



**Panelists, while waiting for the meeting to begin, we invite you to:**

1. Consider your verbal introduction: name, organization and/or art form, and your location
2. Silence or stow electronic devices not being used for this meeting - be present in the (virtual) space
3. Gather materials and any drinks/snacks
4. Log into your SmartSimple account and navigate to panelist home dashboard

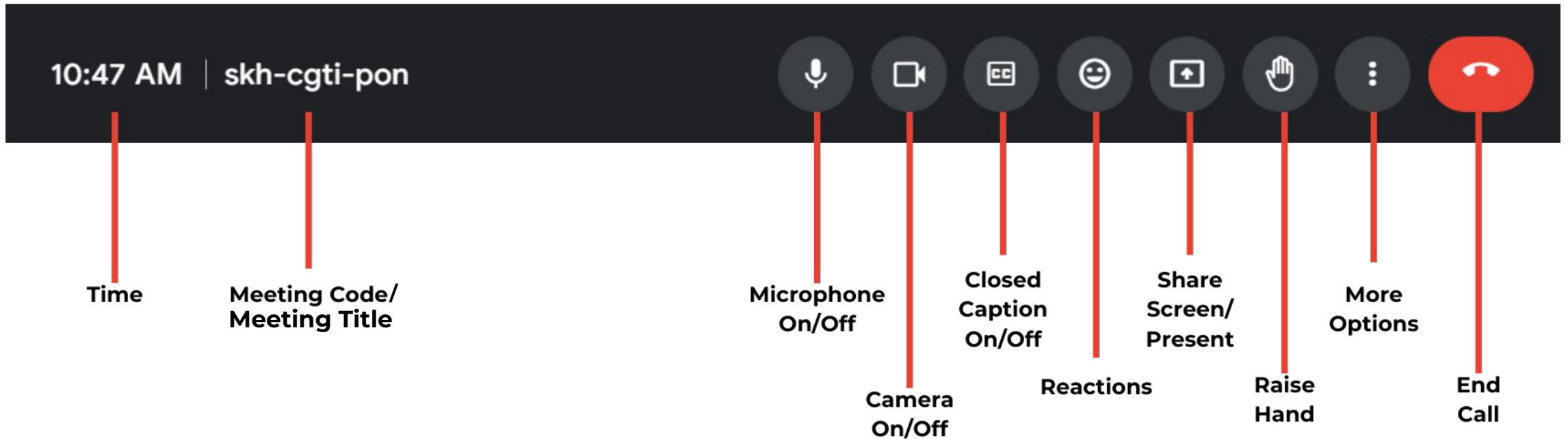


# **FY2026**

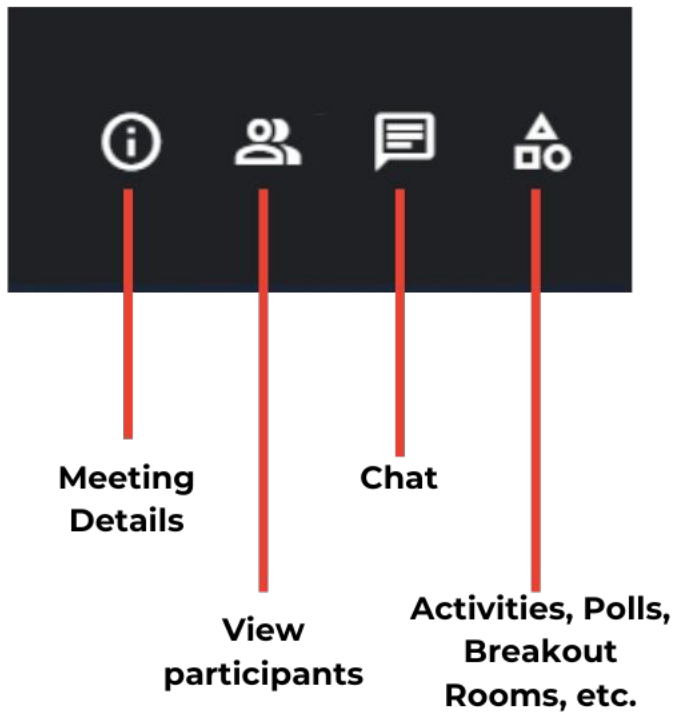
## **Heritage Awards Panel Meeting**

**Tuesday, December 9, 2025**  
**10 AM - 4 PM**

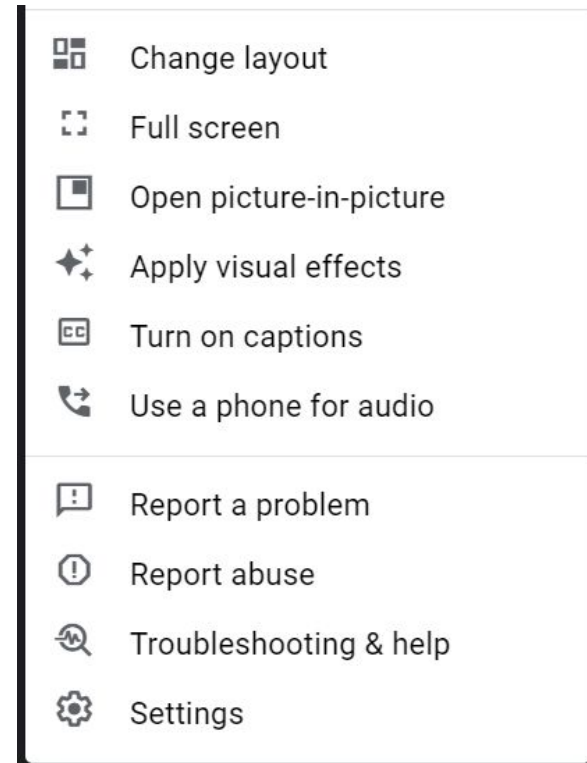
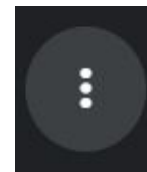
# Reference Shot of Features (1 of 2)



# Reference Shot of Features (2 of 2)



In "More Options"





# **Introductions**



## Land Acknowledgement Statement

We acknowledge the lands and waters now known as Maryland are the home of its first peoples: the Accohannock Indian Tribe, Assateague People's Tribe, Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians, Choptico Band of Indians, Lenape Tribe, Nanticoke Tribe, Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, Piscataway Conoy Tribe, Piscataway Indian Nation, Pocomoke Indian Nation, Susquehannock Indians, Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee, and tribes in the Chesapeake watershed who have seemingly vanished since the coming of colonialism. We acknowledge that this land is now home to other tribal peoples living here in diaspora. We acknowledge the forced removal of many from the lands and waterways that nurtured them as kin. We acknowledge the degradation that continues to be wrought on the land and waters in pursuit of resources. We acknowledge the right of the land and waterways to heal so that they can continue to provide food and medicine for all. We acknowledge that it is our collective obligation to pursue policies and practices that respect the land and waters so that our reciprocal relationship with them can be fully restored.



