



Advancement Grant Program

GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

ELIGIBILITY

Los Angeles County school districts that are in partnership with the Arts Ed Collective and will be implementing board approved strategic plans for arts education in 2026-27 are eligible to apply.

Interested school districts must submit a funding request via the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture's online grant portal at apply-lacdac.smapply.io by **6:00 pm, Wednesday, March 25, 2026**. Arts and Culture strongly recommends submitting the application at least five days prior to the deadline to give ample time to troubleshoot.

These guidelines and other grant resources are available at:

lacountyartsedcollective.org/advancement

**The Advancement Grant Program is administered by the
Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture.**

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and the Arts Ed Collective Funders Council and through direct contributions from the
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LOS ANGELES COUNTY ARTS EDUCATION COLLECTIVE

The Los Angeles County Arts Education Collective is a countywide public-private initiative dedicated to making the arts part of every child's growth and development.

In 2002, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors launched the Los Angeles County Arts Education Collective (Arts Ed Collective) as a regional effort to restore the arts in public education. The Arts Ed Collective is coordinated by the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture), implemented in partnership with the LA County Office of Education (LACOE), and is recognized as a national model of collective impact in arts education. Starting with just one school district in each Supervisorial District nearly two decades ago, the Arts Ed Collective now includes a robust coalition of partners representing more than 76 school districts, 5 charter school networks and hundreds of community-based arts organizations, teaching artists, educators, philanthropists, and advocates. Partners all work toward the shared goal that every young person in LA County engages in the arts all year, every year, because the arts are fundamental to human growth and development. The Countywide initiative is guided by a Leadership Circle and a Funders Council who continue to invest in this formidable movement for arts education across the region.

ARTS FOR ALL CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES: LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S NEW REGIONAL BLUEPRINT FOR ARTS EDUCATION

In 2020, the Board of Supervisors adopted Los Angeles County's New Regional Blueprint for Arts Education ([Arts Ed Blueprint](#)) which sets forth ambitious goals for increasing youth access to the arts. The Arts Ed Blueprint outlines strategies for advancing:

- arts instruction for all students, across all grade levels, in all public schools;
- expanded opportunities for arts education after school;
- year-round community-based arts learning;
- access to careers in the creative economy;
- arts-based programs and services, provided in collaboration with multiple County departments, that support children, youth and families; and
- a prioritization of historically underserved populations.

Despite the many positive benefits of the arts on child and youth development – including improved academic achievement, school attendance, engagement, sense of identity, self-esteem, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities – there remain long-standing systemic barriers to accessing arts education and cultural resources, particularly for historically underserved communities, English-language learners, and youth of color. To address these disparities and to promote cultural and racial equity, the new Arts Ed Blueprint centers access and equity and prioritizes historically underserved youth, schools, and communities.

The Arts Ed Blueprint sets new targets for achieving scale, equity, and quality in arts education – in school, after school and in communities:

Scale - Every young person in every neighborhood has year-round opportunities for learning in and through the arts in school, after school, and in their community.

Equity - Every young person, regardless of race, culture, language, income, religion, national origin, legal status, place of residence, gender identity, LGBTQ+ status, or ability, receives high-quality, culturally sustaining arts education. Young people who have been historically excluded or precluded from learning in the arts receive priority for the resources and investments required to meet their needs.

Within the context of the Arts Ed Blueprint, the terms historically underserved and historically excluded or precluded are defined as specific groups of people who, over many years in the past which may extend into the present, have been denied or prevented from accessing resources or opportunities by institutions, systems, and/or dominant power structures. This may include Black, Indigenous, and other youth of color, current or former foster youth, as well as youth who are currently or formerly homeless, impacted by the justice system, LGBTQ+, migrants, English language learners, living in poverty, in rural areas, and/or with disabilities. This term can also apply to schools, neighborhoods, and communities with high proportions of people who have been historically excluded or precluded.

