



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Winter 2025/2026 Grant Cycle

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document contains both general information across the slate of available Vallejo Arts Fund grants AND specific information for each of the 5 Grant Opportunities available in the 2026-2028 Vallejo Arts Fund Phase 4 Cycle.

Below you can find the general information across all Applications. For specifics project/proposal eligibility, narrative, budget, and Sample materials information per Grant Opportunity, please skip to the CATEGORY SPECIFIC FAQs section.

CONTENTS

GENERAL

- [1. Why is Vallejo-rootedness the main criterion for VAF Grants?](#)
- [2. What types of artistic and/or cultural work does the Fund seek to support?](#)
- [3. What is the total Vallejo Arts Fund Phase Four grant investment?](#)
- [4. Why is VAF offering multi-year and single-year grants?](#)
- [5. What is the difference between the multi-year and single-year grants in Youth Arts Programs, Cultural Communities, and Places & Spaces Grants?](#)
- [6. How many Vallejo Arts Fund Grants can I Apply For?](#)
- [7. What happened to Three Palms Group?](#)
- [8. Why are some elements through the Center for Cultural Innovation and others through Vallejo Arts Fund?](#)
- [9. I know an individual or team who would be a great candidate for funding. How can I help this potential applicant?](#)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- [1. Who is eligible to apply to the Vallejo Arts Fund?](#)
- [2. Which for-profit organizations are eligible for funding?](#)
- [3. Who is ineligible to apply to the Vallejo Arts Fund?](#)
- [4. What is the difference between Cultural Bearers and/or Cultural Practitioners, versus cultural producers?](#)

[5. What is the difference between Emerging, Mid-Career, and Established Artists/Cultural Bearers?](#)

[6. I work at an organization. Can I apply to VAF opportunities?](#)

AWARD DETAILS

[1. How many grants are available in each program category?](#)

[2. If I am awarded a grant, how will I receive the funds?](#)

[3. If I am awarded a grant, is it considered taxable income?](#)

[4. If I am awarded a grant, will I need to submit a report? Are there any other requirements?](#)

HOW TO APPLY

[1. How do I apply for funding?](#)

[2. If I am the lead applicant, can I include paying myself in my budget?](#)

[3. What kind of Support Materials are required?](#)

[4. Why do Program Grants \(Youth Arts Programs, Cultural Communities and Places & Spaces Grants\) require two sets of Support Materials?](#)

EVALUATION

[1. What makes for a strong application?](#)

[2. How are applications evaluated?](#)

[3. Who reviews the applications?](#)

[4. In 2023, panelists could serve on the panel as long as they only applied in a different category. Why is the process different this year?](#)

NOTIFICATIONS

[1. The notification date has passed, and I haven't heard from VAF. Does this mean I didn't receive a grant?](#)

[2. If my funding request is declined in this round, can I reapply in the 2027-2028 round?](#)

[3. Do you offer feedback?](#)

[4. Will you publicize the names of grantees?](#)

SUPPORT

[1. I'm having issues with Submittable \(e.g., lost password, error messages, trouble uploading\) and need help. Who do I contact?](#)

[2. I have a project idea but I'm not sure if it's eligible. Who do I contact?](#)

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FAQs

MICROGRANTS

- [1. Why are there two kinds of Microgrants in this Winter 2026 Cycle?](#)
- [2. What is the difference between the two Microgrants?](#)
- [3. What do you mean that funding is unrestricted but subject to certain 501\(c\)\(3\) requirements?](#)

CAPACITY BUILDING COHORT

- [1. What does Vallejo Arts Fund Capacity Building Cohort funding support?](#)
- [2. What does Follow-Up Self-Directed Capacity-building mean?](#)
- [3. If I am not selected for the Capacity Building Cohort - can I still participate in workshops?](#)
- [4. How will we know when Cohort Activities are Scheduled?](#)

YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMS

- [1. Why are applicants required to have a track record of working with youth in an arts and cultural context for at least 3 years?](#)
- [2. I work at a youth-centered organization that provides multiple youth programs. Can I apply?](#)

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

- [1. What does VAF Cultural Communities Grants funding support?](#)

PLACES & SPACES

- [1. What is the difference between “Places” and “Spaces”? Why is VAF providing funding to both?](#)
- [2. What is the difference between the multi-year and single-year options?](#)
- [3. Why doesn't this Places & Spaces Grant cover expenses for artistic fees or programming?](#)
- [4. I produce Spaces in Vallejo. Do I need to have a lease or agreements with the various Places where my Spaces occur?](#)

GENERAL

1. Why is Vallejo-rootedness the main criterion for VAF Grants?

Based on feedback and insights gathered over the last two years from Vallejoans, one of the Vallejo Arts Fund's Guiding Principles will continue to honor the importance of applicants both residing and having "rootedness" in Vallejo. While some grant programs require applicants to be residents, the Vallejo Arts Fund has heard that some residents (even those born and raised in Vallejo) may not be rooted in Vallejo (i.e., they work, produce, and spend a majority of their time, income, or talents outside of Vallejo). Therefore, guided by the desire and feedback of Vallejoans, the VAF will require applicants to demonstrate both residency and rootedness as part of their application.

