



Arts Capital FY 2027 Guidelines

DEADLINE: September 14, 2026



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 our website: www.msac.org.

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Program Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the Arts Capital program is to provide eligible organizations with direct access to state capital funding for projects that enhance or create complete, usable, and accessible arts facilities.

The Arts Capital program provides support for projects that involve the expansion, renovation, or major repair of existing facilities*. Projects focusing on the construction of entirely new structures are also eligible, provided they result in a fully functional, accessible, and usable arts facility within 2-years of fund disbursement. Projects that prioritize energy-efficient building methods and technologies, increase facility accessibility for people with disabilities, or expand an organization’s programming and ability to serve a broader audience are strongly encouraged to apply.

*For the Arts Capital program, the term facility means a permanent structure fully operational/usable for public programming.

The Arts Capital Grant program was created through [Article - Economic Development §4-514 in 2024](#), which states, “For each of fiscal years 2024 through 2029, the Governor shall include in the State operating or capital budget an annual appropriation of \$3,000,000 for the Maryland Arts Capital Grant Program” .¹

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

Grant Cycle

Funding

Arts Capital grants range from \$50,000 - \$500,000.

Arts Capital grants are available annually through fiscal year (FY) 2029, with the possibility of program renewal beyond that year.

Grantees of the Arts Capital program receive funding in one payment (100% of the award amount) after the grant agreement has been signed by all required parties and the funded project has been approved by the State Board of Public Works (unless otherwise stipulated by the State or Board of Public Works).

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.

Support Period

Arts Capital grant funds support activities taking place within two years of the fiscal year (FY) in which funds are disbursed.

If awarded, grantees may begin spending and obligating funds after the grant has been approved by the Board of Public Works.

Grantees agree to spend or obligate all funds by June 1, 2029 or within two years of fund disbursement. Obligation of funds 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. Grantees unable to complete their proposed project within the support period should notify MSAC staff as early as possible. The support period for FY 2027 is anticipated to run from June 2027 through June 2029. The final support period will be communicated to grantees when grants are approved by the Board of Public Works and funds are disbursed.

Use of Funds

Grant funds may be used for capital projects involving the expansion, renovation, major repair, or new construction of facilities operated by an eligible organization. To qualify, these projects must result in a facility or enhancements with a minimum useful life expectancy of 15 years. Additional parameters include:

- Exterior capital projects must either result in new or expanded outdoor structures for hosting cultural or arts-related programming, or directly improve the building's physical accessibility or visibility.
- Proposals for new construction projects must demonstrate a feasible plan to complete a fully operational arts facility within the project's anticipated support period.
- All project planning and implementation must adhere to local jurisdiction regulations, permissions, and permitting requirements for building-related capital improvements on public or private property. Applicants are responsible for conducting their own research and ensuring compliance.
- Arts Capital funds may only be used for a new project or phase of work. Activities that occur before the time of grant application are not eligible for funding.
- Up to 15% of the grant request may be allocated to indirect administrative costs related to the proposed project.
- Up to 10% of the grant request may be allocated to non-permanent equipment directly associated with the proposed capital project.

Strongly Encouraged Funding Usage:

- Projects that increase access to arts facilities and programming to people with disabilities, people of color, people living below the federal poverty level, or that expand access to new audiences.
- Projects that prioritize energy-efficient building methods and technologies.
- Projects that expand arts services by increasing usable programming space.

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Purchase of a building, land, or vehicles
- Signage projects that are not connected or physically attached to the facility

- Research, studies, design services or pre-development costs unrelated to the proposed capital project
- Feasibility studies or master plans
- Purchases of equipment that are not part of a permanent capital improvement project or exceed 10% of the grant request
- Institutional indirect costs that exceed 15% of the total grant request
- Debt Service (i.e., mortgage, rent, or loans)
- Regranting to other individuals or entities
- Activities that are principally recreational, therapeutic, or rehabilitative
- Scholarships awarded by the applicant organization for its own activities
- 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 to further sectarian religious instruction or in connection with the design, acquisition, or construction of any building used, or to be used, as a place for sectarian religious worship or instruction or in connection with any program or department of divinity for any religious denomination.
- Expenses for which the applicant was previously 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)
- Institutional indirect costs in excess of 15 percent (15%) of the total grant amount

