Maryland Touring Roster
FY2026 Guidelines

Applications accepted July 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS
arts.gov

Individuals who do not use conventional print may contact the Maryland State Arts Council to obtain this publication in an alternate format. (410) 767-6555 or msac.commerce@maryland.gov

For individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
TTY: Maryland Relay 1 (800) 735-2258 or 711

This publication is available as a PDF on the MSAC website: www.msac.org.

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Program Overview

Purpose

The Maryland Presenting & Touring Program, consisting of the Maryland Touring Grant and the Maryland Touring Roster, is designed to spark and promote the artistic collaboration between Maryland touring artists and Maryland presenters with the goal to increase opportunities for professional performing artists to obtain successful touring engagements.

The Maryland Touring Roster is a list of juried Maryland-based artists who have a demonstrated history of successful professional touring engagements. Artists who are appointed to the Roster have been selected through a review process, as outlined in the following sections.[1]

Selected artists will be listed within the Maryland Arts Directory, under the "View Presenting and Touring Roster" option. The roster list may be included in various MSAC communications.

Members of the Touring Roster are eligible to receive artist fees through the Maryland Touring Grant, which provides funding to eligible Maryland-based non-profit organizations to support the presentation of Touring Roster members. Presenting organizations can request up to $5,000 in Touring Grant funds through a separate application process. Touring Grants support the presenting organization's costs associated with presenting their selected Maryland Touring Artist(s).

Acceptance to the roster does not guarantee bookings and/or Touring Grants. Roster artists are encouraged to mention the Touring Grant opportunity to current/potential presenters when discussing bookings.

Application Cycle

Application Period
The Maryland Touring Roster Program accepts applications from July 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026. Applications are panel reviewed on a bimonthly (every other month) basis.

Timeline
The application timelines below are estimates and may change according to application volume, funding changes, constituent needs, staff capacity, or other factors. Subscribe to MSAC communications to be notified of any public information sessions and other program updates by completing the signup form on our webpage.
- Applications
  - Publication: July 1, 2025
  - Deadline: Applications accepted through March 31, 2026
- Application review and notifications
  - Reviewed monthly according to the following schedule:

Applications received July 1 - August 31, 2025
Applications reviewed/scored September 1 - 30
Notifications sent to applicants early October

Applications received September 1 - October 31, 2025
Applications reviewed/scored November 1 - 30
Notifications sent to applicants early December

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[1] A resource to assist with understanding this document is the MSAC Glossary, which provides an overview of terms commonly used in MSAC grant guidelines, on the website, and in other published materials

Applications received November 1 - December 31, 2025
Applications reviewed/scored January 1 - 31
Notifications sent to applicants early February

Applications received January 1 - February 28, 2026
Applications reviewed/scored March 1 - 31
Notifications sent to applicants early April

Applications received March 1 - 31, 2026
Applications reviewed/scored April 1 - 30
Notifications sent to applicants early May

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must meet the requirements listed below.

For Independent Artists
- Must be a Maryland resident (owning or renting residential real property in Maryland) at the time of application submission and throughout any MSAC Touring Grant-funded presentations or programs, provided to the presenting organization. Proof of residency may be required
- Must be 18 years of age or older
- College and university-based performers must perform regularly off-campus for professional fees

For Performing Companies/Groups (more than one performer)
- All individuals in the company or group must be 18 years of age or older
- At least 50% of the company's artists must be Maryland residents (owning or renting residential real property in Maryland) at the time of application submission and throughout any MSAC Touring Grant-funded presentations or programs, provided to the presenting organization. Proof of residency may be required.
- The company's primary place of business must be located in Maryland
- College and university-based performers must perform regularly off-campus for professional fees
- If the company or group has its own nonprofit status, the makeup of the performing ensemble must meet the eligibility criteria outlined above for Performing Companies/Groups

All Applicants
- In addition to the age and residency requirements above, applicants must be able to demonstrate they have a successful history of professional touring engagements.
  - A tour is a public performance in a venue or venues that are not typically or regularly scheduled by the performer. This includes both one-time performances and longer, multi-engagement tours.

Artists approved for the Touring Roster will be asked to renew their Touring Roster status every three years through a brief renewal application that will be reviewed internally by MSAC staff.

The eligibility guidelines listed above provide an overview only. In some cases, MSAC staff might make eligibility determinations addressing situations not described here but in support of the mission of the agency and the Department of Commerce.

Application, Review, and Notification

Application and Review

SmartSimple

Applications are submitted via the secure, online grants management system, SmartSimple. Log in or create a free account on the [SmartSimple registration page](#).

