



Arts Capital FY 2026 Guidelines

DEADLINE: October 3, 2025



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



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TTY: Maryland Relay 1-(800) 735-2258 or 711

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

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Program Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the Arts Capital grant program is to provide eligible organizations with direct access to state capital funding for projects that enhance or create complete, usable, and accessible arts facilities.

The Arts Capital grant provides support for projects that involve the expansion, renovation, or major repair of existing facilities or infrastructure. Projects focusing on the construction of entirely new structures are also eligible, provided they result in a fully functional, accessible, and usable arts facility. Projects that prioritize energy-efficient building methods and technologies, increase facility accessibility for people with disabilities, or expand an organization's programming and ability to serve a broader audience are strongly encouraged to apply.

¹

The Arts Capital Grant program was created through [Article - Economic Development §4-514 in 2024](#), which states, "For each of fiscal years 2024 through 2029, the Governor shall include in the State operating or capital budget an annual appropriation of \$3,000,000 for the Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program"

Grant Cycle

Funding

Arts Capital grants range from \$50,000 - \$500,000.

Arts Capital grants accepts applications annually through fiscal year (FY) 2029, with the possibility of program renewal beyond that year.

Grantees of the Arts Capital grant receive funding in one payment (100% of the award amount) after the grant agreement has been signed by all required parties and the funded project has been approved by the State Board of Public Works (unless otherwise stipulated by the State or Board of Public Works).

Support Period

Arts Capital funds support activities taking place within two years of the fiscal year (FY) in which funds are disbursed.

If awarded, grantees may begin spending and obligating funds after the grant agreement has been approved and fully executed by the Board of Public Works. Grantees agree to spend or obligate all funds by May 1, 2028, or within two years of disbursement. Obligation means that awarded funds are expended, encumbered, or otherwise legally committed to be used, such that returning the unspent funds would cause the grantee legal harm. Grantees unable to complete their proposed project within the support period should notify MSAC staff as early as possible.

¹ A resource to assist with understanding this document is the [MSAC Glossary](#), which provides an overview of terms commonly used in MSAC grant guidelines, on the website, and in other published materials.

Use of Funds

Grant funds may be used for capital projects involving the expansion, renovation, major repair, or new construction of facilities or infrastructure operated by an eligible organization. To qualify, these projects must result in a facility or enhancements with a minimum useful life expectancy of 15 years. Additional parameters include:

- Exterior projects must either result in expanded outdoor cultural or arts-related programming space or infrastructure, or directly improve the building's physical accessibility or visibility.
- New Construction projects must include a project timeline and outcomes that demonstrate the feasibility of delivering a fully usable and operational arts facility within the project's scope and funding support period.
- All project planning and implementation must adhere to local jurisdiction regulations, permissions, and permitting requirements for building-related capital improvements on public or private property. Applicants are responsible for conducting their own research and ensuring compliance.
- Arts Capital funds may only be used for a new project or phase of work. Work that begins before the grant award and Board of Public Works approval is not eligible for funding.
- Up to 15% of the grant award may be allocated to indirect administrative costs related to the proposed project.

Strongly Encouraged Funding Usage:

- Projects that increase access to arts facilities and programming to people with disabilities, people of color, people living below the federal poverty level, or that expand access to new audiences.
- Projects that prioritize energy-efficient building methods and technologies.
- Projects that expand arts services by increasing usable programming space.

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Purchase of a building, land, or vehicles.
- Signage projects that are not connected or physically attached to the facility.
- Design services or purchases of equipment that are not part of a permanent capital improvement.
- Feasibility studies or master plans.
- Non-capital expenses such as research, studies, or pre-development costs unrelated to the capital project.
- Debt Service (i.e., mortgage, rent, or loans).
- Activities for the exclusive benefit of an organization's members.
- Contributions to any persons who hold, or are candidates for, elected office.
- Contributions to any political party, organization, or action committee.
- Activities in connection with any political campaign or referendum.
- Lobbying activities.
- Expenses to further sectarian religious instruction or in connection with the design, acquisition, or construction of any building used, or to be used, as a place for sectarian religious worship or instruction or in connection with any program or department of divinity for any religious denomination.
- Expenses for activities or projects already completed at the time of grant application.
- Expenses for which the applicant has been awarded funds through another MSAC grant program. (i.e., an applicant may only be awarded MSAC funds once for any individual project expense; contact MSAC staff with questions).
- Institutional indirect costs in excess of 15 percent of the total grant amount

Timeline

The grant timelines below are estimates and may change according to application volume, funding changes, constituent needs, staff capacity, or other factors. Subscribe to MSAC communications to be notified of any public information sessions and other program updates by completing [the signup form on our webpage](#).

