

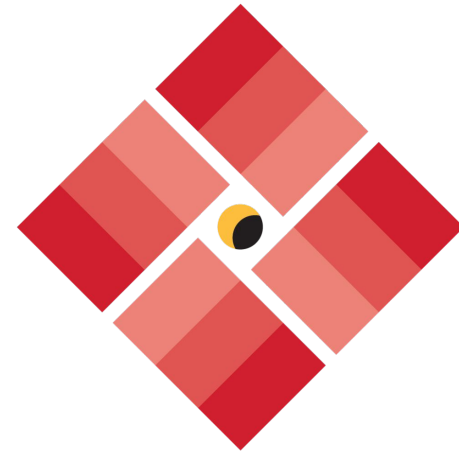
INFORMATION SESSION

FY26 “How to Apply” - Professional Development Opportunity Grant

Recorded Thursday, Aug 28, 2025

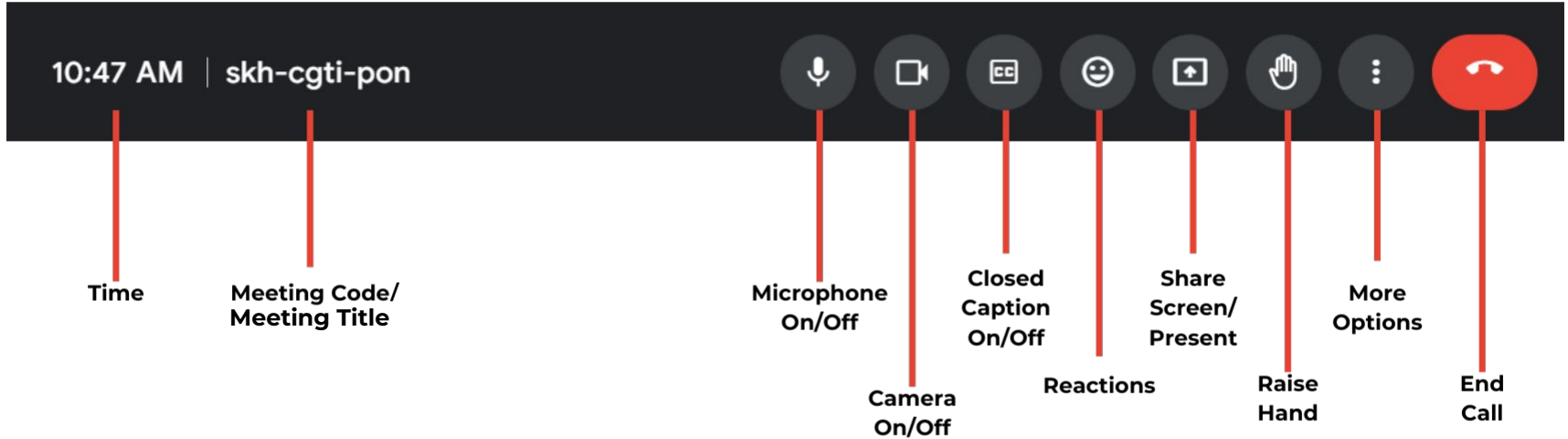
Presented by:

Emily Sollenberger & Laura Weiss
Program Directors, Arts Services

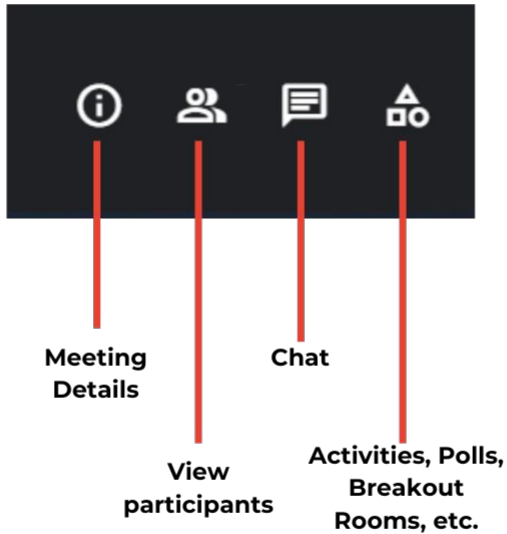


PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

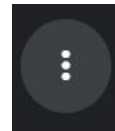
Reference Shot of Features (1 of 2)



Reference Shot of Features (2 of 2)



In “More Options”



-  Change layout
-  Full screen
-  Open picture-in-picture
-  Apply visual effects
-  Turn on captions
-  Use a phone for audio
-  Report a problem
-  Report abuse
-  Troubleshooting & help
-  Settings

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.

