



101 PREFONTAINE PL S
SEATTLE, WA 98104
4CULTURE.ORG

Launch Grants & Fiscal Sponsorship

While some 4Culture grants do not require tax-exempt status to apply, many 4Culture grants stipulate that applicants must have 501(c)(3) status. However, groups that are fiscally sponsored by an eligible 501(c)(3) **CAN** apply for most grants at 4Culture that require 501(c)(3) status—including Launch grants. Please refer to this document for more specific information about applying for a Launch grant as a group that is currently or intends to be fiscally sponsored.

4Culture's Commitment to Racial Equity

With a focus on racial equity, 4Culture funds, supports, and advocates for culture to enhance the quality of life in King County. We acknowledge that systematic inequity takes many forms—racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, heterosexism, and more. Our focus on racial equity provides us with the tools we use to dismantle all oppressions.

The goal of the Launch program is to create pathways toward a racially equitable cultural landscape that is accessible across the entire geography of King County. Accepting applications from fiscally sponsored groups is part of 4Culture's commitment to equity, expanding access to our grant programs to groups that would not otherwise be eligible.

What is Fiscal Sponsorship?

Fiscal sponsorship is a mechanism that enables a 501(c)(3) organization to extend certain benefits of its legal tax-exempt status to other groups without those groups having to file for nonprofit status on their own. Sponsored groups can accept tax-deductible donations and apply for grants through the 501(c)(3)'s exempt status.

There are many different models of fiscal sponsorship, each with its own requirements. Fiscally sponsored projects sign a contract with the fiscal sponsor organization that lays out the legal, financial, tax, employment, and other stipulations of this type of arrangement.

It's important to note that the fiscal sponsor has a legal obligation to ensure funds raised through its tax-exempt status are spent on nonprofit activities. As such, they may have authority over some parts of their groups' operations and finances. They will also incur administrative costs, which may be passed on to their groups. If awarded, 4Culture will pay your grant funds directly to your fiscal sponsor, who will in turn disburse the funds to you in the manner outlined in the contract.

 [Learn more about fiscal sponsorship in this article from Candid](https://learning.candid.org/resources/knowledge-base/fiscal-sponsorship/)

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About Launch Grants

Launch grants support new and emerging cultural and science organizations in King County. Organizations that are selected through the Launch program will receive three years of general operating support and will also have access to additional capacity-building support services. Applicants can choose from two tracks for this program, each tailored to a specific type of organization:

New Organizations - This track is for groups that:

- Began programming within the last three years.
- Are currently operating or intend to operate as a nonprofit.
- Have not received a Sustained Support grant from 4Culture

This can include new collaborative ventures initiated by existing organizations that offer new and distinct programs or services and have a decision-making body and leadership structure independent of the participating organizations.

Emerging Organizations - This track is for groups that:

- Do not yet have 501(c)(3) status or have had 501(c)(3) status for only a few years.
- Are hiring their first full-time equivalent (FTE) staff member who will receive a W2 (not a 1099) and work at least 20 hours per week.

Read the full [Launch grant guidelines](https://www.4culture.org/grants/launch/) (https://www.4culture.org/grants/launch/) to learn more about the program, eligibility, the application process, and the submission deadlines.

Using a Pre-Approved Fiscal Sponsor

4Culture maintains a list of pre-approved fiscal sponsors. This is not an exhaustive list of eligible fiscal sponsors. If you don't see your fiscal sponsor listed here, that's okay! Please contact 4Culture with the name of your current or intended fiscal sponsor, and **it is possible 4Culture can add them to our list of pre-approved fiscal sponsors.**

Science and Technology organizations have additional requirements about which fiscal sponsors they can use to apply for 4Culture grants. Please contact 4Culture to learn more.

Here are 4Culture's pre-approved fiscal sponsors as of March 2026:

- [Allied Arts Foundation](https://www.alliedartsfoundation.org)
(https://www.alliedartsfoundation.org)
- [Northwest Film Forum](https://nwfilmforum.org)
(https://nwfilmforum.org)
- [Arts of Kenmore](https://artsofkenmore.com)
(https://artsofkenmore.com)
- [Shunpike](https://shunpike.org) (https://shunpike.org)

- **SouthEast Effective Development (SEED)**
(<https://www.seedseattle.org/arts-culture>)
- **Unkitawa** (<https://www.unkitawa.org>)
- **Velocity Dance Center**
(<https://velocitydancecenter.org>)
- **The Vera Project**
(<https://theveraproject.org>)

4Culture does not endorse any of the fiscal sponsors listed above; they are listed for your convenience as they have been confirmed as eligible to disburse public funds. It is your organization's responsibility to thoroughly vet your fiscal sponsor before entering into an agreement.

