Live Arts Boston Program Priorities and FAQs

Live Arts Boston prioritizes:

Application

1. All are welcome to apply. We do prioritize applications led by and uplifting the artistry and voices of Black people, indigenous people, people of color, immigrants, and new Americans.
2. Must have clear artistic goals, uniqueness, and strength of concept
3. Projects with high potential for artistic and self-defined career growth
4. Projects centered on artistic disciplines that have had less representation, visibility, and support in Greater Boston as defined in the [TBF Geographic Area Served](#)
5. New ideas or existing work that explore creative discomfort, fosters collaboration and engages a wide range of Greater Boston audiences.

Artist / Creative / Organizations:

1. A willingness to center health and wellness as a core part of your artistic work, career trajectory, and grant experience.
2. Committed to the 18-month grant cycle and participation in at least 70 percent of the seminars and mentor sessions. Seminars will be a vital part of your development, understanding, and knowledge exchange.
3. Openness to growing your peer network, challenging viewpoints and values, all while taking deeper risks in your practice, creative entrepreneurship and future production.
4. Values equity and the benefits of how your community influences / impacts your artistic work / practice.

Program Eligibility and FAQs

1. **What if I have never applied for a grant before?**
   a. LAB welcomes applications from visual and performing artists, creatives, and organizations, with the exception of those who received a grant in 2022-2023. If you have received a LAB grant for 2022-2023, you must wait 1 grant cycle before reapplying.
2. **What if I have applied to LAB before and have not received a grant? Can I apply again with the same project?**
   a. In this new iteration of LAB, all previous applicants regardless of funding are eligible to reapply EXCEPT 2022-2023 LAB Grantees who must wait 1 cycle before reapplying.
3. **Are film-, or media-focused projects eligible for LAB grants?**
   a. LAB grants do not support stand-alone media or film projects. Each of these areas may be components of a project, but the majority of the work must align with the following disciplines: dance, theater, music (ex: Rap, Rhythm & Blues/Soul, Classical, Contemporary, Rock/Pop, Electronic/EDM, Indie, World, Fusion, Jazz, Folk, Singer-Songwriter) opera, musical theater, spoken word, visual art, performance art, circus arts, traditional and folk performing arts, literary and/or performance festivals, and any multi-disciplinary combination of these.
4. **Are projects focused on album production eligible for LAB grants?**
   a. Projects that are focused solely on video or audio production without a public performance component are not eligible for funding.
5. **What if I have an educational project, or a project featuring youth participants?**

a. A requirement of the LAB program is that core artistic members of the project must be professional artists over the age of 18. We define a professional artist as someone who has devoted significant time towards building of creating, interpreting, presenting, and/or producing works of art. An individual or group comprised of professional artists may perform for younger audiences, and youth can be included in grant-funded performances (for example, in the case of a children's choir taking part in a larger production). However, projects primarily focused on teaching arts and/or youth work are not eligible for LAB funding.

6. **What if my project doesn't include new work?**
   a. Starting in 2024, LAB no longer prioritizes solely on new, original works of art. Proposals of existing work need to be open to transformational change by the end of the grant cycle. Works that have already received LAB funding are ineligible to receive a grant unless it is in a restructuring phase of its development.

7. **Can I apply for a grant if my project performance or event occurs before the grant period begins?**
   a. We cannot support projects that have finished before the grant period begins.
   b. Projects that are ready for public presentation to Greater Boston audiences must take place between December 2025 and June 2026.

8. **Where do I need to live to qualify for funding?**
   a. A requirement of the LAB program is that grant recipients live in one of the towns or cities listed within TBF Geographic Area Served.

9. **What if I want to collaborate with artists who live outside the Greater Boston area?**
   a. Applicants working with artists living outside TBF Geographic Area Served are eligible to apply. The only requirement is that the primary applicant confirms that they live within this area.

Application Process

1. **Who is the primary applicant on the application?**
   a. For Individual Artists, this is yourself!
   b. For Groups of Artists, the primary applicant is the person who would receive funding if a grant were awarded, and the person who will be the primary point of contact throughout the application process. Please choose carefully who this person will be. In lieu of an individual receiving funds, your group may also choose to work with a fiscal sponsor. (See more on fiscal sponsorship below.)
   c. For Organizations, you will provide your organization's name. Funding, if received, will be directed toward that entity.

2. **Can someone help me submit an application?**
   a. Yes! You may get help submitting your application; the form has a field to indicate the name, email address and phone number of the person completing the application on your behalf.

3. **Should I apply as an Individual Artist, as part of a Group of Artists, or on behalf of an organization?**
   a. There is no advantage or disadvantage to applying as an individual, group, or organization. Grantees are selected from all three categories, so pick the category that best reflects the way you are working, as long as there is a primary applicant.

4. **What does "Group of Artists" mean?**
   a. The Boston Foundation welcomes LAB applications from unincorporated groups of artists, like a band or ensemble, or an artistic collaboration that isn't formally organized as a nonprofit.

5. **What does "core artistic members" mean?**
   a. For bands and other groups or artistic collaborations, the core artistic members are the co-owners of the project, providing creative input, and sharing ownership of all intellectual property. Core members are not people hired to provide a service to the project, such as is often the case

with lighting designers, stage managers, orchestra members, etc. Please choose your core artistic members carefully, as you will be working together through the 18-month cycle and will share ownership of all project development, growth, IP, funding, etc.

