

FY 2027 Outreach Howard Grant Program - GUIDELINES

Application Calendar

February 2026 Grant applications available online at hcac.gosmart.org
April 9, 2026 Deadline for applications. Applicants can submit up to 11:59 PM.
July 15, 2026 FY26 Final Report Due
September 2026 Earliest announcement of grant award or rejection
January 30, 2027 FY27 Interim Report Due
July 15, 2027 FY27 Final Report Due

General Information

The Outreach Howard Grant Program was established to encourage recipients of the Howard County Arts Council's Baltimore City Arts and Cultural Organization Grant Program to extend the reach of their programs directly to Howard County residents by producing an arts and/or cultural activity at a location in Howard County. Outreach Howard supports focused, distinct programs that will take place in Howard County between **October 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027**. While not required, applicants are encouraged to consider partnerships with Howard County organizations, both in and outside of the arts and culture, as appropriate to their project.

Howard County Arts Council (HoCo Arts) is a private, non-profit organization established to serve the citizens of Howard County by fostering the arts, artists and arts organizations. HoCo Arts is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and is authorized by both Howard County and the Maryland State Arts Council to administer public funds designated for the arts. To carry out its mission, HoCo Arts provides operating and project grants to eligible organizations. If you have any questions about HoCo Arts's grant programs, please contact HoCo Arts staff at 410-313-2787 or visit www.hocoarts.org.

Outreach Howard Purpose

- To foster excellence, diversity, and vitality in arts offerings for Howard County residents.
- To broaden opportunities for Howard County residents, artists, and arts organizations.
- To increase the availability of arts activities in Howard County.
- To provide opportunities for Baltimore City grant recipients to produce programs in Howard County and to engage residents in Howard County.
- To provide opportunities for Howard County residents who otherwise would not have access to such programs.

HCAC Responsibilities

- Develop procedures for submission and funding of applications.
- Develop and maintain a grant process and reporting requirements in accordance with established procedures and criteria.

- Review and evaluate applications for grants funds.
- Select recipients, determine grant award amounts.

Deadline

- The deadline for submission is **April 9, 2026 at 11:59PM.**
- Late or incomplete applications will be rejected.
- Applicants may be asked to clarify or revise application.
- All required attachments and supplemental information must be included.
- Please direct all questions regarding preparation of these forms to HCAC at 410-313-2787.

Applicant Eligibility & Qualifications

- Applicant organization may be a previous BCAC grant recipient in or any Baltimore City organization that has received funding from HoCo Arts within the last 2 years.
- Applicants must be in good standing.
- Applicant organization may apply for one Outreach Howard Grant per cycle; the program may consist of a one-time activity or a series of related activities.
- A program is eligible for funding through Outreach Howard if it supports an arts and/or cultural activity that is presented to an audience at a location in Howard County.
- Program activities may include, but are not limited to, dance, design, folk and traditional arts, history exhibit or historic reenactment, lectures or seminars, literature, media arts, music, theater, visual arts, and workshops. This list is not exhaustive and applicants are encouraged to think creatively about their own programs.

Program activities must either:

- Be open to the public, with or without an admission fee, or
- Bring arts and/or cultural activities to a targeted audience in Howard County that might not otherwise be able to experience this activity, such as senior citizens or residents at special needs facilities.
- Qualified, experienced staff must be involved in the planning and implementation of the program.

Budget & Matching Requirements

- Eligible programs for Outreach Howard must be held and funds spent by **June 30, 2027.**
- Outreach Howard does not require matching funds.
- **Grant requests cannot exceed \$15,000.**
- Funding may be used for program expenses directly related to the activities described in the application.

- Program budget must be based on cash income and expense only.
- Organizational support for staff salaries (pro-rated) and materials directly related to the proposed program are allowable as a cash expense, but other operational or overhead costs are not. Do not include expenses of partner organizations or in-kind donations of goods and services in the program budget. Staff salaries should be appropriate and reasonable.
- Other allowable expenses may include marketing materials, professional documentation, and program enhancements that are integral to the event. Examples of program enhancements include interpretive material, program accommodations (i.e.: sign language interpretation, audio description), catalogs, brochures, or publications. Other enhancements such as specific lecture-demonstrations, pre- or post-event talks, or workshops relevant to the proposed program also are eligible.
- Professional fees for a master class led by visiting artists, curators, or lecturers are eligible (artistic staff, including resident artists or adjunct and full-time teachers, do not qualify as visiting).
- Funding may not be used for food, beverages, capital costs, building renovations/improvements, cash prizes, deficits, fundraising events, gifts, permanent equipment over \$500, security, items for sale (i.e.: t-shirts and posters) or any operational costs associated with the applicant's administrative office (such as staff salaries, office rent and utilities, office equipment, office supplies, etc.).
- Operational expenses of partner organizations are not eligible for funding.
- Operational expenses of arts schools, colleges or universities, expenses for tuition-based coursework or classes, and tuition, awards or scholarships for credit or non-credit classes, are not eligible for funding, while expenses related to public programming such as an exhibit, performance, lecture, or master class by a visiting artist may be eligible.

