

ARTS & HUMANITIES

COVID-19 RELIEF FUND



arts & humanities
COUNCIL OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY



ARTS & HUMANITIES COVID-19 RELIEF FUND

FY23 GUIDELINES Organizations & Groups

SUBMISSION DETAILS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, September 16, 2022 at 11:59 p.m.

Awards will be announced in October 2022.

All applications and relevant materials must be submitted online through AHCMC's grants portal. Late applications and materials will not be accepted.

Questions?

All questions related to the FY23 *Arts & Humanities COVID-19 Relief Fund* should be submitted via email at COVID19Relief@creativemoco.com

Please note that AHCMC grants staff will be unable to respond to questions after 5:30 p.m. on Friday, September 9, 2022.

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

801 Ellsworth Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910
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The Mission of the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County

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

Equity & Inclusion

With the acknowledgment and understanding that access to resources has been historically limited for certain groups of people, AHCMC is committed to cultural equity within all funding activities and to serving communities that have been traditionally underrepresented in mainstream funding, discourse, leadership, and resource allocation including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, Native American, Latinx, Chicanx, Arab, MENASA (Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian), Asian, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color, socio-economically disadvantaged communities, differently abled individuals and/or people with disabilities, and Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual constituents. AHCMC recognizes that language is fluid, and the intersectional justice movement is redefining terminology regularly. This list is not exhaustive and will be updated periodically as language continues to shift over time.

ADA Compliance

Funded projects should be accessible to differently-abled individuals and/or people with disabilities. AHCMC encourages applicants to consider physical and programmatic accessibility as an integral part of the project planning and budgeting process. Applicants may include the cost of access accommodations as part of their project’s budget, for example, sign interpreters, audio describers, etc. [Click here for tips for how to implement accessibility.](#)

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Introduction

The Montgomery County Government and the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) understand that due to COVID-19, the creative sector continues to deal with significant uncertainty. Many arts and humanities organizations/groups are experiencing serious challenges affecting their programming, staffing, and financial stability.

In response to the disastrous impact of this pandemic on a highly vulnerable sector, the Montgomery County Government and AHCMC are providing emergency relief funds. The *Arts & Humanities COVID-19 Relief Fund* is available to non-profit arts and/or humanities organizations/groups based in Montgomery County, MD experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19.

Funds will support organizations/groups that work in a wide array of arts/humanities disciplines including performing arts, folk and traditional arts, media arts, visual arts, literary arts, history, and philosophy.

Purpose

By providing *Arts & Humanities COVID-19 Relief Funds*, the Montgomery County Government and the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) seek to:

- Promote stability in arts and humanities organizations/groups by providing emergency funding to support vital operating costs;
- Stimulate local support and involvement in the arts and humanities, including volunteer participation, audience development, and financial contributions despite the abnormal circumstances and financial detriment caused by COVID-19;
- Strengthen the scholarly and artistic capabilities of arts and humanities organizations/groups; and
- Improve and/or stabilize the management infrastructure and effectiveness of arts and humanities organizations/groups.

Use of Funds

The *Arts & Humanities COVID-19 Relief Fund* allows recipients the flexibility to use funds for their most urgent needs, supporting day-to-day operating costs and furthering the general mission or work of an organization/group. Rather than funding a particular project, relief funds are holistic awards that can be used for programming costs, professional development, and/or vital administration costs, such as rent, utilities, and employee salaries.

Award Amount

Relief funds will be determined by the amount of funding provided by the Montgomery County Government, the number of eligible applications received, and the size of an organization's/group's allowable annual cash operating revenue or expenses prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, whichever is lower. See Budget Eligibility Requirements on page 5 for more information.

FY23 Arts & Humanities COVID-19 Relief Fund Timeline

Webinars	August 2022
Application Deadline	September 2022
Award Announcement	October 2022
Survey explaining how funds were used	August 2023

Important Notes

- **If relief funds are used for programming, activities must be open to the public, with or without an admission fee, in person or virtually, in Montgomery County, MD.** In-person activities should follow current COVID-19 guidelines as required by the Montgomery County Health Department ([Click here for health department information about safety requirements for in-person activities](#). [Click here for additional COVID-19 resources](#).)
 - **Public programs must be ADA compliant. Relief funds may be used for accessibility expenses.**
- AHCMC will not make payments to fiscal sponsors.
- Applicants who need assistance or accommodation to complete this application should contact AHCMC grants staff.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

Organizations/groups eligible to apply must have met all the following requirements **by the published application deadline**:

