



THE FUTURE OF ARTIST EMPLOYMENT IN MARYLAND



Constituent feedback

NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT for the **ARTS**

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Overview

Purpose

MSAC is spending the year focusing on improving its efforts to connect Maryland artists with employment opportunities across the state. In September, it hosted “The Future of Artist Employment in Maryland,” a series of five public dialogues in which artists responded to prompts about MSAC’s artist employment initiative. Their recommendations form the first part of the data that will inform the creation of a responsive program that strives to meet the needs of Maryland’s artists. The anticipated rollout of this program is summer 2022.

During the September dialogues, artists requested that their notes be aggregated and published before MSAC sought any further responses from the public. This document is the result of that request. It is offered with the hope that Maryland artists who did not participate in the September dialogues will read their colleagues’ comments before offering their own responses via a public survey at <https://forms.gle/iRb8ZrxqSh7bNiLd8>, which will remain open through Dec. 3.

Respondents are also welcome to reach out to MSAC directly. Contact information is below.

Description

This document is laid out in six parts, which correspond to the six prompts presented to artists who attended the September dialogues:

- Prompt 1: MSAC’s largest grant program offers general operating support for organizations. Currently, there is no program that funds the “general operations” of being an artist. What is your response to the idea of general operating support for artists?
- Prompt 2: How often should general operating support for artists be offered, both within the year (e.g., annually, quarterly, monthly, etc.) and across years (i.e., should such support be a one-time-only or renewable opportunity)?
- Prompt 3: How can MSAC’s grantmaking process be more inclusive for artists who are new to their field, discipline, or practice?
- Prompt 4: MSAC strives to provide artists with non-monetary support through its professional development offerings, which are free sessions covering topics suggested by the public. What other forms of non-monetary support would be useful in supporting the goal of increasing artist employment?
- Prompt 5: Artists who are new to seeking public and private funding might benefit from a “starter package” supporting their success in this realm. What are the potential contents of such a package (e.g., seed money, access to training, organized networking events, etc.)?
- Prompt 6: Word-of-mouth recommendations and informal apprenticeships are powerful tools for connecting artists with resources and new skills. How could such tools be organized or amplified by MSAC to support a greater number of Maryland artists?

Each prompt is accompanied by a summary of respondents’ comments, followed by a full review of their conversation. Readers are encouraged to finish this document before responding to the public survey at <https://forms.gle/iRb8ZrxqSh7bNiLd8>, which will remain open through Nov. 30.

For more information, contact MSAC Senior Program Director Chad Buterbaugh at chad.buterbaugh@maryland.gov or 443.469.8239.

Prompt 1

MSAC's largest grant program offers general operating support for organizations. Currently, there is no program that funds the "general operations" of being an artist. What is your response to the idea of general operating support for artists?

Summary

The idea of general operating support for artists was met with enthusiastic affirmation by all respondents. "What artist wouldn't want, or doesn't need, operating support?" one person remarked. Many respondents pointed out that operating support for artists could help them pivot away from constant growth and toward sustainability, as with the periods when artists might be between projects. Another common response was to frame the activity of independent artists as essentially entrepreneurial, though some respondents expressed the desire for help in contextualizing their work along these lines. See below for a full review of the conversation.

Review

- Artists should be viewed as entrepreneurs, as they are responsible for business and overhead expenses, such as: promotional materials, website development, and the cost of finding new opportunities. Grant opportunities need to account for this kind of spending.
- Other common costs for self-employed artists are: business insurance, digital tools to track mileage and spending (i.e., Quickbooks), search engine optimization costs, website development, online ad buys and other marketing costs, the cost of time and effort to create and submit grant proposals, and art materials used for creative practice and teaching engagements.
- Directors of arts organizations also would benefit from access to general operating funds for artists, which could be used to compensate artists between projects. This would reduce artists' need to take second jobs to survive, and would also help with talent retention in specific areas.
- General operating funds for artists could be a resource to help artists find studio space. Such funds might be set up to reimburse artists for money spent on studio space.
- Consider the model of the National Endowment for the Arts in terms of providing helpful advice on how independent artists might fit into larger suites of grantmaking that also support organizations.
- General operating funds for artists could be a resource to help artists purchase artist liability insurance.
- Leave room for the fact that what counts as "general operating expenses" might differ even within the community of independent artists, as individuals work in different genres and have different approaches to their creative practices.
- General operating funds for artists could be a resource to help artists receive honoraria for shows
- General operating funds for artists should be conceived of as "baseline support" that helps artists who are struggling to make a living.
- If a program supports the general operations of being an artist, then artists should be involved in its creation. For example, artists have particular insight into the trauma that can be associated with considering personal finances.
- During the pandemic, MSAC's Emergency Grant program has been very beneficial. General operating funds for artists seems to be a natural extension of the Emergency Grant.
- A program supporting the general operations of being an artist should clearly define "artist" as part of program guidelines.

