

# **Arts Council of Fairfax County Operating Support Grant Guidelines**

**Arts Council of Fairfax County**  
**MAPPING THE FUTURE OF THE ARTS IN FAIRFAX**

**Deadline: February 15, 2017**

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## Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Purpose of the *Operating Support Grant Program*
- Goals of the *Operating Support Grant Program*
- Organizational Eligibility
- Grant Restrictions
- Matching Requirements
- Funding Categories
- Review Process
- Evaluation Criteria
- Terms and Conditions of a Grant
  - Duration of a Grant
  - Organizational Eligibility
  - Amount of Grant
  - Addendum
  - Cost Sharing
  - Use of Funds
  - Acknowledgement of Arts Council Funding
  - Announcement of Award
  - Payment and Reporting Procedures.
- Grant Preparation Assistance
- Uploads
  - Required Documents
  - Work Samples
  - Supplemental Materials
- Submitting Your Application
- Appeals Process

## **Introduction**

The Arts Council of Fairfax County creates and nurtures an environment in which the arts and artists can flourish, and is designated as Fairfax County's local arts agency. Through partnerships with schools, individual artists, arts organizations, and other cultural and community groups, the Arts Council promotes and encourages excellence in the arts by initiating and supporting programs, activities, and policies that inspire, nurture, and reflect the cultural diversity of Fairfax County.

In 2006, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors established a community funding pool for the arts through a grant to the Arts Council of Fairfax County. The *Operating Support Grants Program* is supported by this community funding pool.

## **Purpose of the *Operating Support Grant Program***

The purpose of *Operating Support Grants Program* is to maintain stability and encourage the development and advancement of the arts in Fairfax County while serving the artistic and cultural needs of Fairfax County residents and their families.

## **Goals of the *Operating Support Grant Program***

Through the *Operating Support Grant Program*, the Arts Council of Fairfax County seeks:

- To encourage wide participation in the arts through diverse cultural programming available to all residents of Fairfax County.
- To provide support for established arts organizations and the development of new organizations;
- To promote opportunities for individual artists and arts organizations of all disciplines to create, present, and celebrate their artistic endeavors;
- To be a catalyst for increased private sector support for arts organizations through leveraged public funding;

## Organizational Eligibility

All applicants must meet the following criteria to apply to the *Operating Support Grant Program*. Staff reviews all grant applications for eligibility prior to the review process.

1. An organization is eligible to apply to the *Operating Support Grant Program* if:
  - It has as a core mission the creation, exhibition, presentation, production, or performance of and/or education in an arts discipline.
  - It has regular activity in a minimum of four different months in the year or 120 days of the year.
2. An organization must:
  - Be in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws; and
  - Hold current or pending status under IRS code 501(c)(3); or
  - Operate as a specifically defined arts division, or have its own arts program identity, within a larger nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization; or
  - If an organization does not hold 501(c)(3) status in its own right, a fiscal sponsor that holds 501(c)(3) status may apply on its behalf. The fiscal sponsor must manage all grant funds and ensure compliance with the terms of the grant if an award is made.
3. The organization or the division/program that is applying must have an address of record within the geographical boundaries of Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church and satisfy TWO of the following four criteria for at least one year:
  - Present at least 51% of public artistic activities within the geographical boundaries of Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church.
  - Meet, rehearse, exhibit, and operate within the geographical boundary of Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church.
  - Have 51% of board of directors' members work or reside in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church.
  - Verify that 51% of attendees at performances, exhibits, events, and activities reside in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church evidenced through acceptable statistical data including but not limited to: ticket analysis, subscription data, box office surveys, and audience surveys.
4. The applicant must have submitted all required final reports for any grant(s) received from the Arts Council of Fairfax County that are due by the deadline.
5. An organization must have independently prepared financial statements such as an audit or a treasurer's report (audit required for organizations with expenses of \$600,000 and above).
6. An organization is not eligible to apply to the *Operating Support Grant Program* if it receives line item funding from Fairfax County in fiscal year 2017.

## **Grant Restrictions**

All *Operating Support Grant Program* grants must:

- Support activities, programs, or projects occurring within Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church;
- Have qualified artistic or scholarly, administrative, and management leadership (either professional or volunteer) capable of completing any grant-supported activities, programs, or projects;
- Occur within the dates of July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

*Operating Support Grant Program* grants cannot be used for:

- Fundraising activities, such as capital campaigns or endowment campaigns;
- Construction or renovation projects;
- Political advocacy costs;
- Activities not open to the general public;
- Debt retirement;
- Pre-grant Costs.

