



City of Boulder, Colorado  
Boulder Arts Commission  
1500 Pearl Street, #300  
Boulder, Colorado 80302  
[www.boulderarts.org](http://www.boulderarts.org)  
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**Thanks for your interest in being appointed to the Boulder Arts Commission!  
Commissioners and staff of the Office of Arts and Culture have prepared  
this short FAQ to help answer some of the most asked questions.**

**What is the process for becoming an appointed member of the Boulder Arts Commission?**

The process begins with submitting your application. Applicants meeting the minimum requirements will be scheduled for an interview with members of the Boulder City Council, who make the appointments to all the city's boards and commissions. After City Council votes to appoint a candidate to the Arts Commission, that person typically is sworn in and begins serving at the next Arts Commission meeting. Questions about the appointment process should be [directed to the Office of the City Clerk](#).

**What is the length of term that commissioners serve?**

The standard term is five years. In 2021, when the number of seats was expanded to seven, City Council decided to appoint one seat for a four-year term in order to stagger the appointments. That term will revert to being a five-year term when it is next appointed in 2024.

**What are the roles and responsibilities of Arts Commission members?**

Commissioners have five main responsibilities:

1. to advise City Council and staff on matters of arts and culture,
2. to serve as an ambassador of the Office of Arts and Culture to the community,
3. to approve the distribution of grant funding,
4. to advise the city manager on public art decisions, and
5. to serve on public art selection panels, Arts Commission subcommittees, several nonprofit boards, as liaisons to nonprofits, and occasional cross-departmental committees.

The Arts Commission also plays a role in implementing [the Boulder Community Cultural Plan](#) and its cultural vision: "Together, we will craft Boulder's social, physical, and cultural environment to include creativity as an essential ingredient for the well-being, prosperity, and joy of everyone in the community." Finally, the Arts Commission has adopted the [Statement on Cultural Equity](#) to galvanize their work in the context of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Mission of the Boulder Arts Commission (established 2022)**

*The Boulder Arts Commission believes arts and culture are the foundation for a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible community. We work collaboratively with city staff, artists, arts and culture organizations, and the community to support artists and enrich Boulder's quality of life and economic vitality and to help create a highly innovative, vibrant, and resilient city.*



**COMMUNITY VITALITY DEPARTMENT**  
OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE  
CULTURAL GRANTS – PUBLIC ART – CREATIVE ECONOMY  
CREATIVE NEIGHBORHOODS – ARTISTS & PROFESSIONALS  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS

**Why would someone want to serve on the Arts Commission?**

Many people are interested in giving back to their community, and this is a great way to be involved in a vital and creative aspect of life in Boulder. Some commissioners have received grants from the Arts Commission in the past, and now enjoy sitting on the other side of the table.

**What kind of person might be a good fit for the Arts Commission?**

Most people choose to serve on the Arts Commission because they are passionate about arts and culture. Some are artists, some have had arts administration or teaching experience, some have served on the boards of local arts organizations, and some are patrons of the arts. Others have professions and expertise outside the arts that might be beneficial to the cultural community.

**Is grant review/processing experience important for an applicant?**

It's helpful but not necessary. Most commissioners have had some previous experience with grant writing and/or scoring. However, experience is not as important as the demonstrated ability to do the work. The key is being an active participant who is thoughtful in reading and scoring the grants. Someone who has been involved in arts and culture but has not worked with grants will catch on pretty quickly! The Office of Arts and Culture staff offers grants training every year before commissioners begin the grants cycle, which is very helpful.

**If I am appointed to the Boulder Arts Commission, does that mean I can no longer apply for grants or public art?**

You, and the organization you work for, definitely can apply. You will be required to recuse yourself from any decision on grants or public art that might imply a direct financial benefit to you.

**What is the general time commitment per month for a member of the Arts Commission?**

Commissioners must attend monthly meetings, held on the fourth Wednesday, that typically last two to three hours. The staff emails the commissioners an agenda packet five or six days ahead of each commission meeting. These meetings are hybrid virtual/in person and are recorded for online access. Most Arts Commission discussions and decisions are conducted during these monthly public meetings.

During the [grant cycle](#), typically from February through June each year, commissioners review and score grant applications, which can require between five and 30 hours per month. Commissioners typically have two weeks in which to complete the online review/scoring of applications for each grant category. The number of applications can vary from a few to as many as 40, depending on the grant category.

Arts Commissioners also serve on public art selection panels, which can require a few hours to review applicants and meet with the panel over several months. The commission has several subcommittees that can require time between meetings (see below). Commission members participate in annual grant panel training in January as well as a retreat, which is usually held during the October meeting. Arts commissioners also serve on the boards of three nonprofit cultural organizations and as liaisons to organizations that have received general operating fund grants, which requires occasional emails, phone calls, or meetings with community arts leaders.

Commissioners also attend special events held by the Office of Arts and Culture such as cultural summits, grant information sessions, and equity training. Members may choose to attend art openings and performances as representatives of the Arts Commission.

**Does this commission have subcommittees?**

The Arts Commission currently has subcommittees to address sponsorships and the Public Art Standing Selection Panel. Commissioners volunteer for subcommittee work as needed throughout the year.

**What happens at a typical Arts Commission meeting?**

Meetings are currently being held hybrid virtual/in person. They are open to public observation and always include an opportunity for public comment. Typically, the agenda includes approvals for grants, grant reports, and selection processes for public art. Commissioners may work with staff and the chair to add other discussions to the agenda. Staff also makes presentations on important work plan items. Each year, the Arts Commission holds a retreat in October to conduct detailed reviews and revisions of the grants and public art programs, give advice on the staff work plan and budget, discuss their priorities for the next year, and draft an annual letter to City Council.

**Is there any on-boarding process?**

All commissioners will receive comprehensive training by Office of Arts and Culture staff for grant making, public art approval, and other processes. New commissioners learn about transparency rules, recusal guidelines, the [Statement on Cultural Equity](#), and more.

**Are there any guidelines for scoring grant applications?**

Staff provides comprehensive training at the beginning of each grants cycle. A [scoring system](#) and the community priorities listed in the [Community Cultural Plan](#) provide guidance to help commissioners figure out how to score grants that will engage and benefit the community.

**Does the Arts Commission have any specific wants or needs in the appointment of new commissioners?**

The commission tries to represent diversity within the community and among arts disciplines. Since commissioners come and go based on their terms, the Arts Commission welcomes experience from all art genres, including (but not limited to) public art and social practice, performing arts (music, dance, theater), visual arts (painting, sculpture, photography), hand crafts, literature and poetry, immersive and time-based media (animation, film, video), design and architecture, history and heritage, installations, and the contemplative arts. Applicants who have relevant experiences outside of arts and culture are also encouraged to apply.

**What happens if I am not appointed?**

Try and try again! There are more great art leaders in Boulder than can be appointed each year. We encourage unsuccessful applicants to consider applying in future years. And, there are many opportunities to participate in the commission's process including serving on public art selection panels, providing input on policy at commission meetings, joining advisory teams, and more. We welcome you to stay engaged!

**Please let us know if you have any additional questions.**

We wish you luck in the application process! We look forward to serving with you on the Boulder Arts Commission. Please get in touch if you have questions:

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