



# **GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT GRANTS FOR MID-SIZE ARTS AND HUMANITIES ORGANIZATIONS**

## **FY20 GRANT GUIDELINES**

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

**Letter of Intent: Friday, February 15, 2019- 11:59 p.m.**

**Application: Friday, March 8, 2019 – 11:59 p.m.**

Applications will be accepted for activities occurring from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. The grant award announcement will occur in June 2019.

**First-time applicants MUST contact Grants Program staff.**

**All applications must be submitted online at**

**<http://artsandhumanities.fluidreview.com>**

**Late applications and support materials will not be accepted.**

*All grant funding is subject to fiscal appropriation, reduction or termination  
by the Montgomery County Government.*

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## The Mission of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC), in partnership with the community, cultivates and supports excellence in the arts and humanities, expands access to cultural expression, and contributes to economic vitality in the region.

### Introduction

*General Operating Support Grants for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations* are available to Montgomery County, MD based non-profit arts and humanities organizations that have annual cash operating expenses of at least \$50,000 and no more than \$150,000. Organizations that have annual expenses of more than \$150,000 are also eligible if the organization is not applying for *General Operating Support Grants for Large Arts and Humanities Organizations*.

General Operating Support is defined as support for day-to-day operating costs or to further the general mission or work of an organization, rather than for a specific project. Applicants must submit a balanced FY20 budget of no less than \$50,000, and have had annual cash operating expenses of at least \$50,000 during the past three completed fiscal years.

The **grant request** may not exceed 35% of the organization's FY18 cash operating expenses/income or \$25,000, whichever is lower. Grant awards support organizations that work in a wide array of arts disciplines including performing arts, folk and traditional arts, media arts, visual arts, literary arts, and humanities disciplines including history and philosophy. FY20 grants will be awarded for activities occurring on July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

AHCMC encourages proposals submitted by African, Latino(a), Asian, Arab, and Native American (ALAANA) arts and humanities organizations.

### Purpose

By awarding *General Operating Support Grants for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations*, the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) seeks to:

- Promote stability in arts and humanities organizations by providing a base of funding to support an applicant's operating budget;
- Encourage diverse arts and humanities experiences for Montgomery County residents;
- Stimulate local support and involvement in the arts and humanities, including volunteer participation, audience development, and financial contributions;
- Enhance the scholarly and artistic capabilities of arts and humanities organizations; and
- Strengthen the professional, administrative, and management capabilities of mid-size arts and humanities organizations.

## Organization Eligibility Requirements

An organization may be eligible to apply for FY20 *General Operating Support Grants for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations* if the applicant has submitted a Letter of Intent by the published deadline demonstrating that it has met all of the following criteria for at least the previous three consecutive fiscal years immediately prior to the application deadline:

- Has its primary mission the exhibition, presentation, production or performance of, and/or education in, an arts and/or humanities discipline; and/or provides support services for artists and/or scholars and for arts and/or humanities organizations;
- Has a balanced budget and annual documented cash operating expenses of no less than \$50,000 – see definition of cash operating expenses/income in the Eligible Budget Requirement section on page 4-5;
- Demonstrates 501 (c)(3) status through one of the following ways:
  - The applicant has 501 (c)(3) status, as evidenced by their IRS Letter of Determination;
  - The applicant operates as a specific arts and/or humanities entity or division within a larger 501 (c)(3) organization whose primary mission is not arts or humanities based; or
  - The applicant has a Montgomery County-based fiscal sponsor<sup>1</sup> with current 501 (c)(3) status, whose primary mission is not arts and/or humanities based. The fiscal sponsor must have been operating in Montgomery County for at least the previous three consecutive fiscal years.
- Has its principal office in Montgomery County, as demonstrated by the IRS Letter of Determination;
- Is governed by an independent, legally liable Board operating under a mission statement for the organization and an operating budget specific to the organization;
- Has at least one part-time paid staff member to support the organization’s Board, comply with the grant requirements, and maintain ongoing programming;
- At least 40% of the applicant’s board members reside and/or work in Montgomery County as of the grant application deadline;
- Offers at least 50% of its programs and services in Montgomery County, as demonstrated by previous, current, and projected years’ activities/programming;
- Has fulfilled all requirements for any grant(s) received from the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County in prior years.