- Applications for general operating support for artists would need to be simpler and more accessible than applications for general operating support for organizations.
- A program supporting the general operations of being an artist should consider supporting small groups or ensembles of artists. Such groups sometimes function as LLCs rather than nonprofits, which makes them ineligible for current MSAC funding, unless they apply as individuals.
- The following organizations were named as resources for artists seeking help on various topics: [Baltimore Creatives Acceleration Network](#) (BCAN), [Maryland Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts](#) (MdVLA), [Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts](#) (WALA), and the [Maryland Small Business Development Center](#) (SBDC)
 - BCAN works to foster sustainability as a central part of creative practice
 - MdVLA, WALA, and SBDC work to advise artists on LLC and nonprofit status, fiscal sponsors, and other topics
- A program supporting the general operations of being an artist would reduce the need for artists to go through the effort of incorporating as a nonprofit or finding a fiscal sponsor.
- Consider pairing participants in the artist general operating support program with professionals who are able to provide direct legal or financial advice.
- A program supporting the general operations of being an artist moves grantmakers out of product- or project-driven funding and toward the idea that artists deserve consistent support, even when they are not directly involved in an artistic project.
- A program supporting the general operations of being an artist would demonstrate the value placed on artists in the State of Maryland, as well as align with efforts in other places to support universal basic income for artists (e.g. cities listed [in this article](#)).
- A program supporting the general operations of being an artist should clearly define what “general operations” entails, in terms of specific expenses.
- Some general operating expenses of being a performing artist include the costs of self-producing a show, including: securing venues; compensating tech crews, set designers, and actors; promotions; and costs associated with traveling shows.
- A program supporting the general operations of being an artist should clearly differ from current MSAC offerings like the Creativity Grant or Professional Development Opportunity Grant.
- General operating funds for artists should focus on professional sustainability. The goal should be to sustain rather than to grow, necessarily.
- Part of a program supporting the general operations of being an artist should include educational offerings helping artists understand how to think of their work as a business, as well as how to strategically use funds awarded from the general operating support program.
- A program supporting the general operations of being an artist should account for the differences between artists who have other jobs and those who support themselves fully through their creative work.
- Any application process associated with a general operating fund for artists should be crafted to dismantle current barriers that exist between artists and funding.
- The qualifications for being able to receive general operating support for artists should be standardized among all disciplines.
- The budget, allowable expenses, and non-allowable expenses of a program supporting the general operations of being an artist should be clear.
- Consider the application of a funding formula, as with MSAC’s current Grants for Organizations program, in a potential general operating support for artists program.
- A general operating support program for artists would provide a failsafe for teaching artists, who currently must work with larger organizations and might be penalized by cancellations or miscommunications.

- MSAC should be certain money is available in its budget before rolling out a general operating support for artists program.
- Consider the possibility of income brackets and historically resilient communities as bases for providing general operating support for artists.
- General operating support for artists should be clear about whether support functions more like a grant or an award.
- General operating support for artists should consider allowing for living expenses (e.g., daycare, health insurance, and other costs that are not project-specific).
- MSAC should consider tax incentives, as with those currently offered in Maryland Arts & Entertainment Districts, as a form of general operating support for artists.
- General operating support for artists should include curated access to grant writing workshops, networking events, professional development opportunities, and website and resume development sessions.

