Folklife Network
FY2021 Guidelines

DEADLINE: May 1, 2020
SUPPORT PERIOD: July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

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 file on the MSAC website: www.msac.org.
Maryland State Arts Council

Overview
The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) encourages and invests in the advancement of the arts for all Marylanders. Its grants and programs support artists and arts organizations in their pursuit of artistic excellence, ensure the accessibility of the arts to all citizens, and promote statewide awareness of arts resources and opportunities. Programs are aimed at all Maryland residents regardless of political or religious opinion or affiliation, marital status, race, color, creed, age, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or geographic location within the State.

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. The MSAC also awards grants to individual artists, and provides technical and advisory assistance to individuals and groups. The Council reserves the right to prioritize grants 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. The Council 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 | Ben Wu, Deputy Secretary
Thomas B. Riford | Assistant Secretary, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts

Mission Statement and Goals
The mission of MSAC is to encourage and invest in the advancement of the arts for the people of our state. The goals of the Council are to support artists and arts organizations in their pursuit of artistic excellence, to ensure the accessibility of the arts to all citizens and to promote statewide awareness of arts resources and opportunities.

The MSAC’s programs are aimed at benefiting all Maryland residents regardless of political or religious opinion or affiliation, marital status, race, color, creed, age, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or geographic location within the State.

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, Folk and Traditional Arts, Independent Artist Awards, and Community Arts Development. Anyone wishing to serve should visit msac.org for detailed information and nomination forms.
Staff
MSAC maintains a professional staff to administer its grants programs and Council-initiated programs. Staff members are available to provide technical assistance to the arts community.

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

Requirements For Grant Recipients
- Must comply with Title VI, Section 601, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no persons, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination related to, the arts.
- Must comply with Title IV, Section 1681, of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 6101, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex or age.
- Must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which states that no otherwise qualified person shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination related to, the arts.
- 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.

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

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

Grounds for such reconsideration are:

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

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

- The applicant must discuss the problem with the program director who handled the application.
- To pursue an appeal, the applicant must write a letter to the MSAC Executive Director within 60 days following receipt of the grant award or denial letter requesting a reconsideration of the Council’s decision and stating the grounds for the request.
- The applicant will receive written notification on the determination of the appeal within 90 days of the receipt of the written request for reconsideration.
Folklife Network guidelines
Folklife Network grants fund organizations serving as regional folklife centers in Maryland. Grants are administered through the Maryland Traditions state folklife program and support activities that identify, document, support, or present the living cultural traditions of Maryland’s diverse communities.

Contact
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Overview
Funding
$10,000 - $50,000 annually

Support period
July 1 - June 30 annually

Application publication
February 1 annually

Application deadline
May 1 annually

Notification of application status
July 1 annually

Timeline
A Folklife Network timeline published on the MSAC website, msac.org, outlines the full cycle for each step of this granting process, from announcement of applications to post-grant reporting.

Description
Folklife Network grants fund organizations serving as regional folklife centers in Maryland. Regional folklife centers are defined as continuing programmatic or educational efforts made by an organization to support folklife, or community-based living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth. Regional folklife centers’ activities should:

● Serve the mission of the grantee organization
● Complement the mission of Maryland Traditions to identify, document, support, and present folklife
Complement the mission of MSAC to provide 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

Support equity, diversity, and inclusion by promoting equitable access to the arts, fostering awareness of communities and traditions of color, and striving to amplify the voices of historically under-resourced cultures, both programmatically and administratively

See Appendix A for further details on the purpose of the Folklife Network and regional folklife centers.

**Eligibility**

Organizations eligible for Folklife Network funds are Maryland-incorporated nonprofit organizations, Maryland colleges and universities, and units of government.