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<sup>1</sup> Fiscal sponsorship is a formal arrangement in which a 501(c)(3) public charity sponsors an entity that may lack exempt status. This alternative to starting your own nonprofit allows you to seek grants and solicit tax-deductible donations under your sponsor's exempt status. For more information go to <http://grantspace.org/tools/knowledge-base/Individual-Grantseekers/Fiscal-Sponsorship/fiscal-sponsorship>.

- For the purpose of this grant, costs related to improving or expanding the organization’s physical structure must be counted as capital expenses, **not** as operating expenses.
- An organization applying for the FY20 *General Operating Support Grants for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations* may also apply for the Wheaton Cultural Project Grant, provided that the project is not part of its regular programming/season, and either the FY20 *Advancement Grants* **or** FY20 *Capital Improvement Grants*.
- Due to the large volume of requests and limited funding, applications from national, statewide or regional arts and/or humanities organizations are not accepted at this time.

### **Budget Eligibility Requirement**

An organization may not apply for more than 35% of its FY18 annual cash operating expenses/income, or \$25,000, whichever is lower.

Non-allowable operating expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Re-granting,
- Acquisition of capital assets,
- Allocations to cash reserves,
- Capital improvements,
- Depreciation,
- Deficits,
- Loan principal payments,
- Contributions of endowments, or
- Scholarships awarded by the applicant for the applicant’s own activities.

Non-allowable operating income includes, but is not limited to:

- Loans,
- Unrealized gains or losses,
- Carryover,
- Transfer of funds earned in prior years,
- Revenue raised for capital or endowment funds, or
- Funds intended for the purpose of re-granting.

This is not an exhaustive list. There may be additional non-allowable expenses/income. Grants program staff will review all financial data, and may contact applicants for additional information.

### **Matching Requirements**

- All grant recipients must provide a one-to-one match for the grant award.

- The match must consist of at least 50% cash, as follows:
- Cash may come from any source **except** AHCMC and the Montgomery County Government, and may include, but is not limited to, foundation grants, state and federal grants, private donations, ticket sales, and member dues;
- The match may be entirely cash.
- The match may consist of no more than 50% in-kind contributions, as follows:
- In-kind contributions may consist of donated goods, donated services, and volunteers, as described in further detail below.
- The value of all in-kind contributions shown as income must be offset by in-kind expenses in the total budget.
- The value of in-kind goods and services must be documented with invoices, billing statements or donation letters. If the grant is awarded, this documentation must be provided with the final report required at the end of the grant period.
- The appropriate value of volunteer time. Click [here](#) to find the current [value of volunteer service](#).
- Professionals, such as attorneys, accountants, sound engineers, and lighting designers, who are providing services without charge, will not be considered volunteers. These individuals will be counted as having donated services, provided that the applicant supplies documentation about the usual hourly rate charged by the professional.
- The value of staff time paid by the organization as an in-kind expense must be documented in budget notes.

### **Grant Limitations**

- An organization may not apply for a FY20 *General Operating Support Grant for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations* of more than 35% of its FY18 annual cash operating expenses/income, or \$25,000, whichever is lower.
- An organization may not apply for less than \$5,000.
- An organization may not apply for other AHCMC grants during the same funding cycle, except for the *Wheaton Cultural Project Grant* and either an *Advancement Grant* or a *Capital Improvement Grant*.

*General Operating Support Grants for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations* will not fund:

- Capital improvements, construction or renovation projects;
- Fund-raising activities, including costs of receptions, refreshments or food;
- Purchase of real property including land, buildings, warehouses, offices, and anything affixed to the land;
- Activities for the exclusive benefit of an organization's members;
- Cost of souvenirs such as t-shirts;
- Debt retirement;
- Scholarships, awards or tuition assistance awarded by the organization;
- Political advocacy, or activities that support or promote the interests of any one political party or candidate; and
- Travel outside the United States.