- Applicants are required to complete and submit applications by electronic means, including the use of an electronic signature. To make an accessibility request for an alternative submission method, please contact the program director listed in the Contact Information section.
- Technical support for SmartSimple is available. See contact information section.
- Applicants must meet any revision deadlines requested after submission, as specified in writing, or the application will be considered withdrawn
- By submitting an application to MSAC, whether via electronic means or otherwise, applicant agrees to allow MSAC to retain records per state and federal document retention laws and policies. Applicant is also agreeing to the Terms and Privacy Policy of SmartSimple as applicable to MSAC..

Panelist service

MSAC convenes panelists, representing a range of arts expertise statewide, to evaluate applications electronically. Panelists are selected via public application process based on relevant experience and/or expertise. Opportunities to serve as panelists for various programs are posted throughout the year; individuals interested in panel service are encouraged to learn more and apply on MSAC's [Ways to Get Involved webpage.](#)

Application form and review criteria

The application is a digital form available in SmartSimple and consisting of prompts requiring dropdown menu selections, fill-in answers, and external file uploads.

Application evaluation is based on review criteria that correspond with the prompts in the application form. The review criteria provide guidance on rating an applicant's response to a prompt.

Application prompts and review criteria are provided below, for reference.

Application prompt	Review criteria
1. Describe the artist or company to a potential presenter	Excellent - 5 Points Provides a clear and concise overview of the artist/company using language that can be effectively transferred to venue marketing materials
2. Describe the artistic goals, qualifications, and experience of the artist(s) involved. Address how touring fits into these goals. In the response, provide brief biographical information about the key member(s).	Excellent - 5 Points Clear and concise artistic goals, qualifications and experiences of the artist(s) involved; touring is authentically aligned with the goals, qualifications and experiences of the artist(s) involved; the biographies demonstrate a high level of experience and training to support the artistic goals.

3. Describe the artist's or the company/group's management regarding touring and programming arrangements.	Excellent - 5 Points Includes specific details about how tours are managed; specific details about how programming is developed, and; specific information about how programming is prepared for touring opportunities.
4. Describe the basic space requirements for a performance, such as: Flooring, Stage Dimensions, Backstage Needs, Amplification, Lighting, Front of House Support, Backstage Support, and any other technical requirements	Excellent - 5 Points Includes specific details outlining space requirements that support the best possible performance environment for the artist/company balanced with reasonable and informative expectations for a presenter.
Describe any community, residency, and/or educational program(s) that are offered in addition to the proposed programming (if applicable - not required or scored).	N/A - Not Scored
5. Supply links/attachments to the following: - Three work samples from previous touring/performance engagements. - A list of touring engagements that have occurred within the past three years. - The artist/company's standard performance contract. - Examples of promotional material.	Excellent - 5 Points Supplemental materials clearly and concisely demonstrate the applicant's artistic work. The list of touring engagements, which have occurred within the past three years, demonstrate a capacity for an expansion of engagements. The artist/company's standard performance contract is clear and detailed. The examples of promotional material clearly represent the experience of the artist/company.

The complete scoring rubrics can be found on the program website here.

Application Status Notification

Notification
After the bimonthly panel review, applicants will be notified of the application status as soon as possible and, if approved, receive further instructions on how to set up a Roster profile in the Arts Directory.

The individual listed as the primary contact in the application will receive all notifications; for organizational applicants, notifications will be sent to the primary contact and any other contacts on the organization's account. Automated notifications from SmartSimple will be sent from noreply@smartsimple.com. Please adjust email notification and security settings to ensure receipt of these notifications. Check your spam folder if a notification has not arrived to your inbox.

Reporting
There are no reports associated with membership to the Maryland Touring Roster.

Ineligible and Declined Applications

Applications that are not approved for the Touring Roster generally fall into one of two categories: ineligible or declined.

An application is marked ineligible if it is not complete or does not comply with the eligibility requirements of a particular program. An application can be marked ineligible at any time during the review process.

After an application is considered eligible, it may be declined for several reasons. An application may be declined due to funding allocation limitations at the time, or for the following reasons:

- Required information is incomplete or insufficient to make an award determination
- There are material inconsistencies between the application and the organization's actual operations
- There are significant operational, financial, or other circumstances that reasonably suggest the applicant is, or may become, unable to use the grant funds in alignment with the grant guidelines and agreement.

Application Feedback

Applicants may request feedback on their applications—whether ineligible, declined, or approved for the roster—by submitting a feedback request form. A link to this form will be provided in grant notification emails.

Applicants may re-apply within the same fiscal year if an application is not approved. If an applicant is denied three times within a fiscal year, the Executive Director will determine eligibility for future submissions for the remainder of the fiscal year. It may be determined that the applicant is not eligible for submission again for the remainder of the fiscal year or that a proposal for the same project may not be eligible for submission again.