## **Matching Requirements**

1. Every *Operating Support Grant Program* grant requires a two to one match by the applicant.
2. The matching funds may come from any source except the Arts Council of Fairfax County or the Fairfax County government. Potential sources of your matching funds include foundation grants, private donations, ticket sales, and member dues.
3. In-kind contributions may only consist of donated goods.
4. The value of all in-kind contributions shown as income must be offset by line item expenses in the total budget.
5. The value of in-kind goods must be documented with invoices, billing statements, or donation letters. To the extent possible, documentation about the donor and the value of in-kind goods should be provided with the application. If the grant is awarded, this documentation must be provided with the final report required at the end of the grant period.

## Budget Levels

Organizations may apply in one of five budget levels within the *Operating Support Grant Program*. The applicant's budget size determines the appropriate category. If an applicant is an arts division/program within a larger nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, then the arts division/program's budget should determine its category, not the larger nonprofit's budget size. Applicant using a fiscal sponsor should use the applicant organization budget, not the fiscal agent. Do not include in-kind expenses in the budget level calculation.

For the *Operating Support Grant Program*, your budget size is determined by the "Total Expenses" you describe for your most recently completed fiscal year on the Budget Form. "Pass through money," money that is collected by the organization and then immediately dispersed, as in the case of collecting art sales and then distributing that money back to the individual artist, should not appear in an organization's budget as income. If the organization collects a portion or percentage of that money then only that portion can show as income.

Pass through money is money collected by an organization and then immediately dispersed. Examples include:

- funds collected by an organization that sells art on behalf of an artist and then distributes that money to the individual artist;
- organizations that collect costume fees from individual participants, and then immediately purchase costumes for individual participants;
- money that is collected from individuals for travel purposes, which is then spent on travel.

Some monies spent for fundraising purposes are pass through money. If an organization sells an item for fundraising purposes (for example, wreaths or ornaments), the purchase of those fundraising items cannot be included in the organization's income and expenses. Only the profits from the fundraiser should be included in the income category.

Level 1 under \$50,000.

Level 2 \$50,000-\$100,000.

Level 3 \$100,000-\$250,000

Level 4 \$250,000-\$500,000

Level 5 over \$500,000

## **Review Process**

Following the grant application deadline, Arts Council of Fairfax County staff determines whether an applicant is eligible and whether an application is complete. Staff may contact applicants for information needed to make an eligibility determination. If an applicant is determined to be ineligible as an official applicant, the application will be rejected without evaluation. Incomplete applications are subject to rejection without evaluation. If an application is rejected, the applicant will be notified by e-mail.

All eligible applications for the *Operating Support Grant Program* are evaluated by panel review. Panelists are arts professionals with a particular knowledge of or expertise in the segments of the arts community that are eligible to apply to the Arts Council for funding. Panel meetings are open to the public and applicants will be notified of the schedule for the panel meeting and are encouraged to attend.

The Arts Council of Fairfax County Board of Directors makes the final funding decisions on the basis of the evaluations by the panels and the overall goals of the *Operating Support Grant Program* and of the Arts Council of Fairfax County.

## Evaluation Criteria

Advisory Review Panels usually comprised of approximately 5 individuals who have no conflict of interest, will review and evaluate each eligible application on its own merit. The Arts Council of Fairfax County selects panel members for their diverse backgrounds, expertise in a particular arts discipline, and knowledge of the community. Panelists will evaluate each grant request based on the criteria below:

### 1. Quality of Programs

- Do the programs effectively fulfill the applicant's mission?
- Do the programs demonstrate support and stimulation of artistic growth and excellence for Fairfax County artists?
- Do the programs offer the public greater availability to under-represented artists and art forms?
- Does the applicant demonstrate artistic excellence as shown by the qualifications, background, and experience of the artists?
- Does the applicant offer public artistic activities that reflect the diversity of the population of Fairfax County?
- Have previous programs been received positively?

