



# CALIFORNIA CULTURAL DISTRICTS

## 2017 PILOT PROGRAM: APPLICATION OVERVIEW AND INSTRUCTIONS

The California Arts Council (CAC) is pleased to announce the availability of the open application process for the pilot year of the new California Cultural Districts program. Please read through this document and the California Cultural Districts website for detailed information about the program: [www.caculturaldistricts.org](http://www.caculturaldistricts.org)

### CALIFORNIA CULTURAL DISTRICTS OVERVIEW

The CAC's new California Cultural Districts program aims to cultivate authentic and sustainable cultural districts that reflect the breadth and diversity of California's extensive cultural assets. A cultural district is generally understood as a well-defined geographic area with a high concentration of cultural resources and activities. The California program seeks to identify, support and connect centers of arts and cultural activity through the designation and certification process.

In this pilot year, a cohort of 10-15 Cultural Districts will be selected through an open application process. Selected districts for the first California Cultural Districts cohort will receive a host of benefits and will participate in a developmental evaluation process to refine the program for the future. Selected districts will help shape the final Cultural District certification process and will help to define the most relevant and effective services for state-designated districts.

### PILOT CULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAM BENEFITS

Benefits of participating in the pilot cohort include the following:

- Official state certification
- California Cultural Districts branding materials
- Technical assistance
- Joint marketing support
- Participation in developmental evaluation of the program
- Stipend of \$5,000 for evaluation participation

### APPLICATION PROCESS

The California Arts Council seeks qualified organizational partnerships to apply through a multi-tiered process adjudicated by a review panel that will include the following:

1. Submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI): **Due March 29, 2017 at 5:00 PM PST.**
2. Site visits for semi-finalists
3. Finalists will be invited to submit a full application.

### TIMELINE

January 31, 2017	Open Call for Applications Released
February 15, 2017	Informational Webinar* – 11:00 AM PST
<b>March 29, 2017</b>	<b>LOI Submission Deadline</b>
April 17-19, 2017	LOI Review Panel (Semi-Finalists Selected)

**UPDATED 2/3/2017 – NOTE NEW LOI DEADLINE**

May 1-19, 2017	Site Visits for Semi-Finalists
May 31, 2017	Finalists Selected
May 31, 2017	Full Application Released to Finalists
June 23, 2017	Full Application Deadline
July 17, 2017	Final Application Review Panel (Pilot Cohort Selected)

\*Webinar registration link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4539358324894472194>

**ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible to apply during this pilot round, the following minimum requirements must be met:

- Only organizational partnerships are eligible to apply.
  - At a minimum, the partnership must include three organizations: a cultural non-profit or artist collective; a local business or business association; and a branch of local government and/or a community development corporation.
- The majority of organizations in the partnership must be located in the district.

**REQUIREMENTS**

- Evidence of partnership: Memorandum of understanding or letter of agreement between partnering entities, or local government resolution acknowledging partnership
- Map indicating the boundaries of the proposed district
- Evidence of community support: (3) Three letters of support from individual community members or artists located in the proposed district (do not include participating partners)
  - Support letters from the following groups are encouraged: individual artists, low-income residents, social service organizations, local elected officials, etc.
- Cultural asset survey or inventory: A narrative description of cultural assets is necessary for LOI and a completed preliminary cultural asset survey or inventory is required at the time of final application.
- One organization must serve as the lead applicant for the purposes of completing the application.
- The cultural non-profit or artist collective partner must have a two-year history of arts programming or activities.

**SELECTION CRITERIA**

The pilot cohort will collectively represent emerging and established, rural, urban, and suburban districts, and will include a focus on cultural production, cultural heritage, or cultural consumption. Districts will be asked to identify according to this broad typology during the application process. (A glossary of terms is available at this link:

<https://www.caculturaldistricts.org/glossary>.) For example, a district might be rural, focused on cultural consumption, and established. At each stage of the process, applicants will be grouped and reviewed separately by distinct district types based on the following flexible matrix:

<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>LIFE-CYCLE</b>
urban	cultural production	emerging
suburban	cultural consumption	mid-point
rural	cultural heritage	established

Urban and Rural geographic boundaries are described as such:

- ***Urban and suburban*** cultural districts are generally expected to be a contiguous geographic area that is walkable.
- ***Rural*** districts do not need to be walkable or even contiguous, but will need to make the case for how the participating areas/entities are complementary and synergistic.