- **Residency** pertains to the place where an individual applicant lives, or an organization operates/is based within the Vallejo zip codes 94590, 94591, 94589, and 94592.
- **Rootedness** pertains to individual applicants who have and are able to demonstrate a strong or long history of working in Vallejo (a minimum of 3 years), are recognized by community members, and have contributed to or engaged with diverse Vallejo communities. Rooted projects invest in Vallejo, its individuals, communities, small businesses and more. Rootedness also accounts for the ways in which the applicant shows connection and accountability to the local communities' ways of being and knowing, their traditions, practices, places and spaces.

2. What types of artistic and/or cultural work does the Fund seek to support?

VAF aims to support the following:

- Artistic and cultural work within the performing arts, visual arts, digital and media arts, traditional folk arts, and oral/written storytelling.
- Individual artists and cultural bearers at all stages: early/emerging, mid-career, or established artists.
- Cultural or artist collectives, arts/cultural organizations and the places in Vallejo, CA that support this ecosystem.

*Note: VAF deeply appreciates the multifaceted aspects of arts and cultural practices. However, the VAF is currently **not** seeking applications for healing arts practices (i.e., massage therapists, reiki or acupuncture practitioners), nail artists, culinary artists, locticians, tattoo artists, yoga instructors, fitness/aerobics instructors, or makeup artists.*

3. What is the total Vallejo Arts Fund Phase Four grant investment?

The VAF Winter/Spring 2026 Grant Cycle will award grants in the following categories: Youth Arts Programs, Cultural Communities, Places and Spaces, Microgrants, and Capacity Building. A total of \$780,000 will be made available in this funding round.

4. **Why is VAF offering multi-year and single-year grants?**

Vallejoans have recommended that multi-year funding would be able to add stability to the Vallejo arts ecosystem. During the 2023 cycle, the VAF didn't have enough resources to support multi-year funding. Given the current \$1 million in funding from the Hewlett Foundation, this is now possible.

The VAF team has designed a 2026-2028 cycle that offers multi-year and single-year funding to support existing projects and programs by Vallejoan artists, cultural bearers, cultural producers, collectives, and arts/cultural organizations, while also creating opportunities to continue to experiment or build up programming histories for newer or short-term projects/programs. Additionally, single-year grants allow the VAF to continue to support individuals and collectives or organizations with project support. Finally, VAF has also maintained the original intention of the Individual Microgrant (Unrestricted) to support and financially invest in mid-career and established artists and cultural bearers, as well as the important place they hold in Vallejo.

5. **What is the difference between the multi-year and single-year grants in Youth Arts Programs, Cultural Communities, and Places & Spaces Grants?**

Vallejoan feedback advocated for creating opportunities to help sustain projects and programs that are operating in Vallejo while also trying to nurture new opportunities from capable applicants. Successful applicants meet the criterion and present a competitive application with clear narrative answers, strong examples of the arts/cultural expertise as well as experience working within the specific category communities (i.e., history working with youth, or cultural communities or producing arts/cultural events), compelling support materials, and a clear budget with a proposed project/program is feasible and achievable.

- In general, **multi-year grants** are designed to be ideal for Vallejo-rooted applicants with a history or track record of the project or program that they are proposing for multi-year funding.
- In general, **single-year grants** are designed to be ideal for Vallejo-rooted applicants with a history or track record of arts and cultural work that they are proposing, while giving space for smaller budget projects and/or newer projects or programs.

6. **How many Vallejo Arts Fund Grants can I Apply For?**

You may apply to all the opportunities that you are eligible for. However, you will only be awarded up to 2 grants.

7. What happened to Three Palms Group?

As things have shifted in the world, so too has the Vallejo Arts Fund. The VAF continues building on the foundation laid by Three Palms Group and the work of Maria Tucker, ser marin luna, and all of our collaborators. During Phase 4 the Vallejo Arts Fund will continue to be co-led by “DeLa” / Alison De La Cruz only now through Great Leap, Inc, a small arts organization in Los Angeles, CA where DeLa serves as the Executive & Artistic Director. Great Leap is partnering with Richmond, CA-based organization Calling Up Justice to continue building on the foundation laid by Three Palms Group and to welcome new voices and perspectives into this work.

