



FAQs: FY25 Grants & Funding Cycle

OVERVIEW

What was passed by Metro Council?

The Metro Nashville Arts Commission submitted RS2025-961 which details the FY25 grant and funding policies, inclusive of Thrive and General Operating grants to the Metro Council, who approved the policies by resolution on January 21, 2025. The finalized policies were authorized on January 16, 2025, by the Arts Commission. The legislation includes the following:

- **Increased allocation to the Thrive grant program.** 60% of the budget will be allocated to General Operating (\$1,957,920) and 40% to Thrive (\$1,305,280). The 40% allocation shows MNAC's commitment to funding individual artists and diverse projects across Nashville. This allocation proportionally exceeds all Thrive allocations from previous years.
- **An equitable Operating grant funding model that awards grants based on budget size, scaled to the available budget.** The Commission maintained a policy from the previous grant cycle that shifts a greater proportion of funding to organizations with budgets under \$500,000. All organizations – across size – that receive a qualifying score will receive funding under this model.
- **Independent artists who do not have 501(c)(3) status will work with a fiscal agent to administer their Thrive grant.** The Title VI Conciliation Agreement established a Working Group with representatives from Metro Arts, Metro Human Relations Commission, Metro Legal, Metro Finance, and the artist community to identify a compliant funding mechanism for Thrive. The fiscal sponsorship model provides a solution that funds individuals and complies with all local and state laws. You can read more about the full summary of the Working Group and why they decided on the fiscal agent model [here](#).
- **Eligible Thrive projects will be funded at 75% of their original requested amount.** Thrive applicants will be rank ordered, and funds dispersed at 75% of the ask amount until depleted. If there are remaining funds (due to a smaller number of applicants or a remainder), funds will be evenly distributed to awardees, on top of the 75% award amount. This



funding formula strikes a balance of funding as many projects as possible while maintaining some budget integrity of the requested amount.

- **Contract period beginning Wednesday January 22.** The delayed grant cycle has created a short timeline on which grant funds must be spent so that Metro Arts can close out prior to the end of FY2024-2025. While an extension is not possible, the contract and spending period will be retroactively begun on January 22, 2025 and will run through June 30, 2025. Of note, the current criteria state a June 1, 2025 through date for performance period. However, legislation will be filed that changes the performance period to June 30, 2025, with final reports due July 15, 2025.

Where can I find the guidelines and criteria that were passed?

The guidelines and criteria for both operating grants and the Thrive program can be found on the Metro Arts website. These criteria and guidelines were approved by Metro Arts Commission on January 16, 2025, and by Metro Council on January 21, 2025.

Applicants may only apply for one grant. If you previously applied for both Operating support and a Thrive project grant, please withdraw one application by February 18, 2025. If during technical reviews an applicant is found to have applied for both grants, you will be contacted to determine which you would like withdrawn.

What happens next?

If you applied for **operating grant funding** for FY25:

- Review the final Operating Guidelines available on the Metro Arts website [here](#).
- You are not required to make any changes to your application; however, you must log into Submittable to confirm your application is ready for review for the FY25 cycle.
- If your organization has experienced a *significant* change since you applied, you can make updates to your application on Submittable through February 18, 2025.
- All qualifying organizations who score at least 70% will be partially funded. For a breakdown of potential awards, go to the [grants webpage](#). From there, click on **spreadsheet** to download an excel file. The last column, in green, indicates the potential award amount for FY25. The spreadsheet demonstrates how award sizes are calculated; however, all specific award amounts are estimates and



subject to minor changes, pending data verification and based on the number of qualifying applications.

- The contract and spending period for operating grants will be January 22, 2025, through June 30, 2025 (this end date will be effective after an amendment to the legislation is passed by council in February).

If you applied for **Thrive project funding** for FY25:

- Review the final Thrive Guidelines available on the Metro Arts website [here](#).
- You will be required to edit your application in Submittable to make any adjustments to your project, and to indicate the organization that will serve as your fiscal sponsor (if needed, see below) and submit the necessary documents.
- Projects that score highest in the panel reviews will be funded. Applications will be rank ordered and funds will be awarded until depleted.
- If your project is selected for funding, you will receive 75% of your requested amount.
- The contract and spending period for Thrive projects will be January 22, 2025, through June 30, 2025 (this end date will be effective after an amendment to the legislation is passed by council in February).

OPERATING GRANT APPLICANTS

Will the application our organization submitted last year be fully funded?

All qualifying organizations who score at least 70% will be partially funded. For a breakdown of potential awards, go to the [grants webpage](#). From there, click on **spreadsheet** to download an excel file. The last column, in green, indicates the potential award amount for FY25. Award amounts are estimates and subject to change.

