



# CREATIVITY GRANT GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Creativity Grant Program is to strengthen the vitality and sustainability of artists and small organizations to maintain a strong and stable arts infrastructure in the State of Maryland. The Creativity Grant also provides opportunities to serve the growing needs of relevant arts projects and collaborations within Maryland communities.



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410-767-6555 or [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov)



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# Maryland State Arts Council

## Overview

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) encourages and invests in the advancement of the arts for all Marylanders. Its grants and programs support artists and arts organizations in their pursuit of artistic excellence, ensure the accessibility of the arts to all citizens and promote statewide awareness of arts resources and opportunities. Programs are aimed at all Maryland residents regardless of political or religious opinion or affiliation, marital status, race, color, creed, age, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or geographic location within the State.

The Council comprises an appointed body of 17 citizens from across the state, 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 for ongoing arts programming and projects. The MSAC also awards grants to individual artists, and provides technical and advisory assistance to individuals and groups. The Council reserves the right to prioritize grants awards.

The MSAC receives its funds in an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland and from grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The Council may also receive contributions from private, non-governmental sources.

## Authority

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

Larry Hogan, Governor | Boyd K. Rutherford, Lieutenant Governor

Mike Gill, Secretary | Ben Wu, Deputy Secretary

Liz Fitzsimmons | Managing Director, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts

## Professional Grants Review Panels

To assist the Council in its decision-making, professionals in the arts are appointed to a variety of grants review panels. The function of panels is to evaluate applications from organizations and individuals and to offer policy recommendations to the Council. Each year, more than 100 individuals serve as grants review panelists for the Council's programs, including Grants for Organizations, Arts in Education, Folk and Traditional Arts, Individual Artist Awards, and Community Arts Development. Anyone wishing to serve should visit [msac.org](http://msac.org) for detailed information and forms.

## Staff

MSAC maintains a professional staff to administer its grants programs and Council-initiated programs. Staff members are available to provide technical assistance to the arts community.

## Meetings

All Council and Grants Review Panel 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 Grants Review Panel meetings may be obtained from the MSAC website at [www.msac.org](http://www.msac.org) or by contacting MSAC offices at (410) 767-6555.

## Creativity Grant Overview

The purpose of the Creativity Grant Program is to strengthen the vitality and sustainability of artists and small organizations to maintain a strong and stable arts infrastructure in the State of Maryland. The Creativity Grant also provides opportunities to serve the growing needs of relevant arts projects and collaborations within Maryland communities. Applicants may only submit one application per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).

The Creativity Grant Program supports eligible activities of **Independent Artists** and **Small Organizations** with grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,500. There is no matching fund requirement for Creativity Grants. (For more information, see Creativity Grant Eligible Activities.)

Deadlines for the Creativity Grant Program are rolling. MSAC will begin accepting applications on February 1, 2019 for the FY19 Application cycle and on April 1, 2019 for the FY20 Application cycle. The grant period for FY19 is February 1, 2019 - June 30, 2019. The grant period for FY20 is July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020. Funded activities must occur within the grant period and begin no more than 90 days following submission of an application. Applications will be reviewed monthly, and Creativity Grants will be awarded throughout the fiscal year until allocated funding is depleted.

- **Independent Artists**

- Artists working without an affiliation to an organization may apply for Creativity Grants to support:
  - Individual or collaborative projects.
- Independent Artist eligibility for Creativity Grants:
  - The artist must produce or present projects or programs that are relevant to their community and accessible to the public.
  - The applicant must be the lead artist whose original work is included in the project or program.
  - Applicants and all collaborators must be Maryland residents (living in Maryland six months prior to the application's submission and throughout the funded project or program) and must be 18 years of age or older.
  - An artist may be named (as lead artist or collaborator) in one application per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30).
  - Only one application per project or program will be considered for funding.
  - The applicant may not be enrolled in any matriculated high school, undergraduate or graduate degree program.

- **Small Organizations**

- Organizations with an allowable income of \$50,000 or less may apply for Creativity Grants to support (see below for a full description of allowable income):
  - General operations (operating grants to organizations that produce or present the arts to the general public through public programs)
  - Arts programs (an established or ongoing creative endeavor)
  - Arts services (providing services for artists, arts organizations, or the arts community)
  - Arts projects (the origination of a creative endeavor that may include collaborations with artists and other organizations)
  - Only one application per project or program will be considered for funding.