8. Why are some elements through the Center for Cultural Innovation and others through Vallejo Arts Fund?

The Center for Cultural Innovation has been a key partner of the Vallejo Arts Fund since it launched in 2023. CCI serves as a partner and advisor in compliance, philanthropic giving best practices, sharing systems and expertise while supporting the Vallejo Arts Funds’ participatory grantmaking approach within the unique communities of Vallejo, CA. In this Winter 2026 cycle CCI will support the grant applications, and panelists will review them through Submittable to help streamline applying, reviewing, and scoring.

9. I know an individual or team who would be a great candidate for funding. How can I help this potential applicant?

The best way to help potential applicants is to share this opportunity with them and, if needed, support their application preparation. This may mean helping the applicant compose narrative responses, select support materials, or identify references. You might also support the applicant by reviewing their application for clarity and completeness or reaching out to VAF staff on their behalf with questions.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Who is eligible to apply to the Vallejo Arts Fund?

Applicants must:

- Be able to articulate and demonstrate rootedness in Vallejo, CA for at least 3 years.
- Reside full-time in California.
- Submit proposals for projects that will take place in Vallejo, CA.
- Be artists, individual arts workers (e.g., cultural producers, culture bearers, creatives, cultural practitioners, teaching artists, arts administrators, or specialized creative technicians), artist collectives, and arts/cultural organizations or the places and spaces that support this ecosystem. Please check the Specific Grant opportunity for specific applicant eligibility
- Be able to show their role(s) in the arts and culture sector and demonstrate that their artistic/cultural practice is public-facing through support materials.

2. Which for-profit organizations are eligible for funding?

To be eligible for Vallejo Arts Fund consideration, businesses must meet the following criteria:

- Be a commercial enterprise, including small businesses and sole proprietorships (Note: businesses do not have to be brick and mortar; they can be online storefronts or nomadic enterprises);
- Be based in Vallejo;
- Primarily provide a cultural, creative, or arts-related service or product;
- Be in good standing with the City of Vallejo, evidenced through possession of an active Vallejo business tax certificate (aka business license, business permit); and
- Cannot have a conflict of interest (family or financial relationships) with CCI, Great Leap, Calling Up Justice, or the Hewlett Foundation's boards, staff, and directors.

**Applicants recommended for funding will be asked to submit a copy of their active Vallejo business tax certificate. To register your business or renew your business tax certificate, visit the City of Vallejo website [here](#).*

3. Who is ineligible to apply to the Vallejo Arts Fund?

Applicants who:

- Are unable to articulate and provide proof of rootedness in Vallejo, CA for at least 3 years.
- Are unable to provide proof of full-time residency in Vallejo or California.
- Are unable to show their role(s) in the arts and culture sector and demonstrate that their artistic/cultural practice is public-facing.
- Request funding to support a project (only applicable to those applying for a Microgrant).
- Submit proposals for projects that take place outside of Vallejo, CA.
- Are 2023 Individual Micrograntees seeking to apply for a Winter 2026 Microgrant
- Request funding to pay themselves for non-artistic work (e.g., unrelated freelance work).
- Hire a consultant not tied to the proposed project.
- Using funds for work already completed.
- Use funding for lobbying or in support of any political campaigns, voting efforts, or in a manner inconsistent with CCI's charitable purpose under IRS Section 501(c)(3).

Note: VAF funding or any portion thereof is subject to certain 501(c)3 tax-exempt requirements, such as limitations on political activity and lobbying, private benefit (benefiting a person rather than furthering tax-exempt purposes), and private inurement (benefit to individuals affiliated with the organizations offering and managing this grant). In other words, funds cannot be used for political activity or lobbying, and they can't be used in ways that primarily benefit private individuals or businesses unrelated to the grant's purpose.

4. What is the difference between Cultural Bearers and/or Cultural Practitioners, versus cultural producers?

Cultural Bearers and/or Cultural Practitioners refer to individuals who are part of a traditional folk or cultural communities of practices and work across multiple genres/forms, including performing arts, visual arts, digital/media arts, and oral/written storytelling. Whereas, Cultural Producers are those creatives, artists, event producers or administrators who collaborate, plan, fundraise, activate or enable the creation of exhibits, live-productions, cultural spaces or events.

5. What is the difference between Emerging, Mid-Career and Established Artists/Cultural Bearers?

- **Emerging or Early-Career artists/cultural bearers** are at the beginning of their career, irrespective of age. This artist/cultural bearer is in the process of building recognition by consistent exhibition/production/presentation participation and starting to garner reviews or press coverage for their work and/or its impact. Cultural Bearers may also be moving from within basic knowledge and understanding of their traditions, into a more intentional focus towards learning protocols, practices, and forms.
- **Mid-Career artists/cultural bearers** are those who have already established a sizable audience, a consistent body of work and/or practice, and a defining style over a period of a number of years. Mid-career artists/cultural bearers have received local, regional or national exhibitions, productions, or presentations of their work in publications or for the public. For cultural bearers, recognition from elders or community members within their established cultural practice to highlight their place within their traditions, practice, or field, instead of in a broader mainstream cultural practice, is also acceptable.
- **Established artists/cultural bearers** are those who have established an extensive body of work and are widely recognized due to the scope of their public exhibitions, productions, publications or presentations. These artists may have their work presented at respected, well-known institutions or significant collections. These cultural bearers may have been named within their traditional practices as Master-level or Elders in the practice who can not only pass on traditional practices but may also have the license to create contemporary practices, forms or genres within the cultural community. These artists/cultural bearers may also be recognized for their historical significance or have a place within cultural discourse.

