



2027-2028 GUIDELINES

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About this Funding Opportunity

Equity in Arts Learning for Colorado Youth (EAL) seeks to increase access to arts education for historically marginalized youth. Grants of \$10,000-\$25,000 are available to support projects that bring professional artists and culture bearers into educational settings to lead programming with youth ages 4-21. Projects supported by EAL will exemplify the value of arts education, encouraging ongoing community support.

Goals of this Initiative

1. **Strengthen regional efforts to improve sustained access to arts education** for historically marginalized and minoritized youth. This includes youth who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual), persons with a disability, and/or those living in a rural community.
2. **Provide opportunities for youth ages 4-21 to work with professional artists** in an educational setting, especially youth who have limited or no access to high quality, sustained arts learning.
3. **Heighten awareness of the impact of arts education**, so that resources both financial and curricular increase state-wide, leading to more equitable access to arts education for youth.

Application Timeline

- ***Letters of Intent*** – Accepted September 28, 2026 – November 20, 2026

- **Invitations to Apply** – Sent by January 22, 2027
- **Full Application Due** – February 24, 2027
- **Award Notifications** – Sent by late April, 2027
- **Projects Take Place** – July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028
- **Final Report Due** – Thirty days after completion of project; no later than July 31, 2028.

For more information and virtual open office hours, visit our landing page [HERE](#).

Applicant Qualifications

Applicants must be a Colorado-based nonprofit organization, or a PK-12 school.

1. **For Schools Applicants:** School applicants must engage an artist or arts organization as a partner.
2. **For Organizational Applicants:** Organizational applicants must:
 - a. Be engaged with a school partner or have a strong history of working with youth
 - b. Be registered with Colorado Secretary of State with an address in Colorado
 - c. Have a Colorado-based staff person who will be actively engaged in the project

Project Design

Funded projects may take place at schools (during the school day or after school), community centers, libraries, nonprofit arts sites, and other locations that are highly accessible to youth.

Projects may involve any arts & culture discipline or genre, such as theater, dance, music, visual arts, media arts, literary arts, folk and traditional arts, or interdisciplinary art forms. Arts integration projects (connecting an art form with another subject area) are encouraged.

Projects should:

1. Take place over a period of time that allows for depth of learning and relationship building. *Ideally, projects take place over the course of six weeks or longer.*
2. Center the identities and needs of youth. *Youth should be consulted in the project's design and be able to influence the project's evolution along the way.*
3. Fill a clear gap in the school or community. *The rationale for the project should be informed by the stated needs of the student and community.*
4. Engage experienced artists and culture bearers. *Teaching artists should have a successful record of working with youth, and whose identities reflect the youth participants.*
5. Be highly accessible to youth participants. *A fee may not be charged for participation, and it must take place in a setting that youth are able to easily get to.*
6. Allow for time and resources to measure and communicate the project's value and impact. *Evaluation results will be collectively shared.*

Project examples:

- An artist residency in which students create a mural reflecting their school culture.
- A visiting musician works with youth at a local community center to create songs expressing their cultural identities.
- A media artist supports youth in creating a podcast featuring interviews with community elders.
- Youth write and produce a one-act play with guidance from a theater teaching artist using vignettes from their daily lives.

The following are NOT eligible for EAL funding:

- Programs that charge a fee to participants
- PK-12 staff salaries (Teacher stipends are allowable)
- General operating costs unrelated to the proposed project
- Capital improvement projects

Conflict of Interest Policy

We take seriously conflicts of interest among applicants and review panel members. A conflict of interest may exist when a panel member or an applicant's staff, board members, contractors, project partners, or their immediate family members:

- Have a personal, professional, or financial relationship with Think 360 Arts staff, board members, grant reviewers, or funding partners involved in the grant process;
- Could personally or financially benefit from a grant-funded decision, contract, or purchase;
- Participate in selecting or paying a vendor, contractor, or partner with whom they have a close relationship; or
- Have another relationship or interest that could compromise, or appear to compromise, impartial decision-making.

