

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

Full Application Guidelines - Fiscal Year 2025

Virtual programming is eligible for funding, provided it complies with the rest of the guidelines.

The Delaware Division of the Arts awards General Operating Support grants to Delaware arts organizations in support of their annual operating expenses to ensure that year-round participation in the arts is available to the people of Delaware.

Three-year Application Cycle

The General Operating Support Application follows a three-year cycle. A multi-year application cycle permits grantees, as well as the Division, to focus more attention on the delivery of programs and services and less on the preparation, processing, and review of grant applications. Organizations approved for General Operating Support demonstrate a history of programming, service to their community, and management of their operations that provides confidence that a similar level of service or activity may be sustained over a three-year period without requiring a full application and review each year.

The Division uses a staggered, multi-year application cycle for General Operating Support. Organizations seeking General Operating Support must submit a Full Application in the “on year,” and Interim Applications (Reports) in the “off years.” Grant awards for the second and third years will be determined by applying a funding formula to updated financial information submitted in the “off year” Interim Application (Report).

Beginning December 4, 2023, you may log in to smARTDE to determine whether to submit a Full Application or an Interim Application (Report) this year. If a Full Application is required, it will be available under “Opportunities.” If not, then you will find your Interim Report under “Reports Pending.”

Eligibility

To be eligible for General Operating Support, applicants must:

1. Have the promotion, presentation, production, and/or teaching of the arts as their primary purpose as outlined in their charter, incorporation papers, bylaws, and IRS nonprofit determination letter.
2. Have a stable, functioning board of directors that meets at least quarterly.
3. Be based and chartered in Delaware as a nonprofit organization; exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) or 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code; and eligible to receive donations allowable as charitable contributions under Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.
4. Have total operating income of more than \$16,000 for the last completed fiscal year.

Please note the following restrictions:

- The Division will not accept applications through fiscal agents.
- No individual may compile or submit an application on behalf of an organization if that individual is a member or relative of a member of the Delaware State Arts Council or Division staff.

New arts organizations must successfully complete the Division of the Arts StartUp Program before applying for General Operating Support, Education Resource, or Arts Stabilization Fund grants.

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Full Application Components

The General Operating Support Full Application includes:

- An organizational profile
- Narrative questions addressing the current year (September–August) and upcoming year's programming, artistic quality, availability and service to the community, management, and any significant organizational changes.
- A board list with contact information, board-designated responsibilities/committees, occupation/expertise, and # years of service
- A staff contact list with names, job titles, and email addresses
- A detailed 2-year side-by-side budget report including the most recently completed fiscal year (actuals), and current fiscal year (budgeted)
- Financial reports for the most recently completed fiscal year (see instructions within smARTDE)
- Support materials (up to four)

Interim Application (Report) Components

The General Operating Support Interim Application (Report) includes:

- An organizational profile
- Narrative questions focused on the current year's program highlights (September-August) and any significant changes in the organization.
- A board list with contact information, board-designated responsibilities/committees, occupation/expertise, and # years of service
- A staff contact list with names, titles, and email addresses
- Financial reports for the most recently completed fiscal year (see instructions within smARTDE)
- Support materials (up to three)

Note:

All materials submitted to the Division of the Arts during the grant application process are subject to public inspection upon request, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Please redact any confidential information contained in financial documents and audits prior to submission.

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Evaluation Criteria and Considerations

The following criteria are utilized by panels to evaluate each General Operating Support application in the “on year.” Panelists use detailed [scoring rubrics](#) in their review of each application.

Artistic Quality (40% of score)

- Artistic product, process, and/or service
- Interpretative materials and/or educational activities
- Ingenuity, vitality, relevance
- Program evaluation

Availability of the Arts/Service to the Community (30% of score)

- Fulfillment of community needs
- Audience development
- Demonstrated efforts to promote [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#)
- Outreach and collaboration

Management (30% of score)

- Board/staff qualifications and governance
- Fiscal responsibility
- Operational evaluation

Grant Awards

Applicants should not expect the funding to be exactly the same each year of the three-year cycle. Grant awards are re-calculated annually from a formula and panel review process that encompass the following: a satisfactory review of application materials and on-site evaluations, actual operating expenses/income as reported in the application and IRS materials, the number of organizations in the applicant pool, and available state and federal funds. Because of these variable factors, grant awards are likely to fluctuate from year to year. In addition, prior funding does not guarantee future funding.

The Division of the Arts retains the right to reduce or rescind a grant award during the grant period if the grantee is found not to be in compliance with state and/or federal grant requirements, or if funding (state or federal) is reduced during the fiscal year.

