



FY23 Operating Support Grant Guidelines

Deadline: April 14, 2022

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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 Requirement
- Budget Levels (short and long form)
- Review Process
- Evaluation Criteria
- Terms and Conditions of a Grant
 - Duration of a Grant
 - Organizational Eligibility
 - Amount of Grant
 - Addendum
 - Use of Funds
 - Acknowledgement of ArtsFairfax funding
 - Required Directory and Event Listings
 - Announcement of Award
 - Payment and Reporting Procedures
- Grant Preparation Assistance
- Uploads
 - Required Documents
 - Work Samples
 - Supplemental Materials
- Submitting Your Application
- Appeals Process

Introduction

As Fairfax County's designated local arts agency, ArtsFairfax creates and nurtures an environment in which the arts and artists flourish. Through partnerships with schools, individual artists, arts organizations, and other cultural and community groups, ArtsFairfax promotes and encourages excellence, equity, diversity, inclusion, and access in the arts by initiating and supporting programs, activities, and policies that inspire, nurture, and reflect the diverse populations, voices, and traditions of Fairfax County.

Purpose of the Operating Support Grant Program

ArtsFairfax's Operating Support program advances the arts in Fairfax County by supporting the goals and objectives of the county's arts organizations, helping them maintain and develop their programs, services, and facilities. ArtsFairfax embraces the county's One Fairfax racial and social equity policy. Artists and arts organizations receiving ArtsFairfax grants must intentionally examine their operations, programs and services, and incorporate equity, diversity, access, and inclusion in decision-making, development and deployment of policies, programs, and services.

Operating Support Grants maintain organizational stability as a platform for becoming more resilient, adaptable, and nimble for sustainability, change, and growth. As ArtsFairfax's largest grant program, Operating Support funds generate recognition for a broad spectrum of the county's cultural organizations.

Goals of the Operating Support Grant Program

Through the *Operating Support Grant Program*, ArtsFairfax seeks:

1. To provide support for established and emerging arts organizations.
2. To encourage wide participation in the arts by expanding exposure to, and incorporating Fairfax County's diverse voices and traditions in cultural programming that is available to all residents of Fairfax County;
3. To promote opportunities for a diversity of cultural workers, leaders, individual artists, and arts organizations to create, present, and celebrate their artistic endeavors and traditions;
4. To be a catalyst for increased resiliency, transformation, and expanded resources to support arts organizations through 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.

An organization is eligible to apply to the *Operating Support Grant Program* if:

1. It has as a core mission the creation, exhibition, presentation, production, or performance of and/or education in an arts discipline, and it operates as a stand-alone nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with current or pending status.

2. It has regular activity in a minimum of four different months in the year or 120 days of the year.
3. The organization 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:
 - a) 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.
 - b) Meet, rehearse, exhibit, and operate within the geographical boundary of Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church.
 - c) Have 51% of board of directors' members work or reside in Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church.
 - d) 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. An eligible organization must:
 - a) Be in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws; and
 - b) 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.
 - c) An organization must have independently prepared financial statements such as an audit or a treasurer's report (audit required for organizations with expenses of \$750,000 and above).
 - d) The applicant must have submitted all required final reports for any grants received from ArtsFairfax during the previous fiscal year.
 - e) The applicant must maintain an ArtsFairfax Directory listing and list activities on the ArtsFairfax events calendar.

The following are not eligible organizations:

- a) Arts divisions, and organizations with an arts program within a larger nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, are not eligible for Operating Support and can apply only for Project Support grants (not Operating Support, Organizational and Professional Development, or Fast Track grants).
- b) Organizations that receive line-item funding from Fairfax County or the State of Virginia.
- c) Departments of George Mason University, and non-profit organizations and foundations that support county agencies are not eligible for ArtsFairfax grants.

Grant Restrictions

All Operating Support Grant Program grants must:

- a) Support activities, programs, or projects occurring within Fairfax County, the City of

Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church.

- b) Have qualified artistic or scholarly, administrative, and management leadership (either professional or volunteer) capable of completing any grant-supported activities, programs, or projects.
- c) Occur within the dates of July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

Operating Support Grant Program grants cannot be used for:

- a) Fundraising activities, such as capital campaigns or endowment campaigns.
- b) Construction or renovation projects.
- c) Political advocacy costs.
- d) Activities not open to the general public.
- e) Debt retirement.
- f) Pre-grant Costs.
- g) Proselytizing and faith-based activities.

