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## Professional Development Opportunity Grant FY2021 Guidelines

**DEADLINE(S): None\***  
**SUPPORT PERIOD: Rolling**



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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](http://www.msac.org).

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

# 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

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](http://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](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 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.

## Professional Development Opportunity Grant Overview

The purpose of the Professional Development Opportunity Grant Program is to encourage and support relevant professional development opportunities for artists and arts organizations throughout Maryland by embracing the importance of growth, learning, and discovery. Applicants may only receive funding for one application per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

The Professional Development Opportunity Grant Program supports eligible activities of **Independent Artists** or **Arts Organizations** with grants up to \$2,000. There is no matching fund requirement.

Deadlines for the Professional Development Opportunity Grant Program are rolling. The grant period for FY21 is July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021. Applications will be reviewed monthly, and Professional Development Opportunity Grants will be awarded throughout the fiscal year until allocated funding is depleted.

All activities described in project-based application submissions to any funding program at the Maryland State Arts Council must demonstrate alignment with the Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery plan to be considered eligible.

- **Independent Artists**
  - Independent artists (i.e., artists working independently from an institution or organization) may apply for Professional Development Opportunity Grants to support:
    - Individual (or collective) professional development opportunities that are relevant to the artist's objectives to create work that is publicly accessible.
  - Independent Artist eligibility for Professional Development Opportunity Grants:
    - Professional Development opportunities must have a public, established practice of working with artists and/or arts organizations (for at least one year) OR be approved by the MSAC Grants and Professional Development Director.

- Applicants must be Maryland residents (owning or renting residential real property in Maryland at the time of application submission and throughout the funded project or program) and must be 18 years of age or older.
  - An artist may only receive funding for one application per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). Applicants may reapply at any time if a submitted application is not funded.
  - The applicant may not be enrolled in any high school, undergraduate or graduate degree program.
- **Arts Organizations or Arts Programs**
  - Arts organizations or Programs may apply for Professional Development Opportunity Grants to support:
    - Professional Development opportunities in alignment with the organization's needs to better produce or present arts programs, services or projects that are relevant to its community and accessible to the public.
  - Professional Development opportunities must have a public, established practice of working with artists and/or arts organizations (for at least one year) OR be approved by the MSAC Grants and Professional Development Director.
    - An arts organization may only receive funding for one application per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).
    - The organization has one completed and documented fiscal year as of the date of the grant submission with ongoing arts activities.
    - County Arts Councils and Arts & Entertainment District entities are eligible to apply.
    - The organization fits one of the following criteria:
      - Has a 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and is incorporated in Maryland
      - Has a 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, and has a significant physical presence in Maryland
      - Is a unit of Government/College/University

## Review Criteria

The review of all Professional Development Opportunity Grant applications is based on successful evidence of the answers to the following application questions:

1. Provide information regarding the selected Professional Development Opportunity (location, date, length, etc.) How will your selected opportunity for professional development enhance your ability to better serve the public through this learning?
2. When will the professional development take place and how will you share or implement what you have learned/experienced?
3. What is the overall budget for the opportunity and source(s) of funding beyond the MSAC request?
4. Explain why the selection of this specific professional development opportunity best aligns with the identified need(s) for growth.

Please review the Professional Development Opportunity Grant Application Scoring Rubric [here](#).

# Application Process

## Preparing Your Application

Please refer to the Professional Development Opportunity Grant Application Scoring Rubric as you respond to the application questions.

### Financials

**Independent Artists** are not required to submit financial statements with the application.

**Arts Organizations** must submit a financial statement from the last completed fiscal year demonstrating ongoing arts activities for at least one year.

### Smart Simple

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

- Applicants are required to complete and submit their applications by electronic means, including the use of an electronic signature, a minimum of 90-days prior to the start of the proposed professional development activity(ies). (Example: If the proposed start date of an activity is December 1, the Professional Development Opportunity Grant application must be received by MSAC no later than September 1.)
- Technical support for SmartSimple is available during regular office hours, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.
- Lost, misdirected or late applications are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

## Grant Review and Evaluation Process

Applications for the Professional Development Opportunity Grants (\$2,000 or less) are reviewed by MSAC program staff.

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 published strategic goals of the Maryland State Arts Council, in the determination of the MSAC staff: Increase Participation, Provide Intentional Support, Build Capacity, Leverage Connections, Bolster Maryland Arts.

### Notification

Professional Development Opportunity Grant applications submitted by the fifth day of the month will be reviewed within the same month. Applications received after the fifth day of the month will be reviewed in the following month. After the monthly review, applicants will be notified of the application status as soon as possible, and, if approved, receive a formal grant agreement form to process the grant payment (100% of award amount).

## Reporting Requirements

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

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

**Grant Funds May Be Used For:** Expenses directly associated with the proposed eligible professional development activities, including but not limited to artist payment/stipends; consultant fees; honoraria; contractual services; administrative expenses; transport; artistic materials and supplies; space/venue/equipment rental.