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SEATTLE, WA 98104
4CULTURE.ORG

Equipment Sample Application

Note: this is a sample application from the 2025 Equipment for Organizations program; some of the questions and sections have changed for the 2026 Equipment for Organizations program.

Applicant

Lao Senior Outreach

Project Title

Echoes of Heritage: A Lao Senior Ensemble Keeping the Cultural Heartbeat Alive

Discipline

Heritage

Short Project Description

Traditional Lao instruments including khene, ranat, saw, kim, gong, drums, and cymbals to form a senior classical symphony ensemble preserving Lao cultural heritage.

Project Description

Lao Senior Outreach seeks to acquire traditional Lao musical instruments—including the khene, ranat, saw, kim, gongs, drums, cymbals, and flutes—to establish a Lao Senior Classical Symphony Orchestra. These instruments are central to Lao cultural expression and were carefully selected to support the musical and social engagement of our elder participants.

Since launching in 2022, we've discovered that many seniors in our community—most of whom are low-income, immigrant, and limited-English speakers—carry powerful artistic traditions but lack opportunities to share them. Currently, we borrow instruments, which limits consistent practice and participation. There is an urgent need to preserve this cultural knowledge, especially as a number of our skilled elder musicians are advancing in age.

The Executive Director and cultural advisors have conducted extensive research to identify instruments that are authentic, durable, and appropriate for older learners. Selected instruments will enable seniors to perform, teach, and collaborate with peers, enhancing both cultural pride and community connection. We are submitting this equipment request now to expand our program infrastructure, promote healthy aging through music and movement, and reduce social isolation among a historically underserved population. These purchases are foundational to building a culturally relevant ensemble that fosters intergenerational mentorship and keeps the Lao cultural heartbeat alive in King County.

Project Impact

This equipment acquisition will allow Lao Senior Outreach to launch the Lao Senior Classical Symphony Orchestra—a first-of-its-kind program that blends music, dance, and singing to promote healthy aging and cultural preservation. With traditional Lao instruments, we will expand weekly practices, performances, and workshops across King County.

The orchestra offers a powerful public benefit: reducing isolation, fostering intergenerational connection, and providing culturally affirming spaces for elders who are often left out of traditional arts programs. These instruments will support seniors in developing skills, building friendships, and showcasing their talents at community events and cultural festivals. Programming will be open to the public and ADA-accessible through use of partner facilities with accommodations.

This equipment enables us to meet a core part of our mission—to engage underserved seniors through culturally relevant arts and healing practices. The impact includes expanded outreach to new audiences, deeper engagement with community partners, and increased participation from seniors with limited mobility or English proficiency.

By investing in the physical, cognitive, and emotional wellness of Lao elders, this project not only preserves cultural heritage but creates a joyful, inclusive space for public celebration and learning.

Implementation

Culture Lao Senior Outreach will purchase culturally specific Lao musical instruments between September 25, 2025, and September 25, 2027, using vendors identified through prior research. As these instruments are not available in U.S. markets, we will source them directly from artists and music schools in Laos and Thailand based on authenticity, craftsmanship, and affordability.

This equipment is central to forming the Lao Senior Classical Symphony Orchestra and will support weekly practices and performances throughout King County. Priority items include the khene, ranat, kim, saw, drums, and gongs. If awarded partial funding, we will prioritize essential melodic and rhythmic instruments, then continue fundraising for remaining pieces.

The Executive Director, informed by three years of program leadership and consultation with elder musicians, will coordinate all purchases and quality assessments. Instruments will be actively used by Lao seniors during rehearsals, cultural events, and workshops, engaging over 50 participants annually.

Although we do not yet have a dedicated facility, we have strong relationships with local community centers, temples, and reserved library rooms where elders can gather for practices. Instruments will be stored securely at the Executive Director's residence and transported as needed to program sites.

Each item will be maintained by program staff and volunteers with cultural knowledge and care experience. Given their rarity and value, instruments will be insured under the organization's policy. This timeline-driven, elder-centered acquisition plan ensures the instruments are accessible, protected, and integral to preserving cultural heritage and supporting healthy aging.

Advancing Equity

Yes, Lao Senior Outreach is deeply committed to serving historically marginalized communities—particularly low-income Lao elders in King County, most of whom are refugees and survivors of war, displacement, and systemic racism. Our seniors face intersecting barriers including limited English proficiency, trauma, chronic health conditions, and cultural invisibility. The vast majority are BIPOC community members who've endured structural inequities while raising families and navigating American systems.

