



## Network Technical Assistance FY2021 Guidelines

**DEADLINE: Rolling through April 1, 2021**  
**SUPPORT PERIOD: July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021**

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This publication is available as a PDF on the MSAC website: [www.msac.org](http://www.msac.org).

# 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 page at [msac.org](http://msac.org) to read the full strategic plan and learn more about implementation actions.

## Equity/Accessibility Statement

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) celebrates our state's diversity and promotes the role of the arts to connect people, bridge our differences, and inspire an appreciation of our shared humanity. Because the arts have the power to transform individuals and communities, MSAC is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our organization and across all the communities of our state, and in supporting our partners in modeling the same commitment.

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

## 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](http://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](http://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 comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, as amended.
- 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.

## 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.

# Overview

## Purpose

This program supports organizational development for Maryland Arts & Entertainment Districts and grantees of MSAC's County Arts Development and Folklife Network grant programs.

## Description

The intention of the Network Technical Assistance grant is to support organizational development activities beyond the scope of regular activities funded by Arts & Entertainment District Operating Support, County Arts Development, or Folklife Network grants. Organizational development is defined as any effort that supports the stability, visibility, and effectiveness of an organization. This broad definition means that organizational development looks different based on each organization's unique needs. Contact relevant MSAC staff to discuss typical activities funded by Network Technical Assistance grants.

## Grant Cycle

### Funding amount

Grants are between \$500 and \$2,000 and are disbursed based on applicant requests. Grants may fund the entirety or a portion of an applicant's proposed organizational development activity.

### Support Period

July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

### Application deadline and grant period

Eligible activities must begin or take place prior to July 1, 2021. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis beginning October 1, 2020. The final deadline for FY 2021 applications is April 1, 2021 at 5 pm.

## Eligibility

Eligible applicants are Maryland Arts & Entertainment District management entities and current grantees of the County Arts Development and Folklife Network grant programs. Further eligibility guidelines are below:

- Applicants must have no past-due reports for MSAC grants.
- Organizations may receive no more than one Network Technical Assistance grant per granting cycle.
- Interested applicants must schedule a 30-minute meeting with relevant MSAC staff before starting an application.

All activities described in project-based application submissions to any funding program at MSAC must demonstrate alignment with the [Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery](#) plan to be considered eligible.

## Contact Information

MSAC Staff offer the following assistance throughout the application process:

- Help with technical or logistical questions about the grant application process
  - Dana Parsons, Director, Grants and Professional Development:  
[dana.parsons@maryland.gov](mailto:dana.parsons@maryland.gov)
- Help with application strategy and content:

- Arts and Entertainment Districts Staff
  - Steven Skerritt-Davis, Deputy Director: [steven.skerritt-davis@maryland.gov](mailto:steven.skerritt-davis@maryland.gov)
  - Arthur Brown, III, Program Associate: [arthur.brown1@maryland.gov](mailto:arthur.brown1@maryland.gov)
- County Arts Development Staff
  - Steven Skerritt-Davis, Deputy Director: [steven.skerritt-davis@maryland.gov](mailto:steven.skerritt-davis@maryland.gov)
  - Arthur Brown, III, Program Associate: [arthur.brown1@maryland.gov](mailto:arthur.brown1@maryland.gov)
- Maryland Traditions Staff
  - Chad Buterbaugh, State Folklorist: [chad.buterbaugh@marland.gov](mailto:chad.buterbaugh@marland.gov)
  - Ryan Koons, Folklife Specialist, [ryan.koons@maryland.gov](mailto:ryan.koons@maryland.gov)
- Technical Assistance with MSAC's grant system, Smart Simple:
  - Tammy Oppel, Grants Management Associate: [tammy.oppel@maryland.gov](mailto:tammy.oppel@maryland.gov)

# Application Process, Review, and Reporting

## Application Process

### SmartSimple

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, a minimum of 90 days prior to the start of the proposed arts activities. (e.g. if the proposed start date of an activity is December 1, the Network Technical Assistance application must be received by MSAC no later than September 1.)
- Technical support for SmartSimple is available during regular office hours, 8:00 AM through 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.
- Lost, misdirected or late applications are the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- **Applicants must meet all revision deadlines after submission, as specified in writing, or the application will be withdrawn.**

### Matching

There is no matching requirement for Network Technical Assistance grant funds. The full grant amount is disbursed upon approval of an application.

### Use of Funds

Grant funds may be used for:

- Fees for professional consultants/consulting firms providing technical assistance services in organizational development areas such as fundraising, strategic planning, etc.
- Other costs associated with long-term planning (e.g., board or staff retreats, etc.)
- Contracted services to marketing, media production, public relations, or other agencies assisting with increasing the organization's visibility
- Other activities supporting an organization's long-term stability, visibility, or effectiveness

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Capital improvements or purchases of permanent equipment
- International conferences or travel out-of-state
- Artistic programs or activities funded by an Arts & Entertainment District, County Arts Development, or Folklife Network grant
- Operational expenses funded by an Arts & Entertainment District, County Arts Development, or Folklife Network grant

## Review

### Review criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to applicant's organizational development
- Applicant's capacity to carry out the proposed activity
- Financial feasibility of the proposed activity

## Evaluation

MSAC staff review and evaluate all applications. Staff assigned to evaluate applications will have content and technical expertise in the Arts & Entertainment District, County Arts Development, or Folklife Network program.

If multiple applications receive the same score but budget restrictions prevent all applications with that score from being funded, final selections will be based on which applications most closely align with the five published goals of MSAC's current Strategic Plan, as interpreted by staff. The goals are: Increase Participation, Provide Intentional Support, Build Capacity, Leverage Connections, and Bolster Maryland Arts.

## Notification and Payment

All applicants will be notified by email regarding the outcome of their application. 100% of grant funds will be disbursed upon completion of required documents.

Applications are reviewed by program staff as they are received. Applicants will be notified of the grant status within three weeks of submission, and, if approved, receive a formal grant agreement form to process the grant payment (100% of award amount).

The grantee will receive payment 6-8 weeks from the date of receipt of the fully executed agreement.

To receive grant payments via direct deposit, please follow the instructions and complete the required forms from the [Comptroller of Maryland](#).

## Reporting

### Final Report

If awarded a Network Technical Assistance Grant, the recipient 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 request for a brief summary, as well as data required by the National Endowment for the Arts. For a complete list of Final Report Requirements, please refer to the website [here](#).

Failure to submit reports may jeopardize current and/or future MSAC grants and may result in the required return of grant funds to the State of Maryland.