Contact Information

MSAC staff offer technical assistance when feasible throughout the application process. This includes professional development related to grant/application writing and program requirements; one-on-one conversations; and tailored feedback.

For more information on the Touring Roster application process, contact:

- Emily Sollenberger, Program Director, Arts Services (Visual/Media Arts, Multi-Discipline, Folk/Traditional Arts, Service)
    - emily.sollenberger@maryland.gov
    - (443) 326.5637
- Laura Weiss, Program Director, Arts Services (Theatre, Music, Dance, Literary Arts)
    - laura.weiss@maryland.gov
    - (443) 326.5564
- Grants logistics and technological assistance
    - Catherine Teixeira, Grants Director
        - catherine.teixeira@maryland.gov
        - (443) 799.7256
    - Tammy Oppel, Grants Management Associate
        - tammy.oppel@maryland.gov

- ■ (410) 326.5555
- ○ Kirk Amaral Snow, Grants Management Associate
  - ■ kirk.amaralsnow@maryland.gov
  - ■ (410) 767.8865

MSAC Overview

Description

MSAC is an appointed body of 17 Maryland citizens, 13 of whom are named by the Governor to three-year terms that may be renewed once. Two private citizens and two legislators are appointed by the President of the Senate and by the Speaker of the House. All councilors serve without salary.

To carry out its mission, MSAC awards grants to nonprofit arts organizations, arts programs, and individual artists, and provides application assistance, professional development, and other resources to individuals and groups. MSAC reserves the right to prioritize grant awards.

MSAC receives its funds from an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland; grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; and, on occasion, contributions from private, non-governmental sources.

Authority
MSAC is an agency of the State of Maryland under the authority of the Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts.

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lieutenant Governor
Harry Coker, Jr., Secretary of Commerce
Steven Skerritt-Davis, Executive Director, MSAC

Staff
MSAC maintains professional staff to administer its programs. For staff listing, visit the [MSAC staff page.](#)

Meetings
Council and panelist meetings are open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Act set forth in Title 3 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The dates, times, and locations of Council and panelist meetings may be obtained on the [Meeting Notices page](#), or by contacting MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov or (410) 767-6555.

Mission and Goals
MSAC's mission is to advance 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.

MSAC's strategic plan outlines five pillars and goals:

1. Access: Bolster access to arts experiences and resources
2. Awareness: Amplify the stories of Maryland's arts sector and the value of public support
3. Connection: Foster networks within and beyond the arts sector
4. Equity: Cultivate a thriving arts ecosystem centered in equity
5. Leadership: Commit to a culture of care and innovation

Read [MSAC's full strategic plan](#) to learn more about implementation actions.

Equity and Justice Statement

The arts celebrate our state's diversity, connect our shared humanity, and transform individuals and communities. 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, disability, class, language, and/or ability.

The driving goals of MSAC's grant processes are:
- To yield a greater variety of funded projects
- To eliminate biases that may be found in any part of the granting process (e.g., applications, panelist procedures, adjudication systems)
- To acknowledge positions of privilege while questioning practices, shifting paradigms of status quo arts activities, and taking more risks
- To expand deliberations to include criteria beyond current conventions or Western traditions

Accessibility

MSAC is committed to making sure all Marylanders can access its programs and services. Everyone is welcome, and all MSAC events and activities must be fully accessible both physically and programmatically. MSAC complies with all applicable disability-related statutes and regulations and seeks to ensure meaningful participation by all Marylanders, regardless of need or ability. See the "Grantee Requirements" section below for more information on the accessibility-related expectations of all grantees.

Accessibility Web Page

MSAC has a dedicated [accessibility page available](#) on our website It includes contact information for the accessibility coordinator, federal and state regulations, the organization's equity and justice statement, grievance procedures, an emergency preparedness plan, accommodation policies, other accessibility resources for artists and arts organizations, and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) images.

Language Access

MSAC offers language accessibility services. Services include making translations of grant materials, remote American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, subtitles, braille translation, translation into languages other than English, and more.

En Español/Spanish: MSAC pone a disposición servicios de traducción y accesibilidad de idiomas. Contacte msac.commerce@maryland.gov para más información.

中文普通话/Mandarin Chinese: 马里兰州艺术委员会(MSAC)提供翻译和语言无障碍服务。请联系 msac.commerce@maryland.gov 了解更多信息。

한국어/Korean: MSAC 는 한국어 지원을 돕고 있습니다. 자세한 문의사항은 msac.commerce@maryland.gov 로 연락 주시기 바랍니다.

