



Funding Programs Update

Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment | Oct 19, 2026

FY26 Funding Disbursement Status *(as of 10/16/26)*



Program	Total Awardees	Total Funds	# of Awardees Paid	% of Awardees Paid	\$ of funds disbursed	% of funds disbursed
ALMF	396	\$7,045,000	385	97%	\$4,695,000	67%
Elevate	277	\$12,616,773	273	99%	\$11,000,089	87%
CSAP	22	\$1,320,000	21	95%	\$919,741	70%
HPG	22	\$3,000,274	20	91%	\$1,904,021	63%
Thrive	35	\$3,850,000	32	91%	\$3,208,500	83%
Nexus	76	\$505,000	61	80%	\$374,500	74%
TOTAL	829	\$28,337,047	792	96%	\$22,101,851	78%

2027 ACME Grants

Applications Window: July 7, 2026 – August 18, 2026, at 6:59 PM

Contract Period: January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027 (or December 2028 for 2-year contracts)

2027 Grant Panel Process!



- **60** Panels (Elevate, Heritage Preservation, Thrive)
- **330+** trained Panelists (panelists score against a detailed rubric)
- **900+** applications moved to Panel Process
- **12-26** applications reviewed per Panel Meeting
- **20** interpreters scheduled throughout the month (Spanish and American Sign Language)
- **5-8** Panelists review every application (Olympic scoring before final scores)
- **2-3** Panels Meetings per day
- **5** weeks (Tues-Saturday)

- **NOTE:** Full **Scores**, **Comments**, and Panel Meeting **Recordings** will be available to applicants when Notification letters go out in November.

120 Ineligible Applicants (not moving to Panel Meetings)



Elevate (88 ineligible)

- Insufficient **2-year Austin-based** arts production history
- Not primarily **arts-focused**
- **Unclear** or unverifiable **documentation** (un-dated or incomplete work samples)
- Ineligible **activities** proposed (studio build out, events outside the Austin, events not open to the public)

Thrive (19 ineligible)

- Annual **expenses below \$60,000**. This was verified with documented IRS filings.
- **Geographic ineligibility** (outside the Austin MSA)
- **Not** meeting the definition of an **arts nonprofit**
- **Duplicate** lead applicants

Heritage Preservation (13 ineligible)

- **Sites not historically designated**, or lack of evidence confirming eligibility status.
- **Incomplete bid packages or missing required documentation.**
- **Applicant type not eligible** under program rules.
- Insufficient organizational **operating history.**
- Activities proposed **outside the contract period.**

\$23 Million in Funds Available in 2027

\$65+ million in requests

Austin Live Music Fund



- **\$6 million**
- ~290 awards (\$5k - \$70k)
- **1,044 Applicants**
 - 56 Venues
 - 65 Promoters
 - 923 Musicians

Elevate



- **\$11 million**
- ~250 awards (\$30k - \$80k)
- **854 Applicants**
 - 257 Arts 501c3s
 - 179 Arts Group
 - 418 Individuals

Heritage Preservation



- **\$3 million**
- ~30 awards (\$50k - \$250k)
- **53 Applicants**
 - 40 Heritage Events
 - 13 Capital Projects

Thrive



- **\$3 million**
- ~30 awards (\$160k - \$250k)
- **104 Applicants**
 - 40 with Space
 - 64 without Space

2026 Nexus Fall Launch

Application Window: September 7 – October 13

Contract Period: January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027

2026 Nexus Fall Launch Update



- **300 Applications** Received (288 English, 12 Spanish)
- **86 hours** of direct application **support** to 95 individuals (6 Virtual Office Hours, 11 Bookings appointments, 4 English workshops, 2 Spanish Workshops). Plus 2 Community Events reaching 375 community members.
- **13 Reviewers** have been trained and are reviewing applications
- Scores and comments due November 16. No Panel Meetings. No Appeals Process.
 - From our ACME Guidelines: *"Nexus Grant Reviews: Due to high application volumes for our smaller grant opportunity, the Nexus program will use a modified review structure of the formal panel. Applications are evaluated by outside reviewers. All reviewers are trained in the application review process and evaluate applications based on defined grant criteria. Reviewers will provide written comments. A panel discussion will not be offered. All final scoring decisions are carefully reviewed ahead of final award decisions by AACME leadership."*
- Award announcements end of Nov/early Dec
- **75 awards**
 - 25 at the \$10,000 level
 - 50 at the \$5,000 level

Other Updates

ACME Fiscal Sponsor Round Table



- **Goal:** To bring together Austin’s fiscal sponsors to better understand the current landscape, gather insights on strengths and challenges, and inform potential improvements to ACME’s fiscal sponsorship policies.
- September 17th invitation and Survey went out by email
- Preferred meeting date: Wednesday, **November 4th** from 10am – Noon
- **16** Fiscal Sponsors completed the Pre-Survey (due by Oct 16)
 - Collected core information about current fiscal sponsorship practices
 - # of sponsored projects, model type, application process, fee, other services, pain points, etc.
 - Helps ACME assemble an initial snapshot of Austin’s fiscal sponsorship ecosystem to guide the discussion

ACME Access & Assistance



ACME Ambassadors

- **Share** information about ACME programs
- **Guide** creatives toward the right places for help and official guidance
- **Co-host** one **workshop** with ACME staff (your space, our content)
- Participate in a brief **check-in** with ACME
- Compensated
- **LIVE:** [ACME Ambassador Interest Form](#)

Community Navigator

- Solicitation **in development** with Austin Financial Services
- Oct/Nov 2026: **Launch** solicitation
- January 2027: Target contract **start**
- \$60,000–\$75,000, pending final scope
- **1-year** contract with a potential 1-year extension, contingent on performance
- Focus on Spanish-language outreach, navigation, and direct applicant support
- Not eligible for ACME Funding Programs

2027 Grant Application Timeline



Questions?

www.austintexas.gov/acmegrants