This equipment acquisition will allow us to create culturally responsive programming that affirms identity and empowers elders to reconnect through art. By forming the Lao Senior Classical Symphony Orchestra, we will reach seniors who have traditionally remained isolated—particularly men who, due to cultural norms, often view social programs as unnecessary or unfamiliar. Music and traditional instruments provide a culturally rooted entry point to engage these elders in meaningful ways.

With the right tools, our elders can actively participate, teach, and share traditions with family and broader community members. These programs promote physical health, emotional healing, and cultural continuity—critical components of wellness for marginalized populations too often excluded from mainstream services.

This project expands our capacity to serve Lao BIPOC elders with dignity, creativity, and care—ensuring they are not only remembered, but celebrated.

Economic Impact

This project will enhance our organization's ability to make a meaningful contribution to King County by catalyzing both direct and indirect economic activity. With each performance, gathering, and community celebration, we activate local spaces and foster cultural exchange that uplifts economic vibrancy.

Our events typically require the purchase of food, supplies, and décor for approximately 50 participants. These purchases directly support local businesses, including caterers, grocers, and small vendors. When performances are held at community venues or event spaces, we engage in rental contracts that contribute to the financial sustainability of those facilities. Where possible, we prioritize working with BIPOC-owned vendors and culturally aligned service providers, further supporting equity-focused economic development.

Moreover, this project strengthens our partnerships across King County, offering our seniors opportunities to perform, share their culture, and earn stipends—modest yet deeply meaningful acknowledgments of their contributions. Beyond performances, the presence of a formal musical ensemble opens avenues for cultural tourism, educational programming, and participation in regional festivals.

By investing in the revitalization of Lao classical music, we are also investing in the long-term enrichment of our local economy. These activities will not only draw participation from within the Lao community but also invite the broader public to witness and engage with the richness of Lao heritage. This preservation effort becomes a permanent cultural asset—a living legacy that promotes inclusion, generates economic activity, and contributes to the collective cultural wealth of King County.

Project Budget*

Income	Amount
4Culture Request	\$10,584
Applicant	\$0
Foundations	\$0
Corporations	\$0
Government	\$0
Individual Donors	\$0
Earned	\$0
In-Kind	\$0
Other	\$0
Income Total	\$10,584

Expenses	Amount
People	\$0
Transportation / Shipping	\$750
Equipment / Fixtures	\$9,834
In-Kind	\$0
Other	\$0
Expense Total	\$10,584

Project Budget Notes

Project Budget Details Total Estimated Equipment Budget: \$10,584 (including shipping and customs fees) No similar equipment has been purchased previously with 4Culture funds.

Item / Source / Cost

1. Khene (Lao mouth organ) ×2 / Traditional Lao Vendor / \$400
2. Ranat thum (steel-key metallophone) / Cultural Instrument Maker / \$1,175
3. Ranat ek (wooden xylophone) / Cultural Instrument Maker / \$959
4. Ranat thum lek (wooden xylophone) / Cultural Instrument Maker / \$959
5. Kim (hammer dulcimer) ×2 / Thai/Lao Importer / \$2,198
6. Gla jub pe (long neck flute) / Specialty Artisan / \$699

7. Saw Sam Sai (3-string fiddle) / Cultural Instrument Maker / \$499
8. Saw Ou (2-string fiddle) / Cultural Instrument Maker / \$335
9. Saw Duang (high-pitched 2-string fiddle) / Cultural Instrument Maker / \$495
10. Larng gong (18-piece bronze gong set) / Lao Music Cooperative / \$1,185
11. Glong tuk (traditional drum) / Southeast Asian Supplier / \$549
12. Ta Phon Mon (royal drum) / Southeast Asian Supplier / \$327
13. Cymbal set / General Music Retailer / \$37
14. Bell set / General Music Retailer / \$17
15. Shipping & Customs Fees / International Freight / \$750

Notes: All instruments are selected for cultural authenticity, accessibility for elder musicians, and durability. No matching grants or earned income are allocated at this time; the full cost is requested through 4Culture funding.

Activities

Program Activity Summary (June 2024 – June 2025)

From June 2024 through June 2025, Lao Senior Outreach (LSO) implemented over 40 programs throughout King County, engaging more than 250 seniors, youth, and community members. These included performances, cultural events, community outreach, wellness activities, advocacy efforts, and 12 sessions of digital literacy workshops.

