



# City's Special Initiative Program

## Fiscal Year 2011 Grant Guidelines

Administered by



(Revised 6/28/10)

### Purpose of the City's Special Initiative Program

- The City's Special Initiative Program provides a one-time grant to nonprofit arts or cultural organizations for **special opportunities** that are not part of the applicant's annual budget, regular programming or annual event. An example could be the opportunity to present an artist or performance that was not included in an annual season; unanticipated invitation to perform or exhibit as part of conference or meeting being held in Houston; or the opportunity for one-time exposure in national or regional media campaign. Awards are restricted to artistic and marketing costs, with a maximum available of \$15,000.
- Funds may also be used for **emergencies** which can be defined as acts of god or other extreme events. Funds can not be used for past debt or unsuccessful fundraising.

### Deadline for Applications

- The complete application is due **no later than 5:30 p.m.** on the **FIRST Friday of the month, at least 90 days prior to planned event.**

### Application Requirements

Houston-based nonprofit arts and cultural organizations are eligible to apply, provided they meet all the following requirements:

1. Applicant is a currently IRS recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts or cultural organization or other type of non-profit organization that regularly presents arts events or arts projects.
2. Applicant has been in operation for at least one full year prior to the grant application deadline and is able to produce financial statements showing arts or cultural activity for one full year prior to the application deadline.
3. Applicant is physically based in the City of Houston.
4. Applicant may request not more than 50% of previous year's cash revenues as demonstrated in submitted IRS 990 (if required) or internal financial statement.
5. Applicant may only apply for an activity not previously funded with a Special Initiative grant.
6. Applicant must wait a minimum 24 months after date of signing of a previous Special Initiative Grant before submitting another application.
7. Projects offering strong city-wide tourism potential may be eligible for two years of support instead of for existing one year of support rule. This will be considered by the Grants Committee at time of application review. Applicants would be subject to 24 month rule after the second year of funding is complete. This must be for a **new** project and not an existing one.

8. A consortium of **at least three** qualified non-profit organizations may apply for funding and the organization acting as fiscal agent for the consortium will not be penalized individually from future funding.
9. Project for which funds are being requested must meet the requirement of the Hotel Occupancy Tax (Texas Tax Code Ann., Section 351.101), which mandates funds must be used to promote tourism. (<http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/tx.toc.htm> )
10. If the applicant is a current or previous grantee, it must be 'current' on all grant agreements and have submitted and received approval of all previous final reports.
11. Applicant must submit for City's Special Initiative funding at least **90 days** prior to scheduled event.

## How to Apply

- It is highly recommended that a possible applicant contact HAA Grants staff prior to preparing an application to ensure eligibility.
- Complete the Special Initiative Program grant application, and include all required attachments including full budget proposal. See "Helpful Hints" on page 4.
- HAA must receive the application no later than 5:30 p.m. on the FIRST Friday of the month at the Houston Arts Alliance, 3201 Allen Parkway, Suite 250, Houston, TX 77019, attention: City's *Special Initiative Program*.

## How Applications Are Processed

- Generally, the review process takes six to ten weeks from the time of the application deadline to the time an award decision is made. HAA reserves the right to restrict use of funds in its grant awards.
- Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Each complete and eligible application is forwarded to the HAA Grants Committee. This committee, comprised of members who are experienced in the arts and non-profit management, reviews the application, recommends whether or not to fund, and if so, at what amount. The recommendation is ratified by Houston Arts Alliance Board of Directors and is forwarded to the Mayor's Office. The Mayor's Office makes the final decision. Note: For all other grant categories, HAA uses a peer-panel review process.
- Applications are evaluated based upon: 1) artistic or cultural merit or contribution to City of Houston; 2) marketing plan to attract tourists or visitors to the City of Houston, or serve the convention industry; 3) evidence of community support; and 4) administrative ability of the organization as determined by its budget, program quality, artistic and administrative staff, and any previous grant history with HAA.

## After Grant Approval

- The applicant is notified by the *Mayor's Office* of final decision. All grantees are required to meet with HAA staff to complete grant agreement materials.
- **Agreements and Payments:** Once the **Houston Arts Alliance** has received the signed agreements, processing of the award begins. Payments are on a reimbursement basis, made in minimum of two installments, with the final installment paid **after** the Final Report is approved.
- **Final Report:** Within 45 days of the completion of the activity the grantee is required to submit a Final Report summarizing the completed project and detailing the use of the grant funds. For each expense, copies of invoices or receipts and cancelled checks are required as documentation for the grant amount spent.
- **Credit Line:** All grantees must use the following credit line: Made possible in part by a grant from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance. Where sponsor logos are used, the HAA logo and City seal must be used and given equal value to other sponsors of similar size including sponsor benefits. A minimum of four tickets/passes to the event shall be made available at no cost to HAA for its sole use, if requested.

