

Scoring System and Decision Process 2023

- > How does the panel come to a decision?

The panel consists of the seven City Council-appointed [Boulder Arts Commissioners](#). After reading your application, the panel will provide scores and comments.

The questions are divided into two sections:

First, the panel members provide scores on the information you provide in the “Panel Questions” section. Panel members provide a score of 1 to 8 for each panel question.

Second, the panel members provide additional points for encouragement points. A maximum of 4 additional points is available to the panel members for this question.

The scores for each panel member are added together to establish a preliminary score for the application. All questions are weighted equally. Those preliminary scores are averaged across all the panel members to establish a preliminary score. This score is used to rank your application for consideration. For each grant category, the Arts Commission will establish a threshold score over which an application is considered eligible for an award. Please note that meeting the threshold score does not automatically approve an application for funding.

In addition to providing a score, the commissioners will include questions or comments for each applicant. We will provide these comments to you before the second round of scoring. You will have the opportunity to offer a one-page statement answering the questions raised, or further informing the panel about your application.

After your one-page response is completed, the panel will rescore your application. Once this rescore is complete, the applications are re-ranked. At the decision meeting, the members of the Boulder Arts Commission then deliberate to decide final approval of the applications which will receive a grant. The Arts Commission may a) accept the top scores in the ranking, b) choose to adjust the ranking, or c) ask the panel to reconsider specific scores.

The complete scoring system and rubric can be found below.

- > How do the panel members use the scoring system?

Panel members use the following rating scale descriptions to help align their decisions about each score.

Score	Descriptor	Strengths/Weaknesses
8	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong (a model for field or discipline with essentially no weaknesses).
7	Outstanding	Very strong with some minor weaknesses.
6	Very Good	Strong with numerous minor weaknesses.
5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness.
4	Satisfactory	Some strengths but with some moderate weaknesses.
3	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness.
2	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses.
1	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses.

Minor weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact.
Moderate weakness: A weakness that lessens impact.
Major weakness: A weakness that severely limits impact.

Scoring System Rubrics

- > How do the members of the panel interpret the scoring system for each application?

Before the grants awards process begins, panel members are trained in how to interpret the scoring system and rubrics, or set of criteria, which helps reduce the possibility of subjective scores based on personal preferences. Please keep in mind, however, that although panel decisions follow this set of criteria, scores could reflect a small degree of subjectivity individual to each panel member. Panel members must be able to defend their scores with observations about each application’s specific strengths or weaknesses during the scoring and re-scoring process.

Following are the scoring systems for various application categories.

Community Project Grant, page one

Community Priorities

The City of Boulder’s [Community Cultural Plan](#) is a visioning and strategic document that describes how the people of Boulder will align efforts, with the support of the municipal government, to achieve our collective vision: *Together, we will craft Boulder’s social, physical, and cultural environment to include creativity as an essential ingredient for the wellbeing, prosperity, and joy of everyone in the community.* The Community Priorities are six points that summarize the community’s most common responses in answer to the question, “What is your vision for Boulder’s culture and creative economy?”

Reference: [Cultural Plan and Community Priorities.](#)

Examples of ways to demonstrate impact on the Community Priorities may include descriptions of how your project or organization:

- Supports artists and creative professionals by providing professional development programming.
- Contributes to Boulder’s creative identity and creates a vibrant cultural destination through high artistic merit and excellence in the practice of a medium or discipline.
- Engages the community in civic dialogue about the arts through interactive outreach in the neighborhoods.
- Adds creativity in the public realm by engaging underserved populations in art-making for their community.

In what way will this project contribute to one or one or more of the Community Priorities described in the Community Cultural Plan? Does the project contribute to one priority thoroughly?

1-2: Poor to Marginal	3-4: Fair to Satisfactory	5-6: Good to Very Good	7-8: Outstanding to Exceptional
Does not or minimally addresses how the project will contribute to one or several of the Community Priorities.	Few or some aspects of the project will address one or several of the Community Priorities.	Several aspects of the project will significantly address one or more of the Community Priorities.	The project will address one or more of the Community Priorities in very strong or exceptional ways.

Cultural Offerings

In what way does your project fill a gap in the variety of cultural offerings in Boulder? What is exciting or new about your project?

1-2: Poor to Marginal	3-4: Fair to Satisfactory	5-6: Good to Very Good	7-8: Outstanding to Exceptional
Minimally fills a gap in the cultural offerings of Boulder with major weaknesses.	A few aspects of the project may fill gaps in cultural offerings with a few major or moderate weaknesses; only modest innovations are proposed.	Some or many aspects of the project fill gaps in cultural offerings with moderate or minor weaknesses; some new or innovative programming.	The project fills gaps in cultural offering in very good or exceptional ways with a few or no minor weaknesses; the project is new and innovative.

