2019-2020 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 the Vans Custom Culture shoe design contest.

Program Overview
VANS Custom Culture Grants are available to public high schools (including charter schools) serving students in grades 9-12 or community based nonprofit organizations/governmental agencies serving as a fiscal agent for arts programming in public high schools. The grants are intended to encourage the inclusion of the arts as an integral component of a well-rounded 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 arts instruction for students.

Funding Overview
Each grantee will receive an award of $2,000, and funds must be used to support programs and/activities in dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual arts, or interdisciplinary arts. Projects must include an instructional component using the arts.

For the 2019-2020 application cycle, the money should be used for activities associated with an external partnership. Partners may include, but are not limited to, community artists and/or cultural organizations, local businesses, other schools or higher education institutions, community groups, parent groups, and/or youth groups. Partnerships should seek to deepen community and student impact using the arts and/or expand the reach of arts education to new and innovative partners.

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.)

Eligibility
Applicants must be public high schools, including charter schools, serving grades 9 – 12, or a community organization with an established partnership with an eligible high school. 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 performing arts 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.

**Scoring and Evaluation Criteria**
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 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 need for this grant. (10 pts)
Grant Timeline
Applications open Wednesday, November 6, 2019 and close on Friday, December 6, 2019. A judging panel will convene in December to select the 10 grant recipients. Americans for the Arts will notify grant recipients in January 2020 and will disperse all grant funds by February 1, 2020. Funds must be used between February and May 2020. A mid-point report will be due by April 1, 2020 and a final report on projects and activities funded by the Custom Culture Grants will be due to Americans for the Arts no later than July 15, 2020.

Application Instructions
To be considered for a grant, schools or community organizations working to benefit a school 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.

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, Kelly Fey Bolender, at artseducation@artsusa.org or 202-371-2830.