## Panel Process

An Advisory Review Panel will evaluate each grant application based on the criteria listed below. The meetings of the panel are open to applicants who wish to observe. Applicants are not permitted to make any comments or participate in any way at the panel meeting.

Based on the panel's scores, AHCRC staff will recommend grant award amounts to AHCRC's Grants Committee. The Grants Committee will review and revise, as necessary, the grant awards and forward its recommendations to the AHCRC Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has final authority to approve all grant awards.

The panel scores and comments are available to the applicant upon request and following final action on the grants. Applicants may contact Takenya LaViscount, Senior Grants Program Manager, at 301-565-3805 x 26, or [takenya.laviscount@creativemoco.com](mailto:takenya.laviscount@creativemoco.com).

## Evaluation Criteria

Applications for the *General Operating Support Grants for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations* are evaluated based on the extent to which each application addresses and aligns with the grant objectives and the following criteria:

### Organizational Capacity (25 points)

- Employs an organizational structure appropriate for the size and scope of the organization
- Has an effective governing board that provides active, appropriate leadership, and retains qualified, experienced artistic and managerial staff
- Encourages the involvement of volunteers (non-board) who can help the organization achieve its mission
- Demonstrates evidence of evaluation and planning, both short-term and long-term

### Programming Quality (25 points)

- Demonstrates high artistic/scholarly program quality and work sample
- Provides programs that are aligned with the organization's mission
- Provides programs that are relevant to the communities for whom they are intended
- Demonstrates a commitment to quality and creativity, including a willingness to experiment and innovate within the stated mission
- Conducts program evaluation and demonstrates that feedback is utilized in planning
- Demonstrates success of prior programming (e.g. internal evaluation data and external community recognition)

### Community Impact (25 points)

- Demonstrates understanding of, and impact on, the community to be served
- Conducts outreach and access efforts to engage diverse communities, including underserved populations
- Collaborates and forms meaningful partnerships with other stakeholders to achieve organizational mission
- Ensures that programs and services, facilities, and online media are accessible to the public

### **Financial Stability (25 points)**

- Demonstrates sound financial controls and reporting procedures as demonstrated by record of budget size that meets the budget eligibility requirement, continuous improvement, and/or plans to address the deficit, if applicable
- Sources and amounts of matching funds appear to be reasonable and attainable
- Diversified funding sources, including earned and contributed income
- Employs fundraising strategies appropriate for the size of the organization and community served

### **Grant Disbursement**

Grant payments will be made in two installments:

The first 75% of the grant award will be made to the grantee following AHCMC's receipt of any outstanding final reports or grant requirements, FY20 signed grant agreement, voided check with organization's name, and County funding.

The remaining 25% of the grant award will be made upon the grantee's submission of its mid-year report due no later than January 31, 2020 and completed FY20 final report on or before July 31, 2020 showing evidence that the match requirements have been met.

AHCMC will not release an organization's first grant payment until the organization has:

- Submitted its final report from previous year, if applicable;
- The applicant is in good standing with AHCMC and has paid all constituent service fees (i.e. marketPower and Culture Spot payments) have been fulfilled.

Submitting late reports can have a detrimental impact on an organization's funding when the applicant applies for the next grants cycle. **The deadline to submit the FY20 final report is July 31, 2020.**

### **Return of Grant Funds**

- The grantee must return the grant funds if it is not possible to implement the grant as described in the grant agreement. **Please contact Grants Program staff before grant funds are returned.**
- If AHCMC determines that grant funds were spent not in compliance with the guidelines or not consistent with the approved grant proposal, the grantee must return the amount spent on non-allowable expenses.
- Grant funds received but not spent by June 30, 2020 must be returned to AHCMC by July 31, 2020 with the grantee's final report.

