

Frankenthaler

Helen Frankenthaler Foundation 2026 Grantmaking Overview

Established and endowed by Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011) during her lifetime, the [Helen Frankenthaler Foundation](#) supports public engagement with the visual arts through philanthropic, educational, curatorial, and research initiatives. Since becoming active in 2013, it has expanded its grantmaking to sustain museums and visual arts institutions, supporting exhibitions, scholarship, and education across the field.

The Foundation's grantmaking priorities are currently organized across three areas:

- **Climate Action and Sustainability.** Infrastructure projects focused on energy efficiency and sustainability are supported through the Frankenthaler Climate Initiative (FCI), a national program with a separate application process. **Applications for the 2026 cycle are due Friday, March 27.** For more information, [visit the FCI website](#).
- **Visual Arts & Education.** Project-based support for exhibitions, publications, public programs, and academic initiatives that advance the presentation, study, and interpretation of the visual arts.
- **Cultural Resilience.** Unrestricted support to sustain institutional capacity and core programming across the visual arts field.

Application Limits

- The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative operates through a separate application process and may be applied to independently.
- Organizations may also submit one application per cycle to **either** Visual Arts & Education **or** Cultural Resilience. Applications to both of these funding areas within the same cycle are not permitted.

What We Fund

Visual Arts & Education (Project-Based Support)

The Foundation supports discrete, institutionally grounded projects that advance the presentation, study, and understanding of the visual arts. Competitive proposals typically include:

- Exhibitions, publications, and public programs focused on modern and contemporary art
- Projects that expand access to collections, archives, and curatorial research
- Academic and institutional initiatives in art history, studio practice, visual studies, museum and curatorial studies, conservation, and related areas of scholarship and teaching—particularly those involving university museums, galleries, and special collections
- Conferences, programs, or initiatives led by professional organizations whose missions address the visual arts
- Exhibitions and scholarly or public programs related to the 2028 centennial of Helen Frankenthaler

Priority is given to projects that offer rigorous and clearly articulated approaches to the study and presentation of artistic practice—particularly in relation to painting and printmaking across the 20th and 21st centuries—and that demonstrate meaningful collaboration and engagement across institutions, disciplines, collections, or publics.

Projects must be clearly defined in scope, duration, and outcomes, and supported by appropriate institutional capacity. Requests for Visual Arts & Education funds should not be framed as general operating support.

Cultural Resilience (General Operating Support)

The Foundation provides unrestricted support to organizations whose core work is centered in the visual arts. These grants are intended to sustain exhibitions, programs, and institutional activities; support staffing, operations, and organizational capacity; and to maintain continuity during periods of reduced public funding and broader pressures affecting the arts and culture sector.

Cultural Resilience support is not project-based and does not require a defined initiative.

Application and Review Process

The Foundation uses a single-stage online application process. Applicants are asked to provide basic information about their organization, project, and financial status; identify a funding area; provide a concise description of the request; and submit a brief statement of the intended use of funds.

The application is designed to be concise and can typically be completed quickly once materials are prepared. A checklist of required and optional documentation is provided below. Applicants should ensure all required information is complete at the time of submission; incomplete applications may not be reviewed.

The Foundation does not conduct preliminary eligibility reviews in advance of submission.

Applications are reviewed based on alignment with the selected funding area, clarity and feasibility of the request, organizational capacity and readiness, and relevance to the visual arts field. Final funding decisions are made by the Foundation's Board of Directors. All applicants will be notified of the outcome.

2026 Timeline

2026 Visual Arts & Education and Cultural Resilience grants are awarded in two cycles: Spring and Fall.

Spring Cycle

Application Deadline: Monday, April 20, 2026 (11:59 PM)

