

STARTUP PROGRAM

Application Guidelines - Fiscal Year 2025

The StartUp Program develops and strengthens the management capacity of emerging arts organizations while providing modest support for operating expenses. The StartUp Program serves as the gateway for emerging arts organizations to enter the Division's General Operating Support grant program.

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

Eligibility

To be eligible for StartUp, 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 been providing continuous public arts programming for at least two years at the time of application.
5. Have total operating income of more than \$16,000 for the last completed fiscal year.
6. Submit a Letter of Intent Form through [smARTDE](#) **no later than January 15, 2023**, and receive approval to apply. It is strongly advised that new applicants contact the Division prior to submitting a Letter of Intent Form.

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.

Board Support

Because this program requires the full engagement of the board, organizations wishing to apply for StartUp Program support are expected to review the StartUp program guidelines at a board meeting and submit a copy of the complete meeting minutes including the discussion and affirmative vote to participate in the program.

Grant Awards and Technical Assistance

StartUp Program funding consists of operating support up to \$2,500 and a program of training classes and consulting with Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement (DANA). The program pairs the organization with a Standards for Excellence® Licensed Consultant to determine the needs of the organization, and then provides customized training for staff and board members to learn nationally-accepted best practices for nonprofit management. Topics covered may include: Vision, Mission, Strategy and Evaluation; Leadership: Board, Staff and Volunteers; Legal Compliance and Ethics; Finance and Operations; Resource Development and Fundraising; Public Awareness, Engagement and Advocacy. DANA will continue to work with members of the organization's board/staff for a period of time to guide them in their growth.

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Matching Funds

StartUp Program 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 StartUp Program 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 StartUp support. Any arts organization receiving 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.**

StartUp Program Application Components

After the Letter of Intent has been submitted and reviewed, applicants may be invited to submit a full application. If invited, the StartUp Program application may be accessed at [smARTDE](#) under "Applications in Process" and includes:

- An organizational profile
- Narrative questions addressing programming, artistic quality, availability and service to the community, and management
- 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
- A 2-year side-by-side budget comparison
- Financial reports for the most recently completed fiscal year (instructions available in smARTDE)
- Board minutes indicating board approval to participate in the StartUp program
- 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.

Evaluation Criteria and Considerations

The Division recognizes that StartUp applicants face many challenges in their nascent stages. Nevertheless, in order to introduce emerging arts organizations to the rigor of public evaluation, the criteria listed below, which are used to evaluate established arts organizations, are also used to evaluate StartUp Support applications. A panel reviews the application, using a detailed [scoring rubric](#).

Artistic Quality (40% of score)

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

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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

Expenses Eligible for StartUp Program Support

Funding from StartUp Program 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...)
- Supplies and materials
- Professional development (workshops, seminars, conferences, excluding credit-earning post-secondary coursework)
- Technical costs
- Travel (domestic) and other operational expenses necessary to deliver arts programs and services

Expenses Not Eligible for StartUp Support

Division funds may not be used for these expenses:

- Activities outside Delaware
- Activities for which academic credit is given
- Awards, donations or cash prizes
- 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 of the grant period
- Fundraising costs (capital/endowment campaigns)
- Investments of any type
- Meals/refreshments
- Lobbying
- Private entertainment
- Projects restricted to exclusive participation or enjoyment
- Projects that have sectarian or religious purposes
- Scholarships or research by individuals

Grant Period

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

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Application Deadline and Filing

The deadline for StartUp Program applications is **4:30 pm on March 1, 2024**. If invited to apply, the Fiscal Year 2025 StartUp Program application may be accessed at [smARTDE](#) under “Applications in Process.” Late applications will not be accepted.

smARTDE

If your organization has never applied to the Division before, please read these instructions on [how to register](#) for smARTDE.

Once logged in, if you need help with the system, please read [these instructions](#) first.

Grant Review Process and Award Notification

After all applications and interim reports 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 found in smARTDE. Grantees may opt to receive payments through electronic fund transfer (recommended) by updating their information on Delaware’s [eSupplier Portal](#). Electronic funds transfers and check payments are always free. However, electronic fund transfers are faster than mailing a check.

Reporting Requirements

Final Reports for FY2025 StartUp 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.

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 required Final Report