



VANS Custom Culture Grant Guidelines

Americans for the Arts is pleased to again partner with VANS Custom Culture on the *VANS Custom Culture Grant* program. This program seeks to increase visibility for and resources available to arts educators and schools across the country, in order to sustain the arts as a vital part of education. The grant program is supported by funds from a separate program, [Vans Custom Culture](#)—a design contest where high schools compete to win \$50,000 for their art program.

About the grant:

VANS Custom Culture Grants are available to [public high schools](#) (including charter schools) serving students in grades 9-12. The grants are intended to encourage the inclusion of the arts as an integral component of an excellent education, and to support activities that are consistent with local and national learning standards for arts education. Ten (10) schools across the country will each receive a \$2,000 grant to support their work in providing high-quality music and/or visual arts instruction for students.

How can the grant be spent?

Each grantee will receive an award of \$2,000, and funds must be used to support visual arts and/or music programs. For the 2015-2016 application cycle, the money should be used for activities associated with **partnerships** with community artists and/or cultural organizations (such as field trips, residencies, master classes, performances, workshops), combining with other subject areas to integrate curriculum; joining forces with another school (to design a collaborative workshop or performance etc.), or pairing with other partners such as businesses, parents, and other community or school leaders. Overall, this grant program seeks to use arts education as a platform to create social impact in communities while serving a high number of students.

Examples of Successful Applications in the past year includes:

William Workman High School – “Concert with the Stars”

William Workman High School used the grant money to bring in two world class musicians, Poncho Sanchez and Francisco Torres, to play a concert with the Workman High School Jazz Band. They rehearsed with the band on two separate occasions and then put on the show of a lifetime. Over 500 people were in attendance, including mayors from both neighboring cities, and there was not an open seat in the entire theater. This event proved to be successful and special for the community members to see their high school band students perform at a professional level on the same stage with professional musicians of the highest caliber.

East Mountain High School-“Change is good!”

East Mountain High School used the grant money to purchase live-sound equipment in order to engage community awareness about their recording arts program. They partnered with a local restaurant, The Greenside Café, to play at least an hour on the second Wednesday of every month. They brought the owner business and he donated five percent of what was made in their one hour of playing. Secondly, after contacting the principal of Roosevelt Middle School, they set up an assembly where they presented information about their high school, performed a set of songs and brought awareness of their high

school to a wider and younger audience. In being awarded the grant, East Mountain High School fulfilled both the student's needs and the wider community's needs as well through concerts and events.

Funding may **NOT** be attributed to school personnel, faculty and/or teachers. Additionally, grant funds may **NOT** support costs associated with:

- Overhead, maintenance and administration;
- Food and beverages;
- Operational Reserves;
- Tuition and scholarships;
- Fundraisers and special events;
- Travel not directly related to the execution of the project
- Supplies (paint, clay, sheet music, etc.)
- Facilities (rehearsal space or classroom improvements, etc.)

How to apply?

To be considered for a grant, schools will have to complete the online application. Applicants must complete all questions on the form and upload supplemental materials that demonstrate student creativity, overall school culture, and a connection to the intended use of the grant. The online application form can be found at: www.americansforthearts.org/vans/grants .

What is the timeline?

Applications open Wednesday, November 16, 2016 and close on an **extended deadline of Friday, December 16, 2016**. A judging panel will convene in mid-December to select the 10 grant recipients. Americans for the Arts will notify grant recipients in early January and will disperse all grant funds by January 31, 2017. Funds must be used between January and June 2017. A blog reporting on projects and activities funded by the *VANS Custom Culture Grants* will be due to Americans for the Arts no later than May 15, 2017. Selected grantees will have their grant report posted on ARTSblog.

Am I eligible?

Schools must be public high schools, including charter schools, serving grades 9 – 12. Schools must currently offer visual arts and music courses as part of their arts education programs, and grant funds must be used to support either visual arts and/or music programs. While Vans' commitment to art and music stems from their connection to the skate/surf culture that influences their brand, teachers are encouraged to include partnerships with other art forms as part of an innovative program proposal, particularly as these grants are intended to support partnerships.

Please note that:

- ❖ Preference will be given to schools that can demonstrate 1) the grant will serve a high number of students; 2) successful community arts partnerships; and 3) a demonstrated need for funding.
- ❖ Schools with immediate family members that serve on the staff or Board of Directors of either VANS or Americans for the Arts will not be eligible to receive grants.
- ❖ Schools that have received a Vans Grant in the past two years are not eligible to apply for this application cycle.

The review panel charged with selecting the grant recipients will be comprised of national arts education experts, along with representatives from Americans for the Arts and VANS.

Panel members will review the applications and will rank the applicants according to the following criteria. Panelists will be instructed to review and score each section independently, so please carefully answer each sub-question in the section in order to receive full points for the section.

Question 1 - Project Overview (200 word max) 25 of 100 pts

- Describe how your school would utilize the \$2,000 grant. (15 pts)
- Provide a budget breakdown of how the funds will be used. (5 pts)
- Provide a narrative to describe each of the funding expenditures. (5 pts)

****Please refer to funding guidelines on what is and is not eligible.*

Question 2 – Supplemental Materials (200 word max) 25 of 100 pts

- Describe how your supplemental materials relate to your proposed project. (10 pts)
- Describe how the supplemental materials demonstrate a commitment to high quality arts education for all students. (10 pts)
- Describe your school's current arts environment (course offerings, administrator support, etc.) and how this project will improve access to the arts. (5 pts)

Question 3 - Engagement and Impact (200 word max) 25 of 100 pts

- Describe how many students will be served by the proposed project. (10 pts)
- Describe the impact this grant will have on your school/community/students. (5 pts)
- Describe how the proposed program speaks to the unique needs of the youth in your particular community. (5 pts)
- Describe how your school would partner with parents, businesses, and/or arts and culture or community organizations to leverage the impact of the proposed activities. (5 pts)

Question 4 - School / Student Need (200 word max) 25 of 100 pts

- Provide information on your school's Title I status and/or its percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches. (15 pts)
- Provide any additional information about your school or student population's particular need for this grant. (10 pts)

Contact Information

For more information regarding the *VANS Custom Culture Grant* program, or for clarification about the criteria or the application process, please contact Americans for the Arts' Arts Education Program Manager, Jeff Poulin, at jpoulin@artsusa.org or 202-371-2830.