



UNITED ARTS FUND ALLOCATIONS - GRANT GUIDELINES 2026

GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The United Arts Fund Allocations program provides unrestricted general operating support to Catawba County-based arts and cultural organizations. Each year, Arts Culture Catawba organizes a United Arts Fund giving campaign. All proceeds from this campaign are allocated to organizations for general operating support in quarterly payments. If funded, you will enter into an agreement with Arts Culture Catawba and be positioned to become a member of the “United Arts Fund Alliance,” which meets regularly throughout the year. In order to accept funding, you will be required to abide by the United Arts Fund Alliance Policy, which is available on our website at artscatawba.org/grants.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for this program, the applying organization must be a nonprofit arts/cultural organization that meets all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Registered nonprofit organization with 501c3 state and federal tax-exempt status
- Has the creation and/or promotion of arts, science, or history programming in its mission statement
- Dedicating at least 80 percent of annual programming expenses to arts, science, or history activities
- Based and operates most programming in Catawba County
- Produced quality arts/cultural programs for at least three consecutive years
- Overall agency budget must exceed \$75,000 annually on average for three years. The actual organizational expenses from the three most recently completed years will be used to determine the average
- Has paid staff with a minimum of at least one part-time employee
- Organizations that are part of another entity such as a municipality, school system, or college/university are not eligible to apply in this category

New members will be considered a “Pilot Partner” for their first two funding cycles (Each Funding Cycle is July 1 - June 30) before achieving full “Funded Affiliate” status. Pilot Partners will participate in separate training activities, check in more often with our Stewardship Committee, and are not automatically eligible for repeat funding (see **Grant Amount and Funding Determination Process** for more details).



APPLICATION PROCESS

If an organization did not receive funding the previous year, an eligibility form must be submitted, which is available on our website at artscatawba.org/grants. If you are invited to submit a full application, the application link will be emailed to you. Those who received funding the previous year are not required to complete an eligibility form and will be contacted regarding any information needed in the application process.

Full applications are due by Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 5:00 pm. Once all applications have been received, executive staff and leadership from your board will be invited to attend a mandatory in-person interview with our Stewardship Committee on Monday, April 13, 2026.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The purpose of the application materials and interview is to give our selection committee a comprehensive overview of your organization, including its artistic/cultural programming, impact on the community, and organizational management.

A score of 3/5 in each category is the minimum standard for a fundable application. Your organization will be evaluated upon the following three criteria:

- **Artistic/Cultural Merit** - quality of programming, innovation of programming, artistic/cultural direction, and qualifications/background/expertise of artists/historians/scientists
- **Community Value** - intentional community building efforts, educational value of programming, impact on participants and audiences, ability to adapt to the needs of the community, and economic impact
- **Organizational Management** - organizational leadership, board governance, financial management, planning and evaluation, and alignment with UAF Alliance Policy



GRANT AMOUNT AND FUNDING DETERMINATION PROCESS

Grant amounts will be based upon the amount raised each year from our United Arts Fund campaign. Estimated funding amounts will be provided in May for your preliminary planning purposes.

The grant award range will first be determined by your organization's budget, based upon financial information submitted. The tier your organization is in will be determined by your average total annual expenses from the last three fiscal years:

	Organization Budget Range	Grant Award Range
Tier 3	\$75,000 - \$399,999	\$12,000 - \$20,000
Tier 2	\$400,000 - \$999,999	\$15,000 - \$25,000
Tier 1	\$1,000,000 and up	\$18,000 - \$30,000

The panel will score your application based upon the evaluation criteria listed above. The scores will be averaged and the percentage out of 100 will be applied to the maximum amount in your range (for example, a total average score of 73% applied to a maximum allocation of \$20,000 would be \$14,600). The funds available and the score rankings will be key factors in which organizations are funded. There will be a final adjustment, adding or subtracting evenly, to make the final grant amounts equal to our available funds.

As long as Funded Affiliates of the United Arts Fund Alliance meet the minimum standards defined in *Eligibility Requirements* and *Evaluation Criteria*, they will be assured to receive at least the minimum level of funding. Pilot Partners do not receive the same assurance until they have reached full Funded Affiliate status after two years, even if minimum standards are met. Any Funded Affiliate or Pilot Partner organization that fails to meet minimum standards may be subject to probation or loss of funding in the next funding period.

TIMELINE:

Eligibility Form Opens: January 12, 2026
Full Applications Open: January 28, 2026
Eligibility Form Deadline: February 2, 2026
Full Applications Due: March 19, 2026
Panel Presentations: April 13, 2026
Award Notifications: May 1, 2026

FUNDING PERIOD: Throughout the 2026-27 fiscal year, with quarterly payments in July, October, January, and April.

Questions? For more information, contact:
Chris Coffey, Grant & Resources Coordinator
grants@artscatawba.org
(828) 324-4906, ext 306