



Tacoma
Creates

COMPREHENSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT 2026-27 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Tacoma Creates is the City of Tacoma's Cultural Access Program. This community-supported initiative increases access to arts, culture, heritage, and science experiences throughout Tacoma by expanding offerings and reducing barriers to participation, particularly for underserved youth.

Eligible non-profit arts, culture, heritage, and science organizations may apply for funding that helps them expand equitable access to public programs, increase opportunities in neighborhoods throughout Tacoma, expand educational options for youth, and build sustainability for continued services to the community.

The 2026-27 funding cycle supports public programming that happens between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027.

Organizations interested in applying are encouraged to read through all the information in this document prior to starting the application, which **must** be submitted online through Submittable. Application forms can be found on the Arts & Cultural Vitality Division [Submittable](#) page.

All applicants are encouraged to contact Tacoma Creates staff with any questions regarding the funding application at tacomacreates@tacoma.gov.

For more information about Tacoma Creates, visit tacomacreates.org.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

- **Applications Open:** No later than January 31, 2026
- **Application Workshops and Support:** February 2 – March 9, 2026 (see [Appendix A](#) for more information)
- **Application Deadline for Comprehensive Organizational Support:** **Monday, March 9, 2026, 11:59pm**
- **Notification of Funding Decision:** No later than May 22, 2026
- **Contracting Process with Funded Organizations:** May – June 2026
- **Contract Funding Period:** July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

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STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

You are welcome to contact Tacoma Creates staff at any time:

Lisa Jaret, Tacoma Creates Program Manager: ljaret@tacoma.gov or 253-591-5161

Clarissa Gines, Tacoma Creates Coordinator: cgines@tacoma.gov or 253-591-5174

Kyle Mullins, Tacoma Creates Program Assistant: kmullins@tacoma.gov or 253-591-5744

General inquiries may be sent to tacomacreates@tacoma.gov.

To schedule a phone or Zoom meeting with Tacoma Creates staff, visit calendly.com/tacomacreates.

Tacoma Creates is part of the [City of Tacoma’s Arts & Cultural Vitality Division](#).

ABOUT TACOMA CREATES FUNDING

Funding to support the cultural sector in Tacoma comes from a sales tax of 1/10 of 1% in Tacoma, which was approved by voters in 2018, and reauthorized by Tacoma City Council in 2025. Program parameters, including organizational eligibility, are guided by state and local legislation. You can read more about the history of Tacoma Creates and the legislation that supports this program at tacomacreates.org/about-tacoma-creates.

Funding is based on a competitive application process and is distributed through contracts for services with the City of Tacoma. Contracts for funding will go to organizations that best demonstrate how their arts, culture, heritage, and/or science programs benefit people and communities in Tacoma, based on the goals and evaluation criteria described in this document.

PRIMARY FUNDING GOALS

- Support public programs in arts, culture, heritage, and/or science that engage community members in Tacoma
- Increase access to these programs, and reduce barriers to participation, especially for historically underserved populations, and within neighborhoods across Tacoma
- Support programming by and for culturally or ethnically specific communities, and/or other underrepresented groups
- Expand access to youth education programs in arts, culture, heritage, and science
- Support the sustainability of cultural sector organizations in Tacoma

DEFINITION OF ARTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE, AND SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS

Tacoma Creates funding supports organizations, as defined below, whose **primary purpose** is to advance and/or preserve arts, culture, heritage, or science:

- **“Arts organization”** has a primary focus on programming across one or more of the following artistic fields: creative place-making, dance, design, folk and traditional arts, literary arts, multi-disciplinary arts, music, media arts, theater, and visual arts.
- **“Culture organization”** has a primary focus on public programming that seeks to advance or preserve the traditions, language, knowledge, skills, cuisine, or achievements of a particular nation or people with a shared and immutable personal identity trait.
- **“Heritage organization”** has a primary focus on public programming centered on the identification, documentation, exhibition, interpretation, celebration, and/or preservation of a community’s history.
- **“Science organization”** has a primary focus on public programming across one or more of the following scientific fields: physical sciences, life sciences, natural sciences, earth and space sciences, engineering, and/or technology.

Tacoma Creates uses the terms “cultural sector” or “cultural organizations” to mean, collectively, organizations whose primary purpose meets these definitions, and who provide public programming in these areas.

Organizations with primary missions in other areas, including education, social services, health, and youth development, are not eligible for Tacoma Creates, even if they offer programs in arts, culture, heritage, or science.

For additional definitions of terms used in Tacoma Creates funding programs, visit tacomacreates.org/definitions.

ABOUT COMPREHENSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Comprehensive Organizational Support funding is open to eligible Tacoma-based non-profit cultural organizations that demonstrate an organizational commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as strong programming work in all three of these public benefit areas: neighborhood programming, increasing public access, and educational programming for youth. Applicants in this category must offer programs for the general public (adults/all-ages), **and** youth education programs (classes or workshops for youth under 18). Applicants in this category are expected to offer a variety of public programming opportunities throughout the year.

Funding range: Applicants in this category may request up to 15% of the organization’s total annual budget, based on the average of actual income over the last three completed fiscal years, up to a maximum of \$400,000 per 12-month funding cycle. This funding is meant to help organizations sustain and expand programming that is aligned with Tacoma Creates funding priorities; Tacoma Creates funds are expected to cover a portion of key cultural services listed in funding contracts.

Funding is determined through a competitive application process. The number of contracts awarded each year, and the funding amount for each contract, is based on: a) availability of funds, b) review of each application by a review panel, based on the evaluation criteria detailed in these guidelines, and c) approval of the review panel’s funding recommendations by the [Tacoma Creates Advisory Board](#). Typically, the funds available are not sufficient to support each organization’s full request, therefore many organizations will be funded at a level that is less than their request. Organizations may apply for Tacoma Creates funding every year, however funding from year to year is not guaranteed.

There is another Tacoma Creates funding category, called **Impact Funding**, which may be a better fit for some organizations based on organizational eligibility criteria, their budget size, and/or their programming. To learn more about Impact Funding, see the separate guidelines, available at tacomacreates.org/impact-funding. Organizations may submit only one application for each funding cycle.

ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPREHENSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Before an application for funding can be considered, staff must confirm that the applying organization meets **all** eligibility requirements that are established in the Washington State and City of Tacoma legislation. Eligibility is based on the organizational criteria outlined below, and not on the merits of the proposed programming.

- **Primary Purpose:** Your organization’s *primary* purpose – meaning your organization’s overall mission and the majority of its activities – must be to advance and/or preserve arts, culture, heritage and/or science, using the definitions listed on page 3.
- **Non-Profit Status:** Your organization is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, incorporated under the laws of Washington State and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- **Organization Location:** Your organization’s official business address and your mailing address are both within [Tacoma city limits](#). This is confirmed by the address registered with the IRS, and on your City of Tacoma business license.
- **Program Delivery:** Your organization must directly provide cultural programming to the general public within [Tacoma city limits](#).
 - There are no exceptions to this requirement. Use the City of Tacoma’s [Parcel Analysis tool](#) to verify programming locations, as there are some locations that use “Tacoma” in their address that are technically outside of Tacoma city limits.
- **Track Record:** Your organization has a two-year history of providing cultural programming or experiences to the general public in Tacoma.

EXCLUSIONS FROM ELIGIBILITY

Certain kinds of organizations are not eligible for any category of Tacoma Creates funding, based on Washington State legislation ([RCW 36.160](#)). Excluded from eligibility is any agency of the state or any of its political subdivisions; any municipal corporation; any organization that raises funds for redistribution to multiple cultural organizations; and any radio or television broadcasting network or station, cable communications system, internet-based communications venture or service, newspaper, or magazine.

ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

The online application starts with a series of questions to confirm your organization's eligibility for funding.

Organizations with a current 2025-26 Tacoma Creates contract will confirm and/or update organizational information to verify eligibility.