Today's Agenda

- Review of Professional Development at MSAC
- PD Opportunity Grant Program & Guidelines
- PD Grant Application
- Monthly review process
- Smart Simple grant platform
- Q&A



*Image: Maryland Arts Summit, 2019
(University of Maryland Baltimore County)*

Things to note at the top

- Acknowledgement that this information session is not a public session and recorded by PDs for your information.
- Note about the program opening later than planned for FY26
- Application will open September 2, 2025 for applications through March 31, 2026
 - First review period will be in October.

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 with a red header. The main navigation bar includes links for ABOUT, PROGRAMS, OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCES, and a button for EXPLORE THE ARTS IN MD. A featured image of yarn is at the top. Below it, a text block mentions Gwen Handler and Winnie Dreier. The main content area is titled 'Ways to Get Involved' with a breadcrumb trail: Home > About > Ways to Get Involved. Under the heading 'Public Calls: Paid Opportunities', there are two expandable sections: 'Panelists' and 'Editors', each with a plus icon. Below these is the 'Employment Opportunities' section, which also has a plus icon. The footer contains social media icons, a 'Maryland' logo, and links for Privacy, Terms of Use, Accessibility, Careers, and Translate, along with the copyright notice: © 2023 Maryland State Arts Council.

Professional Development Overview

Purpose of program:

- Respond to the needs of the Maryland arts sector with an array of Professional Development opportunities.
- Two different opportunities within the Professional Development:
 - Gatherings and online offerings open to the public (*MSAC providing opportunities to the sector*)
 - **Professional Development Opportunity Grant** program (*Organizations/Artists apply to opportunities for them*)

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

Professional Development Opportunity Grant

Opportunities for Organizations & Artists

Professional Development Opportunity Grant program encourages and supports relevant professional development opportunities for artists and arts organizations throughout Maryland.

- Embracing growth, learning, and discovery
- Grants available for up to \$2,000
- Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed monthly
- Awarded one grant per fiscal year

Opportunities for Organizations & Artists

Examples of eligible Professional Development opportunities/ activities include:

- Participating in a class (non-credit), workshop, conference, seminar, etc
- Attending an artist retreat
- Hiring a consultant/coach to learn a specific skill or topic
- Other similar learning opportunities

PD Grant - Who Can Apply?

- Independent Artists
 - Individual (or collective) professional development opportunities that are relevant to the artist's objectives to create work that is publicly accessible
 - Applicants must be Maryland residents and must be 18 years of age or older
 - The applicant may not be enrolled in any high school, undergraduate or graduate degree program.

PD Grant - Who Can Apply?

- Nonprofit Arts Organizations/Arts Programs
 - 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.
 - County Arts Councils and Arts & Entertainment District entities are eligible to apply.
 - 501c3 Nonprofit organizations, unit of Government, Colleges/Universities

PD Grant - What Activities can it support?

- Examples of eligible professional development opportunities include (but aren't limited to!):
 - Conferences
 - Workshops
 - Classes (non-credit)
 - Residencies
 - Hiring a consultant to learn a skill/topic/etc. For example:
 - Strategic Planning
 - EDI Efforts
- The experience must have a *learning/growth component* to it that addresses your artistic goals/objectives

PD Grant - What can it support?

The grant can support expenses related to the PD opportunity such as

- Registration Fees
- Artist payment/stipends
- Consultant fees
- Contractual services
- Administrative expenses
- Transportation (including travel)
 - Can support travel outside of MD!
- Artistic materials/supplies directly connected to the learning experience
- Check with Emily/Laura if you have questions about eligibility

PD Grant - What Activities can't it support?

- Examples of ineligible professional development opportunities include (but aren't limited to!):
 - Participation in an event where sales and/or promotion is the primary goal (i.e. a vendor event, craft fair, etc.)
 - Activities where you are leading the Professional Development (i.e. a class that you are teaching)
 - Classes that are a part of a degree program
 - Learning opportunities that are focused specifically on growth as a classroom teacher (and not as an independent artist)
 - Completion of a specific project

PD Grant - What can't it support?

