



CA\$H Theatre GRANT

CA\$H: Creative Assistance for the Small (Organization) and Hungry (Artist)

Fall 2026 Guidelines: CA\$H Sustains

CA\$H THEATRE is a program of Theatre Bay Area and is funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Gerbode Foundation, and the Campbell Foundation.

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OVERVIEW

PRO TIP: Be sure to review the **CA\$H Sustains worksheet** that applies to you. Our CA\$H Theatre worksheets list every question on the application, along with **important requirements not listed here** and tips to make your application more competitive.

Download the [application worksheet as a PDF](#).
 Download the [application worksheet as a Word doc](#).
 View the [application worksheet as a Google doc](#).

Types of CA\$H Theatre Grants

PRO TIP: Since you are only allowed to submit **ONE CA\$H Theatre application** per round, review all three to determine which CA\$H Theatre program best fits your needs.

<u>CA\$H Creates</u>	<u>CA\$H Performs</u>	<u>CA\$H Sustains</u>
Funds development projects and capacity-building projects	Funds fully-produced performances of theatre projects open to the public	Funds general operating support for small organizations
Both individuals and small companies based in the Bay Area are eligible to apply	Both individuals and small companies based in the Bay Area are eligible to apply	Small companies based in the Bay Area are eligible to apply
The grants are for \$2,500	These grants are for \$5,000	These grants are for \$5,000
<i>CA\$H Creates and Performs Guidelines are available on our website.</i>	<i>CA\$H Creates and Performs Guidelines are available on our website.</i>	

CA\$H SUSTAINS provides **general operating support** for small theatre companies in the Bay Area.

- Your current annual budget and your annual budget from the most recently completed fiscal year need to demonstrate an annual operating budget that does not exceed \$100,000. Detailed eligibility requirements below.
- These grants are for \$5000.
- **Applicants may submit only ONE proposal in each granting round.** Submitting multiple applications for the same project, individual, or company will result in all applications being **disqualified**.
- **Yes, we support improv, musical theatre, and opera companies!**

DEADLINE

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE by **5:00 PM Pacific, November 2, 2026**.

We apologize, but we are unable to grant extensions.

ELIGIBILITY

CA\$H Sustains is open to Bay Area-based small organizations that create and perform theatre.

Your organization is eligible to apply for a CA\$H Theatre Grant if:

You are a small company...

- **Your company's annual operating budget does not exceed \$100,000** in the most recently completed fiscal year and in the current year *at the time the application is submitted*.
 - Funding received after the application deadline will not be considered for eligibility in the current round. If you receive a surprise major gift in November that suddenly makes your \$75K company a \$105K company, you are still eligible for CA\$H Theatre this round.
- Your company is not a program of a CA\$H-ineligible company.

- If your company is in residence at a larger company, your company is still eligible for CA\$H Theatre. If your company is administered and/or primarily funded by a larger company, you are not eligible.
 - If you're uncertain whether you're eligible, reach out and ask!
Email Melissa@TheatreBayArea.Org.

You do theatre...

- Your company has a documented history of at least two professionally-oriented works of theatre that were presented publicly this year or in the three years prior. Staged readings and streaming productions definitely count!
- Your company creates and performs theatre performances for the public, and is not primarily a performance venue or presenter.
- Your company is not an education program, religious organization, or political campaign, part of one, or primarily funded by one.

You are based in the Bay Area...

- Your company is located in any of the counties within Theatre Bay Area's Northern California service area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma counties, and primarily produces inside that area.

You do not have a conflict of interest...

- No one currently employed by your company or under contract with your company is serving on a CA\$H Theatre panel for that round.
- Your company does NOT have a current TBA staff member or board member in a leadership position.

If you have received a CA\$H Theatre grant before...