If our organization did not apply last year, can we apply now?

No, the deadline for applying for FY25 funding was January 2024. Applications will open soon for FY26 funding.

Do I need to make changes to my application in Submittable?

You are not required to make any changes to your application unless you've had a significant change in your organizational leadership, structure, or focus. You



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will be required to log on to Submittable before February 18 to confirm that you want your application to be considered for FY25 funding.

When will I know if I receive funding?

The Arts Commission anticipates making funding decisions on February 27, 2025. Applicants will be notified within 48 business hours about the outcome of their application.

When will we apply for funding for FY26?

Applications will open soon for FY26 funding. You will be notified by email of the timeline for FY26 Operating Grant applications.

I would like some additional support regarding my application. Can someone help me?

Yes. Metro Arts staff is ready to answer any questions and will be holding frequent office hours in person and online until February 18. You can find a schedule of office hours and events by [clicking here](#); this page will be updated as new times are added. You can also email arts.grants@nashville.gov with any questions or concerns.

THRIVE APPLICANTS

Will my application I submitted last year be fully funded?

Projects are not guaranteed funding; those projects who receive the highest scores from panelists and are selected for funding will receive 75% of their requested amount. The total budget for Thrive is \$1,305,280.

If I did not apply last year, can I apply now?

No, the deadline for applying for FY25 funding was January 2024. Applications will open soon for FY26 funding.

What is a fiscal agent?

Thrive applicants who are not 501(c)(3) nonprofits must secure a fiscal agent (often also referred to as a Fiscal Sponsor) to receive and administer their grant awards. The Arts and Business Council of Greater Nashville* defines fiscal sponsor as: "a contractual arrangement in which a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization offers its legal and tax-exempt status to another group for a project



or activity related to the mission of the nonprofit... Fiscal sponsorship allows projects to seek grants under the fiscal sponsor's tax-exempt status."

Because Metro Arts can only distribute grants to nonprofit organizations, individuals can work with a Fiscal Agent to meet this requirement. Metro Arts will help facilitate connections between artists and fiscal agents, if the artist requests assistance.

*Metro Arts Thrive grants are separate and independent from the Arts and Business Council, but the Arts and Business Council has some helpful information about how fiscal sponsorship works. We share this [FAQ for informational purposes](#) to illustrate how this model has worked in other settings.

Will I be assigned a fiscal sponsor?

You will not be assigned a fiscal sponsor. You can either choose your own fiscal sponsor or Metro Arts staff will assist you in identifying a fiscal sponsor.

Does my fiscal sponsor need to be an arts organization?

No, your fiscal sponsor can be any nonprofit organization registered in Tennessee that has an IRS Letter of Determination with an effective date of exemption of January 15, 2024, or earlier.

Does my fiscal sponsor receive funds from my project budget?

Your fiscal sponsor can elect to receive up to 10% of project budget to cover administrative fees. Your fiscal sponsor can also elect to not charge an administrative fee or can charge a smaller percentage.

You can adjust your project budget and your requested amount any time before February 18, if you would like to account for this fee in your budget.

What updates do I need to make to my application?

By February 18, applicants should log onto Submittable to make the following updates:

- Updates to project scope, timeline, or budget, based on accelerated timeline
- Organization name and contact information about your fiscal agent (if necessary)
- Upload two forms on fiscal sponsorship, indicating who will serve as the fiscal agent for the project



What forms will I need to complete with my fiscal sponsor?

Applicants will need to complete a Letter of Fiscal Agency (from Fiscal Agent to Metro) and Letter of Agreement (Agreement between grantee and Fiscal Agent). These forms can be [found here](#), on the Partner Tools page on our website.

I have some project expenses from last fall related to this project. Can I submit them for reimbursement?

The spending window for Thrive projects in FY25 is from January 22, 2025 through June 30, 2025. You are not able to receive reimbursements for project expenses outside of this window.

When will I know if I receive funding?

The Arts Commission anticipates making funding decisions on February 27, 2025. Applicants will be notified within 48 business hours about the outcome of their application.

I can't do my project this year. Can I reapply for funding for FY26?

Of course. Applications for FY26 funding will open soon.

If you decide to withdraw your application from consideration for the FY25 cycle, you need to log onto Submittable by February 18 and withdraw your application.

I applied for Thrive funding and an operating grant. Can I receive funding for both?

Applicants may only apply for one grant. If you previously applied for both Operating support and a Thrive project grant, please withdraw one application by February 18, 2025. If during technical reviews an applicant is found to have applied for both grants, you will be contacted to determine which you would like withdrawn.

I would like some additional support regarding my application. Can someone help me?

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