Matching Requirement

For FY23, there is no matching requirement for *Operating Support Grant Program* due to the constraints created by the COVID pandemic, but the funding can and should be used to leverage additional private support.

Budget Levels

Organizations fall within one of five budget levels within the *Operating Support Grant Program*. Organizations with budgets \$10,000 to \$50,000 should apply using a short form. Organizations with budgets over \$50,000 must use the long form. Organizations may only submit one application. Applicants using a fiscal sponsor must contact ArtsFairfax grant staff for additional instructions and should use the applicant organization budget, not the fiscal sponsor’s budget in determining what form to use.

For the *Operating Support Grant Program*, your budget size is determined by the “Total Expenses” from your most recently completed fiscal year. Do not include in-kind expenses in the budget level calculation.

Level 1 \$10,000-50,000 (use short form)

Level 2 \$50,000-100,000

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

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

Level 5 over \$500,000

“Pass through money,” i.e., 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.

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 purchases 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 considered pass through money. If an organization sells an item for fundraising purposes (for example, wreaths or ornaments), the purchase cost and sales proceeds for 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.

Review Process

Following the grant application deadline, ArtsFairfax 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, 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 email.

All eligible and complete applications for the *Operating Support Grant Program* are evaluated by panel review. Panelists are arts professionals with knowledge of or expertise in the segments of the arts community that are eligible to apply to ArtsFairfax for funding. In-person panel meetings are open to the public and applicants will be notified of the schedule for the panel meeting; applicants are encouraged to attend. If necessary, panel meetings may be held online, and ArtsFairfax will contact applicants regarding observation of virtual panels. Staff notes summarizing the discussion and comments will be available.

Review Panels are generally comprised of approximately five individuals who have no conflicts of interest. They review and evaluate each eligible application on its own merit. ArtsFairfax selects panel members for their diverse backgrounds, expertise in a particular arts discipline, knowledge of grant practice and/or knowledge of the community.

The ArtsFairfax Board of Directors makes the final funding decisions based on the evaluations by the panels, available funds, and the overall goals of the *Operating Support Grant Program* and of ArtsFairfax.

Evaluation Criteria

Panelists will evaluate each grant request based on their self-awareness and intentionality in addressing the following five evaluation criteria in the present, past and future.

Organizations with budgets over \$50,000 will be evaluated on all criteria, and * designates

criteria for the Short Form.

1. Organization Profile (*History, Mission, Relevance*)

- a) Does the applicant provide clear, specific, and thorough evidence of vision, mission, goals, and evolution over time?*
- b) Does applicant use demographic data to describe their service area and how the community informs their identity, mission, and programs?*

2. Programs and Services (*Ability to create quality, mission-driven work that engages and inspires its community including aesthetic attributes of risk-taking, resourcefulness, sensory experiences, sustained resonance, impact, and value*)

- a) Do the programs and services effectively fulfill the applicant's mission and goals?*
- b) Does the applicant offer public artistic activities that reflect the diversity of the population of Fairfax County?*
- c) Are the applicant's efforts to understand Fairfax County's diversity and respond to the community it serves evident? Does explanation clearly and thoroughly illustrate the creative process, which includes creative roles, responsibilities, and authentic constituent collaboration, where constituents are essential in the artistic decision-making process?
- d) Is the organizational success story clear and does it explain why it is considered successful in terms of aesthetic attributes, evaluation, and outcomes?
- e) Do the programs demonstrate support for and stimulation of artistic growth and excellence?
- f) Do the programs offer the public greater access to underrepresented artists and art forms?
- g) Does the applicant demonstrate artistic excellence as shown by the qualifications, background, and experience of the artists?
- h) Are there clear examples of positive critical response to the organization's performances, exhibits and other artistic work?

3. Community Engagement (*an organization's ability to meaningfully engage with its community to achieve its mission*)

- a) Is the applicant building support for the organization's mission and activities by connecting with stakeholders (partners, audiences, patrons, users, visitors etc.) outside the walls of the organization—churches, community centers other gathering spaces—and/or collaboration with non-arts partners?
- b) Is there evidence of effort to improve and evaluate program quality involving staff, board, artistic personnel, and diverse constituents?
- c) Are programs and outreach activities accessible for all residents of Fairfax

* designates criteria for the Short Form.

