

INFORMATION SESSION

FY25 “How to Apply” - Creativity Grants for General Operating Support

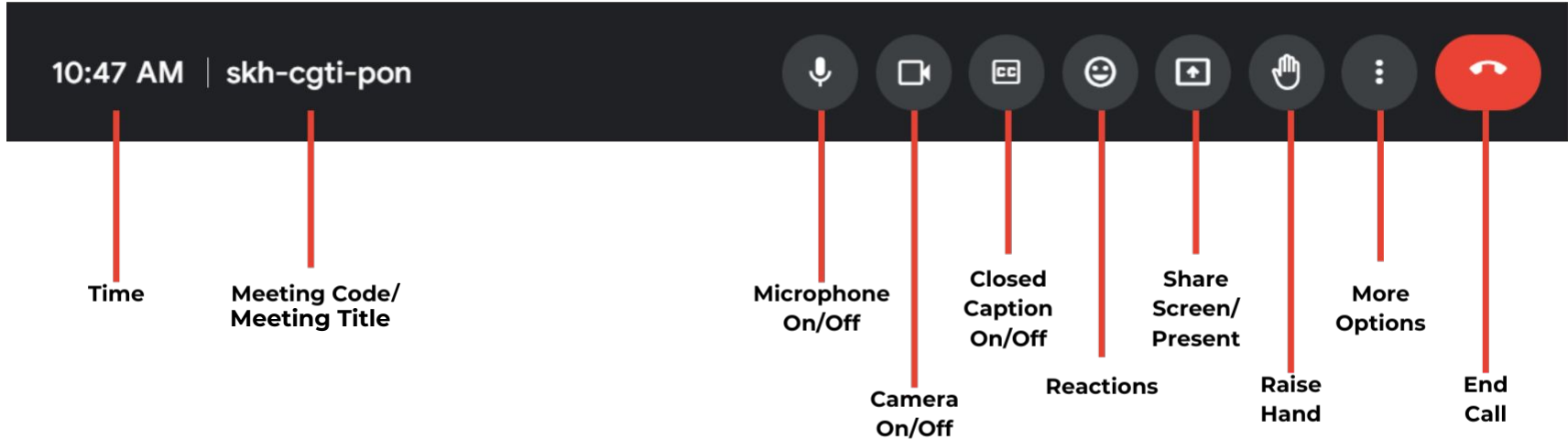
Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Presented by:

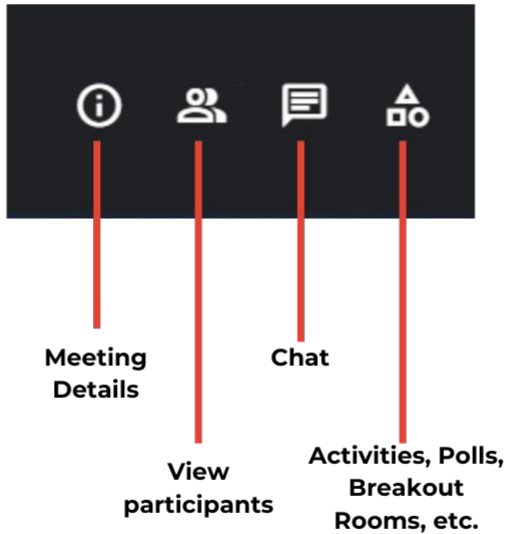
Emily Sollenberger & Laura Weiss
Program Directors, Arts Services



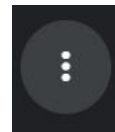
Reference Shot of Features (1 of 2)













Reference Shot of Features (2 of 2)



In "More Options"



-  Change layout
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Land Acknowledgement Statement

We acknowledge the lands and waters now known as Maryland are the home of its first peoples: the Accohannock Indian Tribe, Assateague People's Tribe, Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians, Choptico Band of Indians, Lenape Tribe, Nanticoke Tribe, Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, Piscataway Conoy Tribe, Piscataway Indian Nation, Pocomoke Indian Nation, Susquehannock Indians, Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee, and tribes in the Chesapeake watershed who have seemingly vanished since the coming of colonialism. We acknowledge that this land is now home to other tribal peoples living here in diaspora. We acknowledge the forced removal of many from the lands and waterways that nurtured them as kin. We acknowledge the degradation that continues to be wrought on the land and waters in pursuit of resources. We acknowledge the right of the land and waterways to heal so that they can continue to provide food and medicine for all. We acknowledge that it is our collective obligation to pursue policies and practices that respect the land and waters so that our reciprocal relationship with them can be fully restored.