- Has its primary mission or objective as the exhibition, presentation, production or performance of, and/or education in, an arts and/or humanities discipline, and/or provides support services to artists and/or scholars and/or arts and/or humanities organizations;
- Has been in operation for **at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the application deadline**;
- Has had its primary location and/or a verifiable mailing address in Montgomery County, MD for **at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the application deadline**;
- Operates as a non-profit:
 - The applicant has 501(c)(3) status, as evidenced by their U.S. Internal Revenue Service (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;
 - If the applicant is not formally recognized by the IRS as a public charity or otherwise officially established as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) institution, the applicant must operate in the manner of a non-profit organization (the group's net earnings cannot be distributed to those who control it).¹
- Is governed by an independent, legally liable Board of Directors operating under a mission statement for the organization and an operating budget specific to the organization.²;
- Maintains Good Standing status with the state of Maryland;
 - A Certificate of Status (generally called a "good standing" certificate) is a legal document issued by the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation verifying that an entity is up to date on their state filings. [Click here to check whether your organization/group is in Good Standing with the State of Maryland](#).
- Has offered at least one public program/event in Montgomery County, MD since 2019, in person or virtually; and
- Is ADA compliant.

¹ AHCMC defines organizations as entities recognized by the IRS as a public charity or otherwise officially established as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) institution.

² Groups without 501(c)(3) status from the IRS are not required to have a Board of Directors.

Budget Eligibility Requirements

Awards will be based on the amount of funding provided by the Montgomery County Government, the number of eligible applications received, and an applicant's allowable annual cash operating revenue or expenses, whichever is lower, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Non-allowable cash operating revenue includes but is not limited to:

- Unrealized gains or losses
- Investment revenues (interest and dividends)
- In-kind donations
- Revenue raised for capital
- Funds intended for re-granting

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

- Investment Fees
- Interest Expenses
- Re-granting³
- Capital improvement expenses/other related costs⁴
- Depreciation
- Loan principal payments
- In-kind donations
- Bad debt

This list is not exhaustive—there may be additional non-allowable revenue and expenses. AHCMC grants staff will review all applications and may contact applicants for additional information.

Limitations

Arts & Humanities COVID-19 Relief Funds for organizations/groups will not fund:

- Public, private, or charter schools;
- Capital improvements, construction, or renovation projects;
- Rental costs for a Montgomery County-owned facility;
- Purchase of real property, including land, buildings, warehouses, offices, and anything affixed to the land;
- Activities for the exclusive benefit of the organization's/group's members;
- Fundraising activities;
- Cost of receptions, refreshments, and/or food;
- Cost of merchandise such as T-shirts;
- Debt retirement;
- Re-granting⁵;
- Political advocacy or activities that take a position regarding any one political party, candidate, or issue;
- Administrative and/or programming costs incurred outside of Montgomery County, MD; and
- Travel outside the United States.

Application Review Process

AHCMC grants staff will review applications for eligibility and completeness.

³ Scholarships, awards, and/or tuition assistance are considered forms of re-granting.

⁴ Costs related to improving or expanding the organization's/group's physical structure must be counted as capital improvement expenses, not as operating expenses.

⁵ Scholarships, awards, and/or tuition assistance are considered forms of re-granting.

The Online Application Process

All applications and work samples must be submitted online through the AHCMC SurveyMonkey Apply (SM Apply) grants portal: <https://artsandhumanities.smapply.io/>. All applicants are required to upload at least one, but no more than two work samples. For specific questions about SM Apply, please send a message to COVID19Relief@creativemoco.com. **Please note that AHCMC grants staff will be unable to respond to questions after 5:30 p.m. on Friday, September 9, 2022.**

1. Go to <https://artsandhumanities.smapply.io/> and login to your SM Apply account using your username and password.
 - a. If you do not have an account, create one by clicking the green “Register” button in the upper right-hand corner. Complete all necessary steps to activate your account.
 - b. If you are new to SM Apply but have previously applied to AHCMC programs through FluidReview, you may use the same FluidReview email and password to sign-in to SM Apply.
2. Select “Programs” in the upper right-hand corner to view open opportunities.
3. Find the box that reads “FY23 Arts and Humanities COVID-19 Relief Fund” and select the green “More” button.
4. Click the green “Apply” button on the right-hand side.
5. Complete all required tasks marked with an asterisk (*).
6. Submit your application by clicking the green “Submit” button on the left-hand side.
 - a. Applications cannot be submitted unless all required tasks are marked as complete.
 - b. Applications that are complete but not submitted by the deadline **cannot not be reviewed**.

Required Application Materials

IMPORTANT! Staff will not review work samples that exceed the stated limits below. Do not upload additional supplementary materials that are not work samples. Additional supplementary materials will not be reviewed.