6. I work at an organization. Can I apply to VAF opportunities?

Yes! VAF supports individuals, collectives, and organizations.

- If you are seeking funding to support the operations of an organization, such as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, fiscally sponsored project, cooperative business, or for-profit entity, to name a few, or to fund a future project or program, then your organization (if rooted in Vallejo for at least 3 years) could apply to the VAF's Cultural Communities Grants, Youth Arts Program Grants, or Place & Space Grants.
- If you are an individual arts worker at an organization (i.e., artists, cultural bearers, cultural producers, arts administrators, arts educators, arts technicians, etc) seeking a professional development opportunity, consider applying to the VAF Capacity Building Cohort Grant. Both VAF Microgrants are also for *individuals*, and funding for Unrestricted Microgrants is meant to support mid-career or established individual artists or cultural bears; while Project-Restricted Microgrants can support individuals or artist collectives for a specific project.

AWARD DETAILS

Additional Category Specific FAQs are provided on page 17.

Note: Please note that although applicants can apply for both multi-year and single-year tiers, funding will only be awarded within one of these categories.

1. How many grants are available in each program category?

MICROGRANTS

- Individual Artist Microgrant (Unrestricted): Up to twenty \$3,000 awards are available for mid-career or established artists and/or cultural bearers whose body of artistic work, practice, and rootedness in Vallejo provides benefit to the broader community.
- Individual Artist or Artist Collective Microgrant (Program-Restricted): Up to twenty \$2,000 awards are available for artists/cultural bearers and/or artist/cultural collectives at all career stages who have been rooted in, working with, or engaging the broader Vallejo community and are seeking funding to support the completion of one artistic or cultural project. Expenses for this project-restricted grant can be spent on artist, producer, and/or venue fees; marketing or publicity; documentation, editing, and archiving; and hospitality for artists or community members, as well as production expenses (i.e., costumes, supplies, or printing).

Note: Please note that although applicants can apply for both unrestricted and program-restricted microgrants, funding will only be awarded within one of these categories. 2023 Micrograntees are ineligible for this grant opportunity.

CAPACITY BUILDING COHORT

Up to twenty grantees will be awarded \$2,000 to participate in the Capacity Building Cohort. Cohort members will be expected to spend up to 20 hours on cohort capacity-building activities and an additional 20 hours on follow-up, self-directed capacity-building.

YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMS

Up to eight awards ranging between \$10,000 - \$20,000, with funding terms of either one or two years, will be awarded to individuals, collectives, or organizations with programs that engage youth (defined as individuals 20 years or younger) in creating, exploring, exhibiting, or cultivating work in the performing arts, visual arts, digital/media arts, traditional folk arts, or storytelling.

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Up to six awards ranging between \$10,000 - \$20,000, with funding terms of either one or two years, will be awarded to individuals, collectives, or organizations that make, produce, teach, and/or engage in contemporary and traditional arts and cultural practices.

PLACES & SPACES

Up to nine awards, ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000, with funding terms of either one or two years, will be awarded to support costs associated with the production, use, and/or maintenance of a physical space or place that enables artistic and/or cultural production in Vallejo, CA.

Note: Given the breadth of possible costs associated with the Places and Spaces Grant, we encourage potential applicants to contact CCI at grants@cciarts.org to schedule a time to discuss your specific situation and funding request within this category.

2. If I am awarded a grant, how will I receive the funds?

If awarded a grant, the payment will be processed via ACH (i.e., direct deposit) through Tipalti.com—CCI's secure, third-party accounting software platform. CCI will issue the award in two payments: The first installment will be 90% of the grant funds, which will be paid once the grant agreement is signed and returned. The remaining 10% will be paid once all grant requirements have been met and a final report has been submitted and approved by CCI. Processing times will depend on the grantee's return of an electronically signed grant agreement and any other requested documents, such as the W-9 Form.

Grantees do not need a fiscal sponsor or another 501(c) (3) nonprofit intermediary to receive funding. However, they do have the option to use their fiscal sponsor or an incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit to contract with CCI and receive the awarded funds. For teams, the lead team member will be responsible for completing all grant and payment processing requirements. If the grant recipient decides to share their award with a team of collaborators, they may do so; however, CCI is not responsible for any due diligence or disbursement of funds to different team members.

