



Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment  
**The Creative Reset: Phase One**  
September 2025



# The Creative Reset: Phase One

## What We Did At-A-Glance

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- Answered the Call
- Listened to the Community
- Led with Trust & Transparency
- Learned the Art of the Pivot
- Enhanced the Funding Programs based on Community Feedback



**“We painted the mural while the gallery was already open.”**



# The Power of Engagement

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# AACMEs Engagement Approach & Analysis



**Six-Part, Iterative Feedback Cycle:** Engagement unfolded in six steps — from historic data review to public presentations. Community input shaped each stage, making it a co-creation with Austin’s creative community.

**Multiple Engagement Channels:** 1:1 meetings, surveys, citywide sessions, focus groups, and community-hosted events where ACME listened.

**Community-Led Contributions:** Draft guidelines were co-written with community members, and their ideas were directly incorporated.

**Extended Timelines:** Engagement periods were lengthened based on community requests.

**AI + Human Analysis:** Advanced tools identified themes and provided an analysis of all data collected; staff ensured context and nuance were preserved. [Scan QR Code or click this link to view community feedback analysis.](#)





# Enhanced Funding Programs

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# What's New?

## Funding Guideline & Applications:

- Community Engagement Process
- Feedback loop with Commissions
- Feedback loop with all-staff
- Public Input, share-out of progress along the way
- Updated application process to enhance User Experience

## Major department-wide enhancements:

- Strengthened SOP's to prevent issues such as double-dipping in funds
- Universal appeals process for all grant programs
- Updated Panel process for programs that use that



# AACME Funding Programs: *Eligibility At-A-Glance*

File ID: 25-1876



FUND SOURCE	Cultural Arts Fund (HOT)			Live Music Fund (HOT)	General & Incentive Funds	Historic Preservation Fund (HOT)	
APPLICANT CATEGORY	Thrive	Elevate	Nexus	Austin Live Music Fund	Creative Space Assistance Program	Capital Projects (Historic designation with activities highlighting site's local history)	Heritage Events (History-informed activities highlighting site's local history)
501 (c)(3) Arts Nonprofit	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓
501 (c)(3) Arts Nonprofit w/ Creative Space	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓
501 (c)(3) Nonprofit (non-arts)	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
State of Texas Designated Arts Nonprofit	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-
For-Profit Arts Group	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
For-Profit Individual Artist	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
For-Profit Professional Musician	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-
For-Profit Independent Promoter	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-
Organization w/ Eligible Creative Space	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓ 501 (c)(3)
For-Profit Business	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fiscal Sponsor Allowed	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-



# Nexus Grant

**Grant Agreements are for a 12-month term and awarded in two categories:**

Applicant	Award Amount
Individual Artist / Arts Group (one year experience)	\$5,000 <b>OR</b> \$10,000 based on score



## Notable Enhancements:

- Focus on individual artists/arts groups
- Award amount options (\$5K or \$10K)
- Now eligible for appeals process





# Elevate Grant

**Grant Agreements are for a 12-month term and awarded in four categories:**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Award Amount</b>
<b>501(c)(3) Arts Nonprofit</b>	
operating budget greater than \$300,000	Award up to \$80,000
operating budget of \$100,001 to \$299,999	Award up to \$60,000
operating budget of \$50,001 to \$100,000	Award up to \$50,000
operating budget under \$50,000	Award up to \$30,000
<b>State of Texas Nonprofits/Arts Group</b>	
operating budget \$50,001 to \$500,000	Award up to \$40,000
operating budget under \$50,000	Award up to \$30,000
<b>Individual Artist</b>	
Minimum two-year production history in Austin operating budget \$500,000 or less	Award up to \$30,000



## **Notable Enhancements:**

- Similar applicants competing together (budget size)
- Larger award size range for individual artist
- Updated panel process

# Thrive Grant

**Grant Agreements are for a 24-month term and awarded in two categories:**

Applicant	Maximum Total Award	Annual Award Cap
501 (c)(3) Arts Nonprofit <b>with</b> Creative Space	Up to \$250,000 total over 2 years	Up to \$125,000 per year
501 (c)(3) Arts Nonprofit <b>without</b> Creative Space	Up to \$170,000 total over 2 years	Up to \$85,000 per year



## **Notable Enhancements:**

- Similar applicants competing together (budget size and creative space)
- Awardees from previous cycles are eligible for an award, no restrictions
- Updated panel process

# Creative Space Assistance Program

**Grant Agreements are for a 12-month term:**

Applicant Organization w/ Eligible Creative Space	Award Amount
<p>All Applicants must have at least a \$60,000 operating budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Live Music Venue</li><li>• Performance Venue / Theatre</li><li>• Museum / Art Gallery</li><li>• Multi-Use</li></ul>	<p>\$60,000</p>



## Notable Enhancements:

- Flat award amount, based on feedback
- Updated creative space definition/use





# Austin Live Music Fund

**Grants are awarded in three categories:**

For-Profit Applicant	Award Amount
Professional Musician & Independent Promoter	\$20,000 with 24-month Grant Agreement term
Professional Musician & Independent Promoter	\$5,000 with 12-month Grant Agreement term
Live Music Venue with at least a \$60,000 operating budget	\$70,000 with 12-month Grant Agreement term



## Notable Enhancements:

- Updated award amounts based on feedback
- Updated scoring criteria based on feedback
- Updated panel process

# Heritage Preservation Grant

Grants are awarded in two categories:

Project Types	Award Amounts & Term
Heritage Events (Local, State, or National Designated Historic Location)	Up to \$150,000 with 12-month Grant Agreement term
Heritage Events (Eligible Properties Pursuing a Designation; or Historic Location with No Designation)	Up to \$50,000 with 12-month Grant Agreement term
Capital Improvement Projects	Up to \$250,000 with a 24-month Grant Agreement term



## Notable Enhancements:

- Expanded funding categories, to include events
- Historic interior flooring repairs and mechanical/electrical upgrades are now eligible



# Planned Launch Calendar

## 2025

Oct 21, 2025
Elevate Austin Live Music Fund CSAP Heritage Preservation Grant

## 2026

March	July	September
Nexus	Elevate Thrive Austin LMF Historic Preservation Grant	Nexus

## 2027

March	July	September
Nexus	Elevate Austin LMF CSAP Historic Preservation Grant	Nexus







# Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment

## Amplifying Austin's Creative Spirit

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