

2021-2022

# Artist Opportunity Grants

Administered by Culture Works



## ARTIST OPPORTUNITY GRANTS

Welcome to the Montgomery County Artist Opportunity Grant Program. This program is made possible by funding from the Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District (MCACD) and is administered by Culture Works.

### PROGRAM GOALS

The Artist Opportunity Grant Program is intended to provide financial assistance to Montgomery County artists to further their careers through professional development opportunities and through opportunities associated with new works.

Artist Opportunity Grants help advance the careers of individual artists by supporting expenses related to specific, unique opportunities that have the potential to significantly impact an artist's work and professional development. The purpose of these grants is to empower artists at critical stages in their creative lives. The goal is to assist artists in Montgomery County in furthering and innovating their work, to elevate the quality and raise the profile of individual artistic work in the region, and to help artists achieve their artistic and career goals through the pursuit of new works or professional/career development opportunities in the field, thereby making them competitive in the creative marketplace. Grants are intended to fund an artist's vision or voice, regardless of the level of their artistic career point (emerging, mid-career, mature) or genre. Grants typically range from \$500 to \$3,000.

### WHAT IS AN OPPORTUNITY?

An opportunity may be one of many things—such as an invitation to exhibit at a prestigious gallery, to audition for a major dance company, or to study with a mentor or renowned teacher. It may also be an opportunity to create/complete a new work that advances an artist's career, develops an experimental/risk-taking project, or exposes an artist to new audiences. In any case, an opportunity should be well suited to the artist's skill level and

should represent a natural, meaningful step in their career in the context of their past artistic work and stated artistic goals. An opportunity should not duplicate experiences the artist has had during their career.

Applicants must limit their funding request to one opportunity. Requests to fund multiple activities will not be considered unless the activities are part of a formal series (e.g., a series of workshops hosted by the same organizer).

This program does not fund general supplies utilized in the course of normal business. Eligible costs do include the finishing/completion of new works of art for an imminent opportunity.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for the Artist Opportunity Grant Program, applicants must:

- Be a resident of Montgomery County, Ohio, with a valid street address (no P.O. boxes) demonstrated by a driver's license, utility bill, bank statement, voter registration document, etc.; and
- Be a United States citizen or a permanent legal resident; and
- Be at least 18 years old; and
- Be a professional artist or creative entrepreneur. This is defined as someone who:
  - Has specialized training in the field (not limited to academic training; may be self-taught);
  - Is recognized as a "professional" by peers (artists working in the same discipline)\*; and
  - Has at least a one-year history of public presentation or publication.*\*It should be noted that the word "professional" refers to the nature of the artist's commitment, particularly as it is conveyed on the artist's resume.*

## ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

As an opportunity-based grant, applicants are required to request a specific dollar amount and articulate how the difference will be made up in the event the grant doesn't cover the entire expense. Appropriate requests will fall in the range of \$500-\$3,000, and grants will not exceed \$3,000. Funds can be used for the following:

**ALLOWABLE EXPENSES** (including but not limited to):

### **PRESENTATION/DOCUMENTATION/PORTFOLIO**

**DEVELOPMENT:** Costs related to producing materials such as slides, catalogs, portfolios, audio/visual recordings, manuscripts, brochures, etc. that are part of an imminent, concrete opportunity or are part of a clear marketing/outreach plan to make materials available for distribution and self-promotion.

**SERVICES:** Use of other professional services for the presentation or production of new work. Can include professional consultants who help with websites, business plans, marketing plans, etc.

**MATERIALS/SUPPLIES:** Project-specific expenses for materials or for equipment rental needed to complete work (as described in the application) for an exhibition, performance, publication, etc. in which the artist has been invited to participate.

**EQUIPMENT/FACILITIES:** Expenses for materials or equipment rental or purchase (not exceeding \$500 per item) needed to prepare new work for an exhibition, performance, publication, etc. in which the artist has been invited to participate. Specifications regarding product description, supplier, and cost must be included in the application (be specific and comprehensive).