Timeline

The timelines provided below are estimates. Processing, notification, and payment timelines 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 17, 2026
 - Deadline: September 14, 2026
- Application review
 - September - November 2026
 - Panel Meetings: December 2026
- Notification
 - January 2027
- Final Approval from BPW
 - Approximately June 2027
 - Funds spent or obligated by: June 2029, or two years after disbursement
- Reports
 - Progress Report: June 2028 (exact date will be communicated to grantees)
 - Final Report: June 2029 (exact date will be communicated to grantees)

Program Updates

Arts Capital is an annual grant program. The following program updates were made between the FY26 and FY27 grant cycles:

- In extenuating circumstances where a renting organization has less than five years remain on their current lease at the time of application, it may be acceptable for the organization to submit the current lease along with a jointly signed affidavit or similar documentation indicating that the lease will be renewed for a time equivalent to 5 years from the date of application. MSAC staff retain sole discretion over the acceptability and approval of alternative documentation.
- Capital projects proposed by eligible organizations in facilities owned by K–12 public school systems are now eligible.
- Letters of support must now be signed and dated within two years of the application deadline
- For projects in leased facilities, applicants are now required to provide a signed letter from the property owner demonstrating their support for the proposed work.
- Non-permanent (non-fixed) equipment costs are now limited to 10% of the total grant amount requested.
- Applicants whose legal name does not match the name on the deed or lease must provide additional documentation and consult with the Program Director prior to submission.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must meet the requirements listed below:

- Nonprofit organization (i.e., an organization with an IRS-designated 501(c)3 status), incorporated and based in Maryland;
- Operate a physical property in Maryland that is either leased or owned by the applicant organization.
 - Applicants must provide either proof of property ownership or a lease agreement with the property owner showing a minimum of five years remaining at the time of application;
- Have an annual operating budget of less than \$3,000,000; and
- Either:
 - Currently participate in MSAC's Grants for Organizations or County Arts Development programs
 - or**
 - Be open to the public and provide arts-based cultural education or experiences.

Ineligible applicants include:

- Units of government (e.g., town, city, county, state, federal) except for those designated as County Arts Agencies)
- Colleges or universities (i.e., an established higher education institution in Maryland)
- Schools (i.e., a public or private school serving students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12)
- Fiscally-sponsored organizations
- Auxiliary non-profit organizations (i.e. "Friends of groups", economic development organizations, neighborhood organizations, parent-teacher organizations) whose mission is primarily to benefit and fund specific activities, programs, or facilities that would otherwise be considered ineligible
- Past Arts Capital grantees that either:
 - Have not completed projects for which Arts Capital funding was awarded, including MSAC staff approval of a final report associated with the award

- Have received \$500,000 in Arts Capital funds within a five-year period*

Ineligible Projects include:

- Capital improvements to properties owned by private K-12 schools and school systems, public or private colleges and universities
- Capital Improvements to properties owned by the State of Maryland Department of General Services or the Maryland Stadium Authority

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.

*Applicants that have been awarded Arts Capital funding within the past five years may not request an amount that would cause their total Arts Capital funding to exceed \$500,000 within that five-year period.

Application, Review, and Award

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, submit, and sign applications digitally. 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
- After submission, applicants must meet any revision deadlines as specified in writing. Failure to meet such deadlines will result in the application being considered withdrawn
- By submitting an application to MSAC the applicant agrees to allow MSAC to retain records per state and federal document retention laws and policies. The 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.