For all other languages, please contact MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov for more information.

Feedback

If constituents would like to provide general feedback about the accessibility of programs funded or produced by MSAC, contact MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov or (410) 767-6555.

Grievances

For programs or services provided by MSAC:

>If a program or service operated by MSAC, facilities operated by MSAC, or public meetings conducted by MSAC are inaccessible to persons with a disability, or is illegally discriminatory, and a constituent wishes to file a grievance, see the following steps.
>- For questions or discussion prior to filing a grievance, contact MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov or (410) 767-6555
>- To file a formal grievance, contact Cathy Dombroski, Director of Human Resources for the Department of Commerce, at catherine.dombroski1@maryland.gov

For programs or services that are not provided by, but are funded, by MSAC:
- Communicate the grievance to the sponsoring organization
- For situations in which a constituent feels a grievance was not handled appropriately by the sponsoring organization, or if a response from the organization has not been provided within 30 days, file a formal grievance by contacting MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov or (410) 767-6555

MSAC will work with constituents to provide assistance as appropriate.

Grantmaking

Review Panels

To assist MSAC in its decision-making, Maryland residents with expertise in the arts are selected to serve on a variety of grant application review panels. The function of panels is to evaluate applications from organizations and individuals. Each year, MSAC publishes several open calls, and approximately 150 individuals serve as panelists for MSAC grant programs, including Grants for Organizations, Arts in Education, Independent Artist Awards, Public Art Across Maryland, Creativity Grants, Presenting and Touring, Professional Development Opportunity, Folklife Network, Folklife Apprenticeships, Heritage Awards,Capacity Building, Arts Capital, and County Arts Development. In addition, MSAC occasionally releases calls for residents to serve as program editors evaluating grantmaking policies and procedures, and jurors or judges for various arts activities supported by MSAC. Anyone wishing to serve is encouraged to visit MSAC's Ways to Get Involved page for detailed information and links to application forms for any open calls.

Constituents may also get involved with MSAC by creating a profile on the Arts Directory, an online resource for raising the profile of Maryland artists and arts organizations; or by attending regularly scheduled virtual and in-person professional development sessions posted on MSAC's Eventbrite page.

Appeals

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

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

Based on the above, if an applicant believes there is legitimate reason for an appeal, the following steps must be taken:
- The applicant must discuss the problem with the program director who handled the application
- To pursue an appeal, the applicant must write a letter to the MSAC Executive Director within 60 days following receipt of the grant award or denial notification; the letter should (1) request a reconsideration of the decision, (2) state the grounds for the request, and (3) certify that the applicant first discussed the problem with the program director and provide the date and time the discussion occurred.

The applicant will receive written notification on the determination of the appeal within 90 days of the receipt of the written request for reconsideration.

Grantee requirements

All MSAC grantees must:
- Comply with Title VI, Section 601, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no persons, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination related to, the arts
- Comply with Title IX, Section 1681 et seq. of the Education Amendments of 1972,
- Comply with the, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 6101-6107
- Comply with relevant State and federal laws
- Maintain complete and accurate records of all activities connected with the grant
- Give credit to MSAC in accordance with published [recognition guidelines](#) whenever and wherever credit is being given
- Notify the appropriate MSAC staff person in writing if a significant change is made in any MSAC-funded program or project

In addition to the requirements above, all MSAC grantees must ensure that any programming remains accessible to all, and if needed, conduct programs in accessible venues other than their own organization in order to meet accessibility requirements. Grantees are required to:
- Comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, as amended
- Prohibit discrimination on the basis of: (a) political or religious opinion or affiliation, marital status, race, color, creed, sexual orientation, or national origin: of (b) gender expression, sex, or age, except when age or sex constitute a bona fide occupational qualification; or (c) the physical or mental disability of a qualified individual with a disability
- Designate an Accessibility Point of Contact to ensure compliance, receive accommodation requests, and document grievances, as well as publish direct contact information for the Point of Contact to the public

- Create and publicly share a grievance procedure to allow stakeholders to address any events or programs that are inaccessible
- Upon request, submit documentation of operations and compliance with the above

Disclosure of personal information

Certain personal information requested by MSAC's parent agency, the Department of Commerce,, is necessary in determining eligibility for grants. Failure to disclose this information may result in the denial of one or all benefits or services, including funding, provided by MSAC. Availability of this information for public inspection is governed by the provisions of the Maryland Public Information Act, Title 4 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. This information will be disclosed to appropriate staff of the Department, or to public officials, for purposes directly connected with administration of the program for which its use is intended. Such information may be shared with state, federal, and local governments if legally required.