Sustainability
General Operating Support for Organizations of all Sizes

Ohio Arts COUNCIL

The Sustainability program supports ongoing arts and cultural activities in all genres. Awards support the state's arts and cultural ecosystem, providing stable and consistent funding to organizations regardless of budget size. This flexible and reliable funding supports a wide range of the state's arts providers as they make high-quality artistic experiences available to residents and visitors, positioning Ohio as a national leader in creativity, artistry, and cultural wealth.

GRANT AWARDS: Sustainability grantees are divided into three categories by arts programming budget and reviewed with like-sized organizations.

1. **Sustainability-Large organizations:** applicants with the 40 largest arts programming budgets among all Sustainability applicants (averaged over past three most recently completed fiscal years) as determined by OAC staff every four years (i.e., FY 2024 and FY 2028). Grant awards vary in size and are determined by a formula that considers panel evaluation of each application and the applicant's allowable operating income (as averaged over the most recently completed three fiscal years).

2. **Sustainability-Mid-Sized organizations:** applicants with annual arts programming budgets exceeding $50,000 (averaged over past three most recently completed fiscal years) as determined by OAC staff. Grant awards vary in size and are determined by a formula that considers panel evaluation of each application. The applying organization's allowable operating income (as averaged over the most recently completed three fiscal years).

3. **Sustainability-Small organizations:** applicants with annual arts programming budgets of less than $50,000 (averaged over past three most recently completed fiscal years) and may request up to $10,000.

All awards require a 1:1 cash match.

ELIGIBILITY: All applicants must possess nonprofit status or nonprofit intent. Applicants may be: 1) arts and cultural organizations in any arts discipline (literature, performing arts, visual arts, media arts, traditional arts, multidisciplinary arts, etc.); 2) other organizations providing arts programming (government entities, social service agencies, etc.); or 3) educational organizations (colleges, universities, etc.) that demonstrate a commitment to arts programming in a larger community setting.

Additional eligibility requirements for Sustainability include:

1. 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.

2. Sustainability-Large and Mid-Sized applicants (see INCOME DETERMINATION, below) 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.).

3. Sustainability-Large organizations (see INCOME DETERMINATION, below) must meet additional eligibility requirements (which do not apply to Small or Mid-Size applicants):

    a. Sustainability-Large applicants must be incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in Ohio.

    b. Sustainability-Large applicants' primary mission must be the presentation or production of the arts.

    c. Sustainability-Large applicants must have been in existence and presenting regular, annual programming for at least five years since the start date of the grant period for which they are seeking funding.

    d. Sustainability-Large applicants must have a permanent, paid, professional staff administering both the business and artistic functions of its work.

    e. Sustainability-Large applicants (except local arts councils and centers) must use a majority of artists who meet the definition of a professional artist – a person who devotes a major portion of his or her time to practicing, performing, or teaching the arts.

    f. Sustainability-Large applicants may not be national service organizations, divisions, or departments of larger governmental entities (e.g., divisions of parks and recreation), nor receive operating funds from other state agencies.

    g. Sustainability-Large applicants that are college/university-based must:

        i. derive at least 51 percent of their income from outside the college/university;

        ii. manage their own budget;

        iii. have an annual, independent audit;

        iv. maintain their own board, independent of the college/university board of trustees;

        v. have an arts-based mission; and

        vi. not present work exclusively by or for students.

Organizations receiving support through the Statewide Arts Service Organization program are ineligible to apply.

LARGE/MID-SIZED/SMALL DETERMINATION: Sustainability grantees are divided into three categories by arts programming budget (averaged over the past three most recently completed fiscal years) and reviewed with like-sized organizations.

1. **Sustainability-Large organizations:** the 40 largest arts programming budgets among all Sustainability applicants; determined by OAC staff and re-evaluated every four years (FY 2024, FY 2028)

2. **Sustainability-Mid-Sized organizations**: all other applicants with annual arts programming budgets exceeding $50,000

3. **Sustainability-Small organizations**: applicants with annual arts programming budgets of less than $50,000

OAC staff determines whether an organization will be reviewed as a Large or Mid-Sized organization by reviewing its submitted financial materials. An average of an organization's three most recently completed fiscal year's

incomes (DataArts field "Total Unrestricted Revenue Less In-Kind," from each applicant's Funder Report from its most recently completed fiscal year, subject to OAC staff review) is used to make this determination following its February 1 submission accompanying application materials. Following the deadline, OAC investment office staff will request a certified, audited statement and Income Verification Form from organizations likely to be among the largest 40 applicants by budget size to determine their final eligible income (due April 1). For the purposes of grant calculations, organizations are classified as either large or mid-size for the duration of each four-year Sustainability grant, unless otherwise notified by OAC staff. Organizations will be notified if they have been classified as a Large organization for the purposes of Sustainability funding no later than April 30.