Prompt 2

How often should general operating support for artists be offered, both within the year (e.g., annually, quarterly, monthly, etc.) and across years (i.e., should such support be a one-time-only or renewable opportunity)?

Summary

The vast majority of respondents asserted that general operating support for artists should be offered on a recurring, renewable basis. Respondents made differing suggestions for how often funds should be offered within the year, whether annually, quarterly, or monthly. On the other hand, the consensus that support should be renewable across years, though this was tempered with multiple ideas for implementation: first, that career sustainability should be a primary goal of such a general operating support fund for artists; second, that application processes should be simple and accessible; third, that artists should be involved in the creation of the application; and fourth, that artists at varying stages of their careers should have equitable access to such support. See below for a full review of the conversation.

Review

- Renewable grants would increase the sustainability of artists' work.
- If funds were available on a rolling basis, it would reduce the need for artists to center planning and effort around a grant deadline that only occurs once a year.
- A program providing general operating funds for artists should consider ways to reduce the burden of filling and submitting paperwork.
- One way to reduce the paperwork burden is by making applications necessary only every two years, while funding would continue in the interval.
- An annual funding opportunity would bring general operating funds for artists in line with general operating funds for organizations, and this would make opportunities available across the board in the arts sector.
- Renewable general operating funds for artists would provide artists the opportunity to create budgets and time allocations in the long term.
- General operating funds for artists should take the form of a monthly stipend ensuring baseline survival.
- In planning a general operating fund for artists, a people-centered approach is best, as individuals have needs that are different from organizations. Artists should be involved with the planning of such a fund, including its application process.
- General operating support for artists should be available twice a year.
- A general operating fund for artists should account for the fact that artists' needs will change at different times in their career or creative practice. For example, the fund would need to cover the unique needs arising in periods of crisis.
- Reporting on general operating fund expenditure should be simple.
- Reporting on general operating funds for artists would be unnecessary.
- A general operating fund for artists would need to account for the need to broadly serve artists within the constraints of a presumably limited amount of funding available at MSAC.

- A general operating support fund for artists should be built with the intention of helping artists sustain their livelihoods. If fiscal support is limited, the idea of operating support might extend to include offerings like in-kind donations, professional development, and other forms of non-monetary support.
- The application for artist's general operating support should allow artists to retain their own ideas, goals, and creative perspectives, rather than requiring them to observe the same requirements as organizations applying for general operating support.
- General operating support for artists should be available on a monthly basis for as long as three years.
- General operating support for artists should offer separate funding categories for artists with different levels of experience. This would prevent newcomers from having to compete for the same resources with more experienced artists, who might have more familiarity with grant writing.
- General operating support for artists might provide modest amounts of money. This alone could provide enough extra support to make a second or third job unnecessary.
- Applications for general operating support should be required quarterly and should be highly accessible to artists, even those who have limited grant writing experience.
- General operating support for artists should change the current paradigm, in which funding is awarded on a one-time or project-oriented basis.
- If career sustainability is a goal of the artist general operating support program, then it must focus on including an accessible application, awarding a sustaining amount of funding, and being clear about expected outcomes of the grant, as well as the timelines associated with the funding process.
- General operating support for artists should have clearly-defined differences from MSAC's Creativity Grant.
- The success of a renewable general operating support fund for artists will depend on artists' view of themselves as self-employed professionals with defined budgets. In this regard, organizations' approach to operations can provide examples, in terms of quarterly and annual milestones reporting expenses and income, the practice of keeping adequate cash reserves on hand, and defined check-ins with grantmakers to determine grant amounts from year to year.
- If multi-year general operating support is made available for artists, it would have to account for the fact that artists' funding needs might be inconsistent from year to year.
- In subsequent years of general operating support for artists, applications should require less effort, so artists may devote energy toward expanding and growing their funding in areas outside MSAC.
- General operating support for artists should focus on balanced, equitable funding, as the amount of support available through MSAC is likely to be limited.
- If general operating support for artists is offered each year, a certain percentage of annual grants should be reserved for first-time applicants, in order to ensure a broader granting portfolio.
- General operating support for Maryland artists should consider the Canadian model, in which regular arts funding is generally more available to artists who have a proven track record of: 1) making their living from the arts; and 2) making positive contributions to society.
- General operating support for Maryland artists should consider the model of some European countries, in which regular arts funding is generally more available to artists who have a proven track record of regular artistic activity.
- Receiving an artist general operating support for a grant should allow for automatic eligibility to receive a second such grant the next year.
- General operating support funds for artists should be distributed in equal amounts on a monthly basis throughout the granting period.
- General operating support funds for artists should compensate artists for the time and effort taken to re-apply for subsequent years of funding.