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

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

Application prompt	Review criteria
<u>Section 1: Organization, Mission and Project Overview</u> 1. Please provide your organization's mission and vision statements and an example of a recent success that reflects your mission. 2. Describe the arts-based cultural education or experiences offered to the public by the organization. 3. Describe the audience or community served by, regularly participates in, or benefits from the arts-based cultural education or experiences the organization offers. 4. Provide a two-sentence summary of the capital project proposed. Please see response template below. Summary template: "MSAC Arts Capital funds will support [Organization Name] in the [action: construction / renovation / repair / expansion] of [Facility Name] located in [City, County]. This project will [describe direct impact on the facility], allowing the organization to [describe programmatic/community impact]." <i>Note: Information provided in this section may be shared with partner agencies or used for external marketing (i.e. press releases and announcements).</i> 5. Describe your proposed capital project and how it will support your mission and	<u>1. Project Impact on Mission Delivery and Future Success</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 30 points The application clearly explains how the project will strengthen the organization's ability to carry out its mission and improve its long-term effectiveness. The facility challenges are clearly described, and the application provides strong evidence that the project will address them. The expected benefits are significant, clearly defined, and likely to improve operations, finances, programs, accessibility, safety, or other organizational outcomes.

contribute to your organization's long-term success. In your response be sure to outline the specific facility challenges that this project will address, and how have those challenges impacted your organization (financially, operationally, or programmatically)?	
<u>Section 2: Project Plans, Feasibility, and Organizational Impact:</u> 1. Project Location: Will the proposed capital project take place at the address listed in the organization's SmartSimple profile? If not, list the address of the location or property where the project will occur. Please explain why the proposed capital project's location differs from that listed for the applicant organization. a. What is the legislative district associated with the project location? b. Latitude and Longitude of the project location 2. Property Ownership: Does the organization currently own or lease the property where the proposed project will occur? a. The Property is owned by the organization OR The property is leased. <i>Note: If the property is leased: If awarded, an authorized representative of the property owner will need to sign the grant agreement. Please provide accurate contact information for that representative below. If the property is owned by a government entity (city, county, etc.), please note that each jurisdiction has its own process for reviewing and approving agreements. In some cases, additional steps—such as review by a</i>	<u>2A. Timeline Development</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The project timeline is clear, specific, and realistic, and includes strong evidence of prior planning and research. <u>2B. Budget Preparation and Feasibility</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The budget is detailed, well-researched and clearly tied to successful completion of proposed activities. The budget demonstrates that the project is financially feasible, and leverages non-state funding. <u>2C. Organizational Capacity/ Project Team</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application provides clear and specific evidence that the project team has the necessary skills, resources, and partnerships to ensure successful completion of the project within the 2-year project period. <u>2D. Organizational Sustainability</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application demonstrates a clear understanding of the capital project's operational and financial impacts and presents well-defined strategies to address challenges, adapt to changes, and maximize opportunities for long-term sustainability, including staffing and budget considerations.

<i>council or legal department—may be required before the agreement can be signed. We strongly encourage you to reach out to your property contact early to learn more about their process and any potential timelines.</i> b. Property Owner Name/ Entity: c. Property Owner Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN): d. Property Owner Address: e. Property Owner Contact Name: f. Property Owner Contact Email: g. Property Owner Contact Phone: h. Do you have a lease with at least 5 years remaining (at the time of this application)? <i>Note: Per the grant guidelines, applicants with leased properties must have at least 5 years remaining at the time of application. Contact the Program Director with any questions.</i> 3. Project Planning Phase: What planning activities were conducted in preparation for this project or grant application? Please include details about involved partners, identified solutions, and any consultations or studies that took place. 4. Timeline Development: a. Provide a detailed description of the proposed capital project and its intended outcomes. Describe how the project may be divided into phases of planning or work. How will the project team ensure the project will be delivered on time and within budget? This narrative should complement the timeline provided in the table below. Note: In the case of	
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large projects, specify which phase(s) of the overall project the Arts Capital grant will support. b. Timeline Table: Please use this chart to list the schedule of activities associated with your application, in chronological order. Click the + sign to enter each activity and dates in which they are estimated to occur. Dates can be approximate and do not need to be exact/finalized. <i>Note: The estimated start and end date for all activities should fall within the anticipated project support period: June 2027 - June 2029. Please note that this two-year support period may shift depending on the grant disbursement date. Be sure to scroll to the right to enter the duration for each activity, which should be entered as weeks or months (i.e. 2 weeks or 2 months). The schedule must reflect a project that, upon completion, results in a new or enhanced, usable, and accessible arts facility.</i> 5. Project Budget: a. What is the total estimated expenses associated with your proposed capital project? b. Arts Capital grant amount requested <i>Note: This amount should match the total listed under "Total Expenses - Arts Capital Supported" in the budget chart below. The requested amount must be between \$50,000 and \$500,000.</i> c. Estimated Project Budget	
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Note: Please complete the provided budget chart, providing a clear, detailed and realistic financial plan for income and expenses tied to the proposed project. Click the "Budget" button in SmartSimple to open the budget chart in a new tab.