- Applications
 - Publication: August 18, 2025
 - Deadline: October 3, 2025
- Application review
 - October - December 2025
 - Panel meetings: January 2026
- Notification
 - February 2026
- Reports
 - Funds spent or obligated by: May 1, 2028, or two years after disbursement
 - Final Report Deadline: June 2028 (exact date will be communicated to grantees)

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must meet the requirements listed below:

- Nonprofit organization (i.e., an organization with an IRS-designated 501(c)3 status), incorporated and based in Maryland;
- Operate a physical property in Maryland that is either leased or owned by the applicant organization.
 - Applicants must provide either proof of property ownership or a lease agreement with the property owner showing a minimum of five years remaining at the time of application;
- Have an annual operating budget of less than \$3,000,000; and
- Either:
 - Currently, participate in MSAC's [Grants for Organizations](#) or [County Arts Development](#) programs
 - or**
 - Be open to the public and provide arts-based cultural education or experiences.

Ineligible Organizations include:

- Units of government (e.g., town, city, county, state, federal)
- Colleges or universities (i.e., an established higher education institution in Maryland)
- Schools (i.e., a public or private school serving students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12)
- Fiscally-sponsored organizations
- Auxiliary non-profit organizations (i.e. "Friends of groups", economic development organizations, neighborhood organizations, parent-teacher organizations) whose mission is primarily to benefit and fund specific activities, programs, or facilities that would otherwise be considered ineligible
- Past Arts Capital grantees that either:
 - Have not completed projects for which Arts Capital funding was awarded, including MSAC staff approval of a final report associated with the award
 - Have received \$500,000 in Arts Capital funds within a five-year period*

Ineligible Projects include:

- Capital improvements to properties owned by schools, school systems, colleges, or universities
- Capital Improvements to properties owned by the State of Maryland Department of General Services or the Maryland Stadium Authority

The eligibility guidelines listed above provide an overview only. In some cases, the Board of Public Works, the Department of Commerce, and/or MSAC staff might make eligibility determinations addressing situations not described here but in support of the mission of the agency and the Department of Commerce.

*Applicants that have been awarded Arts Capital funding within the past five years may not request an amount that would cause their total Arts Capital funding to exceed \$500,000 within that five-year period.

Application, Review, and Award

Application and Review

SmartSimple

Applications are submitted via the secure, online grants management system, SmartSimple. Log in or create a free account on the [SmartSimple registration page](#).

- Applicants are required to complete and submit applications by electronic means, including the use of an electronic signature. To make an accessibility request for an alternative submission method, please contact the program director listed in the Contact Information section.
- Technical support for SmartSimple is available. See contact information section.
- Applicants must meet any revision deadlines requested after submission, as specified in writing, or the application will be considered withdrawn.
- By submitting an application to MSAC, whether via electronic means or otherwise, the applicant agrees to allow MSAC to retain records per state and federal document retention laws and policies. Applicant is also agreeing to the Terms and Privacy Policy of SmartSimple as applicable to MSAC.

Panelist service

MSAC convenes panelists, representing a range of arts expertise statewide, to evaluate applications electronically. Panelists are selected via public application process and based on relevant experience and expertise. Opportunities to serve as panelists for various grant programs are posted throughout the year; individuals interested in panel service are encouraged to learn more and apply on MSAC's [Ways to Get Involved](#) webpage.

Application form and review criteria

The grant application is a digital form available in SmartSimple and consisting of prompts requiring dropdown menu selections, fill-in answers, and external file uploads.

Application evaluation is based on review criteria that correspond with the prompts in the application form. The review criteria provide guidance on rating an applicant's response to a prompt.

Application prompts and review criteria are provided below, for reference.