### 2. Community Outreach

- Is there community support for the applicant?
- Does the applicant respond to community needs?
- Does the applicant make efforts to provide access to the arts for all residents of Fairfax County, especially the traditionally underserved populations (youth, the elderly, the disabled, minorities, ethnic communities, and those in underserved areas not reached by existing programs)?
- Does the applicant contribute to the community's quality of life and cultural vitality and show a clear understanding of Fairfax County's cultural diversity?
- Does the applicant attempt to reach underserved populations and broaden community involvement through its outreach activities?

### 3. Organizational Effectiveness

- Does the applicant have active involvement, stability, and strong leadership in board, staff, and volunteers?
- Does the background of management and professional staff qualify them for their positions?
- Does the organization have goals for the coming year?
- Is there evidence of long-range, strategic planning?
- Is there evidence of program evaluation?
- Does the applicant have a history of balanced budgets and a diversified base of financial support?

### 4. Appropriateness of Budget

- Does the applicant have a reasonable, clear, and complete budget?
- Does the applicant appear financially stable, with a realistic budget?
- Does the applicant have income from a variety of earned and unearned sources?

## **Terms and Conditions of a Grant**

All activities supported by *Operating Support Grant Program* grants shall take place within the fiscal year for which the grant is awarded between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

### **Duration of a Grant**

Generally, activities supported by *Operating Support Grant Program* grants may be carried out for one year, between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

### **Organizational Eligibility**

Grant recipients must continue to meet all *Operating Support Grant Program* eligibility requirements during the grant period. Grant recipients are required to notify the Arts Council of Fairfax County Grants staff in writing of any major financial, leadership, or programmatic changes to their organization.

### **Amount of Grant**

*Operating Support Grant Program* grants range from \$500 to \$50,000. An organization can request no more than 15% of their actual expenses as described on the Budget Form for the most recently completed fiscal year. Do not include in kind expenses. Applicants may be granted an amount less than requested.

### **Addendum**

If there are substantial changes in the organization's programming, staffing, and/or funding after the application has been submitted, the organization may submit a one page addendum explaining these accomplishments and/or challenges and how this effects the application. The addendum may be submitted during the time after the application deadline until 2 weeks before the panel meeting (6 week period).

### **Cost Sharing**

Every *Operating Support Grant Program* requires a two to one match by the applicant. See Matching Requirements, for more information on the cost share requirements.

### **Use of Funds**

*Operating Support Grant Program* grants may be used for a broad range of activities. Grant funds may not be used for fundraising activities, such as capital campaigns or endowment campaigns, construction or renovation projects, political advocacy costs, activities not open to the general public, debt retirement, pre-grant costs, proselytizing, promoting one any one faith over another or events that would be inappropriate for a diverse, multicultural and multigenerational audience. All listed expenses must be incurred during the grant period.

### **Acknowledgement of Arts Council Funding**

The Arts Council of Fairfax County requires acknowledgement of the Arts Council's support for all public programs and services. Credit the Arts Council as a donor on all printed materials through use of the Arts Council logo and the statement, "This program is funded in part by the Arts Council of Fairfax County." Grant recipients are required to send copies to the Arts Council of all materials that are distributed to the public.

To announce this grant to the public, follow the guidelines in the Grantee Communications kit on the Arts Council website.

### **Announcement of Award**

No information about the status of an application will be released until all applications have been reviewed and all negotiations are concluded. The Arts Council will notify applicants of final decisions in June, 2017.

### **Payment and Reporting Procedures**

Grants recipients will receive 60% of the award amount at the time of the grant announcement. Grantees are required to submit a final report at the end of the grant period (due August 1, 2018). Upon approval of the final report, the remaining 40% of the award amount will be disbursed to the grant recipient. The final report is to be submitted on line including copies of all materials distributed to the public such as catalogues, programs, brochures, flyers, press releases, and other publicity materials. The materials may be scanned and attached to the final report or sent to the Arts Council before the end of the grant period.

### **Record Keeping**

Grantee shall maintain an accurate record of the grant received and all expenses incurred under this grant, and retain such books and records for at least four years after completion of the use of this grant.

### **Cancellation**

The Arts Council reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to discontinue funding if it is not satisfied with the progress of the grant or the content of any required written report. In the event of discontinuation or at the close of the grant period, any unexpended funds shall immediately be returned to the Arts Council, except where the Arts Council has agreed in writing to an alternative use of the unused funds.

### **Mandatory Participation in Research**

During the grant period, the Arts Council may request grantees participate in local, regional, or national arts studies. The studies may be related to, but are not limited to: audience spending, organization management, or facility usage and planning. Grantees are required to assist the Arts Council by completing these studies.

