

Step-By-Step: Applications from ORGANIZATIONS

- 1. Preparing to Apply:** The [ARTIE](#) online grant application system guides applicants through the process of creating an application, answering narrative questions, completing a budget for planned work, and selecting supporting documentation. First-time or inexperienced applicants, or those proposing never-before-funded projects, are encouraged to submit a draft of all or part of their completed application to an OAC staff member using ARTIE no later than two weeks before the final deadline date using the “Request Feedback” button. (Due to limited staff capacity, no more than one draft per applicant can be reviewed before a given deadline, and more experienced applicants need not submit one.) *Feedback requests are optional, and do not affect scoring*; grant review panelists are not informed of which applicants participated in this process. First-time applicants (or first-time grant writers for previously funded organizations) are encouraged to contact their regional program coordinator to discuss an application, as well as the program’s application process and reporting requirements.
- 2. Grantwriting Tips:** OAC staff has compiled a list of grantwriting suggestions based on past observations and past panel comments. While each application is different, in general the most competitive applications include a clearly written narrative, logical and mistake-free budget, and thorough electronic support materials and/or hyperlinks to online materials. A Grantwriting Tip Sheet can be found on the Grants webpage of the OAC website: oac.ohio.gov/grants.
- 3. Hyperlinks:** Links to online materials should be embedded within narrative content, allowing readers to visit websites with a single click. This allows panelists to easily access documents or pages from your organization’s website or elsewhere online – such as board lists, newsletters, event announcements, critical reviews, or audiovisual content – while reading about them in your narrative responses. Using hyperlinks is encouraged but optional, and moderation is suggested; applicants should consider that panelists often have several dozen applications or more and include only links those most worthy of extra review or attention. Items referenced using hyperlinks should *not* be uploaded as separate support material items.
- 4. Support Materials:** Applicants may also attach a limited number of other electronic support materials to their applications in ARTIE; *no materials* are mailed in hard copy to the OAC. Attachments may include promotional materials, audiovisual samples including videos and images, or planning and evaluation documents. Some programs may restrict the maximum number of separate online attachments permitted, as panelists’ review time is limited. ARTIE provides a list of items that are either required or suggested for each program and situation, and guides you in selecting appropriate file types and formats.
- 5. Final Applications:** Applicants must submit their full application – including all support materials and an electronic signature – via ARTIE by 5 p.m. on the deadline date. Applications not submitted electronically will not be accepted. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications **at least five business days prior** to the application deadline to avoid any unexpected delays leading up to deadline day. Any deadline falling on a Saturday, Sunday, or state holiday, is extended until the next business day.
- 6. Evaluation and Scoring:** Unless otherwise noted, a panel of arts and cultural professionals, educators, artists, and other community members evaluate and score grant applications according to how well they satisfy that program’s Review Criteria (noted within each program’s guidelines). Each criterion noted with a program’s Evaluation and Scoring section is worth five points. All eligible applicants to a given program are scored by panels, and a summary of comments from each review are made available to applicants.
- 7. Panel Meetings:** Unless otherwise noted, all panel meetings are open to the public through a video conferencing platform. Representatives of applying organizations are encouraged to listen online. For details on panel meeting dates, times, and instructions for participating, visit the OAC online grants calendar (oac.ohio.gov/Grants/Grants-Calendar).

At each panel meeting, a diverse group of expert panelists discuss how well each application satisfies the program's Review Criteria. Panelists highlight strengths and weaknesses, discussing all aspects of the application and its support materials. Following the public discussion, each panelist provides a final score for each application. Later, OAC staff use averages of these scores to determine funding award recommendations. Funding recommendations must be approved by the OAC board, the only body authorized to make final funding decisions. The review process is competitive, and not all applications are funded.

- 8. 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 might include a technological error preventing panelists from properly viewing the application, or a failure of a panelist with a known conflict of interest to leave the discussion. 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 OAC board, whose decision is final, after consultation with OAC staff.
- 9. OAC Board Meetings:** Award recommendations and panel comments are reviewed by the OAC board during its meetings, held quarterly each year. These meetings are open to the public per Ohio's Sunshine Law; meeting dates/times and location details are posted on the OAC's website. Formal announcements of grant awards are made following each OAC board meeting. Grantees are informed via e-mail of funding decisions. In most cases, a summary of panel comments regarding your application will be available in ARTIE. The OAC asks that you await this formal announcement before inquiring about grant amounts and panel comment summaries, or before announcing the grant award to the media.
- 10. Grant Agreements:** If your application receives funding, your organization enters into a legally binding agreement (contract for services) with the state of Ohio. Agreements cannot be altered without prior approval from the OAC. Upon receiving formal announcement of your grant award via e-mail, your primary contact must finalize the electronic grant agreement in ARTIE. Until an accepted grant agreement is received by the OAC through your electronic submission in ARTIE, no funds are officially committed to your organization. If anything changes related to the grant activities for which your organization has been awarded funds, you must promptly notify the OAC in writing. Failure to do so may jeopardize future funding.

In addition to the grant agreement, all funded organizations must upload an IRS form W9 and a State of Ohio Supplier Information Form to Ohio Shared Services. These documents are required by the state of Ohio to process grant payments.

- 11. Credit and Publicity:** 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. The requirements differ depending on your organization and the type of grant you receive. Please consult the OAC's online [Credit and Publicity](#) page for details, up-to-date logo files, ideas for publicizing your OAC award, and other information. Your OAC grant is an investment of public tax dollars, so we encourage you to inform the media and your legislators about the value of these dollars to your organization and your community, tell your story, and use this opportunity to alert your community to this award.
- 12. Partial Payments:** Sustainability award grantees will automatically receive a partial payment upon acceptance of the award in ARTIE, no other action by a Sustainability grantee needs to be taken for the partial payment to be processed. Organizations in most project grant programs may apply for a partial payment of 50 percent of their total grant award via ARTIE. To request a partial payment, grantees must complete an online request certifying that the grant activity has been partially completed and expenses

have been incurred. In all programs, partial payments will not be honored until a grant agreement has been processed. No partial payments will be made within two months of the ending date on the grant agreement. Current grantees that have had a previous grant canceled at the initiation of the OAC may not be approved for partial payments until the staff determines that the grantee is able to administer the necessary paperwork. OAC staff may request additional information regarding grant activities prior to approving a partial payment.

13. Final Reports: OAC grantees will be provided a final payment upon a timely and complete final report submission. As the grantee, you must successfully complete the project or program and then submit the OAC final report form in ARTIE for approval by agency staff before payment will be made. Final report forms will be accessible in ARTIE after a grant agreement is received and are due 30 days after the grant end date. Once a final report is received and approved, final payment of the grant will be processed. Processing a grant payment may take up to six or more weeks.

If the OAC does not receive your final report within 30 days of the ending date on the grant agreement, your grant is in danger of cancellation. Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the Investment Office Director *before* the final report due date. Such requests should be rare and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. 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.