- Re-granting; activities that are principally recreational, therapeutic, or rehabilitative; travel outside Maryland to *present or produce arts*; 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.
- Day-to-day expenses associated with the running of a for-profit business, including but not limited to LLC, C-Corp, S-Corp, etc.
- Capital improvements or purchases of permanent equipment, Acquisition of capital assets
- Contributions to any political party, organization, or action committee; Activities in connection with any political campaign or referendum; Lobbying activities

Professional Development Opportunity Grant Application Questions and Rubric

PD Grant - Application

1. Independent Artists: Describe the selected Professional Development opportunity you will participate in (including location, date, length, format, etc.). Provide details explaining your artistic practice (including how the public experiences your artistic work), and how the selected opportunity will address identified goals or areas of growth for yourself as an artist.

Organizations: Describe the selected Professional Development opportunity you or others from your organization will participate in (including location, date, length, format, who will participate, etc.). Provide details explaining your organization's mission and primary focus, how the selected opportunity will address identified goals or areas of growth for the organization, and how what is learned will enhance the organization's ability to serve its mission and/or operations.

Clear, specific, and thorough explanation of the proposed professional development opportunity with detailed evidence of artistic and/or creative growth.

PD Grant - Application (Overview)

Helpful Hints!

Describe the activity with specific details of WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY within your first narrative

*** Don't forget to describe who you are and what your artistic practice is as it relates to the selected learning opportunity!***

Approach your application as if the reader has no idea what you're proposing! Give them the full picture of who you are as an artist/organization, what your goals are, and how the opportunity will assist in achieving those goals.

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

PD Grant - Application

2. Provide a detailed timeline/schedule describing:

A. participation in the selected opportunity and,

B. when you plan to share or implement what was learned through the experience. In your response consider how the timeline and schedule connects to goals/benchmarks you have determined.

An Excellent to Outstanding response includes clear, specific and realistic timeline demonstrating participation in and plan for use/dissemination of professional development opportunity with thorough descriptions of both phases.

PD Grant - Application (Timeline)

Helpful Hints!

Include a full timeline/schedule of the entirety of the activities from beginning to end

Consider a daily, weekly (or other time increment) listing with specific dates/timeframes that share all steps and activities of the opportunity. In particular, include detailed activities of what to expect during the specific learning opportunity.

PD Grant - Application

3. Explain why you selected this experience and the process for selecting this specific professional development opportunity. In your response, address the history of success of the opportunity selected and its ability to strengthen your identified area(s) of growth.

An Excellent to Outstanding response includes how the selection of professional development source directly connects to the identified professional development need(s) and has a history of success in the identified area(s) for growth.

Creativity Grant - Application (History of Success)

Helpful Hints!

Include more about the PD opportunity and why you selected them.
Why this opportunity over something else that may be similar?

Consider how you know this will be the best fit for learning for you and your goals.

Include how they are successful – referrals? Instructors top of field?

PD Grant - Application

4. Provide an overall budget for the Professional Development opportunity you are participating in. In your response, include details for all anticipated expenses for the opportunity, source(s) of funding beyond the MSAC request, and how MSAC funds will be used.

An Excellent to Outstanding response includes that the proposed PD-specific financial information indicates realistic expenses for the professional development experience.

PD Grant - Application (Budget)

Helpful Hints!

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.

(ie - Conference Fee = \$750: includes fees for instructors, materials, 2 meals/day, etc.)

The response must be within the context of the narrative; attachments of other budgets/financials will not be considered

PD Grant - Application

- Attachments include w-9, Electronic Signature

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

FY24 Professional Development Opportunity Grant Application Scoring Rubric

Independent Artists: Describe the selected Professional Development opportunity you will participate in (including location, date, length, format, etc.). Provide details explaining your artistic practice, how the selected opportunity will address identified goals or areas of growth for yourself as an artist, and how what is learned will enhance your ability to better serve the public.

Organizations: Describe the selected Professional Development opportunity you or others from your organization will participate in (including location, date, length, format, who will participate, etc.). Provide details explaining your organization's mission and primary focus, how the selected opportunity will address identified goals or areas of growth for the organization, and how what is learned will enhance the organization's ability to better serve the public.

Clear, specific, and thorough explanation of the proposed professional development opportunity with detailed evidence	Clear explanation of the proposed professional development opportunity with some evidence of artistic and/or creative growth and	An overview of the proposed professional development opportunity with little evidence of artistic and/or creative growth and	Unclear explanation of the proposed professional development opportunity with no evidence of artistic and/or creative	
---	--	--	---	--

PD Grant - Grant Amount

- Available up to \$2,000
- One grant per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30)
- PD 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

All applications are reviewed by the panelists

- A dedicated group of panelists from across the state will review and score all applications
- Staff do not score applications

*Check out the Ways to Get Involved page of [MSAC.org](https://www.msac.org) if you have interest in becoming a panelist in future.