All review panelists must disclose any potential, actual, or perceived conflicts of interest prior to reviewing any application. Any panelist with a conflict must recuse themselves from the evaluation of that specific applicant.

The existence of a conflict does not automatically disqualify an applicant or prevent an expense or partnership from being approved. However, applicants must disclose known conflicts in writing as soon as they become aware of them, including conflicts that arise after an award is made. Individuals with a conflict must step away from related discussions and decisions.

Think 360 Arts will review each disclosure individually and may require additional documentation or a plan for managing the conflict. This may include recusal, independent review or approval, competitive vendor selection, or another reasonable safeguard. Failure to disclose a conflict may result in disallowed expenses, repayment of grant funds, suspension or termination of the award, or ineligibility for future funding. Questions or disclosures should be submitted to grants@think360arts.org.

Letter of Intent (LOI) Criteria

Profile Info:

- Applicant Name (Name of School, Nonprofit Organization)
- Name of person submitting LOI, administrator contact info (if school)
- Email
- Best phone number
- Title of project
- Estimated budget

Narrative:

1. Please describe the project. What are the goals, and what are the needs/gaps you are addressing? What activities will take place? *(500 word limit)*
2. Who are the partners (nonprofit arts & culture organization, teaching artist, school)? Describe your history of collaboration with these partners. *(250 word limit)*
3. What community(ies) will your project serve? *(250 word limit)*
4. In what city/county will the project primarily take place? *(Drop down list of counties)*
5. Roughly how many students/youth will this project serve? *(Fillable field)*

Important Note:

If selected to submit a full application, applicants will be required to submit a full budget, a narrative describing the program and its goals more specifically, and applicable letters of commitment (e.g., from the partnering school, artist or non-profit arts organization).

Full Application Criteria

Profile Info:

- Applicant Name (name of School or Organization)
- Name of person submitting LOI, administrator contact info (if school)
- Email
- Best phone number
- Title of project
- Arts Discipline(s) (drop down, select multiple, other field)
- Youth grades/ages served (ECE, K-5, 6-8, 9-12, 18-21 - select all that apply)

Narrative:

1. Provide a summary of the project request. Include the goals and objectives, activities, and timeline. Is this a new or existing program? If existing, how many years has it been offered?

2. What gaps in arts education in your community are being addressed, and how will the project make access to arts learning more equitable?
3. How have youth informed the project design, and how will they continue to be involved in co-creation during the project?
4. Where will the program take place? Describe how this location supports equity/access to your community.
5. Is there a selection process for students to participate? If so, what are the guidelines for participation?
6. Please provide demographic descriptions that apply to the *youth involved in the project*:
 - a. Do the youth served attend a Title I School? y/n
 - b. Do youth served live in a rural community? y/n
 - c. What percent identify as BIPOC? (fill in)
 - d. What percent identify as having a disability? (fill in)
 - e. What percent identify as LGBTQIA+ Youth? (fill in)
 - f. What percent live in a Low-to-Moderate Income Community? (fill in)
7. What evaluation methods will you use to assess the success of the program (e.g., surveys, interviews with students, public-facing programs)? How will you know that you have been successful in achieving your goals?
8. How will you document youth learning? Do you have opportunities to communicate success stories to your community? If so, please describe.

Required Attachments

For All Applicants:

- Project budget: [See Template](#)
- Artist Qualifications: Include Teaching Artist biography, resume/CV, and/or links to past projects

For School Applicants:

- Letter of Commitment from the partnering artist or arts organization
- Letter of commitment from your school or school district's leadership depending on the scope of the work, i.e. a principal or superintendent, respectively

For Nonprofit Organization Applicants:

- Letter of Commitment from your school or school district's leadership depending on the scope of the work, i.e. a principal or superintendent, partnering artist(s)
 - Organization budget for current FY
 - Financials/audit from most recent prior fiscal year (profit and loss, balance sheet)
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Frequently Asked Questions

Can individual artists apply for this grant?

No, individual artists are not eligible to apply for this grant. Individual artists are encouraged to partner with schools or nonprofit organizations as the artistic partners, with the school or nonprofit being the formal applicant.

Are past EAL grantees eligible?