Application Sections and Prompts	Review Criteria
<u>Section 1: Mission Alignment and Project Overview</u>	<u>1A. Alignment with Organizational Goals</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 15 points

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please provide your organization's mission and vision statements and an example of a recent success that reflects your mission. 2. Describe the arts-based cultural education or experiences offered to the public by the organization. 3. Describe the audience or community served by, regularly participates in, or benefits from the arts-based cultural education or experiences the organization offers. 4. Provide a brief one-paragraph synopsis of the proposed capital project and what it will achieve for the applicant organization. (100 words max) Note: The response to this section should focus on a high-level overview that summarizes the request for staff and grant panelists. Information provided in this section may be shared with partner agencies or used for external communications (i.e. press releases and announcements). 5. What specific challenges related to your facilities or physical space will this project address, and how have those challenges impacted your organization (financially, operationally, or programmatically)? Describe the activities you will undertake through this project to address these challenges, and explain how the project will support your mission and/or contribute to your organization's long-term success. 	<p>The application provides a clear, specific, and thorough explanation of how the proposed project will facilitate the organization's mission.</p> <p><u>1B. Identification of Challenges and Future Success</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 15 points The application identifies specific facility-related challenges and provides specific evidence of the significance of these challenges. The application details how the project will directly address the challenges and support the organization's future success.</p>
<p><u>Section 2: Project Plans, Feasibility, and Organizational Impact:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Location: Will the proposed capital project take place at the address listed in the organization's SmartSimple profile? If not, list the address of the location or property where the project will occur. Please explain why the proposed capital project's location differs from that listed for the applicant organization. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the legislative district associated with the project location? b. Latitude and Longitude of the project location 2. Property Ownership: Does the organization currently own or lease the property where the proposed project will occur? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Property is owned by the organization OR The property is leased. <i>Note: If the property is leased: If awarded, an authorized representative</i> 	<p><u>2A. Timeline Development</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The project timeline is clear, specific, and realistic, and includes strong evidence of prior planning and research.</p> <p><u>2B. Budget Preparation and Feasibility</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The budget is detailed, well-researched and clearly tied to successful completion of proposed activities. The budget demonstrates that the project is financially feasible, and leverages non-state funding.</p> <p><u>2C. Organizational Capacity/ Project Team</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application provides clear and specific evidence that the project team has the</p>

<p><i>of the property owner will need to sign the grant agreement. Please provide accurate contact information for that representative below. If the property is owned by a government entity (city, county, etc.), please note that each jurisdiction has its own process for reviewing and approving agreements. In some cases, additional steps—such as review by a council or legal department—may be required before the agreement can be signed. We strongly encourage you to reach out to your property contact early to learn more about their process and any potential timelines.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Property Owner Name/ Entity: c. Property Owner Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN): d. Property Owner Address: e. Property Owner Contact Name: f. Property Owner Contact Email: g. Property Owner Contact Phone: h. Do you have a lease with at least 5 years remaining (at the time of this application)? <i>Note: Per the grant guidelines, applicants with leased properties must have at least 5 years remaining at the time of application. Contact the Program Director with any questions.</i> <p>3. Project Planning Phase: What planning activities were conducted in preparation for this project or grant application? Please include details about involved partners, identified solutions, and any consultations or studies that took place.</p> <p>4. Timeline Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide a detailed description of the proposed capital project and its intended outcomes. Describe how the project may be divided into phases of planning or work. How will the project team ensure the project will be delivered on time and within budget? This narrative should complement the timeline provided in the table below. (In the case of large projects, specify which phase(s) of the overall project the Arts Capital grant will support.) b. Timeline Table: Please use this chart to list the schedule of activities associated with your application, in chronological order. Click the + 	<p>necessary skills, resources, and partnerships to ensure successful completion of the project within the 2-year project period.</p> <p><u>2D. Organizational Sustainability</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application demonstrates a clear understanding of the capital project's operational and financial impacts and presents well-defined strategies to address challenges, adapt to changes, and maximize opportunities for long-term sustainability, including staffing and budget considerations.</p>
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sign to enter each activity and dates in which they are estimated to occur. Dates can be approximate and do not need to be exact/finalized. *Note: The estimated start and end date for all activities should fall within the anticipated project support period: May 1, 2026 - May 1, 2028. Please note that this two-year support period may shift depending on the grant disbursement date. Be sure to scroll to the right to enter the duration for each activity, which should be entered as weeks or months (i.e. 2 weeks or 2 months). The schedule must reflect a project that, upon completion, results in a **new or enhanced, usable, and accessible arts facility.***

