



FY25 Operating Support Grant Sample Responses
Med/Large Organizations (Budgets over \$100,000)

The following responses are sections of applications that were highly rated and recognized by the review panels as being exemplary. Thank you to the applicants for allowing us to share their applications.

Describe your programs and activities that will occur during FY25 (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) and their connection to your organization's mission, values, and goals. What distinctive cultural roles do your programs and services play in Fairfax County and/or its communities?

McLean Project for the Arts (MPA):

MPA serves 25,000+ residents of and visitors to Fairfax County and the greater DC area annually through our four key programs:

1. Exhibitions: MPA hosts 8-12 museum-quality exhibitions annually, from curated exhibitions around a central theme to juried shows of over 30 artists. Our exhibitions and opening receptions are free, open to the public, and fully accessible/ADA compliant. MPA exhibitions are frequently reviewed by The Washington Post with positive commentary about their artistic excellence. Our galleries are highly sought-after exhibition spaces for artists, having shown the work of ~3,500 artists over 60 years, and welcoming ~1,500 in-person gallery visitors annually. In recent years (in response to the pandemic), MPA added virtual presentations of our exhibitions to our website, offered zoom exhibition openings and artist talks, and in-print and video presentations. Although MPA has resumed all in-person gallery activities, including tours, artist talks, and ArtReach educational programming, to encourage and support the broadest engagement possible, MPA continues to offer ArtReach educational sessions online to communities that are unable to visit our galleries in person. For FY25, we have 9 planned exhibitions already and funding would directly support these exhibitions and related activities.

2. ArtReach: MPA's central outreach program extends arts education into the community, focusing resources on individuals and groups with limited opportunity to visit a gallery or engage with working artists. ArtReach centers on MPA's gallery exhibitions, offering artist-educator led tours and hands-on activities that demonstrate art principles and incorporate concepts of the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs). MPA's award-winning ArtReach program is free and serves ~3,000 individuals annually. MPA invests funds purposefully to engage students from Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) schools, including Title I schools, teens and young adults from under-resourced communities, and individuals from senior centers and community disability programs. MPA subsidizes bus service to our galleries for all Title I FCPS participants. The MPA service area extends from DC and Arlington neighborhoods to all areas of Fairfax County, including Alexandria, Falls Church, Vienna, and Herndon. Through our virtual programming and the distribution to community partners of our educational activity flyers tied to our exhibitions, our ArtReach program offers extraordinary access to underserved communities. MPA's partnership with ServiceSource, Second Story, and Best Buddies continues to grow and MPA continues to reach out to and engage new veteran communities. All indicators show increased opportunities for our ArtReach programming in FY25 to enhance and expand arts experiences within our community, and funding would directly support and strengthen these services.



3. Art education: MPA offers a broad variety of affordable art classes, summer art camps, and free workshops annually, educating over 1,200 art students of all ages and abilities. MPA's diverse instructors, experts in their chosen media, teach an expansive range of styles and approaches, and both virtual and in-studio classes are offered. All indicators point to increased participation in FY25.

4. MPAartfest: MPA partners with community and service groups to host our beloved annual arts festival, MPAartfest, which is free, ADA-compliant, and fully accessible to the public. MPAartfest transforms McLean Central Park into a lively landscape of mini art galleries, live musical performances, and free and engaging art activities for all ages. We welcome neurodiverse interns from local high schools and provide a tent for neurodiverse artists to participate in our annual MPAartfest. In FY24, MPA hosted its 17th annual MPAartfest with thousands in attendance and community engagement by scores of dedicated community volunteers. Planning is already well underway for MPAartfest to be held in FY25.

In FY25, MPA plans to offer the above-mentioned programming in-person, while still offering ArtReach sessions online or bringing this aspect of our program directly to participant locations, as needed. MPA is committed to providing access to visual arts to all members of our community, with a focus on underserved populations. MPA will continue to invest and allocate new resources into this critical component of our overall mission in FY25.

Describe your internal efforts to improve program quality.

