Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District

# ARTIST OPPORTUNITY GRANT

2023–2024 Program Guidelines

Administered by Culture Works

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# 2023–2024 ARTIST OPPORTUNITY GRANT

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.

## About the Program

The Artist Opportunity Grant Program empowers Montgomery County, Ohio, artists to advance their careers through professional development opportunities and the creation of new works.

The program's goals are 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, thereby making them competitive in the creative marketplace. Grants are intended to fund specific, unique, and imminent opportunities that have the potential to significantly impact an artist's work and professional development, regardless of where they are in their artistic career.

**The MCACD is providing $60,000 for the 2023–2024 grant cycle, and grants will range from $500 to $5,000.**

## 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, explores a new or innovative technique, 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 may only submit one application per grant cycle and 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).

## Who Can Apply?

To be eligible for the Artist Opportunity Grant Program, an applicant 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 an artist or creative entrepreneur. For the purposes of this grant program, an artist is defined as someone who has practiced their artistic discipline for at least three years*, demonstrates strong artistic potential, and is committed to developing their artistic career. Artists devote a significant portion of their time to creating, practicing, or teaching their artform and receive compensation for their work.

- Have exhibited, performed, or published work as an artist within the past three years, including self-curated opportunities or those in non-traditional venues.

*NOTE: An applicant's history of artistic practice can include time spent in, and activities completed as part of, an undergraduate or graduate art program.

## How Can Artists Use Funding?

**Artist Opportunity Grants range from $500 to $5,000.** As an opportunity-based grant, applicants must request a specific dollar amount within the allowable range, explain how funds will be used, and provide documentation of project expenses (e.g. screenshots of supply costs or registration fees, quotes from venues, etc.). If the Artist Opportunity Grant will not cover the full cost of an opportunity/project, the applicant must explain how they will cover the difference.

Grant funds must be used within the grant period—January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. This program does *not* fund general supplies utilized in the course of normal business. All costs must be tied to a specific, unique opportunity/project. **Allowable expenses include**:

- **Artist's Time:** *New in 2023.* For artists applying for funding to create new work, up to 20% of the funding request may be used to offset the cost of the applicant artist's time based on a typical hourly rate and estimated number of hours needed to complete project activities.

- **Presentation/Documentation/Portfolio Development and Marketing:** 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.

- **Professional Services:** Use of professional services to support the project (e.g., payments to contracted artist collaborators, production crew, professional consultants who help with project marketing plans and design, etc.).

- **Materials and Supplies:** Project-specific expenses for materials or supplies (e.g., paint, film, paper, fabric, etc.) needed to complete work for an exhibition, performance, publication, presentation, etc. as described in the application.

- **Equipment and Facilities:** Expenses for equipment rental or purchase (equipment purchases must not exceed $500 per item) needed to prepare new work for an

exhibition, performance, publication, etc. Expenses related to the short-term rental of venue/exhibition/rehearsal space (costs associated with home studios/workspace or leases are not permitted).

- **Fees and Travel:** Registration fees and travel costs associated with an imminent, concrete opportunity to perform, exhibit or audition, study with a mentor, or participate in a workshop, conference, residency, seminar, or other professional development opportunity. Lowest available fares and current IRS mileage rate apply. Reasonably priced accommodation is permitted if the opportunity is more than 100 miles from home.

## Restrictions

**Artist Opportunity Grants will *not* fund:**

- 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

- More than one applicant applying for the same project (Artists are welcome to collaborate, but one artist must be identified as the lead, applicant artist)

- Activities that have already taken place or take place outside of the grant period (January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024)

- 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 opportunity

- Multiple opportunities that are not part of a formal series (e.g., a series of workshops 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 or fees or commissions that should be paid by others (e.g., works by creative workers to be used by employers, commissioned artwork, etc.)

- 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.

# 2023–2024 Program Timeline

**For the 2023–2024 application cycle, all proposed opportunities must take place between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024.**

**August 7, 2023** – Application available at cultureworks.org.

**August 15, 2023** – Virtual Artist Opportunity Grant Info Session for applicants to learn more about the program and application process. Check cultureworks.org for details and to register.

**August 22 and 24, 2023** – Virtual Project Ideation Sessions for applicants to receive feedback on their proposal ideas before completing the application. Check cultureworks.org for details and to register.

**September 8, 2023** – Virtual Project Budget Workshop for applicants to learn how to create a project budget and supporting documentation. Check cultureworks.org for details and to register.

**Mid-September 2023 (Date TBA)** – Virtual Artist Statement Workshop for applicants to learn how to craft an effective artist statement. Check cultureworks.org for details and to register.

**October 6, 2023** – **Application deadline, 11:59 pm EST**. Applications must be submitted online.

**Mid-November 2023** – 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 2023** – Grantees meet with Culture Works to review and complete grant agreements.

**January 2024** – Culture Works begins issuing grant payments. (Grants are paid in one lump sum 30 days prior to each grantee's project start date and following completion of their grant agreement).

**December 31, 2024** – All projects/opportunities must be complete. (Note: Each grantee will have a unique project end date based on their timeline of activities, but *all* funded projects must be completed by December 31, 2024 at the latest. A final report is due 30 days following the grantee's project end date.)