We understand that fund disbursement may impact disability-related community support or other social benefits; therefore, we will structure options that work for each person's unique financial situation. Please contact CCI at 415.288.0530 or vafadmin@greatleap.org (including 'VAF Payment Request' in the subject line) to determine a plan that works best for you.

3. If I am awarded a grant, is it considered taxable income?

Please be aware that grant awards may be taxable as ordinary income. As CCI or VAF cannot offer legal or tax advice, grantees are advised to consult with an accountant, tax expert, and/or a benefits specialist. We understand that fund disbursement may impact disability-related community support or other social benefits, and are willing to structure options that work for each person's unique financial situation. Please contact CCI at 415.288.0530 or grants@cciarts.org (including "Vallejo Arts Fund Microgrant" in the subject line) if you have questions or would like assistance with options that may be available to you.

4. If I am awarded a grant, will I need to submit a report? Are there any other requirements?

- If you are awarded a multi-year grant, you will need to submit a brief interim report at the end of the first 12 months from signing the agreement. There is also a final report at the end of the 24 months of the award.
- If you are awarded a single-year grant you will need to submit a brief final report at the end of the first 12 months from signing the agreement.

CCI will provide further instructions on how to access the final report form through Submittable in the grant agreement. In addition, all grantees must submit a final report that is approved by CCI before they are eligible to reapply in the same Vallejo Arts Fund grant category again.

HOW TO APPLY

1. How do I apply for funding?

Applications will be accepted online ONLY through CCI's Submittable platform. Applicants MUST create an account in Submittable before they can access the grant application. Learn more about using Submittable here. The application can be accessed at:
<https://centerforculturalinnovation.submittable.com/>

2. If I am the lead applicant, can I include paying myself in my budget?

Yes, lead applicants are allowed to budget to include artistic, producer, curator, administrative or artistic technicians as part of their project budget. Consider how much time you are spending in your role on the project, your hourly rate, and the deliverables your work helps the project accomplish.

3. What kind of Support Materials are required?

Support materials are required for all applications. Examples of support materials include resumes, websites, articles/press, social media, and photos/video documents. Materials will be used to verify the applicant's role(s) in the arts and culture sector, demonstrate that their artistic/cultural practice is public-facing, and provide further context for the action's direct impact and results within the Vallejo community. Work samples are required and are crucial in helping panelists become familiar with the applicant's work. Panelists will spend up to seven minutes total viewing for requested work samples. Depending on the grant opportunity, applicants must be prepared to submit anywhere from 3-6 support materials.

- **Documents and/or image files**

- i. Support materials must be uploaded individually to the Submittable platform or uploaded in a single document.
- ii. The sample must be accompanied by its title, length, location (if applicable), and the year created. For example, "Vallejo Vibez Freestyle, Play Script, 2 pages, Marin, 2024".
 1. You may also include up to two sentences of contextual information. For example, "Venue. Vallejo art gallery. Workshop for artists. 2023. Workshop I led at a local gallery for creatives."
- iii. For Documents: We will accept .doc, .docx, and .pdf files. Each page of text and its header description (i.e., title, genre, year, and contextual information: published or produced or new work) should be displayed on a letter-size (8.5 x 11 inches) page.
- iv. For images, we will accept .jpg and .png files. Five high-resolution images are required, though you may upload up to ten. Note: the field to enter the work sample description (i.e., title, medium, dimensions, year, and contextual information) will appear AFTER your file is uploaded. It is otherwise not visible.
- v. For work sample images uploaded in a single document, we will accept .doc, .docx, and .pdf files. Five high-resolution images are required, though your document may include up to ten images. Each image and its description (i.e., title, medium, dimensions, year, and contextual information) should be displayed on a letter-size (8.5 x 11 inches) page.

- **Video files:**

- i. If uploading a video sample, cue the sample to the desired start time or include playback instructions in the work sample description, if applicable.
- ii. Support materials must be uploaded individually to the Submittable platform. We will accept .avi, .mp4, .mov, and .mpg files. If your sample is more than 3 minutes, include the desired start/end times in the work sample description. We recommend the MPEG-4 (H.264) format with a minimum resolution of 640x480 and MP3 audio. Resizing your video to these specifications before uploading will help your samples look better.
- iii. Each uploaded work sample must be accompanied by a one- to two-sentence description that includes contextual information and viewing/playback

instructions if applicable. For example, “Nigerian Cultural Dance Class at Dance Studio. Start sample at 00:05:03 and play until 00:08:09.”

4. Why do Program Grants (Youth Arts Programs, Cultural Communities and Places & Spaces Grants) require two sets of Support Materials?