Quality - Arts instruction is thoughtfully and intentionally designed to:

- build artistic, technical, and creative skills;
- encompass a variety of art forms and genres;
- connect arts learning to other areas of study, growth, and development;
- reflect the culture, language and heritage of the learner;
- introduce the learner to the cultures, languages and heritages of others;
- expose young people to creative careers; and
- recognize the region's rich cultural diversity.

Culturally Relevant, Responsive, and Sustaining

Instruction - Asset-based teaching practices that view diversity in thought, culture, and traits as strengths. Instruction is designed to accept and affirm the backgrounds of students of color (Culturally Relevant); connect to students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference (Culturally Responsive); and sustain cultural ways of being in communities of color while supporting students to critique dominant power structures in society (Culturally Sustaining).¹

In-School Arts Education - Learning in the arts takes place during the school day as part of an integrated or discrete, sequential arts curriculum.

After-School Arts Education - Learning in the arts takes place outside of school hours, either on a school campus or for youth who are part of a specific school community, and intentionally augments or deepens in-school arts education.

THE GOALS OF THE ADVANCEMENT GRANT

The Advancement Grant offers financial support to Los Angeles County school districts working to provide quality arts education to all students. The goals of the grant are to:

- assist school districts in achieving key action items in their strategic plans for arts education that are aligned with the goals and targets of the Arts Ed Blueprint
- generate resources, practices, skills, or knowledge that will be sustained beyond the term of the grant
- direct resources and investments into historically underserved communities to increase learning in the arts for youth who continue to face structural and systemic barriers to high quality, culturally sustaining arts education

¹ "Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy." California Department of Education. Accessed October 6, 2020. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/culturallysustainingped.asp>

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility

Los Angeles County school districts that are in partnership with the Arts Ed Collective and will be implementing board approved strategic plans for arts education in 2026-27 are eligible to apply (see page 9). If you are interested in learning more about becoming an Arts Ed Collective district partner, contact artsedcollective@arts.lacounty.gov for additional information.

Alignment with District Plans and Arts Ed Blueprint

The project outlined in your funding request must demonstrate alignment with existing district plans, including the district's strategic plan for arts education and the Local Control Accountability Plan, as well as alignment with [the goals and targets of the Arts Ed Blueprint](#).

Eligible Projects

Your district may submit a request for funding to **initiate or expand** activities or services that address one or more goals for advancing arts education in your schools.

Projects that preserve arts education are only eligible if additional information is provided in the application to justify the need and the impacting factors (i.e. significant budget, staffing, or enrollment challenges).

Ineligible Project Expenses

The funding request and the district cash match cannot include:

- Services for students that occur outside of the traditional school day which supplant or replace instruction previously offered during the school day
- In-kind services or materials
- Fundraising activities

APPLICATION AND GRANT AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS

All eligible school districts may apply for up to \$25,000 in matching funds to support strategies detailed in the funding request. Determination of awards will be based on the extent to which the application meets the review criteria (see page 7) and receives priority points (priority points are determined by the most current California Department of Education (CDE) data). Final awards may be less than the requested amount.

Selected school districts must enter a grant agreement with the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, which will govern the delivery of funds, in order to receive grant funds. Before grant agreements are issued, all grantees must obtain a Los Angeles County Vendor Number and submit a Grant Acceptance Form.

Responsibilities

The grant period will begin July 1, 2026 and will run through June 30, 2027. Grantees will be required to adhere to all provisions of the grant agreement, including:

- County grant funds must be expended after the grant agreement execution date.
- Matching Funds
Grantees must contribute matching funds at a minimum 1:1 ratio (i.e., for every dollar of County funds, one dollar of matching funds is required).