- You have closed any past CA\$H Theatre Grants you have received, meaning the CA\$H-supported project (for Creates and Performs) or season (for Sustains) has been completed, the Impact Assessment form has been filed, and it's been at least a year since you were awarded.
 - If you were awarded in Spring 2026, you are ineligible to apply until Spring 2027.

CA\$H Theatre does not fund:

- The following types of organizations:
 - Education programs, training programs, summer camps, or schools
 - Dance companies (NOTE: CA\$H Theatre funds dance theatre, but does not fund dance. Dancers' Group administers CA\$H Dance.)
 - Religious organizations
 - Political campaigns
 - Theatre venues that don't produce theatre of their own
 - Organizations with annual operating budgets over \$100k
 - This includes organizations that are projects of, primarily funded by, or wholly administered by CA\$H-ineligible organizations. (Fiscal sponsorships, shared services, and shared space/residencies do not impact eligibility for CA\$H Theatre.)
 - Organizations that have not produced at least two pieces of live theatre open to the public within the last three years
 - Organizations located outside of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, or Sonoma counties, or primarily producing outside of that area.

A NOTE ABOUT TAXES

While we wish our grants could be considered tax-exempt income, all grants disbursed by Theatre Bay Area (including CA\$H Theatre grants) are considered taxable payments by the IRS, and it is our responsibility to report the funds accordingly. If Theatre Bay Area disburses funds to you that meet or exceed the IRS reporting threshold of \$600, we are required by law to collect an IRS Form W-9 from you reflecting your name, address, and identification number (which is your SSN for individuals and your EIN for organizations), and to issue the organization or individual named on the W-9 with a Form 1099-NEC after the end of the year. We want to make sure all of our potential grant recipients are aware of this so it doesn't come as an unpleasant surprise. If you have questions about this, please don't hesitate to let us know!

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

CA\$H Sustains is designed to be an entirely artist-driven program. TBA forms the decision-making panel by assembling a panel of theatremakers, all of whom have experience running small theatres, to ensure each application is reviewed by peers. It is our commitment to gather a group that is diverse in all aspects (identity, geography, and experience). Every panelist is given training on the panel process. All panelists are empowered to interpret the [priority criteria](#) through the filter of their own personal experiences and artistic views, while always staying true to the guiding principles on which the program was founded.

Priority for CA\$H Sustains will go to organizations that:

- have had, or have the potential to have an impact on the community or the field,
 - What makes this organization's work important to support at this time?
- are innovative, take creative risks, and have the potential for excellence,
 - What is unique about this organization?
 - Is the organization well-prepared to meet its goals?
- and are actively producing professionally-oriented theatre, or have a history of producing professionally-oriented theatre. (If you are building capacity to start a new theatre company, apply for CA\$H Creates.)
- **How competitive is CA\$H Theatre?**

Each round, approximately 15-25% of applicants are awarded across all three grants, depending on the number of applications received..

TIMELINE

Notification:

- We do our best to ensure that all applicants will receive notice of the panel's decision within eight weeks of the application deadline.
- All applicants will be notified by email. Please ensure that the email provided in the application is correct and one you check often.

Acceptance of the Award:

- If you are awarded, you must file your paperwork to accept the award within 15 days of receipt.
 - Failure to meet this deadline could result in forfeiture of the award.
 - If you need extra time, please reach out to Melissa at Melissa@TheatreBayArea.org
 - **If you are awarded in the Spring round, you must file your paperwork before the end of the fiscal year on June 30.**

Granting Period:

- **The granting period for Fall 2026 CA\$H Sustains is November 2, 2026 - December 31, 2027.**
 - If you are awarded in Fall 2026, you are welcome to close your grant earlier in order to apply for CA\$H Theatre in Fall 2027.
 - If you are awarded and require an extension on your granting period, please reach out to Melissa at Melissa@TheatreBayArea.org
- **If you are awarded, you are ineligible to apply for further CA\$H Theatre funding until your current grant has closed.** In order to close your grant, you must meet the following conditions:
 - One year has passed since you were awarded
 - For example, if you are awarded in Fall 2025, you are now eligible to apply again in Fall 2026. If you were awarded a CA\$H Theatre grant in Spring 2026, you are ineligible to apply again until Spring 2027.
 - Your CA\$H-supported project must be completed. (CA\$H Creates and CA\$H Performs) or your CA\$H-supported season must be completed (CA\$H Sustains).
 - Your Impact Assessment form has been filed.
 - Link to the [CA\\$H Sustains Impact Assessment Form](#).