- General operating support for artists should be renewable, but there should be at least a one-year gap between applications. Although multi-year funding is a good idea, it might reduce the number of artists who could receive funding, thus creating inequity.
- If renewable, general operating support for artists should provide three years of continuous funding followed by a two-year period of ineligibility.
- General operating funds for artists should be part of a larger suite of artist-centered opportunities that include clearly-defined possibilities for funding emergency needs and living expenses, such as rent, utilities, daycare, etc.
- If demonstration of making a living through the arts is an eligibility requirement for receiving general operating support for artists, equal emphasis should be placed in reducing gatekeeping structures that prevent newer or less experienced artists from accessing funds.
- General operating support for artists should account for the fact that less established artists could be disadvantaged by not knowing the many costs associated with maintaining a life as an artist.
- General operating support for artists should not be made available based on an artist's involvement in a particular project or production.

Prompt 3

How can MSAC's grantmaking process be more inclusive for artists who are new to their field, discipline, or practice?

Summary

For this prompt, respondents' primary recommendation was for MSAC to focus on relationship-building as a way of supporting newer artists. Specifically, relationship-building opportunities were identified at the levels of: artist-to-arts council, artist-to-organization, and artist-to-artist. In addition, respondents suggested that MSAC find ways to target newer artists for support by reserving certain grant opportunities for them, or by creating an official status (e.g., "emerging artist") that would determine how MSAC fosters connections with such artists. The idea of direct outreach to high school and college seniors was mentioned multiple times, as was the idea of organized mentorship between more and less experienced artists. See below for a full review of the conversation.

Review

- MSAC can support newer artists by going into universities, colleges, and high schools with pre-professional programs to give presentations on the grant writing process. This would make the process less intimidating for many artists who are about to enter their post-graduate creative careers.
- MSAC can support newer artists by giving grant writing workshops at multiple levels: a broader, high-level course that gives an overview of how to apply for grants, along with a detailed, in-depth course that provides particular strategies on grant writing. The Maryland Micro-Credentials for Creative Classrooms offered by the [Maryland State Department of Education, Fine Arts Office](#), could be a good model for such a curriculum.
- MSAC should offer funding for ensembles of artists working in theater and other collaborative genres, whose creative practices might not be connected to a nonprofit organization.
- An organized messaging strategy could help organizations who are aware of MSAC's work pass along ideas and opportunities to the artists they hire.
- MSAC should consider opportunities for artists working within various tax designations. Whether they file a W2, W9, or 1099, all artists are in need of support.
- MSAC's support of newer artists should include clear guidelines on how artists can access such support. Newer applicants should understand how the quality of their creative work is being evaluated, how opportunities are reserved for either emerging or established artists, and how all evaluation criteria are weighted.
- A mentorship system could allow newer artists gain knowledge from those who are more experienced. Mentoring topics might include individualized trainings, introductions to panel service, and familiarization with the grantmaking process.
- MSAC should identify a cohort of newer artists to have regular meetings with MSAC staff.
- MSAC should offer opportunities for free-to-the-artist studio space, in which rent could be subsidized on both short-term and long-term bases.
- MSAC should develop connections with community arts programs to offer training, mentorship, webinars, and office hours for artists.
- MSAC should work with real estate developers to facilitate the creation of more live-work communities for artists.

