



Eligibility: Capital construction projects of \$150,000 or more, occurring between July 1, 2025-June 30, 2027

Deadline for proposal: June 1st, 2024 (Phase 1), August 1st, 2024 (Phase 2)

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APPLY HERE

Qualifying Core Criteria

- Preference is given to Oregon-based 501(c)3 cultural nonprofits who are CACO donors in good standing. The Cultural Advocacy Coalition (CACO) depends on membership from institutions like yours to fund cultural advocacy work for all of Oregon. The CREF process is a significant portion of the CACO budget, and we invite each applicant and participant to support our work at a level that is meaningful to their organization.
- The organization has legal authority to improve subject property and capital projects that align with the purpose of CREF.
- Projects support increased access to arts, heritage, or the humanities and produce a quantifiable economic impact.
- The organization is committed to championing equitable policies and practices that empower justice, inclusiveness, equity, and belonging.
- Projects are expected to be completed within the designated period;
- The requesting organization seeks 50% or less of construction costs for capital budgets exceeding \$100,000.
- Phased projects can apply for funding and if funded they must take one biennium off before reapplying. CREF funds should make up no more than 50% of the total project budget.
- If an applicant is accepted into the slate of projects and only receives partial funding (as a result of the legislative process), they must take one biennium off before reapplying. Letters of Inquiry must be received by June 1, 2024.

- Watch our website for more tips on making a strong proposal. Start by [watching this FAQ video](#).

Points of Emphasis

This process is strengthened by broad geographic representation and diverse artistic disciplines. The success of the entire CREF slate is based on garnering political support from legislators across the state and political backgrounds. Because of the increase in requests in recent years, CACO groups all projects into geographic regions.

While CACO has a mandate to recommend a slate of CREF projects, we can make no guarantees of support or funding. CACO recommends a carefully considered slate of projects, which we all must then work diligently to encourage the legislature to fund. We have had years where funding levels have been cut arbitrarily, or sessions like 2023 when CACO's CREF slate was seemingly forgotten in a chaotic end of session.

This is NOT a simple grant process. We do not pick winners and losers; we select projects that--based on the information provided--are best prepared to be completed successfully and represent Oregon broadly. If you are not selected, we encourage you to apply again as you gain more donations, grants, and support.

Cultural Advocacy Coalition History, Vision, and Mission

CACO was formed in 1998 to advocate for policies and funding to create a thriving environment for art, heritage, history, and the humanities across Oregon.

CACO's vision is a state where Oregonians can access and engage in arts, heritage, and the humanities in their community without barriers; students have equitable access to quality arts education throughout their academic careers; and arts and culture organizations can provide innovative, world-class programming that allows for the export of ideas, innovation, and creative work, while contributing to Oregon's economy and quality of life.

CACO is committed to cultural equity and strives to embody values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of arts policy; support of artists; nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.

CACO advances its mission and vision by lobbying the state legislature on behalf of Oregon's cultural community in support of its legislative agenda, which includes both policy matters and funding for capital projects. Before each odd-year legislative session, CACO reviews and endorses a package of capital construction requests from cultural nonprofits representing a diversity of regions and disciplines.

Cultural Resources Economic Fund (CREF) Purpose

CREF was established by the Oregon Legislative Assembly in 2013. Its goals are to:

- Leverage art and cultural resources to create vibrant public spaces that integrate art and cultural and natural amenities
- Sustain Oregon's rich arts and cultural experiences
- Enhance a strong sense of place and community identity

To improve and strengthen the economic vitality of Oregon communities, the Oregon legislature may allocate Lottery Bonds or General Fund dollars through CREF as designated grants for capital projects in the cultural sector including new construction, building acquisition, historic preservation, and reconstruction.

2025-2027 CREF Committee of the Cultural Advocacy Coalition

- Ginger Savage, Crossroads Carnegie Art Center Baker City-Chair
- Isaac Marquez, City of Eugene-Outgoing Chair
- Sue Dixon, Portland Opera
- Peter Bilotta, Chamber Music Northwest
- Jordan Anderson, OPB-CREF recipient (2016)
- Karie Burch, Portland Art Museum-CREF recipient (2017)
- Catherine Rickbone, Newport-CREF recipient (2017)
- Josh Neckels, Eugene Ballet-CREF recipient (2017)
- Judy Margles, Retired, Oregon Jewish and Holocaust Museum-CREF Recipient (2021)
- Dan Thorndike, CACO Board Member and Medford Fabrication, Medford
- Nonvoting Advisors: Sue Hildick, Senior Advisor Cultural Coalition of Oregon & Brian Rogers, Oregon Arts Commission/Oregon Cultural Trust

Glossary of Terms

Shovel ready: describes a construction project that is considered to be at an advanced enough stage of development for building to begin soon. The term generally implies that planning is more or less complete, approval permits are in place, and laborers can get to work once sufficient funding is secured.

