WHEATON CULTURAL PROJECT GRANTS

FY27 GRANT GUIDELINES

SUBMISSION DETAILS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, January 15, 2027, at 11:59 p.m.

Applications will be accepted for activities that take place from April 1, 2027, through March 31, 2028.

Grant awards will be announced in late March 2027.

First-time applicants are highly encouraged to contact AHCMC grants staff.

All applications and relevant materials must be submitted online through AHCMC's grants portal.

Late applications and materials will not be accepted.

All grant funding is subject to fiscal appropriation, reduction, or termination by the Montgomery County Government.

P.O. Box 8817, Silver Spring, MD 20907
(301) 565-3805
www.creativemoco.com

The Mission of the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County

The Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC), in partnership with the community, cultivates and supports excellence in the arts and the humanities, expands access to cultural expression, and contributes to economic vitality in the region.

Equity & Inclusion

With the acknowledgement and understanding that access to resources has been historically limited for certain groups of people, AHCMC is committed to cultural equity within all funding activities and to serving communities that have been traditionally underrepresented in mainstream funding, discourse, leadership, and resource allocation including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, Native American, Latinx, Chicanx, Arab, MENASA (Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian), Asian, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color, socio-economically disadvantaged communities, differently abled individuals and/or people with disabilities, and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual constituents. AHCMC recognizes that language is fluid, and the intersectional justice movement is redefining terminology regularly. This list is not exhaustive and will be updated periodically as language continues to shift over time.

ADA Compliance

Funded programming and the workspace for staff, contractors, and volunteers should be accessible to differently-abled individuals and/or people with disabilities. AHCMC encourages applicants to consider physical and programmatic accessibility as an integral part of the project planning and budgeting process. Applicants may include the cost of access accommodations as part of their project's budget, for example, sign interpreters, audio describers, etc. Additional resources, including helpful links and a PDF of *Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook*, can be found on AHCMC's website.

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Introduction

Wheaton Cultural Project Grants (WCPG) are available to arts and/or humanities organizations and groups located in Montgomery County, MD that may or may not be incorporated as non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status and individual artists and scholars who reside in Montgomery County, MD. Grant awards support impactful projects within Wheaton and provide professional opportunities for artists and scholars to work in Wheaton. Awarded projects engage the Wheaton community in a wide array of arts and humanities disciplines, including performing arts, media arts, visual arts, literary arts, folk and traditional arts, the humanities, history, and philosophy.

Purpose

By awarding *Wheaton Cultural Project Grants*, the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) seeks to:

- Support communities that have traditionally received insufficient resources and that have limited access to arts/humanities programming;
- Support Wheaton's cultural diversity by funding arts and/or humanities projects
- Support artists and scholars currently living or working in Wheaton; and
- Activate Wheaton as a cultural destination that stimulates local economic activity.

Grant Award

Grants will be awarded for activities occurring **between April 1, 2027, through March 31, 2028**.

- Awards range from a minimum of $1,000 up to a maximum of $10,000.

FY27 *Wheaton Cultural Project Grants* Estimated Timeline

Webinars	November / December 2026
Application Deadline	January 15, 2027
Panel Review	February 2027
Award Announcement	Late March 2027
Mid-Year Report	Late October 2027
Final Report	May 2028

Important Notes

- More than **one submission per applicant** for a *Wheaton Cultural Project Grant* per fiscal year **will not be accepted**.
- Funds can only cover project expenses incurred **from April 1, 2027, through March 31, 2028**.
- Grant requests for less than $1,000 will not be accepted.
- Grant requests for more than $10,000 will not be accepted.
- Grant requests for the same project in more than one grant category within the same fiscal year **will not be accepted**.
    - Example: an applicant may not apply for the same project in FY27 for both *Programming & Capacity Building Project Grants* and *Wheaton Cultural Project Grants*.
- **AHCMC will not make payments to fiscal sponsors.**
- **AHCMC will not make payments to LLCs.**

- Applicants who need assistance or accommodation to complete this application should contact AHCMC grants staff.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants must have met all the following requirements **by the published application deadline**:

INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS & SCHOLARS

- Has resided in Montgomery County, MD with a verifiable mailing address in Montgomery County, MD **for at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the application deadline** (P.O. Boxes not accepted as proof of residency);
- Is at least 21 years old;
- Is not a full-time student;
- Is a practicing artist and/or scholar with demonstrated ability in the arts/humanities discipline of the project;
- Is able to provide AHCMC with a Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) prior to undertaking the grant activities;
- **Has a partnership for the project with a non-profit or for-profit organization based in Montgomery County**, whose budget may exceed $500,000 and whose mission may or may not be arts and/or humanities-based;
    - **The partnership must consist of meaningful collaboration between the applicant and organization with clear indications for how the partnership will enhance the applicant's own work and benefit the Wheaton community**; and
- Has met all outstanding requirements for any grant(s) received from the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County in prior years.

ORGANIZATIONS & GROUPS

- The **primary mission** is the exhibition, presentation, production, or performance of, and/or education in, an arts and/or humanities discipline, and/or provides support services to artists and/or scholars and/or arts and/or humanities organizations;
- **Has been in operation for at least 12 consecutive months prior to the application deadline**;
- Has had its primary location and a verifiable mailing address in Montgomery County, MD for **at least 12 consecutive months prior to the application deadline**;
- Operates as a non-profit:
    - The organization[1] or group may or may not be incorporated and may or may not be formally recognized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a public charity with tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status. However, the applicant **must** operate in the manner of a non-profit (the organization's/group's net earnings cannot be distributed to those who control it);
- Has an annual operating budget of **no more than $500,000** for the most recently completed fiscal year;
- Non-profit applicants **must be a 501(c)(3) in good standing** with the State of Maryland;
- Has met all outstanding requirements for any grant(s) received from the Arts & Humanities

[1] AHCMC defines organizations as an entity recognized by the IRS as a public charity with tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status.

Council of Montgomery County in prior years.

Eligible Disciplines

Applicants may work in any one or combination of the disciplines listed below. The disciplines can also be found on AHCMC's website.

- **Dance** includes choreography or performance, whether in a historically recognized or a contemporary style.
- **Folk & Traditional Arts** includes artistic expressions grounded in a common ethnic heritage, shared language, religion, or occupation. These are artistic traditions passed on from generation to generation, often within families and communities and from master to apprentice, through observation, oral transmission, and practice.
- **Historical, Critical, and/or Theoretical Approaches to the Arts** includes work that reflects upon and analyzes creative processes and/or specific works, such as a performance, exhibit, or piece of art.
- **History and/or Social Sciences** includes research, study, and writing in the areas of human social, political, or cultural development, civics, and work that shares historical or social sciences information or activities with the community.
- **Languages, Linguistics, and/or Literary Arts** includes the study and/or analysis of how we communicate and how our ideas and thoughts are expressed and interpreted, and the study or analysis of a specific aspect or work of literature.
- **Media Arts** includes electronic, technology-based work suited to mass media communication and presentation used within an artistic medium. Any genre in film, video, audio, or computer-based art production and/or distribution is included, and a selected component of a long-term project will be considered if it meets the other requirements of the grant guidelines.
- **Music** includes the performance, creation, recording, and distribution of original music from any genre, or of historically recognized musical compositions and/or styles.
- **Philosophy, Ethics, and/or Comparative Religion** includes research and/or study of theories about the purpose of life, how moral and ethical standards arise in society, and the reasons for our thoughts and actions.
- **Storytelling** includes spoken word performances, in particular the interactive style of using words and actions and other effects to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination.
- **Theater** includes the creation, production, and/or performance of original contemporary or historically recognized theater and musical theater works.
- **Writing** includes the creation, presentation, and distribution of materials that are literary in nature; and publications, readings and compilations of original poetry, fiction, non-fiction, creative non-fiction, screenplays and play scripts.
- **Visual Art** includes the creation, production, and/or exhibition of visual art as the primary focus. Objects, installations, site-specific or gallery-oriented works of art within any area of the visual arts are also included, as are curatorial projects and/or projects that expand the context of traditional or contemporary works of art.
- **Design** encompasses many disciplines including, but not limited to, architecture, communications and graphic design, fashion design, historic preservation, industrial and product

design, interior design, landscape architecture, social impact design, rural design, and urban design (not including capital campaigns, construction costs, the purchase or leasing of sites).