HOW TO APPLY

What's on the application?

The CA\$H Theatre Grant has joined the [Common App](#). You will find the same questions on the CA\$H Theatre applications as you will find on the applications for the Zellerbach Family Foundation Community Arts Grant, The Fleischhacker Foundation, the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the Gerbode Foundation, and InterMusic SF. **Please note: there are also a few CA\$H-specific questions, so be sure to look at our worksheet even if you are working from the questions provided on the Common App site.**

The application is divided into numbered sections:

1. Organization Information
2. General Support Information
3. Budget and Financial Information
4. Optional Support Materials (optional)
5. Certifications
6. Demographic Survey (optional)
7. Review and Submit

Please download the application worksheet to see important requirements not listed here, as well as tips to make your application more competitive. You can review the questions and prep your answers on the worksheet before beginning the CA\$H Theatre application.

Download the [application worksheet as a PDF](#).
Download the [application worksheet as a Word doc](#).
View the [application worksheet as a Google doc](#).

The online application is available here:
[CA\\$H Sustains Application Fall 2026](#)

Important information:

Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. We can't be responsible for technical issues that prevent applications from being submitted on time, so plan on submitting early.

You can't edit the form once submitted, but if you submit early enough, we can delete your application to enable you to submit another one before the deadline. Unfortunately, the software won't allow you to save your progress and return to the application; you must complete the form in one sitting. TBA's recommendation is to review the application carefully before assembling the materials needed.

If there was a problem with your application, your form will not submit and you will receive an error message. After successfully submitting your application, you will see a confirmation message on your screen, and you will receive an email confirmation. If you do not receive this email confirmation, check your spam filter! If you still don't see it, contact Melissa Hillman at Melissa@TheatreBayArea.org to confirm that your application is in our system, and to double check the accuracy of the email address provided in the application.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Grantees must complete the [CA\\$H Sustains Impact Assessment form](#) after the project is complete. We use this information to show funders how impactful their support of the CA\$H Theatre grant has been (or could be, for new funders), not to make sure you did it "right." You have nothing to prove – all we want to see is that the grant truly helped you, and that you were able to do some awesome things with it. You won't be judged or evaluated, and the information you provide on your impact assessment form has precisely zero impact on your future ability to get CA\$H Theatre funding.

GET SUPPORT

We have a free webinar scheduled to support CA\$H Sustains grantseekers. We strongly recommend attending one, even if you have already applied for a CA\$H Theatre grant in the past.

CA\$H Sustains Application Walkthrough and Q&A

[Tuesday, October 20, 6:00 - 7:30 PM](#)

FREE

This Zoom webinar will walk you through the application and give you tips to make your application more competitive. There will be an extensive Q&A period, so bring your questions, or feel free to attend and just listen to the questions others ask.

Still have questions? Contact Melissa Hillman at Melissa@TheatreBayArea.org.

GET INVOLVED

Interested in being a panelist? If you're eligible to apply for CA\$H Theatre, you're eligible to be a panelist! It's a great way to get an insight into the workings of the program, strengthen your future applications, and contribute to your community! Remember, you can't serve on a panel if you're applying for this round, but if you're planning to wait this one out and apply in future rounds, or if you're interested in serving on a panel in future rounds, register as a panelist! We have other grants in addition to CA\$H Theatre that need panelists, too. [Learn more about TBA's grant panels](#), what each one pays, and how to register as a TBA grant panelist.