Tacoma Creates

2026-27 Application Guidelines – What's new in 2026?

Every year, there are updates to the Application Guidelines and the online application forms based on feedback from applicants, review panelists, staff, and, in some years, changes in the Tacoma Municipal Code. Here are some of the key updates in 2026:

- **Definitions of Arts, Culture, Heritage, and Science Organizations**
  - Definitions have some updates, especially for Culture and Heritage organizations
- **Youth Education Programs**
  - Updates to Public School Cultural Access Program section, and confirmation of support for programs in partnership with Remann Hall and Tacoma Housing Authority.
- **TPS Out of School Time Programs (Beyond the Bell, Club B, and Summer Late Nights)**
  - There is a possible shift in the afterschool schedule for Beyond the Bell – details are in Appendix C of the Application Guidelines
  - Last year was a pilot year for Tacoma Creates-supported programming in Summer Late Nights – that support continues this year
- **Evaluation Criteria and Scoring**
  - The core funding goals have not changed, but there are shifts in the Review Criteria language for both funding programs, including:
    - Participation in TPS Out of School Time Programs and TPL Branch Workshops are more clearly addressed within the Criteria
    - In the Comprehensive Organizational Support category, there is more clarity on Programming Merit for General Public Programs and Youth Education Programs, with overall organizational work shifted into the Community Impact section
  - The 30-point scale used for application scoring has been updated with more details to support review panelists' work
- **Application Questions**
  - There are updates to prompts throughout the application, including the sections focused on core programming proposals and equity and access.
- **Draft Deliverables**
  - Increased clarity in Guidelines about how to write draft deliverables, and how staff will work with funded organizations to update and finalize deliverables for contracts
- **Documentation for In-Kind Contributions**
  - For organizations in the Comprehensive Organizational Support category with a significant percentage of in-kind support, there is a new required documentation form.
- **Capital Funding – Information Gathering**
  - The new program to support capital expenses (buying or renovating a building, or major purchases of durable equipment) will be launched in 2027; as part of our program development, there is section in the application to share their current plans related to capital expenses. This is purely informational and will not be reviewed by panelists.

Complete details about all aspects of the application process are in the Application Guidelines; find the Guidelines and related information at www.tacomacreates.org.

Questions? Email Tacoma Creates staff at tacomacreates@tacoma.gov.