**Location**

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021), MSAC will accept applications to support one new regional folklife center in each of the three following regions:

- Baltimore (Baltimore City)
- Mid-state (Carroll, Frederick, and Howard counties)
- Upper Shore (Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot counties)

In FY 2021, MSAC will accept applications to support continuing activities at existing regional folklife centers in the five following regions:

- Appalachian (Garrett, Allegany, and Washington counties)
- Greater Baltimore (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Harford counties)
- Capital (Montgomery and Prince George’s counties)
- Southern (Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary’s counties)
- Lower Shore (Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester counties)

**Fiscal Budgeting**

Folklife Network grants are between $10,000 and $50,000 each. Applications include a budget form in which applicants list proposed folklife expenditures. Budgets should reflect proposed spending on folklife activities only. Budget categories are listed below.

- Staffing
- Equipment
- Facilities
- Artist, contractor, or consultant fees
- Marketing and communications
- Transportation (personnel or materials; in-state only)
- Other (applicants must list)

Folklife Network applications do not require the demonstration of the applicant organization’s overall budget. Only budgets associated directly with folklife activities are required in the application. Organizations may receive one Folklife Network grant per year.

MSAC must be consulted if, during the granting period, rebudgeting results in more than a 10 percent fluctuation from expenditures proposed in the application (e.g., more than $5,000 of a $50,000 grant being allocated to
expenses other than those listed in the initial application). MSAC staff will approve, deny, or request more
information on the proposed change based on the grantee’s capacity to undertake proposed changes and
alignment with the mission of MSAC and Maryland Traditions.

MSAC must also be consulted if, at the end of the granting period, more than 10 percent of the total grant award
remains unspent (e.g., more than $5,000 of a $50,000 grant remaining at June 30, the end of the MSAC fiscal
year). MSAC staff will take further action, if any, based on the grantee’s plan to expend funds and alignment with
the mission of MSAC and Maryland Traditions.

Matching
Folklife Network grants must be matched in cash by applicant funds at a ratio of 4:1. For example, an applicant
requesting a $50,000 Folklife Network grant must demonstrate that a cash value of $12,500 has been budgeted
to match the requested grant amount. A cash match is defined as any expenditure that is directly related to
financial transaction, including salary, wages, fringe, and cost of materials used in folklife activities. Staffing costs
pro-rated for time spent on folklife activities are allowable. Indirect costs (e.g., facility fees, overhead, etc.) are
allowable but may make up no more than 10 percent of an applicant’s total budget for folklife activities, as
proposed in the application. In-kind or donated goods or services are not allowable as part of the applicant match
but may be listed on the budget for reference. Other MSAC grants are not allowable as part of the applicant
match.

Use of funds
Grants may be used to support any aspect of folklife work benefitting and open to the public. Typical types of
folklife activities include but are not limited to:

● Exhibitions
● Performances
● Festivals
● Workshops
● Lectures
● Field schools
● Oral histories
● Ethnographies
● Archiving

Folklife Network funds may not be used for:

● Programming not in support of folklife
● Activities not benefitting and open to the public

Potential applicants are encouraged to consult with the state folklorist in advance of making an application in
order to discuss their ideas for contributing to the Folklife Network as a regional folklife center.

See Appendix B for further details on the roles and responsibilities of the state folklorist and regional folklife
centers in the administration of Folklife Network grants.

Funding formula
Folklife Network funding is request-based. Applicants request anywhere between $10,000 and $50,000 in their
applications. Funding amounts are determined by multiplying the amount of the applicant request by an
aggregated application score, which ranges from zero to 60. For example, an applicant request of $50,000 and an aggregate score of 42 results in a grant of $35,000, where:

- A score of 42 points on a scale of 60 possible points represents 70 percent of the highest possible score
- $35,000 represents 70 percent of an applicant’s request of $50,000

See Appendix C for the scoring rubric panelists use to evaluate applications.

**Application, Evaluation, and Reporting**

**SmartSimple**

All applications are submitted via the online grants management system SmartSimple. Log in or create a free account at marylandarts.smartsimple.com.

**Application types**

There are two types of Folklife Network applications: Full and Request for Funding. Full applications require complete narrative, budget, and administrative information, with the option to submit supplemental materials. Requests for Funding require similar information in substantially abbreviated format and are offered for grantees with track records of continuing success in terms of application, evaluation, and reporting.

