

Capacity Building

Engaging Outside Expertise to Strengthen Internal Organizational Knowledge

The Capacity Building program supports organizations' efforts to engage outside expertise to improve business practices or add new knowledge and skills that forward organizations' missions. Awards may fund outside fees associated with technical assistance projects, planning or evaluation work, staff professional development opportunities, or other initiatives that upgrade an organization's ability to do what they do. Registration costs for in-person professional development conferences or virtual learning opportunities may also qualify. These internal projects help Ohio arts providers address new challenges, modernize practices and procedures, and strengthen their ability to serve their constituents.

GRANT AWARDS: Applicants may request up to one half of outside fees. The maximum request is \$5,000. No additional cash match is required. Capacity Building grantees generally receive their full request.

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) arts and cultural organizations in any arts discipline (literature, performing arts, visual arts, traditional arts, multidisciplinary arts, etc.); 2) other 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 support through the Statewide Arts Service Organization program are ineligible to apply.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS: Capacity Building grants are six-month or one-year awards for *internal organizational development* projects that engage the services of outside professional expertise to improve practices, build skills, or engage in planning or professional development. Outside expertise may include a consultant, conference, or third-party training expert. Funds may also be used to send staff to an approved professional development conference. All OAC funds must be directed to outside fees. Grantees must provide the administrative time and supplies needed to complete each project. Projects must focus on a single area of intentional organizational capacity building, rather than a suite of unrelated and/or ongoing activities. Sample activities might include:

- a consultant-led board development project or new strategic plan,
- staff's registration costs to attend a professional conference,
- workshops for staff to improve technology skills offered by technology experts,
- facilitator-led community conversations to evaluate ongoing programming,
- a consultant-led feasibility study to examine the possibility of a building expansion, or
- participation in online webinars and on-site training related to disaster preparedness offered by national experts.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

May 1 annually (for activities taking place July 1-next June 30) and November 1 annually (for activities taking place January 1- June 30) at 5 p.m.

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▶ [View regional map](#)

Requests to hire contractors to carry out organization’s day-to-day work are not eligible. Requests to support costs associated with participating in an event hosted by the Ohio Arts Council are not eligible. Please refer to the [Introduction and Overview](#) for a list of activities the OAC cannot fund.

HOW TO APPLY: Capacity Building program applications must be submitted via the [ARTIE](#) system. Please refer to [ARTIE: Organizational Grant Applications](#) for a description of the process.

Documentation of the proposed activities from the third-party must be uploaded to the ARTIE system and must include a description of activities, date(s) of activities, and cost. Examples may include a proposal from a consultant outlining the scope of activities, timeline, and cost; a conference schedule with session descriptions and registration costs; or a quote from a third-party company outlining services, cost, and tentatively identified dates. Documentation must be uploaded to the [ARTIE](#) system.

Note: *Participating staff members, board members, and/or volunteers must be identified at the time of application.*

EVALUATION AND SCORING: A panel of OAC staff evaluates each Capacity Building application, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and discussing all aspects of the application and its support materials. Summaries of comments are made available to applicants. Score averages are used to determine funding award recommendations. The OAC Board is the only body authorized to make final funding decisions and must ratify recommendations. The process is competitive and not all applications are funded.

REVIEW CRITERIA: Applications will be awarded funds provided they satisfy these review criteria:

- Project will have a deep and lasting impact on organization’s ability to achieve its mission
- Project responds to a stated need affecting the organization or its effectiveness
- Project will improve internal organizational practices in a meaningful way
- Consultants, contractors, and/or educational leaders are qualified to carry out project as described
- Participants are appropriately selected, and a clear description of activities is provided
- Project costs are reasonable for the activities as described

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

Task/Deadline	FY 2024 Applications	FY 2025 Applications
Application Available in ARTIE	November 2022	November 2023
Application Deadline at 5 p.m. (For Projects July 1—next June 30)	May 1, 2023	May 1, 2023
Grant Award Announcement	July 2023	July 2024
Application Deadline at 5 p.m. (For Projects January 1—June 30)	November 1, 2023	November 1, 2024
Grant Award Announcement	January 2024	January 2025