed project?
- Is the addition and subtraction correct?
- Does requested financing exceed guidelines for the percentage of total budget?
- Note: Although donated in-kind goods and services do not qualify towards matching funds, they are encouraged and should be specified in the grant application.

Supplementary Materials

Copies of catalogs, reviews, programs, brochures, or promotional materials related to the proposed residency will augment the application. Each applicant is required to submit them along with work sample for the proposed artist(s).

Disclosure

As a private 501(c) 3 that receives public funding, HoCo Arts is committed to providing equal opportunity in all facets of its operation without regard to race, sex, creed, religion, national origin, age, occupation, personal appearance, political opinion, sexual orientation, marital status, physical or mental disability, familial status, source of income, or gender identity. HoCo Arts complies with all county, state, and federal equal protection statutes and regulations, including Title IV, Section 601, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX, Section 1681, of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 6101 of the Age Discrimination Act of 1973, as amended; and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Appeals Process

The Howard County Arts Council takes care during the entire grants review process to be as thorough as possible to ensure fair and equitable distribution of grants monies. Therefore, simple dissatisfaction with the denial of an award or with the amount of the award is not sufficient reason for appeal. Reconsideration of a grant award will take place only if there has been a procedural impropriety or error.

This means one of the following:

- A decision based on review criteria other than those stated in the guidelines.
- A decision based on a recommendation of a panelist with undisclosed conflict of interest.
- A decision based on material provided to panelists and/or HoCo Arts Board members that was substantially incorrect, inaccurate, or incomplete despite the applicant having provided the staff with correct, accurate, and complete application information by the application due date.

Dissatisfaction with the denial of an award or with the amount of the award is not sufficient reason for appeal.

Given this information, should an applicant feel there is legitimate reason for appeal, the applicant must write a letter to the HoCo Arts Executive Director within fifteen (15) days of the postmark date of the notification stating the grounds for appeal. The Committee on Grants will review the appeal and make a recommendation. Based on that recommendation, the Board of Directors will make a final decision. The applicant will receive written notification on the determination of the appeal within 45 days of the receipt of the letter of appeal.