



# The Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions

## Guidelines for Folk & Traditional Arts Projects

Administered by the

**Alliance for California Traditional Arts**



### Overview

Launched in 2017 in honor of the Hewlett Foundation's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions initiative celebrates the foundation's longstanding commitment to the performing arts in the San Francisco Bay Area. The initiative supports the creation and premiere of 50 new works of the highest artistic quality and enduring value — works the foundation hopes will go on to inspire, engage and challenge audiences across the country and around the world in years to come. The \$8 million initiative awards ten \$150,000 commissions each year for exceptional new works by extraordinary artists working in partnership with San Francisco Bay Area nonprofit organizations. To find out more about the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions, and past awardees please visit this [page](#).

The Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions initiative seeks applications for compelling projects led by accomplished local, national, or international artists. Competitive projects will be viable yet ambitious, and organized in a way that demonstrates thoughtful planning. Projects will involve artists with experience that is commensurate with the design and goals of the proposed

project. The application should demonstrate how a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award will enable the artist(s) to undertake a project they would not otherwise be able to realize.

## **Commissions awarded in 2021 will support the creation of 10 new works in the folk & traditional arts to premiere in the Bay Area between 2021-2024**

**Performative genres include dance, music, storytelling and theater, and other traditional arts expressions that have a strong performative element, according to the community of practice.**

### **Application Date at a Glance**

January 22: Letter of Intent (LOI) + Guidelines announced and available online

March 8: Letter of Intent (LOI) deadline

April 15: Applicants declined or notified they are a finalist and invited to submit a full proposal

May 18: Finalists' full proposals due

August 6: Finalists receive decline or award notice

August TBD: Awardee meeting with the Hewlett Foundation and ACTA

October: Awardees receive payment

Oct-Nov TBD: Public announcement of awards

### **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, as well as 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 Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions initiative seeks to support a wide variety of traditional art forms to show the breadth and creativity of living practices rooted in cultural communities.

### **Eligibility - Who can apply**

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

#### **LEAD APPLICANT**

The **lead applicant** must be a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization headquartered in one of eleven Bay Area counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, or Sonoma. The lead applicant will apply with a lead artist who can live anywhere in the world. Applications from nonprofit organizations that are not exclusively focused on the arts are welcome and encouraged.

The **lead applicant** must have an average annual operating budget of \$50,000 or greater for fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

- The **lead applicant** must upload a copy of their IRS determination letter showing they are a 501(c)(3).
- The **lead applicant** must upload either an audit, or a balance sheet and profit and loss statement for the organization's 2019 fiscal year.

The lead applicant organization will submit the application, enter into the grant agreement with the Hewlett Foundation, and be responsible for commissioning the lead artist and managing the project to successful completion. A lead applicant organization may collaborate with other organizations.

**Fiscal sponsors:** Entities without nonprofit status, or those with organizational budgets under \$50,000, may apply through a fiscal sponsor that meets the eligibility requirements. 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](#).

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.

#### **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—

they must partner with a lead applicant organization, which would receive the commissioning award from the Hewlett Foundation and commission (pay) the lead artist to create the new work. Projects with a lead artist that is currently a student, or with performers that are predominately school-age students (K-12 and college), are not eligible to apply.

A key feature of the 50 Arts Commissions is that the lead artist fee must be at least \$50,000.

Lead artists who have been awarded a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award in the past cannot be lead artists for this commission, but they can be collaborating artists.

## **PROJECTS**

The proposed project must not be a current or past grant recipient of a Gerbode Special Award in the Arts or the Creative Work Fund. Lead applicants and lead artists may apply for a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions for a project that has not been funded by the Gerbode Special Award in the Arts or the Creative Work Fund.

### **Developing the Project: New Work in Folk & Traditional Arts**

The Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions 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.