Expenses Eligible for General Operating Support

Funding from General Operating Support grants may be used to support most aspects of an arts organization's annual operating expenses (not including capital expenses), such as:

- Artists' fees
- Administrative costs
- Contractual services
- Facilities operations (utilities, routine maintenance...)
- Marketing or publicity of events/activities
- Personnel (salaries, benefits...)
- Professional development (workshops, seminars, conferences, excluding credit-earning post-secondary coursework)
- Supplies and materials
- Technical costs
- Travel (domestic) and other operational expenses necessary to deliver arts programs and services

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Expenses Not Eligible for General Operating Support

Division funds may not be used for these expenses:

- Activities for which academic credit is given
- Activities outside Delaware
- Awards and cash prizes or donations
- Bad debt
- Building, renovating, or remodeling of facilities
- Capital expenditures and non-consumables valued over \$3,000
- Traditional circus performers and athletic activities
- Contingency funds
- Expenses incurred outside the grant period
- Fundraising costs (capital/endowment campaigns)
- Investments of any type
- Lobbying
- Meals/refreshments
- Private entertainment
- Projects restricted to exclusive participation or enjoyment
- Projects that have sectarian or religious purposes
- Scholarships or research by individuals

Matching Funds

General Operating Support grants are funded on a matching basis. Matching funds (1:1) must be cash and may not come from the National Endowment for the Arts. Other federal grant sources may be used as match in accordance with authorizing legislation.

Grant-in-Aid

The Division of the Arts was created by the Delaware General Assembly to serve as the principal mechanism for supporting the arts in Delaware. Arts organizations seeking General Operating Support from the state are expected to apply for support through the Division.

The Division will notify the Delaware Controller General's Office and the General Assembly Joint Finance Committee of all organizations that apply to the Division for General Operating Support. Any arts organization receiving general operating support through other state mechanisms, including Grant-in-Aid, could see an impact in Division funding. Before applying for Grant-in-Aid, **please contact the Division.**

Grant Period

Funding awarded in the FY2025 grant cycle must be spent on activities that occur between September 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025.

Application Deadline and Filing

The deadline for the General Operating Support Full Application or Interim Application (Report) is **4:30 pm on March 1, 2024**. Late applications will not be accepted.

The Full Application or Interim Application may be accessed in [smARTDE](#) beginning on December 4, 2023. *If a Full Application is required, it will be available under "Opportunities." If not, then you will find your Interim Report under "Reports Pending."* If you need a refresher on smARTDE, please [click here](#).

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Grant Review Process and Award Notification

After all applications have gone through a grant review process, the Delaware State Arts Council will make funding recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025 to the Division Director at the June 2024 Council meeting. The recommended grant awards will apply to Fiscal Year 2025 only. Applicants will be notified of final funding decisions after July 1, 2024, following the Council meeting and passage of the state budget. For details on the grant review process and appeals procedures, visit the Division of the Arts' [Grant Review Process](#).

Grant Payment Procedures

Grantees will be notified of awards via email, and payments will be issued according to the payment schedule issued with the award notice. Grantees may opt to receive payments through electronic fund transfer (recommended) by updating their information on Delaware's [eSupplier Portal](#). Electronic funds transfers and paper check payments are always free. However, electronic fund transfers are faster than mailing a check.

Reporting Requirements

Final Reports for FY2025 General Operating Support grants must be submitted through [smARTDE](#) by September 30, 2025. Failure to submit a final report on time may result in forfeiture of the final payment of the grant award and may impact future funding.

Arts Trust Fund recipients are also required to submit a mid-year narrative report on professional development activities in the month of February.

Statement of Assurances

The Statement of Assurances is the contract that all Division grantees must sign. Grant applicants must indicate that their organization's authorizing official has read and agreed to the obligations of grant recipients, should a grant be awarded. Receipt of state and federal grants carries with it certain obligations and responsibilities. By submitting a Division of the Arts grant application, applicants are affirming that they are familiar with the requirements of the Delaware Division of the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, as presented in the Division of the Arts [Statement of Assurances](#), including but not limited to:

- [Crediting the Division](#) appropriately on all materials
- Keeping public events current on [DelawareScene.com](#)
- Notifying the Division of any significant changes to the programs, budget, or staff/board
- Providing up to four complimentary tickets for use by on-site evaluators per grant period
- Compliance with [Accessibility Requirements](#)
- Submitting all required Final Reports (all grantees) and Mid-Year Reports (Arts Trust grantees)

Arts organizations applying for General Operating Support may also be eligible for Arts Stabilization and Education Resource grants. A separate application is required for each grant program. Applicants considering Arts Stabilization and/or Education Resource grants should contact the appropriate [Division staff person](#) in advance to determine eligibility of the proposed project. All applications are available at [smARTDE](#).