Several types of income or donations will not be considered allowable operating income for this determination:

- Restricted funds, such as endowments or capital improvements;
- In-kind donations;
- Donated works of art (acquisition income);
- Other state funds; and
- Past OAC funding.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS: Sustainability grants are four-year awards for organizational operating support. Funds may be used for a wide variety of expenses in the general operation of an organization. Many grantees use Sustainability funds to support general artistic or administrative expenses (salaries, hourly compensation, etc.), and other allowable expenses include marketing, program planning, education, and evaluation.

Please refer to the Introduction and Overview for a full list of activities the OAC cannot fund.

HOW TO APPLY: All Sustainability program applications must be submitted via the ARTIE system. Please refer to ARTIE: Organizational Grant Applications for a description of the process. All Sustainability grants are four years in duration, with off-year updates provided annually.

NEW: Beginning in FY 2024, Sustainability will follow a staggered, multi-year review process.

NEW APPLICANTS to the Sustainability program may apply at an upcoming deadline after the required funding history requirements are met.

RETURNING APPLICANTS to the Sustainability program and former Arts Access grantees have been categorized into a Group A or Group B schedule. Group A organizations are required to submit full "on-year" applications by February 1, 2023 for FY 2024 funding. Group B organizations will submit "off-year" updates by April 1, 2023 for FY 2024 and again by April 1, 2024 for FY 2025 funding, and will then be required to submit full "on-year" applications by February 1, 2025 for FY 2026 funding.

> **Current (FY 2023) grantees in Sustainability and Arts Access:** Please refer to the Sustainability Returning Grantee Application Groups PDF to find out whether your organization will need to submit a full on-year application (Group A) or an off-year update (Group B) for FY 2024. Organizations are listed alphabetically according to their current organizational name in ARTIE.

Please note:

- During this transition to a staggered review process, Group B organizations will be funded for FY 2024 and FY 2025 using panel scores from their last operating support panel review. Group B organizations may then apply for a new four-year award in FY 2026.
- Any applicant turned down for Sustainability support at its regular on-year deadline may apply again two years later.

Both on-year applications and off-year updates must be submitted online in the ARTIE system. Applicants considered as small organizations must submit a summary of upcoming programming and updated budget information. Applicants considered as large or mid-sized organizations must submit a summary of upcoming programming, as well as updated financial information including a SMU/DataArts Funder Report. Sustainability-Large organizations are required to submit additional financial materials in support of these updates including a certified independent audit, independent auditor's letter, and Income Verification Form; the ARTIE system provides details.

Grantees should notify the OAC of any major organizational changes (e.g., change of mission, new location, mergers and acquisitions, new executive director, new CEO, new contact with the OAC 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 arts and cultural professionals, educators, artists, and other community members evaluate and score Sustainability grant applications. Meetings are generally organized by regional geography and applicant size, with Large, Mid-sized, and Small organizations reviewed separately (Sustainability-Large every four years, Sustainability-Mid-Sized and Sustainability-Small every two years, with four-year awards for all). 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 panel meetings, 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 all panelist scores to determine funding award recommendations, which are presented to the OAC Board. The Board is the only body authorized to make final funding decisions on behalf of the agency. 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. Evidence of meeting the criteria 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 (15 points)
- ☐ Artists, educators, and organization staff/contractors are qualified and reflect the demographic diversity of the community(s) being served
- ☐ Activities of high artistic, educational, and/or cultural value will be offered
- ☐ Arts programming will fill an unmet need in the community(s) being served

Community Engagement (15 points)
- ☐ Promotional methods to engage the community will be appropriate and effective
- ☐ Intentional efforts will be made to engage with historically underrepresented populations
- ☐ Community will benefit from the organization's proposed arts activities

Defining and Measuring Success (15 points)
- ☐ Programming is 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
- ☐ Programming 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 community(s) being served

☐ Income and/or in-kind contributions come from a mix of sources appropriate to the community

LARGE and MID-SIZED

☐ DataArts Funder Report portrays a financially healthy balance of income and spending aligned to ongoing programming

SMALL

☐ Planned spending is realistic and aligned to proposal narrative

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

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP A

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.		
April 1	2023	Large Orgs' Financial Materials Due	2024	Off-year Update 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	
November	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

SUSTAINABILITY GROUP B

DATE	AWARD YEAR 5		AWARD YEAR 6	
November	2022	Off-year Update Available in ARTIE	2024	Off-year Update Available in ARTIE
April 1	2023	Off-year Update Deadline at 5 p.m.	2024	Off-year Update Deadline at 5 p.m.
July	2023	Off-year 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