Award Notifications: Mid-Late May 2026

Fall Cycle

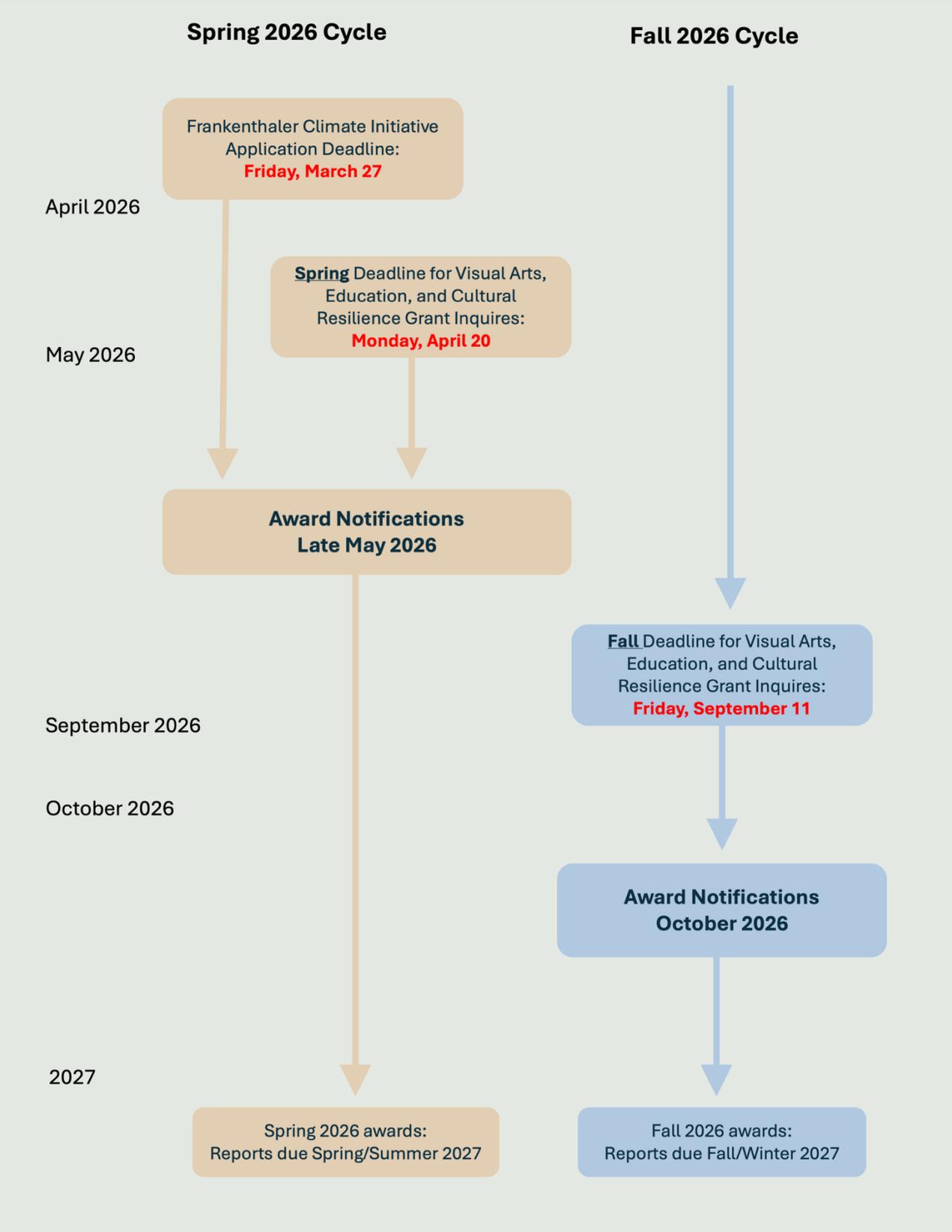
Application Deadline: Friday, September 11, 2026

Award Notifications: October 2026

The Frankenthaler Climate Initiative follows a separate application process, with a deadline of Friday, March 27, 2026. FCI awards are issued in late May, aligned with the Spring cycle.

Grant Period and Reporting

Grants are typically awarded for a one-year period of activity, with supported work completed within twelve months of the award. Grantees are required to submit a brief report outlining activities and outcomes at the conclusion of the grant period.



Funding Amounts

The Foundation typically awards grants at the \$25,000 or \$50,000 levels.

Smaller discretionary grants (generally \$5,000–\$15,000) may be awarded for focused projects at institutions with annual operating budgets of \$500,000 or below.

In select cases, grants of up to \$100,000 may be awarded.

Requests above \$100,000 are considered on a limited basis, typically for projects of greater scope or multi-year support and in the context of prior engagement with the Foundation.

Requests above \$250,000 are not accepted on an unsolicited basis.

Organizational Eligibility

Applicants must be U.S.-based nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, or qualifying public institutions or entities working through an established fiscal sponsor.

Eligible organizations must demonstrate that the visual arts are a primary focus of their mission and activities, with sustained engagement through exhibitions, collections, public programming, scholarship, education, or artist-centered institutional initiatives.

Eligible applicants include:

- Visual arts museums, nonprofit galleries, archives, and related cultural organizations
- Professional associations or organizations whose missions and primary activities involve the visual arts
- Artist residency programs and artist-endowed foundations
- University museums, galleries, and academic departments or divisions focused on visual art or the study of art (e.g., art history, studio art, curatorial studies, museum studies, visual studies, fine art conservation)
- Community art centers and nonprofit visual arts organizations
- Public art programs, biennials, and other nonprofit visual arts exhibition platforms
- Libraries or archives with a significant visual arts focus

Organizations are not eligible if they:

- Are not based in the United States or its territories
- Do not hold 501(c)(3) status and lack a qualifying fiscal sponsor
- Do not demonstrate a primary focus on the visual arts

The Foundation does not support:

- Individuals, including artists or private collectors
- Commercial galleries or other for-profit arts organizations
- Performing arts organizations whose primary focus is not visual art (e.g., dance, music)
- Media organizations or social service organizations
- Institutions whose primary focus rests outside of the visual arts (e.g., science or history museums)

Application Checklist

Applicants should be prepared to provide the following through the online application portal:

1. Organization and Contact

- Organization name, contact information, and legal status (501(c)(3) or fiscal sponsor)
- Brief statement of mission and visual arts focus
- Basic organizational financial information including approximate annual operating budget

2. Funding Area

- Select one: Visual Arts & Education or Cultural Resilience

3. Request

- Grant amount (selected from available options)
- Project title and dates (Visual Arts & Education only)

4. Proposal Description

Visual Arts & Education (Maximum 500 words)

- Provide a concise description of the project, including central activities (e.g., exhibition, publication, public program, or artist-centered initiative), key participants, and intended audiences.
- For educational initiatives, briefly describe the context (e.g., higher education programs in art history, studio art, curatorial or museum studies, or K–12 settings).

Cultural Resilience (Maximum 500 words)

- Provide a concise description of the organization and how unrestricted operating support would strengthen its ability to sustain exhibitions, scholarship, education, or public programs in the visual arts.

5. Supporting Materials

- Project budget (required for Visual Arts & Education)
- Institutional budget or most recent 990 (optional)
- One additional supporting document (optional)

Contact

For general inquiries, please contact grants@frankenthalerfoundation.org.

The Foundation will make every effort to respond within 5–7 business days. Due to the volume of inquiries, responses may be limited to questions regarding application requirements and process.

The Foundation does not provide individualized feedback on proposals in advance of submission or assess eligibility prior to application.