Equity and Justice Statement

The arts celebrate our state's diversity, connect our shared humanity, and transform individuals and communities. The Maryland State Arts Council (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, class, language, and/or ability.

Vision

The Maryland State Arts Council plays an essential role ensuring every person has access to the transformative power of the arts.

Mission

Maryland State Arts Council 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.

Goal 1. Increase Participation: Broaden MSAC's constituency, providing avenues designed to increase pathways to engagement

Goal 2. Provide Intentional Support: Embrace thoughtful and targeted approaches to serving known and yet to be known MSAC constituents

Goal 3. Build Capacity: Work strategically to further build organizational and governance capacity to ensure that MSAC is capable of vigorously delivering on its mission

Goal 4. Leverage Connections: Further enhance current relationships and involve additional partners, collaborators, and constituents who will benefit from and advance the work of MSAC

Goal 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

Creative Meeting Actions

Celebrate being in the space with other creative people.

Engage with everyone's presence as a gift.

Acknowledge that together we know a lot.

Enter the conversation with curiosity and inquiry.

Share your idea and trust that it will be heard.

Use "I" statements.

Focus your language on the task at hand.

Hold one another accountable with care.

Apply "Yes, and!" - "I hear your idea and I'm going to add to it!"

Balance speaking and listening.

MSAC Professional Development

Follow MSAC's Eventbrite page for updates about free professional development opportunities

- Topic-specific sessions on Financial Management, Legal Advice, Marketing Strategies, Strategic Planning, Board Engagement, and more.
- Coffee with the Council
- Creative Conversations
- Regional Office Hours
- Maryland Arts Summit (visit mdarts.org)



Propose a topic by emailing msac.commerce@maryland.gov
Sign up for our mailing list at tinyurl.com/MSACMailingList

Ways to Get Involved

MSAC relies on a diverse array of constituents from across the state to give input in a variety of ways.

- Panelists review and score applications
- Editors give input on program policies
- Schedule of public calls and details at msac.org/about/ways-get-involved
- Apply in SmartSimple
- Training and support
- Compensation provided for service



The screenshot shows the MSAC website's 'Ways to Get Involved' page. The header includes the MSAC logo, the Department of Commerce tagline 'Advancing the Arts Across Maryland', and navigation links for 'Smart Simple', 'News', 'Resource Bulletin', 'Contact', and 'My Profile'. A search icon is also present. Below the header is a navigation menu with 'ABOUT', 'PROGRAMS', 'OPPORTUNITIES', and 'RESOURCES'. A yellow button labeled 'EXPLORE THE ARTS IN MD' is positioned to the right. The main content area features a large image of colorful yarn and fabric arts. Below the image is a text box describing a project by Gwen Handler and Winnie Dreier. The page title is 'Ways to Get Involved', and the breadcrumb trail is 'Home > About > Ways to Get Involved'. The page lists 'Public Calls: Paid Opportunities' with expandable sections for 'Panelists' and 'Editors'. Below that, it lists 'Employment Opportunities' with an expandable section for 'Current Openings'. The footer contains social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, along with links for 'Privacy', 'Terms of Use', 'Accessibility', 'Careers', and 'Translate'. The MSAC logo and the text 'Maryland' are on the left, and the copyright notice '© 2023 Maryland State Arts Council' is on the right.

Today's Agenda

- Review of Creativity Program & Guidelines
- Creativity Grant Application - General Operating
- Helpful Hints for Applications
- Monthly review process
- Smart Simple grant platform
- Q&A

Creativity Grant Overview

Purpose of program:

- Supports activities/general operations for independent artists and organizations
 - Today we will focus specifically on the General Operating Support option.
- Strengthens the vitality and sustainability of artists and small organizations to maintain a strong and stable arts infrastructure in the State of Maryland
- Serves the growing needs of relevant arts projects and collaborations within Maryland communities

Creativity Grant Overview

- Available to Independent Artists & Organizations
- Project-Support OR General Operating (orgs only)
- Brief application
- Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed monthly
 - FY25 applications are available July 1, 2024 - April 30, 2025
- Eligible to receive one Creativity Grant per fiscal year

What's New for FY2025

- New options!
 - General Operating Support (we'll focus on this today)
 - Project - Planning Grant (New!)
 - Project - Implementation Grant
- New funding amounts!
 - General Operating Support: Up to \$5,000
 - Project - Planning: Up to \$2,000
 - Project - Implementation: Up to \$4,000

Creativity Grant - Who Can Apply (Gen Op)?