- Matching funds may come from the district or its funding partners.
- Potential sources include (but are not limited to): ELOP, General Fund, LCAP, Prop 28, Title I.
- Matching funds must be used for eligible projects, as described in the above section, and may be spent any time during the grant period.
- Ineligible project expenses also apply to matching funds.
- In-kind contributions (such as services or materials) are not allowed as sources of matching funds.
- A project lead must be designated to coordinate, implement, and monitor the project. The project lead will be named as the primary contact in the grant agreement, if awarded.
- The terms and conditions of the grant can be found in the sample grant agreement. lacountyartsedcollective.org/initiatives/school-based-arts-education/advancement-grant/manage-your-grant

Invoicing and Reporting

Grant funds will be distributed in up to three installments:

- 25% upon completion of all project planning and participation by the project lead in a dedicated Grantee Convening or a countywide network event
- 50% following a mid-project check-in call with Arts and Culture staff
- 25% upon completion of the project and submission of a complete final report that includes participation data, final budget, a brief narrative on project outcomes and at least one work sample.

Credit and Acknowledgment

School districts will be required to include standard credit language and/or logos acknowledging funding support from the Arts Ed Collective and LA County Department of Arts and Culture on all digital and print communications, promotional, press, product materials, facilities, or equipment relating to the funded project, as relevant.

School districts will be encouraged to submit a letter recognizing funding support and sharing the impact of the grant.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

Guidelines and Application Available	Wednesday, January 28, 2026
Open Office Hours	February 10, 26, + March 18, 2026
Funding Request Deadline	Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 6:00 pm
Panel Review	May 2026
Notification of Awards via Email	June 2026
Grant Acceptance Form Due	Upon notification of award
Grant Period	July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027
Grantee mid-project check-in with Arts and Culture Staff	Based on individual projects: October 2026 - April 2027
Final Report Due	May 15, 2027

SUBMIT A FUNDING REQUEST

The Funding Request can be accessed via Arts and Culture's online grant portal at apply-lacdac.smapply.io. All applications must be submitted electronically.

New applicants to the portal must register a user account. Complete the User Setup by selecting 'School District' in the Eligibility Profile. This will allow the user access to the Advancement Grant funding request. Please review the Application Instructions prior to using the portal at lacountyartsedcollective.org/advancement.

Complete applications must be submitted no later than funding request deadline. It is strongly recommended to submit the application at least five days prior to the deadline to give ample time to troubleshoot any issues.

Applications submitted late or with section(s) blank will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered for funding.

As a public agency, all information submitted to Arts and Culture in conjunction with a funding request becomes public record at the time the application is submitted.

REVIEW AND SCORING CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a peer panel of experienced arts and education professionals that may include district administrators, community arts partners, funders, and arts educators.

Each section of the application addresses items from one of the criteria below. Applications will be scored according to the following:

Criterion 1: STRATEGIC DIRECTION (35 points maximum)

Arts education goal(s) for the upcoming year are described in detail and are included in an active district plan such as the Strategic Plan for Arts Education or the Local Control Accountability Plan and align with the Arts Ed Blueprint. All district plan(s) are clearly cited. There is a compelling justification of why this is the right time to focus on this aspect of the district's arts plan, how this project builds upon past successes, and how it moves the district towards providing arts education for all students – and particularly those who have been historically and systematically excluded or precluded. It is clear how the project will initiate or expand arts education in the district. The proposed project is clearly aimed at generating resources, practices, skills, or knowledge that will be sustained beyond the term of the grant.

Criterion 2: QUALITY OF PROJECT PLAN (30 points maximum)

The project is thoughtfully designed. The project plan identifies specific activities that can be realistically accomplished with the designated resources and timeline. The project plan proposes specific tactics to support young people who have been historically and systematically excluded or precluded from participation in arts learning in ways that are culturally relevant, and responsive to the students to be served.

Criterion 3: QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION (10 points maximum)

The project has measurable goals and an appropriate evaluation methodology in place that uses qualitative and quantitative data to assess changes in the scale, quality, or equity of arts instruction provided in the school district.

Criterion 4: PERSONNEL CAPACITY (15 points maximum)

Professional staff are in place to manage and implement the project. There is evidence of support from multiple levels of district leadership. Staff or community partners providing student instruction or professional development for educators have demonstrated capacity to engage participants in diverse and culturally responsive learning experiences. The roles and responsibilities of the staff, district administration, and proposed partners are clearly defined.

