



Grants for Artists FY 2027 Guidelines

DEADLINE: November 20, 2026



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 on our website: www.msac.org.

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Program Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the Grants for Artists (GFA) program is to contribute to the sustainability of artists' livelihoods by providing funds that support working or living expenses.

The GFA program aims to provide artists with holistic support rather than support that focuses solely on a particular product or project-based needs. A primary goal of the program is to strengthen the creative workforce, which is a vital part of Maryland's economy and culture.¹

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) reserves the right to revise these guidelines. This can include making policy or procedure updates, adjusting the timeline, and adding updated, new, or clarifying information.

Grant Cycle

Funding

GFA grants are \$2,500 and are available annually.

Grantees of the GFA program receive funding all at once approximately 6-8 weeks after a fully executed grant agreement.

Support Period

GFA funds support activities taking place between the grant notification date (anticipated in February 2027) to August 15, 2027.

Grantees agree to spend or obligate all funds by August 15, 2027. Obligation of funds 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.

Use of Funds

Grant funds may be used for artists' working or living expenses with a few restrictions.

Eligible working expenses include:

- administrative costs
- consultant fees
- contractual services
- entry fees
- equipment or equipment rental
- exhibition costs
- financial tools or planning
- studio or workspace costs (including capital expenses)
- materials and supplies
- marketing costs
- payment to technical crews, fabricators, or collaborators
- professional memberships

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.

- performance costs
- production costs
- submission fees for grant or residency applications
- travel and transportation
- website development

Eligible living expenses include:

- childcare or caregiving services
- food
- housing
- home improvement projects or capital expenses
- insurance
- medical costs
- personal vehicles and transportation
- students loans
- utilities

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Activities performed as part of regular, continuing employment with an entity (e.g., non-profit organizations, LLCs, institutions, government agencies, etc.)
- 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 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)

Timeline

The timelines provided below are estimates. Processing, notification, and payment timelines 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: October 19, 2026
 - Deadline: November 20, 2026
- Application review
 - December 2026 - January 2027
- Notification
 - mid February 2027
- Reports
 - Deadline: August 15, 2027

Program Updates

Grants for Artists is an annual grant program. The following program updates were made between the FY26 and FY27 grant cycles:

- Previous GFA awardees must wait 2 years to re-apply, For example an awardee in FY 2026 must wait until FY 2029 to re-apply.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be an independent artist, an artist making work unaffiliated with an institution or an organization, and meet the requirements listed below.

Applicants must be:

- Artists who currently engage in a sustained artistic practice in a discipline supported by MSAC, including forms of dance, music, visual art, public art, folk and traditional arts, media arts, literary arts, and theatre.
 - For GFA, “sustained” means that the artistic practice is ongoing, active, and intentional over time, rather than occasional, a hobby, or solely historical.
 - For GFA, examples of a “sustained” artistic practice includes, **but are not limited to**:
 - Representation by a gallery, promoter, or agent for your creative arts work
 - Work published in collections, exhibitions, programmed events, and/or by an arts organizations (in the last 5 years)
 - Publication credits for your work in film, theatre, dance, literature, etc. from the last 5 years
 - Choreography for programs or festivals
 - Selection by an arts organization to take part in a showcase
 - Works produced and/or commissioned
 - Performance in an arts venue
 - Participation and creative contribution in an exhibition, festival, or arts event
 - Publications such as books, poetry, films, songs, and albums
 - Participation in a residency program
 - Studio space or recording studio (rented or owned)
 - Purchasing resources for your creative practice, for example: purchase of instruments, sewing machines, art supplies, etc. (in the last 5 years)
- Maryland residents who are 18 or older. A Maryland resident is defined as someone owning or renting residential property in Maryland six months prior to the application’s submission and throughout the funded project or program. Those experiencing homelessness are encouraged to reach out to MSAC staff for details on how to apply

Applicants must *not* be:

- Enrolled in any matriculated high school, undergraduate or graduate degree program at the time of application and through June 30, 2027.
- Recipient of a FY 2025 and FY 2026 GFA award. Previous GFA grantees must wait 2 fiscal years from their last award to re-apply to GFA. For example, a grantee receiving funds in FY 2026, must wait until FY 2029; a grantee receiving funds in FY 2025 must wait until FY 2028.
- Collaborative Groups, though members of collaborative groups may apply individually, provided they meet eligibility requirements.
- An arts organization or arts program (e.g., non-profit organizations, LLCs, institutions, government agencies, etc.)