**FEES/TRAVEL:** Travel associated with an imminent, concrete opportunity to perform, exhibit or audition, or for a unique opportunity to study with a significant mentor. Registration fees/attendance at

workshops and/or seminars directly related to advancing the applicant's discipline skills or business expertise, e.g., training in marketing, finance, or development of marketing materials; research or advanced study/coaching that will enhance the artist's abilities. Lowest available fares and current IRS mileage rate apply. Reasonably priced accommodations are permitted if the opportunity is more than 100 miles from home. Fees related to artist residencies related to the development of an artist's career are permitted.

## INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND INDIVIDUALS

- Students pursuing ANY degree
- Artists who have received an Artist Opportunity Grant in the immediate prior year
- Artists who have received two (2) Artist Opportunity Grants over the life of the program
- Non-residents of Montgomery County
- Activities that have already taken place
- Ongoing work or supplies for ongoing use (this fund exists to help artists take advantage of *unique* opportunities in their careers)
- Living expenses not tied to a specific project or opportunity (e.g., rent, utilities)
- Purchase of equipment costing more than \$500 (per item) or equipment not related to a specific, imminent opportunity
- Multiple opportunities that are not part of a formal series (e.g., a series of workshops hosted by the same organizer)
- Arts-in-education programs or teaching opportunities (Artists interested in funding for these types of opportunities are encouraged to inquire about the Special Projects Grant program)
- Activities of a commercial nature (e.g., works by creative workers to be used by employers, commissioned artwork, etc.)
- Funding to offset applicant's own artistic fees (fees or commissions that

should be paid by others)

- Activities considered to be hobbies or of a therapeutic or recreational nature
- Curatorial projects of other people's work
- Personal medical, legal, accounting, or administrative expenses
- Banking fees, PayPal fees, or service fees from crowd funding projects
- Food or beverage expenses
- Fundraising events, religious activities or events, or advocacy of specific political causes or candidates.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following five criteria:

**Artistic Merit:** The professional capabilities of the applicant; the artistic strength, quality, vision, originality of the applicant's work as demonstrated in the application, previous work, and artist's statement.

- Work is of compelling artistic vision and singular voice.
- Work is inventive, imaginative, substantive in form and content.
- Work is self-reflective/critical, demonstrating internal development and willingness to take risks, as appropriate.

**Potential Impact** of the proposed project to advance/further the applicant's work/career.

- Opportunity is unique and not a repeat of past experiences (i.e., is it juried selectively, time-sensitive, prestigious for the artist's field, a "first" for the artist?).
- Potential for the opportunity to facilitate subsequent creative work.
- Potential impact of the proposed opportunity on the professional development of the applicant (i.e., clearly defined, realistic, attainable goals based on the artist's level of achievement).

**Quality of Proposed Project:** The artistic strength, quality, vision and originality of the proposed project.

- Artist demonstrates an understanding and awareness of professional practice and standards in his/her field.
- Artist has demonstrated capacity to be self-directed and is well positioned to take full advantage of the opportunity the grant affords.
- Work is well-executed and well-produced, demonstrating control of craft/materials/production values and technique, as appropriate and clear intentionality of purpose.
- Work reflects awareness of the history and contemporary practice of its field and its relationship to both.

**Administrative Capability:** The feasibility of the proposed project as determined by the applicant preparing and clearly articulating a logical, well-conceived project plan that can be reasonably executed, clear goals, and an accurate budget.

- Professional resume, including education, artistic training, and level of achievement and/ or evidence of commitment to personal artistic development as demonstrated through efforts to attain performances, exhibits, etc.
- Artist has a history of active engagement in creating artwork and presenting it to the public, with a record of professional accomplishment appropriate to career stage.
- Completeness and clarity of the application. The reasonable likelihood that the project can be completed based on the itemized budget and proposed timeline. *(See page 6 for more about budget requirements.)*

**Public Benefit:** The applicant seeks to increase access to and direct participation in high-quality arts and cultural resources that celebrate diversity and foster creativity within

Montgomery County.

- The applicant is actively involved in the arts and cultural community.
- The applicant has experience sharing his/her work through public exhibition/performances and plans to do the same with this project.
- Applicant has capacity or is actively seeking to share through exhibits, performances, readings, marketing, local artist organizations, personal website, newsletter or advocacy.
- Applicant has identified ways to share about this opportunity with the public.

