



## **Highland Park Cultural Arts Commission Spark Microgrant Program Guidelines**

### **Purpose**

The Cultural Arts Commission (CAC) of the City of Highland Park has created the Spark Microgrant Program to nurture our community's individual artists, arts organizations, and other organizations engaging in cultural activities—especially those who are not currently eligible for or receiving other CAC funding. The commission recognizes the need to nurture cultural arts opportunities in Highland Park through entry-level grants to help new creators, new programs, and new collaborations germinate. The application process is streamlined; the review cycle moves quickly; and the awards, though modest, are intended to mitigate risk and provide momentum. A Spark Microgrant helps you respond to opportunities quickly. They are a new way for our city to invest in the success of its artists and audiences.

### Examples of projects that might benefit from Spark Microgrant funding:

- A production by a new theatre ensemble
- Curatorial expenses for a group exhibit
- Studio fees for a band to record music
- A location-based dance performance
- Poetry slam in a Highland Park business
- Production costs for a film
- Bringing an expert puppeteer to teach others in the craft

Spark Microgrants are not to be used to supplant budgeted funds; they are intended to fill in a financial gap that is making an artistic project impossible.

### Application and Review Cycle

Applications are available from the City of Highland Park City Manager's Office at either 847-926-1043 or online at [cityhpil.com/cac](http://cityhpil.com/cac). Each application, no matter how many collaborators it includes, must identify a lead applicant who will be responsible for all communication, financial aspects, and the final report.

You may submit your application at any time. The CAC will review applications at each of its quarterly meetings; applications must be submitted at least two weeks prior to a meeting to be considered at that time. CAC meetings are open to the public; meeting dates, location, and agendas are posted on the city's website at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

Commission members review applications individually prior to meetings, and the commission may request clarification from applicants through official channels so that decision-making during meetings can proceed efficiently.

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## Awards

Applicants may request up to \$500.00. The commission may award any amount up to the maximum based on its evaluation of the grant, though it is under no obligation to make any award. Applicants should address in their narrative whether the proposed project will proceed if the commission does not allocate full funding.

## Eligibility

Applicants may be individual artists or collectives, curators, or residents or businesses collaborating with artists. They do not need to be 501(c)(3) entities or incorporated.

Applicants must be adults who have resided in Highland Park for at least one year. They must not be in arrears with the city at the time of application.

- To be eligible for funding, projects must be completed by the end of the calendar year in which they are awarded.

To be eligible for funding, projects must occur within Highland Park and must include substantial participation from or benefit to residents of Highland Park.

To be eligible for funding, you must have completed and submitted a final report on any projects previously funded by the Highland Park Cultural Arts Commission, unless the timeline of the first project as originally proposed has not come to its conclusion.

Spark Microgrants may not be used to fund:

- Additions or improvements to property/facilities
- Tuition, scholarships, or lessons that are part of a school's required curriculum
- Thesis projects and other student-led work
- Subsistence, personal rent, or food (unless the food is the artwork)
- Travel or conference expenses (other than to bring a participant/presenter to Highland Park)
- Capital expenses
- Debt reduction
- Endowments or fund-raising activities
- Projects that do not include a public component
- Political lobbying
- Projects supported by another Cultural Arts Commission grant or city funding
- Work that will not be accessible to diverse audiences, including those with disabilities

Any individual project or performance is eligible for only one Spark Microgrant.

# Highland Park Cultural Arts Commission Spark Microgrant Program Guidelines

## Review Criteria

The Cultural Arts Commission will consider the following when evaluating grants:

- Opportunity/impact of Spark Microgrant on viability of project
- Innovation/creativity
- Artistic quality/submitted work
- Feasibility/degree to which applicant has planning and commitments in place
- Opportunity for Highland Park artists/collaboration
- Accessibility for Highland Park audiences/ability to attract visitors

Additional considerations may include:

- The applicant's history (and documentation) of contributing to the arts in Highland Park
- Service to diverse and underserved audiences
- Number of local artists and organizations involved
- Quality/completeness of the application
- Project's potential benefit to the applicant's career
- Applicant's prior success in similar projects
- Whether the project can be replicated or expanded in the future
- Alignment with goals of the city and commission

The City of Highland Park respects the integrity of artistic personal vision and the right to freedom of expression. Spark Microgrants may be awarded to work that some consider provocative, especially since interpretation of an artist's work is a complex and personal process. At the same time, the Cultural Arts Commission and the City Council respect the public nature of these grants. We acknowledge that bold statements and challenging works may at times be troublesome to some community members. The city intends these funds be used to support a wide variety of artistic viewpoints. The exhibitions, individual artists, and programs supported by Spark Microgrants are judged on their aesthetic merits and presented as representative of the quality and diversity of the arts in our community.

## Funding Process

Applicants for Spark Microgrants will be notified of the commission's decision within five workdays of the meeting at which an application is reviewed. Notification will include instructions on how funds will be dispersed and any additional paperwork required to receive funds. The lead applicant must provide a social security number or business/taxpayer identification number to receive the funds. You will be responsible for any taxes related to the award.

Spark Microgrants are not reimbursement grants; you are not required to provide receipts.