A completed, online application includes:

1. **A Completed Application Form**
 - [Download a template of the application under the “Organizations + Groups” tab on the AHCMC website by clicking here](#). **Please note that templates are for the applicant’s reference only; all applications and materials must be submitted through SM Apply.**
2. **501(c)(3) Check**
 - Not applicable to Group applicants.
3. **A Completed Demographic Information Form**
4. **Work Sample(s)**
 - **Upload no more than 2 work samples** that demonstrate the applicant’s work. **Work samples must be no more than 2 files or 2 pages total (for both images and written work).**
 - Work samples should reflect the primary discipline of the applicant.
 - **Work samples may be submitted in any one or combination of the file formats below.**
 - **Images:** Maximum 2 images, up to 4 MB per file, which can be uploaded individually or formatted as one PDF.

- Video: Maximum 2 videos, up to 100 MB per file, no more than five minutes combined.
- Audio: Maximum 2 files, up to 10 MB per file, no more than five minutes combined.
 - The SM Apply link feature only supports links to YouTube and Vimeo.
 - If using the SM Apply link feature for YouTube or Vimeo, use the full hyperlink at the top of your browser instead of shorthand links (i.e., use the full <https://www.youtube.com> link, not <https://youtu.be>).
 - Applicants may choose to use the SM Apply link feature or embed the links in a document and upload it as a PDF.
 - If providing links to websites other than YouTube or Vimeo, links must be embedded in a document and uploaded as a PDF. For each link, the entire link should be visible.
 - Make sure that links are not broken.
 - Make sure that the content from hyperlinks is viewable and does not require a password.
 - If the submitted video and/or audio is more than five minutes combined, applicants must include instructions for which segments are relevant. (Ex: Please click on the YouTube hyperlink to watch the video from 0:47 to 4:10.)
- Written Work:
 - Double-spaced with at least 11-point font and 1-inch margins.

Post-Award Information

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read this section carefully before submitting an application.

Award Agreement

If funds are awarded, an authorized representative of the recipient must sign an Agreement with AHCMC stating that the recipient agrees:

- To fill out and submit the Bill.com contact form on SurveyMonkey Apply and create an account on Bill.com for direct deposit of funds;
- To comply with all FY23 *Art & Humanities COVID-19 Relief Fund* eligibility and other guideline requirements through **June 30, 2023**;
- To use the funds only for the purposes described in the application **by June 30, 2023**;
- Not to use the funds for the activities listed on page 5 of these guidelines under “Limitations”;
- To use funds only for administrative and/or programming costs incurred in Montgomery County, MD. Funds cannot be used for administrative or programming costs incurred due to activities that took place outside of Montgomery County, MD (i.e., other counties in Maryland, Washington D.C., or Virginia);
- To return any funds not spent or not spent in compliance with the published guidelines no later than **July 31, 2023**;
- If requested, to submit a completed survey no later than **August 31, 2023**, providing information about the use of funds;
- Not to discriminate against any person on the basis of any characteristic described in Section 27-1(a) of Chapter 27 of the Montgomery County Code;
- To comply with all ADA requirements pertaining to the organization/group; and

- To acknowledge the support of the Arts & 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.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in cancellation of funds, forfeiture of funds, and/or ineligibility to apply for future awards.

Recipients are encouraged to notify AHCMC about exhibitions, performances, festivals, or other activities resulting from this funding opportunity and to participate in [CultureSpotMC.com](https://www.culturespotmc.com), AHCMC's online calendar.

Relief Fund Disbursement

Relief funds will be disbursed in full following AHCMC's receipt of:

- The required Award Agreement;
- **For Group recipients only:** A signed W-9 form including the group's Social Security Number (SSN) or Employer Identification Number (EIN);
- The required Bill.com contact form and the creation of a Bill.com account, allowing direct deposit of funds to the recipient's bank account⁶;
- **Payment from the Montgomery County Government to AHCMC.**

Reporting

If requested, award recipients must submit a completed survey no later than **August 31, 2023**, providing information about the use of funds.

Return of Funds

- Funds not spent or not spent in compliance with the published guidelines must be returned. Please contact AHCMC grants staff before relief funds are returned.
- If AHCMC determines that funds were spent for activities not in compliance with these guidelines and/or for activities that are not consistent with the approved application, the recipient must return the amount spent on non-allowable expenses.
- **Funds received but not spent by June 30, 2023 must be returned to AHCMC by July 31, 2023.**

Important Reminders & Tips

- Applications must be submitted online through SM Apply **by 11:59 p.m. on the posted deadline. Late applications will not be accepted.**
- Applications that are emailed, delivered in person, faxed, or submitted in any fashion other than the online grants system will not be accepted.
- **Follow the instructions in SM Apply carefully.**
- **To avoid unanticipated technical glitches, do not wait until the deadline to submit.**
- **AHCMC grants staff will be unable to respond to questions after 5:30 p.m. on Friday, September 9, 2022.**

⁶ AHCMC uses a paperless payment process to disburse funds. Bill.com is an online system that allows AHCMC to send secure E-payments.

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Applicants are encouraged to learn more about energy-efficient opportunities to reduce energy costs at <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/green/>.