

FUNDING FOR ORGANIZATIONS

GRANT PROCESS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

The Ohio Arts Council wants you to understand its grant-making process from start to finish. Presented below is 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 recommended for funding, manage your award.

If you have not already done so, you may wish to consult the [How to Use These Guidelines](#) section for more information about how best to use this publication according to 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 tips for using and navigating OLGA and accomplishing the steps described here are included in [Appendix F: OnLine Grant Application \(OLGA\) Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Step One: Read the *Guidelines*!

Before beginning any application, you should familiarize yourself with the *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 for Organizations](#) 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 [OnLine Grant Application](#) (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.

Technical questions about OLGA can be answered by contacting the OLGA Help Desk via phone (614/728-4449) during the customer service hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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 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 send support materials

Your completed application must be submitted via OLGA by the deadline date listed on the OAC Web site. Applications are accepted until 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on the deadline date. If a deadline falls on a weekend or state/federal holiday, the deadline is extended until the next business day.

[Support materials](#) and a signature page are a required part of the application process. These items must be submitted in accordance with the directions in the last section of the OLGA application titled "Assurances/Support Material Checklist." Your materials must be received in the OAC offices within seven calendar days of the deadline date. If the support materials and signature page fail to arrive by the specified date, your application will be eliminated from consideration. Due to the amount of support materials we receive during this seven-day period, we are unable to confirm via phone or e-mail if the materials have arrived at our offices. Please consider hand delivery or overnight shipping with notification if this is a concern.

Within three weeks after the deadline, the Office of Grants Administration and Constituent Services 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 the packet and may call you for clarification of the application and/or related materials.

Step Six: Attend the panel meeting—open to the public per Ohio’s Sunshine Law (optional but encouraged)

Panel meetings generally are scheduled within two months after a 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 three annual meetings for final funding approval.

Applicants’ scores from the panel meeting will be e-mailed to the primary contact person’s e-mail address within three weeks after the panel. A summary of the panelists comments, however, will not be available until after the OAC Board meets. While applicants are not allowed to participate in the panel meeting discussions, you are encouraged to attend it to hear the full discussion of your application and other applications within the same funding program. 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 change that takes 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 miscount of votes or failure of a panelist with a known conflict of interest to leave the room for the discussion and 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 per Ohio’s Sunshine Law

Award recommendations and panel comments are reviewed by the OAC Board at one of three annual meetings open to the public (typically in late June, late September and late February). 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 the organization's primary contact) of the OAC Board's funding decision. Also at this time, a summary of panel comments 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 and Constituent Services.

Upon receiving formal announcement of a 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. When the agreement has been satisfactorily 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 about 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 Ohio Arts Council as a funder in your print and marketing materials, advertisements and, if applicable, curtain speeches. 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 that 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 submit the OAC Final Report Form in OLGA for the Office of Grants Administration and Constituent Services and your program coordinator for approval before payment is 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.