As an added benefit to grant recipients, **MCACD and Culture Works have joined in partnership with the Dayton Metro Library to facilitate convenient access to artistic spaces.**

Dayton Metro Library has high-quality performance and gallery spaces available at the Main Library, as well as access to Community Rooms and programming spaces nestled within neighborhoods all across the county.\* For the opportunity to access these spaces at no cost, DML requests that Artist Opportunity Grant recipients offer a program (performance, gallery show, film screening, educational workshop, etc.) that is free and open to the public during Library hours. In return for sharing your art/education with Library patrons, DML will market the program and provide limited space support.

Beyond this programming partnership, artists may also wish to consider DML's Opportunity Spaces (longer-term residencies typically of three to four weeks) or rental spaces (required for ticketed performances or performances after-hours).

If you are interested in learning more about partnering with the Dayton Metro Library for your Artist Opportunity Grant project:

- **Performing artists** should contact Julie

Buchanan, Programming Manager, at JBuchanan@DaytonMetroLibrary.org or 937-496-8859.

- **Visual artists** should contact Jayne Klose, Community Engagement Manager, at JKlose@DaytonMetroLibrary.org or 937-496-8508.

*\*DML follows all recommended protocols for health and community safety. As such, enclosed spaces and gathering areas may be limited and/or masks may be required due to COVID-19.*

## COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

Applicants should answer the questions on the application as if you are writing about yourself for someone who has never met you and/or someone who may not be familiar with the opportunity you wish to pursue. Consider the following when answering the questions in the application and when writing your artist statement:

**HOW** the opportunity is unique and what it offers that isn't otherwise available to you

**WHY** the opportunity is appropriate at this time in your career

**WHAT** the impact will be on your career and work and why this is the best way to get you there

**WHO** you will be working with (if applicable) and why they are the best person to learn from right now

## **OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR A COMPLETE APPLICATION:**

- **Proof of residency:** On the application, the applicant address must be current and may not be a P.O. box.

- A detailed **project description**, including timeline, goals and potential outcomes, and intended audience.
- A clear and concise **artist statement** and an overview of your history as an artist.
- A current chronological **artistic resume** focused on artistic achievements, activity, exhibitions, performances, awards, and publications, etc.
- At least one recent artistic **work sample** and a description of this work and how it relates to the proposed project. You will have the opportunity to either upload your work sample(s) or provide a link/URL. Work samples may include images, audio files, online galleries, Vimeo/YouTube videos, websites, or blogs where samples of your work appear or are archived.

The work sample is essential to your application and plays a critical role in helping panelists to evaluate the artistic merit of your work and gain a better understanding of the proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to select their work samples carefully and submit items that are as current as possible and relevant to the proposed project. Work samples do not need to be professionally produced to demonstrate vibrant programming or artistic excellence. In consideration of the review panel, please provide links or share files that do not require the creation of login accounts. **Find tips and additional guidelines regarding work samples at [cultureworks.org](http://cultureworks.org).**

- **Project Timeline:** This project or opportunity must take place between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022. If the grant is to complete a project already in progress, it must culminate with a completed work in 2022. Projects anticipated to not be completed by December 31, 2022 will not be considered.

- **Letter of Invitation/Acceptance** from the organization or individual providing the opportunity (if applicable). If you will not know whether you've been accepted into the program prior to the application deadline, indicate this in your application narrative and provide an anticipated confirmation date.
- **Project Budget:** Applicants will be required to submit a complete **budget for the entire project** (not just the amount of the grant requested) using the template provided in the application.
  - As your project budget is reviewed in conjunction with the narrative portion of your application, please be sure they align. Account for all the project components listed in your project description.
  - Please list all sources of revenue/funding, even if they are only anticipated, and not yet secured. **Note: If the total project budget exceeds \$6,000 (i.e., double the maximum grant amount), applicants must provide proof of additional funding sources** (e.g., a letter of commitment from a foundation, a grant agreement from another funder, etc.).
- **Documentation of Expenses** such as quotes, brochures, registration forms, screenshots of products with pricing, etc. These should align with the expenses outlined in your budget spreadsheet.
- **Description of Public Benefit:** Applicants must make their work available/accessible to the general public of Montgomery County in some way (e.g., a performance, exhibition, presentation, publication, workshop, class, a website documenting the project). **Each applicant must clearly identify one public**