## Grant Agreement and Reporting

Following the award of a grant, an authorized representative of each grantee organization must sign a Grant Agreement with AHCMC stating that the organization agrees to:

- Use the grant funds for the operating expenses of the organization and in consistency with the requirements of this grant;
- Repay any grant funds not used for the stated purpose of the grant;
- Not use the grant funds for capital improvements, purchase of real property, scholarships or tuition assistance for program participants, travel outside the country, political advocacy, or debt retirement;
- Operate with its principal office in Montgomery County, MD;
- Offer at least 50% of its programs and services in Montgomery County to the public with or without an admission fee;
- Use the grant funds with respect to the limitations listed on page 6 of these guidelines;
- Not discriminate against any person on the basis of any characteristic described in Section 27-1(a) of Chapter 27 of the Montgomery County Code or on the basis of political opinion or affiliation in any of its policies, procedures or practices;
- Acknowledge the support of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Government on all materials distributed to the public, including use of the AHCMC logo when possible;
- Send copies to AHCMC of all materials that are distributed to the public, e.g., flyers, brochures, program booklets;
- Submit a mid-year report through AHCMC's online grants system between January 1 and January 31, 2020, informing AHCMC of any significant changes in programming, financials and personnel that have occurred since the grant has been awarded.
- Submit a final report through AHCMC's online grants system no later than **July 31, 2020**, presenting information about the organization's achievements, progress and financial information during the fiscal year. Submitting late reports can have a detrimental impact on an organization's funding when the applicant applies for the next grants cycle.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in grant cancellation, forfeiture of remaining funding, return of disbursed grant amount, and ineligibility to apply for future grants.

Grantees are encouraged to notify AHCMC about exhibitions, performances, festivals or other activities resulting from this grant and to participate in [CultureSpotMC.com](http://CultureSpotMC.com), AHCMC's online calendar.

Grantees are strongly encouraged to attend the County Executive's Awards Ceremony in 2019.



## **The Online Application Process**

Letters of Intent, Applications, and Support Materials for *General Operating Support Grants for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations* must be submitted online at <http://artsandhumanities.fluidreview.com>.

1. Log on to your online grant account using your username and password. If you don't have an online grant account, go to <http://artsandhumanities.fluidreview.com> to create an account.
2. Once you have created your online account, you will be able to access the application portal. Select "View Grants" to see open grant applications and Letter of Intent form.
3. Select "Create Submission" on the right for "FY20 Letter of Intent for Mid-Size Arts and Humanities Organizations".
4. All applicants must submit a Letter of Intent for approval by AHCMC grants staff. If the Letter of Intent is approved, the applicant will receive an email notification inviting the applicant to fill out the grant application.

## **Required Application Materials**

Upload to the online application:

### **Organizational Support Materials**

- The organization's IRS letter of Determination (if the applicant organization did not apply for a grant from AHCMC in FY19 or if there have been changes to the applicant's non-profit status);
- List of Board of Directors with residency and work address;
- List of key staff with bios, indicating full-time, part-time, paid, and volunteers;
- The organization's current Strategic Plan, if available; and
- Organizational Chart, if available

### **Financial Support Materials**

- The organization's FY18 990, or if the FY18 990 is not yet available, the letter of extension. If the FY18 990 is not received by June 1, 2019, the organization will be disqualified.
- The organization's FY18 financial statements (P&L and Balance Sheet) and FY19 up-to-date budget, explaining variances of 20% or more; and
- The organization's FY18 audit, if available.

### **Programming Support Materials - One PDF**

- Include materials that will assist the panel in evaluating the organization's programming, presenting, and /or producing activities, i.e., newspaper clippings, program booklet, photos, brochures, or flyers.

## Work Sample

Upload work sample(s) that demonstrates your organization's programming. The quality of your presentation on the work sample is critical to the evaluation of your application. Applicants should submit their strongest work samples. **Performing arts organizations are highly encouraged to submit video or audio work samples.** If your work includes audience interaction, a live performance recording is helpful. Submit your work sample in the format specified below.

