

Announcement of Grants for Arts in Action 2023 Request for Preliminary Proposals

OVERVIEW

Arts in Action provides funding for projects that connect USC faculty and students with LA community partners and use the arts to promote positive social change. Arts in Action builds on and extends USC's historic commitment to addressing some of society's most intractable problems.

Arts in Action projects incorporate a range of arts-based practices designed to identify and tackle systemic forms of oppression connected to, for example, homelessness, mass incarceration, the COVID-19 pandemic, racism, gender oppression, sustainability and climate justice, educational inequity, xenophobia, and multiple forms of violence and hate.

Arts in Action projects are often participant-driven, blurring the lines between "artist" and "audience." We prioritize artwork that grows from a shared process and where the collaborative act of creating the work is core to the project's impact and value.

ARTS IN ACTION GRANTS

USC faculty and students working with community partners are invited to submit preliminary proposals for Arts in Action 2023 for projects beginning no earlier than February 1, 2023. These grants will support community-based projects that address social issues, bring people together, facilitate dialogue, and create spaces to imagine and design future change.

Eligible disciplines include the visual arts and design, dramatic arts, cinematic and media arts, music, dance, and architecture. Projects involving multiple art forms are welcome and encouraged.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested teams of faculty and students should send:

- A 500-word preliminary proposal that clearly describes the project, objectives, anticipated outcomes, and how the project aligns with Arts in Action's mission.
- A 100-word abstract that clearly describes the project workings (e.g. a series of workshops, a piece of collectively created public art, a youth program in partnership with local schools, etc.).
- A biography and contact details for each team member.

Preliminary proposals are due by Monday, October 3, 2022, at 5:00 pm, to artsinaction@usc.edu. The entire proposal should be in a single Word document or PDF.

Following an initial review of preliminary proposals, applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal will be provided with information about the full application and review process.

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- Faculty and current students from across USC are invited to apply. Please note that funding for awarded projects must be managed by the primary applicant's home department or school.
- Proposals that include at least one faculty member from one of USC's six arts schools are encouraged and will be prioritized. Teams comprising faculty or students from multiple USC schools are encouraged.
- Projects that center students' involvement are strongly encouraged.
- Students submitting a proposal must identify at least one faculty mentor as a key member of the project team. Faculty mentors should be willing to discuss the project with Arts in Action staff following the preliminary proposal stage, if requested (students should also take note of Mobilize!, Arts in Action's mini-grants program exclusively for students: <https://artsinaction.usc.edu/take-action/>).
- Project outputs should include at least one free public-sharing event, whether a workshop, performance, or service activity. Multiple public outputs that span the lifetime of the project are strongly encouraged. Preliminary proposals are not required to have all outputs identified.
- Projects should include at least one community partnership. Work that takes place off campus and in community settings is strongly encouraged.
- Given continuing impacts of COVID-19, projects should contain contingency plans for executing activities online or via physically distanced formats.
- To be considered, applicants who received a previous Arts in Action grant must submit their grant report before the October 3 deadline.

WHAT MAKES A STRONG PROJECT?

1. Understanding of the issue: Does the project demonstrate knowledge of and commitment to an intractable social issue or problem?
2. Partnership: Has or will the project be developed with adequate participation from community partners, will it engage students directly, and does it fully address their needs? (See 'Modes of Participation' grid on page 4 for further guidance. Arts in Action supports projects that include modes of participation 3 – 5 on the grid.)
3. Project feasibility: Can the project team and method realistically meet the objectives?
4. Impact: How will the project contribute to positive and ongoing social change? How will the project contribute to students' development as socially engaged artists and citizens?
5. Outputs and visibility: Will the project be visible to the wider public?

KEY DATES:

August 29, 2022: Call for submissions of preliminary proposals

October 3, 2022, at 5:00 pm: Preliminary proposals due

Mid-October: Applicants invited to submit full proposal

November 30, 2022, at 5:00 pm: Full proposals due

Early January 2023: awardees notified

February 1, 2023: earliest date for project commencement

CURRENT ARTS IN ACTION PROJECTS

In 2022, Arts in Action supported nine faculty/and or student-driven projects. Grant amounts ranged from \$3,000 to \$28,000. More information about all Arts in Action projects can be found at artsinaction.usc.edu/project.