- d. How did you determine that the costs are reasonable? List any quotes obtained.
- e. If the budget for the overall project exceeds the Arts Capital grant amount requested, please indicate how you will leverage non-state funding to complete the project by listing the other income sources as well as the status of those funds as either requested, pending, or secured.

Note: If the budget for the overall project does not exceed the Arts Capital grant amount requested, enter "N/A".

6. Operational Capacity/ Project Team:

- a. Has the organization successfully completed similar projects in the past? Please describe.
- b. List staff or board members involved in the project and how they will be involved, their relevant experience, and any past pertinent roles.
- c. List external partners (consultants, contractors, architects, etc.), how they were selected, and their role in the project.

7. Organizational Sustainability: Once completed, what impact will this project have on the organization's long-term operational and financial sustainability? Please note any

projected cost savings, new expenses related to facility changes, potential staffing needs, or estimated new operational costs. How is your organization planning for managing those changes?	
<u>Section 3: Community Involvement and Impact</u> 1. Who are your community stakeholders for this project and how have you engaged and collected feedback from those community members? How has the community input shaped the project? 2. Describe the community need or opportunity this project addresses and how it will positively impact your immediate and surrounding communities, as well as the county in which your organization is located. 3. Accessibility Outcomes: For each of your responses below, please be sure to specify physical or programmatic changes, impacted groups, and how representatives from those communities were involved in developing proposed solutions. a. How will this project enhance facility or program accessibility for people living with disabilities? b. How will this project improve access to the organization's facility or programs for people of color? c. How will this project improve access to the organization's facility or programs for people living below the federal poverty level? 4. Local Workforce Opportunities: a. Will this project create new employment or workforce development opportunities?	<u>3A. Community Voice and Impact</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application demonstrates a deep understanding of community needs and presents creative, well-aligned solutions for serving them. It outlines clear and effective outreach strategies showing that the project has been shaped by input from appropriate stakeholders and community members. Detailed evidence is provided on how the project will positively impact the immediate and surrounding communities and county. <u>3B. Accessibility Outcomes</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application provides a clear and comprehensive plan for enhancing accessibility for people with disabilities, detailing specific features (e.g., ramps, sensory-friendly spaces, adaptive technology) and identifying the groups impacted (e.g., individuals with mobility or sensory impairments) and how they were actively engaged in the planning process. It also clearly demonstrates how the project will expand access for people of color and individuals living below the federal poverty level, specifying programs or services to be offered and describing their direct, measurable benefits to these communities. <u>3C. Local Workforce Opportunities</u> Excellent to Outstanding - 10 points The application provides clear and specific evidence of how the project will create new jobs or workforce development opportunities in the community, and

b. Describe your existing inclusive hiring practices. How will you incorporate these or new inclusive practices in hiring contractors, vendors, and any new staff hires resulting from this project?	outlines concrete strategies for ensuring these opportunities are accessible through inclusive and equitable hiring practices.
<u>Required Attachments</u> ● Two Signed Letters of Support: ○ One (1) from the local elected governing body (ie. Mayor, County Executive, etc.) representing the area in which the project will be located; ○ One (1) from the State Senator or Delegate representing the area in which the project will be located. ○ Note that letters must be signed and dated no longer than two years prior to the date of application. ● Lease/Deed: All applicants must provide one of the following: a signed deed proving property ownership, or a current lease showing at least 5 years remaining on the agreement from the date of the application. <i>Note: If the current lease agreement has less than 5 years remaining, applicants can submit their current lease with a jointly signed affidavit or similar documentation indicating that the lease will be renewed for a time equivalent to 5 years from the date of application. Please contact the Program Director Abby Neyenhouse at abby.neyenhouse@maryland.gov to discuss further. MSAC staff retain sole discretion over the acceptability and approval of alternative documentation.</i> <i>Note: If the applying nonprofit's name is not on the Lease/Deed, reach out to the Program</i>	<i>Not Scored</i>

Director to discuss acceptable documentation.