The eligibility guidelines listed above provide an overview only. In some cases, 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.

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, submit, and sign applications digitally. 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
- After submission, applicants must meet any revision deadlines as specified in writing, Failure to meet such deadlines will result in the application being considered withdrawn
- By submitting an application to MSAC the applicant agrees to allow MSAC to retain records per state and federal document retention laws and policies. The applicant is also agreeing to the Terms and Privacy Policy of SmartSimple as applicable to MSAC

Application form and eligibility 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.

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

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

Application prompt	Review criteria
<u>General Eligibility:</u> Are you a Maryland resident (i.e., have you owned or rented residential property in Maryland six months prior to this application's submission), and are you 18 years of age or older?	Eligible: "Yes" Response Ineligible: "No" Response
<u>General Eligibility:</u> Are you enrolled in a degree-granting high school, undergraduate, or graduate program?	Eligible: "No" Response Ineligible: "Yes" Response
<u>General Eligibility:</u> Are you applying for this grant in support of activities that are affiliated with or on behalf of an entity (e.g., nonprofit organization, LLC, institution, government agency, etc.)?	Eligible: "No" Response Ineligible: "Yes" Response
<u>General Eligibility:</u> Were you awarded the Grants for Artists grant in 2025?	Eligible: "No" Response Ineligible: "Yes" Response
<u>Artist Details:</u> Select the discipline(s) or category that best fits your work as an independent artist.	Eligible: Applicant indicates and describes a sustained artistic practice within an artistic discipline supported by MSAC.
<u>Artist Details:</u> Include a brief description of your work as a sustained independent artist, the type(s) of art you create, and your ongoing engagement in your artistic practice.	Ineligible: Applicants may be considered ineligible if they indicate a practice that is not within an artistic discipline supported by MSAC; describe a practice that is occasional, a hobby, or solely historical in

In your response, include specific details on your sustained practice and any public engagements with your artistic practice the past 5 years (on or after November 20, 2021).	nature; provide no evidence of sustained creative practice outside of instructional settings; or provide incomplete answers and description of their sustained independent artist practice.
<p>Artist Details: Submit two distinct work samples of your original work that reflect your current, sustained practice as an independent artist. Submissions must include a brief description of your role in the provided work sample and how the sample reflects your described artistic practice and creative outputs. Samples may be of completed works created within the last five years of the application deadline (on or after November 20, 2021) or works in progress.</p> <p>If submitting an audio or video sample, please include the start and end times for the portion the applicant wants reviewed (up to 3 min).</p> <p>Additional work sample guidance can be found after this table.</p>	<p>Eligible: Works submitted are in accepted formats, complete with the required description, and the work is either in- progress or completed within the past 5-years.</p> <p>Ineligible: Work is not in the required format, does not demonstrate or describe their creative outputs, not original to the applicant, the description is incomplete or is not clearly representative of the practice described, or one or more of the submissions was created or was a work in progress over five years ago (older than November 20, 2021). Please refer to the Work Sample Submission Requirements section for guidance on the eligibility of works utilizing AI.</p>
<p>Financial Information</p> <p>Indicate how you would use GFA funding.</p>	<p>Eligible: Applicant includes a spending plan consisting of allowable expenditures.</p> <p>Ineligible: Applicant spending plan is either missing, unclear, or unallowable per program guidelines.</p>

In addition to responding to the prompts above, all applicants are required to submit a current, complete, and 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 are disbursed to the person or entity indicated on the W-9 and sent to the address listed in the form.

Work Sample Submission Requirements

The application will include the following prompt:

Submit two distinct work samples of your original work that reflect your current, sustained practice as an independent artist. Samples may be of completed works created within the past five years or works in progress. If your website link shows multiple samples, specifically describe the two work samples you would like reviewed.*

*For GFA, original work refers to work that reflects the applicant's own creative practice and artistic choices, whether as an artwork or as the interpretation or performance, of existing works, compositions, choreography, or traditional practice. Submitted creative outputs must not be copies or simple reproductions of another artist's work, though they may incorporate existing source material if it is substantially transformed to create something new. Applicants will be asked to certify that all submitted work samples represent and clearly demonstrate their own original creative outputs and contributions.

Work Sample Formats

Work samples may be submitted as direct website links or uploaded files.