- The commissioning project must premiere in one of the 11 Bay Area (listed above) within three years of the award date (by August of 2024). The premiere or public sharing does not have to occur in the same county as the lead applicant's location.
- The length of premiere or public sharing component should reflect the scale and possibilities of a large commission.

### **Understanding the concept of "new"**

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.

### **Pandemic planning**

If awarded a commission, the work must premiere within three years of the grant award, between August 2021 and August 2024. Predicting the health protocols that will be necessary for public gatherings is challenging. We suggest applicants build their plans and proposals in a way that will allow them to modify the project to accommodate pandemic safety measures. The Letter of Intent (LOI) does not ask for this information but finalists invited to submit a full proposal will be required to discuss their approach.

## **WORK SAMPLES**

The work sample(s) should demonstrate the work of the lead artist. An optional second work sample can further demonstrate additional work by the lead artist, or show the presenting, producing, and/or commissioning capacity of the lead applicant. Panelists will review a maximum total of five minutes of work sample. Therefore, the combined length of the work sample(s) must be no more than five minutes.

At least one work sample is required for the Letter of Intent. Finalists will be given further direction regarding their work samples when invited to submit a full proposal.

### **Accepted Formats**

- Hyperlinks to website or online video sharing sites such as YouTube or Vimeo. If your work sample is password protected, please provide the password.
- For projects involving material arts, up to 10 JPEGs will be accepted.
- Applicants may submit a combination of still images and video.

Please do not submit CDs, DVDs, or other physical media.

### **Work Sample Description**

Include identifying information for each work sample (title, artist, date, explanation of the lead artist's role, time signatures to start and end viewing if needed, the relationship of the work sample to the proposed project, and the video access password if needed).

## **Funding & Payments**

The Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions initiative is designed to support the creation of ambitious projects of sizable scale. All grants will be in the amount of \$150,000 and all applicants, regardless of their annual budgets, must apply for a grant of \$150,000.

**Payment to Artists:** All awardees are required to pay the lead artist a fee of at least \$50,000. The total payments for lead artist fees and other expenses for the creation of the work must total a minimum of \$100,000 (including the lead artist fee). The application budget forms are structured to help applicants allocate the appropriate amount of funds for the creation and production of the work, as well as cover their indirect costs.

## Two- Step Application Process: Letter of Intent + Invited Final Proposals

The Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions application is hosted on the *Submittable* online platform. Details on how to register and get started can be found at [actaonline.org/hewlett50](https://actaonline.org/hewlett50) beginning on January 22, 2021.

### Step 1 - Letter of Intent

**Letter of Intent:** Eligible nonprofits and lead artists may submit an online Letter of Intent (LOI) beginning on January 22, 2021. The deadline for submitting is March 8, 2021. A national panel will review all LOIs and make recommendations for up to 25 applicants to submit full proposals for award consideration.

### Step 2 - Invited Full Proposal

**Invited Full Proposal:** Up to 25 organizations will be invited to submit full proposals by the deadline of May 18, 2021. The full proposals will give the finalists an opportunity to develop their projects with a more detailed work plan, budget, and memorandum of understanding between the lead organization and lead artist. Additional work samples will also be requested as part of the full proposal. A second national review panel will make recommendations to the Hewlett Foundation, which will make the final decisions on the 10 awards.

## Review & Selection Criteria

### Grant Reviewers

A national panel of artist-practitioners and field experts knowledgeable about folk and traditional arts will review and score all eligible applications and select finalists. Final awards will be based on a combination of recommendations from the panelists and from the Hewlett Performing Arts Program staff. All project reviews will be informed by the Hewlett Foundation's aim to award projects that are diverse by genre, geography and artistic voice.

### Selection Criteria

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, 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.

## **Post-Award Activities and Requirements**

### **Awardee Convening**

Awardees will be asked to attend a half-day awardee convening in August of 2021, shortly after they have been informed of their award. At the convening, attendees will have an opportunity to meet one another, learn about the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions media and publicity strategies, and discuss some logistics for the commissioned projects. If it is safe to do so, the gathering will be in person. If it is not safe to gather in person, we will meet virtually.

