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## **Folklife Apprenticeship FY2027 Guidelines**

**DEADLINE: March 20, 2026**

**SUPPORT PERIOD: July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027**

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

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# Program Overview

## Purpose

The Folklife Apprenticeship funds the teaching of skills and knowledge by a mentor artist to an apprentice artist in the traditional arts.<sup>1</sup> MSAC defines traditional arts as community-based living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth. Traditions that have been features of Maryland culture for many generations and traditions that have come to Maryland more recently through patterns of migration, immigration, or the movement of refugees may be supported with Folklife Apprenticeship funds.

Grants are administered through MSAC's Maryland Traditions program and annually fund up to fifteen Folklife Apprenticeship teams.

During the study period, a mentor artist passes down their knowledge to an apprentice artist in an effort to support the vitality of traditional arts in Maryland. Typical apprenticeships focus on, but are not limited to:

- Performance-based traditional arts
  - Dance
  - Music
  - Storytelling
  - Theatre
- Material traditional arts
  - Costume
  - Craft
  - Food
  - Visual traditions
- Occupational traditional arts
  - Agricultural traditions
  - Architectural traditions
  - Maritime traditions

Folklife Apprenticeships support living cultural traditions and are distinct from registered apprenticeships offered through the Maryland Apprenticeship Training Program (MATP), which supports workforce development. For more information on MATP, visit <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/apppr/>.

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) reserves the right to revise these guidelines, including making policy/procedure updates and adjusting the timeline, as appropriate, to include updated, new, or clarifying information.

## Grant Cycle

### Funding

Folklife Apprenticeship grants are \$5,000.

Folklife Apprenticeship grants are available annually.

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<sup>1</sup> 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. Access the Glossary by [clicking here](#).

## Support Period

Folklife Apprenticeship funds support activities taking place during the fiscal year (FY) in which funds are awarded. MSAC's FY 2027 is July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

Grantees agree to spend or obligate all funds by June 30, 2027. Obligation means that awarded funds are expended, encumbered, or otherwise legally committed to be used, such that returning the unspent funds would cause the grantee legal harm.

## Use of Funds

Grant funds may be used for:

- Expenses directly connected with the work plan set forth in the application and may include:
  - Compensation for the mentor artist's and/or apprentice artist's time
  - Teaching materials
  - In-state travel

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Acquisition of capital assets
- Capital improvements or purchases of permanent equipment
- Activities for the exclusive benefit of an organization's members
- Contributions to any persons who hold, or are candidates for, elected office
- Contributions to any political party, organization, or action committee
- Activities in connection with any political campaign or referendum
- Lobbying activities
- Expenses for activities or projects already completed at the time of grant application
- Expenses for which the applicant has been awarded funds through another MSAC grant program. (i.e., an applicant may only be awarded MSAC funds once for any individual project expense; contact MSAC staff with questions)

## Timeline

The grant 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: February 9, 2026
  - Deadline: March 20, 2026
- Application review
  - March - May 2026
  - Panel meeting: June 2, 2026
- Notification
  - July 2026
- Reports
  - Deadline: August 15, 2027

## Eligibility

Eligible applicants must meet the requirements listed below.

Both the mentor artist and apprentice artist must be independent artists.

Further eligibility guidelines are:

- Teams must consist of one mentor artist and one apprentice artist each

- Individuals may receive the Folklife Apprenticeship more than once, though the following guidelines apply in every case:
  - Mentor artists and apprentice artists may receive a Folklife Apprenticeship no more than two times in a single 5-year period
  - A single individual may apply as either a mentor artist or apprentice artist in different Folklife Apprenticeship applications, in consideration of multiple, evolving skill sets
  - Individuals may receive no more than one Folklife Apprenticeship (as either mentor artist or apprentice artist) per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30)
- Mentor artists must:
  - Be recognized as such by the members of their community
  - Demonstrate a previous connection to traditional arts through vital contributions to a particular living cultural tradition geographically located in Maryland
  - Be 18 years of age or older
  - Be a resident of the United States or a U.S. territory, provided that the apprentice artist is able to demonstrate that the desired mentor artist skillset does not exist in Maryland
- Apprentice artists must:
  - Demonstrate basic skills in the proposed course of study
  - Demonstrate a commitment to practicing the form of folklife at hand after the conclusion of the Folklife Apprenticeship
  - Be a Maryland resident (owning or renting residential property in Maryland six months prior to the application's submission and throughout the funded project or program); those experiencing homelessness are encouraged to reach out to MSAC staff for details on how to apply
  - The mentor artist and apprentice artist may be relatives
- The apprentice artist may be younger than 18 years of age; if this is the case, contact information and e-signature from the apprentice's parent/guardian will be required to acknowledge permission for the apprentice to participate in the program
- Entities (e.g., non-profit organizations, institutions, government agencies, etc.) are not eligible for support through the Folklife Apprenticeship program

