

PERFORMING ARTS COMMISSION ARTIST SELECTION HANDBOOK

I. INTRODUCTION

The Performing Arts Commission for the Town of Leesburg ("the Commission") serves as an advisory body dedicated to supporting, promoting, and enriching the performing arts. A key function of the Commission is to **review and recommend** artists and performances that align with the mission of fostering artistic excellence, diversity, accessibility, and community engagement.

This handbook outlines the guidelines for evaluating and recommending performing artists and projects in a fair and equitable manner. All recommendations made by the Commission are advisory in nature and subject to final review and approval by the Leesburg Town Council. The goal is to ensure that every proposed project reflects the cultural vibrancy, values, and priorities of the Town of Leesburg.

II. TYPES OF PERFORMING ARTS SUPPORTED

The Commission supports a broad range of performing arts, including but not limited to:

1. **Theater & Drama** – Includes traditional, contemporary, experimental, and puppetry-based storytelling.
2. **Musical Theater & Opera** – Storytelling through a combination of music, song, dance, and dialogue, encompassing both musical theater and opera.
3. **Music Performance** – Encompasses all genres, including classical, jazz, folk, rock, pop, electronic, orchestral, chamber, and experimental soundscapes.
4. **Dance** – Covers classical ballet, contemporary dance, culturally specific dance forms, and movement-based storytelling.
5. **Spoken Word & Comedy** – Includes poetry, performative storytelling, stand-up comedy, and other spoken art forms.
6. **Interdisciplinary & Immersive Arts** – Hybrid performances that integrate multiple artistic disciplines and engage audiences interactively.
7. **Culturally-Specific & Indigenous Arts** – Traditional and contemporary performances that highlight diverse cultural identities and heritage.
8. **Inclusive & Adaptive Performances** – Works created by or featuring artists with disabilities, neurodivergent artists, or performances designed for accessibility.
9. **Youth & Family-Oriented Performances** – Child-friendly, intergenerational, and educational productions designed to engage young audiences.

III. SELECTION PROCESS FOR ARTISTS AND PROJECTS

To ensure fairness, transparency, and artistic excellence, the selection process is structured as follows:

1. Call for Artists & Performances

- The Commission will issue an open or limited call for artists based on programming needs.
- Calls will be publicly announced via official channels (Town of Leesburg website, social media, arts organizations, etc.).
- Applications must include:
 - Artistic statement
 - Work samples or portfolio
 - Project proposal (if applicable)
 - Technical and logistical requirements
 - Budget proposal

2. Eligibility Requirements

- Artists must demonstrate professional experience and artistic excellence in their discipline.
- Performances must align with the Commission’s mission of accessibility, diversity, and artistic innovation.
- Projects must be feasible within available funding and infrastructure.
- Projects must align with existing community standards and demonstrate sensitivity to the diverse perspectives within our town. While artistic expression is inherently subjective and interpretation can vary, the Commission prioritizes works that strive to foster inclusion and avoid material likely to be perceived as obscene, defamatory, or discriminatory on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected status. Final recommendations will be made with care, centering community relevance and cultural responsibility.
- Preference will be given to works that:
 - Ensure accessibility to the community by removing financial or structural barriers to participation, so that no one is excluded due to socioeconomic status, ability, or lack of resources
 - Foster cultural exchange and artistic collaboration
 - Provide educational or community engagement components
 - Demonstrate relevance to the Leesburg community through alignment with public input gathered via surveys, forums, or other modes of engagement.

3. Artist & Project Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- **Artistic Quality & Originality** – Innovation, creativity, and artistic merit of the performance.

- **Community Impact** – Relevance to the community and potential for audience engagement.
- **Diversity & Inclusion** – Representation of varied cultural, social, and artistic perspectives.
- **Feasibility & Technical Viability** – Alignment with budget, venue capabilities, and logistics.
- **Public Accessibility** – Considerations for inclusive access (ASL interpretation, sensory-friendly performances, etc.).

4. Selection Panel & Review Process

- The selection panel will include:
 - Members of the Performing Arts Commission
 - Independent arts professionals (when necessary)
 - Community representatives (as needed for specific programming)
- Panelists will review applications using a standardized scoring rubric.
- Final recommendations will be submitted to the full Commission for approval.
- Selected artists will be notified and provided with contract details and performance expectations.
- Commission members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest when selecting artists. If a member has a personal, financial, or professional relationship with a potential artist, they must abstain from discussion and voting on that selection to maintain fairness and integrity in the process.