Through participation in heritage festivals, environmental justice campaigns, intergenerational education, and virtual health programming, LSO strengthened cultural pride, reduced senior isolation, and empowered underserved elders with new skills and visibility. These activities reflect LSO's commitment to equity, healing, and joyful cultural preservation.

Program Activity List (June 2024 – June 2025)

1. Jul 20, 2024 – Lavender Festival in Sequim
2. Jul 27, 2024 – UCL Summer Festival & Fix the Harm tabling
3. Aug 4, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 1 – Wat Mixay
4. Aug 17, 2024 – SEAPI Health Education Summit & Fix the Harm
5. Aug 24, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 2 – Skyway Library

6. Sep 1, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 3 – Wat Mixay
7. Sep 8, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 4 & Raffle – Wat Mixay
8. Sep 15, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 5 – YouTube
9. Oct 13, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 6 – Online Safety
10. Oct 25, 2024 – Soos Creek Botanical Garden & Shadow Lake outing
11. Oct 27, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 8 & Pom Foundation Halloween Party
12. Nov 3, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 9 – Wat Mixay
13. Nov 24, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 10 – Columbia Library
14. Dec 13, 2024 – Year-End Celebration & Digital Literacy Graduation
15. Dec 22, 2024 – Digital Literacy Session 12 – Columbia Library
16. Jan 11, 2025 – Sounds of All Nations Rehearsal 1 – APCC
17. Jan 18, 2025 – Sounds of All Nations Rehearsal 2 – APCC
18. Jan 25, 2025 – Sounds of All Nations Rehearsal 3 – APCC
19. Jan 28 & 30, 2025 – "Beat the Winter Blues" virtual exercise sessions
20. Feb 15, 2025 – APCC New Year Celebration performance – Tacoma Dome
21. Feb 15, 2025 – Wat Lao Dhammactyaram fundraiser
22. Feb 18, 2025 – "Make Us Visible" advocacy in Olympia
23. Feb 26, 2025 – Home food delivery to elder in Tacoma
24. Mar 1, 2025 – Funeral gathering – Bounthane Chanthaseny
25. Mar 11, 2025 – APCC New Year Debriefing – Harvest Buffet
26. Mar 23, 2025 – House blessing for Dr. Khamph – LSO Board
27. Apr 10, 2025 – Home visit – Chanh & Phoun, Tacoma
28. Apr 20, 2025 – Home visit – Mae Thongkham Sipraseuth
29. Apr 24, 2025 – Senior hike – Kubota Garden
30. Apr 27, 2025 – Tabling at Wat Mixayaram – book sale & community feedback

31. May 4, 2025 – Zoom Workshop – Rainier Beach Community Center
32. May 18, 2025 – Seattle Aquarium AAPI Heritage Day
33. May 20, 2025 – Southeast Asian Resettlement 50-Year Commemoration
34. May 25, 2025 – Zoom Workshop – Rainier Beach Library
35. June 3, 2025 – Planning Committee member and fiscal sponsor for Lao Coalition, Celebrating 50th Anniversary of Lao Heritage and Resilience at the state capitol on Aug. 8th, 2025

Board List

Lao Senior Outreach Board Members (June 2025). All board members serve voluntarily and actively contribute their professional and cultural expertise to strengthen the organization’s mission of cultural preservation and senior well-being.

[Person 1] – President – 3 years. Musician, Mitaphab Band, Lao Folk Artist. Snohomish, WA.

[Person 2] – 3 years. Commissioner, WA State Commission on APA Affairs. Kent, WA.

[Person 3] – 1 year. MSW Candidate, UW School of Social Work. Seattle, WA.

[Person 4] – Secretary – 2 years. Lao Veteran Freedom Fighter (Retired). Renton, WA.

[Person 5] – 2 years. Physician & Site Medical Director. Seattle, WA.

[Person 6] – 1.5 years. Entrepreneur, Musician, Consultant. Auburn, WA.

[Person 7] – 1 year. Field Faculty, UW School of Social Work. Issaquah, WA.

[Person 8] – 2.5 years. Founder, Cambodian Americans Advocating for Peace. Seattle, WA.

[Person 9] – 2 years. Caseworker & Cultural Mediator, UW Medicine. Seattle, WA.