5. Project Budget:

- a. What is the total estimated expenses associated with your proposed capital project?
- b. Arts Capital grant amount requested This amount should match the total listed under "Total Expenses - Arts Capital Supported" in the budget chart below. The requested amount must be between \$50,000 and \$500,000.
- c. Estimated Project Budget: Please complete the provided budget chart, providing a clear, detailed and realistic financial plan for income and expenses tied to the proposed project. *Click the "Budget" button in SmartSimple to open the budget chart in a new tab.*
- d. How did you determine that the costs are reasonable? List any quotes obtained.
- e. If the budget for the overall project exceeds the Arts Capital grant amount requested, please indicate how you will leverage non-state funding to complete the project by listing the other income sources as well as the status of those funds as either requested, pending, or secured. *Note: If the budget for the overall project does not exceed the Arts Capital grant amount requested, enter "N/A".*

6. Operational Capacity/ Project Team:

- a. Has the organization successfully completed similar projects in the past? Please describe.
- b. List staff or board members involved in the project and how they will be involved, their relevant experience, and any past pertinent roles.

<p>c. List external partners (consultants, contractors, architects, etc.), how they were selected, and their role in the project.</p> <p>7. Organizational Sustainability: Once completed, what impact will this project have on the organization's long-term operational and financial sustainability? Please note any projected cost savings, new expenses related to facility changes, potential staffing needs, or estimated new operational costs. How is your organization planning for managing those changes?</p>	
<p><u>Section 3: Community Involvement and Impact</u></p> <p>1. Community Voice: Who are your stakeholders for this project? How have you engaged and collected feedback from these community members? How has the community input shaped the project?</p> <p>2. Community Impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how this project will positively impact your immediate and surrounding communities, as well as the county you are located in. Does this project address a critical need in your community? <p>3. Accessibility Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How will this project enhance facility or program accessibility for people living with disabilities? Please specify features, impacted groups, and how representatives from those communities were involved in developing proposed solutions. Does this project improve access to the organization's facility or programs for people of color and individuals living below the federal poverty level? <p>4. Local Workforce Opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Will this project create new employment or workforce development opportunities? Describe your existing inclusive hiring practices. How will you incorporate these or new inclusive practices in hiring contractors, vendors, and any new staff hires resulting from this project? 	<p><u>3A. Community Voice and Impact</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application demonstrates a deep understanding of community needs and presents creative, well-aligned solutions for serving them. It outlines clear and effective outreach strategies showing that the project has been shaped by input from appropriate stakeholders and community members. Detailed evidence is provided on how the project will positively impact the immediate and surrounding communities and county.</p> <p><u>3B. Accessibility Outcomes</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application provides a clear and comprehensive plan for enhancing accessibility for people with disabilities, detailing specific features (e.g., ramps, sensory-friendly spaces, adaptive technology) and identifying the groups impacted (e.g., individuals with mobility or sensory impairments) and how they were actively engaged in the planning process. It also clearly demonstrates how the project will expand access for people of color and individuals living below the federal poverty level, specifying programs or services to be offered and describing their direct, measurable benefits to these communities.</p> <p><u>3C. Local Workforce Opportunities</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application provides clear and specific</p>

	evidence of how the project will create new jobs or workforce development opportunities in the community, and outlines concrete strategies for ensuring these opportunities are accessible through inclusive and equitable hiring practices.
<p><u>Required Attachments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Letters of Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One (1) from the local governing body representing the area in which the project will be located; ○ One (1) from the State Senator or Delegate representing the area in which the project will be located. • Lease/Deed: All applicants must provide one of the following: a signed deed proving property ownership, or a current lease showing at least 5 years remaining on the agreement from the date of the application. • Letter of Support from the Property Owner (Optional): If awarded, property owners are required to sign Arts Capital grant agreements. Applicants applying for projects in leased spaces are strongly encouraged to obtain and upload a letter from the property owner supporting the project and Arts Capital grant application. • Project Imagery (architectural sketches, renderings, imagery of the site, or specific equipment): At least one reference image is required. Larger projects may focus on architectural plans and renderings, small projects may provide an image of where the new equipment or investment (i.e. air handler or accessibility ramp) will be located, and/or a stock image of the equipment to be purchased they intend to purchase and install. We encourage the submission of current project site photos that help illustrate your project description. • Project Quotes or Estimates (Optional): Copies of any quotes or estimates received from vendors during project planning. Note - While not required, we strongly encourage you to provide estimates or quotes that support your project budget submission. 	Not Scored