### **Advocacy Requirements**

Grantees are required to write a note to both the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and the Supervisor for your organization's magisterial district (if applicable) thanking them for appropriating the grant funds. The letters should provide information about how the grant funds were used to support your organization, and the community impact. Grantees should also invite their District Supervisor to the funded programs.

## **Grant Preparation Assistance**

The Arts Council of Fairfax County will conduct a free grant preparation workshop to instruct prospective applicants on how to complete an *Operating Support Grant Program* application. The Arts Council strongly encourages attendance by all potential applicants. An applicant's attendance at a workshop will not affect the evaluation of the application.

For further information please consult the Arts Council's website, or if you have questions and cannot attend the workshop, please contact Rachelle Etienne-Robinson, Grants Coordinator by e-mail at [rerobinson@artsfairfax.org](mailto:rerobinson@artsfairfax.org) or by telephone at (703) 642-0862, ext. 6.

## **Grant Writing Tips**

- Write clearly and concisely.
- Do not use jargon.
- Remember that the people who are reading your application may know nothing about your organization or your programs.
- Check narrative and other text for grammar and spelling errors.
- Do not repeat information in different narrative sections.
- Keep in mind that the Arts Council staff does not participate in panel discussions. The application must stand on its own merits.
- Be sure that when a reader has finished reviewing your grant application, s/he will know your organization.
- Verify that all contact information in your application is correct, including e-mail addresses and phone numbers.
- Financial information referred to in the narrative should match the numbers on the Budget Form.
- Use the Arts Council as a resource. If you have any questions, call at (703) 642-0862, or e-mail [grants@artsfairfax.org](mailto:grants@artsfairfax.org).

## Uploads

### Each applicant has only 100 MB space for uploaded files.

Submission of Required Documents, Work Samples and Supplemental Materials is mandatory. Work Samples and Supplemental Materials should describe recent (within the last two years) activities. You may provide links to images, audio clips and/or online video (1280x720 resolution) samples. You can submit up to 3 Work Samples and 5 Supplemental materials. Documents and images can consist of programs, brochures, catalogs, study guides, posters, newsletters, other promotional materials, newspaper reviews, articles, testimonials, letters of support, and awards. Online media entry is limited to a maximum running time of five minutes. As you plan your uploads, please consider the limitations of the system for the number of files, formats, and file size for uploads below.

Type of Sample	File Format	Min #	Max #	Max File Size	Notes
Images	JPEG	0	8	25 MB	Total of all images should not exceed 25 MB
Videos	Mov or MPEG	0	8	250MB	Do not Upload videos( Links accepted in document upload)
Documents	MS Word or PDF	7	12	25MB	Total of all docs should not exceed 25 MB
Audios	WAV, MP3	0	8	25MB	Total of all audio files should not exceed 25 MB

If your supplemental materials exceed the Maximum File Size please submit a link of the documents.

**Links** to these accepted file types may be submitted: jpg, jpeg, gif, bmp, png, tif, 3gp, avi, flv, mov, mp4, mpg, rm, wmv, doc, docx, txt, xls, xlsx, ppt, pptx, pdf, aac, mid, midi, mp3, mpa, ra, wav, wma, eps

### Required Documents:

1. IRS Letter of Determination for your organization and/or your parent organization
2. Most recent IRS 990 submission (do not include schedules)
3. List of Board of Directors that includes profession, work address, and place of residence. Please highlight members who work or live in Fairfax County.
4. Bios for each person named on the "List of Key Board Members and Staff"
5. Treasurer's Report or Audit for most recently completed fiscal year. An audit required if applicant's expenses exceed \$600,000.
6. Fiscal Year to date budget
7. Cover sheet for supplemental materials and work samples including links to online media

Submit required documents in **PDF** format. Name the file as TR/A/Budget/ILD/990\_Organization Name\*. Then click Upload button, a box appears including: **Title, Description and Choose File**. Choose the file you want to upload, enter the name of the file in the **Title box** (using the above Name format: *Treasurer's Report\_Organization name*). Do not include blank spaces in file names.

\*Supplemental Materials Key:

TR = Treasurer's Report

A = Audit

Budget = Fiscal Year to Date Budget

ILD = IRS Letter of Determination

990 = 990 Tax form

### **Work Samples:**

Applicants are required to submit samples of their work. The samples should reflect the highest professional standards in the quality of artwork documented and in the manner in which they are presented. The panel's judgment of artistic merit will be based upon the quality of the work submitted.