Monthly Application Review Process

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, reviewed and awarded monthly.

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

For example: Applications received in September (9/2-9/30) will be reviewed in October; notifications will be sent by early November

Notifications

If you're awarded - congratulations!

- You're only eligible for one PD Grant per fiscal year
 - Once awarded an FY26 PD Grant, you are not eligible to apply again until the FY27 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 September 2025 and December 2025 will have a Final Report deadline of August 15, 2026.
Applications submitted between January 2026 and March 2026 will have a Final Report deadline of December 31, 2026
- 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

PD Grant - FAQs

My Professional Development Opportunity takes place outside of Maryland, am I still eligible to apply?

Yes, the professional development opportunity can take place outside the state and cover travel expenses, while in alignment with the review criteria.

I'm interested in facilitating my own Professional Development offerings to other people, is that eligible?

No, hosting your own professional development offerings for others would be a better fit for a Project-based Creativity Grant. Professional Development is to support the learning and growth of the applicant.

PD Grant - FAQs

My organization receives GFO or Creativity general operating support from MSAC. Can I apply for a Professional Development Grant?

Yes! An organization can receive both general operating support and a PD Grant in the same fiscal year.

I'm eligible and applying to the Creativity Grant, can I also apply for the Professional Development Grant in the same month?

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

PD Grant - FAQs

I would like to apply for lessons/classes/etc with a private instructor - is this eligible?

Possibly - but check with Emily/Laura first! Professional Development opportunities must have *a public, established practice* of working with artists and/or arts organizations OR *be approved by the MSAC Program Directors*.

My PD opportunity is already complete. Can I submit for reimbursement of expenses?

No - we cannot reimburse for previously completed projects. You must submit an application before the PD activities take place to be considered eligible.

PD 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 PD Grant application. We only review the narrative questions per the scoring criteria. Do not include important information in links or other documents, as they will not be considered.

I want to hire a consultant for my organization to [update our website, write our annual appeal, etc.] - is this eligible?

There must be a clear learning opportunity associated with your work with the consultant. If you're just hiring them to do the work, then it wouldn't be eligible.

PD Grant - FAQs

I am an arts teacher/professor and I want to apply to attend an education-based conference - is this eligible?

The PD Grant is intended to support your work as an artist. If the primary focus of the PD opportunity is to support your work as a classroom teacher/professor (and not as an independent artist), the experience is likely ineligible, and may be supported through your school, local department of education, etc. Talk to staff to discuss specifics!

I've been invited to run a sales booth or present at a conference - can the PD Grant support these conference-related expenses?

If you are also participating in the conference as a conference-goer, then you can apply and focus on your participation at the conference and learning opportunities connected. If you are only presenting/selling and not otherwise participating in the conference, you would not be eligible for a PD grant. The grant cannot strictly support your presentation/promotion/sales of your work.

PD Grant - FAQs

I received a PD Grant last year to attend an annual conference. Can I apply again this year to attend the same conference? No - this is a new addition to the guidelines for FY25 - while you would be eligible to apply for a PD Grant again in the new fiscal year, it cannot support the same repeat activity that has already been funded in the past.

I'd like to apply for funding to research a particular element for a project I am working on. Would that be eligible for a PD Grant? The better option would be to consider applying for the new Creativity Grant specifically for the Planning Phases of a project. If the research/development/learning aspects are directly linked to a specific project, it is likely better suited for Creativity support. If the learning/growth opportunity is directly linked to yourself as an artist or arts administrator (a specific skill, technique, etc that would enhance your craft), it is likely better suited for PD support. Talk to a Program Director to discuss specific scenarios further.

Helpful Hint - Apply early!

While you are eligible to apply any time for the PD 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!

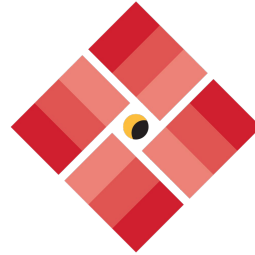
Questions

We are here to help!

Emily: emily.sollenberger@maryland.gov

Laura: laura.weiss@maryland.gov

Thank You!



PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

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