- **Organizational Budget:** Approved by the organization's Board of Directors and for the organization's current fiscal year as of the date of the application.
- **Financial Statement:** From the organization's most recently completed fiscal year.
- **IRS Form 990:** The most-recently filed version with any accompanying cover sheets and signatures. If the applicant submitted a "Postcard 990-N", a screenshot confirmation can fulfill this requirement.
- **IRS 501(c)(3) Letter of Determination:** Original or duplicate of IRS determination letter.
- **Signed IRS Form W9:** The applicant's address on the submitted W9 must match the address in the Smart Simple grant portal.
- **Most Recently Completed Audit:** This is only required for organizations with annual budgets of \$750,000 and above.

The complete scoring rubric can be found on the program website [here](#).

In addition to responding to the prompts above, all applicants are required to submit a current, signed [W-9 form](#) upon application submission. The address on the W-9 form must match the address entered in SmartSimple, both on the application form and under the SmartSimple account profile. If awarded, grant funds will be made payable to the person or entity indicated on the W-9 and sent to the address listed in the form.

Award

Notification

After application review, applicants will be notified of their status as soon as possible. If the application is selected for funding, it will be listed as 'Pending Approval' in SmartSimple until it is ultimately approved by the Board of Public Works (BPW). First, grant materials for selected projects will be shared with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) to review each capital project and identify any potential historical implications that may require additional oversight. Additionally, the applicant will receive the Grant Agreement Form (GAF) to review and sign. Please note that if the Arts Capital grant project is located in a leased property, the building owner will need to sign the GAF as the "Beneficiary". Also, if the property is owned by a local government entity, a representative of that jurisdiction will need to sign as the "Beneficiary". Applicants may be required to submit additional project information as needed to support the BPW approval process and the execution GAF.

The individual listed as the primary contact in the application will receive all notifications; for organizations, notifications will be sent to the primary contact and any other contacts on the organization's account. Automated notifications from SmartSimple will be sent from noreply@smartsimple.com. Please adjust email notification and

security settings to ensure receipt of these notifications. Check your spam folder if an application submission confirmation notification has not arrived to your inbox.

Disbursement

The disbursement process for the Arts Capital Grant Program is unique and takes substantially longer than other grants administered by MSAC. The Arts Capital disbursement process begins when the GAF is fully executed and gains approval from the BPW. Applicants can expect a minimum of 6 months from the notification of grant status to receiving disbursement of your grant funds.

Grantees are encouraged to sign up to receive disbursement electronically via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Those with existing state vendor profiles can sign up for EFT disbursements by completing the relevant forms on the [Comptroller's EFT for Vendors site](#). Typically, those who have previously received MSAC grants have an existing state vendor profile.

New grant recipients will receive grant funds via check made payable to the name and address indicated on the grantee's W-9. They will be able to sign up for EFT for any subsequent disbursements.

Disbursement Status

Grantees are encouraged to deposit grant checks immediately. The grantee is responsible for following up with MSAC staff if disbursement is not received during the fiscal year in which it was approved by the BPW. If the disbursement was lost in transit, the State of Maryland is able to re-issue disbursement. However, MSAC is unable to guarantee that funds will be available for re-issue after the end of the fiscal year in which a grant was approved.

If the grantee owes any Maryland state taxes or other state liabilities, GAD may intercept grant disbursements and hold them until the liability is resolved. Should this be the case, GAD will send written notice of this directly to the grantee via mail. MSAC is not provided further information, as it is confidential. Grantees can find more information and discuss options with the Central Collections Unit at 410.767.1642. Additionally, information on held disbursements can be found by creating an account on [GAD's Online Service Center](#) site.

Changes in Funded Activities

If there are significant changes to the proposed activities for which a grant has been awarded, the grantee is responsible for contacting relevant staff; any proposed changes must be shared and approved in writing before proceeding. Staff will help ensure that any proposed changes remain in alignment with the program guidelines, however there is no guarantee that proposed changes will be approved. Any approved changes that result in timeline extensions that affect the final report deadline will be reflected in SmartSimple.