**Full application components**

A completed Full application consists of the following components:

- Answers to prompts soliciting a complete description of the applicant’s proposed folklife activities for the upcoming granting period
  - Activities should be described with as much detail as is available to the applicant at the time of application. Applicants who might use funds to respond to unexpected opportunities should state this intention
  - Institutional Review Board (IRB) documentation for folklife activities at colleges and universities are not required, though each grantee is expected to remain in compliance with its own internal ethical standards, as well as those set out earlier in this document
- A budget proposing folklife expenditures for the upcoming grant period, including both MSAC and applicant contributions, in accordance with matching requirements
- Resumes of key artistic and administrative personnel, compiled into a single PDF not exceeding 10 pages
- Proof of incorporation as an eligible MSAC grant recipient (i.e., Maryland nonprofit organization, college or university, or unit of government)
- Optional supplemental materials
  - Supplemental materials include but are not limited to catalogs, reviews, programs, brochures, audiovisual productions, or promotional materials not exceeding 20 pages and 10 minutes of audiovisual review time

**Request for funding (RFF) components**

A completed RFF consists of the following components:

- Answers to prompts soliciting an overview of the applicant’s proposed folklife activities for the upcoming granting period
- A budget proposing folklife expenditures for the upcoming grant period, including both MSAC and applicant contributions, in accordance with matching requirements
- Optional supplemental materials

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Three-year funding cycle
The Folklife Network operates on a three-year funding cycle. In a three-year funding cycle, Full applications are required every three years, and RFFs are required in the intervening years. Grantees are placed on a three-year funding cycle when they have demonstrated a strong track record of continuing success in terms of application, evaluation, and reporting. The process for being placed on a three-year funding cycle is below.

● Panelists score organization’s first Full application at 39 or higher
● MSAC logs organization’s on-time reporting and fulfillment of grant requirements throughout granting period
● Panelists score organization’s second Full application in the immediately subsequent granting period at 39 or higher
● MSAC logs organization’s on-time reporting and fulfillment of grant requirements throughout the immediately subsequent granting period
● Limited fiscal fluctuation and staff turnover at organization during the two-year period described above
● MSAC places organization on three-year funding cycle through written notification

Removal and reinstatement of three-year funding cycle
MSAC may choose at any time to require organizations to submit a Full application, even if they have been placed on a three-year cycle. Organizations in a state of fiscal or personnel transition are more likely to be required to submit a Full application to demonstrate their change management plan. If an organization previously on a three-year cycle has been required to submit a Full application, it returns to the three-year cycle when the following two requirements are met:

● Panelists score the application at 39 or higher
● Fiscal and/or personnel issues stabilize

Full application and RFF scoring
Full application scores stand until the next Full application is submitted and scored. For organizations on a three-year funding cycle, this means that a score of 52 on a Full application will be applied to any RFFs submitted in subsequent years. Organizations on a three-year funding cycle may elect at any time to submit a Full application in the interest of increasing their score, but the most recent Full application score will stand in any case. All Full applications are reviewed by a panel of experts. All RFFs are reviewed by MSAC staff only.

Panelist review
MSAC convenes a group of panelists to evaluate Full applications. Each Full application is evaluated using a three-part rubric. Panelists assign as many as 20 points and supply qualitative comments for each of the three parts:

● Evidence of engagement with folklife
● Logistical and financial feasibility
● Evidence of engagement with and awareness of residents of the regional area of service

Panelists review Folklife Network applications twice:

● Once remotely and independently, at which time an initial score is made
● Once after conversation with other panelists at a meeting facilitated by MSAC staff, including the state folklorist, at which time all panelists will discuss applications and have the opportunity to amend their score based on discussion
● Final scores will be reviewed by the MSAC board and Department of Commerce leadership for final approval, denial, or requests for further information
See Appendix C for the scoring rubric panelists use to evaluate applications.

Panelist selection
Panelists are selected via public application process. Applicants who are folklife artists, folklife specialists, arts administrators, and other cultural workers possess the necessary expertise to evaluate applications, though all potential panelists are given consideration.

See Appendix D for details on the full review process used for MSAC grants.