- **Presenting and/or Multidisciplinary** works incorporate, combine, and/or integrate multiple disciplines. Works may explore boundaries between disciplines, fuse or transcend disciplines, and look to new forms of expression. Projects can be multi- or cross-disciplinary in nature and may include work from the performing, visual, media, design, literary arts, and/or humanities disciplines.

Project Eligibility Requirements

Eligible activities must:

- Take place between **April 1, 2027, through March 31, 2028;**
- Take place in Wheaton, MD; and
  - Google Maps outline of Wheaton
  - Map of Wheaton's Urban District
  - Map of Wheaton's Arts & Entertainment District
- **Be open to the public, with or without an admission fee, in person or virtually.**

Eligible Project Examples

The following are examples of activities that are eligible for funding. This list is not exhaustive; applicants are encouraged to think creatively about the activities proposed in their grant application.

- ✓ Performances, presentations, or exhibitions of visual, performing, media, and/or folk and traditional arts
- ✓ Festivals or events that include one or more arts/humanities discipline(s)
- ✓ Historical presentations, archeological programs, or historical reenactments
- ✓ Poetry readings, author lectures, or script workshops
- ✓ Public art, including community mural projects
- ✓ Arts and/or humanities educational programs

Grant Limitations

Wheaton Cultural Project Grants will not fund:

- General operating expenses[2];
- Strategic planning or organizational development;
- Indirect costs (costs not directly related to carrying out the funded project);
- Miscellaneous or contingency costs;
- Public, private, or charter schools;
- Capital improvements, construction, or renovation projects;
- Purchase of real property, including land, buildings, warehouses, offices, and anything affixed to land;
- Activities for the exclusive benefit of the grantee's members;
- Fundraising activities;
- Cost of receptions, refreshments, or food;
- Cost of merchandise such as T-shirts;
- Debt retirement;
- Legal costs for litigation, contract negotiations, or any type of dispute

[2] General operating expenses are defined as day-to-day operating costs, such as office rent and utilities, to further the general mission or work of an organization/group rather than for a specific project.

- Re-granting[3];
- Political advocacy, donations or activities that take a position regarding any one political party, candidate, or issue;
- Costs incurred in connection with any criminal or civil proceeding
- Administrative and programming costs incurred outside of Montgomery County, MD; and
- Travel outside the United States.

Panel Process

All eligible applications are evaluated by a panel of arts, humanities, and/or cultural professionals in an open panel review process. Panelists are chosen to represent a cross-section of professionals qualified to provide expert knowledge of specific arts, humanities, and/or cultural disciplines as well as for their management experience, professional knowledge of the sector, and prior panel experience. AHCMC staff make every effort to ensure that the panel is diverse in all respects.

AHCMC staff review applications for eligibility and completeness, but do not score. Staff manage all administrative and logistical tasks necessary to conduct a successful panel review, provide panelists all documentation necessary to evaluate applications effectively, inform the panel in matters of AHCMC policy and procedures, and facilitate panel meetings. Panelists are provided with the eligible applications and support materials approximately four weeks prior to the panel review meeting to allow sufficient time for their evaluation. All eligible applications are evaluated based on the following AHCMC Evaluation Criteria: Quality of Project, Project Impact, Community Impact, and Administrative Oversight (described in detail below).

The panel convenes to discuss and provide scores for each application. Panel meetings are open to applicants who wish to observe; however, applicants are not permitted to make any comments or participate in any way at the panel meeting. Applicants may not contact panelists before or after the panel meeting regarding their application review. Once the application deadline has passed and the panel has received the application for review, AHCMC staff will not forward updates from the applicant to the panel.