Reporting

All grantees must file a final report in SmartSimple. The report will be added to the grantee's SmartSimple profile as soon as the GAF is fully executed.

The final report deadline for Arts Capital grants is due June 2028 (exact date will be communicated to grantees).

The final report form collects information about the grantee and grant activities, including optional demographic information, data for the National Endowment for the Arts, summary of activities and use of grant funds, and other program-specific information and documents, as relevant.

Grant funds may not be used to offset grantees' state liabilities; as such, grantees whose grant disbursements were intercepted by GAD due to state liabilities, as outlined in the Disbursements section above, are not exempt from submitting required reports. Grantees must either return the funds to MSAC or follow through with their proposed grant activities and submit reports accordingly.

Failure to submit reports may jeopardize current MSAC grants, eligibility for future MSAC grants, and may result in the required return of grant funds. Before any funds are distributed, grantees are also required to submit any outstanding reports or satisfy obligations for any other MSAC grants they have received.

Ineligible and Declined Applications

Applications that do not receive funding generally fall into one of two categories: ineligible or declined.

An application is marked ineligible if it is not complete or does not comply with the eligibility requirements of a particular grant program. An application can be marked ineligible at any time during the review process.

After an application is considered eligible, it may be declined for several reasons. An application may be declined due to funding allocation limitations at the time, or for the following reasons:

- Required information is incomplete or insufficient to make an award determination
- There are material inconsistencies between the application and the organization's actual operations
- There are significant operational, financial, or other circumstances that reasonably suggest the applicant is, or may become, unable to use the grant funds in alignment with the grant guidelines and agreement.

Application Feedback

Applicants may request feedback on their applications—whether ineligible, declined, or approved for funding—by submitting a feedback request form, a link to this form will be provided in grant notification emails.

Contact Information

MSAC staff offer technical assistance when feasible throughout the application process. This includes professional development related to grant writing and program requirements; one-on-one conversations; and tailored feedback.

For more information on the Arts Capital grant application process, contact:

- Program and application strategy assistance
 - Abby Neyenhouse, Arts Capital Program Director
 - abby.neyenhouse@maryland.gov
 - (443) 904-6338
- Grants logistics and technological assistance
 - Catherine Teixeira, Grants Director
 - catherine.teixeira@maryland.gov
 - (443) 799-7256
 - Tammy Oppel, Grants Management Associate
 - tammy.oppel@maryland.gov
 - (443) 326-5555
 - Kirk Amaral Snow, Grants Management Associate
 - kirk.amaralsnow@maryland.gov
 - (410) 767-8865

MSAC Overview

Description

MSAC is an appointed body of 17 Maryland citizens, 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 nonprofit arts organizations, arts programs, and individual artists, and provides application assistance, professional development, and other resources to individuals and groups. MSAC reserves the right to prioritize grant awards.

MSAC receives its funds from an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland; grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; and, on occasion, 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.

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lieutenant Governor
Harry Coker, Jr., Secretary of Commerce
Steven Skerritt-Davis, Executive Director, MSAC

Staff

MSAC maintains professional staff to administer its programs. For staff listing, visit the [MSAC staff page](#).

Meetings

Council and panelist 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 panelist meetings may be obtained on the [Meeting Notices page](#), or by contacting MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov or (410) 767-6555.

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 strategic plan outlines five goals:

1. Access: Bolster access to arts experiences and resources
2. Awareness: Amplify the stories of Maryland's arts sector and the value of public support
3. Connection: Foster networks within and beyond the arts sector
4. Equity: Cultivate a thriving arts ecosystem centered in equity
5. Leadership: Commit to a culture of care and innovation

Read [MSAC's full strategic plan](#) to 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. 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, disability, class, language, and/or ability.

The driving goals of MSAC's grant 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

MSAC is committed to making sure all Marylanders can access its programs and services. Everyone is welcome, and all MSAC events and activities must be 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. See the "Grantee Requirements" section below for more information on the accessibility-related expectations of all grantees.

Accessibility Web Page

MSAC has a dedicated [accessibility page](#) available on our website. It 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, other accessibility resources for artists and arts organizations, and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) images.