## **Grantee Responsibilities**

The Grantee is responsible for completing the project for which funds are awarded and complying with the terms of the Grant Agreement. If the grantee does not provide required documentation, the grantee will be ineligible to apply again for this or any other grant from **Houston Arts Alliance** until this grant has been closed properly.

## **What May Be Funded:**

- 1. Marketing & promotion of unique one-time events including advertising and printing costs**
- 2. artist fees**
- 3. Travel and lodging for visiting artists**
- 4. Event related expenses such as rental of technical equipment or space usage**
- 5. Staff that is not part of normal administrative or artistic expenses, if organization is receiving general operating support from HAA, Theater District or Museum District.**

## **What May Not Be Funded:**

1. Project activities that do not meet the eligible uses of the Hotel Occupancy Tax, as outlined in the Texas Tax Code Chapter 351 <http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/tx.toc.htm>
2. Existing deficits
3. Expenses associated with programs outside of the City of Houston unless they are unique and offer regional or national exposure for Houston.
4. Projects or events that are extensions of training or academic programs
5. Costs related to performances or programs already funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax (through the Houston Arts Alliance, Miller Outdoor Theatre, Houston Museum District Association, or Theater District Improvement)
6. Programs and projects that take place less than 90 days after application date.
7. Scholarships, awards or cash prizes
8. Benefits, galas and projects planned primarily for fund raising
9. Loans, interest on loans, fines, penalties or costs of litigation
10. Problems that result from inadequate planning or budgeting or unsuccessful fund raising
11. Projects or performances that are regularly occurring events
12. Projects or activities which have a primary purpose that is religious. Religious organizations or groups closely affiliated with religious organizations may receive funding if all the following conditions are met:
  - The funded program has a secular purpose
  - The primary effect of the funded program does not advance or inhibit any religion or religious activity
  - The activity is open and advertised to the general public
13. Administrative costs not directly affiliated with the special initiative program or project
14. Equipment (except rental costs directly affiliated with the funded project or program)
15. Capital building expenses
16. Meals, refreshments and/or catering expenses

## Application and Support Materials

**Project Budget:** Complete the required Project budget form showing both project expenses and all anticipated sources of revenue. This is required as part of the application.

**Expenses:** When listing the proposed expenses for the project for which you are applying, please review the list of What HAA funds may not support in the grant Guidelines to avoid proposing the use of grant funds for items that cannot be paid for with grant funds. These items may be included in your budget but they must be paid for with cash or in-kind contributions from sources other than this grant.

**Revenue:** Provide a revenue budget for the proposal. Include the amounts that you expect to raise from other sources such as ticket sales and concessions. Indicate if contributions will come from foundations, corporations or individuals and if the funds are committed or anticipated.

**NOTE:** HAA can not guarantee that funding is always available; however, staff can confirm availability of funds prior to application.

### Additional Attachments for “New” or “First-Time” HAA Applicants:

Applicant organizations that are new to the **Houston Arts Alliance** grants process or have not received a grant in the last fiscal year are asked to provide the following information in addition to the above materials:

- **A list of the current Board of Directors** (to include names, addresses and phone numbers, and community affiliation).
- **A short history of the organization** (one page maximum).
- **Annual Financial Report** - documentation from the most recently completed fiscal year. Documentation should be most recent IRS Form 990 filed with the Internal Revenue Service (if required by IRS), or a copy of most recent annual financial statement signed by board Treasurer if annual revenues less than \$25,000.

### Helpful Hints

- **Don't miss the deadline!** The complete application package is due no later than 5:30 p.m. on the FIRST Friday of the month.
- **Please type!** The application can be downloaded from our website at [www.haatx.com](http://www.haatx.com).
- **Please do not fax or bind your application.**
- **Application Information:** Complete the first page of the Application. *Don't forget the required two signatures on the application form before turning it in!*
- **Application Narrative:** In the space provided, answer the questions thoroughly. The application form provides specific guidance as to the information that you need to provide. *This is your chance to make the case for your project!*
- **How much should you apply for?** It is up to the applicant organization to determine the amount of the request. Matching funds are not required, but are generally considered an indication of community support for a project. Limited funding rarely allows for any one project to be fully funded. Most grants are generally between \$2,000 to \$15,000.
- **Deliver or Mail to** the Houston Arts Alliance, 3201 Allen Parkway, Suite 250, Houston, TX 77019-1800, attn: City's Special Initiative Program.