AHCMC staff use the applicant's panel score to calculate and recommend grant awards to AHCMC's Grants Committee. The Grants Committee reviews and revises the grant awards as necessary and forwards their recommendations to the AHCMC Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has final authority to approve or decline all grant awards.

After the award notifications have been publicly announced, applicants are **highly encouraged** to schedule a feedback appointment to review panelist's commentary by contacting Grants Managers Krystle Seit at (301) 565-3805 ext. 20 or Krystle.Seit@creativemoco.com or Catherine Frost at (301) 565-3805 ext. 28 or Catherine.Frost@creativemoco.com.

Evaluative Criteria

Panelists evaluate and score eligible FY27 WCPG applications utilizing the Evaluative Criteria defined below. An applicant's commitment to the Evaluative Criteria should thread through the entire application, including the narrative, work samples, and support materials.

Applicants that receive an averaged panel score below 60 points will not be eligible for a grant.

[3] Scholarships, awards, and/or tuition assistance are considered forms of re-granting.

Quality of Project (15 points)

- ✓ Clear commitment to cultural expression through artistic and/or scholarly disciplines; and
- ✓ Clarity and appropriateness of project proposal and alignment with the grant purpose.

Project Impact (35 points)

- ✓ Potential of the project to have a positive impact on the applicant;
- ✓ Clear objectives and achievable outcomes with a detailed description of how outcomes will be measured; and
- ✓ Includes the community in project planning and evaluation and is responsive to community feedback.

Community Impact (35 points)

- ✓ Uses data and demographics to clearly define audience and demonstrates an understanding of the community to be served;
- ✓ Potential of the project to have a positive impact on Wheaton constituents; and
- ✓ Clear commitment to being accessible to, collaborating with, and engaging under-resourced and marginalized communities in Wheaton and empowering local participation.

Administrative Oversight (15 points)

- ✓ Evidence of administrative skills required to meet proposal objectives, including completeness and clarity of the proposal and timeline; and
- ✓ Well-researched, clear, realistic, and complete budget and budget notes.
    - **Individual artist/scholar applicants are required to retain a portion of the AHCMC grant to compensate themselves for their work.**

The Online Application Process

All applications and relevant materials must be submitted online through the AHCMC SurveyMonkey Apply (SM Apply) grants portal: https://artsandhumanities.smapply.io/. For specific questions about SM Apply, please contact Jesús Guzman, Grants Assistant Manager at (301) 565-3805 ext. 21, or Jesus.Guzman@creativemoco.com.

1. Go to SM Apply and login to your account using your username and password.
    a. If you do not have an account, create one by clicking the green "Register" button in the upper right-hand corner. Complete all necessary steps to activate your account.
2. Select "Programs" in the upper right-hand corner to view open opportunities.
3. Find the box that reads "FY27 Wheaton Cultural Project Grants" and select the green "More" button.
4. Click the green "Apply" button on the right-hand side.
5. Complete all required tasks marked with an asterisk (*).
6. Submit your application by clicking the green "Submit" button on the left-hand side.
    a. Applications cannot be submitted unless all required tasks are marked as complete.
    b. **Applications that are complete but not submitted by the deadline cannot be reviewed.**

Required Application Materials

All documents except for work samples must be submitted as PDFs. (See the work sample directions below for information about acceptable file formats.) Contact AHCMC grants staff if you need guidance converting documents to PDFs.

IMPORTANT! Staff will remove materials that exceed the limits stated below.

A completed, online SM Apply application includes:

ALL APPLICANTS

1. **A Completed Narrative**
    - Fillable form in SM Apply.
        - Download a template of the application under the "Application + Templates" tab on AHCMC's website. **Please note that templates are for the applicant's reference only; all applications and materials must be submitted through SM Apply.**
2. **Programming Support Materials**
    - **One PDF, 5 pages maximum.**
    - **No more than 5 hyperlinks total** (i.e., do not include 25 hyperlinks, or 5 hyperlinks on each page) embedded in Programming Support Materials.
    - Rather than an excerpt or complete work, these materials contextualize your artistic and/or scholarly process and products.
    - Include materials that will assist the panel in evaluating the applicant's programming, presenting, and/or producing activities. (i.e., evaluation results of previous programming, planning materials, testimonials, articles and/or reviews of the applicant's artistic or scholarly work, newspaper clippings, program booklets, photos, brochures, flyers, etc.)
3. **Work sample(s)**
    - Upload a **maximum of 10 work samples** that demonstrate the applicant's programming and/or work as a professional artist/scholar. **Work samples must be no more than 10 files or 10 pages total (this includes images, written work, and any submitted audio/video).**
    - Applicants are encouraged to submit recently completed and high-quality work samples.
    - There will be a fillable form in SM Apply for applicants to provide a brief description of the work sample(s) and an explanation for how the sample(s) relates to the project.
    - **The maximum of 10 work samples may be submitted in any one or combination of the file formats below.**
        - Images: Up to 4 MB per file, which can be uploaded individually or formatted as one PDF.
        - Audio/Video: Maximum 4, up to 100 MB per file, no more than ten minutes combined. **Please note that any submitted audio/video counts towards the limit of 10 work samples.**
            - The SM Apply link feature only supports links to YouTube and Vimeo.
            - If using the SM Apply link feature for YouTube or Vimeo, use the full hyperlink at the top of your browser instead of shorthand links (i.e., use the full https://www.youtube.com link, not https://youtu.be).
            - Applicants may choose to use the SM Apply link feature or embed the links in a document and upload it as a PDF.
            - If providing links to websites other than YouTube or Vimeo, links must be embedded in a document and uploaded as a PDF. For each link, the entire link address should be visible.
            - Make sure that links are not broken.
            - Make sure that the content from hyperlinks is viewable and does not require a password.
            - If the submitted video and/or audio is more than ten minutes combined, applicants must include instructions for which segments are relevant. (Ex: Please click on the YouTube hyperlink to watch the video from 0:47 to 4:10.)

- Written Work:
  - **Double-spaced with at least 11-point font and 1-inch margins.**
  - If the work submitted is a portion of a larger work, include a synopsis of the chapters and an outline of the complete work. Clearly explain how and where the piece submitted fits into the whole.
- **Work samples should demonstrate the applicant's own work, not work created by others.**
- Work samples should reflect the discipline most closely aligned with the project.
  - For Presenting and/or Multidisciplinary: work sample(s) should convey more than one arts and/or humanities discipline.
  - For Performing and Media Arts: applicants are highly encouraged to submit video or audio work samples, instead of stills or photos.

4. **AI Disclosure Statement**
   - A short statement in response to specific questions confirming whether generative AI meaningfully shaped your application, work sample, or support materials. You are not required or expected to use AI, and disclosure by itself will not increase or decrease a score.
5. **A Completed AHCMC Reporting Data Form**
   - **This form corresponds with AHCMC's reporting obligations. Responses will not be factored into eligibility or the panel review.** All responses will be kept confidential. Responses will only be shared publicly in the aggregate.

INDIVIDUALS

6. **Individual Support Materials**
   - Resume or CV of the Artist/Scholar applying;
   - Letter of Support – a collaborative sponsorship agreement and/or letter of support between the applicant and the partner organization, outlining details of the partner's role and commitment.
     - Download a template of the application under the "Application + Templates" tab on AHCMC's website. **Please note that all materials must be submitted through SM Apply; and**
   - Bio(s) of Key Staff and/or Volunteers who work for the Partner Organization, including the individual's role in the project.

GROUPS[4]

5. **Group Support Materials**
   - List of group members with affiliation, including residency and work address (city and ZIP Code accepted) with those who reside and/or work in Montgomery County highlighted;
   - Bios of Key Group Members and/or Volunteers, including the individual's role in the project;
   - Current Strategic Plan, if available; and
   - Organizational Chart, if available.
6. **Financial Support Materials**
   - Previous Fiscal Year's End-of-Year Revenue and Expenses (Profit & Loss Statement);
   - Current Fiscal Year's Operating Budget with Actuals Year-to-Date; and
   - Current Balance Sheet or Balance Sheet for the most recently completed fiscal year, if available.