Independent Artists are not eligible for General Operating Support; Independent Artists must select one of the Project-specific options for the Creativity Grant.

Organizations must be one of the following:

- Nonprofit organization (an organization with an IRS-designated 501(c)3 status). Organizations must be incorporated in Maryland or have significant physical presence in Maryland.
- Model A Fiscal Sponsorship (comprehensive sponsorship, in which the assets, liabilities, and exempt activities collectively referred to as the project are housed within the fiscal sponsor).
- Unit of government (a unit of government [town, city, county, state] with the capacity to undertake an arts program)
- College or university (an established higher education institution in Maryland)
- School (a public or private school serving students in grades pre-Kindergarten through 12)

Creativity Grant - Who Can Apply (Gen Op)?

- Organizations with an allowable income of \$50,000 or less OR organizations with an allowable income of more than \$50,000 that have not received MSAC general operating funding programs in the current fiscal year.
 - If you have received general operating support through another MSAC program, you are NOT eligible for a Creativity Grant (Gen Op OR Project) in the same year
 - If you are not currently supported through the GFO program (in FY25), then you could apply for support instead through the Creativity Grant (in FY25)

Creativity Grant - Who Can Apply (Gen Op)?

- Only one application per project or program will be considered for funding.
- The organization must produce or present arts programs, services or projects that are relevant to its community and are available to the public.
- The organization has operated as an arts organization or arts program for one full fiscal year and be able to submit a financial statement for their most recently completed fiscal year at the time of application.
 - If an organization is new (within first year), Project-specific support would be an option to consider

Not sure if your organization is eligible for support? Reach out so we can discuss further!

Creativity Grant - What can it support?

- Can support expenses directly related to the proposed arts activity including (but not limited to):
 - Artist fees/stipends
 - Consultant fees
 - Marketing/Promotions
 - Artistic materials & supplies
 - Space/venue
 - Equipment (connected to activities/non-capital)
 - *For Gen Op, this will include most of your day-to-day organizational expenses*

Creativity Grant - What can't it support?

- Re-granting, scholarships
- Capital improvements & permanent equipment
- Activities that aren't open to the public
- Activities that are primarily therapeutic
- Travel outside of MD
- Day-to-day expenses associated with the running of a for-profit business, including but not limited to LLC, C-Corp, S-Corp, etc.
- As with any MSAC grant, the funds cannot be used for political contributions, lobbying activities
- ***Not sure? Ask!***

Creativity Grant - Application (Gen Op)

- Choose your track:
 - Project-support - Planning or Implementation (Artists, Orgs)
 - **General Operating (Orgs only)**
- 3 Narrative Questions
 - Generally the same questions for all application options
 - Project -based support focuses on one specific project/program/event proposal; whereas general operating would focus on full year of operations.
- Organizations must also upload a financial statement (not needed for independent artists)

Creativity Grant - Application (Gen Op)

1. Describe the primary arts activities/programming and geographic area that your organization will serve in the fiscal year. Within your response, include the mission of the organization, and address the intended community engagement and impact of the organization's mission and arts activities/programming.

An Excellent to Outstanding response includes a clear, specific, and thorough explanation of the organization's mission and primary arts activities/programming for the fiscal year, which includes clear and thorough evidence of intended community engagement and impact; including intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs.

Creativity Grant - Application (Overview)

Helpful Hints!

For GOS, describe the org as a whole (mission, programming, etc.). Don't forget the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY.

Approach your narrative as if the reader knows nothing about your organization, its mission, or its programming. Give them the full picture of what you're hoping to do.