Organizations without a current Tacoma Creates contract will need to establish their eligibility. If your organization is not currently funded by Tacoma Creates, we strongly encourage you to contact Tacoma Creates staff to discuss eligibility. The Tacoma Creates Advisory Board will review and make determinations in cases of unclear eligibility. While funding applications are open, organizations submit their eligibility information in the first section of the application; during the rest of the year, organizations may submit a separate Organizational Eligibility Form, found on the Arts & Cultural Vitality Division [Submittable](#) page.

All eligible applications are forwarded to the review panel for full evaluation.

WHAT TACOMA CREATES FUNDING CAN SUPPORT

Tacoma Creates funding can support a wide variety of public programs that advance arts, culture, heritage, and science, that take place within [Tacoma city limits](#). This includes, but is not limited to performances, presentations, workshops, permanent and special museum exhibitions, events, festivals, and educational programs for all ages. Programs must generally be open to the public, with the exception of Public School Cultural Access Programs that are specifically for Tacoma Public Schools / Chief Leschi Schools students or teachers, or education programs for court-connected youth. Tacoma Creates funding can also support general organization expenses and capacity building efforts that are connected to the public programming work.

WHAT TACOMA CREATES FUNDING CANNOT SUPPORT

- Programming that occurs outside of [Tacoma city limits](#)
- Work that is commercial in nature – this includes organizations/programs focused primarily on the sales of goods
- Charitable fundraisers or galas, even those which include or benefit the cultural sector
- Debt service or endowment building
- Events or activities that promote a specific political agenda or religious practice
- Education programs exclusively for students at any public school outside of Tacoma Public Schools / Chief Leschi Schools, at any private pre-K-12 school, or at any college, university or technical school
- Payment to a current member of the Tacoma Creates Advisory Board or City of Tacoma employee

APPLICATION SUPPORT

Tacoma Creates staff wants to help applicants understand the process and submit the best possible proposal. New applicants are especially encouraged to connect with staff in advance of submitting the application. There are several opportunities provided for application support including: application workshops, individual support and open office hours with staff, and past application excerpts.

➡ For more information about Application Support, go to [Appendix A](#).

Find additional general support for application development at tacomacreates.org/application-assistance.

CONTRACTS FOR SERVICES, PAYMENT PHASES, AND REPORTING

Organizations approved for funding will sign a *contract for services* with the City of Tacoma. This means that the organization agrees to provide cultural services – also called “deliverables” in the contract – for the benefit of people in Tacoma, and the City agrees to pay for those services after they have been delivered. Organizations draft their deliverables, which are essentially a summary of programs by quarter, as part of the application.

Funding will be divided into multiple payments over the course of the contract. Organizations in the Comprehensive Organizational Support category will report on completed deliverables and submit an invoice every quarter. Full and final payments will not be made until after all contracted cultural services have been provided. Funded organizations should be prepared to cover the costs of their programming in the meantime.

➡ To learn more about Reporting Requirements, go to [Appendix B](#).

CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS

INSURANCE

The City of Tacoma requires proof of insurance as part of the contracting process; the types of insurance required varies based on the types of programs and/or services provided, as explained below.

Proof of insurance is not required at the time of application; however, we strongly encourage organizations to reach out to their insurance company to get a quote on the types of insurance that would be required by a City contract so you can plan accordingly.

- **Commercial General Liability Insurance:** Limits not less than \$1,000,000 each occurrence and \$2,000,000 annual aggregate. Must include these three endorsements: Additional Insured, Waiver of Subrogation, Primary and Non-Contributory.
 - Required for *all* Tacoma Creates funding contracts.
- **Abuse and Molestation Liability Insurance (also known as Sexual Misconduct Liability):** Required if the funded organization will be working directly with youth under the age of 17, seniors, or people with disabilities as part of their Tacoma Creates contracted work. This includes programming *exclusively* for youth, seniors, or people with disabilities such as classes, workshops, camps, live virtual programming, one-on-one instruction, and Beyond the Bell / Club B / Summer Late Nights classes. This does *not* include all-ages or general audience programming, or virtual programming that is completely pre-recorded where there will be no live virtual interaction with youth, seniors, or people with disabilities.

- **Commercial Automobile Liability Insurance:** Required if the funded organization will require the use of owned, rented, or leased automobiles to transport youth under the age of 17, seniors, and/or people with disabilities as part of their Tacoma Creates contracted work.
- **Marine General Liability Insurance:** Required if the funded organization will be performing work on or around water that includes the ownership, maintenance, and/or use of watercraft as part of their Tacoma Creates contracted work.
- **Workers Compensation Insurance:** Required if the funded organization has W-2 employees.
- **Employer’s Liability Insurance (also known as Stop Gap Insurance):** Required if the funded organization has more than 5 W-2 employees.

This [list of insurance requirements](#) includes details including technical language that will be useful for insurance agents, along with a list of insurance companies that specialize in insuring non-profits.

For questions about insurance requirements, contact Naomi Strom-Avila, Funding and Cultural Programs Manager for the Arts & Cultural Vitality Division, at nstrom-avila@tacoma.gov or 253-591-5191.

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Funded organizations must comply with the laws of the Federal Government, Washington State, and the City of Tacoma, including ADA accessibility, non-discrimination, and equal employment opportunities.

BUSINESS LICENSE

Funded organizations must have a [City of Tacoma business license](#).

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Funded organizations must acknowledge the City of Tacoma / Tacoma Creates on their website and in all appropriate public announcements, programs, advertising, and other forms of notice relating to the funded programming, as outlined in the funding contract.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS

A core goal of Tacoma Creates is to support the long-term health and sustainability of cultural sector organizations. With that in mind, organizations funded by Tacoma Creates receive access to a variety of resources to support their work, including:

- **Capacity building opportunities**, such as peer learning workshops, one-on-one technical assistance, and scholarships, in focus areas including equity and access, youth education programs, and non-profit management.
- **Communications support**, including free access to Peachjar, for sending digital flyers to Tacoma Public Schools families, as well as the [Tacoma Creates Events Calendar](#).

EQUITY AND ACCESS

Equity and access are central to Tacoma Creates funding priorities. This includes our public mandate to support programming in neighborhoods across the city as well as in the downtown area, to engage and support historically underserved populations, and to present cultural programs that are welcoming to all – creating a sense of belonging for new participants along with continuing attendees. Tacoma Creates is committed to supporting funded organizations in advancing their individual and collective equity work; we encourage organizations to budget for and use Tacoma Creates funds to support staff time in this work.

These priorities are aligned with the City of Tacoma’s vision for programs that support access, opportunity, and belonging. The City of Tacoma’s [Equity Index](#) demonstrates where there are disparities in access to opportunity, and can support decision-making about neighborhood-specific investments. More information about the City’s commitment to creating an equitable and anti-racist city is posted on the Tacoma Creates [Equity and Access](#) page. Applying organizations will need to demonstrate how they contribute to this vision through their policies, practices, and programs.

This work will look different for different organizations, depending on their mission, leadership, the communities in which they work, and the audiences they intend to serve. The framing of equity and access below is intended to suggest a range of opportunities and approaches that organizations can develop and demonstrate in their work.

In this application, we are using the term BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). Tacoma Creates recognizes that language is fluid and terminology is changing regularly. This term is intended to be broadly inclusive of all racially or ethnically marginalized communities.

EQUITY

Equity means minimizing historical, systemic, and institutional disparities and maximizing opportunities for all people. Equity takes into account context: history, current realities, and future outcomes. Equity advances social justice, which is about the distribution of social and economic resources and opportunities to create a more just society. The purpose of equity in Tacoma Creates programming is to foster greater inclusiveness, increase diversity, and broaden participation in arts, culture, heritage, and science experiences.

ACCESS

Access is an essential part of equity, and important for building community participation and engagement. For your organization’s Tacoma Creates programming, consider the different aspects of access outlined below. How does your organization already demonstrate these different types of access, and where are there opportunities to expand? How can you make it easier for a variety of community members to participate in your programming?

