



2026 PROJECT GRANT GUIDELINES

ABOUT PROJECT GRANTS

Gwinnett Creativity Fund (GCF) Project Grants provide support for arts and cultural projects, initiatives or programming. Projects may range from visual and performing arts programming, theatre, music, film, and arts education. All project grants require a minimum of 25% cash match.

The application is open to 501(c)(3) organizations as well as qualified Gwinnett County-based public arts commissions. The application may be accessed here: <https://exploreghwinnett.smapply.io>

ABOUT GWINNETT CREATIVITY FUND (GCF)

The Gwinnett Creativity Fund celebrates the power of the arts and their role in shaping a vibrant, inclusive community. Designed to elevate Gwinnett County as a cultural destination, the fund supports projects that educate, inspire, and bring people together through creativity.

Developed and managed by Explore Gwinnett Tourism + Film with funding from the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners, the grant empowers local organizations to grow, expand programming, engage new and underserved audiences, and strengthen Gwinnett's reputation as both a cultural and economic hub.

2026 PROJECT GRANT TIMELINE

- **NEW APPLICATION DEADLINE:** Midnight, January 31, 2026
- **ZOOM ORIENTATION:** By appointment (required of first-time applicants)
- **NOTIFICATION:** February, 2026
- **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:** January 15 – November 15, 2026
- **FINAL REPORT DEADLINE:** 45 days after project completion OR no later than December 1, 2026

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:

- IRS Exempt Determination Letter (if a 501(c)(3) organization)
- Qualified public arts commissions should include a letter (on letterhead) detailing the partner entities for the project
- IRS Form W-9
- Organization Logo
- FY25 & FY 26 Budgets
- Current Income Profit/Loss Statement
- Project Budget
- Project Marketing Overview and Support Materials

FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR 2026

501(c)(3) arts, cultural and entertainment organizations and Public Arts Commissions that have substantial, current and ongoing involvement or impact in Gwinnett's arts and cultural landscape providing evidence of innovative community engagement, participation and measurable cultural impact. The GCF will prioritize:

- Gwinnett non-profits based in and serving Gwinnett County
- Other 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations (not necessarily based in Gwinnett County) who have documented partnerships with Gwinnett arts organizations, educational institutions, community groups or municipal entities with programs serving Gwinnett County residents
- First-Time Applicants
- Small to mid-sized organizations

ORIENTATION

An orientation is **required** of first-time applicants and recommended for other organizations. The brief ZOOM orientation session is available by appointment.

ELIGIBILITY

- Applications from a non-profit fiscal agent on behalf of a for-profit applicant are not eligible.
- Organizations must have been in existence for one year and can provide at least one year of financial documentation (budgets, profit and loss, etc.).
- Applicants must be a non-profit entity with a determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service declaring the organization as a 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Applicants must be dynamically engaged in performing, educating, exhibiting, or presenting arts and/or cultural programming or initiatives.
- Projects must include a public accessibility component; however, admission may be charged.
- A Gwinnett County organizational address not required

INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Individuals
- For-profit organizations
- 501(c)(6) organizations
- Organizations that have discriminatory policies and/or practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, economic status, disability, sex/gender, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information or political beliefs
- Certain event expenses may be ineligible
- Applicants who have not completed Final Reports for previous grant cycles will be ineligible to reapply

INELIGIBLE USES OF GRANT FUNDS

- Staff or contractor salaries, salaries, honorariums or stipends
- Artistic fees and travel expenses
- Awards
- Artist/Patron gifts or experiences
- Religious services and/or religious education
- Endowment
- Capital campaigns
- Food & Beverage
- Prepayment for Goods or Services

ACCESSIBILITY

All GCF funded projects should be held at ADA compliant facilities or locations. For information and guidance on making your programs accessible to people with disabilities, review the Accessibility Planning and Resource Guide for Cultural Administrators on the website of the National Endowment of the Arts:

<http://arts.gov/accessibility/accessibility-resources/publications-checklists/accessibility-planning-and-resource>.

HOW ARE ORGANIZATIONS EVALUATED?

Completed applications must be uploaded to the grant portal. All applications are reviewed/scored on a weighted matrix, and due to budget limitations, not all grant requests may be fulfilled.

GRANT DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

- Grant Guidelines
- Signed Grant Agreement
- Final Report

50% of the grant award will be paid upon receipt of the signed agreement and completion of “Big Check” photo. The final 50% is distributed once the final report is submitted, reviewed and approved.

Any organization that does not submit a final report by the deadline may be ineligible to apply for future Gwinnett Creativity Fund Grants and may be required to return the previously allocated funds. Recipients must request prior approval via the grant administrator for any changes in how funds will be utilized.

FINAL REPORT REQUIREMENTS

- Final Report Form (Budget section of this form **must be completed**)
- Updated Project Budget
- Marketing Materials (examples of marketing and promotion of the project)
- Sponsor/partners credit examples
- Recognition of GCF (logo on website and event collateral)
- Itemized receipts and invoices from all grant funds spent with cover page
- Photos from the completed project
- Video Testimonial

QUESTIONS?

Contact gcf@exploregwinnett.org.