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 Process, Review, and Award

### Process

#### Before You Apply

The mentor artist and apprentice artist should discuss their proposed work plan, budget, and decide which artist will be primary contact on the application and receive grant funds, if awarded.

If both the mentor artist and apprentice artist are Maryland residents and 18 years of age or older, either can be the primary contact on the application.

If the apprentice artist is under 18 years of age, the mentor artist is required to be the primary contact of the application, provided they are a Maryland resident.

If the mentor artist is not a Maryland resident, the apprentice artist is required to be the primary contact on the application. However, if the apprentice artist is under 18 years of age, the parent or guardian of the apprentice artist must be the primary contact of the application.

Those interested in applying for a Folklife Apprenticeship are encouraged to contact the State Folklorist to discuss their ideas.

## 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 during regular office hours
- 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 and based on relevant experience and expertise. Opportunities to serve as panelists for various grant 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 grant application is a digital form available in SmartSimple and consisting of prompts requiring dropdown menu selections, fill-in answers, and external file uploads.

Folklife Apprenticeship applications include the option of uploading an audio or video recording answering narrative questions. This option is intended as an accommodation. Instructions for uploading application recordings are included in SmartSimple.

- Application recordings must be uploaded either as .mp3, .mp4, or .mov files not exceeding 20 minutes total
- Applicants are responsible for formatting and producing application recordings in keeping with the technical specifications above; inaccessible or inaudible recordings are considered incomplete and will not be considered

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name and briefly describe the form of folklife this apprenticeship would focus on. (100 words)</li> <li>Describe the cultural history and culture of origin of the form of folklife this apprenticeship would focus on. (200 words)</li> <li>Describe the current community participating in the form of folklife this apprenticeship would focus on. (200 words)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Criterion 1: Traditional nature of the proposed form of folklife</u> Excellent Response - 20 Points</p> <p>Form of folklife clearly demonstrates a strong connection with an easily identifiable cultural community over a generational period of practice</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is your experience participating in this form of folklife? (200 words)</li> <li>Describe your skill set with this form of folklife. (200 words)</li> <li>Describe any official or unofficial recognitions you have received for participating in this form of folklife. (200 words)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Criterion 2: Expertise of the mentor artist</u> Excellent Response - 20 Points</p> <p>Mentor artist's expertise is demonstrated through an extensive skill set and strong public and community recognition as a notable tradition bearer</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is your experience participating in this form of folklife? (200 words)</li> <li>Describe your skill set with this form of folklife. (200 words)</li> <li>Describe any official or unofficial recognitions you have received for participating in this form of folklife. (200 words)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Criterion 3: Preparedness of the apprentice artist</u> Excellent Response - 20 Points</p> <p>Apprentice artist's preparedness is demonstrated through a strong, progressive trajectory of past accomplishments</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How would this apprenticeship contribute to the cultural, practical, and artistic value of this form of folklife? (200 words)</li> <li>Describe how this apprenticeship provides a direct benefit to the culture from which the tradition originated. (200 words)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Criterion 4: Potential impact of the apprenticeship on the continued vitality of the tradition</u> Excellent Response - 20 Points</p> <p>Apprenticeship is poised to provide strong cultural, practical, and artistic value to the tradition at large</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the work plan for this apprenticeship, with details on the type of activities taught, materials needed and dates and locations of training. (500 words)</li> <li>Briefly describe the expenses associated with this apprenticeship. (200 words)</li> </ul>	<p><u>Criterion 5: Feasibility of the work plan</u> Excellent Response - 20 Points</p> <p>Work plan is exceptionally clear and organized; scope is ideal given the stated time commitments</p>
<i>Unscored questions</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the mentor artist a Maryland resident? If not, explain why it is necessary to learn from an out-of-state mentor artist, including details on steps taken to find a mentor artist who is a Maryland resident. (100 words)</li> </ul>	[Prompt evaluated for eligibility only]