The categories and examples below provide ideas and examples but are not the only ways to support access to public programs. We do not expect every organization to address all of these points, though we encourage you to consider what makes sense for your organization’s programs, and name what access looks like for your work and the community members you intend to serve.

Acceptance-based Access is about how your organization nurtures a sense of **welcoming and belonging**, especially for those who are new to your organization’s programs. Thinking through your organization’s programming, you may want to consider:

- How your organization can demonstrate acceptance through interpersonal interactions, use of space, language, signage, etc., to make people feel comfortable and welcomed
- The needs and perspectives of different potential participants in your organization’s programs, such as: BIPOC, people who identify as LGBTQIA+, people who speak different languages, people with different levels of education or experience, people with different levels of income, people of different ages, etc.
- How people from different backgrounds see themselves represented in the presenters, staff, or volunteers they encounter at your organization’s programs

Communications Access is about **how your organization promotes its programs**. Consider how your organization is getting the word out about opportunities to engage, and whether the messages are being shared in a way that the community members your organization intends to serve can receive them. You may want to think about:

- The formats, methods, and languages your organization uses
- The communities and networks you connect with to expand your organization’s reach
- The ease with which community members can communicate with and get information from your organization

Disability Access is about considering how your organization can best serve **people with disabilities**. There are a variety of ways your organization might be able to improve experiences for people with physical, developmental, and/or unseen disabilities, and people who are neurodivergent. You may want to consider:

- Offering technology and/or services that help people with disabilities – such as people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, or blind or vision-impaired – navigate your organization’s facility and/or programs
- The guidance provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Providing programs specifically for people with physical or cognitive disabilities
- Connecting with people with disabilities to learn more about how they can be included in your organization’s work

Financial Access addresses the **cost of participation in your organization’s programs**. Think about how cost may be a barrier, and if, how, or when your organization could minimize or remove this barrier. Consider how your organization decides on admission or registration fees for different programs. Some ways you can address financial access include:

- Offering free and reduced-price options
- Offering scholarships or sliding scale options for education programs
- Communicating clearly about financial access options, and minimizing barriers to receiving reduced-price access

Geographic Access considers **where programs happen, and how participants can get to them**. Think about the challenges people may have in getting to your organization’s programs, and how your organization can reduce those barriers. Geographic access also includes:

- Presenting your programs at multiple locations in different neighborhoods, including collaborations with Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma Public Library, and Parks Tacoma
- Considering and communicating about transportation options – including bus lines and schedules, safe bicycle parking, and accessible and affordable car parking
- Considering the City of Tacoma’s [Equity Index](#) in planning programming locations

Interest-based Access considers **how your intended participants relate to the content or subject matter of your programs**. Your organization may want to think through how you choose what programs to offer, and how your organization connects with the community to learn what they are interested in, particularly if specific programs are designed for a specific cultural community or identity group.

Public Access addresses **who can attend your organization’s programs**. In general, programs should be open to anyone interested in participating, though programs may be designed to support specific audiences who are historically underserved or have been underserved by your organization. You may want to consider:

- How you ensure your organization’s programming is open to the public
- How your organization offers technical access and support for any virtual programming

YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Education programming for youth under 18, especially underserved youth, is a central part of Tacoma Creates. Tacoma Creates funds can support youth education programs in two key categories:

- 1) **Youth Education Programs Open to All Youth Under 18** – These are classes, workshops, or other active learning experiences specifically for youth that organizations offer and present on their own – at their own facility or at another community location in Tacoma. This may include after-school, weekend, or summer classes. These programs should be open to all young people that fit within the age and experience guidelines for the class. Organizations may charge tuition for youth education programs but should consider how Tacoma Creates funds can support free or low-cost options as possible.

- 2) **Public School Cultural Access Program (PSCAP)** – These are programs offered in partnership with public schools in Tacoma, for the students at these schools. PSCAP funds primarily support programs offered in collaboration with Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) and may also cover programs in partnership with Chief Leschi Schools and public charter schools within Tacoma city limits. PSCAP funds are meant to increase access to cultural learning programs for all local public schools, with a priority on serving schools with the highest levels of need.

PSCAP funds may support a wide variety of opportunities, including: presentations, workshops, or residencies that happen at school sites as part of the school day; partnering with teachers to develop learning activities that support classroom curriculum; cultural learning field trips during the school day; professional learning opportunities for public school educators; offering classes through the district-led Out of School Time programs such as Beyond the Bell / Club B and Summer Late Nights; early learning programs in partnership with TPS pre-school programs; high school internships; and other opportunities that support arts, culture, heritage, and/or science learning for TPS students and teachers. Organizations offering programs in collaboration with TPS as part of the regular school day should demonstrate alignment with classroom teachers’ learning goals for their students, and the [Washington State Learning Standards](#) as appropriate.

Tacoma Creates can also support Youth Education Programs offered in partnership with Remann Hall (Pierce County Juvenile Detention Center) or with Tacoma Housing Authority. If your organization is interested in partnering with these organizations and would like an introduction, contact Tacoma Creates staff.

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME (OST) PROGRAMS: BEYOND THE BELL, CLUB B, AND SUMMER LATE NIGHTS

We encourage organizations to consider providing classes through one or more of Tacoma Public Schools’ OST programs as a way to connect with and support more youth, and to bring programming to different neighborhoods in Tacoma.

➡ If your organization is interested in proposing classes for Beyond the Bell, Club B, or Summer Late Nights as part of your Tacoma Creates work, review [Appendix C](#) for more information prior to applying.

SCHOOL DAY FIELD TRIPS FOR TPS STUDENTS

Tacoma Creates funds will cover bus costs for approximately 200 school-day field trips each school year, for TPS classrooms to attend Tacoma Creates-supported programming. This opportunity is open to classes serving all grade levels, pre-K through high school, at any Tacoma Public School, with a priority given to Title 1 schools.

Schools interested in field trips to Tacoma Creates-supported programming can request a bus through the TPS Staff Hub, and Tacoma Creates will reimburse the district for these transportation costs. If your organization offers school-day field trips, we encourage you to consider how you can include this work in your Tacoma Creates-supported offerings, including providing free or reduced-price access when possible.

PROGRAMMING AT TACOMA PUBLIC LIBRARY BRANCHES

Tacoma Creates partners with Tacoma Public Library (TPL) to expand cultural programming opportunities for people throughout Tacoma. This is an optional opportunity for organizations to offer short educational programs to library patrons of all ages in different parts of the city.

➡ For organizations interested in proposing programming for the TPL partnership, see [Appendix D](#).

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Each application will be reviewed by a panel of 4-6 community members. Panelists will review each application individually and as a group. Panelists will use the application review criteria below, and will score each criteria category using a [30-point scale](#).

Based on their discussions and the combined scores, the review panel will make a collective recommendation about which applications to fund, and the relative amount of the funding requests to support. Full funding at the requested amount is not guaranteed. The Tacoma Creates Advisory Board reviews the panel's recommendation, then votes to approve (or modify) the recommendation. Tacoma Creates staff do not score applications or vote on funding recommendations.

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

The application as a whole should tell a clear story about the proposed programming, and how it will be produced. Organizations are not expected to meet every criterion listed below – the list includes a range of ways that organizations can demonstrate their public benefit and their alignment with Tacoma Creates funding goals.