Direct Website Links

Acceptable links must lead to work samples that are clearly attributed to the applicant and publicly accessible (no login required). Eligible links include:

- An artist website or online portfolio
- An independent artist profile listing (such as the [Baker Artist Portfolios](#) or MSAC's [Presenting and Touring Roster](#) or [Public Art Roster](#))
- For performing artists, direct links to work samples hosted on platforms such as YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud, or similar

Please note: social media accounts (such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, etc.) or any site requiring a log in are not accepted as work samples.

File Uploads

Acceptable file formats:

- Images - JPG/JPEG/PNG
- Audio - MP4 or MOV
- Video - MP3 or WAV
- PDF or Word Document

Maximum file size: 500 MB per file

If submitting audio or video files, please edit or shorten files as needed to meet the size limit.

To ensure smooth upload and review, please follow these file-naming guidelines:

- Use only letters and numbers (no punctuation, symbols, or special characters)
- Do not use accents or non-Latin characters (e.g., è, Ø, ü, ñ)

Work Sample Selection

Applicants are encouraged to select work samples that best represent their artistic practice. Examples may include:

- Visual documentation: Images of artwork, installations, or exhibitions
- Audio or video recordings: Excerpts from performances, rehearsals, compositions, or other time-based work, must include the start and end times for the portion the applicant wants reviewed.
- Written materials: Excerpts, scripts, scores, or documentation of literary or dramatic work
- Teaching artists should include original work that demonstrates creative practice.

Excerpts are acceptable and encouraged for longer works.

Information Required For Each Work Sample

- Work Sample Descriptions (in field provided - up to 40 words)
Briefly describe your role in the work sample provided and how this sample reflects your described artistic practice. For collaborative projects, identify your specific contribution. Audio or Video descriptions must include the start and end times for the portion the applicant wants reviewed (up to 3 min).
- Work Sample Date (in field provided in format of Year/Month/Date)

With each submission, include the date the work was completed/performed. For works in progress, indicate the last date you work on this piece. Submitted samples must have been created within the last five years of the application deadline (on or after November 20, 2021).

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Work Samples

Applicants must disclose whether generative AI was used to develop, create, or refine any submitted work samples. A checkbox will be provided with each sample asking if the applicant used AI to develop any of the submitted work samples. If checked, additional fields/questions will appear that the applicant will need to respond to.

If AI was used, applicants must answer the following questions:

- *What AI tool(s) were used in the creation of the work depicted in the sample?*
- *Describe how the AI tools were used in this work and explain the artistic decisions and creative actions you took to shape, alter, or transform that material into the final artwork.*

Samples of work created with the support of AI tools are eligible for consideration when AI supports the artist's vision and creative actions, and the artist retains primary creative control. Work samples entirely generated by AI are not accepted. If the applicant's artistic practice involves AI as a creative tool and AI was used in the submitted work samples, applicants must respond to the additional prompts to help MSAC staff understand the applicant's contributions to the artwork and evaluate eligibility.

Selection Process

Because GFA support is based primarily on eligibility, as described above, application review is completed by MSAC staff. Once eligibility review is complete, staff calculate the percentage of eligible applications submitted by applicants residing in each county and jurisdiction. Consistent with the legislative intent of expanding access of the residents of the State to the arts, grants are allocated proportionally based on the number of eligible applications from applicants residing in each county or jurisdiction. For example, if 10% of all eligible applications are submitted from Worcester County, approximately 10% of the grants awarded will be to applicants from Worcester County. Grantees are selected at random, from within each county or jurisdiction's pool of eligible applicants.

Award

Notification

After application review, applicants are notified of their status as soon as possible. If the application is approved, the applicant will receive instructions to access a Grant Agreement Form (GAF) to review and sign electronically via SmartSimple.

The individual listed as the primary contact in the application receives all notifications; for organizations, notifications are sent to the primary contact and any other contacts on the organization's account. Automated notifications from SmartSimple are 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 does not arrive in your inbox.

Disbursement

The grant funds are provided in a disbursement, which is a distribution from a dedicated fund for the specific purposes outlined in your application. The disbursement process begins when the GAF is fully executed,

meaning that both the grantee and MSAC staff have signed the agreement. The grantee receives notification when the agreement is fully executed from SmartSimple. This notification includes instructions on how to access a copy of the fully executed GAF in the grantee's SmartSimple profile.

The grantee receives the grant disbursement approximately six to eight weeks from the full execution of the GAF. More information on MSAC's disbursement processing timeline can be found on the [Payment Process](#) webpage.

