

Cultural Facilities Grant | FY2025 Guidelines

These grants help Vermont nonprofit organizations and municipalities enhance, create, or expand the capacity of an existing building to provide cultural activities for the public. Cultural activities are defined broadly as activities that enhance artistic, creative, aesthetic, historic, or scholarly appreciation by members of the public. This includes performances, exhibits, readings, film screenings, displays, workshops, etc.

Applicants must own a facility that has been in existence for a minimum of ten years prior to the application deadline and it must be physically located in Vermont. When making improvements to facilities, applicants are encouraged to hire Vermont-based vendors and to consider energy-efficient and/or climate-resilient options. Facilities that experienced damage from the 2023 flooding may be eligible to apply for repairs if they meet the existing eligibility and funding criteria.

Examples of projects eligible for funding include:

- improvements to wiring, heating, lighting, and plumbing
- accessibility features such as elevators, lifts, assistive listening systems, ramps, and bathrooms
- stage improvements such as curtains, lighting, sound, and rigging
- permanent display panels or exhibit cases affixed to the building
- fixed equipment
- improvements to environmental controls, storage, or lighting for collections care
- hazard mitigation efforts such as flood gates, sump pumps, rain gutters, sprinkler systems
- energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, heat pumps, renewable energy systems, LED lighting

Cultural Facilities Grants do not fund:

- overhead, operating support, studies, surveys, engineering reports, or architectural fees
- programming, temporary exhibits, performances, or activities
- multi-year projects
- routine maintenance (e.g., exterior or interior painting, carpeting)
- moveable furniture, rugs, or appliances
- major structural repairs to foundations, roofs, windows, etc.
- new construction unless directly connected to accessibility improvements
- electric vehicle charging stations

See [Notes and Terms](#) for additional information.

Who May Apply or Receive Funding

Vermont municipalities or nonprofit organizations incorporated in the State of Vermont that:

- own and operate the facility
- have a [Unique Entity ID \(UEI\)](#) from the federal government. You may apply before obtaining a UEI, but an award cannot be made until this ID is established.

Who May Not Apply or Receive Funding

Any organization or municipality that:

- has an outstanding final report with the Arts Council
- received a Cultural Facilities Grant of any value during the previous fiscal year
- received a Cultural Facilities Grant of \$15,000 or more in one of the past two fiscal years
- received a grant from any of the other Building Communities Grants Programs in the same fiscal year in which they are applying for a Cultural Facilities Grant
- received \$50,000 or more from the State Capital Appropriations Budget within the past three years
- is a Vermont public school (preK-12, state college, or university)
- is a privately owned business/building

Grant Amounts and Matching Requirements

Awards range from \$1,000 to \$30,000 and must be matched on a 1:1 basis. At least 50% of the match must be in cash. Up to 50% can be in well-documented in-kind materials and/or labor. Funds from other state sources may not be used to match a Cultural Facilities Grant. Funds will be issued only after the project work is completed and the required reports are submitted. Grant amounts are dependent upon state funding and are subject to change.

Criteria for Selection and Expectations

Applicants should provide a clear presentation of the project that is consistent with the organization's mission and demonstrates:

commitment to cultural programming and activities through (weighted at 30% of review):

- well-planned ongoing and/or high potential for cultural activities open to the public
- expanded or improved use of any existing public facility for cultural activities
- response to community needs and interests

overall quality of the project is high, and includes considerations such as (weighted at 70% of review):

- facility needs
- a prioritized plan for facility improvements (and collections care if applicable)
- the preservation of significant historic features and consideration of community context when renovations are occurring in a historic building
- ability to manage the project
- a reasonable and appropriate budget and grant request
- strong fundraising efforts and a well-articulated case for financial need
- maximized use of available funding and community resources
- compliance with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the ADA Amendment Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325) which became effective on January 1, 2009

Funding Requirements

Work undertaken on historic buildings must meet the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects](#). Grant funds and matching funds may only be used for materials ordered or purchased and for work begun and completed after notification. Construction must be done in adherence to relevant building codes and guidelines (e.g., 2010 Standards for Accessible Design).

See [Applicant and Grantee Information](#) for more information regarding requirements.

Application and Deadline

The application deadline is **May 6, 2024, at 11:59 pm**. Notification will occur by August 31, 2024. Funded activities must be completed between September 1, 2024, and August 31, 2025. Applications must be submitted through the Council's [grant portal](#).

Nondiscrimination Policy

The Vermont Arts Council is committed to supporting entities that maintain an environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic bias, disability, citizenship, veteran status, or other category protected by applicable state or federal law.

Questions?

Inquiries about the Cultural Facilities Grant program should be made by sending an [email to Michele Bailey](#) or by calling 802.402.4614.

Inquiries about using the online application system should be made by sending an [email to Meredith Bell](#) or by calling 802.402.4478.