Criterion 5: FISCAL CAPACITY (10 points maximum)

Project expenses are clearly described and calculated accurately. Specific activities have been appropriately budgeted. A minimum of one-to-one matching funds are committed and identified.

Priority Point Area 1: STUDENT POPULATION (16 points maximum)

Districts serving large student populations will earn priority points for supplemental funding as follows:

- Enrollment of 10,000 – 19,999 = 8 priority points
- Enrollment of 20,000 or greater = 16 priority points

Priority Point Area 2: UNDUPLICATED PUPIL COUNT (16 points maximum)

Districts with a high percentage of students in the Unduplicated Pupil Count will earn priority points for supplemental funding as follows:

- Unduplicated Pupil Count of 72 – 85.9% = 8 priority points
- Unduplicated Pupil Count of 86 % or greater = 16 priority points

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 132*

* Scores over 100 may receive an award less than or equal to the funding request, based on available funding each year

LEARN MORE

Application Workshops

For school districts interested in applying, check out our pre-recorded workshop series to learn about the guidelines, hear tips for submitting a strong request, and get support on navigating the Survey Monkey Apply grant portal.

Part 1: Understanding Eligibility and Requirements

Part 2: Scoring Criteria and Examples

Part 3: Using Survey Monkey Apply

The application workshops are available for viewing online at iacountyartsedcollective.org/advancement.

Technical Assistance Virtual Office Hours

Join us to have your questions answered by Arts and Culture staff. We are offering virtual office hours to support districts in applying for funding. Drop in anytime during the scheduled hours. We encourage you to review the recorded workshops before attending and bring questions for discussion.

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Virtual Office Hours: 10:00 – 11:30am

2026AdvancementGrantOfficeHours1.eventbrite.com

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Virtual Office Hours: 2:30 – 4:00pm

2026AdvancementGrantOfficeHours2.eventbrite.com

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Virtual Office Hours: 8:00 – 10:00am

2026AdvancementGrantOfficeHours3.eventbrite.com

Schedule a Meeting

Arts and Culture staff are happy to meet with you one-on-one to discuss this opportunity, your district's eligibility, or the application process. Schedule an appointment directly through our [Bookings page](#).

ELIGIBLE DISTRICTS

ABC Unified	Gorman Joint	Palmdale Elem.
Acton-Agua Dulce Unified	Green Dot Public Schools	Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified
Alhambra Unified	Hacienda La Puente Unified	Paramount Unified
Antelope Valley Union High	Hawthorne Elem.	Pasadena Unified
Arcadia Unified	Hermosa Beach City Elem.	Pomona Unified
Azusa Unified	Hughes-Elizabeth Lake Union Elem.	PUC Schools
Baldwin Park Unified	ICEF Public Schools	Redondo Beach Unified
Bassett Unified	iLead Charter Network	Rosemead Elem.
Beverly Hills Unified	Inglewood Unified	Rowland Unified**
Burbank Unified	Keppel Union Elem.	San Gabriel Unified
Castaic Union	Lancaster Elem.	San Marino Unified
Centinela Valley Union High	Las Virgenes Unified	Santa Monica-Malibu Unified
Charter Oak Unified	Lawndale Elem.	Saugus Union
Claremont Unified	Lennox Elem.	South Pasadena Unified
Compton Unified	Little Lake City Elem.	South Whittier Elem.
Covina-Valley Unified	Long Beach Unified	Sulphur Springs Union
Culver City Unified	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Temple City Unified
Downey Unified	Los Angeles Unified	Torrance Unified
Duarte Unified	Los Nietos Elem.	Valle Lindo Elem.
East Whittier City Elem.	Lynwood Unified	Walnut Valley Unified
Eastside Union Elem.	Magnolia Charter Schools	West Covina Unified
El Monte City Elem.	Manhattan Beach Unified	Westside Union Elem.
El Monte Union High	Monrovia Unified	Whittier City Elem.
El Rancho Unified	Montebello Unified	Whittier Union Elem.
Garvey Elem.	Mountain View Elem.	William S. Hart Union High
Glendale Unified	Newhall Elem.	Wilsona Elem.
Glendora Unified	Norwalk-La Mirada Unified	Wiseburn Unified

**Contingent upon the submission of a district adopted Strategic Plan for Arts Education by September 30, 2026.

HOW THE ARTS ED COLLECTIVE SUPPORTS SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Arts Ed Collective offers a continuum of services to school districts to help build infrastructure that allows all students to receive arts education as a core part of a well-rounded education.

