

HEWLETT 50

ARTS COMMISSIONS

The Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Folk & Traditional Arts Projects

Administered by the

Alliance for California Traditional Arts



Who can apply for a Commission?

The building blocks of a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions application is the partnership between a **lead applicant** and a **lead artist**.

The lead applicant must be a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization based in one of 11 Bay Area counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma. The nonprofit organization must have a minimum annual organizational budget of \$50,000, averaged between fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

The lead artist can reside anywhere in the world.

How can we apply for a Commission?

Visit actaonline.org/hewlett50 beginning on January 22, 2021, to learn more and apply for a Commission online. The Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) is the administrator for this round of the initiative with the Hewlett Foundation.

What are folk & traditional arts?

Folk and traditional arts are expressions that are learned as part of the cultural life of a

community. Members of these communities may share a common ethnic heritage, cultural mores (customs), language, religion, occupation, or geographic region. These traditions are shaped by the aesthetics and values of a shared culture, and are passed from generation to generation through observation, conversation, and practice. These expressions are often passed on through oral tradition and represent time-honored vernacular education systems. Traditional arts flourish as they continually change and adapt to new settings and circumstances while remaining informed by shared ancestral knowledge.

Forms as diverse as Ohlone basketry, gospel music, Japanese *koto* music, Oaxacan mask making used in dance-ritual, and queer voguing are all examples of folk & traditional arts. Each of these expressions is strongly rooted in specific tribal, ethnic, regional, or cultural communities.

The initiative seeks to support a wide variety of traditional art forms to show the breadth, creativity, and living practices rooted in cultural communities.

How should I understand what a “new” work eligible for a commission is in the context of the folk & traditional arts?

Traditional arts practices are distinguished and informed by cultural context, history, and lineage. In order for these expressions to thrive into the future, they continually evolve. What is *new* in a proposed project can be based on many things. We encourage *new* compositions, *new* choreographies, *new* narratives. We also encourage works focused on *new* repertoire, *new* partnerships, taking work to a *new* scale, *new* research, or a type of collaboration that has never happened before.

The initiative will support projects that create new dance, music, storytelling, and theater work in the folk and traditional arts. Proposed projects may also be in other folk & traditional arts genres, but should have a strong performative element, according to the community of practice. It is critical that applicants that are not predominately dance, music, storytelling, or theater works explain how performance and audience are understood through their cultural practices and lenses.

What are the responsibilities of the lead applicant?

The lead application is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that is responsible for submitting the application, entering into the grant agreement with the Hewlett Foundation, commissioning the lead artist, and managing the project to completion. The lead applicant and lead artist should collaboratively plan the project and prepare the application. A lead applicant organization may collaborate with other organizations.

What kind of nonprofit organization should be a lead applicant?

Proposals are welcome from 501(c)(3) charitable organizations in the arts sector as well as from nonprofits from other sectors. Applicants must be headquartered in one of the 11 Bay Area counties and have an average annual organizational budget of \$50,000 or greater, as described above.

What if we do not have nonprofit status? Can we still apply?

Entities without 501(c)(3) nonprofit status may apply through a fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor must be 501(c)(3) charitable organization, be headquartered in one the 11 Bay Area counties, and have an average annual organizational budget of \$50,000 or greater, as described above.

Fiscal sponsorship is an arrangement between a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (the fiscal sponsor) and a charitable project. The fiscal sponsor serves as the lead applicant. Learn more about fiscal sponsorship models [here](#).

Can a fiscal sponsor submit more than one application to this application round?

Yes, a fiscal sponsor may be a lead applicant for multiple fiscally sponsored projects. Additionally, a fiscal sponsor may also choose to apply for its own project. A fiscal sponsor may not apply for more than one of its own projects.

Can current Hewlett Foundation grantees apply?

Yes, current Hewlett Foundation grantees in all program areas are eligible to apply if they meet the eligibility requirements.

