



Special Request Grant Guidelines

DEADLINE: None*

SUPPORT PERIOD: Rolling



Individuals who do not use conventional print may contact the Maryland State Arts Council to obtain this publication in an alternate format. 410-767-6555 or msac.commerce@maryland.gov



For individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
TTY: Maryland Relay 1-800-735-2258 or 711

This publication is available as a PDF file on the MSAC website: www.msac.org.

*Note: For awarded grants, payment may take up to 90 days.

Maryland State Arts Council

Overview

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) 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.

The Council comprises an appointed body of 17 citizens from across the state, 13 of whom are named by the Governor to three-year terms that may be renewed once. Two private citizens and two legislators are appointed by the President of the Senate and by the Speaker of the House. All councilors serve without salary.

To carry out its mission, MSAC awards grants to not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations for ongoing arts programming and projects. MSAC also awards grants to individual artists and provides technical and advisory assistance to individuals and groups. MSAC reserves the right to prioritize grant awards.

MSAC receives its funds in an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland and from grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. MSAC may also receive contributions from private, non-governmental sources.

Authority

MSAC is an agency of the State of Maryland under the authority of the Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts.

Larry Hogan, Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford, Lieutenant Governor

Kelly M. Schulz, Secretary

Thomas B. Riford, Assistant Secretary, Tourism, Film, the Arts, Marketing, and Communication

Mission and Goals

MSAC's mission is to advance 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's most recent strategic plan outlines five goals:

1. **Increase Participation:** Broaden MSAC's constituency, providing avenues designed to increase pathways to engagement.
2. **Provide Intentional Support:** Embrace thoughtful and targeted approaches to serving known and yet to be known MSAC constituents.
3. **Build Capacity:** Work strategically to further build organizational and governance capacity to ensure that MSAC is capable of vigorously delivering on its mission.
4. **Leverage Connections:** Further enhance current relationships and involve additional collaborators, and constituents who will benefit from and advance the work of MSAC.
5. **Bolster Maryland Arts:** Showcase the high caliber, diverse and relevant work of Maryland's artists and arts organizations; their contributions to community vitality and MSAC's role as a catalyst.

Visit the About Us page at msac.org to read the full strategic plan and learn more about implementation actions.

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) and its supporting collaborators are committed to advancing and modeling equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in all aspects of our organizations 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, class, language, and/or ability.

The driving goals of MSAC's granting processes are:

- To yield a greater variety of funded projects
- To eliminate biases that may be found in any part of the granting process (e.g., applications, panelist procedures, adjudication systems)
- To acknowledge positions of privilege while questioning practices, shifting paradigms of status quo arts activities, and taking more risks
- To expand deliberations to include criteria beyond current conventions or Western traditions

Accessibility Policy

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) is committed to making sure all Marylanders can access our programs and services. Everyone is welcome, and all events and activities sponsored by or operated within MSAC are fully accessible both physically and programmatically. MSAC complies with all applicable disability-related statutes and regulations and seeks to ensure meaningful participation by all Marylanders regardless of need or ability.

Feedback Procedures

If guests would like to provide general feedback to MSAC about accessibility for MSAC's programs or programs funded by MSAC, contact the Accessibility Coordinator at 410-767-6476 or email precious.blake@maryland.gov.

Grievance Procedures

For programs or services provided by MSAC

If a program or service operated by MSAC, facilities operated by MSAC, or public meetings conducted by MSAC are inaccessible to persons with a disability or is illegally discriminatory and you want to file a grievance:

- If you have any questions or would like to discuss the situation before filing a grievance, contact the Accessibility Coordinator.
- To file a formal grievance, contact Dan Leonard, Director of EEO & Fair Practices and ADA Coordinator: daniel.leonard@maryland.gov

For programs or services that are not provided by, but are funded by MSAC

- Communicate the grievance to the sponsoring organization.
- If you think your grievance was not handled appropriately by the sponsoring organization, or if you have not received a response from the organization within thirty (30) days, contact MSAC's Accessibility Coordinator to file a formal grievance at 410-767-6476 or precious.blake@maryland.gov.

MSAC will work with you to provide assistance as appropriate.

Accessibility Web Page

MSAC has a dedicated accessibility page on msac.org that includes contact information for the accessibility coordinator, federal and state regulations, the organization's Equity and Justice statement, grievance procedures, an emergency preparedness plan, accommodation policies, and other accessibility resources for artists and arts organizations, and PECS images.