5. Contracting & Compliance

- All selected artists must sign an agreement outlining:
 - Performance expectations
 - Compensation details
 - Technical requirements
 - Liability and insurance policies (as applicable)
- Performers must adhere to town regulations and venue policies.

IV. EQUITABLE SELECTION PRACTICES

To uphold the Commission’s commitment to fairness and inclusion:

1. **Non-Discrimination Policy:** Artists and projects will not be selected or excluded based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, or political affiliation.
2. **Transparency:** Selection criteria, scoring rubrics, and decision-making processes will be publicly available.
3. **Community Representation:** The Commission will seek input from diverse community stakeholders when selecting large-scale projects.
4. **Bias Reduction:** Panelists will receive training on implicit bias and equitable arts programming.

V. APPEALS PROCESS

Artists who wish to appeal a selection decision must submit a written request within 10 business days of notification. The appeal will be reviewed by a designated subcommittee, and a final decision will be issued within 30 days.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW

- These guidelines will be reviewed annually by the Commission to ensure effectiveness and alignment with community needs.
- Adjustments may be made based on feedback, budget considerations, and evolving artistic trends.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Performing Arts Commission is committed to fostering a vibrant arts ecosystem by selecting artists and projects that inspire, educate, and engage the Leesburg community. Through a transparent and equitable selection process, the Commission ensures that performing arts remain an integral part of the town's cultural landscape.

PERFORMING ARTS COMMISSION ARTIST SELECTION RUBRIC

Purpose:

This rubric provides a standardized framework for evaluating artist and performance proposals in alignment with the mission, values, and selection criteria of the Performing Arts Commission. Each proposal will be scored based on the following categories, ensuring a fair and equitable selection process.

SCORING SCALE

Each category is rated on a scale of **1 to 5**, where:

- **1 = Poor** (Does not meet expectations)
- **2 = Fair** (Partially meets expectations)
- **3 = Good** (Meets expectations)
- **4 = Very Good** (Exceeds expectations)
- **5 = Excellent** (Far exceeds expectations)

The total maximum score is **50 points**.

SELECTION CRITERIA & SCORING RUBRIC

Category	Criteria Description	Score (1-5)
Artistic Quality & Originality	Proposal demonstrates artistic excellence, innovation, and originality. Artistic vision is clear and compelling.	
Community Impact	Proposal reflects relevance to the community and contributes to public engagement, cultural enrichment, or social impact.	
Diversity & Inclusion	Project promotes diverse representation and inclusivity, featuring underrepresented voices and perspectives.	
Feasibility & Technical Viability	The project is logistically sound, with clear technical requirements and a realistic plan for execution within the given resources.	
Public Accessibility	Performance is accessible to a broad audience, including accommodations for individuals with disabilities (e.g., ASL, sensory-friendly elements).	
Engagement & Educational Value	Proposal includes opportunities for audience interaction, workshops, or educational components.	
Past Work & Experience	Artist's previous work demonstrates professionalism, artistic merit, and successful project execution.	
Alignment with Commission Mission	Project aligns with the values, goals, and mission of the Performing Arts Commission.	
Budget & Financial Feasibility	Proposal provides a clear, reasonable, and well-justified budget with appropriate use of funds.	
Sustainability & Long-Term Impact	Project has potential for long-term cultural impact and aligns with future programming goals.	
TOTAL SCORE	<i>Maximum score: 50 points</i>	

INTERPRETING THE FINAL SCORE

- **45-50 points:** Highly recommended for selection.
- **35-44 points:** Strong proposal; recommended with minor revisions if needed.
- **25-34 points:** Average proposal; requires significant revisions or additional justification.
- **15-24 points:** Weak proposal; unlikely to be selected unless critical concerns are addressed.
- **Below 15 points:** Not recommended for selection.

NOTES & FEEDBACK SECTION

- Strengths of the proposal:
- Areas for improvement:
- Additional comments or recommendations:

This rubric will be used consistently to ensure a fair and transparent artist selection process. It will be reviewed periodically to reflect evolving artistic and community needs.