Can a lead applicant who has previously received a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award apply for another commission?

No. Any lead applicant that has received a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award in the past may not apply again as a lead applicant. Past recipients of a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award may act as a fiscal sponsor for a project that it is not leading, or serve a partner organization to another lead applicant.

What is the role of the lead artist?

The **lead artist** is the person primarily responsible for the creation of the commission. The lead artist may be based anywhere in the world. Individual artists are not eligible to apply directly for the initiative but must partner with a lead applicant organization. The lead applicant would receive the commissioning award from the Hewlett Foundation and commission (pay) the lead artist to create the new work. The lead applicant and lead artist should collaboratively plan the project and prepare the application.

What if the lead applicant would like to commission an artist collective or an ensemble?

The lead applicant may work with an artist collective or an ensemble, but the lead applicant must designate a single artist from the collective or ensemble to act as lead artist for the application.

Does the lead artist have to be from the Bay Area?

No, the lead artist may be from anywhere in the world.

Is preference given to local, national, or international artists?

Artists may be based anywhere in the world, with no preference for one location over another.

Is it necessary for the creation and development of the work to take place in the 11 Bay Area counties listed above?

No, the commissioned work may be created or developed anywhere in the world as long as the world premiere or public sharing of the work happens within the 11 Bay Area counties.

Can an artist apply more than once?

An artist may serve as the lead artist on only one application per application cycle. A lead artist may serve as a collaborator on other applications in the same cycle. Any lead artist that has received a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award in the past may not apply again as a lead artist but may serve as a collaborator on subsequent applications.

Can lead artists that were awarded the Gerbode Foundation Special Awards in the Arts or the Creative Work Fund apply?

Projects that have received funding through the Gerbode Foundation Special Awards in the Arts or the Creative Work Fund (a program of the Walter & Elise Haas Fund) are not eligible for the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions. Lead applicants and artists that have received funding through these two grant programs are eligible to apply for the 50 Arts Commissions so long as they are applying for a project is different from what was funded by the Gerbode Foundation Special Awards in the Arts or Creative Work Fund.

Are student projects eligible?

No. The lead artist may not be a student at the time of application submission, or during the grant period. Additionally, projects featuring performers that are predominantly school-age students (K-12 and college) are not eligible to apply.

Are adaptations of existing works eligible?

Yes, adaptations of existing works are eligible so long as the adaptation of the existing work includes significant reimagining or creative alterations by the lead artist.

What criteria will be used to evaluate applications?

Folk & traditional arts are as diverse and innovative as the cultural communities they represent. It is important for applicants to provide enough specificity for the reviewers to understand cultural and community contexts of the project and artistic practice to ground and animate the nuances, aesthetics, and themes of the project.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following selection criteria:

1. Artistry & Lineage: Proposals will articulate the cultural context of the artistic practice and proposed project. They will provide perspective on how a community values the practice and how it assesses artistry, beauty, and vision. The lead artist's training, lineage, education, and accomplishments will demonstrate why they are positioned to be in the distinctive role of lead artist.

2. Project Concept: Proposals will clearly articulate the subject matter and major theme(s) of the proposed project and explain how the work will illuminate or advance the key theme(s). Proposals will also communicate the artist's depth of thought and distinct creative approach to the theme(s).

3. Project Design & Planning: Proposals will convincingly show how the lead applicant, lead artist, and key collaborators have the capacity to fully realize the project. Key indicators of strong project design include a coherent and achievable timeline, clear and viable budget, and clear roles and responsibilities. Strong proposals will give evidence that the project brings together the administrative and artistic resources, knowledge, and team to ensure the project will be created and produced as planned.

If selected to submit a full proposal, an expanded and more detailed project design and plan will be required, including a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that explains the rights and responsibilities between the lead applicant and the lead artist.

