



culturaladvocacycoalition

Cultural Resource Economic Fund (CREF) Frequently Asked Questions

What types of projects can be funded with CREF funds?

The focus on these funds is on capital needs: new construction, building acquisition, historic preservation, reconstruction which may include ADA compliance, seismic upgrades, sustainability, remodeling and emergency repairs.

How much funding is available for individual projects?

Historically, individual cultural-sector projects have received appropriations ranging from \$100,000-\$2,500,000. Historically the CAC has advanced a slate of approximately \$6m. in the last two legislative sessions.

Who decides which projects receive CREF funds?

CREF funds are not distributed through a grant process, but instead are appropriated directly by the Oregon Legislature through the Ways and Means Committee. The Ways and Means Committee receives hundreds of requests for a limited amount of bond funding and determines whether to appropriate funds and at what level.

How do I apply for CREF funding?

The Cultural Advocacy Coalition represents the cultural sector before the Ways and Means Committee and lobbies for CREF projects that have received the Coalition's endorsement. Cultural organizations may seek capital construction funding of their projects through the Coalition as a part of a larger package of multiple projects. Alternatively, cultural organizations not seeking the Coalition's endorsement may choose to request project funding through the legislative process independently through their local legislators.

What is the timeline and process for the Coalition to make its endorsement decisions?

The Coalition will use a committee process to review all letters of interest and will select a statewide complement of organizations for panel review. Selected organizations will be notified as to additional information needed prior to panel review. We expect the review process to be conducted in July and August, 2020 with decisions being made in September, 2020. The panel will rank projects based on core criteria and other considerations distributed in advance to selected organizations. The panel's ranking will be used to select projects eligible for Coalition endorsement in the 2021 Session.

What happens after my project is endorsed?

The Coalition will work with endorsed organizations to help them prepare necessary information for legislative review. The Coalition will formally request funding on behalf of the package of endorsed projects, coordinate lobbying efforts among organizations and manage the sector's request throughout the Ways and Means process.

An endorsement by the Coalition does not guarantee approval of legislative funding.

How much time will I have to spend in Salem lobbying for funding?

Lobbying requirements vary with each session, but please expect for your point of contact to be available for at least two in person group meetings, with follow-up calls/emails as necessary. Committee testimony by the organization's leadership will be necessary on at least one, possibly two days, and legislative contact, as assigned, prior to committee testimony will also be expected. Legislative committee meetings are imprecise and scheduling must allow for either the full afternoon or morning for committee testimony. Committee meetings, which require stakeholder testimony, may be scheduled with as much as one week, to as little as one-hour of notice.

When could I expect funding to be available?

CREF funds have historically been funded through lottery backed bonds, which are often sold late in the state's two-year budget cycle. This means the legislature may approve the project list in June or July 2021, but the funds may not be available until June 2023.

If my project is funded, how are the funds disbursed?

CREF funds are disbursed via expense reimbursement to projects approved by the legislature. Following notification that state funds have been made available through the sale of lottery bonds; approved organizations receive reimbursement of expenses, up to appropriated amounts, through the Oregon Arts Commission, by producing paid invoices or receipts for eligible construction expenses.

What other requirements should be considered before making the decision to seek the Coalition's endorsement and request CREF funding at this time?

- Requests must support the advancement of arts, heritage, culture or the humanities.
- Requests must be made by the organization that owns/leases the facility seeking funding.
- Projects are required to match state funds at least 1:1.
- Projects are expected to have measurable economic impact.
- Funding is disbursed as reimbursement for expenses, following bond sale, as late as June 2023.
- Funding may not be used for fundraising or program costs.
- Funds must be disbursed within two years of the bond sale.
- State funding that exceeds \$750,000 triggers prevailing wage requirements for the full project.

For specific process & application questions not addressed in this document, please contact sue@oregonculture.org.