The Vienna Jammers Percussion Ensemble:

Continually improving program quality is vital for relevancy and ongoing success – and is addressed formally yearly by the Jammers staff and board. We solicit anonymous input annually from students and parents. Students complete written evaluations to document what they learned and offer suggestions for improvement. Parents submit online surveys and provide candid feedback. The combined information helps the Executive Director and board assess the organization's performance and identify areas for improvement. The board discusses summarized feedback and comments each year and, in conjunction with the staff, decides how and where to implement changes. Through analysis of the surveys, trends become evident, strengths and weaknesses are identified, new ideas are generated, and more insight is obtained on how to improve program quality. Jammers is fortunate to have a talented board with a range of experiences and skill sets that work collaboratively with Executive Director David Reynolds, Jr. We are also pleased to have Darren Lin as our board Programming Chair, who is an Assistant Director in "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band and an accomplished percussionist. Mr. Lin and others will continue working with our staff to identify performance opportunities that increase exposure and create memorable experiences for our young musicians and audiences. Jammers' students also contribute to programmatic development under the guidance of staff as they are encouraged to compose music, which influences the artistic output. Numerous student compositions have been played in live performances, invariably met by exuberant applause and even standing ovations, that contributes to a memorable experience for everyone!



How do you engage stakeholders (arts collaborators, participants/audiences, funders, non-arts partners) to build support for your organization’s mission and activities? Describe the role of partners in delivering your programs and services to diverse and underserved residents in the County.

Music for Life:

Our programs are conducted in partnership with local government and community organizations; they provide us with free access to facilities near our students. Our After-School Guitar Program operates in public facilities (libraries, schools, community centers, etc.), housing project community rooms, other nonprofit facilities, and churches. Our Ukulele Program operates in Title 1 Elementary Schools and schools for youth with disabilities. Our Band & Orchestra and STEAM Guitar Programs operate in middle and high schools.

We are an Ignite Partner with FCPS, i.e. FCPS has verified the quality of our programs and approved us as an educational partner. For our music lessons programs, we coordinate with school music teachers to ensure our lessons for at-risk youth in their school compliment theirs and do not conflict with their program schedule. For our STEAM Guitar Program, we coordinate with the school’s CTE teacher to identify a class, usually their STEM design class, we can join for a quarter to conduct our program.

We collaborate with five other local music nonprofits; it increases our capacity and links our clients to their opportunities. [Name of Partner Organization] provides instruments when needed and supports refurbishment of donated used instruments. [Names of Partner Organizations] provide access to music teachers for our Band & Orchestra Program as well as client access to their programs. Our collaborators also support our community outreach initiatives and demonstrations to schools and community groups.

Nationally we are partnered with the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) and National Association for Music Education (NAfME). NAMM provides us world-wide direct access to businesses involved in the manufacture or sale of music products. NAfME provides us access to their resources for curriculum development and standards. Locally we are partnered with the Songwriters Association of Washington (SAW); they provide us access to area music teachers and luthiers.

How do you gather feedback from participants, audiences, or constituents on your programs and activities? Describe your mission-related engagement of the community beyond programs and services.

MPA:

MPA gathers feedback from participants and audiences on our programs and activities through a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures. We track our performance and demonstrate our programming success by utilizing various metrics such as post-event surveys to track qualitative reviews of our programming and analysis of in-person attendance and/or online engagement with other programming. We track the number of visitors to our exhibitions and participants in our classes, workshops, and other activities and analyze and compare participation and engagement across different populations and timeframes. Exit interviews, both in-person and by email, are given to evaluate specific measures of success as relevant to the audience. We solicit qualitative feedback from participating teachers and parents regarding ease of use, understanding concepts presented, academic growth, and further interest in art and art concepts. We also analyze



statistically significant increases or decreases in engagement by all demographic groups during the time of programming and outreach. Through these collective evaluation mechanisms, we receive valuable data that we use to modify or adjust our ArtReach and other programming approaches to optimize ongoing and future results for all populations we serve.