4. Audience & Community Impact: At the heart of the commissions is performance and public sharing to benefit both residents of the Bay Area and beyond with bold works of art that give voice and value to the idea of creation. We acknowledge that for many folk & traditional arts practices, "performance" may take many forms and is not bounded by a site, stage or audience. Therefore, applicants are asked to explain what "performance" and "audience" mean for their practice and for the proposed project, through their specific cultural lens.

Proposals will describe the intended constituents, participants, and/or audiences for the new work. Strong proposals will describe the impact the proposed project is likely to have on the art form, the cultural community or communities, and/or the artist(s). Proposals should describe any plans to improve the accessibility of the project, such as disability access, language, ticketing policies, or public events beyond the performance. The applicant's rationale for the venue and any plans to present the work outside of the Bay Area (not required) will also be considered.

If selected to submit a full proposal, applicants will need to describe outreach, promotion and community engagement activities, if any. Applicants are not required to conduct outreach, community engagement, or co-creation activities but if the project includes them, clear descriptions of these processes, and the experiences of the artist(s) to lead them are necessary.

5. Financial Capacity: Lead applicants must have sufficient financial capacity to achieve the goals of the project. Financial capacity is demonstrated by the fiscal stability of the lead applicant and the viability of the project budget. Strong proposals will demonstrate the applicant has the financial capacity to fulfill the commissioned project without creating great financial strain on the organization.

Can we apply for an award for a work currently in development?

The Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions initiative is designed to support the development of new works. Projects for which the bulk of the creative work has already been completed are eligible to apply but unlikely to result in a competitive application. Work that has been performed as workshops or as a work-in-progress are eligible. If a work has already been fully staged, it is ineligible for a commissioning award.

Are projects without a confirmed venue eligible to apply?

Yes, works that have not yet confirmed a venue for the world premiere are eligible to apply. The lead applicant should list potential venues and explain how they will select the venue(s) in the Letter of Intent.

Can the commissioned work be premiered as part of an annual festival?

Yes, a commissioned work may have its world premiere as part of an annual festival. However, Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions funding must support only the creation of the commissioned work and its presentation. Funding may not support overall marketing or administrative costs of the festival.

Where must the commissioned work premiere?

The premiere must take place within the 11 Bay Area counties listed above. Venues can be performance spaces, outdoor spaces, or other types of spaces.

How much should the commissioned lead artist be paid?

The lead artist must be paid a fee of at least \$50,000.

What are the funding guidelines?

All applicants must request \$150,000. A minimum of two-thirds of the commission (\$100,000) must be used to support the creation and development of the commissioned work. This amount includes the \$50,000 lead artist commissioning fee. Any remaining funds may support the presentation of the commissioned work. Applicants selected to submit full proposals (finalists) will be provided a budget template and clear guidance about how to assemble a detailed project income and expense budget.

Can the project budget be larger than the grant request? Is there a requirement for matching funds?

The Hewlett Foundation will consider proposals for projects that have additional sources of funding as well as those that are funded solely by the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions' award. There is no matching fund requirement.

Can the project budget include indirect costs like administrative overhead?

Yes, applicants are encouraged to include indirect costs (also called "overhead" or "administrative expenses") in their project budgets. Indirect costs are general overhead and administration expenses that support the entire operations of an organization and that may be shared across projects or programs. Examples include rent, utilities, equipment for an office; information systems and support; administrative staff such as development, finance and accounting, IT, HR, and legal. While these costs may not be directly attributable to a project, they are real and necessary to operate as an organization. The proposal budget includes a section for listing indirect costs.

When will the commissioning funds be dispersed?

Projects that are awarded funding for folk & traditional arts will receive the entire \$150,000 grant payment in October 2021, after a grant agreement has been signed and approved by both the lead applicant and the Hewlett Foundation.

Will we receive feedback about our application?

Due to the large number of applications we expect to receive, neither the Hewlett Foundation nor the Alliance for California Traditional Arts will be able to provide feedback to applicants.