A description of each work should include the applicant's name, the work's name, as well as date of creation and date of performance/publication if appropriate. Due to the number of applications received, the panel will review a **maximum of five minutes** of recorded material per applicant.

Film clips should be submitted in a platform-independent player format or in QuickTime at a **1920x1080 pixels resolution (1080p/24)** with the file suffix labeled as .MPEG or mov. Limit each film/new media entry to a maximum running time of **five minutes**.

Submit **up to three** recent examples of original work not to exceed a **total of five minutes** multimedia format.

- Samples may be excerpts or complete works.
- You are strongly encouraged to submit work produced in the **last two years**.
- **Copy** the links of your video examples in to a **PDF file**, each in a different line. Include the applicant's name, title of work and date of completion, as well as a brief description of the piece and applicant's role in the development and execution of the work.
- Name the file (**Work-Sample\_ Organization Name\_01**). Do not include blank spaces in the file name.
- Click **Upload** button, a box appears including: **Title, Description and Choose File**. Choose the file you want to upload, Enter the name of the file in the **Title box** (using the above Name format), then add to the **Description box** a short description of the work sample.

### **Supplemental Materials:**

Submit **up to five** Supplemental Materials that describe recent activities (within the last two years). Supplemental materials could include, but are not limited to programs, brochures, catalogs, posters, newsletters, other promotional materials, newspaper reviews, articles, testimonials, letters of support, or awards.

Name each submission with *SM\_ Organization Name \_01*. For example, label the first submission *SM\_ Organization Name \_01*; the next submission *SM\_ Organization Name \_02*, etc.

Click **Upload** button, a box appears including: **Title, Description and Choose File**. Choose the file you want to upload, enter the name of the file in the **Title box** (using the above Name format), then add to the **Description box** a short description about the file you upload

## **Submitting Your Application**

All *Operating Support Grant Program* applications must be submitted via the on line application system no later than February 15, 2017 at midnight/12p.m. Late applications will not be accepted. Hard copies of supplementary materials will not be accepted.

## **Appeals Process**

Unless there are grounds for an appeal, all funding decisions of the Arts Council are final. Arts Council funding decisions may be appealed only upon the following grounds:

1. The Applicant's grant application was denied based on criteria other than those set forth in the applicable guidelines, where the application of such improper criteria was open and obvious and there was also no legitimate basis for denial under the applicable guidelines;
2. The Applicant's grant application was denied based on the grant panel's failure to apply the applicable guidelines, where such failure is open and obvious and not merely a subjective evaluation of the merits of the application;
3. The Applicant's grant application was denied based on the grant panel's failure to consider relevant evidence presented in support of the grant application, where such failure was both open and obvious and not merely the result of the Applicant's failure to properly identify or present such evidence; and/or
4. The Applicant's grant application was denied as the direct result of an undisclosed conflict of interest between the Applicant and a member of the grant panel, where, but for such conflict, the Applicant's grant application would not have been denied.

Other than the grounds listed above, there are no other grounds for an appeal, including, but not limited to, general dissatisfaction with the process, dissatisfaction with the amount awarded, dissatisfaction with the qualifications of the members of the grant panel, disagreement with an opinion of a member of the grant panel, or the Applicant's desire to submit additional evidence.

To file an appeal, an Applicant must submit a written appeal request directly to the Arts Council. Such appeal must be received by the Arts Council within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of the applicant's notification letter from the Arts Council with regard to the funding decision being appealed. An appeal must state the grounds for the appeal and provide clear and convincing evidence in support of such grounds. No evidence or supporting materials which could have been provided as part of the Applicant's original grant application will be considered.

All appeal requests will be reviewed by the Grants Committee of the Arts Council's Board of Directors. Appeals will be reviewed within sixty (60) calendar days from the date the written appeal request was received by the Arts Council. If the Grants Committee determines that there exist grounds for an appeal, the Grant Committee will re-evaluate the application. All decisions of the Grant Committee with regard to any re-evaluation will be final. If the Grants Committee determines that there are no grounds for an appeal, then the original decision of the grant panel shall become final without further recourse or reconsideration. All decisions of the Grants Committee with regard to appeal requests are final without further recourse or reconsideration.