

CHILDRENS THEATRE FOUNDATION of america

2026 Aurand Harris Theater Grant & Individual Fellowship

Application Guidelines

Application opens **Wednesday, February 18, 2026**

Application deadline: **Monday, March 30, 2025, 12 Noon ET**

Please note: applications are limited to 100 theatres and 20 individual artists

The Childrens Theatre Foundation of America challenges and supports theatre artists to achieve excellence in service to young people. A major priority of CTFA is supporting culturally responsive theatre for youth which clearly recognizes diversity, equity, and inclusion that is important to the future of theatre for young audiences.

These grants and fellowships are named for and funded by the author royalties of Aurand Harris, one of the nation's most published and performed playwrights for children and youth. Harris (1916-1996) had a deep appreciation for artists, particularly playwrights, who devoted their careers to creating quality theatre for young audiences, and for theatres who produce work for children and youth.

Harris grants and fellowships are designed to benefit the field of theatre for children and youth, to provide growth opportunities for theatre artists developing work for the young, to support the mission and values of CTFA, and to honor the intentions of Aurand Harris. Harris wanted to give TYA practitioners a boost; not just to keep the lights on, but to help them shine brighter. In the spirit of Aurand Harris's legacy, CTFA is looking to support individuals and companies that are looking to expand or innovate on their existing work.

In 2026, the Harris Committee is awarding multiple theatre grants between \$3,000 and \$6,000 and fellowships between \$2,000 and \$4,000. Because CTFA is a volunteer-run organization and we want to ensure that each application is given thorough consideration, we will cap applicants to the first 100 theatres and 20 individual artists.

2026 Harris grants and fellowships will fund projects slated to take place between June 1, 2026 and May 31, 2027.

WHO MAY APPLY

501c3 IRS certified nonprofit theatres in the United States and individual artists.

2026 Aurand Harris Theatre Grant & Individual Fellowship **Application Guidelines**

REQUIREMENTS

Theatres must

- have been certified as a nonprofit* prior to March 30, 2023,
- have an annual operating budget of under a million dollars
- have a demonstrable record of artistic quality,
- demonstrate how a potential Harris grant will support the innovation or expansion of their current work.

* Applicant theatres without their own non-profit status may apply under another organization's 501c3 IRS certified nonprofit status if that organization is an active partner in the proposed project.

Individual theatre artists must

- have a demonstrable record of artistic quality,
- provide a professional reference, and
- demonstrate how a potential Harris grant will support their professional development.

FUNDING PARAMETERS/WHAT WE FUND

For theatres

Theatres can request funding for projects or materials that can enrich and deepen their work.

Examples might include:

- Dramaturgical travel for playwriting research
- Specialized actor training to support the specific needs of a production
- Hiring diverse, culturally-responsive playwrights, directors, designers, etc.
- Technical equipment that will elevate the artistry of a production
- Expanding community-based programming to a new location or demographic

For individual artists

Individual artists can request funding to support a personal development opportunity. Ideally, this project would allow an artist to build and develop their theatre artistry, and expand their awareness and creation of culturally responsive theatre for young audiences.

2026 Aurand Harris Theatre Grant & Individual Fellowship **Application Guidelines**

Examples might include:

- Writing a new play
- Taking on a new directing opportunity
- Developing new design techniques

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS/WE DO NOT FUND

For Theatres, we do not fund:

- companies that received CTFA funding in 2024 or 2025
- general operating expenses
- free ticket programs or ticket subsidies
- activities offered or undertaken for academic credit
- projects that do not align with CTFA's mission and values

For Individual Artists, we do not fund:

- individuals that received CTFA funding in 2024 or 2025
- activities undertaken for academic credit
- projects that do not align with CTFA's mission and values

TIMELINE/SELECTION CRITERIA

- The application window for the 2026 Harris grants and fellowships from Wednesday, February 18, 2026 to **Monday, March 30, 2026 at 12 Noon ET.**

*For your reference, we will provide application worksheets **once the application portal is open.***

PLEASE NOTE: The worksheet is not the application. All applications must be submitted on the Good Grants portal.

THEATRE GRANT application worksheet [LINK TO COME](#)

INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIP application worksheet [LINK TO COME](#)

- All applications will be pre-screened to confirm they meet the eligibility requirements.
- The CTFA Harris review committee will read eligible applications and score them on the following selection criteria:

For theatres, a grant-funded project should have the potential to

2026 Aurand Harris Theatre Grant & Individual Fellowship **Application Guidelines**

- expand or innovate on a theater's previous work and
- promote culturally responsive theater experiences for young people.

For a theatre artist, fellowship funding should have the potential to

- expand or innovate on the artist's prior work and
- allow the artist to build and develop their theater artistry.

A successful Harris-funded proposal

- advances the mission and values of CTFA,
 - can be accomplished by the applicant within the funding window, and
 - is a project where CTFA funds are needed and can make a difference.
- The project funding window is from Monday, June 1, 2026 to Friday, May 31, 2027.
 - All applicants will be notified of their status by 5 PM Friday, May 15, 2025. Grantees will receive 75% of their award upon receipt of a signed grant conditions and agreement document.
 - Final reports are due by Wednesday, June 16, 2027. Upon receipt of their final reports, grantees will receive the final 25% of their grant funding.

If you have any questions about the application, please contact us at ctfaharrisgrant@gmail.com.

[About previous Harris grant recipients](#)