Coaching for Strategic Planning: Coaching is provided to school districts to create or update five-year strategic plans for sustaining long-term, district-wide arts education, including planning for the use of increased arts education funding from Proposition 28 (The Arts and Music in Schools Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act) and district-identified goals aligned with the LA County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education. Applications for coaching support during the upcoming school year are available at lacountyartsedcollective.org/initiatives/school-based-arts-education/strategic-plan-coach.

Coaching for District Arts Coordination: Once the local school board approves the strategic plan, a year of coaching is available to help build the capacity of the arts committee and district staff to coordinate and manage successful implementation of the plan. School districts completing strategic plans this spring will be offered another year of coaching. School districts with new staff assigned to arts coordination for the upcoming school year may also request a coach.

Countywide Network: Ongoing support for arts coordinators and district arts committee members is available through a countywide network of leaders and practitioners who convene regularly to learn and collaborate. Events can be found at lacountyartsedcollective.org/initiatives/school-district-support/school-district-arts-coordinator-network.

Arts Ed Profile: The LA County Arts Ed Profile online tool allows teachers, parents, administrators, policymakers, funders, and others to find data about arts education provided by LA County public schools. The Arts Ed Profile Report 2015-18 provides key recommendations for addressing quantity, quality, and equity of arts education. The online tool and report are available at lacountyartsedcollective.org/research-evaluation/arts-ed-profile.

Funding for Implementation (Advancement Grants): School districts in partnership with the Arts Ed Collective that have school board-adopted strategic plans for arts education are eligible to apply for grant funding. These matching grants help districts initiate or expand strategies that increase and improve arts education in their district.

Technology Enhanced Arts Learning (TEAL): Developed and implemented as a partnership between the Department of Arts and Culture and LACOE's Center for Distance and Online Learning, TEAL provides TK-6 educators with online resources focused on integrating the arts and social-emotional learning (SEL) into the teaching of other core subjects (e.g., language arts, math, science, social studies). Get started at tealsel.org/.

Creative Wellbeing: The Creative Wellbeing program brings healing-centered, arts-based programming to schools, supporting the mental health and resilience of systems-impacted youth through culturally responsive instruction and community partnerships. More information is available at lacountyartsedcollective.org/initiatives/creative-wellbeing.

Contact Arts and Culture for assistance in considering your entry point for participation in Arts Ed Collective services for the upcoming school year.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture

The mission of the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture is to advance arts, culture, and creativity throughout LA County. The department provides leadership, services, and support in areas including grants and technical assistance for nonprofit organizations, countywide arts education initiatives, commissioning and care for civic art collections, research and evaluation, access to creative pathways, professional development, free community programs, and cross sector creative strategies that address civic issues. All of this work is framed by our longstanding commitment to fostering access to the arts, and the County's Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative. For more information, please visit lacountyarts.org.

Los Angeles County Arts Commission

The Commission supports and advocates for the mission, vision and values of the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, providing leadership, information, and resources with the community, artists, educators, arts organizations and municipalities in cooperation with the Department. The Commission is an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors, with three appointees for each District.

Arts Education Funders Council

The Funders Council is a coalition of government, corporate and foundation partners who support arts education and meet regularly to share knowledge, develop strategy, and provide fiscal oversight of shared investments in arts education in Los Angeles County. As a regional collaborative of public and private funders active since 2004, the Funders Council brings members together to have a collective impact on student learning in and through the arts.