- **Architecture + Advocacy: Empowering South Los Angeles Youth with Community-Engaged Design** – Students from the [School of Architecture](#) lead a series of workshops with [LA Commons](#). The workshops teach design to students in South Los Angeles and empower them to share their stories, own their spaces, and make invisible struggles visible.
- **Comedy and Cancer** – A collaboration between the [School of Dramatic Arts](#) Comedy Program and the [Adolescent and Young Adult Program](#) at [USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) brings together patients, hospital staff, caregivers, and alumni to cope with illness through laughter. Weekly comedy-focused workshops include improv, sketch comedy, and stand-up, to promote self-empowerment, community building, and provide tools to deal with the heavy burden of illness.
- **Comix from the Heart Vol. 02** – Student artists from the [Irvine and Young Academy](#) and the [Roski School of Art and Design](#) use stories gathered from practitioners, patients, and researchers from the [School of Pharmacy](#) and the [American Heart Association](#), to create a medical comics anthology. *Comix from the Heart* Vol. 02 brings attention to cardiovascular disease, risk factors, and prevention.
- **Here, My Voice 2** – Building upon a pilot program, [Thornton School of Music](#) vocal art students support members of the hard-of-hearing community by integrating movement exercises provided by [Kaufman School of Dance](#) specialists. Local members of the [Hearing Loss Association of America](#) pair up with students to receive personalized voice lessons to encourage the (re)discovery of their voices as a tool of self-expression.
- **Monuments + the Future of Memory: Remembering Willowbrook** – In partnership with [Willowbrook Inclusion Network](#) and [LA Commons](#), this ongoing project allows the [School of Architecture](#) faculty and students to design a series of virtual monuments using community collections and input from local youth artists to celebrate its local history and challenge the traditional memorial as an inert monument dedicated to hegemonic narratives of the past.
- **Peace Pods 2.0** – With support from [Open Paths Counseling](#), USC students and faculty from the [School of Dramatic Arts](#) and [Irvine and Young Academy](#) design portable spaces that facilitate peace, isolation, and a physical disconnect. Participants reset their senses and thoughts and follow up with playful moments involving movement, performance, music, sound, and the visual arts.
- **Performing Policy: The Justice Project** – Students from the [School of Dramatic Arts' Institute for Theatre & Social Change](#) and [Price School of Public Policy](#) explore the transformative power of restorative justice with a production of an original theatre piece that brings together former perpetrators and survivors of violence. This performance project incorporates intensive policy research, Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, and dialogues collected by [Healing Dialogue and Action](#).

- **Sacrifice Zone: Los Angeles** – School of Dramatic Arts students create interactive media and a docu-narrative toolkit inspired by the efforts of Esperanza Community Housing’s People Not Pozos Campaign. The project addresses the health risks of ongoing exposure to harmful pollutants in USC’s Southeast Los Angeles neighborhood and shares the campaign’s advocacy efforts with educators and community leaders to enact change.
- **University Park Slow Jams** – This creative call-to-action includes Price School of Public Policy Interns and Association of Planning and Development students collaborating with Public Matters, USC Kids Watch Ambassadors, and Los Angeles Walks. This project blends socially engaged art and education with creative public acts to build street safety awareness and unite residents through meetings, workshops, public art events, and activities with the community council, students, and other community members.

Appendix: Modes of Participation Grid

This breakdown of “modes of participation” was created by the James Irvine Foundation. We include it as a helpful resource for applicants seeking further guidance on what constitutes a strong community collaboration. “Participants,” in the case of Arts in Action, refers to community partners. **We support projects that fall within categories 3 through 5.**

Mode of Participation	Participant Engagement	Content Contributed by Participants	Presented or Culminating Artistic Product	Examples	Role of Arts Professionals
1. Observational: participants receive finished work presented by arts professionals	Watching/ Viewing	None	No contribution by participants	Performance/ Exhibit	Sole Author, Presenting/Exhibiting Content
2. Observational Learning: participants receive finished work with explicit learning or enrichment component	Learning	None to minimal	No contribution by participants	Educational component to performance/exhibit	Sole Author, Presenting/Exhibiting Content
3. Co-Presentation: participants share in presentation/ exhibition of artistic work	Doing/ Practicing with guidance or instruction	Minor choices and suggestions	Participants play an instrumental role	Play with community actors; artist-driven community mural	Leading/Directing, possibly participating
4. Co-Creation: participants share in creation of new artistic work	Contribute content to artistic product	Major artistic input	Final product is shaped by contributions of participants	Creation and performance of a play based on stories of a community	Gathering input, directing, guiding, presenting/exhibiting content
5. Participant - Driven: participants engage directly in the creative process, with or without involvement of arts professionals	Doing/ Practicing	Maximum artistic input	Product not necessarily required	Art-making workshops or classes where participants create or present work	Lightly facilitating/organizing