PROGRAMMING MERIT: GENERAL PUBLIC PROGRAMS

At a minimum, all applications should demonstrate:

- Public programs for adults/all-ages that advance arts, culture, heritage, and/or science and engage community members in Tacoma
- Their experience, purpose, and goals in developing and delivering general public programs

The most successful applications will also demonstrate some or all of the following:

- How and why the arts, culture, heritage, or science programming is relevant and meaningful for the intended participants and audiences
- How the programming deepens, broadens, and/or diversifies experiential cultural programs within Tacoma
- How the programming benefits or supports people and communities in Tacoma
- How the programming intersects with other [priorities for the City of Tacoma](#), such as environmental justice, community safety, workforce development, or supports for mental and physical health
- How the organization is working to sustain, expand, and/or improve their programming

PROGRAMMING MERIT: YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS

At a minimum, all applications should demonstrate:

- Classes, camps, or other education programs that engage youth under 18 in active learning in arts, culture, heritage, and/or science
- Their experience, purpose, and goals in developing and delivering youth education programs

The most successful applications will also demonstrate some or all of the following:

- Application of best practices in youth education and alignment with youth development goals
- Individuals overseeing education programming and/or teaching classes that have relevant experience and/or training in their cultural field, and in working with youth
- Educators who are representative of the populations they intend to serve
- If the organization is proposing programs as part of the regular school day for TPS students, or professional development for TPS certified teachers, how they demonstrate support for and alignment with basic education goals, clear instructional plans aligned with Washington State student learning goals, and collaboration/commitment from TPS teachers/administrators
- If the organization is proposing classes for Beyond the Bell, Club B, or Summer Late Nights, how these programs demonstrate relevant experience in and commitment to youth education

COMMUNITY IMPACT

At a minimum, all applications should demonstrate:

- Organizational mission, goals, and core programming aligned with Tacoma Creates funding priorities
- How they build and develop community trust through approaches such as partnerships, collaboration, communications, and culturally relevant programming

The most successful applications will also demonstrate some or all of the following:

- A history of and/or specific plans for continuing community engagement and programming that aims to strengthen community connections and interactions
- How they maintain and/or expand relationships with participants and partners
- How community members are engaged in the envisioning, planning, delivery, and evaluation of programming
- Strategies for understanding community-specific needs, and developing responsive programming
- Meaningful collaborations with other local organizations – either inside or outside the cultural sector – that improve or expand the impact of the work, and/or support the capacity and sustainability of smaller cultural organizations

EQUITY AND ACCESS

At a minimum, all applications should demonstrate:

- How their proposed programming aligns with Tacoma Creates' vision for equitable, inclusive, and welcoming cultural programming (as described on pages 7-9)
- Clear, specific, and achievable plans supporting and/or increasing public access to their cultural programs, incorporating approaches and strategies that address multiple types of access outlined on pages 7-9

The most successful applications will also demonstrate some or all of the following:

- An existing commitment to equity and access through current and past programming and/or internal practices
- Strategies for identifying and minimizing systemic barriers to participation in their programs
- Awareness of the organization's current capacity, challenges, and opportunities related to equity and access, and specific work on internal practices and policies to support continued or expanded equity work
- Approaches that center communities impacted by structural racism and/or systemic oppression, which includes the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities, older adults, etc.
- Commitment to programming in different neighborhoods in Tacoma, especially those that have been historically underserved, including district-led Out of School Time programs, Tacoma Public Library workshops, and other efforts

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

All applications should demonstrate:

- Clear and specific program proposals and deliverables that demonstrate public benefit and align with the funding request
- A strong foundation for successful program implementation based on effective planning, communications, and evaluation practices; financial responsibility and capacity; and staff and board capacity, as detailed below

More specifically, panelists will consider:

- Effective planning: programming goals and objectives are thoughtful and strategic; narrative, budget, and staffing demonstrate aligned capacity to complete proposed work effectively; the application as a whole is clear and compelling with sufficient detail and specificity
- Financial responsibility: clear and balanced organizational budget; diversity of funding sources; budget history demonstrates working within available resources, and/or plans for addressing any deficits
- Communications and evaluation: multi-faceted and relevant approach to communications; history of and plans for program evaluation and incorporating evaluation results; engagement of community dialogue and feedback integrated into planning processes and decision-making

- Organizational and programming leadership: individuals leading the work have relevant skills, background, experience, and/or training; staff capacity is appropriate for proposed programming; staff and board are representative of the communities the organization serves or intends to serve

THE APPLICATION

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted through our online application form. Go to tacomaarts.submittable.com/submit and select 2026-27 Tacoma Creates – Comprehensive Organizational Support.

If your organization has previously applied for Tacoma Creates funding or other Arts & Cultural Vitality Division programs, you should use the same organizational account in Submittable rather than starting a new one.

Refer to the [Application Review Criteria](#) on pages 11-13 to understand how applications will be evaluated.

USE OF AI (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE) IN APPLICATIONS

The vibrancy of our local cultural sector is built on uniquely human experiences and perspectives, and authenticity matters in publicly funded and public-serving programming. That said, we recognize that applicants may choose to use AI tools to help draft application responses. If you are using AI in any aspect of your organization’s application, please note:

- Applicants are responsible for the accuracy, originality, specificity, and integrity of all submitted materials
- AI-generated content should reflect the applicant’s own ideas and intent, not replace them
- Overuse of AI-generated language can obscure the applicant’s unique voice and may weaken the clarity, specificity, and authenticity of the proposal
- Applicants should be aware of risks associated with sharing data and intellectual property with AI tools

Applicants should also know that each application will be read by 4-6 community members serving on the review panel, who will be considering the aspects of authenticity listed here in their review.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Comprehensive Organizational Support applications must be submitted online by **Monday, March 9, 2026, 11:59pm**. The online form will close automatically at that time; it will not be possible to submit an application after the deadline. There will be no exceptions. Note that Tacoma Creates staff will not be available to answer questions or offer technical support after 5pm on March 9. We strongly encourage organizations to submit at least a day in advance of the deadline to avoid any technical difficulties at the last minute.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

The information below mirrors the questions in the online application form. We suggest that you refer to this document as you develop your application.

You may wish to use the [Application Worksheet](#), which covers the same information below, but in a Word document. This may be helpful for tracking the information needed for your application and developing your narrative responses, which can then be copied and pasted into the online application form. Assume that the panelists who will review your application are not familiar with your organization’s work, so use concise and specific language to support their understanding of your proposal. Note that there are word limits for each section. You may use text formatting in your narrative responses to support readability.

The sections of the application do not need to be completed in the order that they appear, though all required questions (noted as “Required” in red text in the online form) will need to be completed in order to submit.

SECTION 1: ORGANIZATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Provide the following information:

- Name of Organization (your organization’s public-facing name, and its legal name, if different)
 - Organization’s Official Business Address (and Mailing Address, if different)
 - Organization’s Website (or other online presence)
 - Organization’s Primary Contact for this application: Full Name, Job Title, Email, and Phone
 - Organization’s Youth Education Contact: Full Name, Job Title, Email, and Phone
 - Organization’s Authorizing Official (person who will sign contracts): Full Name, Job Title, Email, and Phone
-

SECTION 2: FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

For this section, you will need to provide:

- Published Mission Statement and Primary Work (only needed here for organizations new to Tacoma Creates, or organizations with updated Mission Statements; all organizations will enter their Mission Statement in Section 3)
 - Employer Identification Number (EIN)
 - City of Tacoma business license
-

SECTION 3: ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Share your organization’s mission, primary work and brief history, key individuals who lead the work, work samples, attendance summary, and organizational budget. This information provides context about your organization’s recent work.

Organization Mission / Purpose (50 words)

What is your organization's published mission statement?

About Your Organization (200-300 words)

- Tell us a little bit about what your organization does, and why.
- What are your organization’s key strategic goals, and how do they align with Tacoma Creates goals?
- How has your programming benefited or supported people and communities in Tacoma, and how long have you been providing programming in Tacoma?
- If your organization has received Tacoma Creates funding in the past, what are 1-2 specific ways that your organization has used Tacoma Creates funding to advance your work?

Organizational Leadership and Program Leads

Share the names and roles of your organization’s key board members, staff leaders, and the key people who will lead and implement the programs you are proposing. You may use this [Organizational Leadership Chart](#) to list up to 5 individuals in each category, or you may use your own Word/PDF document that lists your organization’s full board, staff leadership, and program leads (include names and job titles/roles). Optional: you may also upload 1-3 bios or resumes for the individuals who are most central to the success of your organization’s proposed programs.

Work Samples

Share 1-3 brief examples of past work to show the value of your programming. If your organization has received Tacoma Creates funding, choose work that was supported by Tacoma Creates; otherwise, choose work that is similar to what you are proposing to produce this year.

