Statewide Arts Service Organizations

General Operating and Partnership Support for Ohio's Arts Service Organizations

In place of competitive operating and project support funding, qualifying organizations that provide statewide professional services to arts and cultural organizations are supported via a parallel process that honors their unique and valuable contributions to Ohio's arts sector.

GRANT AWARDS: Grants vary in size and are determined by a formula that considers panel evaluation of each application and the applying organization's allowable operating income (as averaged over the most recently completed three fiscal years). All awards require a 1:1 cash match.

ELIGIBILITY: All applicants must possess nonprofit status. Additional eligibility requirements follow:

1. Applicants must provide technical assistance, professional development, and resources that primarily serve Ohio's arts, arts education, and/or cultural communities. Organizations with a mission of primarily providing arts programming as opposed to serving other providers in the arts community do not qualify.

2. Applicants must maintain a statewide presence as demonstrated by both a geographically diverse board and service provision throughout the state.

3. Applicants must serve a defined membership or constituency that includes organizations as well as individuals.

4. Applicants must maintain a dedicated, paid staff administering core business functions.

5. Applicants must consider constituents needs in designing services, including having both a demonstrated method of determining constituents' needs and an evaluation process to gauge the effectiveness of services designed to address them.

6. Applicants **must have received at least two OAC grants in the last four OAC fiscal years.** This support must have come from an OAC funding program that evaluated and scored the application through a panel process, which include ArtSTART, ArtsNEXT, Arts Partnership, ArtsRISE, Statewide Arts Service Organization, Sustainability, and former programs that include Artists with Disabilities Access Program (for Organizations) and Arts Access.

7. Applicants must maintain an up-to-date profile in SMU/DataArts, a national initiative focused on collecting and analyzing financial and participation information from arts and cultural organizations. **A current profile must include a minimum of the two most recently completed fiscal years of data** (i.e., when applying in FY 2024, funder report must reflect data *no older than* FY 2022 and FY 2021; when applying in FY 2026, funder reports *no older than* FY 2024 and FY 2023, etc.).

Applicants are encouraged to contact Ohio Arts Council staff to confirm eligibility prior to starting an application.

Note: *Recipients of SASO grant awards are not eligible to apply for or receive other competitive OAC awards during their SASO grant periods (including Sustainability, ArtSTART, ArtsNEXT, Ohio Artists on Tour, Capacity Building, Arts Partnership, and ArtsRISE), though they may request funding for capacity building activities as part of their SASO application.*

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS: SASO grants are four-year awards for statewide arts service organization operating support. Funds may be used for a wide variety of expenses in the general operation of a statewide service organization. Many grantees use SASO funds to support administrative expenses, and other allowable expenses include member services, program planning, education, and evaluation.

Please refer to the [Introduction and Overview](#) for a full list of activities the OAC cannot fund.

SASO grantees also work in partnership with the OAC in a variety of ways throughout the year that both highlight their unique roles within Ohio's arts and cultural sector, as well as support the mission and work of the Ohio Arts Council. To satisfy the terms of their awards, each grantee collaborates with the OAC, completing generally **three** of the partnership activities from the list below each fiscal year (with substitutions or other arrangements made at OAC staff discretion):

1. **Provide professional development:** develop and present at least one in-person or online professional development session during an OAC event or webinar series (the focus of which should be determined jointly with OAC staff).
2. **Nominate panelists:** ensure experts representing their constituency are present on upcoming OAC grant review panels by submitting panelist nominations for at least three to five panelists per year.
3. **Facilitate field visits:** connect relevant OAC staff members with interested host organizations, artists, arts educators, or other people or destinations throughout Ohio representing their constituent group for at least one OAC site visit per year (with SASO representatives encouraged to attend as well).
4. **Highlight success stories:** help publicize and highlight the great work being done by members of their constituent group by sharing standout success stories with OAC communications staff, ideally at least once per quarter, for wider dissemination and exposure.
5. **Lead collaborative initiatives:** contribute to one-time-only or ongoing OAC initiatives by serving as the lead partner in project design, service provision, communications and marketing, and documentation and evaluation.

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

Off-Year Updates Deadline: April 1 (2023, 2024, 2025)
SASO grants are four years in duration, meaning that there is no panel review prior to the second, third, and fourth years of the award. However, grantees must submit a summary of upcoming programming, as well as updated financial information (consisting of a completed DataArts funder rereport), prior to these "off-year" awards. Grantees should notify the OAC of any major organizational changes (e.g., change of mission, new location, mergers and acquisitions, change of executive leadership, change of primary contact in ARTIE, etc.) that take place during the grant period. Grantees may be asked to submit a revised summary, including a revised budget breakout, detailing the effect of these changes on their ongoing award management.

EVALUATION AND SCORING: A panel of out-of-state arts and cultural professionals evaluate and score SASO grant applications. Panel meetings are open to the public through a free video conferencing platform. Representatives of applying organizations are strongly encouraged to listen online. For details on panel meeting dates, times, and instructions for participating, visit the OAC online grants calendar ([oac.ohio.gov/Grants/Grants-Calendar](#)).

During 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 provides 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.

Program Quality (15 points)
☐ Artists, educators, and organization staff/contractors are qualified and reflect the state's demographic diversity
☐ Activities of significant professional value will be offered to Ohio's arts, arts education, and/or cultural communities
☐ Activities will fill an unmet need in the state

Community Engagement (15 points)
☐ Intentional efforts will be made to engage with historically underrepresented populations
☐ Methods to engage a statewide reach will be appropriate and effective
☐ Ohio's arts, arts education, and/or cultural communities will benefit from the organization's proposed activities and services

Defining and Measuring Success (15 points)
☐ Activities and services are guided by careful planning in line with the organization's size and capacity
☐ Planning is inclusive of a diverse range of perspectives including members of the community(s) being served
☐ Organizational goals are defined, and plans are in place to determine how successful they were

Resource Management (15 points)
☐ Organizational leadership has appropriate skills and knowledge and reflects the demographic diversity of the state
☐ Income and/or in-kind contributions have come from a mix of sources appropriate to the community
☐ DataArts Funder Report portrays a financially healthy balance of income and spending aligned to ongoing programming

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

DATE	AWARD YEAR 1		AWARD YEAR 2	
November	2022	Application Available in ARTIE	2024	Off-year Update Available in ARTIE
February 1	2023	Application Deadline at 5 p.m.		
July	2023	Grant Award Announcement	2024	Off-year Grant Award Announcement
August 30	2023	Grant Agreement Deadline	2024	Grant Agreement Deadline
July 30	2024	Final Report Deadline	2025	Final Report Deadline

DATE	AWARD YEAR 3		AWARD YEAR 4	
January 1	2025	Off-year Update Available in ARTIE	2026	Off-year Update Available in ARTIE
April 1	2025	Off-year Update Deadline at 5 p.m.	2026	Off-year Update Deadline at 5 p.m.
July	2025	Off-year Grant Award Announcement	2026	Off-year Grant Award Announcement
August 30	2025	Grant Agreement Deadline	2026	Grant Agreement Deadline
July 30	2026	Final Report Deadline	2027	Final Report Deadline