## Equity and Justice Statement

The arts celebrate our state's diversity, connect our shared humanity, and transform individuals and communities. The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) is committed to advancing and modeling equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in all aspects of our organization and across communities of our state.

MSAC and its grantees are committed to embracing equity and non-discrimination regardless of race, religious creed, color, age, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, class, language, and/or ability.



## **Vision**

The Maryland State Arts Council plays an essential role ensuring every person has access to the transformative power of the arts.

## **Mission**

Maryland State Arts Council advances the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland.



# **MSAC Strategic Plan - Pillars and Goals**

## **Access**

Bolster access to arts experiences and resources

## **Awareness**

Amplify the stories of Maryland's arts sector and the value of public support

## **Connection**

Foster networks within and beyond the arts sector

## **Equity**

Cultivate a thriving arts ecosystem centered in equity

## **Leadership**

Commit to a culture of care and innovation



# Creative Meeting Actions

**Celebrate** being in the space with other creative people.

**Engage** with everyone's presence as a gift.

**Acknowledge** that together we know a lot.

**Enter** the conversation with curiosity and inquiry.

**Share** your idea and trust that it will be heard.

**Use** "I" statements.

**Focus** your language on the task at hand.

**Hold** one another accountable with care.

**Honor** all perspectives and build on shared ideas.

**Balance** speaking with listening.



# Equity: Impact vs. Grant Writing

The nomination process is meant to inspire authentic reflection and internal analysis for each nominator, with the knowledge that MSAC is to be seen and utilized as a collaborative partner in the process.

One aspect of the partnership is to guide panelists to see beyond the “polish” of grant writing that may be inequitably influenced by the privilege of resources (financial, educational, etc...) and, instead, focus upon the impact of the nomination.