6. **What is fiscal sponsorship, and do I need it to receive a grant? Am I considered an "organization" if I work with a fiscal sponsor?**
   a. The Boston Foundation <u>does not</u> require that LAB grantees have fiscal sponsorship to receive their awards. However, all grant recipients who are not 501(c)(3) nonprofits, whether as standalone nonprofits or via their fiscal sponsors, may be taxed on the amount awarded. For more information about fiscal sponsorship, please contact the following local and national organizations:
      i. **The Boston Dance Alliance**
      ii. **Third Sector New England**
      iii. **The Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston**
      iv. **Fractured Atlas**
         1. *Please Note*: *Fiscal sponsorship <u>applies ONLY to the way you would receive your grant money, if awarded</u>.* You will APPLY as either an individual or a group of artists—in other words, you will apply in the category that best reflects who you are and how you work.
         2. To learn more about what fiscal sponsorship is, please read here: https://www.fracturedatlas.org/fiscal-sponsorship

7. **What types of organizations are eligible to apply for a LAB grant?**
   a. Only non-profit performing arts organizations with annual budgets of under $450,000 may apply. <u>Groups of artists who do not fit that definition are welcome to apply (see above) but should not apply as organizations.</u> If you have questions about your organization's eligibility, please contact program staff at LAB@tbf.org before applying.

8. **Am I eligible to apply if I am an LLC?**
   a. Yes! Many artists operate as LLCs. However, the primary focus of your company must be on the creation and/or presenting/producing of performing arts work in order to receive a grant.

9. **Are full-time students eligible to apply?**
   a. If you, as the primary applicant, will be enrolled as a full-time student (graduate or undergraduate) in the 2024-2025 academic year, you are **ineligible** to apply for a grant.

10. **Why do you ask for demographic information?**
    a. The Boston Foundation strives to distribute grant funds equitably, and the information requested in the application will help us ensure that we are reaching a diverse applicant pool and awarding funds to a grantee pool that represents that diversity and our commitment to racial equity.

11. **How long does it take to complete an application?**
    a. The new LAB application for both Round One and Round Two will take approximately 6 to 8 hours each to complete but may take less time on a case-by-case basis.

12. **When will I know if I am moving on to Round Two? When will I know if I have received a grant?**
    a. *For a full timeline of the LAB 2024 Application Cycle, please see our main page. Applicants will be notified whether they are advancing to Round Two of the application process in mid-March 2024. Following notifications, applicants will have 2 – 3 weeks to complete their proposals, due by early April 2024.*
    b. *Please note, only applicants who move on to Round Two will receive a specific Round Two timeline and access to that application. Round Two applicants will receive notification as to whether they have received a grant by late May 2024.*

13. **How will I hear from the Boston Foundation about the status of my LAB application?**

a. Our primary means of being in touch with you will be via email. Please make sure the email address used in your application is the primary email address you can easily be reached at. Keep an eye out for emails from LAB@tbf.org.

Application Contents

1. **What kinds of project expenses are covered by a LAB grant?**
   a. All expenses required to make your project are eligible, EXCEPT costs associated with fundraising and making full length albums. Durable equipment critical to making your art (such as computers or hardware) may not make up the majority of your LAB budget and is subject to approval. We will not ask for a budget until the final cohort is determined after Round Two applications are reviewed.

2. **How should I approach the narrative fields in the application?**
   a. You do not need to write in academic or scholarly language. Just be as clear as you can be and provide examples in your statement that help us to understand you (as a person and artist), your drive, your work and goal. Reviewers may not have a deep knowledge of your discipline or artistic practice; write with a general audience in mind.

3. **What makes a strong work sample?**
   a. Work samples are intended to bring your work to life for grant reviewers. The work sample plays a critical role in helping reviewers understand your work and your proposed project. A strong sample will be recent (preferably no more than five years old) and relevant to the proposed project (or to your approach/overall aesthetic). A strong sample will also be clear (for example, reviewers should be able to hear dialogue easily) and well-timed (the cue time should bring us into the action quickly, with no lengthy build-up). Reviewers will be looking at dozens of projects, so make sure every minute of your work sample counts.
   b. If you don't have a work sample that documents your proposed project, that's okay! Please include a sample or samples from previous work that will help panelists become familiar with your artistry. If you are applying on behalf of a Group of Artists, a work sample that depicts your collaborative work is best. If this is not available, consider submitting multiple samples, perhaps one for each of the artists involved.
   c. A good work sample is one where the reviewers can see and hear the work clearly. However, your work samples do not need to be professionally produced. With a little effort, you can create a sample of good quality from your phone.
   d. Video samples are strongly preferred as they best help reviewers understand your work. If they are not available, you may submit audio samples. Please do not submit CVs, or letters of recommendation - reviewers will not read them. For performing arts applicants, we are looking for samples of live performance or rehearsal. Please do not submit marketing or promotional materials.
   e. In most cases, one or two longer excerpts of a performance are better than many short snippets or a compilation. **In total, you may include no more than three samples, and each one must be at least two minutes in length.** The total time limit for all samples combined is six minutes. The maximum file size cannot exceed 2GB, if your file exceeds the limit, Smart Simple may not be able to upload or process it.
   f. If you are sharing a longer video but want the reviewers to watch only a specific part, be sure to choose and clearly indicate the cue times (minutes and seconds) at which reviewers should start and stop watching. Pick times that let the viewer jump right into the action as long lead-ins dilute the impact.

We are happy to address any questions about program guidelines, eligibility, and the application form that are not addressed above or in one of our informational videos. However, we are unable to provide specific guidance about the content of individual Round One applications. You can reach the LAB team by email at LAB@tbf.org. Please allow up to 2 business days for a response.