- MSAC should develop and leverage relationships with organizations who might encourage artists in their circles to connect with the arts council. Such organizations might include smaller nonprofits, literary magazines, arts startups, and schools.
- If MSAC offers a program subsidizing studio rent, it should be aware of rent thresholds beyond which many artists are likely to be priced out.
- If MSAC offers a program assisting with artist living spaces, it should consider the benefit to artists of living on public transportation lines or in Arts and Entertainment Districts.
- MSAC should offer grant writing workshops in a retreat-based format that allows fuller discussion. This could address the disappointment felt by grant applicants who are unsuccessful in their initial attempts, as well as offer curricula helping artists navigate the transition from having a day job to being a full-time artist.
- If MSAC develops programs targeted at supporting newer artists, it should account for the fact that the threshold for success might be lower based on newer artists' relatively limited experience. Such programs should include mechanisms specifically designed to encourage participation from newer artists.
- MSAC support for newer artists should account for the fact that many such artists have day jobs and cannot attend daytime events. Evening sessions or recorded content would be necessary to ensure maximum reach.
- MSAC support for newer artists should consider successful models for supporting individual artists and designers, such as that offered by the [Rhode Island Foundation](#).
- MSAC support for newer artists should be categorized by grant application category. During application, artists should be able to self-select into "emerging" or "established" categories, depending on their levels of experience.
- Advocacy organizations outside of MSAC have important roles to play in supporting newer artists. MSAC should help facilitate connections between newer artists and advocacy organizations like [Maryland Citizens for the Arts](#) (MCA), [Arts Education in Maryland Schools](#) (AEMS), and [Teaching Artists of the Mid-Atlantic](#) (TAMA).
- Any MSAC opportunity intended to support newer artists should include multiple grant writing workshops and informational sessions.
- Artists who have been successful with grant writing should be invited to co-facilitate grant writing workshops hosted by MSAC.
- Grant writing workshops hosted by MSAC should include separate sessions for artists who do not write grants on a regular basis.
- Language associated with any aspect of the MSAC granting process should be as accessible as possible. Examples of successful applications should be made available to new applicants.
- MSAC should make efforts to address newer artists via social media outreach. This outreach should acknowledge the fact that the United States is experiencing an artistic renaissance in which more workers are breaking away from the typical model of working 40 hours a week during daytime hours.
- If MSAC conducts outreach with college, university, and high school seniors, it should consider supporting field trips to important annual events like Maryland Arts Day in Annapolis.
- If MSAC offers grants tailored to support newer artists, the application process for the Emergency Grant could provide a useful template.
- If MSAC offers grants tailored to support newer artists, the application for the Independent Artist Award, which is easy to navigate and takes limited time to fill out, could provide a useful template.
- Grants designed to support marketing, promotion, and brand growth efforts would greatly support the careers of newer artists.
- MSAC efforts to support newer artists should center accessibility, in particular the idea that MSAC stewards public funds intended for the benefit of all artists in Maryland.

- MSAC grant programs designed to support newer artists should be simpler and more accessible than either MSAC grant programs designed to support organizations, or the grant programs of many other organizations supporting the arts.
- Continuing to expand the number of panelists evaluating MSAC grant applications will help introduce newer artists to the work of MSAC, as well as provide some compensation for their work.
- Part of MSAC outreach in colleges, universities, and high schools could include providing honoraria to working artists who would be willing to talk to students about the opportunities that will be available to them upon graduation.
- MSAC should regularly review its grant applications to ensure they are effectively constructed, includes relevant questions, and invites applicants to reach out, after the application is submitted, to make comments on how the process went for them.
- MSAC should provide context for applicants on when, how, and why its applications require quantitative (versus qualitative) information.

Prompt 4

MSAC strives to provide artists with non-monetary support through its professional development offerings, which are free sessions covering topics suggested by the public.

What other forms of non-monetary support would be useful in supporting the goal of increasing artist employment?

Summary

Respondents offered many different suggestions on what forms of non-monetary support would benefit their careers. Generally, these suggestions fell into two categories: first, help with exposure, which would entail access to space for exhibiting, working, performing, rehearsing, creating, and the like; and second, help with infrastructure, which would entail help with taxes, marketing, connection with technical support like stage crews, and other factors. Other respondents also suggested targeted revisions to MSAC grant guidelines to improve independent artists' access to funds. See below for a full review of the conversation.