# Responses as Recommendations

"The nomination was unclear and did not speak to the nominee's connection to traditional arts."

Becomes:

"I would recommend that the nominator clarify the nominee's connection to the traditional arts by adding language that connects their work to living cultural traditions."



# Goals for today's meeting

- Review 21 Heritage Award nominations from across the state with an initial average score of 90% or higher
- Based on final scores and discussions held today, staff will determine six \$10,000 awards



# Panel Meeting Structure

The goal is to discuss and score each nomination within 10 minutes. *Timing is subject to change.*

- 2 minutes: Lead Panelist
- 4 minutes: Discussion - new information to add; new perspective to share; additional questions
- ~1 minute: Staff discipline expert will share additional thoughts/clarifications/reminders
- 2 minutes: Final scoring submission in SmartSimple



# Nomination Score - practice round

APP -41735

Nominee: Test Nomination

Category: Test

Lead reader: Chad

Initial average: 0%

Final average: 93.8%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-39816

Nominee: Sukanya Mukherji

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Raye-Valion Gillette

Initial average: 96.67%

Final average: 97.5%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-39857

Nominee: The Ward Brothers' Workshop

Category: Place

Conflict of Interest: Raye-Valion Gillette

Lead Reader: Manya Tolino

Initial average: 92.78%

Final average: 93.9%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-39933

Nominee: Shanye Huang

Category: Person/people

Conflict of Interest: Raye-Valion Gillette

Lead Reader: Kristin Meyer

Initial average: 94.44%

Final average: 95.6%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40233

Nominee: Natalia Kormeluk

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Manya Tolino

Initial average: 93.75%

Final average: 96.3%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40273

Nominee: Masady Mani

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Kristin Meyer

Initial average: 90.83%

Final average: 96.3%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40286

Nominee: The Flamenco Workshop

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Kristin Meyer

Initial average: 95%

Final average: 95.8%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40290

Nominee: Chelsea Monae Sherman

Category: Tradition

Lead Reader: Raye-Valion Gillette

Initial average: 95.42%

Final average: 87.1%



# 10 min break

Return at 11:45



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40314

Nominee: Torcuato Zamora

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Michelle Puhl Price

Initial average: 95.83%

Final average: 93.8%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40324

Nominee: Annapolis Oyster Roast and Sock Burning

Category: Tradition

Lead Reader: Manya Tolino

Initial average: 92.5%

Final average: 87.5%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40333

Nominee: Navid Bazargan

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Michelle Puhl Price

Initial average: 97.92%

Final average: 97.1%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40334

Nominee: Abu the Flutemaker

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Manya Tolino

Initial average: 96.67%

Final average: 96.3%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40340

Nominee: Ken Koons

Category: Person/people

Conflict of Interest: Ryan Koons

Lead Reader: Michelle Puhl Price

Initial average: 90.83%

Final average: 89.6%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40357

Nominee: Sarah Powell

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Raye-Valion Gillette

Initial average: 92.92%

Final average: 88.8%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40358

Nominee: Chesapeake Bay Sailing Log Canoe  
Racing

Category: Tradition

Lead Reader: Raye-Valion Gillette

Initial average: 97.5%

Final average: 97.1%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40370

Nominee: Baltimore City Community College

Category: Traditions

Lead Reader: Kristin Meyer

Initial average: 93.33%

Final average: 95%



# 15 min break

Return at 1:30pm



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40386

Nominee: Serbian Cultural Center Opancici Inc.

Category: Tradition

Lead Reader: Manya Tolino

Initial average: 92.08%

Final average: 92.1%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40387

Nominee: Baakari Wilder

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Manya Tolino

Initial average: 93.75%

Final average: 92.1%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40389

Nominee: Mario Harley

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Michelle Puhl Price

Initial average: 95.83%

Final average: 95.8%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40399

Nominee: Woyneab “Wayna” Wondwossen

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Kristin Meyer

Initial average: 95.42%

Final average: 95.4%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40405

Nominee: WombWork Productions, Inc

Category: Tradition

Lead Reader: Raye-Valion Gillette

Initial average: 97.50%

Final average: 95.4%



# Nomination Score

APP 2026-40412

Nominee: Pan Masters Steel Orchestra Inc.

Category: Person/people

Lead Reader: Michelle Puhl Price

Initial average: 91.25%

Final average: 90.8%



# Next steps

- Panelist feedback session