Yes

Do you accept Fiscal Sponsorship for projects?

No, though we encourage deep community partnerships and innovative collaborations. Organizations eligible to apply are listed in the “Application Qualifications” section above.

What's your funding rate?

For full applications, our average funding rate over the past 3 years is 37% for applicants who are invited to complete the second phase of the grant application.

What Teacher Stipends are allowable?

While K-12 teacher salaries are not allowable as it is a duplication of public funds, extra duty stipends for time spent outside of contract hours may be included in the budget.

Can I apply for this grant to pay for staff salaries at a nonprofit organization?

We understand that for many arts nonprofits, the majority of the project costs will apply toward the direct implementation of the project, which will likely include artist and administrator time. Personnel expenses included in EAL projects must be directly associated with the delivery of the program.

Can this grant go toward hiring a new staff member?

As grantees will vary from year to year, we would discourage nonprofit organizations from applying to EAL to fund new hires. However, it is not a disqualification.

As an applicant, why do I have to have a staff member in Colorado in order to apply?

Staff presence in Colorado is important to us, as it shows a level of investment and authentic commitment to and understanding of our arts community. Proposals that engage Colorado artists are a top priority of this initiative.

Can I request less than \$10,000?

We encourage you to build a budget that includes artist fees, supplies, transportation, marketing costs, and staff time, if applicable. If you have considered these costs and the project is less than \$10,000, yes you may apply for an award less than \$10,000. An amount requested below \$10,000 might also reflect an opportunity to expand an existing program that has some funding in place.

Can I request funding for a program that already exists?

Yes, this does not need to be a new project.

Am I eligible to apply if I already receive funding from one of the funding partners?

Yes, as long as you can demonstrate the need for additional resources for the project proposal.

Can grant funds support supplies, transportation, or other program expenses?

Yes. Grant funds may support reasonable expenses directly related to delivering the proposed project, including artist fees, project supplies, transportation, accessibility accommodations, evaluation, and directly related administrative or personnel time. General operating expenses unrelated to the project are not eligible.

I've also applied to the Arts in Society Colorado Art Grant. Can I also apply for EAL Funding?

Yes. Applicants may apply to both programs if their proposed project aligns with each program's purpose and eligibility requirements. Before applying to either grant, we encourage you to review the linked [Arts in Society and Equity in Arts Learning Eligibility Comparison Guide](#), which outlines the major differences and includes examples of projects that may qualify for either or both programs.

Can EAL programs serve college students, since the ages listed are 4-21 years old?

Youth enrolled in Colorado PK-12 schools can be as old as 21, including, but not limited to, those in 18-21 programs and alternative pathway schools. EAL projects are not intended to support programming at the higher education level.

Does a project have to last at least six weeks?

Not necessarily. Six weeks or longer is recommended because EAL prioritizes sustained learning, meaningful skill development, and relationship-building. Shorter projects may still be considered. Generally speaking, one-time events, performances, or assemblies are generally not a strong fit.

Do nonprofit applicants need to partner with a school?

Not always. Nonprofit organizations may propose projects taking place in schools or in other settings that are accessible to youth, including libraries, community centers, and nonprofit arts spaces. Applicants that are not partnering with a school should demonstrate a strong history of working with youth and explain how participants will be reached and engaged.

Does the project have to take place during the school day?

No. Projects may take place during or after school, on weekends, or during school breaks. They may be offered at schools or other accessible community locations. Regardless of the setting, participation must be free for youth.

Do I need to have my teaching artist and project partners confirmed before submitting a Letter of Intent?

Applicants should identify their anticipated teaching artist and key partners in the Letter of Intent whenever possible. If invited to submit a full application, applicants will need to provide additional information about the artist's qualifications and letters of commitment/support from project partners.

What do you mean by “professional artist” or “culture bearer”?

Generally speaking, professional artists and culture bearers are individuals with demonstrated experience in their artistic or cultural practice and the ability to lead meaningful learning experiences with youth. A formal arts degree is not required. Applicants should provide materials demonstrating the artist's qualifications, relevant experience, and history of working with youth.