MPA pursues mission-related engagement of the community beyond programs and services in three ways: (1) Networked communication; (2) Active service to non-profit community leadership; and (3) Leadership in the Regional arts community. Our networked communication includes regular presentations to and long-term partnership with the McLean Rotary and the McLean Chamber of Commerce. MPA's programs are included in the McLean Community Center's (MCC) weekly e-newsletters. We are further represented in MCC's reports and participate in monthly board meetings. We engage the McLean Rotary, Boy Scouts, FCPA and the Fairfax County Supervisor in the success of our community wide MPAartfest each fall. Second, our active service to local non-profit community leadership includes MPA being a part of the Regional Community Partnership Forum's steering committee for over five years, and MPA's Executive Director's service on the Board of the McLean Chamber of Commerce. Finally, our Artistic Director & Curator is a leader in the regional arts community and has led our engagement as a participant in the Raw Hope in Humanity Rising Coalition of DC/MD/VA to unite arts and cultural communities in the greater Washington DC-region. MPA's Artistic Director & Curator's leadership in the field is well respected, as evidenced by her work as a guest curator and arts writer with several area galleries and publications.

At MPA, we believe that visual arts stimulate a community's creativity, imagination and desire for beauty in the world. We also believe that engagement in the visual arts allows individuals to grow, discover and share in the triumph of creating. For decades, MPA has advocated for support of the arts in Virginia. We do this by reaching out and communicating directly with public officials, educators, business and community leaders, and other community members to encourage engagement in our visual arts programming. We partner with local community and service groups such as Rotary, Scouts, women's clubs and the Chamber of Commerce. Participants from those organizations, along with local elected officials, are among the hundreds of volunteers we engage as part of MPAartfest, our annual, outdoor community arts festival. Our MPA Board actively helps MPA fundraise and garner community support for the visual arts. Board members donate money and time to help MPA hold several successful annual fundraisers. Board members are ambassadors for MPA in the community, model positive leadership, and provide advice and support to the Executive Director and staff.

How do you identify underserved populations and engage specific demographic groups to enhance or create programs to improve accessibility?

MPA:

We identify underserved populations and engage specific demographic groups to improve accessibility through our ArtReach programming, which deliberately focuses on underserved communities. As noted above, MPA partners with local schools, community centers, senior centers, and other local nonprofits to reach underserved populations. MPA creates educational ArtReach programming to engage these underserved populations and improve accessibility to the visual arts for all members of our community.

All MPA programming and facilities are fully accessible to people with special needs, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). MPA also ensures that our annual outdoor visual arts festival,



MPAartfest, is fully accessible by partnering with Rotarians to help drive golf carts so individuals with mobility issues are not precluded from the event. We are proud to share that, in 2021, MPA was selected by the Mellon Foundation as one of eight organizations across the country to be the host venue and the featured event in a regional learning workshop focused on creating inclusive, accessible, and sustainable art festivals.

MPA's exhibitions have a long history of embracing diversity, including showcasing the work of BIPOC, women, and other underrepresented artists. MPA uses diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA) metrics to evaluate demographics and operations across all aspects of our mission. We measure the demographic composition of the artists we show, the nature of our exhibitions, and our social media presence to ensure representation of all community demographic groups. Since Jan 2019, 86% of our exhibitions have featured BIPOC artists and/or jurors; the ratio of our exhibiting artists is 60%/40% non-diverse/BIPOC; and 80% of our exhibitions included works and themes addressing important issues such as DEIA, environment, and sustainability.

How does the organization (staff, artistic leadership, Board, volunteers, partners) carry out the mission, goals, and/or strategic plan?