County, especially underserved populations including but not limited to youth, the elderly, the disabled, minorities, ethnic communities, and those in underserved areas?*

d) Is there evidence of effective marketing of the organization's programs?*

4. Organizational Effectiveness (*ability to successfully manage resources*)

- a) Is the staffing structure (staff, artists, Board, volunteers, partners) currently successful in carrying out the mission, and goals and/or strategic plan?*
- b) Does the organization reflect the diversity of its service area and that of the County in its policies, programs, leadership, and personnel?
- c) Does the applicant have clear priorities and mechanisms to regularly identify, evaluate and address staffing, training, planning, evaluation, and finances that are both sustainable and aligned with growth or change?

5. Financials

- a) Is the applicant financially stable; and/or does the application explain changes in finances due to the pandemic and steps being taken or planned, to address needs and changes?*
- b) Does the applicant have a reasonable and clear future budget scenario?
- c) Does the applicant have a history of income from a variety of earned and unearned sources?

Each of the five evaluation criteria are equally weighted in the review.

Terms and Conditions of Grant

Duration of the Grant

Generally, activities supported by the *Operating Support Grant Program* grants may be carried out for one year, between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

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 ArtsFairfax staff in writing of any major financial, leadership, or programmatic changes to their organization.

Amount of Grant

Operating Support grants range from \$1,000 to \$50,000. An organization can request no more than 15 percent of their actual expenses as described in the Financials for the most recently completed fiscal year. Applicants may be granted an amount less than requested.

Addendum

* designates criteria for the Short Form.

The addendum is required to update the application for substantive changes in the organization's programming, staffing, and funding after the application has been submitted. The organization must submit the 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 1 week before the panel meeting.

Matching Requirement

There is no matching requirement for the *Operating Support Grant Program* for FY23 due to the challenges of the Covid pandemic.

Use of Funds

Operating Support 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, or faith-based activities. All listed expenses must be incurred during the grant period.

Acknowledgement of ArtsFairfax Funding

1. ArtsFairfax requires acknowledgement of ArtsFairfax's support for all public programs and services provided by an organization that receives an Operating Support grant. To raise the visibility of your organization as well as that of the arts and nonprofit cultural organizations in Fairfax County, ArtsFairfax requires the following:
Credit ArtsFairfax as a donor on your website and all printed materials through the use of the ArtsFairfax logo and the statement, "This program is funded in part by ArtsFairfax."
2. Grant recipients are required to follow the instructions in the Grant Communications Kit and send copies to ArtsFairfax of samples of materials that are distributed to the public.
3. Grant recipients are required to acknowledge ArtsFairfax funding on at least one social media platform—tag @artsfairfax on their social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and follow ArtsFairfax and use #ArtsFairfax.
4. Include an ArtsFairfax grant award announcement in your printed programs for the duration of the grant period in accordance with your sponsorship recognition policy. The three suggested sizes are commensurate with your award amount: over \$10,000 full page, \$5,000-\$9,999 half page, and under \$5,000 quarter page. The announcements are available in both color and black and white. Contact Jackie Dubin, Grants Manager at jdubin@artsfairfax.org for customized copy.

Required Directory and Event Listings

Create a directory listing on the ArtsFairfax website: artsfairfax.org

Grantees are required to list their programs and events on the ArtsFairfax website throughout the grant period.

Announcement of Award

No information about the status of an application will be released until all applications have been reviewed and all award decision-making is concluded. For the current grant year (FY23), ArtsFairfax will notify applicants of final decisions in August 2022.

Payment and Reporting Procedures

Grant recipients will receive 70 percent 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, 2023). Upon approval of the final report, the remaining 30 percent of the award amount will be disbursed to the grant recipient. The final report is to be submitted online 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 ArtsFairfax before the end of the grant period.

Record Keeping

Grantees 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

ArtsFairfax 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, any unexpended funds shall immediately be returned to ArtsFairfax, except where ArtsFairfax has agreed in writing to an alternative use of the unused funds.