Final report
An annual final report describes how funds were spent over the most recently completed granting period. The Final report collects narrative, fiscal, and demographic information in keeping with MSAC and National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) requirements. Successful completion of a final report is required for organizations to be eligible to apply for future Folklife Network funds. Final reports are completed in SmartSimple, the same online grants management system used for applications. Final Reports are available at the end of each granting period. MSAC notifies grantees in writing when Final Reports are available.
Appendix A

Purpose of the Folklife Network and regional folklife centers

The purpose of the Folklife Network is to maintain a stable, statewide folklife infrastructure through the establishment of regional folklife centers. Grantees serve as a designated regional folklife center following a successful application. Grantees may continue to serve as the designated regional folklife center based on continued strong performance, as illustrated through favorable panelist review of subsequent applications and fulfillment of grant requirements. In regions without regional folklife centers, and pending availability of funds, MSAC will advertise the vacancy and accept applications to establish a new Folklife Network grantee within the region.

Regional folklife centers are intended to serve as resource centers. Folklife artists, cultural workers, and organizations working in each region are encouraged to collaborate with the regional folklife center. In-region partnerships with the regional folklife center are allowable. Partnerships may be programmatic, organizational, or fiscal in nature. Programmatic partnerships bring multiple stakeholders together at the regional folklife center to produce programming reflecting the combined expertise of the constituent group. Organizational partnerships bring multiple organizations together to partner on activities of mutual benefit and serving the mission of each organization. Fiscal partnerships combine funding streams from multiple allowable funding sources to increase the capacity of folklife activities in the region. In fiscal partnership, funds must be administered through a single fiscal agent (i.e., the Folklife Network grantee).

Folklife Network funds are awarded at the beginning of the MSAC fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). Funds support folklife activities taking place in the grantee’s geographic area of service, as defined in accordance with the applicant’s mission and in keeping with MSAC granting requirements.

See the Maryland State Arts Council website, msac.org, for examples of previous folklife collaborations going back to 2002.
Appendix B

Roles and responsibilities

Folklife Network grants are intended as ongoing, sustainable funds aimed at cultivating strong, lasting relationships between MSAC and organizations doing folklife work regionally in Maryland. Successful grantees participate fully in the list of roles and responsibilities listed below, as well as receive technical assistance and consultation from Maryland Traditions.

The primary point of contact for Maryland Traditions is the Maryland state folklorist, which has been a permanent, full-time position at MSAC since 1974. In addition to grantmaking, the state folklorist is responsible for visiting, convening, and facilitating conversations among regional folklife centers.

For each Folklife Network grant, MSAC is responsible for:

1. Interfacing with grantees’ local networks in order to affirm the State of Maryland’s investment in and support of each regional folklife center
2. Making site visits to regional folklife centers as needed in order to discuss successes and challenges, log grantees’ logistical needs for use in future MSAC policy and procedure revisions, and make public addresses at events on behalf of the State of Maryland
3. Facilitating and encouraging creative exchanges among regional folklife centers in an effort to increase inter-region collaboration
4. Providing branding materials that identify grantees as regional folklife centers
5. Maintaining grantmaking and reporting schedules, facilitating grantees’ access to application and reporting materials, and providing technical assistance as needed

For each Folklife Network grant, the grantee is responsible for:

1. Identifying, documenting, supporting, and presenting folklife in a way that addresses the needs of the communities served by the grantee organization
2. Supplying contact info and biographical sketches to MSAC for inclusion in a registry published at msac.org
3. Maintaining a schedule of in-person, as-needed site visits by the state folklorist, hosted at the regional folklife center
4. Delivering folklife fieldwork and collateral, including hard copy and digital materials, to Maryland Traditions for later archival deposit
5. Providing the state folklorist with ongoing updates on the needs of regional constituents, as collected through regular formal or informal assessments
6. Facilitating the state folklorist’s attendance and constituent address at a minimum of two folklife events per granting period (e.g., festivals, performances, demonstrations, workshops, board meetings, staff meetings, or other convenings of regional constituents)
7. Facilitating Apprenticeship Grant applications and Heritage Award nominations as suitable candidates are identified, and within the capacity of the regional folklife center
8. Using MSAC-provided branding materials to identify activities supported by grant funds
9. Adhering to all grantmaking and reporting requirements, in keeping with regular MSAC policies and schedules
Appendix C

Scoring rubrics

The review of Folklife Network applications is based on the following three criteria. Rubrics detailing these criteria are below. Panelists will score Full applications for Folklife Network funds according to the rubrics below. The questions accompanying each criterion are taken directly from the application form.

