

## FUNDING FOR ORGANIZATIONS

### Grant Process for Organizations

The OAC wants you to understand its grant-making process from start to finish. Below you will find an overview of the life cycle of a grant. Understanding this process is an important first step that will help you sharpen your grant-writing skills, develop a competitive application, submit it through the OnLine Grant Application (OLGA) system and, if you are recommended for funding, manage your award.

If you have not already done so, you may wish to consult the [How to Use the Guidelines](#) section for more information on how best to use this publication for your organization's needs. Additional information about specific applications, [support materials](#), [evaluation](#) and review [criteria](#) can be found in the "How to Apply" section within each program section.

Please note: Many of the tips for using OLGA and accomplishing the steps described here are also included in [Appendix F: OnLine Grant Application \(OLGA\) FAQs](#).

### Step One: Read the OAC *Guidelines*!

Before beginning any application, you should familiarize yourself with the OAC *Guidelines*, paying particular attention to each funding program for which your organization intends to apply. It is also very important to read the [Funding Restrictions](#) section, which is relevant to all organizational funding programs, and Appendices A and B regarding [Legal Requirements](#) and [ADA Policy](#). While reading these sections, make a list of any questions regarding eligibility, what the program funds, [criteria](#), etc.

If you are a new applicant, you should contact the appropriate OAC program coordinator at least eight weeks prior to the deadline to discuss your organization's eligibility and get any questions answered. See the [staff directory](#) for contact information. If you are a previous grantee, you also are encouraged to contact your program coordinator with any questions. Certain programs require applicants to speak with a program coordinator prior to applying; consult the *Guidelines* section for your [program](#) for more details.

### Step Two: Visit OLGA

All organizational applications must be submitted electronically through the [OLGA](#) system; the OAC does not accept paper applications from organizations. Before applying, please familiarize yourself with OLGA and its functions. You should begin each funding cycle by creating or updating your applicant profile in OLGA. **It is critical that the OAC has current and accurate contact information for organizations requesting funds.** Particularly important are up-to-date e-mail addresses for all contact people, as information about the application and grant updates are sent exclusively through e-mail to these contacts.

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).

**Step Three: Get Your Board's Approval**

Before submitting your application, you must confirm and assure your board's permission to apply for OAC funds. Your board president will be required to sign the signature page, which must be submitted with your grant [support materials](#).

**Step Four: Submit Your Draft Application (Optional but Encouraged)**

You are strongly encouraged to complete a [draft application](#) and submit it through OLGA no later than one month before the final deadline. Program coordinators can provide feedback on draft applications via phone, e-mail, fax or a scheduled appointment at the OAC offices. You will then be able to revise your application based on the feedback you received. This step helps you prepare a well-written, thorough proposal and increases your chances of successfully competing with other applicants.

**Step Five: Submit Your Application and Support Materials**

Your completed application must be submitted electronically via OLGA by 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on the final deadline date. If a deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday or state holiday, the deadline will be extended until the next business day.

[Support materials](#) and a signature page are required parts of the application process. These items must be submitted in accordance with the directions in the last section of the OLGA application titled "Signature/Assurances." Your materials must be received in the OAC office by 5 p.m. EST within seven calendar days of the final application deadline date (regardless of postmarked date). If your support materials and signature page do not reach the OAC within this timeframe, then your 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. If you are applying for the Sustainability, Arts Access, Project Support or Arts Partnership programs, you may also submit your support materials through an [online submission form](#).

Within three weeks after the deadline, the Office of Grants Administration & Operations will notify you regarding the date, time and location of your panel meeting. Most panel meetings are open to the public and applicants are encouraged to attend. The appropriate program coordinator will review your application packet and may contact you for clarification regarding your application and/or related materials.

**Step Six: Attend Your Panel Meeting (Optional but Encouraged)**

In general, panel meetings are scheduled within two months following a final deadline. [Panelists](#) meet to discuss, evaluate and score applications in each [program](#) area. OAC staff members present the scores and a summary of each application's discussion to the OAC board at one of the board's three annual meetings for final funding decisions. While applicants are not permitted to participate in the panel meeting discussions, you are encouraged to attend the meeting in order to hear the full discussion about your application and other applications within the same funding [program](#).

Applicants' scores from the panel meeting will be e-mailed to the primary contact person listed in OLGA within three weeks after the panel meets. A summary of the panelist's comments, however, will not be available until

after the OAC board meets. No formal announcement regarding a funding decision and/or a grant amount will be sent to any applicant until after the OAC board meeting.

Applicants requesting Sustainability funds must notify the OAC immediately of any organizational changes that take place after the panel meeting where their application was reviewed. An organization may be asked to submit a revised application, including a revised budget breakout. If an organization stops doing business or reduces its original budget by more than 50 percent, the panel recommendation will be canceled. A reduction in an organization's original budget of less than 50 percent may result in a reduction of the funding recommendation.

