

## Funding for Bold, Ground-Breaking Projects

The ArtsNEXT program provides competitive funding for innovative and experimental projects. Awards support big ideas that push boundaries, engage participants in unexpected ways, pilot new solutions to challenging problems, improve program design with calculated risk-taking, or result in the creation of new work. These forward-looking projects help define Ohio as an exciting, cutting-edge place to make, consume, and experience the arts.

**GRANT AWARDS:** Applicants may generally request between \$5,000 and \$20,000, though larger awards are possible in unique circumstances. All awards require a 1:1 cash match.

**ELIGIBILITY:** All applicants must possess nonprofit status or nonprofit intent, but need not be registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Applicants may be: 1) nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in any arts discipline (literature, performing arts, visual arts, traditional arts, multidisciplinary arts, etc.); 2) other nonprofit organizations that provide arts programming (government entities, social service agencies, etc.); or 3) educational organizations (public, private, charter, and parochial schools from pre-kindergarten through university level) that demonstrate a commitment to arts programming in a larger community setting.

Organizations receiving Arts Learning support, or operating support through the Sustainability or Arts Access program, are eligible to apply.

**HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS:** ArtsNEXT grants are one-year awards for organizational project support. This program supports projects that allow an organization's programming to evolve creatively. Priority is given to projects designed to improve the accessibility, affordability, and/or diversity of arts experiences, as well as those demonstrating the highest risk with strong potential for success. Funds may be used for a wide variety of expenses, including artist fees, production expenses, marketing, planning, education, and program evaluation. The budget section of the ArtsNEXT application provides a full list of allowable expense areas.

Funded projects will generally exhibit one of three types of innovation:

1. **Incremental Innovation.** Projects exhibiting incremental innovation make small changes or improvements over time, and can be thought of as "variations on a theme." Examples might include trying a new marketing strategy, hosting an event in a new type of venue, or building on existing programming in a sequential, logical way. Incremental innovations involve minimal risk.
2. **Transferable Innovation.** Projects that borrow, replicate, or adapt a proven practice from another industry, organization, or community are employing transferable innovation. Projects improve the design of an existing program or service by applying ideas that have been successful in another setting. Examples include producing a new activity that has been well-received elsewhere, modifying an idea from the private sector for use in a nonprofit setting, or experimenting with programming that has flourished in a different arts genre. Transferable innovation typically involves moderate risk.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** March 1  
(annually)

### STAFF CONTACTS

#### Brianna Dance

Organizational Investment Coordinator  
for organizations in the Eastern Region

[brianna.dance@oac.ohio.gov](mailto:brianna.dance@oac.ohio.gov)

614-728-4427

#### Jim Szekacs

Organizational Investment Coordinator  
for organizations in the Western Region, and  
Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, and Lorain counties

[jim.szekacs@oac.ohio.gov](mailto:jim.szekacs@oac.ohio.gov)

614-728-4449

[VIEW REGIONAL MAP](#)

3. **Disruptive Innovation.** These are the big ideas that often come to mind when the concept of innovation is discussed. Disruptive innovation interrupts current behavior rendering existing practices obsolete. These projects are rare, unproven, and revolutionary. Examples might include radically changing the delivery of an arts experience, upending expectations about participation in a particular genre or type of arts activity, or creating something entirely new in the arts and cultural field. Disruptive innovation is inherently a high-risk proposition.

Sample activities might include:

- commissioning and debuting a new performing arts work to honor a community milestone
- executing a partnership that brings local artistic assets together to activate a nontraditional space
- adapting an arts event successful in a suburban setting to a new urban or rural community
- building a regional collaboration to generate new community resources
- expanding a longtime activity to include an entirely new creative element
- revamping the way a successful arts activity is marketed to attract new and more diverse participants
- launching a locally-driven and authentic creative place-making initiative
- developing a technology to deliver arts experiences in new and more accessible ways
- using partnerships to change the delivery of an arts experience, making it more affordable
- implementing a pilot based on a promising practice from another industry

An ArtsNEXT award may not be used to fund activities described in and already being supported through another OAC grant. Please refer to the [Introduction and Overview](#) for a list of activities the OAC cannot fund.

**HOW TO APPLY:** All applications to the ArtsNEXT program must be submitted via the [ARTIE](#) system. Please refer to [ARTIE: Organizational Grant Applications](#) for a description of the process. New applicants are encouraged to contact the OAC prior to applying.

**EVALUATION AND SCORING:** A panel of arts and cultural professionals, educators, innovators, artists, and other community members evaluate and score ArtsNEXT grant applications. Panel meetings are open to the public and audio-streamed online. Representatives of applying organizations are encouraged to attend or listen online. Visit the calendar on the OAC's [Grants](#) page for meeting details and instructions for participating.

At the panel meeting, panelists discuss how well each application satisfies the program's evaluation criteria. Panelists highlight strengths and weaknesses, discussing all aspects of the application and its support materials. Following the public discussion, each panelist enters a final score for each application. Later, OAC staff use averages of these scores to determine funding award recommendations. The OAC Board is the only body authorized to make final funding decisions and must approve funding recommendations. The review process is competitive, and not all applications are funded.

**REVIEW CRITERIA:** Criteria are divided into four categories: Program Quality, Community Engagement, Defining and Measuring Success, and Resource Management. Criteria evidence may be found in any portion of an application or associated support materials. Each criterion is worth up to five points, for a maximum of 60 points.

**Program Quality** (20 points)

- Project will result in activities of extremely high artistic, educational, or cultural value
- Project shows clear evidence of incremental, transferable, or disruptive innovation compared to relevant past programming
- Project will improve the accessibility, affordability, and/or diversity of arts experiences
- Project's artistic and/or educational leaders are highly qualified and skilled in program development

**Community Engagement** (15 points)

- Efforts to engage participants are intentional and energetic, as well as inclusive of people with disabilities
- Project will strengthen and enliven the local creative economy
- Activities will be promoted using cutting edge tools and an understanding of targeted communities

**Defining and Measuring Success** (15 points)

- Planning work is deliberate and strategic, with processes that involve a broad range of voices
- Project success is clearly defined, measurable, and meaningful
- Organization will carefully document the impact of its programs, with an emphasis on project replication, creative evolution, and the sharing of best practices

**Resource Management** (10 points)

- Budget for proposed activities is realistic, aligned with proposal narrative, and supported by an appropriate range of earned and contributed income
- Plans for project sustainability are thoughtful, rational, and well-explained

**TIMELINE:** The following timeline outlines the ArtsNEXT grant lifecycle. Any deadline falling on a Saturday, Sunday, or state holiday, is extended until the next business day.

YEAR	DATE	TASK/DEADLINE
2016	November 1	Application Available in ARTIE
2017	March 1	Application Deadline
	April	Panel Meeting
	July	Grant Award Announcement
	August 30	Grant Agreement Deadline
2018	July 30	Final Report Deadline