Professional Grants Review Panels

To assist the Council in its decision-making, professionals in the arts are appointed to a variety of grants review panels. The function of panels is to evaluate applications from organizations and individuals and to offer policy recommendations to the Council. Each year, MSAC publishes an open call, and more than 100 individuals serve as grants review panelists for the Council's programs, including Grants for Organizations, Arts in Education, Independent Artist Awards, Public Art Across Maryland, Creativity Grants, Maryland Touring Grants, Maryland Touring Artist Roster, Maryland Traditions grants, and County Arts Development. Anyone wishing to serve should visit msac.org for detailed information and application forms for any open calls.

Staff

MSAC maintains a professional staff to administer its grants programs and Council-initiated programs. Staff members are available to provide technical assistance to the arts community.

Meetings

All Council and Grants Review Panel meetings are open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Act set forth in Title 3 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The dates, times, and locations of Council and Grants Review Panel meetings may be obtained from the MSAC website at www.msac.org or by contacting MSAC offices at (410) 767-6555.

Requirements For Grant Recipients

- Must comply with Title VI, Section 601, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no persons, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination related to, the arts.
- Must comply with Title IV, Section 1681, of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 6101, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex or age.
- Must maintain complete and accurate records of all activities connected with the grant.
- Must have filed a satisfactory reporting with MSAC for the most recently completed fiscal year.
- Must file a final report in alignment with the program requirements. Necessary reporting methods will be provided by MSAC in ample time to meet the deadline. Failure to report may jeopardize any future grant being received by the organization and may result in the organization being required to repay grant funds.
- Must give credit to MSAC in accordance with the [Recognition Guidelines](#) whenever and wherever credit is being given.
- Must notify the appropriate MSAC staff person in writing if a significant change is made in any MSAC-funded program or project.

Accessibility Requirements for Grant Recipients

Grantees must ensure that any programming remains accessible to all, and if needed, conduct programs in accessible venues other than their own organization in order to meet accessibility requirements. Grantees are required to:

1. Comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, as amended.
2. Prohibit discrimination on the basis of: (a) political or religious opinion or affiliation, material status, race, color, creed, sexual orientation, or national origin; of (b) gender expression, sex, or age, except when age or sex constitute a bona fide occupational qualification; or (c) the physical or mental disability of a qualified individual with a disability.
3. Designate an Accessibility Point of Contact to ensure compliance, receive accommodation requests, and document grievances, and publish direct contact information for the Point of Contact to the public.
4. Create and publicly share a grievance procedure to allow stakeholders to address any events or programs that are inaccessible.
5. Upon request, submit documentation of operations and compliance with the above.

Notice: Certain personal information requested by the Department of Commerce is necessary in determining eligibility for grants. Failure to disclose this information may result in the denial of one or all of these benefits or services. Availability of this information for public inspection is governed by the provisions of the Maryland Public Information Act, Title 4 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. This information will be disclosed to appropriate staff of the Department, or to public officials, for purposes directly connected with administration of the program for which its use is intended. Such information is routinely shared with state, federal, or local government agencies.

Appeals Process

MSAC takes great care during the grant review process to ensure fair and equitable distribution of grant monies based on stated criteria. Therefore, dissatisfaction with the denial of an award or with the amount of an award is not sufficient reason for an appeal. However, a grant request may be reconsidered if a procedural impropriety or error has affected its review.

Grounds for such reconsideration are:

- A decision based on review criteria other than those stated in these guidelines.
- A decision based on material provided to panelists and/or Councilors that was substantially incorrect, inaccurate, or incomplete despite the applicant having provided the staff with correct, accurate, and complete application information.

Based on the above, if an applicant believes there is legitimate reason for an appeal, the following steps must be taken:

- The applicant must discuss the problem with the program director who handled the application.
- To pursue an appeal, the applicant must write a letter to the MSAC Executive Director within 60 days following receipt of the grant award or denial letter requesting a reconsideration of the Council's decision and stating the grounds for the request.
- The applicant will receive written notification on the determination of the appeal within 90 days of the receipt of the written request for reconsideration.