### ***Note About the Appeals Policy***

An organization that disputes a review panel's recommendation on grounds of procedural errors may request a review of that recommendation by the OAC board. Procedural errors include a miscounting of votes or failure of a [panelist](#) with a known conflict of interest to leave the room for the discussion and/or vote on an application. Appeals may not be made on the basis of an applicant's disagreement with the panel's assessment of the artistic quality or merit of the proposed project or [program](#). To file an appeal, the applicant must submit a letter to the executive director at the OAC office within 30 days of the panel meeting stating the reasons for the request for review. Appeals will be reviewed and acted on by the Executive Committee of the OAC board after consultation with OAC staff. Such action will be ratified by the OAC board, whose decision is final.

### **Step Seven: OAC Board Reviews Grant Recommendations (Open to the Public)**

Award recommendations and panel comments are reviewed by the OAC board at one of three annual meetings (typically in late June, late September and late February). These meetings are open to the public, per Ohio's Sunshine Law. The OAC board's funding decisions are final.

Formal announcements of grant awards are made following each OAC board meeting (typically in July, October and March). You will be informed via e-mail (sent through OLGA to your organization's primary contact) of the board's funding decision. Also at this time, a summary of panel comments regarding your application will be available in OLGA. The OAC asks that you await this formal announcement before inquiring about grant amounts and panel comment summaries or announcing the grant award to the media.

### **Step Eight: Review and Return Your Grant Agreement**

If your application receives a favorable recommendation for funding, your organization must enter into a legally binding agreement (contract for services) with the state of Ohio. Agreements cannot be altered without prior approval from the director of Grants Administration.

Upon receiving formal announcement of your grant award via e-mail, you must download and complete your grant agreement via OLGA. If you have any questions regarding the grant agreement, please contact the OAC immediately. Once your grant agreement has been reviewed, it must be signed by an authorized signatory of your organization (original ink signature required) and sent to the OAC. Until a grant agreement is received by the OAC, no funds are officially committed to your organization.

In addition to the grant agreement, all organizations must submit an IRS form W9 and a State of Ohio Vendor Information Form with their grant agreement. These documents are required by the state of Ohio in order to process the payment of the grant. No payment will be made without these documents filed and up-to-date in the state accounting system.

If anything changes related to the grant activities for which your organization has been awarded funds, you must promptly notify the OAC in writing of those changes. Failure to do so before filing a final report may jeopardize future funding.

### **Step Nine: Fulfill Your Credit and Publicity Responsibilities**

As part of your grant contract with the state, you are required to credit the OAC as a funder in your promotional and educational materials (both online and in print) and—if applicable—provide written and verbal credit, as well. The requirements differ depending on your organization and the type of grant you receive. Please consult [Appendix E: Credit and Publicity Responsibilities](#) for details. In addition, because your OAC grant is an investment of public tax dollars, we encourage you to inform the media and your legislators about the value of these dollars to your organization and your community.

### **Step Ten: Partial Payments May be Requested**

Organizations may apply for a [partial payment](#) of 50 percent of the total grant award. If your organization needs a partial payment, you must complete an online Partial Payment Request certifying that the grant activity has been partially completed and expenses have been incurred. Processing any grant payment may take up to six weeks. No partial payments will be made within two months of the ending date on the grant agreement. Any current grantee who has had a previous grant canceled at the initiation of OAC staff will not be approved for partial payments until the staff determines that the grantee is able to administer the necessary paperwork.

### **Step Eleven: Submit Your Final Report**

All OAC grants are reimbursements. As the grantee, you must successfully complete the project or [program](#) and then submit the OAC final report form in OLGA for approval from the Office of Grants Administration & Operations and your program coordinator before payment will be made. The final report form will be accessible via your OLGA account after the grant agreement is received. Once the final report is received and approved, final payment of the grant will be processed. Processing a grant payment may take up to six weeks.

If the OAC does not receive your final report within 30 days of the ending date on the grant agreement, we may cancel your grant. Requests for extensions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be authorized if a written request is submitted before the due date for your final report. Former grantees who have failed to submit required and acceptable final report packages for any grant may not receive any other OAC funding for five years following the due date of the final report they failed to submit or until an acceptable final report is submitted, whichever occurs first. Until the former grantee meets one of those conditions, the OAC will accept no further grant applications from that grantee.

## Funding Restrictions

The OAC cannot fund the following activities, organizations and expenditures:

### Activities - General

1. Applications to eliminate or reduce existing deficits.
2. Interest expenses paid on loans or debts.
3. Hospitality expenses (e.g., food and beverages for openings, receptions or benefits).
4. Fundraising efforts (e.g., social events, benefits and entrepreneurial activities).
5. United Fund drives or joint arts funding campaigns.
6. Applications for projects that primarily present political, denominational, religious or sectarian ideas or projects that enhance the property of religious institutions.
7. Arts activities that are essentially recreational or therapeutic, except when the focus of the activities is on art-making led by [professional artists](#) and includes a public component, when appropriate.
8. Applications for arts activities that have already begun or have already occurred.
9. Applications that use as a match funds from other OAC [programs](#) or funds from re-grant programs supported by the OAC.
10. Applications for out-of-state travel, except for professional development, conferences or workshops.
11. Requests for artists' fees when information about the artists and samples of the artists' work have not been included in the [support materials](#).