Language Access

MSAC offers language accessibility services. Services include making translations of grant materials, remote American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, subtitles, braille translation, translation into languages other than English, and more.

En Español/Spanish: MSAC pone a disposición servicios de traducción y accesibilidad de idiomas. Contacte msac.commerce@maryland.gov para más información.

中文普通话/Mandarin Chinese: 马里兰州艺术委员会(MSAC)提供翻译和语言无障碍服务。请联系 msac.commerce@maryland.gov 了解更多信息。

한국어/Korean: MSAC 는 한국어 지원을 돕고 있습니다. 자세한 문의사항은 msac.commerce@maryland.gov 로 연락 주시기 바랍니다.

For all other languages, please contact MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov for more information.

Feedback

If constituents would like to provide general feedback about the accessibility of programs funded or produced by MSAC, contact MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov or (410) 767-6555.

Grievances

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 a constituent wishes to file a grievance, see the following steps.

- For questions or discussion prior to filing a grievance, contact MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov or (410) 767-6555
- To file a formal grievance, contact Cathy Dombroski, Director of Human Resources for the Department of Commerce, at catherine.dombroski1@maryland.gov

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

- Communicate the grievance to the sponsoring organization
- For situations in which a constituent feels a grievance was not handled appropriately by the sponsoring organization, or if a response from the organization has not been provided within 30 days, file a formal grievance by contacting MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov or (410) 767-6555

MSAC will work with constituents to provide assistance as appropriate.

Grantmaking

Review Panels

To assist MSAC in its decision-making, Maryland residents with expertise in the arts are selected to serve on a variety of grant application review panels. The function of panels is to evaluate applications from organizations and individuals. Each year, MSAC publishes several open calls, and approximately 150 individuals serve as panelists for MSAC grant programs, including Grants for Organizations, Arts in Education, Independent Artist Awards, Public Art Across Maryland, Creativity Grants, Presenting and Touring, Professional Development Opportunity, Folklife Network, Folklife Apprenticeships, Heritage Awards, Capacity Building, Arts Capital, and County Arts Development. In addition, MSAC occasionally releases calls for residents to serve as program editors evaluating grantmaking policies and procedures, and jurors or judges for various arts activities supported by MSAC. Anyone wishing to serve is encouraged to visit MSAC's [Ways to Get Involved page](#) for detailed information and links to application forms for any open calls.

Constituents may also get involved with MSAC by creating a profile on the [Arts Directory](#), an online resource for raising the profile of Maryland artists and arts organizations; or by attending regularly scheduled virtual and in-person professional development sessions posted on [MSAC's Eventbrite page](#).

Appeals

MSAC strives to ensure fair and equitable distribution of grant monies based on stated criteria. Therefore, dissatisfaction with the denial or amount of an award is not sufficient reason for an appeal. However, an application 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 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 notification; the letter should (1) request a reconsideration of the decision, (2) state the grounds for the request, and (3) certify that the applicant first discussed the problem with the program director and provide the date and time the discussion occurred.

The applicant will receive written notification on the determination of the appeal within 90 days of the receipt of the written request for reconsideration.

Grantee requirements

All MSAC grantees 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
- Comply with Title IX, Section 1681 et seq. of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Comply with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 6101-6107
- Comply with relevant State and federal laws
- Maintain complete and accurate records of all activities connected with the grant
- Give credit to MSAC in accordance with published [recognition guidelines](#), whenever and wherever credit is being given
- Notify the appropriate MSAC staff person in writing if a significant change is made in any MSAC-funded program or project

In addition to the requirements above, all MSAC 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:

- Comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, as amended
- Prohibit discrimination on the basis of: (a) political or religious opinion or affiliation, marital status, race, color, creed, sexual orientation, or national origin; or (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
- Designate an Accessibility Point of Contact to ensure compliance, receive accommodation requests, and document grievances, as well as publish direct contact information for the Point of Contact to the public
- Create and publicly share a grievance procedure to allow stakeholders to address any events or programs that are inaccessible
- Upon request, submit documentation of operations and compliance with the above

Disclosure of personal information

Certain personal information requested by MSAC's parent agency, 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 benefits or services, including funding, provided by MSAC. 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 may be shared with state, federal, and local governments if legally required.