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the apprentice less than 18 years of age? If yes, please provide contact information of the apprentice's parent/guardian and the parent/guardian's signature on the electronic signature page acknowledging permission for the apprentice to participate in the program.</li> </ul>	[Prompt evaluated for eligibility only]
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optional supplemental materials that demonstrate the suitability of the applicants to complete the proposed Folklife Apprenticeship, including written materials (e.g., letters of recommendation, media coverage, or literary work samples) and audiovisual materials (e.g., audio or video work samples):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written supplemental materials must be compiled into a single PDF not exceeding 10 pages.</li> <li>Audiovisual supplemental materials must be linked in a single PDF. Each individual audiovisual sample should not exceed 2 minutes of review time; for longer samples, applicants must indicate which 2-minute portions panelists should review.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	[Prompt evaluated for eligibility only]

The complete scoring rubric can be found on the [program web page](#).

If multiple applications receive the same score but budget restrictions prevent all applications with that score from being funded, final selections will be based on which applications most closely align with the published strategic goals of the Maryland State Arts Council, in the determination of the MSAC staff.

In addition to responding to the prompts above, the primary contact on the application is required to submit a current, signed [W-9 form](#) upon application submission. The address on the W-9 form must match the address entered in SmartSimple, both on the application form and under the SmartSimple account profile. If awarded, grant funds will be made payable to the person or entity indicated on the W-9 and sent to the address listed in the form.

The Folklife Apprenticeship program allows grant payments to grantees as an individual, sole proprietor, or LLC registered in Maryland and owned by either the mentor or apprentice artist.

## Award

### Notification

After application review, applicants will be notified of their status as soon as possible. If the application is approved, the applicant will receive instructions to access a Grant Agreement Form (GAF) to review and sign electronically via SmartSimple.

The individual listed as the primary contact in the application will receive all notifications. Automated notifications from SmartSimple will be sent from [noreply@smartsimple.com](mailto:noreply@smartsimple.com). Please adjust email notification and



security settings to ensure receipt of these notifications. Check your spam folder if an application submission confirmation notification has not arrived to your inbox.

## Disbursement

The grant funds are provided in a disbursement, which is a distribution from a dedicated fund for the specific purposes outlined in your application. The disbursement process begins when the GAF is fully executed. The grantee will receive notification of full execution from SmartSimple. This notification will include a PDF copy of the fully executed GAF, which will also be accessible in the grantee's SmartSimple profile.

The grantee will receive the grant disbursement approximately six to eight weeks from the date of notification of the fully executed GAF. More information on MSAC's disbursement processing timeline can be found on the [Payment Process](#) web page.

MSAC grants are generally considered taxable income. Disbursements are issued directly by the State of Maryland, not by MSAC, and no Social Security, state, or federal income taxes are withheld. Individuals receiving grant awards of more than \$600 will receive, via mail, a 1099 form from the State of Maryland. This form will arrive after the end of the calendar year in which the grant was paid. To request or access your 1099 electronically, register and log in on the General Accounting Division (GAD) [Online Service Center site](#). Specific questions regarding the taxability of your award should be directed to the IRS, the Office of the Maryland Comptroller, or your tax advisor.

Grantees are encouraged to sign up to receive disbursement electronically via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Those with existing state vendor profiles can sign up for EFT disbursements by completing the relevant forms on the [Comptroller's EFT for Vendors Info site](#). Typically, those who have previously received MSAC grants have an existing state vendor profile.

New grant recipients will receive grant funds via check made payable to the name and address indicated on the grantee's W-9. They will be able to sign up for EFT for any subsequent disbursements.

## Disbursement Status

Grantees are encouraged to deposit grant checks immediately. If the grantee has not received grant funds within eight weeks of notification of a fully executed GAF, the grantee should contact MSAC to inquire about disbursement status. The grantee is responsible for following up with MSAC staff if the disbursement is not received during the fiscal year in which it was awarded. If the disbursement was lost in transit, the State of Maryland is able to re-issue payment. However, MSAC is unable to guarantee that funds will be available for re-issue after the end of the fiscal year in which a grant was awarded.

If the grantee owes any Maryland state taxes or other state liabilities, GAD may intercept grant disbursements and hold them until the liability is resolved. Should this be the case, GAD will send written notice of this directly to the grantee via mail. MSAC is not provided further information, as it is confidential. Grantees can find more information and discuss options with the Central Collections Unit at (410) 767-1642. Additionally, information on held disbursements can be found by creating an account on [GAD's Online Service Center site](#).