- Small Organization Eligibility for Creativity Grants:
  - The organization must produce or present arts programs, services or projects that are relevant to its community and accessible to the public.
  - The organization is not a Grants for Organizations (GFO) recipient. (The Creativity Grant is replacing the former GFO Basics Grant and former Basics Grant recipients are encouraged to apply.)
  - The organization has one completed and documented fiscal year as of the date of the grant submission.
  - Community Arts Development (CAD) grant recipients that manage a state-designated Arts & Entertainment (A&E) District may apply only for programs or projects that benefit the A&E District.
  - The organization fits one of the following criteria:
    - Has a 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and is incorporated in Maryland
    - Has a 501(c)3 tax exempt status from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, and has a significant physical presence in Maryland
    - Is a unit of Maryland local government
    - Is an arts program, with a budget of \$50,000 or less, residing at Maryland colleges or universities .

## Review Criteria

The review of all Creativity Grant applications is based on successful evidence of the answers to the following application questions:

1. What arts activities and geographic area will be supported with this funding? Be detailed.
2. What is the timeline for the arts activities?
3. How will the success of proposed arts activities be determined?
4. What is the budget for the arts activities?

Please review the Creativity Grant Application Scoring Rubric [here](#).

## Application Process

### Preparing Your Application

Please refer to the Creativity Grant Application Scoring Rubric as you respond to the application questions.

### Financials

**Independent Artists** are not required to submit financial statements with the application.

**Small Organizations** must submit a financial statement from the last completed fiscal year demonstrating an allowable income figure of less than \$50,000.

**Allowable Income Figures** include ticket sales, tuition, donations, foundation support, corporate support, public support, gift shop sales, fundraisers, etc.

**Non-allowable Income Figures** are loans, carryover, debt forgiveness, transfer of funds earned in prior years, revenue raised for capital or endowment funds or funds intended for the purpose of re-granting, and unrealized gains/losses. These items may be included in your financial statement or budgets but will not be used to determine your grant amount.

## SmartSimple

MSAC utilizes the cloud-based grant system SmartSimple to accept grant applications. Only successfully submitted online applications will be accepted. Hard copy applications will NOT be accepted.

- Applicants are required to complete and submit their applications by electronic means, including the use of an electronic signature, a minimum of 90-days prior to the start of the proposed arts activities. (Example: If the proposed start date of an activity is December 1, the Creativity Grant application must be received by MSAC no later than September 1.)
- Technical support for SmartSimple is available during regular office hours, 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.
- Lost, misdirected or late applications are the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- **Applicants must meet all revision deadlines after submission, as specified in writing, or the application will be withdrawn.**

## Grant Review and Evaluation Process

MSAC utilizes a multi-disciplinary, statewide grant panel to electronically review (approve or deny) applications on a monthly basis for grant requests over \$2,000. Applications for grant requests of \$2,000 or less are reviewed by MSAC program staff only.

## Notification

Creativity Grant applications submitted by the fifth day of the month will be reviewed by the panel within the same month. Applications received after the fifth day of the month will be reviewed by the panel in the following month. After the monthly panel review, applicants will be notified of the grant status as soon as possible, and, if approved, receive a formal grant agreement form to process the grant payment (100% of award amount).

## Reporting Requirements

If awarded a Creativity Grant, the recipient must file a final report online no more than two weeks after the end of the Fiscal Year in which the funded activity occurred (July 15). The report contains a brief summary request as well as some demographic requirements of the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts). Failure to submit reports may jeopardize current and/or future MSAC grants and may result in repayment of grant funds back to the State of Maryland. Before any funds are distributed, Creativity grantees are also required to submit any outstanding reports/requirements for any other MSAC grants they have received.

**Grant Funds May Not be Used For:** Re-granting; capital improvements or purchases of permanent equipment; acquisition of capital assets; activities for the exclusive benefit of an organization's members; activities that are principally recreational, therapeutic, or rehabilitative; travel outside Maryland to present or produce arts; projects chiefly for classroom use or in school activities; activities not open to the general public; scholarships awarded by the applicant organization for its own activities. Grant funds may not be used to make contributions to any persons who hold, or are candidates for, elected office; to any political party, organization, or action committee; or in connection with any political campaign or referendum. Grant funds may not be used for any lobbying activities.