MPA:

MPA's Board and staff are committed to ensuring high quality visual arts programming that is inclusive to all. MPA's highly functional Board committees allow Board members to meaningfully contribute to the work of the organization with 82% serving on committees. The Board of Directors oversees the operations of MPA via several committees, including Executive; Arts & Education; Governance; Finance; Communications & Marketing; Cultivation & Development; and Events. The Board meets quarterly, while the individual committees meet as frequently as monthly. MPA's Board of Directors is responsible for the recruitment, annual performance, and compensation review of MPA's Executive Director. MPA's Executive Director reports to the Board and provides institutional leadership to achieve goals consistent with the Board-approved mission and strategic plan. MPA's key programs, Exhibitions, ArtReach, and Education are developed and managed by our veteran Artistic Director & Curator and ArtReach Director, each of whom have strong professional and academic credentials in visual arts. Day-to-day operations are carried out by MPA's highly qualified staff under the Executive Director's leadership. One of MPA's three annual Board meetings is dedicated to the election of new Board members, including the appointment of officers. Board membership requires a commitment of at least two years and participation in a formal Board orientation. MPA's Board financial commitment is relatively low, which fosters a more diverse membership. The Finance Committee, supported by the Director of Finance and Executive Director, review budgeted versus actual P&L, and provide guidance through the fiscal year. MPA has developed key indicators to evaluate our performance, financial and programmatic, in the context of our strategic plan, e.g., P&L versus target, composition of funds raised and earned versus grants, average participants/program and classroom utilization. MPA's operational plan includes many educational activities, exhibitions, and other events and fundraisers. MPA's staff is supplemented by a cadre of instructors who implement the classes, workshops, and summer camps. For additional events and fundraisers, MPA relies on scores of volunteers and partners, including the McLean Community Center. MPA's five-year Strategic Plan FY23-FY28 supports MPA's overall mission. The plan sets an overall framework to grow and pursue excellence in MPA's contemporary visual arts programming and services; enhance MPA's visibility within the artistic and broader community; support MPA's organizational and leadership capacity; and ensure MPA's ongoing financial strength and stability for years to come. MPA's Strategic Plan identifies four key strategic priorities, followed by detailed objectives and specific ways



for Board and staff to measure progress. MPA's Executive Director and staff regularly meet and evaluate progress and objectives in alignment with MPA's Strategic Plan and make adjustments, if needed, to ensure MPA's ongoing organizational success.

What policies and mechanisms are used to train, recruit, and support a diverse workplace?

MPA:

MPA staff and Board members actively promote diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA) and serve diverse audiences. Our Artistic Director & Curator, Nancy Sausser, is deliberate in presenting women, artists of color, and other underrepresented artists in MPA exhibitions. She is proactive in highlighting artists representing diverse cultural perspectives and backgrounds. MPA's Board and staff actively collaborate to maintain an organizational culture and workplace that reflects the diversity of our region. Every year, MPA kicks off its Board nominating processes with a diversity profile of our entire organization. In 2023, MPA staff, faculty and student audiences were over 40% non-Caucasian. MPA's full and part-time staff is 30% non-Caucasian, and MPA is woman-led. MPA's Board is 20% non-Caucasian and also woman-led. MPA intentionally identifies and solicits Board and staff candidates from different races, religions, ethnicities, genders and professional backgrounds who also match ongoing organizational needs through skills, experience and/or diversity. MPA provides training and professional development in three arenas: 1. Technical Skills: All staff are encouraged to seek ongoing professional development in their domain and may pursue these opportunities online. Additionally, MPA has undertaken IT skill building for all staff to embrace new technology platforms. 2. Artistic skill: Staff are afforded paid time off for artistic residencies and exhibitions in which their work is featured. Additionally, all MPA staff are allowed time to take MPA classes. 3. Managerial skill: MPA's operating budget includes a professional coach who works with MPA's Executive Director to plan, execute, and measure professional growth objectives. MPA measures its workplace success through analysis of staff and Board retention, and analysis of online (anonymous) self-assessment and satisfaction feedback completed by Board members and staff.

How are challenges and opportunities affecting the operation of your organization routinely identified and addressed? What evaluation procedures are in place to measure and align growth of the organization with its mission?

Fall for the Book:

Challenges and opportunities are regular parts of the quarterly board discussions, but also a part of regular weekly staff meetings among the staff, and regular meetings between the board's executives (chair and vice-chair) and the director. After each event, staff allocate time in their weekly meeting to hold a debrief session about the event, with particular focus on how it could be improved. The implementation of our new strategic plan is a significant part of how we are measuring and aligning growth, as we have now moved away from pandemic programming and are working to strike the right balance between in-person and virtually-accessible or hybrid programs. Attendance and audience satisfaction are a major indicator of success. Our audience surveys have recently been updated to allow for measurement of audience demographics, helping us to see where our audiences is coming from and to assess how effective our marketing and event accessibility is at reaching underserved populations.