- Video: Maximum: 2 videos, no more than five minutes combined. Maximum size per file: 100 MB
- Audio: Maximum: 2 audio files, no more than five minutes combined. Maximum size per file: 10 MB
- Live video or audio hyperlinks can also be placed within PDF that is uploaded to FluidReview (i.e., an applicant can submit a live YouTube hyperlink within a PDF)
- Images: Maximum: 15 images, which can be uploaded individually or formatted as one PDF. Maximum size per file: 4 MB

Applicants are encouraged to submit samples reflecting recently completed work. Samples must adhere to the following guidelines for the discipline of the work in which you are engaged.

- Multidisciplinary projects / cross-disciplinary projects may include work from performing, visual, media, design, Folk and Traditional Arts, and literary arts. Applicants must submit work sample(s) that convey more than one artistic/scholarly discipline.
- For Performing Arts (Dance/ Music/ Festivals /Presenting / Folk and Traditional Arts/ Storytelling/ Theater/ Media Arts): Applicants are encouraged to submit video or audio work samples, instead of stills or photos. Upload no more than five minutes of video. You may split the video into two files if necessary, but the total time of the video may not exceed five minutes.
- For History or Social Sciences, Historical, Critical or Theoretical Approaches to the Arts, Linguistics, Literary Analysis, Philosophy, Ethics or Comparative Religion: Upload no more than 10-pages of research, or published material. If the work submitted is a portion of a larger work, include a synopsis of the chapters and an outline of the complete work. Clearly explain how and where the piece submitted fits into the whole.
- For Visual Arts: Upload no more than five minutes of video, or no more than 15 images. The images may depict individual works or a selection of works.
- Upload written work as follows:
  - For prose, submit no more than 4,000 words plus a chapter outline/synopsis;
  - For poetry, submit no more than 10-pages;
  - For a script or screenplay, submit no more than 15-pages

## Grant Preparation Assistance

First-time applicants should contact Grants Program staff.

### Grant Preparation Workshops

AHCMC will conduct free grant preparation webinars and workshops to instruct prospective applicants on how to complete grant applications. While attendance is not required, AHCMC strongly encourages all potential applicants to attend this workshop, even if the applicant has applied previously. Whether or not an applicant attends a webinar or a workshop will not be a factor in evaluating the application. Please click [here](#) or go to <http://creativemoco.com/grants/newsletter> to join our email list and receive notifications about grant deadlines, webinars, and workshops.

### Personal Appointments

Personal appointments are available for those who are unable to attend a webinar or a workshop or who need additional assistance. These appointments are available for assistance with both the content of the application and/or assistance with the online grant application system. Consultation services in languages other than English are available by appointment.

Personal appointments must be held at least two weeks prior to the application submission deadline. To schedule an appointment, contact Takenya LaViscount, Senior Grants Program Manager, at 301-565-3805 x 26, or [takenya.laviscount@creativemoco.com](mailto:takenya.laviscount@creativemoco.com).

### **Important Reminders:**

1. Applications must be submitted online at <http://artsandhumanities.fluidreview.com> by **11:59 pm on the posted deadline**.
2. All required attachments must be submitted online by the deadline or the application will not be accepted.
3. Applications may not be emailed, delivered in person, faxed or submitted in any fashion other than the online grants system.
4. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

#### ***TIPS***

- Write clearly and concisely. Do not use jargon. Remember that the people who are reading your application may be unfamiliar with your organization, and/or organizations in Montgomery County, and/or current events in Montgomery County.
- Keep in mind that the AHCMC staff does not participate in panel discussions. The application must stand on its own.
- Be sure to reference the evaluation criteria as you are developing and writing your application.
- More information on energy-efficient opportunities to reduce energy costs through energy assistance programs may be found here:
  - <https://cienergyefficiency.pepco.com/NonProfits.aspx>

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### **Questions?**

Takenya LaViscount, Senior Grants Program Manager,  
at 301-565-3805 x26, or [takenya.laviscount@creativemoco.com](mailto:takenya.laviscount@creativemoco.com).

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