MSAC grants are generally considered taxable income. Disbursements are issued directly by the State of Maryland, not by MSAC. No Social Security, state, or federal income taxes are withheld. Individuals receiving grant awards of more than \$600 will be mailed a 1099 form from the State of Maryland. This form will arrive after the end of the calendar year in which the grant was paid. To request or access your 1099 electronically, register and log in on the General Accounting Division (GAD) [Online Service Center site](#). Specific questions regarding the taxability of your award should be directed to the IRS, the Office of the Maryland Comptroller, or your tax advisor.

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. If the grantee does not receive grant funds within eight weeks of notification of a fully executed GAF, the grantee must contact MSAC staff to inquire about disbursement status. If the disbursement was lost in transit, the State of Maryland is able to re-issue disbursement. However, the grantee must contact MSAC staff within the fiscal year in which the grant was awarded. MSAC cannot guarantee that funds will be available for re-issue after the end of the fiscal year in which a grant was awarded.

If a grantee owes any Maryland state taxes or other state liabilities, GAD may intercept grant disbursements and hold them until the liability is resolved. GAD will send written notice 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 activities for which a grant has been awarded, the grantee is responsible for contacting relevant staff. 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. SmartSimple will be updated to reflect approved extensions to reporting deadlines.

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 GFA grants is August 15, 2027.

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, use of grant funds, and other relevant program-specific information or documents.

Grant funds may not be used to offset grantees' state liabilities. Grantees whose funds were intercepted by GAD 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 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.

An application is declined if it is eligible but was not selected for funding through GFA's random selection process. The level of MSAC's funding does not allow for the funding of all eligible applications.

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 Grants for Artists Program application process, contact:

- Program and application strategy assistance
 - Hadassah St. Hubert, Program Director
 - hadassah.sthubert@maryland.gov
 - 443-571-0038
- 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
 - (410) 326-5555
 - Kirk Amaral Snow, Grants Management Associate
 - kirk.amaralsnow@maryland.gov
 - (443) 680-3449

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 pillars and 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 ensuring access to its programs and services. Everyone is welcome, and all events and activities sponsored by or operated within MSAC are accessible both physically and programmatically. MSAC is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring equal opportunity, accessibility, and non-discrimination for individuals with disabilities. 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, access resources, accommodations requests, and complaint procedures.

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.

Complaints

For programs or services provided by MSAC:

For inquiries related to MSAC operated programs or services, individuals may first reach out to the [Office of EEO and Fair Practices at the Department of Commerce](#) for an informal discussion. Other related inquiries may include failure of MSAC to accommodate individuals with disabilities, harassment, bullying, and failure to provide accommodations to individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

While the informal process is designed to facilitate a sincere and prompt resolution, it is not a substitution for a filed complaint of discrimination. Individuals opting to initiate a formal complaint may proceed directly to the formal process if preferred. Participants may also choose to transition from the informal process to the formal complaint process at any time.

- **For an Informal Discussion:** Contact Elaine McNeil, Director of EEO, ADA and Fair Practices at (410) 767-6470 or ofp.commerce@maryland.gov.
- **To File a Formal Complaint of Unfair and/or Unlawful Treatment with the Department of Commerce/MSAC:** See the information on [Commerce's EEO and Fair Practices Page](#) regarding the complaint procedures and submit your complaint to ofp.commerce@maryland.gov.

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

MSAC encourages individuals who believe they experience discrimination in programs and services provided by organizations funded by MSAC to reach out to the sponsoring organization first with their complaint. The individual may also reach out to MSAC's Accessibility Coordinator and Grants Director to inform MSAC of the complaint of discrimination. MSAC notifies organizations that receive funding through MSAC that they must comply with all applicable federal and State non-discrimination laws and regulations. Submitting a complaint with MSAC regarding an organization receiving funding from MSAC is not a replacement or a prerequisite to filing a complaint with the appropriate governmental agency or a court.

Complaints may be submitted to the following external agencies:

- Complaints against MSAC-funded organizations and programs, file with [Maryland Commission on Civil Rights](#) (MCCR)
- Complaints against arts organizations and cultural organizations receiving federal funding, filed with the [National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Civil Rights](#).
- Complaints against places of public accommodation, such as private cultural organizations, may be filed with the [Department of Justice](#).

Participation in a complaint process is protected from retaliation under all circumstances, and MSAC complies with all applicable federal and State laws prohibiting retaliation against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

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](#) webpage 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; 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
- 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.