- Work samples may include photos, video or audio clips, an event program, lesson plans, program evaluation results or anything else that you think will help the review panel better understand your work. Videos are especially useful; if you share videos that are longer than a few minutes, be sure to note the minute mark where panelists should start their review.
- Panelists will spend 3-4 minutes reviewing work samples; limit your materials to 4 minutes of video or audio, or 10 images, or 10 pages of written materials. If submitting multiple types of work samples, limit the length/quantity accordingly. Extensive work samples that exceed these limits may be removed before applications are forwarded to panelists.
- For each work sample, you will be able to add a brief description: What was the program/event? When did it happen, and where?
- You may also add additional context about your work samples, such as how the work impacted community, or which communities were served. (Optional, 150 words)

Attendance Summary

In the online application, there is a chart to enter your attendance history for the past two completed fiscal years. Share the approximate number of IN-PERSON attendees at your general public (programs open to any/all-ages) and youth education programs (classes/workshops exclusively for youth under 18). If you have any comments about your attendance summary, or if you had significant attendance at live virtual programs that you want to share, you may do so in the optional Attendance Notes section.

Organizational Budget

Three-Year Budget History

Complete this [Three-Year Budget History Form](#) to upload in the online application.

Note: if your organization's in-kind contributions account for 30% or more of the total income you report on this form, you must also submit documentation for these contributions using the [In-Kind Documentation Form](#).

What was your organization's actual total income for your most recently completed fiscal year?

Your organization's total income includes both earned income and contributed income, and should match the number in your Three-Year Budget History Form.

Audited Budget

Upload an audited budget from your organization's most recently completed fiscal year. If no audited budget is available, you may submit either: a) an unaudited final budget report from your last completed fiscal year along with a letter from your board president that approves and confirms this report, b) a copy of a published annual report showing your budget summary, or c) your IRS Form 990.

Budget Clarifications (Optional; 200 words)

If there are any budget situations that you'd like to explain to the review panel, you may do so in this part of the application. This includes any significant discrepancies between your budget history form and your audited budget, any significant deficits over the last three years, any dramatic changes in a particular category of income or expense from one year to the next, or anything else that might raise questions upon review of your materials. Note that Tacoma Creates supports the practice of building reserves and working capital; modest surpluses are fine and do not require an explanation, though a major surplus should be explained.

If more than 25% of your organization's budget supports programs that are not eligible for Tacoma Creates funding, explain the percentage and the focus.

Additional Budget Documentation

If you have any additional budget documentation you would like to share, including the In-Kind Documentation Form or support for any Budget Clarification notes you may upload that here.

SECTION 4: PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING

The prompts in this section provide the opportunity to tell your organization's story, and to demonstrate how your work aligns with Tacoma Creates funding goals and review criteria.

Many of the questions in this section have multiple prompts – they are designed to help you answer the questions in a way that addresses the review criteria and supports the panel's understanding of your work, but *you are not required to address every prompt*.

Funding Request for 2026-27

Your organization may request up to 15% of your organization's total annual budget, based on the average of actual income over the last three completed fiscal years, up to a maximum of \$400,000 per 12-month funding cycle. This percentage will be automatically calculated in your completed Three-Year Budget History Form. Enter that number (up to the \$400,000 maximum) in the space provided in the application form to confirm the amount you are requesting for the 2026-27 funding cycle.

General Public Programs: What will your organization produce during the next funding cycle (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027)? (800-1000 words)

Describe your organization's primary arts, culture, heritage, and/or science programming that is for adults/families/all-ages. (You will describe learning programs for youth under 18 in a separate section below.)

Consider the following prompts in your response:

Programs Overview

- What are the key programs for the general public that you will produce with Tacoma Creates funding support? Provide details about this work, including dates and locations as appropriate.

Public Benefit

- How will your organization's programming benefit or support individuals and communities in Tacoma? In other words: why does this work matter? Why is it valuable to the community? What are specific examples of how your work aligns with [City of Tacoma priorities](#) and [Tacoma Creates funding goals](#)?

Program Development and Promotion

- How do you make choices about the programs and events that you will produce? Are there any major planning components related to new or reimagined programming?
- How will you get the word out about and support access to your programs? If there are goals to grow or diversify your participants, how will you do that?

Partnership and Collaboration

- Are there other organizations that are key to the success of these programs? If so, who are they, and what is their role? (In addition to describing any partnerships here, we encourage Letters of Commitment from key partners to demonstrate their contributions to your work; these letters may be uploaded at the end of the program proposals section)

Program Evaluation (200-400 words)

- How will you evaluate your programs? How will you measure the quality and/or impact of your organization's work? What are some specific benchmarks or goals for your proposed programs?
- If you are implementing new programs or new program locations in the coming year, how will you measure and evaluate the success of this work?
- Share a specific example of how you have used results from program evaluation work in the last couple of years to inform updates to continuing programs.

Youth Education Programs: What will your organization provide during the next funding cycle (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027)? (800-1000 words)

Describe the classes, workshops, or camps exclusively for youth under 18 that your organization will produce. These may be programs open to all youth, or programs that fall under the Public School Cultural Access Program (see page 9). *(Do not include proposals for Beyond the Bell, Club B, or Summer Late Nights classes, which should be listed in the separate sections below).*

Consider the following prompts in your response:

Programs Overview

- What are the key youth education programs that you will offer with Tacoma Creates funding support? Provide details about this work, including where, when, and how often your programs will occur.
- Who are your organization’s intended students? What are your current student demographics?
- Do you have core staff or contracted educators who will lead your youth education programs, and what is their background? How do you support your education staff/instructors?

Program Development and Purpose

- What is your organization’s educational philosophy or vision? Why do you offer the youth education programs that you do, and how do they connect to your organization’s overall work?
- How do you develop curriculum for your programs?
 - If there are other organizations besides schools that are key to the success of your youth education programs, who are they and what is their role? (Letters of Commitment are encouraged, as above.)
 - Are your communications/promotions strategies the same for your youth education programs as what you’ve described above? If not, describe how you get the word out about and support access to your organization’s youth education programs? If your organization has goals to grow or diversify participants, how will you do that?
- For programs in partnership with public schools:
 - Does your organization focus on any particular school(s), grade levels, or subject areas?
 - How does your organization collaborate with classroom teachers or administrators to align with their learning goals and state learning standards?
 - To confirm the school’s participation and the collaborative nature of your work, include a Letter of Commitment from the partnering teacher, principal, or district administrator. This letter may be uploaded at the end of the program proposals section.

Program Evaluation (200-400 words)

- What does success look like for your organization’s youth education programs, and how will you measure success?
- What are examples of your student learning goals related to your subject matter and broader youth development practices? How do you measure student learning?
- Share a specific example of how you have improved or plan to improve your youth education work based on program evaluation or learning assessment results from the last year or two.

Does your organization offer school-day field trips for pre-K through grade 12 classrooms?

(This is for administrative purposes; if you mark “yes,” we will be sure to follow up with you to add/update information about field trips on our website.)

Beyond the Bell / Club B (Optional section)

If your organization would like to propose after-school programs for Beyond the Bell and/or Club B, be sure to review the information in [Appendix C](#).

To propose Beyond the Bell and/or Club B classes, you will complete the [Class Proposal chart](#) and upload it in the application form. In the chart, you will provide the following information for up to 5 class options:

- Class Title and Description
- Class Outline / Lesson Plan
- What kind of classroom space is needed?
- For which grade levels is this class designed?
- Class Instructor Information
- How many classes can you offer each session?
- Which schedule model can you do?

In addition to the proposal chart, you may offer any additional notes regarding your Beyond the Bell / Club B proposals in an optional notes section.

Summer Late Nights (Optional section)

If your organization would like to propose programming for the Summer Late Nights program, be sure to review the information in [Appendix C](#).