- **Letter of Support from the Property Owner:** Applicants applying for projects in leased spaces are required to obtain and upload a letter from the property owner indicating support for the project and Arts Capital grant application. If awarded, property owners are also required to sign Arts Capital grant agreement.
- **Project Imagery** (architectural sketches, renderings, imagery of the site, or specific equipment): At least one reference image is required. Larger projects may focus on architectural plans and renderings, small projects may provide an image of where the new equipment or investment (i.e. air handler or accessibility ramp) will be located, and/or a stock image of the equipment to be purchased they intend to purchase and install. We encourage the submission of current project site photos that help illustrate your project description.
- **Project Quotes or Estimates (Optional - strongly encouraged):** Submit copies of any quotes or estimates received from vendors during project planning. Note - While not required, we strongly encourage you to provide estimates or quotes that support your project budget submission.
- **Organizational Budget:** Please upload the organization's operating budget (not including capital expenses) that was approved by the organization's Board of Directors and for the organization's most recently completed fiscal year as of the date of the application. *Note that to be eligible, the*

operational budget (not including capital budget) must be under \$3M.

- **Financial Statement:** From the organization's most recently completed fiscal year.
- **Organization's most recent IRS 990 form:**
The most-recently filed version with any accompanying cover sheets and signatures. If the applicant submitted a "Postcard 990-N", a screenshot confirmation can fulfill this requirement.
- **IRS Letter of Determination:** Original or duplicate of IRS determination letter.
- **Completed W9:** Please upload only your completed W9 to this section. Payment will be made to the payee and address provided on the W9. Please ensure the following when submitting your W9: - Your name and address match your Smart Simple profile (You can make edits to your address in "My Profile" on the homepage) - A selection is made in section 3 (individual/sole proprietor vs. C corporation, etc.) - EIN for organizational grants (MSAC is unable to process payments to LLCs; independent artists must list their name and SSN) - Form is signed and dated
Note: Incomplete W9s may result in award notification and payment delays.
- **Most recently completed fiscal year audit:**
This is only required for organizations with annual budgets of \$750,000 and above.

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

In some cases, applications may receive the same score, but budget restrictions prevent all applications with that score from being funded. Final selections will then be based on which applications most closely align with the published strategic goals of the Maryland State Arts Council as determined by MSAC staff.

Applicants are required to submit a current, complete, and 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 are disbursed to the person or entity indicated on the W-9 and sent to the address listed in the form.

Award

Notification

After application review, applicants are notified of their status as soon as possible. If the application is recommended for funding, it will be listed as 'Pending Approval' in SmartSimple until it is ultimately approved by the Board of Public Works (BPW). First, grant materials for selected projects will be shared with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) to review each capital project and identify any potential historical implications that may require additional oversight. Additionally, the applicant will receive instructions to access a Grant Agreement Form (GAF) to review and sign. Please note that if the Arts Capital grant project is located in a leased property, the building owner will need to sign the GAF as the "Beneficiary". Also, if the property is owned by a local government entity, a representative of that jurisdiction will need to sign as the "Beneficiary". Applicants may be required to submit additional project information as needed to support the BPW approval process and the fully executed GAF.

The individual listed as the primary contact in the application receives all notifications; for organizations, notifications are sent to the primary contact and any other contacts on the organization's account. Automated notifications from SmartSimple are sent from 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 does not arrive in 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 for the Arts Capital Grant Program is unique and takes substantially longer than other grants administered by MSAC since this is a capital program with funding from the State's GO Bonds. The Arts Capital disbursement process begins when the GAF is fully executed (meaning that the grantee, beneficiary if applicable, MSAC staff, and the Dept. of Commerce) have signed the agreement and gained approval from the Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW). **Applicants can expect a minimum of 6 months between the 'Pending Approval' notification and final BPW approval and fund disbursement**

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 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 does not receive grant funds within eight weeks of notification of a fully executed GAF, the grantee must contact MSAC staff to inquire about disbursement status. If the disbursement was lost in transit, the State of Maryland is able to re-issue disbursement. However, the grantee must contact MSAC staff within the fiscal year in which the grant was awarded. MSAC cannot guarantee that funds will be available for re-issue after the end of the fiscal year in which a grant was awarded.