ORGANIZATIONS

5. **Organization Support Materials**
   - IRS Letter of Determination;
   - List of Board of Directors with affiliation, including residency and work address (city and ZIP Code

[4] Groups that have any questions about the required materials are highly encouraged to contact AHCMC grants staff.

accepted) with those who reside and/or work in Montgomery County highlighted;
- Bios of Key Staff and/or Volunteers, including the individual's role in the project;
- Current Strategic Plan, if available; and
- Organizational Chart, if available.

6. **Financial Support Materials**
    - FY25 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N, or if the FY25 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N is not yet available, the letter of extension;
    - Profit & Loss Statement for the most recently completed fiscal year;
    - Current Fiscal Year Operating Budget with Actuals Year-to-Date; and
    - Current Balance Sheet or Balance Sheet for the most recently completed fiscal year.

Grant Preparation Assistance

First-time applicants are highly encouraged to contact AHCMC grants staff.

Grant Preparation Webinars

AHCMC will conduct free grant preparation webinars to help applicants complete grant applications. While attendance is not required, AHCMC strongly encourages all applicants to attend webinars, even if the applicant has applied previously. Whether or not an applicant attends a webinar will not be a factor in evaluating the application. Please go to https://www.creativemoco.com/find-opportunities/newsletters/ to join the AHCMC Grants Program email list and receive notifications about grant opportunities, deadlines, and webinars.

Personal Appointments

Personal appointments are available for those who need additional assistance. Appointments can include assistance with the content of the application, such as a draft review, and/or assistance navigating the online grants portal. Consultation services in languages other than English are available by appointment.

Personal appointments must be scheduled **at least two weeks prior to the application deadline**. **Drafts for review must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the application deadline.** To schedule an appointment, contact Grants Managers Krystle Seit at (301) 565-3805 ext. 20 or Krystle.Seit@creativemoco.com or Catherine Frost at (301) 565-3805 ext. 28 or Catherine.Frost@creativemoco.com.

Post-Award Information

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read this section carefully before applying.

Grant Agreement

Following the award of a grant, an authorized grantee representative in a leadership role must sign an AHCMC Grant Agreement stating that the grantee agrees to do the following:

- To complete and submit the BILL contact form in SurveyMonkey Apply and, when prompted, create an account on BILL, formerly known as BILL.com, for direct deposit of grant funds
- To complete and submit the Grant Update Form in SurveyMonkey Apply confirming any costs incurred and funding secured since the time of application;
- To comply with all FY27 *Wheaton Cultural Project Grants* eligibility and other guideline requirements throughout the duration of the grant period;
- To use the grant funds only for the purposes described in the grant proposal during the period of **April 1, 2027, through March 31, 2028**;

- Not to use the grant funds for the activities listed on pages 7-8 of these guidelines under "Grant Limitations";
- To use funds only for administrative or programming costs incurred in Montgomery County, MD. Award funds cannot be used for administrative, or programming costs incurred due to activities that take place outside of Montgomery County, MD (i.e., other counties in Maryland, Washington D.C., or Virginia);
- To request, by use of a grant change request form provided by AHCMC, permission for any change, cancellation, or postponement to the project as described in the grant application no later than **February 28, 2028**. (Change requests submitted after **February 28, 2028**, may result in grant forfeiture);
- To return any grant funds not spent, or not spent in compliance with published grant guidelines, grant agreement, and/or the approved grant proposal no later than **May 12, 2028**;
- To submit a completed mid-year report to AHCMC no later than **October 29, 2027**, through AHCMC's online grants system. Mid-year reports submitted after **October 29, 2027** could have an adverse impact on the likelihood of receiving a future award;
- To submit a completed final report no later than **May 12, 2028,** through AHCMC's online grants system, providing information about the implementation of the funded project and the use of grant funds. Final reports submitted after **May 12, 2028**, could have an adverse impact on the likelihood of receiving a future award;
- Not to discriminate against any person on the basis of any characteristic described in Section 27-1(a) of Chapter 27 of the Montgomery County Code;
- To comply with all ADA requirements pertaining to the project;
- To acknowledge the support of the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Government on all materials distributed to the public, including use of the AHCMC logo when possible;
- To provide complimentary access to any public activities upon request of AHCMC staff.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in cancellation of funds, forfeiture of funds, and/or ineligibility to apply for future awards.