Community Project Grant, page two

Cultural equity.

Among the goals of the Boulder Arts Commission is to encourage the equitable, fair, and just distribution of funds in support of the community. This includes providing support to applicants whose organizational leadership or audience represent groups who are typically underserved by arts programming and funding models (i.e. culturally diverse groups, organizations focused on age diversity, etc.) Describe how your project does or does not fulfil one or several of these categories. For reference, please review the Boulder Arts Commission Statement on Cultural Equity.

Reference: [Boulder Arts Commission Statement on Cultural Equity](#)

1-2: Poor to Marginal	3-4: Fair to Satisfactory	5-6: Good to Very Good	7-8: Outstanding to Exceptional
It offers no or very few advances for diversity, equity and inclusion.	The project addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in a minor way with one or more major or moderate weaknesses.	The project addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in a moderate way with few minor weaknesses.	The project addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in very good or exceptional ways with one or no minor weaknesses.

Proposed Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy

Describe your evaluation strategy and how you will collect data. Please include your goals for this project and how you will measure the benefit to the community.

1-2: Poor to Marginal	3-4: Fair to Satisfactory	5-6: Good to Very Good	7-8: Outstanding to Exceptional
Evaluation strategy for understanding program / project success is lacking; goals, measures and plans for data collection are not in place.	Provides only limited descriptions of evaluation strategies and goals with moderate weaknesses.	Provides clear and thoughtful evaluation strategies and goals with a few moderate or minor weaknesses.	Evaluation strategy is comprehensive. Contains detailed information on goals, benchmarks and data collection and how to measure success.

Encouragement Points

Encouragement points. Among the goals of the Boulder Arts Commission is to encourage the equitable, fair, and just distribution of funds in support of the arts community. Panel members use these “extra points” to balance the scoring, emphasizing applications which tend to score lower in standard categories or historically are underrepresented in grantmaking. Commissioners will be looking for these elements in your responses above.

Examples include:

- First-time applicants and those who have never been awarded a grant.
- Youth applicants who are applying with the help of a mentor of legal age.
- Have the potential to support community and participatory culture and non-professional artmaking.
- Applicants for whom English is not their first language.
- Non-western European art forms or other forms of culture that have typically been disadvantaged by the systems and traditions of grantmaking.
- Elements of the application that the panel member determines will significantly advance stated priorities of the Arts Commission, important issues in the community outside of the arts, or other impacts that are not expressed in the other scoring criteria.

Please check this box if any of these are addressed in your application.*

Are you a first time applicant or have you not been awarded a grant before from the Commission?*

(cont.)

1

Does not need any “extra points” to be competitive in other grant scoring categories or the program overall.

2

A few elements of the application indicate the need for a rebalancing of scoring in order for the applicant to be competitive in one or two scoring categories.

3

Several of the elements of the application call for a rebalancing of scoring in order for the application to be competitive in all other scoring categories.

4

The application as a whole indicates the need for “extra points” in order to be competitive in all scoring categories. Or, a first time applicant. Or, requires a rebalancing of scoring to offset a significant historical or structural inequity.

Arts Education Projects Grant, page one

Benefit to Students

In what ways will this project directly benefit the students and their growth as cultural participants or in the creative industries? What new skills or experiences will be offered?

1-2: Poor to Marginal	3-4: Fair to Satisfactory	5-6: Good to Very Good	7-8: Outstanding to Exceptional
Benefits to students in cultural participation or skill development are not or inadequately addressed with many major weaknesses.	The project will benefit students' cultural participation or skill development in only a few minor ways.	Many significant benefits to cultural participation or skill development are proposed with a few minor weaknesses.	Benefits to cultural participation or skill development are very good or exceptional with only a few or no minor weaknesses.

Complementing Curriculum and Offerings

How does this project enhance, or fill a gap in, the generally available curriculum and offerings?

1-2: Poor to Marginal	3-4: Fair to Satisfactory	5-6: Good to Very Good	7-8: Outstanding to Exceptional
The project does not demonstrate any enhancements to curriculum.	Enhancements to curriculum or offerings are modest with many major or moderate weaknesses.	There are clear enhancements to curriculum and offerings with only a few minor weaknesses.	The project has very good or exceptional enhancements to curriculum and offerings with only a few or no minor weaknesses.

Proposed Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy

How will the benefits to the students be measured?

1-2: Poor to Marginal	3-4: Fair to Satisfactory	5-6: Good to Very Good	7-8: Outstanding to Exceptional
The outcomes and evaluation strategy are not or inadequately addressed with many major weaknesses.	The outcomes and evaluation strategy are addressed in a few minor ways.	The outcomes and evaluation strategy are addressed in a significant and positive way, with a few minor weaknesses.	The project addresses outcomes and evaluation in a very good or excellent way with only a few or no minor weaknesses.

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Arts Education Projects Grant, page two

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