If a grantee owes any Maryland state taxes or other state liabilities, GAD may intercept grant disbursements and hold them until the liability is resolved. GAD will send written notice 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 activities for which a grant has been awarded, the grantee is responsible for contacting relevant staff. 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. SmartSimple will be updated to reflect approved extensions to reporting deadlines.

Reporting

All grantees must file a progress and final report in SmartSimple. The reports will be added to the grantee's SmartSimple profile as soon as the application receives final approval from BPW.

The reporting deadline is tentatively scheduled for June 2028 (Progress Report) and June 2029 (Final Report). Because these dates depend on the timing of fund disbursement, exact deadlines will be communicated to grantees as soon as they are confirmed.

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, use of grant funds, and other relevant program-specific information or documents.

Grant funds may not be used to offset grantees' state liabilities. Grantees whose funds were intercepted by GAD 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 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 the 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 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 or declined for funding—by submitting a feedback request form. Instructions on how to request feedback are provided in grant notification emails.

Declined applicants are encouraged to contact the Program Director to discuss their next project proposal

Contact Information

MSAC staff offer technical assistance when feasible 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 Arts Capital grant application process, contact:

- Program and application strategy assistance
 - Abby Neyenhouse, Arts Capital Program Director
 - abby.neyenhouse@maryland.gov
 - (443) 904-6338
- 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
 - (443) 680-3449

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 ensuring access to its programs and services. Everyone is welcome, and all events and activities sponsored by or operated within MSAC are accessible both physically and programmatically. MSAC is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring equal opportunity, accessibility, and non-discrimination for individuals with disabilities. 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, access resources, accommodations requests, and complaint procedures.

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.

Complaints

For programs or services provided by MSAC:

For inquiries related to MSAC operated programs or services, individuals may first reach out to the [Office of EEO and Fair Practices at the Department of Commerce](#) for an informal discussion. Other related inquiries may include failure of MSAC to accommodate individuals with disabilities, harassment, bullying, and failure to provide accommodations to individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

While the informal process is designed to facilitate a sincere and prompt resolution, it is not a substitution for a filed complaint of discrimination. Individuals opting to initiate a formal complaint may proceed directly to the formal process if preferred. Participants may also choose to transition from the informal process to the formal complaint process at any time.

- **For an Informal Discussion:** Contact Elaine McNeil, Director of EEO, ADA and Fair Practices at (410) 767-6470 or ofp.commerce@maryland.gov.
- **To File a Formal Complaint of Unfair and/or Unlawful Treatment with the Department of Commerce/MSAC:** See the information on [Commerce's EEO and Fair Practices Page](#) regarding the complaint procedures and submit your complaint to ofp.commerce@maryland.gov.

For programs or services that are not provided by, but are funded, by MSAC:

MSAC encourages individuals who believe they experience discrimination in programs and services provided by organizations funded by MSAC to reach out to the sponsoring organization first with their complaint. The individual may also reach out to MSAC's Accessibility Coordinator and Grants Directorate to inform MSAC of the complaint of discrimination. MSAC notifies organizations that receive funding through MSAC that they must comply with all applicable federal and State non-discrimination laws and regulations. Submitting a complaint with MSAC regarding an organization receiving funding from MSAC

is not a replacement or a prerequisite to filing a complaint with the appropriate governmental agency or a court.

Complaints may be submitted to the following external agencies:

- Complaints against MSAC-funded organizations and programs, file with [Maryland Commission on Civil Rights](#) (MCCR)
- Complaints against arts organizations and cultural organizations receiving federal funding, filed with the [National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Civil Rights](#).
- Complaints against places of public accommodation, such as private cultural organizations, may be filed with the [Department of Justice](#).

Participation in a complaint process is protected from retaliation under all circumstances, and MSAC complies with all applicable federal and State laws prohibiting retaliation against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

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](#) webpage 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; or (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.