Review

- MSAC should support artists in the process of tax preparation, with particular focus on deductions, write-offs, and which regulations have changed since the previous year. A list of tax preparers who have experience working with artists also would be helpful.
- If MSAC offers support to artists in the process of tax preparation, it should also consider offering such help to ensembles and organizations, who would benefit, as well.
- Continuation of current non-monetary supports, including MSAC's Maryland Arts Directory, and the Maryland State Department of Education, Fine Arts Office's Micro-Credentials for Creative Classrooms, would be a valuable help.
- MSAC should facilitate artists' access to performance, exhibition, creation, and rehearsal spaces.
- If MSAC provides space for artist work, it should account for the fact that different art forms require different types of space (e.g., an ideal dance space looks different from an ideal visual art space)
- MSAC should facilitate artists' access to performance spaces that do not operate solely on a paid performance basis. Removing this financial expectation would reduce the pressure artists might otherwise feel to sell tickets.
- MSAC should support artists by providing organizations with fair pay rates for teaching artists.
- MSAC's continued efforts in demonstrating the importance of the arts to Maryland's economy would be helpful, as would any effort that raises the value of artists and creatives in the eyes of employers.
- An MSAC-organized group of volunteers dedicated to helping artists do administrative work, including grant writing, would be helpful. A useful model for this work would be [Doctors without Borders](#).
- MSAC should facilitate artists' access to co-working spaces in several places around the state. Each co-working space should include one administrative staff person to assist with resident artists' needs.
- MSAC should consider including sole proprietorships and gig workers among the types of arts sector workers it supports.

- MSAC should incentivize the larger organizations it supports to provide help for independent artists or smaller organizations. The Grants for Organizations (GFO) program could be a good home for such incentivization.
- MSAC should support community-building among artists by facilitating networking opportunities to exchange ideas and build familiarity with one another.
- MSAC should provide clear expectations on what kinds of responses adequately answer questions on its grant applications (e.g., Creativity Grant prompts asking for information on project impact and community relevance).
- MSAC should facilitate a system in which artists may access services from legal and accounting experts on a sliding scale.
- MSAC should assist artists with promoting and advertising their work.
- MSAC should facilitate newer artists' participation in exhibitions or performances.
- A possible collaborator for MSAC on increasing artist employment opportunities is [Strategic Music Partners](#) in Prince George's County.
- MSAC should facilitate connections between smaller arts organizations and experienced board members or influential advocates. This could have a positive effect on helping to build artists' networks.
- MSAC should encourage the opening of more government building spaces for artists and designers to use.
- MSAC should support a leadership program in which cohorts of artists could learn skills to improve their careers.
- If MSAC offers leadership training for artists, it should account for the fact that higher education programs in these subjects are not always accessible to practicing artists and designers, due to various personal and professional constraints.
- MSAC should publish lists of funding opportunities and pro bono administrative services for artists.
- MSAC should foster relationships with organizations who are offering resources that could be of benefit to artists. A possible collaborator and model organizations for such work is [Creative Capital](#) of New York City.
- If MSAC facilitates artists' connection with artmaking spaces, some possible collaborators and model organizations are the [Howard County Center for the Arts](#) and the [Center for Cultural Innovation](#) in Los Angeles.
- MSAC should provide marketing assistance by boosting artists' work through social media.
- If MSAC offers career development assistance to artists, it should be aware of the fact that new graduates in many disciplines are faced with similar challenges regarding developing their professional pathways.
- MSAC should provide artists with business skills, including information on the benefits or drawbacks of working as a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC).
- MSAC should collaborate with the office of the [Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC) of Maryland serving the Corridor Region between Baltimore and the Capital. This collaboration could off-load the details of artists' business development to the SBDC, while leaving MSAC free to address other needs.
- MSAC should leverage its relationships with larger organizations to help connect and support local artists through internships, space offerings, and collaborative performance opportunities.
- MSAC should help artists connect with community centers, arts centers, and other places in which local residents are welcome. Such connections would give artists a chance to share their work.
- MSAC should assist artists with direct mailing tools as a way of boosting marketing.
- MSAC should serve as a clearinghouse that larger entities, like the federal government, could visit to more easily search for and identify artists who would fit their project needs.