**presentation of the project** in his or her application, with clear marketing/outreach plans to ensure attendance/participation. Applications that clearly identify the way in which the public can access the project are most competitive. Those pursuing professional development opportunities should think of a way to share their experience and knowledge with the public, e.g., through lectures, blogs, videos, websites, exhibitions, etc. *(See p. 5 for information on exhibition/presentation opportunities through the Dayton Metro Library.)*

## **THE REVIEW PROCESS**

All applications will be reviewed by staff for completeness and eligibility before advancing to the review panel.

### **Panel Review**

Culture Works and MCACD will identify an independent review panel consisting of artists, arts administrators, educators, and community leaders who understand and have an appreciation for the careers and professional development of artists. Every effort is made to avoid conflicts of interest.

Panelists receive online access to the applications, supporting materials, and artistic samples. It is their responsibility to review the materials and score applications based on the five evaluation criteria identified in these guidelines. The highest possible score is 25.

Panelists review and score applications independently throughout the month of October. In November, they convene at a public panel meeting to discuss applications and make award recommendations as a group. To facilitate discussion and funding recommendations, applications with the lowest initial scores may be eliminated from consideration prior to the public meeting. Applicants will be notified in advance of whether their application will proceed to the panel meeting.

### **Public Panel Meeting**

During the panel meeting, panelists discuss their initial scores and the resulting ranking of the applicants. As needed, panel members will be given the opportunity to review an artist's application and/or documentation. This is done for clarification purposes. As a result of the panel discussion or further review of an applicant's application or documentation, panelists may adjust their scores. Because materials will have been previously reviewed by panelists, they may or may not ask to review the same materials for every applicant.

### **Ranking and Funding Recommendations**

After final scoring, a master list of all applicants will be ranked from highest to lowest regardless of program category and artistic focus. Funding recommendations will be made based on these rankings and the funding that is available. Upon panel recommendations being approved by the MCACD board, all award recipients will enter into a contract/grant agreement with Culture Works.

## **GRANT PAYMENT AND GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Grants will be made in a single, one-time payment in January 2022 following successful completion of the Grant Agreement. Grant funding may only support expenses incurred during the relevant grant period for the cycle within which you apply.

It is the Grantee's responsibility to ensure that funds are spent throughout the year, or as appropriate and necessary, to cover costs proposed in the application.

Grantees are responsible for submitting a final report (financial, narrative and evaluation, including examples of the results of the grant project) within 30 days of the completion of the project/opportunity. Receipts for purchases or services must accompany your final report. If the project is not complete within the grant period, you will be required to identify the delay and

state an expected completion date.

In all publicity, websites, printed or production materials related to the grant project, the recipient must use the Montgomery County logo and credit Montgomery County for support in the same font size, or larger, as any other sponsors or supporters. Text credit should appear as: *This project is made possible by funding from Montgomery County.*

## 2021-2022 TIMELINE

August 9, 2021 – Application available via [cultureworks.org](http://cultureworks.org).

August 31, 2021 – Virtual Artist Opportunity Grant Info Session for applicants, noon. Check [cultureworks.org](http://cultureworks.org) for details and to register.

October 8, 2021 – Application deadline, 11:59 p.m. EST.

Mid-November 2021 – Virtual Public Grant Panel Meeting. Applicants will receive notification of their initial award status following the meeting. The panel's funding recommendations must then receive final approval by the MCACD board.

December 2021 – Grantees meet with Culture Works to review and complete grant contracts.

January 2022 – Funding distributed to grantees.

December 31, 2022 – All projects must be complete. (Note: The project end date is unique to each grantee, but all projects must be completed by the end of the year. Final reports are due 30 days following the project end date.)



This program is made possible through a public- private partnership between Montgomery County and Culture Works.