Program Grants seek to support both quality arts/cultural work by the lead artist/cultural bearer and quality engagement with the niche community engaged in the grant (i.e., youth, cultural communities or places/spaces) arts/cultural contexts. Remember that materials will be used to verify the applicant’s role(s) in the arts and culture sector, demonstrate that their artistic/cultural practice is public-facing, and provide further context for the action’s direct impact and results within the Vallejo community. Work samples are required and are crucial in helping panelists become familiar with the applicant’s work. Applicants are encouraged to upload Support Materials that best show the context, quality, and nature of the lead artist’s work and the proposed project/program.

EVALUATION

1. What makes for a strong application?

In general, the most competitive applications are in the applicant's voice that are clearly written, to the point, and demonstrate a strong alignment with each criterion. Competitive VAF applicants will show their own rootedness and contributions to the Vallejo arts ecosystem through their own activation, creation, or ongoing tangible events, happenings, publications, performances, exhibitions, openings, rehearsals, and practices in Vallejo, CA.

Proposals with a budget are most competitive when the budget feels reasonable within the context of the project/program. Applicants are encouraged to utilize budget notes to clarify or help the panel interpret their budget. Additionally, if your budget is not balanced (i.e., your income exceeds your expenses or vice versa, your expenses exceed your income) explain your intentions. Finally, strong sample materials should provide the panel with the best representations of the applicant’s artistic/cultural work.

2. How are applications evaluated?

The VAF team will invite panelists with expertise in Vallejo as well as in artistic and cultural practices or production to review eligible applications and make award recommendations based on the alignment with the Fund’s mission, guiding principles, and rubric.

All Applications will be evaluated based on their ability to establish the following:

Applicants will be evaluated on their demonstrated connection to Vallejo, including at least three years of local engagement and meaningful contributions to the community. Their project must align with the VAF mission and exhibit strong artistic and cultural value, uplifting diverse practices across performance, visual, digital/media, folk, and storytelling traditions, while contributing to Vallejo's cultural life. Reviewers will assess the clarity, organization, feasibility, and budget accuracy of the proposal, as well as the applicant's ability to manage funds. Preference is given to projects led by Vallejo artists, particularly from historically excluded communities, that support new, underfunded, or under-the-radar voices and that build Vallejo's cultural capacity. Equity, care, transparency, inclusivity, and adherence to "do no harm" principles are critical. Finally, the proposal should address urgent or unmet community needs, amplify local stories, and provide meaningful impact in Vallejo neighborhoods.

The Vallejo Art Fund aims to ensure that grantees reflect the diversity of the Vallejo creative landscape, with a priority for those who are underrepresented or under-the-radar in the region, field, or artistic discipline. To that end, the VAF will seek to balance the final grantee pool across various factors, including geography, disciplines, communities served, and the cultural form and/or tradition represented.

3. Who reviews the applications?

The VAF team will invite panelists with expertise in artistic and cultural practices, production, and cultural community, and Vallejo expertise to review eligible applications and make award recommendations.

The Panel will evaluate the applicants based on the submitted proposals, and the applicants' rootedness in Vallejo, their body of artistic work, their artistic practice, ability to complete the proposed project, and the proposal's alignment with the VAF guiding principles.

4. In 2023, panelists could serve on the panel as long as they only applied in a different category. Why is the process different this year?

VAF's approach is to enter this opportunity with humility, centering respect for all, an environment of mutual learning, collective and deep relational practices, transparency, and action-based care. VAF recognizes that any new effort takes patience, time, and care. Since the 2023 VAF Panel process, several things have shifted based on the feedback from the Vallejo community and the Center for Cultural Innovation, updating our Panelist best practices.

As part of a shift this year, applicants can no longer serve on the Funding Panel.

- VAF has done extensive outreach to locate and encourage Vallejo-based panelists with the artistic, cultural practices, production, cultural community and Vallejoan expertise necessary to effectively evaluate proposals.
- Additionally, VAF opened a broad Panelist call, which also invited artistic/cultural content experts to apply to be in the pool of Panelists.

- In the event that the Vallejo Arts Fund is unable to seat enough Vallejo-rooted panelists or Vallejo residents, VAF will select arts/cultural content experts deeply interested in supporting Vallejo arts and culture, the VAF guiding principles and the work of the VAF.
- All non-Vallejoan panelists will receive additional training on the Vallejo history, demographics, arts and cultural ecosystem context, etc.

NOTIFICATIONS

1. The notification date has passed, and I haven't heard from VAF. Does this mean I didn't receive a grant?

All applicants will be notified regarding their application status via Submittable. If you haven't received notification from VAF by the promised date and time, please check your spam folder. You can also view your application status by logging into your Submittable account. To ensure the timely delivery of all communications, please safelist notifications@email.submittable.com.

2. If my funding request is declined in this round, can I reapply in the 2027-2028 round?

Yes! However, note that the next round of funding will only provide single-year grant opportunities.