### Academic Activities

1. Scholarship assistance for academic credit.
2. Programs of public and private schools, including school districts, affiliates, colleges and universities that are not designed to involve the general public; this restriction does not affect the [Arts Partnership](#) program.
3. Applications to support salaries and overhead of public and private schools, college, university and government agency staff and faculty and operations.
4. Projects that are primarily for academic credit.

### Organizations - Specific Situations

1. Applications from organizations not incorporated in Ohio and/or not located in Ohio.
2. Applications from organizations whose membership and participation policies do not comply with nondiscrimination laws.
3. Applications from organizations that are requesting or receiving funds from other OAC programs to operate the same or a similar [program](#) in the same fiscal year.
4. Applications from organizations that did not submit final reports within the time required for the preceding fiscal year.
5. Applications from organizations acting as [fiscal agents](#) for individual artists.
6. Applications from organizations where programming and facilities do not meet or exceed federal ADA requirements.

7. Applications for operating support from arts organizations that are receiving support from the legislature through a line in the state's operating budget during the same fiscal year in which legislative support is available.

### Equipment and Capital Expenses

1. [Brick and mortar](#) activities and [capital improvements](#), except in the [Individual Excellence Awards](#).
2. Equipment purchases exceeding \$500, except in the Individual Excellence Awards.

### **Applications from Colleges, Universities and Government Agencies**

All applications from colleges, universities and government agencies must:

1. Show how the applicant will involve the community outside the college, university or agency in planning or scheduling committees and in implementing the project.
2. Show how the project will be marketed to the general community beyond college or university students, faculty and staff or the agency.
3. Demonstrate a broad financial base of support and contain a cash match from other outside sources; that is, a match beyond staff time and overhead provided by the college, university or agency.

If the college, university, agency development office, or research foundation prohibits departments or programs from raising outside funds, the applicant must submit a statement of that policy signed by the development office along with the application. However, the OAC will continue to recommend that all applicants build a broad financial base for their projects and [programs](#). [Indirect costs](#) may not be used to match OAC funds if a grant is awarded; they should not be shown in the cash section of the application. Indirect costs, if listed, should be shown only in the in-kind section of the application.

### **Multiple Projects**

Only one Sustainability application per funding cycle will be accepted from any applicant; when seeking Sustainability funding, combine all programming and projects into one application. If you wish to apply for Sustainability but also are planning a one-time [special project](#), you may submit an additional application for that activity to the appropriate [program](#); however, you must first contact OAC staff. The OAC reserves the right to determine whether an application is for a [special project](#) or for ongoing, annual operations.

No organization with a budget of less than \$1.5 million may receive more than \$40,000 in a fiscal year through any combination of grants from the [Sustainability](#) and [Project Support](#) programs. This cap excludes additional funding from all other programs. Direct any questions to the OAC staff before you submit an application. If you submit more than one application, you may be required to submit a budget spreadsheet if the OAC staff has questions about the way income and expenses are divided among your various requests. If a spreadsheet is required, the OAC will contact you.

### Fiscal Agent Projects

Unincorporated nonprofit groups and incorporated nonprofit organizations that lack administrative or fiscal capability should submit grant applications to the OAC through a [fiscal agent](#). A fiscal agent is an incorporated, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that provides administrative and financial services. Individual artists may not apply through a fiscal agent. Choose an organization with a proven record of financial and administrative stability. Consult the OAC staff about your fiscal agent before submitting your application. You may not submit a proposal through a fiscal agent that employs the project's coordinators or producers or includes them on its board.

The OAC reserves the authority to determine if an application qualifies as a fiscal agent project and if the representative organization qualifies as a fiscal agent. Based on the *Guidelines* that follow, the OAC staff will examine the application and [support materials](#) to verify that there is a legitimate fiscal agent relationship. The project coordinator and the fiscal agent organization must sign a letter of agreement or a contract that clearly details the legal responsibilities and obligations of each party. A copy of the signed agreement is required for any fiscal agent application and must be submitted by the application deadline for the appropriate [program](#). You may want to consult an attorney when drawing up this agreement.

It is common practice for fiscal agent organizations to charge a fee, often a percentage of the anticipated income of the project. The fiscal agent fee should be included as an expense item in the project budget on the application. You may request OAC funds for all or part of the fiscal agent fee.

If a [fiscal agent](#) project is awarded an OAC grant, the grant agreement is made between the OAC and the fiscal agent, not the project coordinator. The fiscal agent is responsible for all OAC paperwork and reporting, including revised budgets, missing information letters, grant agreements, [partial payment](#) requests and final reports. If documents are prepared by the project coordinator, they must be reviewed and signed by the authorized official of the fiscal agent organization.

Any correspondence regarding a fiscal agent-sponsored application or grant must be submitted either by the fiscal agent or jointly by the fiscal agent and the project producer or coordinator. The OAC strongly recommends that the fiscal agent maintain separate financial accounts for all projects it represents. The OAC will not act as an arbiter for disputes between the project coordinator and the fiscal agent organization. Project coordinators and organizations that are exploring a fiscal agent relationship may obtain information about the process from the OAC Office of Grants Administration & Operations.

**PLEASE REFER TO APPENDICES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**