Financial Narrative & Table

Vienna Jammers Financial Narrative:

Fiscal responsibility remains central to the Vienna Jammers' financial strategy, as our objective is long-term sustainability. The organization employs a part-time experienced bookkeeper who records all monetary transactions in QuickBooks, manages invoicing and payroll, reconciles payment issues, and escalates concerns or questions regarding the Jammers' finances. She is integral to the success of Jammers, has devoted significant time over many years to benefit the organization without seeking additional compensation, and is a trusted professional. The Executive Director, Board Treasurer (a Certified Public Accountant), and Board of Directors provide oversight. The Executive Director and board are involved in financial decision-making and communicate regularly with the staff. Spending authority by the Executive Director is limited to \$1,000 without board approval and is regularly reviewed. Capital expenditures exceeding the threshold are scrutinized, with board members sometimes presenting cost-effective alternatives after research. Our Treasurer works with the Board, Executive Director, and bookkeeper to create an annual budget based on historical results, plans, and future assumptions. The board reviews and approves the organizational budget before the start of the new fiscal year. Financial reports are prepared by the Treasurer, distributed, and reviewed at every board meeting to ensure the organization is financially responsible and using funds wisely.

Following a period where performance revenue was negatively impacted due to the cancellation of in-person events, operations are regaining momentum and on a path to pre-pandemic levels. That will afford us greater flexibility to be less conservative in our decision-making and enable wise spending of funds.

Despite the many changes associated with the pandemic, our income is reasonably predictable and did not experience a significant hit, thanks largely to a generous Jammers community. The largest income stream comes from tuition, summer camps, and experience camps, coming in at approximately \$167K. Though we anticipated a slight decline in enrollment, additional income from the Jammers Tech program and Jammers Gold adult classes helped to offset decreases. The board made minor adjustments to tuition and summer programming fees since they have been relatively flat for the past few years. We will continue to offer a financial assistance program for those who need monetary assistance – something the leadership team fully embraces – but did not have any applicants or expenses during this period.

Fortunately, our individual, business, and foundation contributions have not suffered in the post-pandemic environment, totaling around \$25K. Jammers is fortunate to be a repeat recipient of grant awards from ArtsFairfax, receiving over \$13K during the period!

The organization saw costs rise, particularly in the area of program expenses. When participants were quarantined at home, expenses were lower due to the absence of venue fees and numerous operational and maintenance costs. That changed as Jammers transitioned from isolation to a hybrid model to in-person rehearsals. Startup costs associated with the Jammers Tech curriculum also required additional funding. Marketing and promotional budgets were also increased to boost fundraising capabilities. We anticipate program costs to rise by a few thousand dollars until we return to "steady state" operations. After the landlord conveyed that our monthly cost would increase dramatically, a fortunate break resulted from effective lease negotiations. A one-time relocation expense would have been significant – as would a massive rent increase. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you want more information about Vienna Jammers' financials.



Vienna Jammers Financial Table:

EARNED INCOME REVENUES	A. Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year	B. Current Fiscal Year Approved Budget	C. Next Fiscal Year	Notes
1. Tickets/Admissions	14011	13750	15000	
2. Memberships				
3. Contract Services				
4. Performances Fees				
5. Tuition/Class/Workshop Fees	166857	155300	160000	Minor dip due to pandemic
6. Advertising Sales				
7. Merchandise Sales & Concessions	2340	2120	2400	
8. Rentals	3000	2500	3000	
9. Special Events				
10. Other				
11. Other				
12. Other				
SUBTOTAL EARNED INCOME REVENUES	\$186,208	\$173,670	\$180,400	