3. Do you offer feedback?

We are unable to provide feedback on individual Vallejo Arts Fund applications. However, VAF will offer a general feedback information session where staff will share overall feedback, including trends across applicants who were not selected. If there are still questions after that, Vallejo Arts Fund staff are available to schedule a 15-minute phone call with declined or prospective applicants to review grant guidelines and review criteria. Please contact us at vafadmin@greatleap.org (including 'Vallejo Arts Fund Applicant Feedback' in the subject line) to coordinate.

4. Will you publicize the names of grantees?

The names of Vallejo Arts Fund grantees may be included in communication channels of Hewlett Foundation, VAF, Great Leap, or Calling Up Justice, such as our e-newsletter, social media accounts, website, and press releases, as well as in future Vallejo Arts Fund guidelines.

SUPPORT

1. I'm having issues with Submittable (e.g., lost password, error messages, trouble uploading) and need help. Who do I contact?

For technical assistance (e.g., password or upload issues), request support at: <https://www.submittable.com/help/submitter/>. Submittable's business hours are 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. MT. They aim to respond within 24 business hours.

2. I have a project idea, but I'm not sure if it's eligible. Who do I contact?

For project assistance (e.g., eligibility, scope, budget, etc), request support by emailing vafadmin@greatleap.org with VAF Project Question in the subject line. VAF's business hours are 10 am – 4 pm PST. They aim to respond within 24 business hours.

----- **PROGRAM SPECIFIC FAQs** -----

To help applicants better navigate across the full slate of Vallejo Arts Fund grant opportunities, we have included additional information for each category.

MICROGRANTS

1. Why are there two kinds of Microgrants in this Winter 2026 Cycle?

Vallejoans have consistently emphasized throughout the history of VAF that both unrestricted and project-based support for individual artists is crucial. In 2023, nearly 200 artists applied for the VAF Microgrant, with only 29 grants awarded; therefore, a large pool of potential grantees remains. Feedback to support mid-career and established artists, those who have been in this work the longest, not only would benefit from investment, but it would also ripple back into Vallejo through these artists.

Additionally, Vallejoans expressed a new need for smaller pots of money to be available for individuals and artist collectives to produce one-time or short-term, smaller-budget projects in Vallejo. These projects may help spark collaboration, experimentation, and innovation, providing artists at all stages of their careers with the opportunity to continue investing in Vallejo's arts and cultural ecosystem.

2. What is the difference between the two Microgrants?

Essentially, one opportunity is unrestricted for mid-career and established artists, while the other is open to artists at any stage in their career or artist collectives to receive a program-restricted microgrant to support one artistic or cultural project.

3. What do you mean that funding is unrestricted but subject to certain 501(c)(3) requirements?

Vallejo Arts Fund Individual Unrestricted Microgrants are unrestricted, meaning you can decide how you'd like to use the funds. However, funds awarded must be used in support and furtherance of your artistic work and contribute to a broader public benefit.

Here are a few examples of how you may use funding:

- To cover living expenses while you're creating or performing your work
- Travel for artistic collaborations, exhibitions, or residencies related to your artistic practice

- For artistic training or coaching (like acting lessons, or professional development workshops that move your artistic or cultural practice forward)
- To purchase equipment or materials used in your practice (e.g., instruments, software)
- To pay for health insurance during a creative period (such as payment for COBRA during a residency)

Please note that these are just a few examples of how funding can be utilized. If you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact CCI at grants@cciarts.org.

CAPACITY BUILDING COHORT

1. What does Vallejo Arts Fund Capacity Building Cohort funding support?

VAF seeks to increase the capacity of both individuals and the broader Vallejo arts and cultural ecosystem through this opportunity. Grantees will become part of a Cohort and receive support for 40 hours of capacity-building time. Additionally, a Cohort Facilitator the relational building amongst the cohort, as well as serving as a sounding board for grantees, and to support the public workshops. Grantees will also have 20 hours of self-directed follow-up to assess how they would like to build out the capacity of their artistic/cultural practice.

2. What does Follow-Up Self-Directed Capacity-building mean?

While VAF hopes that Cohort grantees will have valuable experiences through cohort activities, including public workshops, this grant also seeks to support the grantees in determining how they want to invest in and increase their own capacity. So, grantees will also have 20 hours for their own follow-up on ideas or new skills from a public workshop, Cohort discussions, and more. VAF not only values relational practices and building within the Vallejo community, but also seeks to empower and strengthen individual artists and cultural bearers.

3. If I am not selected for the Capacity Building Cohort, can I still participate in workshops?

Yes! While this grant directly funds 20 grantees, the broader Vallejo Arts and Cultural Ecosystem will be invited to and later have digital access to seven public capacity-building workshops (60-90 minutes each) and their materials.