You will need to provide the following information:

- What is the programming that you can provide, and how will it work for a drop-in environment?
- Can you work with middle school students, high school students, or both?
- What relevant experience do the staff/contractors who will teach these programs have?
- How many nights per week can your organization provide programming?
- Are there specific classroom space or equipment needs for your program?
- Would you be interested in hosting a field trip for Summer Late Nights participants?

Programming at Tacoma Public Library (TPL) Branches (Optional section)

If your organization would like to propose stand-alone presentations/workshops for TPL branches, be sure to review the information about this program in [Appendix D](#).

You will need to provide the following information:

- What is the total number of TPL branch presentations that your organization has the capacity to present over the course of the 2026-27 funding cycle?
- Program Title (you may propose up to three program titles; this set of questions will repeat as needed)
- What is the format for this program? (Mostly Lecture/Presentation or Mostly Participatory/Hands-On)
- Brief public-facing description, including any outcomes or goals for the program.
- For which age groups is this program best suited? Note that all programs will be free and open to the public, but promotional materials can target a specific age range.
- What is your organization’s preferred length for this program?
- How many staff members or paid contractors would be involved in presenting this program? If more than one person, explain the roles/responsibilities of the presenters.
- If your organization's proposed program(s) are selected by TPL, who is the contact person TPL staff should contact regarding scheduling and managing your TPL workshop(s)?
- Do you have any scheduling preferences for your workshop(s)?

Letters of Commitment (Optional, but strongly encouraged for partnership programs)

If your organization is partnering with other organizations to develop or present any of your proposed programs, you may share Letters of Commitment in the application. These are written confirmations in which your partner

organization(s) can confirm the details of how they are collaborating with you as a co-developer or co-producer of your organization's programming. Commitments for programming partnerships with Tacoma Public Schools / Chief Leschi Schools should be shared as well.

Equity and Access

What values, goals, and actions does your organization currently engage in that focus on increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and justice? There are sections below to address your organization's internal work (supporting your staff, board, volunteers, and organizational operations), as well as public-facing work (supporting your participants and community).

Refer to the [Equity and Access](#) section of the Application Guidelines for additional information and definitions.

Internally-Focused Equity Work (500-700 words)

This is about how your organization supports staff, board, volunteers, and how you develop organizational operations with equity in mind. This might include internal policies and practices related to decision-making, recruiting, hiring or onboarding, training or learning opportunities, budgeting approaches, research or data-gathering, or anything else that moves your organization's work forward.

Consider the following prompts in your response:

- Tell us about your organization's current level of understanding, capacity, and challenges related to equity work, and if/how this has shifted or evolved in recent years.
- Provide 1-2 specific examples of work your organization has done in the past year to advance equitable policies and practices regarding your staff, board, budget, and/or other areas of internal operations. What were challenges and/or successes related to this work?
- Most importantly: What specific plans, action steps and measurable goals do you have for sustaining, improving, or expanding internal equity work during the 2026-27 funding cycle? How does this work connect to your organization's core programming, and why does it matter?

Organizational Diversity

The Organizational Diversity Chart is a way to share a snapshot of the representation of your board and staff. Organizations should ask their staff and board members how they identify so their information can be included in this chart. Uploading this chart is required, however staff and board members may provide information about their identities on a volunteer basis. If you don't have data for all individuals who are a part of your organization, that is okay; complete as much of the chart as you can. Be sure to include the total number of individuals for each category of personnel.

Download the [Organizational Diversity Chart](#). Complete this form, and then upload in the online application.

Public Access and other Public-Facing Equity Work (500-700 words)

A core goal of Tacoma Creates funding is to increase access to cultural programming across the City of Tacoma, and to create welcoming spaces that are inclusive of participants with a range of backgrounds and needs. Organizations that are based in and/or provide most of their programming in the Downtown Core* must provide some programming in at least one other neighborhood, and organizations based outside of the Downtown Core are encouraged to offer programming at additional locations in other neighborhoods as possible.

**The Downtown Core is defined as the area within the following boundaries: North border is 6th Avenue; East border is Thea Foss Waterway and East L Street; South border is I-5; West border is Tacoma Avenue South. Use this [map of Tacoma neighborhoods](#) to see the boundaries of the Downtown Core as well as the names and boundaries of the 8 other Tacoma neighborhoods.*

Considering the different aspects of [access](#) listed on pages 7-9, consider the following prompts, providing any information that you didn't already cover in your general public programming and youth education programming sections.

- What aspects of access are a key focus for your organization, and why? Have you identified any particular barriers to full participation in your programs? Provide specific examples.
- What will your organization do to sustain, improve, expand, or launch your access efforts in these areas?
- Does your organization have goals to broaden and/or diversify program participants? How do you support program participants with different needs based on their background, experience, abilities, languages spoken, financial resources, etc.? What goals and actions are you pursuing in these areas?
- What are the different neighborhoods where you will provide programming? How have you built connections in these neighborhoods?
- What successes or challenges has your organization experienced in these areas over the past year or two, and what plans do you have to address any anticipated challenges in the coming year?

Equity and Access Budget Commitment (100 words)

How will Tacoma Creates funding support the plans you have outlined above? Describe any specific budget commitments you are making to support your goals related to justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and access.

Capacity Building and Sustainability (200-300 words)

Capacity building means investing in the effectiveness and future sustainability of an organization. A core goal of Tacoma Creates is to support the overall health of the cultural sector. The strength of the sector is based, in part, on the skills and capacity of the individuals who do the work. Capacity building work also includes upgrades to physical spaces or technology, and other aspects of operations and program improvements. We are also interested in how larger organizations are supporting capacity building for smaller organizations.

How will your organization sustain, improve, expand, or launch capacity building efforts in this funding cycle?

Consider the following prompts in your response:

- How does your organization support individuals who work (or volunteer) for your organization? This may include professional learning opportunities for existing personnel, increasing paid work opportunities, diversifying staff or board, or investing in organization-wide trainings or workshops.
 - Does your organization support capacity and sustainability for smaller organizations in the cultural sector, through free or discounted provision of facilities, staff support/professional expertise, or other services? If so, provide specific examples of past work and plans for the year ahead, including specific organizations/partnerships.
 - How does your budget planning relate to the 3–5-year goals of your organization?
 - Is there other capacity building work that you will use Tacoma Creates funds for during the 2026-27 program year?
-

Other City of Tacoma Funding

To support the City's goals for equitable distribution of resources, we are asking applicants to share information about additional funding from other City departments. You will be asked to list any other City of Tacoma funding that your organization is receiving or seeking. It is allowable to have multiple sources of City of Tacoma funding, though you will need to show how the other funding will cover parts of your work that are different from your Tacoma Creates funding request.

Have you applied for, do you intend to apply for, and/or will you receive any other funding from the City of Tacoma in 2026 or 2027?

In the application, you will select either Yes or No. If “Yes” is selected, you will complete a chart that lists the funding source, funding amount, and a short description of what these funds will cover.

Capital Expenses – Information Gathering

To help inform approaches for the Tacoma Creates Capital Funding opportunity that will launch in 2027, we are interested in learning about your organization’s current plans related to Capital Expenses. Your answers to these questions will not be read or scored by the application review panel.

If your organization is funded for the 2026-27 program year, do you expect to use any of the Tacoma Creates funds to help support a significant purchase of durable equipment that is needed to implement your proposed public programming, and that you would expect to last at least 5 years?

- If Yes or Maybe, explain more about this planned purchase and the approximate expense.

In the next 2-5 years, do you expect your organization to pursue major equipment purchases and/or are you considering buying or renovating a facility in Tacoma in which you will provide public programming?