Phased construction projects: Construction works can be planned as a series of stages or phases, rather than as one continuous process. This can be useful for clients where a complex sequence of events needs to be followed (such as a densely occupied or complex site), or where there are several distinct components to the works, particularly for clients who are seeking to maintain some level of business operation during construction and so wish to minimize disruption. In such cases, the project works can be divided into a series of smaller projects, spaced out over months or even years.

Phasing construction works can be beneficial in allowing a project to move forward despite there being no guarantee of funding being available to complete it.

Completing certain sections of work can make funding more attractive to potential lenders and investors than if the project has yet to begin. It can also enable the client to begin to generate income from the completed parts of the development.

CREF Project Proposal Endorsement Process

Project Proposals—establishing eligibility

Oregon-based 501(c)3 cultural nonprofits are invited to request CACO’s review and endorsement of their project with a proposal that addresses the following information:

- Give an overview of the organization’s leadership, mission, history, and annual budget
- Include statement of need, with a description of the problem
 - Include any feasibility studies and community planning documents for projects over \$2 million
- State the solution, with a detailed description of the capital project
- Verify legal authority to improve property, and description of existing building ownership or proposed ownership structure
- Describe how the capital project directly advances access to arts, heritage, or the humanities, and aligns with the purpose of CREF
- Describe and give examples of the organization’s commitment to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower justice, inclusiveness, and equity
- Estimate the project’s economic impact or description of the process being undertaken to quantify the economic impact
- Include estimate of construction budget and timeline, and project fundraising to date
 - Include fundraising plan for projects over \$2 million
 - Include all phases and timelines for projects over \$2 million
- Include detailed report on architects, engineers, and general contractor for projects over \$2 million
- Specify amount requested through CREF
- Include if other state, local, or federal funding is secured or requested
- Include subject property’s state representative and state senator
- Include key contact information

Applicants will be notified by approximately June 15, 2024, and provided with a CACO board member mentor to be their primary contact and support system for Phase 2. This mentor can read draft proposals and be your primary contact.

Panel Review—evaluating eligible projects for endorsement

A review panel appointed by CACO will evaluate the project proposals and develop recommendations for endorsements to the CACO board. Organizations notified that they have met endorsement eligibility requirements will be asked to provide the following supplemental information, including but not limited to:

- Schematics of the proposed project
- Detailed revenue and expense projections
- Updated estimated economic impact of the project
- Legislative/elected official support
- Letter of support from potentially adversely affected parties, or community outreach plan
- Business plan or sustainability plan
- Restoration or rehabilitation plan
- Risks or planning considerations that may materially affect timing, funding, or completion, including how you may have to scale your project.

Projects will be grouped for review in geographic regions to ensure legislative support

Endorsed Projects—preparing for legislative advocacy

Following the panel review, CACO will notify endorsed organizations no later than September 6, 2024. CACO will work with endorsed organizations to prepare for legislative review. CACO will formally request funding on behalf of the package of endorsed projects, coordinate lobbying efforts among organizations, and manage the sector’s Ways and Means request through the 2025-27 session.

An endorsement by CACO does not guarantee approval of legislative funding.

Cultural Resource Economic Fund Timeline 2025 – 2027 Biennium

Date	Action
March 2024	Review criteria, revise applications
April 19, 2024	Approve revisions to criteria and applications
April 26, 2024	Applications open for Phase 1: Establishing Eligibility
May 1, 2024	FAQ & overview webinar available on CACO website
June 1, 2024	Applications due for Phase 1: Establishing Eligibility
June 1-June 15, 2024	Phase 1 Application Review
June 15, 2024	Notify applicants; assign CACO mentors
August 1, 2024	Phase 2: applications due
August 1-August 15, 2024	Committee review
August 15-August 30, 2024	Select projects for endorsement
September 6, 2024	Notify applicants
Oct./Nov, 2024	Informational meeting with Oregon Art Commission/Business Oregon
September 6, 2024 - end of session 2025	Advocacy for CREF slate
July 1, 2025	Funding available for projects receiving general funding
Winter 2026	Receive general funding
Spring 2027 (March/April)	Funding available for projects receiving Lottery Bond Funding