Criterion 1: Evidence of engagement with folklife

- Application questions:
  - Describe the folklife activities planned for the upcoming granting period.
  - Describe how the planned folklife activities identify, document, support, or present community-based living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent (17-20 points)</th>
<th>Good (13-16 points)</th>
<th>Fair (9-12 points)</th>
<th>Poor (8 or fewer points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed activities clearly identify, document, support, or present one or more living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth</td>
<td>Proposed activities adequately identify, document, support, or present one or more living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth</td>
<td>Proposed activities somewhat identify, document, support, or present one or more living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth</td>
<td>Proposed activities unclearly or do not identify, document, support, or present one or more living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criterion 2: Logistical and financial feasibility

- Application questions
  - List the grant request and applicant match, noting that Folklife Network grants must be matched in cash by applicant funds at a ratio of 4:1 (e.g., a $50,000 grant must be matched by at least $12,500 from the applicant).
  - Provide a categorized budget for proposed folklife expenditures. Categories may include but are not limited to staffing; equipment; facilities; artist, contractor, or consultant fees; marketing and communications; or transportation of personnel or materials in Maryland.
  - Upload resumes of key artistic and administrative personnel, compiled into a single PDF not exceeding 10 pages.
  - Describe measures taken to keep personnel working within their capacity as paid employees or volunteers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent (17-20 points)</th>
<th>Good (13-16 points)</th>
<th>Fair (9-12 points)</th>
<th>Poor (8 or fewer points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed activities are clearly organized, scoped, and budgeted; and supported by expert artistic and administrative personnel working within capacity for fair compensation</td>
<td>Proposed activities are adequately organized, scoped, and budgeted; and supported by artistic and administrative personnel working within capacity for fair compensation</td>
<td>Proposed activities are somewhat organized, scoped, and budgeted; and supported by personnel whose qualifications and compensation are somewhat clear</td>
<td>Proposed activities and support personnel are partially or unclearly described in terms of scope, budget, expertise, and compensation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Criterion 3: Evidence of engagement with and awareness of residents in regional area of service**

- Application questions
  - Describe the communities served by the planned folklife activities.
  - How did your organization develop an awareness of these communities?
  - How do the planned folklife activities represent a strategic response to these communities' needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent (17-20 points)</th>
<th>Good (13-16 points)</th>
<th>Fair (9-12 points)</th>
<th>Poor (8 or fewer points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application materials clearly demonstrate a strong awareness of and strategic response to the needs of distinct communities in the area of service</td>
<td>Application materials demonstrate a strong awareness of and some response to the needs of identifiable communities in the area of service</td>
<td>Application materials demonstrate some awareness of and response to the needs of communities that are incompletely or ambiguously defined</td>
<td>Application materials demonstrate unclear or negligible awareness of communities and their needs in the area of service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Review process

- **Staff Review**: After an application is received, it is reviewed by staff for completeness and adherence to Council guidelines. Applicants will be notified whether their application is complete or if additional information or corrections are necessary. The applicant must meet all subsequent deadlines as specified in writing or the application will be considered withdrawn.

- **Grants Review Panel**: When the application is complete, it is assigned to members of a Grant Review Panel for evaluation. Grant Review Panels meet formally to evaluate the applications submitted.

- **Council Decision**: The full Council meets in early June to reach funding decisions.

- **Department of Commerce Approval**: The Council’s decisions are forwarded to the Department for review, analysis, and final approval by the Secretary of Commerce or a designee by July 1.

- **Notification**: All applicants are notified in writing of the Council’s decision when final approval is obtained.

- **Payment**: Signed Grant Agreement Forms must be received and the grantee must meet all reporting requirements before grant funds for the next fiscal year are disbursed.