

## ARTS ACCESS

### *General Operating Support for Small Organizations*

The Arts Access program supports recurring arts and cultural activities that broaden opportunities for Ohio citizens to participate in the arts. Arts Access grants provide general operating support for organizations with annual budgets under \$30,000 to support their ongoing programming. The application and open review process strengthens applicants' grant-writing skills, reveals promising practices for the arts and increases awareness of cultural resources. Applicants must demonstrate a strong commitment to making artistic programs accessible and relevant to a diverse range of participants. Organizations must also show that their activities have artistic, educational and cultural value and that realistic strategies are in place for planning, [evaluation](#) and organizational management. Arts Access funding supports Ohio's arts providers as they make artistic experiences readily available to their communities. This in turn makes Ohio a vibrant place to live, learn, work and visit.

#### APPLICATION DEADLINE

March 1 (odd-numbered years only)

#### WHAT THE PROGRAM SUPPORTS

The Arts Access program provides two-year grants for organizational operating support. This program supports Ohio organizations that plan and conduct ongoing arts programs for a full year of programming.

#### Allowable Expenses

OAC funds may be used for a wide variety of expenses in the general operation of an organization. Organizations often choose to dedicate Arts Access funds to artistic or administrative expenses. Other allowable expenses include marketing, program planning, education and [evaluation](#). Please refer to the [Funding Restrictions](#) section of the OAC *Guidelines* (page 18) for a list of activities the OAC cannot fund. In addition to those restrictions, OAC funding cannot be awarded to:

- Organizations that are receiving operating support from the legislature through a line item in the state's budget during the same fiscal year in which the legislative operating support is available.

#### GRANT AWARDS

Arts Access applicants may request up to \$5,000. Actual grant award amounts will vary according to the availability of OAC funds as appropriated from the state legislature. All Arts Access grants require a 1:1 cash match.

#### WHO MAY APPLY

Arts, cultural, community-based and social service organizations doing arts programming may apply to the Arts Access program. All applicants must possess nonprofit status or nonprofit intent.

### Eligibility Requirements

- All applicants must have received at least two OAC grants in the last four fiscal years.
- All applicants' last fiscal year income must be less than \$30,000. Non-arts organizations, including colleges and universities, meet this criterion based on the organization's arts programming budget, not the overall organizational budget.

Applicants may be:

- Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in any discipline (community arts, literature, performing arts, traditional arts, visual arts, etc.); OR
- Other nonprofit organizations that provide arts programming (government entities, social service agencies, etc.); OR
- Educational organizations (colleges, universities, etc.) that demonstrate a commitment to arts programming in a larger community setting.

### Funding Restrictions

Organizations that receive Sustainability support are not eligible to receive support through the Arts Access program.

### HOW TO APPLY

Please refer to the [Grants Process for Organizations](#) section of the OAC *Guidelines* (page 14) for a step-by-step guide to the entire process of applying for and managing an OAC grant.

### Application Basics

Applicants are encouraged to contact their [regional program coordinator](#) to discuss the program's grant *Guidelines* and application process. All applications to the Arts Access program must be submitted via the OAC's [OnLine Grant Application](#) system (OLGA). No paper applications are accepted.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a [draft application](#) through OLGA at least 30 days before the final deadline date. To submit a draft, follow the instructions on the final page of the online application.

Applicants must submit their application electronically via OLGA by 5 p.m. on the final deadline date. If the application is not submitted electronically, it will not be accepted. Your organization will be notified via e-mail (sent through OLGA to the primary contact listed in the application) when your application is received. For assistance with OLGA, call the help desk at 614/728-4449 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays, or e-mail [olgahelpdesk@oac.state.oh.us](mailto:olgahelpdesk@oac.state.oh.us).

### Support Materials

To complete an application for this program, applicants must submit one set of [support materials](#) in hard copy to the OAC. Applications that do not include support materials will not be accepted.

Each OAC grant program has specific [support material](#) requirements. To learn which materials are required for this program, as well as other materials that are optional but may strengthen your application, refer to the [Support Materials Grid for Organizations](#) in Appendix H of the OAC *Guidelines*. You may choose to direct panelists to review some support materials online rather than sending them in hard copy form; please refer to the [Online Support Material Submission](#) sheet for further information and submission instructions.

The signature page and support materials must be received in the OAC office by 5 p.m. seven calendar days following the final application deadline date (regardless of postmarked date). If the signature page and support materials do not reach the OAC within this timeframe, the application will not be accepted. Your organization will be notified via e-mail (sent through OLGA to your primary contact person) when your support materials are received.