A useful exercise is having a trusted friend/family member/colleague/etc who knows nothing about your proposal read your draft application and have them "poke holes" in it - fill in the blanks where they were unclear before submitting

Creativity Grant - Application (Gen Op)

2. Describe the timeline of your organization's entire season or fiscal year. Within your response, include a detailed schedule for the year, including specific timing as it relates to steps of planning, promotional efforts, implementation and execution of events/activities, and evaluation.

An Excellent to Outstanding response includes clear, specific and realistic timeline for the entire season/fiscal year, including specific timing as it relates to planning, promotional efforts, implementation & execution of events/activities, and evaluation.

Creativity Grant - Application (Timeline)

Helpful Hints!

Include a full timeline/schedule of the entirety of the activities from beginning to end. Outline the entire fiscal year/season/etc

Consider a weekly or monthly listing (or other time increment) with specific dates/timeframes that share all steps of the process. Include all steps of planning, implementation, execution, and evaluation of the project

Creativity Grant - Application (Gen Op)

3. What is the organization's overall budget for this fiscal year? Include a clear list of all projected income and expenses.

An Excellent to Outstanding response includes clear, detailed, and realistic financial plan for income and expenses tied to the general operations of the organization.

Creativity Grant - Application (Budget)

Helpful Hints!

Gen Op: This should be your entire budget for the year (FY/CY)!

Include a clear list that shows specific line items for all planned income and expenses - and a description to how you got to the total, when necessary
(ie - Artist Fee = \$500: Hourly rate of \$25/hr for 20 hours)

The response must be within the context of the narrative; additional attachments will not be considered in the review process

Creativity Grant - Application

- Attachments include w-9, Electronic Signature
- Financial Statement (orgs only) - such as Profit & Loss statement.

The full application & scoring rubric can be found on msac.org

Creativity Grant Application Scoring Rubric - Project Support

Describe your proposed arts activity/event/project and the geographic area the project will serve. Within your response, include a detailed description of the proposed project, including planned community engagement and intended impact of the arts activity.

Includes a clear, specific, and thorough explanation of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes clear and thorough evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs	Includes a clear explanation of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes clear evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs	Includes an overview of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes some evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs	Includes an unclear explanation of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes minimal evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs	
Excellent to Outstanding	Good to Very Good	Satisfactory	Marginal to Fair	No Evidence
34-36 Points	25-27 Points	16-18 Points	7-9 Points	0 Points

Creativity Grant - Grant Amount (Gen Op)

- Available up to \$5,000 (New!)
- One grant per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30)
- Creativity Grants are an “all or none” grant
 - If awarded, you will receive the requested amount
 - We do not offer a percentage or portion of requested amount

Monthly Application Review Process

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, reviewed and awarded monthly. FY25 applications are available from July 1, 2024 - April 30, 2025.

Creativity Grant applications submitted by the last day of the month will be reviewed by the panel in the following month, with notifications to follow early the following month

For example: Applications received in August (8/1-8/31) will be reviewed in September; notifications will be sent by early October.

Monthly Application Review Process

All applications are reviewed by the panelists

- NEW! There will be a dedicated group of panelists who are reviewing Gen Op applications only; another group of panelists will be dedicated to Project applications only.
- Staff do not score applications

Notifications

If you're awarded - congratulations!

- Your org is only eligible for one Creativity Grant per fiscal year
 - Once awarded an FY25 Creativity Grant, you are not eligible to apply again until the FY26 cycle opens
- You must sign and return your Grant Agreement Form via Smart Simple
- Payment takes approximately 6-8 weeks from the date of receipt of a fully execute Grant Agreement Form

Notifications

Final Reports

- Applications submitted between July 2024 and December 2024 will have a Final Report deadline of August 15, 2025. Applications submitted between January 2025 and April 2025 will have a Final Report deadline of December 31, 2025.
- Grantee agrees to spend or obligate all funds by their assigned Final Report date. This means that the funds are expended, encumbered, or otherwise legally committed to be used, such that returning the unspent funds would cause the grantee legal harm.

Notifications

If you're not awarded - try again!

- This is a very popular and competitive program - don't give up!
- Program Directors can gather feedback from the panelists who reviewed your application, and send their feedback and recommendations, which are connected to the review criteria
 - To request this, complete the link sent in your Decline notification email
 - Please allow for several weeks for processing

Creativity Grant - FAQs (Gen Op)

Can my organization apply for a general operating AND project-based Creativity Grant in one year?