## Changes in Funded Activities

If there are significant changes to the proposed activities for which a grant has been awarded, the grantee is responsible for contacting relevant staff; any proposed changes must be shared and approved in writing before proceeding. Staff will help ensure that any proposed changes remain in alignment with the program guidelines,

however there is no guarantee that proposed changes will be approved. Any approved changes that result in timeline extensions that affect the final report deadline will be reflected in SmartSimple..

## Documentation

To support artists and their careers, MSAC makes site visits available to Folklife Apprenticeship grantees as a free service during the granting period. Site visits consist of professional photo, audio, and/or video recording to document the awardee and their tradition. Site visits are optional; waiving site visits will not negatively affect the status of the grant.

MSAC staff work directly with grantees to arrange site visits and strive to ensure that grantees are clear about the purpose of the visit, comfortable with the duration and nature of the documentation activities, and aware of their importance to the work of MSAC. Photo, audio, and video documentation collected during site visits is deposited in the [Maryland Traditions Archives](#), a public archive of Maryland's living cultural traditions housed at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, with MSAC oversight. Documentation is also used to promote MSAC's traditional arts work to the public.

Though each site visit is unique to each Folklife Apprenticeship team, the following guidelines broadly describe the intention behind all site visits:

- Scheduled in accordance with dates and times of day that best illustrate the grantee (e.g., arranging to document oystering during oyster season or Cambodian New Year music during the April New Year observed in Cambodian communities)
- Illustrate grantees in the contexts in which they would normally be occurring (e.g., arranging to document traditional Irish music performance at an Irish traditional music session or gospel quartet music at a Sunday church service)
- Photo documentation site visits last approximately 3 hours
- Video documentation site visits last approximately 16 hours, and are split up to occur on multiple days

See the "Grants Awarded" section of the [Folklife Apprenticeship webpage](#) for examples of previous Folklife Apprenticeships over the past five years.

## Reporting

All grantees must file a final report in SmartSimple. The report will be added to the grantee's SmartSimple profile as soon as the GAF is fully executed.

The final report deadline for the Folklife Apprenticeship is August 15, 2027.

The final report form collects information about the grantee and grant activities, including optional demographic information, data for the National Endowment for the Arts, summary of activities and use of grant funds, and other program-specific information and documents, as relevant.

Grant funds may not be used to offset grantees' state liabilities; as such, grantees whose grant disbursements were intercepted by GAD due to state liabilities, as outlined in the Disbursements section above, are not exempt from submitting required reports. Grantees must either return the funds to MSAC or follow through with their proposed grant activities and submit reports accordingly.

Failure to submit reports may jeopardize current MSAC grants, eligibility for future MSAC grants, and may result in the required return of grant funds. Before any funds are distributed, grantees are also required to submit any outstanding reports or satisfy obligations for any other MSAC grants they have received.

## Ineligible and Declined Applications

Applications that do not receive funding 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 grant 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 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 funding—by submitting a feedback request form. A link to this form will be provided in grant notification emails.

Applications that are ineligible or declined may be revised and re-submitted during the following cycle but are not automatically carried over from year to year.

## Contact Information

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

For more information on the Folklife Apprenticeship application process, contact:

- Program and application strategy assistance
  - Ryan Koons, State Folklorist
    - [ryan.koons@maryland.gov](mailto:ryan.koons@maryland.gov)
    - (410) 767-6568
- Grants logistics and technological assistance
  - Catherine Teixeira, Grants Director
    - [catherine.teixeira@maryland.gov](mailto:catherine.teixeira@maryland.gov)
    - (443) 799-7256
  - Tammy Oppel, Grants Management Associate
    - [tammy.oppel@maryland.gov](mailto:tammy.oppel@maryland.gov)
    - (410) 326-5555
  - Kirk Amaral Snow, Grants Management Associate
    - [kirk.amaralsnow@maryland.gov](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov) 了解更多信息。

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

For all other languages, please contact MSAC at [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov) or (410) 767-6555
- To file a formal grievance, contact Elaine McNeil, Director of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Fair Practices for the Department of Commerce, at [elaine.mcneil2@maryland.gov](mailto:elaine.mcneil2@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](mailto: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 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.