# Highland Park Cultural Arts Commission Spark Microgrant Program Guidelines

## Recognition

If you receive a Spark Microgrant, you are required to acknowledge this funding in all digital and printed marketing and communications, including websites, promotional emails, press releases, videos, social media, posters, postcards, and programs. You do not need to use a logo. Simply include the following sentence:

*This project is funded in part by a Spark Microgrant from the City of Highland Park Cultural Arts Commission.*

You must inform the Cultural Arts Commission of the day, time, and location of the project/performance/exhibition at least two weeks prior to the event; this will make it more likely that a commissioner will be able to attend.

## Final Report

Forty-five days after the completion of your cultural arts activity, you must submit a final report summarizing and evaluating the success of the project, including a final budget. Remember to include proof that you have credited the Spark Microgrant program for support. Failure to complete your final report on time will impact future requests for funding by the Cultural Arts Commission.

## Questions

If you have questions about the application, guidelines, or eligibility, please contact the Cultural Arts Commission staff liaison at 847-926-1043.

All mailed communications should be addressed to:

Highland Park Cultural Arts Commission  
Attention: Cultural Arts Commission Staff Liaison  
1707 St. Johns Ave.  
Highland Park, IL 60035

# Highland Park Cultural Arts Commission Spark Microgrant Program Application

## Introduction

Please read the Spark Microgrant Guidelines before starting this application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

## Section I: Applicant Information

Lead Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Applicant's Address \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Applicant's Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Applicant's Email \_\_\_\_\_

Is the lead applicant an:

Individual  Collective/Collaboration  A 501(c)(3) Organization

For Profit Corporation  Partnership with a For-Profit Corporation

Is the lead applicant currently receiving funding from the City of Highland Park for any projects?

No  Yes, If yes, please provide details: \_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet of paper, please list the same information for all collaborators who will work on the proposed project.

## Section II: Project Information

Project Name \_\_\_\_\_

Project Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

Project End Date \_\_\_\_\_

Final Report Due Date (45 Days After End Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Project Location (Full Address) \_\_\_\_\_

Admission Charge (If Any) \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Amount Requested \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Draft – For City Council Consideration  
03-24-14*

Summarize your project. (150 words or less)

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**Please answer the following questions. We have provided suggested maximum lengths. You are encouraged to be brief, use bullet points, and avoid repetition add separate piece of paper if required.**

- Why does your project match the purpose of the Spark Microgrant program as explained in the guidelines? (100 words)
- 

- Use your past experience to provide evidence that you can successfully and effectively complete your project within the proposed timeline. (150 words)
-

*Draft – For City Council Consideration*  
*03-24-14*

- What innovations will your project help you explore (for example, a new influence, approach, structure, process, audience)? (200 words)
- 

- How will your project involve Highland Park artists? (100 words)
- 

- How will you encourage Highland Park audiences to participate in or attend your project? (100 words)
-

*Draft – For City Council Consideration*  
*03-24-14*

- How will you measure the success of the project? (100 words or less)
- 

- How will your project contribute to future creation? (100 words)
- 

### **Section III: Supporting Documents**

The first three supporting documents listed below are required; the final two are optional.

- **Budget**—The project budget is of great interest to the commission, because it provides a sense of the scope of your project and the resources you can marshal to accomplish it. Be thoughtful, thorough, and specific. Include all expenses and set realistic expectations for revenue, including the request made via this grant. Include in-kind donations of material goods and volunteer time as possible.
- **Résumés/CVs/Brief Biographies**—Help the commission understand the important people who are working on the project. Your training, experience, and work to date will suggest the quality of your art and your ability to bring it to fruition.
- **Samples**—Share relevant prior work, via PDF, Word documents, digital video or audio files, or other common formats. Commissioners will devote a minimum of two minutes and a maximum of ten minutes to review of such work. Review is



likely to take place individually and prior to the commission meeting. If necessary to provide context to an excerpt of work, provide a very short written background.

- Supporting Material—If you wish, you may provide up to three pieces of material that support your request, such as media clippings, brochures, monographs, etc.
- Letters of Recommendation—Though not necessary, it may be helpful for artists who have yet to build a lengthy career to secure letters of recommendation or support from experts in their field, mentors, or community backers, who can attest to the applicant’s potential and vision.

#### **Section IV: Assurances**

By signing here, the applicant assures that:

- The applicant will personally administer or supervise the activities or services for which she or he has requested support.
- The applicant has secured the participation, knowledge, and consent of all named collaborators and will notify the Cultural Arts Commission of any changes to that list immediately upon learning of any additions or subtractions to the list.
- The applicant has read and will conform to the Spark Microgrant Program Guidelines.
- The facts, figures, and representations made in this application, including all related filings and attachments, are true, accurate, and complete to the best of the applicant’s knowledge and belief.
- The applicant will comply with all laws, acts, and ordinances of the United States and the City of Highland Park.
- No person will be excluded from participation in or be denied benefits of any program, activity, or service on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex/gender, sexual preference, religion, age, or disability.
- Funds received will be applied solely to the projects and programs described in this application.

Signature of Lead Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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