Examples of allowable costs for Outreach Howard

- Pro-rated salary support for staff directly working on Outreach Howard.
- Artistic/Professional fees.
- Materials/supplies.
- Equipment under \$500.
- Local transportation.

Examples of unallowable costs for Outreach Howard

- Operating expenses or indirect costs, that is organizational costs not directly related to carrying out the funded project.
- Food and beverages.
- Operating reserves or debit service.
- Fundraisers and special events.
- Equipment over \$500.
- Expenses of partner organizations.
- In-kind services.

- Expenses of State or local governmental agencies, including Howard County Public Schools, Recreation and Parks, Howard Community College, etc.
- Expenses related to tuition-based activities and operations of visual and performing arts schools and universities or colleges.
- Scholarships, awards or tuition assistance for program participants.
- Non-local transportation.

Review Process and Panel

Staff will review for eligibility. 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. Applications will be forwarded for review to the Outreach Howard Review Panel, made up of individuals selected from HoCo Art's Artistic Review Panel. Members of HoCo Art's Committee on Grants, Board of Directors, and the general public may also be selected to serve on the Outreach Howard Review Panel.

The Outreach Howard Review Panel will review applications and make its recommendations to the HoCo Arts Committee on Grants. The Committee on Grants will then present those recommendations for approval to the HoCo Arts Board of Directors. Organizations will be notified by mail to the disposition of the application after a final vote by the HoCo Arts Board of Directors. All decisions of the HoCo Arts Board of Directors are final. If approved for funding, the organization must submit the signed Letter of Agreement and any outstanding materials or final reports, if applicable, before the grant funds are released.

Review Criteria

I. Application demonstrates:

- Artistic and Cultural Merit.
- Quality and creativity of program design and activities.
- Qualifications of program staff, artists, professionals.
- Quality of artistic/cultural work samples and materials submitted.
- Appropriateness of the program to the organization's mission.

II. Service to the community:

- Potential to make quality artistic or cultural programs more widely available to Howard County residents. Extra weight may be given to programs focused on underserved audiences.
- Potential of the program to engage Howard County residents in quality artistic or cultural activities.
- Skill levels and qualifications of onsite program staff are appropriate to ensure an engaging, well implemented program.

- Potential of the program to serve its intended audience, whether a specific population or the community at large.
- Evidence that the program will be publicized effectively.
- Appropriateness of evaluation methods and their ability to measure program goals or determine whether goals were achieved.
- Appropriateness of the project to the Outreach Howard's purpose.
- If a partner organization is involved, level of partner's commitment to the program is evident.

III. Ability of the applicant to carry out the program:

- Evidence of sound fiscal and administrative management.
- Appropriate level of resources in place to carry out the proposal successfully.
- Skill levels and qualifications of program staff involved are appropriate for the scope of the program.
- Budget is well researched, clear, reasonable, and appropriate.
- Clarity of application.
- Program description, goals, and design are realistic.
- Proposed program is an appropriate activity for the organization at this time.
- Appropriateness of partner organization, if applicable.

Partnerships can be valuable to the success of these projects. While not required, applicants are encouraged to consider partnerships with Howard County organizations, both in and outside of the arts and culture, as appropriate to their project.

Attribution

If a grant is awarded, all public materials, including brochures, news releases, programs and other materials must give credit to the Howard County Arts Council and Howard County Government. Use HoCo Arts and Howard County Government logos where appropriate. When no printed information is used, oral credit must be given.

Changes

Grant recipients must notify HoCo Arts in writing if a significant change is made in any HoCo Arts funded program. 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 program once a grant has been awarded. Unused program funds must be returned to HoCo Arts.

Fraud and Misrepresentation

If awarded, grant funds shall be used only for purposes outlined in organization's grant application on file with HoCo Arts. Applicant 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 applicant are fraudulent or misrepresented in any manner, any agreement based on the application is null and void and the applicant acknowledges that any remaining grant funds not yet disbursed are forfeited and that the applicant is responsible for reimbursing HoCo Arts for funds already disbursed.

Reporting

A detailed final report on the use of the approved funds for the program must be filed with the HoCo Arts within 30 days of its completion or by **July 15, 2027**. Future applications will not be considered unless a complete final report is submitted and approved by HoCo Arts.

Disclosure

As a private 501(c)3 that receives public funds, HoCo Arts is committed to provide 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 identify. HoCo Arts complies with all county, state, and federal equal protection statutes and regulations, including Title VI, Section 601, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX, Section 1681, of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 6101 of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Appeals Process

HoCo Arts 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 stating the grounds for appeal

within fifteen (15) days of the postmark date of the grant award notification. 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.