If your fiscal sponsor is not able to be pre-approved and you are applying as an Arts, Heritage, or Historic Preservation group, we can still accept your application. 4Culture recognizes that your group may be considering other factors when selecting a fiscal sponsor besides 4Culture's pre-approval criteria (e.g., values and mission alignment, the fiscal sponsor's services and fee/cost-share schedule, financial processes and controls, the number of other groups in their portfolio, etc.) and we want to give you the flexibility to work with the fiscal sponsor that is the best fit.

Please contact 4Culture if you want to understand more about how working with a fiscal sponsor that has not been pre-approved could affect your Launch application.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can any organization with 501(c)(3) status be a fiscal sponsor?

Yes, any organization with 501(c)(3) status that is interested in providing these types of services can do so. You just need to have a formal fiscal sponsorship contract between the fiscally sponsored group and the 501(c)(3).

My fiscal sponsor is incorporated in Washington as a Washington Nonprofit Corporation. Does that meet the grant requirements?

Fiscally sponsored groups must be incorporated as a Washington State Nonprofit Corporation (which does not require federal 501(c)(3) status) separately from their fiscal sponsor to be eligible. If you are applying to Launch in the New Organization track, you do not need to incorporate unless you are awarded a grant. If you are applying to Launch in the Emerging Organization track, you need to have incorporated by the Intent to Apply deadline, and you will be asked to upload your processed incorporation documents with your application.

My LLC is fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3). Can I apply for Launch?

No. Fiscally sponsored groups must be incorporated as a Washington State Nonprofit Corporation (which does not require federal 501(c)(3) status) to be eligible. If desired, you can convert your LLC to a Nonprofit Corporation through the Washington Secretary of State's office.

My fiscally sponsored group is a sole proprietorship or unincorporated. Can I apply for Launch?

Fiscally sponsored groups must consist of multiple collaborators and cannot be sole proprietorships. In order to receive a Launch grant, groups must be **legally** incorporated in Washington State as a Nonprofit Corporation (which does not require federal 501(c)(3) status); however, there may be some flexibility to incorporate after you receive notice of your award. Please check the [Launch grant guidelines](https://www.4culture.org/grants/launch) (https://www.4culture.org/grants/launch) for the eligibility requirements and reach out to 4Culture with any questions.

Part of my organization's work is fiscally sponsored but not all of our activities. Can I apply for Launch?

Your fiscal sponsorship agreement must apply to your whole entity, not specific activities or projects, in order to be eligible for Launch.

My fiscal sponsor has a Board of Directors. Does my group need to have a Board as well?

Yes, you should have a Board or Advisory Board that is specific to your group and separate from your fiscal sponsor's Board to be eligible for this grant. That advisory body should have at least three (3) members.

Do I need a fiscal sponsor in place to apply?

If you are applying to Launch in the New Organization track, you do not need to secure a fiscal sponsor unless you are awarded a grant, in which case you will need to contract with a fiscal sponsor before 4Culture can issue your grant contract. If you are applying to Launch in the Emerging Organization track, you need to have a fiscal sponsor in place by the Intent to Apply deadline.

What documents do I need from my fiscal sponsor to apply?

If you are applying as a New Organization, you do not need to provide anything other than the name of your fiscal sponsor (if known). If you are applying as an Emerging Organization, you will need a copy of your fiscal sponsor's 501(c)(3) determination letter.

Does my group apply directly, or should my fiscal sponsor submit the application on our behalf?

The fiscally sponsored group and not the fiscal sponsor should be the entity that submits a Launch application. You will have the option to indicate who your fiscal sponsor is in the application.

What if I want to change my fiscal sponsor from the organization I indicated on the application?

By indicating a fiscal sponsor relationship in an application that is submitted to 4Culture, the applicant is committed to using that fiscal sponsor if awarded funding. Any changes may result in a delay to contracting and payments and may jeopardize your funding. An applicant may use a different fiscal sponsor for future applications and contracts.

What role will my fiscal sponsor play if my group receives an award?

If you receive a Launch grant, your fiscal sponsor will be expected to provide a **W-9** and sign your grant contract. As part of the signing process, you and your fiscal sponsor will be asked to affirm that you are working together in an official fiscal sponsorship relationship that meets the program's eligibility guidelines. The final contract will be made between 4Culture and the fiscal sponsor, and the 4Culture will disburse grant funds directly to your fiscal sponsor. The fiscal sponsor will then distribute funds to the grantee via the terms of 4Culture's contract and the fiscal sponsorship agreement.

Please note that the fiscal sponsor retains control and discretion as to the use of the grant funds and maintaining records establishing that the proceeds were used for purposes authorized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Other Questions

Contact Casey Moser at casey.moser@4culture.org or 206-477-2316.