### **Awardee One-on-One Meetings with the Hewlett Foundation**

Each awardee will be required to participate in a one-on-one meeting with a Hewlett Foundation Program Officer to discuss the project in detail. The meeting will take place in August of 2021.

## **Report Requirements for Awardees**

Awardees will be required to submit a final report within six months of the premiere their project.

## **Application Workshops & Assistance**

The Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA) will administer the application and initial review process for the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions. The ACTA team is available to answer questions, provide assistance, and help guide applicants in submitting a successful proposal. Please note that the ACTA team does not make decisions regarding who is awarded the commissions. A grant review panel will result in recommendations that will inform the final decisions, which are made by the Hewlett Foundation.

For assistance, please contact Lily Kharrazi, ACTA's Director of Special Initiatives at [50Chelp@actaonline.org](mailto:50Chelp@actaonline.org) or by phone at (415) 244-5207.

### **Application Workshops**

#### **Join us on Zoom for one of our free information meetings**

Meeting #1: Wednesday, January 27, 12 noon - 1:15pm

Meeting #2: Wednesday, January 27, 6:00 -7:15 pm

Meeting #3: Friday, January 29, 12 noon - 1:15 pm with ASL interpretation

Meeting #4: Monday February 8, 4:00 --5:15 pm

**Register by sending an email to [reservations50C@actaonline.org](mailto:reservations50C@actaonline.org)**

If you are unable to attend, the video recording will be posted online at [actaonline.org/Hewlett50](http://actaonline.org/Hewlett50) beginning February 1.

## **CHECKLIST FOR ELIGIBILITY & PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**

### **1) Is your organization a 501(c)(3) charitable organization? Or are you a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor?**

Lead applicant must be a 501(c)(3) charitable organization with a valid Employer Identification Number (EIN) to apply. If you do not have this status, you may work with 501(c)(3) charitable organization to act as a fiscal sponsor.

### **2) Which county is the lead applicant headquartered?**

**Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma, or other county**

Only organizations headquartered in the eleven counties listed above may be lead applicants. If the lead applicant checks "Other County," they are not eligible to apply.

### **3) What is your organization's average budget for fiscal years 2018 and 2019?**

If the lead applicant's 2-year average budget is \$50,000 or more, the organization is eligible. If the average budget is less than \$50,000, it is not eligible to apply.

### **4) Has the project previously received funding from the Gerbode Foundation Special Awards in the Arts or the Creative Work Fund?**

If the applicant has received either or both awards for OTHER projects, they may still apply for the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions with a different project. If the applicant has received either or both awards for the same project, they are not eligible to apply for the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions.

### **5) As the lead applicant, has your organization previously received a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award?**

If the lead applicant has previously received a Hewlett 50 Arts Commission award, they are NOT eligible to apply again. If the lead applicant has previously received a Hewlett 50 Arts Commission award as a fiscal sponsor on behalf of another organization, they may apply. You may be an awarded lead applicant only once in the five rounds of the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions, but you may serve as a fiscal sponsor multiple times.

### **6) Is the project's lead artist currently a student?**

If the project's lead artist is currently enrolled as a student, the project is not eligible to apply. If the majority of the performers in the project are traditional school-age students (K-college), the project is not eligible.

### **7) Has the lead artist named in your organization's proposal served as a lead artist for a project that previously received a Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award?**

If the lead artist in the proposal has previously served as a lead artist in a project that received a Hewlett 50 Arts Commission, the lead artist is no longer eligible. Lead artists may only receive a commission one time in the five cycles of the Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions.

**8) By August of 2024, will the lead applicant present a full-length premiere of the work or other public sharing as appropriate to their traditional arts practice in the county of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, or Sonoma?**

The lead applicant must present a full-length premiere of the work or other public sharing in one of the eleven counties listed above within three years of receiving the commission (by August 2024).