No - you are eligible for one Creativity Grant per fiscal year (pick Gen Op OR Project). Talk to a Program Director to help determine which one may be the best fit for your organization and activities.

My org is eligible and applying to the the Professional Development Grant, can I also apply for Creativity in the same month?

Yes! You can apply and receive multiple grants in the same fiscal year – and the same month. Each grant program has different goals and purposes to support different needs.

Creativity Grant - FAQs

How can I share work samples/letters of support/reviews/etc.?

External documents are not considered as part of the review of the Creativity Grant application. Panelists will only review the three narrative questions per the scoring criteria. Do not include important information in links or other documents, as they will not be considered.

I receive Gen Op support through the Grants for Organizations (GFO) program. Can I apply for project-support through Creativity?

No - if you receive support through the GFO program, you are not eligible for Creativity support, too (either project or gen op).

Helpful Hint - Apply early!

While you are eligible to apply any time for the Creativity Grant, we encourage you to apply early, whenever possible.

Payment is processed outside of the MSAC offices. If awarded, payment will take approximately 6-8 weeks to be received. Take this into consideration when determining when to apply.

Helpful Hint - Application Draft Feedback

Before submitting your application, Emily/Laura are available to review and/or meet about your application and offer feedback on your draft.

Email your Program Director to request feedback on your draft. Allow for several weeks to receive written feedback. At certain times throughout the year, it could take longer.

Smart Simple

All applications must be submitted through Smart Simple
(marylandarts.smartsimple.com)

As an applicant, you will need to register with Smart Simple to apply.

Login

✉ Email

🔒 Password

Login

[Forgot Password?](#)

New to the System?

Register

Welcome to Maryland State Arts Council Portal

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.

Google Chrome is the recommended browser for completing applications in SmartSimple.

Go to marylandarts.smartsimple.com to register and/or log-in

My Applications

2

Opportunities

0

In Progress

1

Submitted

12

Approved/Declined/Closed

Click on “Opportunities” on your Smart Simple dashboard

Opportunity Details 

Arts in Education Grant

[Apply Now](#)

Arts in Education Teaching Artist Roster Application

[Apply Now](#)

Creativity Grant

[Apply Now](#)

Emergency Grant

[Apply Now](#)

Presenting and Touring Roster Application

[Apply Now](#)

Professional Development Opportunity Grant

[Apply Now](#)

Public Call

[Apply Now](#)

Click the **“Apply Now”** button to open the application



1. Click "Save Draft" at the bottom of this screen to begin the application. Please note, you will not be able to begin work on the application until you click "Save Draft."
2. Click "Save Draft" after completing each tab in order to save your work.
3. To navigate between tabs, click on the desired tab or use your browser's back button.
4. Click on the MSAC logo in the top left corner to go back to your profile. Be sure to click "Save Draft" at the bottom of the application prior to returning to your profile page.

Please note: To return to a saved draft application, click "In Progress" from the Grantee Home dashboard. From there, select the draft application to be edited and/or submitted. Do not return to the Funding Opportunities area to search for the grant application again, as this will result in creating multiple applications.



Starting September 1, 2022, the Unique Entity ID (UEI) field will be a REQUIRED field for all organizations (including nonprofit organizations, government entities, and schools/universities) applying for funding from MSAC. This will take the place of a DUNS number, which will no longer appear on organizational profiles. After 9/1, an organization without a UEI may be considered ineligible for funding. Independent Artists do not need to obtain a UEI.

Webinar Video (~57 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLCuPo2cQ4U>

Quick Start Guide: <https://msac.org/media/570/download?inline>

CONTACT INFORMATION

PROGRAM DETAILS

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ATTACHMENTS

ELECT

SIGNATURES

Grant Contact Name:

NEXT >

Save Draft

✓ Submit

You have to click **"Save Draft"** to begin any application!

Questions

We are here to help!

Emily: emily.sollenberger@maryland.gov

Laura: laura.weiss@maryland.gov

Thank You!



To learn about similar topics, news & to keep in touch, please join our mailing list at tinyurl.com/MSACsMailingList