- MSAC professional development offerings for artists should include assistance with developing a resume or curriculum vitae (CV).
- MSAC should assist artists in improving their skills at reporting the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of projects. A good model for this kind of work is [Sharp Insight](#), which provides a similar service for [Nonprofit Montgomery](#).
- MSAC should sponsor art camps and residencies.
- If MSAC offers grant writing assistance, the curriculum should include a general “dos and don’ts” list, as well as account for the fact that grant text often includes coded language.

Prompt 5

Artists who are new to seeking public and private funding might benefit from a “starter package” supporting their success in this realm. What are the potential contents of such a package (e.g., seed money, access to training, organized networking events. etc.)?

Summary

Respondents to this prompt pointed out the similarity between what is asked here and what is asked in Prompt 4, on non-monetary support, and Prompt 6, on networking and mentorship. Apart from that, recommendations focused on building starter packages with two factors in mind: first, that the contents of such a package offer resources the recipient would be unlikely to receive otherwise; and second, that the starter package idea be used as a framework for ensuring MSAC’s reach into the state’s less-frequently served geographical areas, especially rural towns and counties. The idea of seed money also was broadly supported. See below for a full review of the conversation.

Review

- A starter package for artists should include tips on how to negotiate contracts for gallery shows and performances. It should also include current market rates for such work, as well as access to professionals who might be able to advise in this regard.
- A starter package for artists should include guidance on how to seek funds from private foundations, including subsidized access to grant-seeking resources like [Candid](#) and [GrantStation](#).
- MSAC should explore a formal relationship with [Enoch Pratt Free Library](#), where some staff are responsible for helping patrons access grant-seeking resources, and some grant-seeking tools are available for free use.
- MSAC should explore a formal relationship with the [CASH Campaign of Maryland](#), which assists Marylanders with tax preparation if they meet qualifying factors.
- A starter package for artists should include training and networking opportunities, but also a number of personal stories from artists, which could help build a sense of community.
- Starter packages for artists should be fitted to specific circumstances (e.g., an entrepreneurial artist teaching mixed media art to children and young adults with special needs).
- Starter packages for artists should be made available for free. Access to training, networking, funding resources, and mentorship should be typical contents, though seed money should be suited to the recipients’ specific needs.
- In assembling starter packages for artists, MSAC should center sustainability and accessibility of resources in order to ensure maximum reach to intended beneficiaries.
- If MSAC offers starter packages for artists, it should account for student artists who are about to graduate from degree-granting programs.
- Starter packages for artists should be designed to serve artists across the state, not just in Greater Baltimore.
- The contents of a starter package for artists should include resources to reduce the perception of grant writing as not worth the effort or unwelcoming to certain types of artists.
- If a starter package for artists includes mentorship resources, whoever does the mentoring should be paid for working in this capacity.

- The contents of a starter package for artists should include a complimentary membership to a relevant professional organization, which might allow the recipient to experience a conference or other event that would have otherwise been inaccessible.
- The idea of a starter package for artists should integrate with the Maryland Arts Summit, which might offer a dedicated track for new artists and could include mentoring and coaching features.
- The contents of a starter package for artists should be paired with sustained support via an operating grant for artists. In addition, the contents of the starter package should focus on marketing tools and resources, such as website development, online store creation, software discounts, consultation on content management and branding, video production support, and assistance with grant or pitch writing.
- A starter package for artists should broaden the definition of funding beyond grants to include fiscal knowledge, tools, and processes.
- Starter packages for artists should be intentionally distributed to benefit communities that are less frequently served through MSAC grantmaking.
- A starter package for artists should offer a broad array of networking resources, including connections with community groups, recreation centers, houses of worship, schools, and after-school programs.
- A starter package for artists should include educational resources addressing the business skills needed to successfully work as an artist.
- If seed money and networking are parts of starter packages for artists, distribution should focus on artists who have just moved to Maryland, as they might have a greater need for startup funds and connection with fellow artists.
- Starter packages for artists should include tips on how to get booked at larger venues.
- Starter packages for artists should include educational resources on how to produce a performance or show.
- A starter package for artists should include examples of successful grant applications from multiple funding organizations. This would reduce some artists' feeling that grant writing is intimidating or elusive.
- Starter packages for artists should include a curriculum on professional communication, with particular emphasis on how to communicate with potential employers.
- The basic contents of a starter package for artists should include: grant proposal templates, business plan templates, sponsor letter templates, lists of employing venues, lists of professional development offerings, retreat opportunities, travel funds, and operating funds,

Prompt 6

Word-of-mouth recommendations and informal apprenticeships are powerful tools for connecting artists with resources and new skills.