Special Request Grant Overview

The purpose of the Special Request Grant is to support needs of arts organizations and programs that may fall outside of the eligibility of MSAC's established grant programs. The Special Request Grant will increase access to and streamline the process of requesting special funds from the Maryland State Arts Council. Applicants may only receive funding for one application per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

The Special Request Grant supports eligible activities of **Arts Organizations or Programs** only.

Deadlines for the Special Request Grant are rolling. The grant period for FY21 is July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021. Applications will be reviewed upon submission on the 5th of each month, and Special Request Grants will be awarded throughout the fiscal year until allocated funding is depleted.

- **Arts Organizations or Arts Programs**
 - Arts organizations or Programs may apply for Special Request Grants to support:
 - Needs that may fall outside of the eligibility of MSAC's established grant programs including to support engagement of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
 - *Note for current GFO (Grants for Organizations) recipients: The proposal cannot provide earned income that would increase the GFO award amounts.*
 - Eligibility
 - An arts organization/program may only receive funding for one application per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).
 - Applicants may only apply once for each request.
 - An arts organization must establish community support through financial contributions and/or partnership agreements specific to the proposed activity. The requested amount from MSAC cannot exceed 50% of the total project budget.
 - The organization/program has one completed and documented fiscal year as of the date of the grant submission with ongoing arts activities.
 - The organization fits one of the following criteria:
 - Has a 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and is incorporated in Maryland
 - Has a 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, and has a significant physical presence in Maryland
 - Is a unit of Government/College/University

Review Criteria

The review of all Special Request Grant applications is based on successful evidence of the answers to the following application questions:

1. What activities and Geographic Area will be supported with this funding?

(Recommended Response: Clear, specific, and thorough explanation of the proposed arts activities with detailed evidence of significant impact to Maryland's arts community(ies).)

2. What is the timeline for the activities?

(Recommended Response: Clear, specific and realistic timeline demonstrating expenditure of funds, arts activity planning, and final implementation.)

3. How will the success of the proposed activities be determined?

(Recommended Response: Clear, specific and realistic indicators of success for the proposed arts activity are communicated as well as a clear process for evaluation of these indicators.)

4. What is the budget for the activities?

(Recommended Response: Financial information is clearly tied to the proposed arts activity and indicates realistic expenses for its implementation.)

Application Process

Smart Simple

MSAC utilizes the cloud-based grant system SmartSimple to accept grant applications. Only successfully submitted online applications will be accepted. Hard copy applications will NOT be accepted.

- Applicants are required to complete and submit their applications by electronic means, including the use of an electronic signature.
- Technical support for SmartSimple is available during regular office hours, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.
- Lost, misdirected or late applications are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Grant Review and Evaluation Process

Applications for Special Request Grants are reviewed by the MSAC staff (requests under \$2,000), MSAC Executive Committee (requests \$2,000 - \$5,000) or the full Council (requests over \$5,000).

Notification

Special Request Grant applications will be reviewed by MSAC within one month of submission and prepared for review by the Executive Committee of the Council or the full Council, as applicable, within two months following submission. After the review, applicants will be notified of the application status, and, if approved, receive a formal grant agreement form to process the grant payment (100% of award amount).

Grants above \$5,000 will be reviewed at the next scheduled Maryland State Arts Council meeting which may impact the timing of review and notification. The Council meets on a bimonthly basis but may occasionally meet on a quarterly schedule.

Reporting Requirements

If awarded a Special Request Grant, the grantee must file a final report online no more than two weeks after the end of the Fiscal Year in which the funded activity occurred (July 15). The report contains a brief summary request as well as some demographic requirements of the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) and Commerce Economic Impact Department. Failure to submit reports may jeopardize the grantee's current and/or future MSAC grants and may result in repayment of grant funds. Before any funds are distributed, grantees must submit any outstanding reports/requirements for any other MSAC grants they have received.

Grant Funds May Not Be Used For: Re-granting; capital improvements or purchases of permanent equipment; acquisition of capital assets; activities for the exclusive benefit of an organization's members; activities that are principally recreational, therapeutic, or rehabilitative; projects chiefly for classroom use or in school activities; activities not open to the general public; scholarships awarded by the applicant organization for its own activities. Grant funds may not be used to make contributions to any persons who hold, or are candidates for elected office; to any political party, organization, or action committee; or in connection with any political campaign or referendum. Grant funds may not be used for any lobbying activities.

Grant Funds May Be Used For: Expenses directly associated with the proposed eligible request.