Required Participation in Research

During the grant period, ArtsFairfax may request that 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 ArtsFairfax in evaluating the impact of funding by contributing to these studies if requested.

Advocacy Requirements

Grantees are required to write 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 will be used to support your organization and its community impact. Grantees should also invite their District Supervisor to funded programs.

Grant Preparation Assistance

ArtsFairfax will conduct a free information session to instruct prospective applicants on how to complete an *Operating Support Grant Program* application March 3, 2022 from

Noon to 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. A Grant Application Financials Webinar will also be offered on March 10 at noon. To register visit the ArtsFairfax website. ArtsFairfax strongly encourages attendance/viewing by all potential applicants. An applicant's attendance at the session will not affect the evaluation of the application.

The *General Operating Support Grant* information session and Financials Webinar recordings, and presentation materials, will be posted on the ArtsFairfax website. If you have questions, please contact Jackie Dubin Grants Manager by email jdubin@artsfairfax.org or by telephone at 571-395-4625.

Grant Writing Tips

- Write clearly and concisely.
- Do not use jargon.
- Spell out acronyms with first reference.
- Don't assume the people who are reading your application know your organization and programs. When a reader has finished reviewing your grant application, they will understand your organization, mission, and programs.
- Check narrative and other text for grammar and spelling errors.
- Do not repeat information in different narrative sections.
- Keep in mind that ArtsFairfax staff does not participate in panel discussions. The application must stand on its own merits.
- Verify that all contact information in your application is correct, including email addresses and phone numbers.
- Financial information referred to in the narrative should match the numbers on the Financials Form.
- Use ArtsFairfax as a resource. If you have any questions, call 571-395-4625, or email jdubin@artsfairfax.org.

Uploads

Submission of Required Documents, Work Samples and Supplementary Materials is mandatory. Work Samples and Supplementary 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 three Work Samples and three Supplemental Materials. Uploads may consist of installation shots, 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. Acceptable file upload types are listed in the application.

You may include links to work samples and supplementary materials in the required cover sheet.

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 members that includes profession, work address, and place of residence for each one. Please highlight members who work or live in Fairfax County.
4. Treasurer's Report or Audit for most recently completed fiscal year. An audit is required if the applicant's expenses exceed \$750,000.
5. Board and staff list with bios.
6. Cover sheet for supplemental materials and work samples including links to online media and descriptions.

Name the uploaded files with the abbreviated name of the document and the organization for example IRS990_Organization Name*

*File naming Key for required documents:

TR = Treasurer's Report

A = Audit

IRS = IRS Letter of determination

990 = 990 Tax Form

Work Samples:

Applicants are required to submit samples of their work including performances, lectures, lesson plans, exhibition installation shots, and publications. The samples should reflect the best quality work of the organization and technical quality, i.e., good sound and video presentation. The panel's judgment of artistic merit will be based upon the quality of the work submitted.

Use the Cover Sheet to describe each work sample including the applicant's name, the work's name, as well as the dates of creation and performance/publication if appropriate. Due to the number of applications received, the panel will review recorded materials totaling no more than five minutes. Please submit edited clips or note the start and end time for longer videos.

Submit **up to three** recent examples of original work with the following considerations:

- Samples may be excerpts or complete works.
- Submit work produced in the **last two years**.
- Links to video work examples should be included in the cover sheet, each in a different line. Ensure links are live and samples can be viewed without an email, account, or subscription. 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**).
- Make sure submitted files of recorded work samples do not exceed an overall total of five minutes.

Supplemental Materials:

Submit **up to three** 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.
- Include a summary of your strategic plan if your organization has one.
- Supplemental videos such as news stories and promotions are limited to a total of 5 minutes.
- Name each file SM_ *Organization Name* _01.
- Links to supplementary materials should be included in the cover sheet, each in a different line with a brief description.

Submitting your application

All *Operating Support Grant Program* applications must be submitted via the online application system no later than **April 14, 2022 at midnight** (11:59 p.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 ArtsFairfax are final.

ArtsFairfax funding decisions may be appealed only upon the following grounds:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 ArtsFairfax. Such appeal must be received by ArtsFairfax within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of the applicant's notification letter from ArtsFairfax describing the funding decision that is 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.