## YEAR TWO: PROGRAMMATIC AND BUDGET UPDATES

Prior to the second year of an Arts Access grant, applicants must submit a summary of programming and updated budget pages for the second year of their grant by April 1. Your organization will receive detailed instructions via e-mail (sent through OLGA to your primary contact person) by January 1.

1. Programmatic update: Applicants must submit via OLGA a narrative summary of programmatic activities that will occur during the second year of the grant.
2. Budget update: Applicants must submit via OLGA updated Budget Overview, Income, Expense and [In-Kind Donations](#) pages for activities that will occur during the second year of the grant.

## TIMELINE

The timeline below presents a general outline of the grant application process for the Arts Access program. Please note that if a deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday or state holiday, the deadline will be extended until the next business day.

Application available in OLGA	November 1
<a href="#">Draft application</a> deadline	February 1
Final application deadline	March 1
<a href="#">Support material</a> deadline	7 calendar days following the application deadline
Panel meeting	May
Grant award announcement	July
Signed grant agreement deadline	August 30
Year 1 grant period	July 1 - June 30
Year 1 final report deadline	July 30
<b>For 2-year grantees only:</b>	
Year 2 update available in OLGA	January 1

Year 2 update financial documentation deadline	April 1
Year 2 grant award announcement	July
Year 2 signed grant agreement deadline	August 30
Year 2 grant period	July 1 - June 30
Year 2 final report deadline	July 30

## EVALUATION AND SCORING

A panel of arts and cultural professionals, educators, Ohio artists and other community members evaluate and score Arts Access grant applications and [support materials](#). Panel meetings are open to the public and representatives from your organization are encouraged to attend to hear the panel's comments about your application. Many panel meetings are streamed live on the Internet to make them more accessible to applicants and the general public; contact your program coordinator or visit the [Deadlines and Panel Meetings](#) page for details and instructions for participating.

At the panel meeting, an evaluative discussion will occur for each application. Following the discussion, a vote will be taken to determine whether the application advances to the scoring round. If an application moves to the scoring round, it will be given a score based on how well it meets the review criteria. After the panel meeting, this score and the organization's request will be used to determine the funding award recommendation. Funding recommendations must be approved by the OAC Board, the only body authorized to make final funding decisions.

The review process is competitive; not all applications are funded. Applicants not voted into the scoring round will not be funded. A cutoff point in the scores will be determined so that applications below a certain score are not funded.

### Review Criteria

Applicants will be given a numerical score based on how well their application meets the [criteria](#) in the following [evaluation](#) categories: 1) Artistic/Educational/Cultural Value; 2) Community Participation and Accessibility; 3) Planning, Evaluation and Documentation; and 4) Organizational and Financial Management. Evidence of meeting the [criteria](#) will be found in the application's narrative, budget information, [support materials](#) and website. There is a maximum of 100 points across the four categories:

### Evaluation Criteria

#### Artistic/Educational/Cultural Value

*The highest score for this category is 25 points.*

- Applicant's activities demonstrate artistic, educational and/or cultural value for the community being served;
- Applicant's artistic, educational or cultural activities advance the organization's mission;

- Applicant's artistic, educational or cultural activities are strengthened by qualified personnel;
- If applicant participates in K-12 in-school educational programming, that programming addresses the [Ohio Fine Arts Academic Content Standards](#).

### Community Participation and Accessibility

*The highest score for this category is 35 points.*

- Applicant understands and is responsive to the needs and interests of the community;
- Applicant contributes to the economic, educational and/or cultural well-being of the community;
- Applicant has clearly described steps to increase [cultural participation](#);
- Applicant has identified and minimized barriers to cultural participation, including but not limited to barriers that prevent participation by people with disabilities;
- Applicant's relationships within the community strengthen its ability to fulfill its mission;
- Applicant effectively publicizes and promotes its activities to the community it serves.

### Planning and Evaluation

*The highest score for this category is 20 points.*

- Applicant engages in planning and has clearly defined goals;
- Applicant involves community members, volunteers and artists in planning and [evaluation](#);
- Applicant evaluates the impact of its programs on the community;
- Applicant's evaluation strategies are appropriate for participants and activities.

### Organizational and Financial Management

*The highest score for this category is 20 points.*

- Applicant demonstrates awareness of strengths/weaknesses and has the ability to manage resources appropriately;
- Applicant's staff, board and/or volunteers are qualified and demonstrate the [capacity](#) to complete the proposed programming;
- Applicant's budget is realistic and aligns with the narrative;
- Applicant's budget reflects a broad base of revenue and support from earned, unearned and in-kind sources;
- If applicable, applicant has a viable plan to reduce any accumulated deficit.