

HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES for Artists

This section is designed to provide readers with some background on the OAC *Guidelines* themselves—what they are, why they exist and how to use them. The *Guidelines* represent the OAC’s vision, purpose and priorities, and connect those priorities to grant programs available to applicants. They also provide step-by-step instructions for applying for an OAC grant and are the starting place for any applicant interested in receiving funding from the agency. When applicants contact us for assistance in applying for a grant, the first question a staff member is likely to ask is, “Have you read the *Guidelines*?” They are at the very core of our work as an agency and are fundamental in describing how we provide services and support to Ohio’s artists.

Having said this, we realize that applicants are extremely busy and often spend only as much time in this publication as is necessary to answer basic grant-writing questions: When is the deadline? How much can I apply for? Who do I call for help? We know that your primary work is creating and educating—not writing grant narratives and completing budget forms. But as long as you are here, we hope you will make the most of the information and resources presented.

The *Guidelines* contain lessons learned over 45 years by this agency and other state arts agencies around the country, as well as current research about [cultural participation](#), public value, arts education, community building and much more. We believe that the more time you put into using them, the more you will get out of them.

Whether you are new to the OAC or an experienced applicant, we recommend you read the following sections:

1. Begin with the [Introduction to the OAC](#) section, which includes the four Public Purposes of the Arts (identified by the 92nd American Assembly), the OAC’s mission, vision and goals and other background information. This section will tell you a great deal about why we do what we do and how our vision and goals serve the citizens of Ohio—including you!
2. Next read [Funding for Artists](#), which provides a quick-read overview of the support available to artists, including a valuable step-by-step look at the process you will use in applying for and managing an OAC grant. This section is likely to answer many of your most basic questions—and some you never even thought to ask.
3. Wait—don’t skip to your program yet! Before you do, consider perusing some of the appendices that have been created to include quick reference materials on topics critical to grant applicants and their work. Appendix A provides important information about the [Legal Requirements and OAC Rules](#) to which applicants are subject.

4. If you have any questions at all regarding applying via the [OnLine Grant Application](#) system (OLGA), make sure to visit [Appendix F](#). It will help you get started and answer common questions about the system and application process.
5. Now it's time to get serious: the [Support for Artists](#) section describes in detail the OAC grant programs that are available to artists. You may wish to start by reading through the section and program descriptions first, noting which ones may make sense for you. Pay close attention to what each program funds, when its deadline falls and what review [criteria](#) are used.
6. Finally! You've determined the program(s) appropriate for you. Now spend some serious time learning all you can about it. Return to the program(s) of interest and carefully read the entire section. Make notes in the margins, jot down questions and begin making preparations to apply. Be thorough—put yourself in the shoes of a panelist reviewing your application. And if needed, contact the appropriate program coordinator to clarify anything you find confusing.
7. Make sure you bookmark (or print out and tape to your wall) Appendix E, which describes the [Credit and Publicity Responsibilities](#) all grantees must adhere to during their grant period. This will be critical if your application is funded—and why not think positively?

That's it! At this point you have used the *Guidelines* to prepare a thorough and well-thought-out proposal. You've read and re-read the most pertinent sections, you've asked questions of staff, if needed, and you've used every resource at your disposal to prepare a competitive application. We hope this review of the *Guidelines* has helped you streamline the writing process.

One more thing—now that you're finished, you may wish to spend a few moments reviewing other sections of the [OAC website](#). A wealth of other resources not contained in the *Guidelines* can be found there, including mailing lists and newsletter archives, artist and consultant databases, information on past OAC grant awards, current news and initiatives, ongoing research projects, upcoming meetings and much more. Whether it's grant season or not, we invite you to check back regularly and stay involved with your state arts council.