# Completing the Application

Applicants should answer the application questions as if you are writing about yourself for someone who has never met you and is not familiar with your work or the opportunity you wish to pursue. Before beginning the application, ask yourself:

**HOW** is this opportunity unique and what does it offer that isn't otherwise available to you?

**WHY** is this opportunity appropriate for this moment in your career?

**WHAT** impact will the opportunity have on your career and work?

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

## Application Components:

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

- A clear and concise **Artist Statement** and an overview of your history as an artist.

- At least one recent artistic **Work Sample** and a description of this work and how it relates to the proposed opportunity/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. **Find tips and additional guidelines regarding work samples at [cultureworks.org](cultureworks.org).**

- A detailed **Project Description** that explains the who/what/where/when/why of the opportunity.

- A detailed **Project Timeline. The project or opportunity must take place between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024.** If the grant is to complete a project already in progress, it must culminate with a completed work. Projects anticipated to not be completed by December 31, 2024 will not be considered.

- A **Letter of Invitation/Acceptance** (if applicable) from the organization or individual providing the opportunity. 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.

- A **Description of the Potential Impact** of the opportunity/project on your career and how it will help you achieve your professional/artistic goals.

- A **Description of the Public Benefit** of the opportunity/project. 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 their application, with clear marketing/outreach plans to ensure attendance/participation. 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. 8 for information on exhibition/presentation opportunities through the Dayton Metro Library.)*

- **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. This budget spreadsheet should align with the application narrative and

include all sources of revenue/ funding, even if they are only anticipated and not yet secured. **Note: If the total project budget exceeds $5,000, 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.

# Evaluation Process and Funding Decisions

All applications are reviewed by Culture Works and MCACD staff for completeness and eligibility before advancing to an independent review panel of artists, arts administrators, educators, and other knowledgeable community members who understand and have an appreciation for the careers and professional development of artists. Every effort is made to avoid conflicts of interest.

Panelists review and score eligible applications independently over the course of a month. In mid-November 2024, they will convene at a virtual public panel meeting to discuss applications and make funding recommendations as a group (see p. 7). 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.

Panelists receive online access to the applications, supporting materials, and artistic work samples. **Panelists score applications based on the five evaluation criteria outlined below. The highest possible score is 25.**

## Evaluation Criteria

**Artistic Merit (5 pts.):** The professional capabilities of the applicant; the artistic strength, quality, vision, and originality of the applicant's work as demonstrated in the application, previous work, and artist's statement. Grant reviewers will consider whether:

- The artist's work is well-executed and well-produced, demonstrating control of craft and technique and a level of skill appropriate to the artist's career stage.

- The artist's work is of compelling artistic vision and singular voice.

- The artist's work is inventive, imaginative, and substantive in form and content.

**Potential Impact (5 pts.)** of the proposed opportunity/project to advance/further the applicant's work/career. Grant reviewers will consider whether:

- The opportunity is unique, time-sensitive, and not a repeat of past experiences.

- The artist identifies clear and realistic artistic/professional goals and makes a case for how this opportunity will help achieve them.

- There is a potential for the opportunity to facilitate future creative work.

**Quality of the Proposed Opportunity (5 pts)**: The artistic strength, quality, vision, and originality of the proposed opportunity/project. Grant reviewers will consider whether:

- The opportunity/project is clearly defined and meets professional standards.

- (As applicable) The mentors/instructors involved are well qualified and/or the artist demonstrates capacity for self-directed learning.

- The opportunity/project is original and reflects awareness of the history and contemporary practice of the artist's field and its relationship to both (i.e., it is not a duplication of an existing effort).

- The opportunity/project is prestigious or a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

**Administrative Capability (5 pts)**: 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 and includes a realistic timeline and accurate budget. Grant reviewers will consider whether:

- The artist provided a clear project timeline and explanation of how funds will be used.

- The project budget is realistic and supported by documentation of expenses. *(See page 6 for more about budget requirements.)*

- The artist has a history of presenting work to the public and a record of professional accomplishment appropriate to their career stage.

**Public Benefit (5 pts):** The applicant seeks to increase the public's access to and direct participation in high-quality arts and cultural resources that celebrate diversity and foster creativity within Montgomery County. Grant reviewers will consider whether:

- The artist has a clear plan to share their work or project outcomes with the community.

- The artist articulates how the opportunity/project will benefit intended audiences.

- (As applicable) The artist has a commitment from the intended exhibition space or performance venue.

## Public Panel Meeting

During the panel meeting, panelists discuss applications one at a time and finalize their scores. As needed, panel members are given the opportunity to revisit an artist's application and/or supporting 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 average score. 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 30 days prior to each grantee's project start date and following successful completion of their grant agreement.** Grant funding may only support expenses incurred during the grant period (January 1, 2024– December 31, 2024).

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 evaluative, 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 the final report.

If a grantee's project is delayed and will not be completed within the grant period, the grantee will be required to complete a **project revision form** identifying the delay and stating an expected completion date. Revisions must be reviewed by Culture Works staff for approval.

In all publicity, websites, printed or production materials related to the grant project, the grantee 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.*

### Dayton Metro Library Partnership

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 (DML) 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 Mariah Johnson, Cultural Programming Manager, at MJohnson@DaytonMetroLibrary.org or 937-496-8803.

- **Visual artists** should contact Caitlin Wissler, Public Services Director, at CWissler@daytonmetrolibrary.org or 937-496-8854.

*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.*

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