Grantees are encouraged to notify AHCMC about programming, exhibitions, performances, and/or other activities resulting from this grant and to participate in CultureSpotMC.com, AHCMC's online calendar.

Grant Disbursement

Grant awards will be disbursed in full following AHCMC's receipt of:

- The required Grant Agreement;
- **For organizations**: the FY25 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N, or if the FY25 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N
- **For individual and group grantees only**: A signed W-9 Form with the grantee's Social Security Number (SSN), Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), or Employer Identification Number (EIN);
- The required BILL.com contact form and the creation of a BILL account when prompted, allowing direct deposit of grant funds to the grantee's bank account[5];
- The required Grant Update Form
- The grantee's final report from the previous year, if applicable;
- The grantee's payment for outstanding constituent service fees (i.e., MarketPower), if applicable; and

[5] AHCMC uses a paperless payment process to disburse grant awards. BILL, formerly known as BILL.com, is an online system that allows AHCMC to send secure E-payments.

- **Payment from the Montgomery County Government to AHCMC for the grants awarded.**[6]

Changes in Grant Implementation

The grantee must alert AHCMC of significant project changes. The grantee must submit a change request form (available on AHCMC's website),and receive AHCMC's approval—a meeting may be required. Any change in the implementation of the project must be approved by AHCMC **before** the change occurs.

- All requests for project changes must be submitted in writing on the form supplied by AHCMC.
- Please note that AHCMC can decline significant project changes if the proposed change is a major diversion from the project described within the application and grant agreement.
- **Requests for a project change will not be considered after February 28, 2028.**

Reporting

All grantees are required to submit a mid-year report no later than **October 29, 2027** and a final report due **no later than May 12, 2028**. Submitting late reports may have a detrimental impact on an applicant's eligibility for future funding.

Return of Grant Funds

- If a change request is not approved and/or the grantee is unable to implement the project as described in the approved grant proposal, the grantee must return the grant funds. **Please contact AHCMC grants staff before grant funds are returned.**
- If AHCMC determines that grant funds were spent for activities not in compliance with these guidelines and/or for activities that are not consistent with the approved grant proposal, the grantee must return the amount spent on non-allowable expenses.
- Grant funds received but not spent by **March 31, 2028,** must be returned to AHCMC **by May 12, 2028,** unless the grantee has been granted an approved extension by AHCMC Grants Staff prior to **March 31, 2027.**

Important Reminders & Tips

- Applications must be submitted online through SM Apply **by 11:59 p.m. on the posted deadline. Late applications will not be accepted.**
- Applications will not be accepted that are emailed, delivered in person, faxed, or submitted in any fashion other than the online grants system.
- **Follow the instructions in SM Apply carefully.**
- Write clearly and concisely—do not use jargon. Remember that the panelists who are reading the application may be unfamiliar with the applicant's work.
- AHCMC staff do not participate in panel discussions—the application must stand on its own.
- Reference the evaluative criteria when preparing and writing the application.
- Before submitting, proofread the application for readability and content.
- **To avoid unanticipated technical glitches, do not wait until the day of the deadline to submit.**

[6] AHCMC may not receive funds by April 1, 2027, for disbursement; however, grantees may begin their projects as of April 1, 2027, and reimburse themselves after grant awards have been disbursed.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, January 15, 2027 at 11:59 p.m.

Applications will be accepted for activities taking place between April 1, 2027, through March 31, 2028.

Grant awards will be announced in Late March 2027.

All applications and materials must be submitted online through AHCMC's grants portal.

Questions?

Catherine Frost, Grants Manager
(301) 565-3805 ext. 28 or Catherine.Frost@creativemoco.com

Krystle Seit, Grants Manager
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Applicants are encouraged to learn more about energy-efficient opportunities to reduce energy costs at http://montgomerycountymd.gov/green/.