



Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts Grant Cycle Guidelines

Focus

The Santa Barbara Foundation is committed to strengthening nonprofit organizations and building the capacity of the arts social sector through the support of Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts. Grants will be available to nonprofit organizations seeking to further their mission of providing quality performing art opportunities. Funding from the Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts has shifted and will be available to qualifying performing arts nonprofit organizations for general operating or programmatic support.

Priorities

Priority will be given to organizations that:

- Demonstrate that their programming responds to a sustained and/or increased need for accessible and diverse performing arts experiences in Santa Barbara County.
- Are taking clear steps to sustain or expand organizational capacity in order to meet need for quality performing arts opportunities.
- Demonstrate awareness of the local performing arts landscape and take steps to align, coordinate, or differentiate their work to avoid unnecessary duplication of services.
- Demonstrate cultural competence among volunteers, staff, and board members in ways that reflect and engage the communities served.
- Seek to dismantle language, cultural, financial, and other barriers that prevent low-income and marginalized populations from accessing performing arts opportunities.

Important Note: *The Foundation aims to promote in its grantmaking a balance of geographic spread, population served, organization size, applicant history with the Foundation, and organization's mission alignment with the Fund. As such, these characteristics will also be considered at the committee level when prioritizing grant awards.*

Types of Support

Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts Grants are available for a variety of activities in the following areas:

- Program Support
- Expansion of existing Programs

- Pilot Programs
- Organizations that seek to produce, present and preserve exceptional works from a variety of artistic traditions, and ensure opportunities for participation that reflect the demographic diversity of Santa Barbara County
- Collaborative efforts to leverage community access to performing arts opportunities
- General operating support

Funding Amounts and Duration

The maximum award for the Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts is **\$15,000**. An organization can apply once per calendar year. Due to the increasingly competitive nature of the grant program, partial funding is likely to be awarded. The grant period is up to one year from the award. A final report is required and is due within 13 months of the grant award, preferably no later than 30 days following the project completion.

Please visit the [Eligibility Criteria & FAQs](#) for a complete list of what the foundation does not fund.

Eligibility Requirements

- The Towbes Fund for Performing Arts Grant are available to organizations serving all regions of Santa Barbara County.
- Organizations must be certified as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or use a fiscal sponsor with 501(c)(3) tax status. Applications that do not contain a valid EIN (tax ID) number will not be considered. Organizations using a fiscal sponsor must review the [Eligibility Criteria & FAQs](#) for additional information and instructions.

Important Dates

March 13, 2026	Application Deadline
Late-April	Funds Awarded
May 2027	Final Report Deadline
October 9, 2026	Application Deadline
Mid-November 2026	Funds Awarded
December 2027	Final Report Deadline

Contact Information

For questions about the Towbes Fund for the Performing Arts Grants program and funding eligibility, or technical assistance, please contact Deanna Vallejo, Senior Program Officer, at (805) 880-9385 or Jessica Sanchez, Senior Director of Donor Relations, at (805) 880-9366.

TFPA Scoring Rubric Structure
Scale: 5 (Highest) to 1 (Lowest) | Maximum Score: 25 Points

Criteria	5	4	3	2	1
Purpose & Strategic Use of Funds	Clearly articulates a well-defined request that is tightly aligned with the organization's mission/ programming and strategic priorities. Funding is explicitly tied to sustaining or expanding organizational capacity to respond to demonstrated demand for quality performing arts opportunities.	Describes a clear and appropriate use of funds aligned with organizational or programmatic needs. Shows a reasonable connection between the request and capacity to meet demand, though some elements could be more specific.	Identifies a general use of funds that aligns with mission, but the strategic rationale or link to capacity and demand is not fully developed.	Request lacks clarity or strategic focus. Limited explanation of how funds will strengthen capacity or respond to demand.	Purpose of funds is unclear, misaligned with TFPA priorities, or does not demonstrate a meaningful connection to organizational or programmatic need.
Financial Stewardship & Sustainability	Demonstrates strong financial stewardship with a clear, realistic plan for prioritizing activities if partial funding is awarded. Shows thoughtful planning for sustaining or stabilizing capacity beyond the grant period.	Provides a solid explanation of how funds would be prioritized if partially awarded and demonstrates responsible financial planning, with minor gaps in long-term sustainability.	Addresses partial funding prioritization at a basic level. Sustainability considerations are present but limited in depth or specificity.	Provides minimal or unclear information about prioritization or sustainability. Financial planning appears reactive rather than intentional.	Does not address partial funding prioritization or sustainability. Raises concerns about responsible use of funds.
Access, Equity & Community Reach	Clearly demonstrates sustained and/or increased demand for performing arts opportunities, identifies specific language, cultural, financial, or other barriers, and presents intentional strategies to dismantle those barriers for low-income and marginalized populations in Santa Barbara County.	Shows evidence of demand and describes efforts to improve access and reduce barriers, though some strategies or populations could be more clearly defined.	References demand and access challenges in general terms. Equity strategies are present but not fully articulated or clearly connected to community need.	Demand and access barriers are minimally addressed or described vaguely. Limited evidence of intentional equity-focused strategies.	Does not demonstrate demand, address access barriers, or articulate how underserved communities benefit.

Collaboration	Provides clear, specific examples of intentional collaborations with other organizations or partners that directly increase access to performing arts opportunities. Partnerships demonstrate shared planning, resources, or implementation and result in meaningful benefits for the communities served.	Describes collaborative efforts that support access to performing arts opportunities, with evidence of coordination or shared work. Partnerships are relevant and beneficial, though impact or structure may be less fully developed.	Mentions collaboration with other organizations or partners, but examples are limited in scope, depth, or clarity regarding how access is expanded.	Collaboration is minimal, informal, or loosely defined. Limited connection between partnerships and increased access to performing arts opportunities.	No meaningful collaboration described, or collaborations are not relevant to expanding access.
Impact, Learning & Cultural Competence	Identifies realistic metrics and feasible methods to assess impact and learning. Demonstrates authentic cultural competence through specific examples in staffing, volunteers, board composition, and/or programming that reflect the communities served.	Provides clear impact measures and some learning processes. Cultural competence is evident, though examples may lack depth or breadth.	Identifies basic metrics or indicators of success. Cultural competence is described, but largely at a values or aspirational level.	Impact measurement and learning are vague or underdeveloped. Cultural competence is minimally addressed.	No clear approach to measuring impact or learning, and no meaningful demonstration of cultural competence.

Scoring Guide

- **22–25 points = Priority for Funding:** Exceptional applications that strongly meet all criteria
- **18–21 points = High Consideration for Funding:** Strong applications meeting most criteria well
- **14–17 points = Consider for Funding:** Solid applications with some areas for improvement
- **9–13 points = Low Priority, May Fund if Resources Allow:** May fund if resources allow; significant gaps in one or more areas
- **0–8 Points = Does Not Meet Criteria for Funding:** Insufficient alignment with program goals