How could such tools be organized or amplified by MSAC to support a greater number of Maryland artists?

Summary

Respondents largely attested to the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations and informal apprenticeships. Suggestions for taking action on these items included: leveraging current MSAC contacts to spread the story of arts council opportunities, using virtual tools to extend the reach of networks of artists, framing networking to include artist-to-artist but also artist-to-vendor relationships, and instituting an MSAC-sponsored mentorship program. See below for a full review of the conversation.

Review

- MSAC should conduct outreach in schools in an effort to broker stronger relationships between students, staff, and teaching artists. The goal of this work should be to build a culture of working with teaching artists statewide.
- If MSAC facilitates the growth of word-of-mouth network, it should begin by organizing groups of artists whose ideas and work overlap in some way.
- If MSAC facilitates the growth of word-of-mouth network, it should efforts in which word-of-mouth communication would be a by-product (e.g., providing rehearsal space or artists' expositions would bring artists together to interact and carry one another's stories back out into the community).
- MSAC should consider taking time in its public meetings to allow artist-attendees to greet one another and share contact information.
- MSAC should offer a virtual bulletin board and social media space for artists and organizations to connect with one another and find opportunities.
- MSAC should develop a collateral kit to share with members of its contact list who would be willing to spread the word about arts council opportunities in their own areas. Another way of implementing this idea would be to require grantees to tell one additional artist about the arts council as a condition of funding.
- If MSAC supports a mentorship program connecting emerging and established artists, successful collaboration would not be left to chance. In addition, formal mentorship would benefit emerging artists in unique situations (e.g., active duty military reintegrating into civilian life).
- MSAC should bolster connections between artists and recommended vendors, such as those providing photography, accounting, or other professional services.
- MSAC should curate a list of small businesses (e.g., bakeries, restaurants, cafes, etc.) that are actively looking for artists to exhibit or perform.
- If MSAC facilitates the growth of the word-of-mouth network, it should account for the fact that some artists never apply for arts council opportunities due to a sense of intimidation or uncertainty.
- MSAC should set up a mentorship program to link new and established artists. Program mentors should be artists who have received grants, and their mentoring work should include: general training on the grantmaking process, participation in grant evaluation panels, and grant writing assistance.

- If MSAC supports a mentorship program connecting emerging and established artists, it should offer opportunities for artists who want to connect with other artists living and working in different parts of the state.
- MSAC should support apprenticeships and internships for emerging artists. These programs should include multiple points of contact to gauge each artist's progress. This work would result in a creative collective based in professional development and personal engagement.
- If MSAC supports a mentorship program connecting emerging and established artists, all participating parties should be paid.
- If MSAC facilitates the growth of the word-of-mouth network, it should account for the fact that people who attend arts council meetings are likely those with more time, travel, and technological resources, as well as adequate feelings of safety in terms of speaking up and entering conversations. Strategic collaborations with organizations like [Teaching Artists of the Mid-Atlantic](#) (TAMA) and [Arts Education in Maryland Schools](#) (AEMS) could be useful in ensuring broader participation from artists.
- If MSAC supports a mentorship program connecting emerging and established artists, it should consider leveraging its relationship with [Maryland Arts and Entertainment Districts](#), which can offer local perspectives on artists who are active and seeking collaboration, as well as provide guidance on applying for grants and implementing projects.
- MSAC should position itself as the primary resource for colleges and universities who are seeking artists of any kind. An intentional, developed relationship between MSAC and colleges and universities would increase the chance that Maryland artists are being hired to work at Maryland higher learning institutions.