CONTRIBUTED/UNEARNED REVENUES	A. Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year	B. Current Fiscal Year Approved Budget	C. Next Fiscal Year	Notes
13. Individuals	19371	19100	19500	
14. Board Contributions				
15. Corporations	5165	4200	5000	
16. Foundations	750	500	500	
17. Federal				
18. State (VCA and/or line item)				
19. Local (Not including this ArtsFairfax Grant)				
20. ArtsFairfax Grant(s)	13816	11500	15000	Apply for VEC and Dimick Foundation
21. Interest & Investment Income	20	25	100	
22. Other	75	100	100	
23. Other				
24. Other				
SUBTOTAL CONTRIBUTED/UNEARNED REVENUES	\$39,197	\$35,425	\$40,200	

SUBTOTAL EARNED AND CONTRIBUTED/UNEARNED REVENUE	\$225,405	\$209,095	\$220,600	
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OTHER REVENUES	A. Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year	B. Current Fiscal Year Approved Budget	C. Next Fiscal Year	Notes
25. In-Kind (must also show as an expense)				
SUBTOTAL ALL REVENUES	\$225,405	\$209,095	\$220,600	

PERSONNEL EXPENSES	A. Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year	B. Current Fiscal Year Approved Budget	C. Next Fiscal Year	Notes
1. Administrative staff salary & benefits				
2. Artistic staff salary & benefits	62525	63250	67500	
3. Technical/Production staff salary & benefits				
4. Contract: artistic				
5. Contract: other	16014	22800	24000	Higher contractor costs with additional time reqs
SUBTOTAL PERSONNEL EXPENSES	\$78,539	\$86,050	\$91,500	

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	A. Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year	B. Current Fiscal Year Approved Budget	C. Next Fiscal Year	Notes
7. Program expenses (production, exhibition, materials)	11890	16095	17500	Addition of Jammers Tech and venue costs
8. PR/Marketing/Advertising/Promotion	1507	2900	2500	
9. Operations and administration				
10. Rental: rehearsal & performance	71598	74370	78000	
11. Royalties/licensing fees				
12. Concessions/Merchandise (cost of goods sold)	5034	6000	6500	
13. Fundraising				
14. Other				
15. Other				
16. Other				
SUBTOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	\$90,029	\$99,365	\$104,500	

SUBTOTAL PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONAL EXPENSES	\$168,568	\$185,415	\$196,000	
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ADDITIONAL EXPENSES	A. Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year	B. Current Fiscal Year Approved Budget	C. Next Fiscal Year	Notes
17. In-kind (must also be shown as income)				
18. Debt retirement				
19. Capital Expenditures				
SUBTOTAL ALL EXPENSES	\$168,568	\$185,415	\$196,000	

TOTAL REVENUE (excluding additional)	\$225,405	\$209,095	\$220,600	
TOTAL EXPENSES (excluding additional)	\$168,568	\$185,415	\$196,000	
ANNUAL SURPLUS/DEFICIT	\$56,837	\$23,680	\$24,600	
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS/DEFICIT				



Sample Programs and Activities Table

The following table is a sample, representing the activities of a fictional youth theatre company.

Note: the table distinguishes only between the planned number of programs and activities *inside* or *outside* Fairfax County. In the narrative response (Question 2a), this applicant would describe in greater detail the planned schedule, repertoire, specific partnerships, content of lesson plans, etc. For this chart, all similar planned activities or programs are to be grouped together by program category in a single line, regardless of time or location.

List of Arts Programs and Activities by category for 07/01/25 - 06/30/26 (Categories: arts education, performances, workshops, exhibitions, classes, camps, etc.)				
		Number of occurrences in Fairfax County	Number of occurrences outside of Fairfax County	Program/Activity Notes
1	Performances	11	2	5 performances each of the Fall and Spring show, Summer Camp performances
2	Arts Education	8	2	Pre-Performance lectures
3	Camps	3		three different two-week long summer camps (M-F)
4	Workshops	6	2	Visiting guest workshops, theater skill intensives, informational tours of local venues/companies
5	Classes	30		FCPS After-School Theater Thursdays (approximately 1x/week during the school year)
6				
7				
8				