- If Yes or Maybe, explain more about your current plans and goals, including total costs, if known.
-

Contract Deliverables / Summary of Proposed Programming

Provide a brief, bullet-point summary of the key cultural programs your organization plans to provide with Tacoma Creates support, which will serve as your organization's draft deliverables. After funding decisions are made, staff will work with organizations to adjust and finalize the deliverables for the contract. All programs proposed in the narrative sections above may be part of your Tacoma Creates contract. Deliverables should align with your organization's overall programming proposal and with Tacoma Creates funding priorities. Deliverables are not required or expected to be fully paid for by Tacoma Creates funds. Deliverables should focus on public programs; a limited number of deliverables may cover specific and demonstrable work related to addressing equity and access, or other internal capacity building work. Your organizational deliverables are not the place for "stretch goals"; they should describe a realistic and achievable scope of work. General marketing and PR work to promote your programming, including tabling at events and media appearances, is work that you can use Tacoma Creates funds to help support, but is not considered public programming and will not be included as a contract deliverable.

Deliverables should be written in a detailed way that shows the specifics of the services that an organization will provide to people in Tacoma. Wherever possible, numbers should be used to show amounts and demonstrate clear planning. Minimums and ranges are allowable to provide flexibility.

Examples of deliverables include:

- *Completion of 3 full-day, week-long summer education camps for 15-25 youth each week*
- *Produce [name or type of performance/event] with 5-7 presentations, serving a total of 500-800 people*
- *Produce 2-3 [name of workshops/lectures/webinars/community meetings], each serving at least 30 people*
- *Present 4-6 [name of class/lecture series] at [neighborhood locations]; each serving at least 20 people*
- *Complete new [educational curriculum/employee handbook/other internal capacity building work] and post/share written documents*

What 2-5 deliverables will your organization complete for each quarter of the 2026-27 program year?

- Summer Quarter: July 1 – September 30, 2026
 - Fall Quarter: October 1 – December 31, 2026
 - Winter Quarter: January 1 – March 31, 2027
 - Spring Quarter: April 1 – June 30, 2027
-

Insurance

All organizations receiving funding from Tacoma Creates must carry basic Commercial General Liability Insurance. Depending on the type of programming your organization will be doing and the size of your organization, you may be required to have additional insurance. In the application, you will be asked to select the additional types of insurance that apply to your organization’s planned Tacoma Creates programming. You will choose from the following: Abuse and Molestation Liability Insurance, Commercial Automobile Liability Insurance, Marine Liability Insurance, Workers Compensation Insurance, Employer’s Liability Insurance, or none of the above.

Refer to this [list of insurance requirements](#) for details about insurance required by the City of Tacoma.

END OF APPLICATION

We encourage you to reach out to [Tacoma Creates staff](#) with questions at any time.

APPENDIX A: APPLICATION SUPPORT

We encourage you to reach out to staff if you have any questions about the application – we are here to help!

There are a variety of options outlined here, and you can always email tacomacreates@tacoma.gov for support. You can also visit tacomacreates.org/application-assistance for a list of application support resources.

APPLICATION WORKSHOPS

There are three free workshops that cover the application process and how to develop a strong application. Each workshop will have a different focus; we encourage applicants to attend the workshop that best matches your organization's situation, but we will cover the basics at all workshops.

The first workshop will be held via Zoom and requires registration (see link below); a recording of this workshop will be posted at tacomacreates.org/application-assistance. Registration is not required for the in-person workshops, though space is limited and we encourage you to arrive a few minutes early.

Applicants should read the guidelines before attending the workshop and come with questions. The presentation portion of the workshop will be about an hour, with time at the end for questions and discussion.

Friday, February 6, 2026, 12:30-2pm – Virtual

- Focus: New applicants: new organizations and/or new staff with returning organizations, applying in either funding category
- Zoom – [click this link](#) to register in advance
- We recommend attending via laptop or desktop computer, so that you will be able to see the slides shared during the workshop.

Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 2-3:30pm – In-Person

- Focus: Impact Funding
- South Tacoma Branch, Tacoma Public Library, 3411 S 56th St
- Nearest bus routes: 3, 41, 53; free parking available in lot, as well as street parking

Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 1-2:30pm – In-Person

- Focus: Comprehensive Organizational Support
- Tacoma Municipal Building, room 243, 747 Market St
- Nearest bus routes: 1, 11, 16; paid street parking available

To request a reasonable accommodation for these workshops, contact the Arts & Cultural Vitality Division at (253) 591-5191. TTY or speech to speech users may dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

Tacoma Creates staff are available to assist anyone who has questions about the application process. Staff can answer questions about guidelines, provide feedback about proposal ideas, and – with enough lead time – can review drafts of proposal narratives or budget forms or other application elements. Tacoma Creates staff will not write applications for applicants.

- **Schedule a meeting:** Meeting times can be requested through [Calendly](#). Each meeting is 20-30 minutes long, and can be held over Zoom, or by phone. If there are application materials you would like staff to review in advance, email them to Tacoma Creates staff at least two days in advance of your meeting at tacomacreates@tacoma.gov.
- **Email staff:** You may send an email with your questions at any time to tacomacreates@tacoma.gov, and we will make sure someone gets back to you within 2 business days.

APPENDIX B: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All funded organizations will need to submit periodic reports about their programming. Tacoma Creates funding is distributed through contracts for services; the reports are the opportunity to demonstrate that the services were delivered and to submit an invoice for payment.

The purpose of each report is to:

- Demonstrate the completion of deliverables (the planned cultural programs) for the quarter
- Upload an invoice for this time period
- Help Tacoma Creates staff understand the scope of your work and its impact within the community

The reports are completed through online forms in Submittable, and include sections to share data about public programs and participants served; to share stories about how programs went and their community impact, and to show examples of work through photos, videos, or documents.

We use a Program Summary Chart for organizations to share details about their programs, the program locations, and the participants they are serving. You may refer to the [2025-26 Program Summary Chart](#) as an example. Visit our [Program Locations](#) page to see how we use this data to show where programs and events took place.

Quarterly reporting schedule:

- Summer Quarter (July – September 2026): report available mid-September; due by October 15
- Fall Quarter (October – December 2026): report available mid-December; due by January 15
- Winter Quarter (January – March 2027): report available mid-March; due by April 15
- Spring Quarter / Final Report (April – June 2027): report available mid-June; due by **July 25**
 - The Spring Quarter report is connected to the Final Report for the full contract year, which includes additional prompts about programs and accomplishments for the full funding cycle.

Staff will review submitted reports, confirm that planned work has been completed, and process invoices. It may take 2-4 weeks for invoices to be paid following staff approval.

DEFERRING OR MODIFYING DELIVERABLES OR PAYMENTS

Sometimes, organizations find that they are not able to complete their deliverables, and in these cases, Tacoma Creates staff can work with organizations to defer or modify the deliverables. Within the contract period, it is possible to skip reporting and invoicing for a quarter, if more time is needed, however organizations may only invoice for work that was completed.

APPENDIX C: TACOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS: BEYOND THE BELL, CLUB B, AND SUMMER LATE NIGHTS

Tacoma Creates is pleased to support cultural organizations that provide programming in several Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) district-led Out of School Time (OST) programs for TPS students:

- **Beyond the Bell:** After-school classes for elementary school students
- **Club B:** After-school classes for middle school students
- **Summer Late Nights:** Evening program for middle and high school students

For Tacoma Creates-funded organizations, this is an opportunity to provide quality cultural learning experiences for students in different parts of the city, to expand your education offerings, and to participate in a system that provides spaces and registration processes so that each organization doesn't have to build and manage these logistics independently.

These programs are organized and managed by a collaboration between Tacoma Public Schools, Parks Tacoma, and Greentrike. This OST Coordination Team is responsible for setting program schedules and policies, overseeing and providing staffing at all program locations, onboarding all educators, and managing registration. The information provided below offers general information about how the program works. Organizations approved for funding for these programs through Tacoma Creates will work with and be responsible to the Coordination Team for class placements and program delivery. Visit the [Beyond the Bell / Club B website](#) for more information.

Organizations interested in this opportunity will need to provide:

- Engaging and age-appropriate curriculum in arts, culture, heritage, and/or science
- A qualified, well-prepared instructor who meets all professional obligations of the program
- All materials to support classroom activities and student learning
- Organizational support and oversight to support instructor(s)
- Participation in marketing and communications efforts to support class registration, including onsite engagement opportunities facilitated by the OST Coordination Team
- Annual background checks, as well as participation in required safety-related trainings and site-based orientations

Organizations are responsible for adhering to the Beyond the Bell / Club B attendance and cancellation policies. Additional expectations and requirements will be communicated by the Coordination Team.

SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMS

Beyond the Bell and Club B classes happen at set dates and times; the Coordination Team will work with funded organizations to confirm locations and days that work for all involved.

There are four sessions of school year classes; each session is approximately 8 weeks long, with most classes meeting twice a week – either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday. Approximate session time frames:

- *Session 1: September – November*
- *Session 2: December – February*
- *Session 3: February – April*
- *Session 4: April – June*

Organizations should ideally commit to all 4 sessions, however exceptions are possible.

After-School Schedules:

For Club B, instructors are on site from 2:15-4:30pm, with 90 minutes of program instruction time.

For Beyond the Bell: there are two possible models for the 2026-27 school year as of the publication of these guidelines:

In the *current model*, instructor responsibilities include engaging with students before and after program instruction time to support student check-in, snack time, and social emotional learning (SEL) practices. The daily schedule is typically:

- 3pm – Instructor arrival
- 3:10/3:30pm – Program opening: snack; SEL serene start activity supported by instructor
- 4-5:30pm – Program time – instructor facilitates arts/culture/history/science curriculum
- 5:30-6pm – Program closing and check out – SEL calm closing activity supported by instructor (instructors stay with students until they are picked up, but no later than 6pm)

In the *possible new model*, Parks Tacoma staff will fully support the transition times before and after program instruction time, and program instruction time would change from 90 minutes to 60 minutes. The program instruction time would mostly likely be 4-5pm.

In the application, organizations may indicate whether they are interested in providing programming with either or both models. Parks Tacoma will confirm the schedule model by April 2026; organizations that propose and are selected for Beyond the Bell programs will not be obligated to follow through if the selected model does not align with their capacity/interest.

PROGRAM COORDINATION

OST Coordination Team will:

- Contact participating organizations to confirm class offerings at least 6 weeks prior to the provider deadline for Session 1, and at least 4 weeks prior to deadlines for Sessions 2-4
- Collaborate with participating organizations to determine which classes will take place at which schools, in order to balance different types of programs for different age groups at each school, and to confirm and finalize class descriptions
- Confirm class instructor details
- Review and provide support on classroom outline/curriculum needed for each class
- Coordinate background checks for all instructors (organizations pay the cost for background checks, which must be updated at the start of each school year)
- Coordinate all required orientation, training, and program readiness work for all participating instructors

As lead partners for Beyond the Bell / Club B, Parks Tacoma and Tacoma Public Schools will:

- Schedule and coordinate space at TPS locations
- Provide a “site lead” at each school; site leads oversee day-to-day operations at each school site; they are responsible for onsite coordination, student supervision and engagement before and after the program instruction time, and ensuring that instructors are supported and following program protocols
- Provide and distribute snacks
- Coordinate and manage bus transportation for students at priority schools
- Promote classes to students and families
- Provide and manage the registration process, including tracking enrollment, attendance, and other student data
- Provide online access to enrollment data for participating instructors/organizations

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

To support continued growth and development for organizations/instructors as well as overall program improvements, there will be a mix of required and optional sessions throughout the school year, including professional learning opportunities, end-of-session reviews, and opportunities to network and collaborate.

SUMMER LATE NIGHTS

Tacoma has a Late Nights program for middle and high school students: it is free, dinner is provided, and it is a drop-in program so students can attend as often as they like. The program is offered at selected TPS sites and Parks Tacoma community centers around the city, and runs Monday-Friday, 5-10pm, all summer long. Visit the [Parks Tacoma Summer Late Nights](#) page for more information.

The Summer Late Nights program is interested in programming from Tacoma Creates-funded organizations as part of the mix of opportunities available at the Summer Late Nights sites. Interested organizations may propose programming as part of their Tacoma Creates application; selected organizations will provide 2-hour activity blocks, generally from 7-9pm, at one or more Summer Late Nights locations, one or more nights per week, for 9 weeks. The exact days, times, and locations will be scheduled in collaboration with the organizing team in the Spring.

Organizations that have a facility that can accommodate 100-150 students at a time may propose hosting a field trip for Summer Late Nights students at their site. The field trip must focus on participatory learning experiences over a 2-3hour time frame.

Funding for Summer Late nights programming will be provided in addition to funding for core programs for all selected organizations. We anticipate the range of fees for the 9-week commitment will be \$1,500 for the minimum of two hours of programming per week, and \$5,250 for the maximum of 8 hours per week. This rate includes fees for instructors, prep time and required meeting time, and a modest budget for supplies and organizational oversight.

APPENDIX D: PROGRAMMING AT TACOMA PUBLIC LIBRARY BRANCHES

Tacoma Public Library (TPL) is interested in working with cultural organizations that can provide educational programming for library patrons of all ages, including programming for youth (babies – teens). TPL’s goal for educational programs is to keep patrons engaged in reading and learning activities throughout the year, and to present programs that are aligned with their [strategic priorities](#).

For cultural organizations, this is an opportunity to plug into the library network and bring short programs to communities in different parts of the city, with TPL providing space as well as limited marketing support. Organizations interested in this opportunity can propose programs to present at TPL branches as part of their Tacoma Creates application, using the optional section in the online application form. The most successful and popular programs tend to be interactive and participatory; TPL is interested in offering a variety of different types of programs to keep patrons engaged from year to year.

These programs should be self-contained, ready-to-go programs that will work in small to mid-sized library meeting rooms with minimal technical support needs. Programs may be either participatory workshops or lecture/presentations, and may be 30, 60, or 90 minutes long.

The Tacoma Creates funding panel will review TPL program proposals and make recommendations; TPL staff will select the organizations and programs that best match their programming interests, needs, and locations.

Program Scheduling and Working with TPL Staff

- Organizations confirmed for presenting programs at TPL branches will be contacted by a TPL staff member, who will work with them to confirm physical space needs and schedule programs at mutually agreeable times and locations.
- TPL will contact organizations starting in May 2026 to schedule programming to occur September 2026 – June 2027. If you have scheduling preferences, you may share those in the application.
- Organizations must maintain timely communication with TPL staff to schedule programs and confirm program content by library-provided deadlines in order to support program success.
- TPL will determine the location at which programs will be presented. TPL may ask organizations to present the same program at multiple [library locations](#). TPL staff will utilize an equity lens to match programs with locations that best meet the needs and opportunities of the neighborhood.
- TPL may cancel any program due to lack of timely communication or preparedness.

Program Delivery

- Organizations must provide all supplies, materials, and content needed for their presentation. TPL has limited technology equipment and related staffing; organizations that need technology for their presentations will need to discuss options with TPL staff and may need to provide their own equipment.
- TPL staff will provide limited day-of assistance with set-up, and breakdown; organization presenters should be prepared to do most of this work and should be able to manage set-up and clean-up within about 15 minutes. TPL staff are not expected to co-create or co-present programs.
- We encourage organizations to work with TPL staff to identify books and/or other library materials that increase engagement with library resources as well as your organization’s presentation content.

Program Promotion

- Organizations will work with TPL staff to confirm program descriptions and to provide photos or logos as needed to support communications.
- TPL will create a program graphic and event listing on its website calendar and will also post it on the Tacoma Creates Events Calendar.

- Organizations are expected to use the TPL-created graphic and web calendar link to promote their library programs as they would other Tacoma Creates-supported programming, using existing platforms (such as email, newsletters, social media, website).

Note: The TPL programming section of the application is specifically for proposing stand-alone presentations for TPL branch locations. If your organization is proposing other kinds of partnership work with TPL for Tacoma Creates support, such as work with the Digital Media Labs, the Northwest Room, collaborations that take place in locations other than branch libraries, or other long-term collaborations, describe that work along with other General Public Programs and/or Youth Education Programs in your application.