



Almost Real Things



**Community  
Amplifier**

Connecting artists to opportunities to make a living

# **In the Know**

## ***GRANT WRITING***

With Natalie Earhart & Lys Santamaria

**FOR THE CITY OF AUSTIN'S NEXUS GRANT**



# UNDERSTAND THE GRANT

# From the Nexus site

- Assistance
- Grant Guidelines
- Eligibility
- Application questions
- Application materials
- Application scoring
- Glossary of important terms
- Reporting requirements
- Funding timeline

# Find out what's available

- What information is out there?
- What resources are available?
- For the Nexus grant, all of the information is on the City's site:
  - [austintexas.gov/nexus](https://austintexas.gov/nexus)
  - [Nexus Guidelines \(English\)](#), [Nexus Guidelines \(Spanish\)](#)
- [The Cultural Arts Program Details](#) have info about all of the grants
- Outside resources and assistance from ART are also available:
  - [communityamplifier.org](https://communityamplifier.org)

# Is this the grant for you?

- What are your current other commitments?
- Be realistic with your workload and schedule
- Check your eligibility
  - For Nexus, this is on the [main page](#)
    - Grant Guidelines
      - Eligible Applicants

## Eligible Applicants

- 501(c) nonprofit arts organization
- An individual artist aged 18 or older\*
- A creative business\*
- Applicant's most recently completed fiscal year's budget is \$150,000 or less
- One year of operating history in the Austin metropolitan statistical area (MSA)
- 51% or more of the applicant's creative production is within the Austin 10-1 districts or extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)
- Applicant has not already received or is not currently receiving City funding for the same activities in the fiscal year in which they are applying

\*May apply directly or with a fiscal sponsor

# Additional research

- Who is giving the grant?
  - What is their mission?
  - What do they hold valuable?
- Who has been awarded in the past?
- What are they looking for?
  - Always refer to the mission of the grant and the description of the grant in your application



# PREPARE YOURSELF

# Consider your timeline

50 Nexus grants are available

**EVERY 6 MONTHS!**

This is not your only chance.

- **Nexus Round 1**
  - Your event needs to happen between Oct 2023 and Mar 2024
- **Nexus Round 2**
  - Your event needs to happen between Apr 2024 and Sep 2024



# Organize

- What are the things you need to do to prepare?
- Set calendar reminders:
  - Deadlines
  - Time blocks for important milestones
- If you need letters of recommendation, leave time for your references to write them
  - Ask at least 2 weeks before they're due
  - You do not need them for Nexus

# Brainstorm

- Start thinking about how you will approach the grant
- Clarify your artistic vision



# Keep brainstorming

- What's a cool project that I can reasonably complete?
- Will it serve my community?
- What have my peers done?
- What's something new that I haven't done?
- What is an event I attended that inspired me?



# Get creative!

- Journal about your project
- Talk to people you trust to clarify your ideas
- If you're struggling to write your ideas, try recording yourself talking about them
- Create a flyer about your project to gain more clarity





**NOW YOU ARE  
READY TO APPLY**



# ANSWERING GRANT QUESTIONS

# Quick tips

- Save your answers outside of the portal
  - To make it easier to collaborate, use a cloud-based text editing app on your computer, like Google Docs
  - You won't lose your work and you will have a living document to help with future apps
- Be clear and direct—get to the point
- Make sure you are thorough
  - Don't be afraid of being repetitive!
  - If something is important to your project, you want to reiterate it

# Example question

What is the applicant's mission, vision, and primary production history? Please identify your key constituencies and provide information about the applicant's service to them.



# Here's how the City explains it:

- Organization's mission, vision, and production history will be used for this response.
- Individual applicants and creative businesses should provide their creative mission, artistic vision, and production history for this response.
- Key constituencies
  - Key constituencies that will be prioritized are community groups that are at immediate risk of cultural erasure and displacement within Austin and/or have been institutionally marginalized and under-funded by the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division.

# Let's break it down

Breaking down questions into separate parts will make it easier to understand and write about it.

1. What is your mission/creative mission?
2. What is your vision/artistic vision?
3. What is your production history?
4. Who are your key constituencies?
5. How do you serve your key constituencies?

# 1. What is your mission/ creative mission?

Think about:

- What is the reason why you do what you do?
- Why did you start creating/start your business?
- What are your goals?

## 2. What is your vision/ artistic vision?

- Is there a bigger purpose behind your art/business?
- How do you see yourself accomplishing your mission?
- What does this look like in the long run?

### 3. What is your production history?

- What's your experience?
- What activities/projects have you hosted or collaborated on so far?

## 4. Who are your key constituencies?

- Who is your audience?
- Why is this your audience?
- What artists/collaborators are you involving?

**REMEMBER: The city will prioritize community groups that are**

- At immediate risk of ***cultural erasure*** and ***displacement*** within Austin
- Have been institutionally marginalized and under-funded by the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division.

# Definition: cultural erasure

Cultural erasure is when, because of cultural displacement, key aspects of neighborhoods that allow both current and future residents to feel at home go missing. Current and future residents lose access to opportunities in the neighborhood and the scale of change erases key aspects of the neighborhood that allows residents to feel at home. Content was developed in collaboration with the City of Austin's Equity Office and industry resources.

From [austintexas.gov/nexus](https://austintexas.gov/nexus) under Glossary of Important Terms

# Definition: cultural displacement

Cultural displacement occurs through changes in the aspects of a neighborhood that have provided long-time residents with a sense of belonging and allowed residents to live their lives in familiar ways.

As the scale of residential change advances, and shops and services shift to focus on new residents, remaining residents may feel a sense of dislocation despite physically remaining in the neighborhood. This may also reflect the changing racial or ethnic character of the neighborhood—not just its class composition.

From [austintexas.gov/nexus](https://www.austintexas.gov/nexus) under Glossary of Important Terms



# 5. How do you serve your key constituencies?

- What have you done/what do you do to serve your audience?
  - Examples of past events, collaborators you've worked with
  - Projects currently in the works
- How you engage with your community

# Quick tips

- You can use bullet points/dashes
  - Not all of your answers need to be long paragraphs
  - You want to be direct, so bullet points or dashes are okay
  - This will also help the panelist
- If you make an argument, back it up with evidence
  - Give examples and include specifics
  - For example, if you state: “We provide opportunities for artists to make money” your evidence could be:
    - “We commissioned 10 artists for our last show” or “Vendors reported making \$500-\$1,000 during our event”



# BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

# Remember!

- Double-check your attached documents
  - Are they titled correctly?
  - Are they all attached?
  - Did you delete any duplicates?
- Is the application filled out correctly?
  - Did you follow the rules?
  - Are you sure?

# Activity

- For our activity, we'll have you practice answering the example question, "What is the applicant's mission, vision, and primary production history? Please identify your key constituencies and provide information about the applicant's service to them."
- You will brainstorm each section to work on the question piece by piece



Almost Real Things



# Community Amplifier

Connecting artists to opportunities to make a living

# Thank you!

[communityamplifier.org](https://communityamplifier.org)