The pilot districts will be selected based on the strength with which they demonstrate the following:

- Quality, diversity, and commitment of participating partners
- Authentic community engagement from diverse stakeholders
- A strong understanding and concentration of the cultural assets present
- Clarity and thoroughness of vision, goals and objectives, and budget
- Clearly defined and qualified leadership
- Anticipated impact of the cultural district designation
- Effectiveness of expected contribution to pilot cohort

## REVIEW PROCESS

Letters of Intent and subsequent findings from the invited site visits will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary and multi-sector selection panel, along with representatives from other state agencies that are partnering on the initiative. The panel will review each phase and select a group of finalists will be invited to submit a full application.

## LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

LOIs are accepted online only and several required attachments must be prepared prior to submission. Your online submission must be started and completed in one sitting. You will NOT be able to save, exit, and re-enter the online application in your web browser.

**LOI Submission Link:** <https://cacapplications.wufoo.com/forms/cac-201617-california-cultural-districts-loi/>

You will be asked to enter basic organizational information including contact information for lead organizational applicant, as well as the FEIN and DUNS number of lead applicant organization.

Applicants must upload a PDF file of their LOI with the following information. Use 12-point font, single spaced and limit your responses to a maximum of 10 pages.

The Letter of Intent must include the following:

- **Applicant Organization Information**  
Brief mission and history of lead applicant organization. *Include the operating budget for current and immediate past fiscal year.*
- **Partnership Information**  
Briefly describe each of the partners and the role each plays in the proposed district including anticipated resources, and how each aligns with the issues and opportunities facing the district. *Include the operating budget for current and immediate past fiscal year for each partner.*
- **Cultural District Typology**  
Describe whether the district is established, emerging, or at some other point in its life cycle, and describe the primary focus or emphasis of the district (i.e. cultural production, cultural

consumption or cultural heritage). If other, please explain.

- **Location Information**

Identify whether the district is Urban, Rural, or Suburban, and provide the location and basic demographic and socio-economic statistics. List the types of public infrastructure and amenities that support the district. Provide information on any district overlap with other local, regional, or federal designations such as locally-designated cultural districts, Main Street, Business Improvement District, Historic District, Federal Empowerment Zone, etc.

- **Budget**

Identify the total budget estimate, and budget sources, for discrete activities proposed to take place under the umbrella of the district (i.e. event expenses, marketing expenses, personnel expenses, etc.).

- **Narrative Questions**

- Describe the types of space for artists, arts organizations, and cultural activities currently present in the district, and any potential plans for additional space creation. Include the facilities, activities, events, and history that make the district distinct.
- Identify the key issues and opportunities facing the district and how the cultural district designation will address them.
- Describe the ways in which the community is currently engaged in the district and its activities.
- Discuss how the community's existing residents will benefit from district designation.
- List any anticipated district stakeholders beyond the core partners and how you intend to collaborate with each.
- Describe the specific anticipated local benefits of a state designation of this district.
- Identify the personnel who will be dedicated (full or part-time) to district operations and planning. Provide the name(s), affiliation(s), experience, and role(s) of the individual(s).

- **Additional Materials Upload**

- IRS Determination Letter of applicant organization
- Map indicating the boundaries of the proposed district
- Letter or resolution from the local government and/or a community development corporation partner acknowledging the partnership
- (3) Three letters of support from individual community members or artists located in the proposed district (do not include participating partners).

**STAFF ASSISTANCE**

CAC staff is available on a limited basis to offer guidance and clarification in preparing your Letter of Intent. We recommend that you contact staff well in advance of the deadline to ensure you can be accommodated. Contact Caitlin Fitzwater at [caitlin.fitzwater@arts.ca.gov](mailto:caitlin.fitzwater@arts.ca.gov)