4. How will we know when Cohort Activities are Scheduled?

Vallejo Arts Fund has outlined that the Capacity Building Cohort will begin meeting on Friday, April 10, 2026, with more specific information to follow. Free public workshops will begin monthly, from May to November 2026. Cohort members will have final meetings in January and February 2027 to reflect on their process, finish their final reports, and gather to celebrate. VAF will share additional details and timelines for the public workshops in February 2026.

YOUTH ARTS PROGRAMS

1. Why are applicants required to have a track record of working with youth in an arts and cultural context for at least 3 years?

The Vallejo Arts Fund values both expertise in arts and cultural work and youth work. VAF seeks to support projects and programs that provide youth with arts and cultural workshops, classes, or experiences with teaching artists in safe contexts.

Youth Arts Programs grants could support:

- Workshops and/or Classes in community-based spaces where youth learn, practice, and explore the skills and practices in a particular art form in Vallejo. These can be ongoing or new arts/cultural workshops/classes.
- Support for individual artists and/or organizations who are already working within School-Based Arts Education programs in Vallejo.
- Programs that use art and culture to engage with youth who have been impacted by the Juvenile Justice System in Vallejo.
- Programs that connect youth to elders, or nature, and/or technology through art-making and/or self-expression in Vallejo.
- Youth-based digital art and podcasting

2. I work at a youth-centered organization that provides multiple youth programs. Can I apply?

The Youth Arts Program grants are designed to support artists and cultural bearers engaging with young people (aged 20 or younger) in a variety of contexts. If your organization has a track record of providing quality arts and cultural programming or projects for youth in Vallejo, CA, then you are able to apply. The multi-year grants are designed to support existing youth arts projects/programs. Newer projects/programs can apply for single-year grants.

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

1. What does VAF Cultural Communities Grants funding support?

Cultural Communities Grants support individual artists, cultural bearers, collectives, arts/cultural organizations, or community-centered organizations that engage in contemporary and traditional arts and cultural practices within the performing arts, visual arts, digital and media arts, traditional folk arts, and oral/written storytelling.

Examples might include, but are not limited to:

- Traditional Folk Arts & Cultural Practices in Vallejo, such as requests for funding to support Miwok basket weaving, West African drumming, or Southern Filipinx cultural dance projects.
- Contemporary Arts and Cultural Workshops, Classes, Programs, Exhibitions, Productions, Concerts, Festivals, or Public Sharings.
- Projects that center artistic forms, experiences, or expressions emerging from Vallejo's

cultural communities.

- General Operating Support for administrative, marketing, and organizational development efforts that strengthen cultural programs and sustainability.
- Initiatives that bridge neighborhoods, generations, or cultural communities, fostering shared learning and collaboration.

PLACES & SPACES

1. What is the difference between “Places” and “Spaces”? Why is VAF providing funding to both?

- a. Places are physical locations in Vallejo that produce, exhibit, present, host, and/or create arts and cultural events, workshops, and happenings.
- b. Spaces may be a series of events, such as an open mic or a pop-up screening series, that regularly gather artists and audiences at a single location in Vallejo or a series of locations in Vallejo.

During the 2023 VAF Cycle, we offered an Arts & Cultural Space Grant guided by Vallejoan priorities. Feedback, insights, and observations from the last several years have recommended that VAF continue to invest in physical Places where arts and culture take place, as well as their maintenance and upkeep. To support this, multi-year funding was introduced to enable grantees from the Places category to apply for long-term funding.

Additionally, VAF has noted that there are cultural producers who may not have enough capital for a physical place but contribute to the ecosystem through pop-up or itinerant Spaces that create, host, and share valuable projects and programs in Vallejo. This grant opportunity may also provide a collaboration opportunity between Space producers and physical places in Vallejo that may not be able to apply on their own. Spaces applicants may be best suited for single-year funding, given the potential budget size of Spaces projects.

2. What is the difference between the multi-year and single-year options?

A two-year (multi-year) grant is ideal for physical places with an existing track record and, history of engagement with arts/culture within Vallejo. While a single-year grant may be ideal for itinerant or pop-up spaces in Vallejo, CA.

3. Why doesn't this Places & Spaces Grant cover expenses for artistic fees or programming?

Vallejoans have been loud and clear about the deep need for quality local arts and cultural Places and Spaces. If you are interested in receiving funding for programming within a Vallejo Place or Space, you are encouraged to consider a Youth Arts Programs or Cultural Communities Grant for existing or larger budget projects/programs. For smaller budget projects or one-off events, consider inviting a partner artist or artist collective to apply for the Individual Artist or Artist Collective Microgrant (Project-Restricted).

Note: Given the breadth of possible costs associated with the Places and Spaces Grant, we encourage potential applicants to contact CCI at grants@cciarts.org to schedule a time to discuss your specific situation and funding request within this category.