

## HOW TO USE THE *GUIDELINES* for Organizations

This section is designed to provide readers with some background on the *Guidelines* themselves - what they are, why they exist, and how to use them. The *Guidelines* represent the Ohio Arts Council's (OAC) 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 organizations 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 arts and cultural institutions.

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 our deadline? How much can we apply for? Who do I call for help? We know that your primary work is using the arts to change lives, affect your community, foster creativity and attract people to participate in your programming - not to write grant narratives and complete budget forms. But as long as you are here, we hope you make the most of the information and resources presented! The *Guidelines* contain lessons learned over 43 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, you 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 our Public Purposes, the OAC mission, the agency's vision and goals, and other background information. This will tell you a great deal about why we do what we do and how our vision and goals as an organization intersect with yours.
2. Next read [Section Two: Funding for Organizations](#), which provides a quick-read overview of the funding available to organizations, including an extremely 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 had 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 material on topics critical to applicants and their work. [Appendix A](#) provides important information about the Legal Requirements and OAC Rules applicants are subject to, and [Appendix B](#) discusses Accessibility and ADA compliance.

4. If you have any questions at all regarding applying online using 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 Organizations](#) section describes in detail all the OAC grant programs available to organizations. You may wish to start by cruising through the section and reading all of the program descriptions first, noting which ones may make sense for your organization and activities. Pay close attention to what each program funds, when its deadline falls and what review criteria are used to evaluate proposals.
6. Finally! You've determined which program(s) are appropriate for your organization. Now spend some serious time learning all you can about them. 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 proposal! And if needed, contact the appropriate program coordinator to clarify anything you find confusing.
7. To ensure your application is well-written and complete, be sure to visit [Appendices C, D and H](#). Appendices C and D are useful resources describing the agency's Cultural Participation Policy and the concept of Public Value. Appendix H contains information on what Support Materials should be submitted with your application. Until you've reviewed all three, your application is probably not yet complete!
8. Make sure you bookmark (or print out and tape to your wall!) [Appendix E](#), which describes the Credit and Publicity Responsibilities all grantees must follow during their grant period. This will be critical if your application is funded - and why not think positive?!

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 craft a competitive application. We hope that this careful reading of the *Guidelines* has helped you streamline the writing process and arrive at this point as easily and painlessly as possible. Congratulations!

One more thing - now that you're finished, you may wish to spend a few moments reviewing other sections of the [OAC Web site](#). 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 on a regular basis and stay involved with your state arts council.