



# 2022-2023

## GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

### Guidelines and Application Instructions

ELIGIBILITY CHECK DUE: **THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2021 BY 4:30PM ET**

APPLICATION DUE: **THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021 BY 4:30PM ET**

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## GREETINGS!

Thank you for your interest in the 2022-2023 General Operating Support (GOS) Grant Program. Cuyahoga Arts & Culture's [mission](#) is to inspire and strengthen the community by investing in arts and culture. CAC is excited to work with you to connect Cuyahoga County residents to arts and culture in our community.

### LOCAL PUBLIC FUNDER

CAC is the local public funder for arts and culture, helping hundreds of organizations in Cuyahoga County connect millions of people to cultural experiences each year. Cuyahoga County residents created CAC in 2006 when they approved a tax on cigarettes to support arts and culture.

### \$207 MILLION+ INVESTED

Since 2007, CAC has invested more than \$207 million in 436 organizations both large and small, making Cuyahoga County a more vibrant place to live, work and play. CAC funds nonprofit 501(c)(3) arts and culture organizations based in and serving Cuyahoga County residents.



### OUR CORE GRANT PROGRAMMING INCLUDES:

#### PROJECT SUPPORT

Annual grants of up to \$20,000 for arts and culture projects.

#### GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

Multi-year core support grants to qualifying organizations with a primary mission of art and culture in Cuyahoga County.

#### CULTURAL HERITAGE

Flexible support grants for qualifying cultural heritage organizations with a primary mission of arts and culture and a budget up to \$500,000.

This document contains the guidelines for the 2022-2023 General Operating Support program. Organizations may only submit one application per cycle. To learn more about the differences between CAC's grant programs, refer to the [2022 Grant Programs Guide](#).

Our team is here to support you throughout the application process. For additional information and resources, please contact a [program manager](#). Visit [cacgrants.org](http://cacgrants.org), to learn more about workshop opportunities, review the [library of tools](#) available for applicants, and [sign up](#) to receive email updates.

KEY  
DATES

### 2022 GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT GRANT PROGRAM

Eligibility Check Due ..... June 3, 2021 at 4:30PM  
 Application Due ..... August 5, 2021 at 4:30PM  
 Public Panel Review ..... Week of September 27, 2021  
 Board Approves Grants ..... November 10, 2021 at 4PM  
 Grant Agreements Sent and Signed ..... November and December 2021

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The purpose of Cuyahoga Arts & Culture's General Operating Support (GOS) program is to strengthen the community by deepening its access to arts and culture through meaningful, multi-year core support grants to arts and cultural organizations based in and serving Cuyahoga County. Grant applications are reviewed through a transparent panel review process. CAC is accepting applications for 2022-2023 General Operating Support.

### ARTS & CULTURE DEFINED:

Arts and Culture is defined in the [Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3381](#), CAC's enabling law, as "including, but not limited to, literature, theater, music, dance, ballet, painting, sculpture, photography, motion pictures, architecture, archaeology, history, natural history, or the natural sciences."



CAC strongly encourages applications from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)-led and serving organizations, as well as others that have been historically excluded or marginalized. These communities include Latino/a/x, Asian and Asian American, Arab, Native American, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, North African; as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender, and gender variant people; people with disabilities; and women.

### SUCCESSFUL GOS APPLICANTS HAVE:

- A primary mission to create, produce, present or provide arts and/or cultural services for the public;
- A history of vibrant artistic and/or cultural programming; and
- Strong organizational capacity to carry out their work.

### Current GOS Grant Recipients

All current GOS grant recipients are required to submit an Eligibility Check. If your organization has received four consecutive years of CAC funding (two GOS cycles or one GOS and two PS cycles), you will not need to complete application and panel review. Contact your [program manager](#) to learn more. Current GOS grant recipients not meeting this requirement will be required to complete and application and panel review.

## APPLICATION OVERVIEW

### PRE-APPLICATION

- 1 Get Connected with CAC**
  - Sign up for CAC's [email list](#)
  - Register with CAC's [online application and reporting system](#)
  - Schedule an informational meeting with CAC staff before the eligibility check deadline.
- 2 Submit an Eligibility Check (June 3, 2021)**

Required documents include:

  - Audited or reviewed financial statements for FY18, FY19, and FY20
  - Articles of Incorporation
  - Secretary of State Certificate of good standing

### APPLICATION

- 3 Complete and Submit Online Application (August 5, 2021)**

Be prepared with the following information:

  - Organizational Overview
  - Funding Criteria Narratives
  - Institutional Goals
  - Additional Narratives
  - [SMU|Data Arts Cultural Data Profile](#)
  - [Support Materials](#)
  - Statement of Assurances

### POST APPLICATION

- 4 Public Panel Review (Week of September 27, 2021)**
- 5 Panel scores and grant amounts approved at the CAC Board of Trustees meeting (November 10, 2021)**

## ELIGIBILITY

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

To be eligible for the GOS grant program, organizations must meet **all** the following criteria:

Have a **primary mission** to produce, present or create programs or activities in areas directly concerned with arts or culture heritage (as defined by the [Ohio Revised Code](#)) for the general public

Have a **permanent and viable base** in Cuyahoga County for at least three years prior to June 3, 2021. Applicant organization must have a business address in Cuyahoga County and conduct the majority of its local programs and services in Cuyahoga County for the residents of Cuyahoga County and visitors to Cuyahoga County

Exist as a **501(c)(3)** organization for at least three years or be a successor to an arts or cultural organization that had been a 501(c)(3) organization for at least five years prior to June 3, 2021, and be verified as a 501(c)(3) by [GuideStar's Charity Check service](#)

Employ for a minimum of two years prior to June 3, 2021, at least **one paid, professional** cultural/artistic and/or administrative staff person working a minimum of 20 hours per week (or 1,040 hours per year) at or above the state-designated minimum wage. This staff person must receive an IRS Form W-2 from the organization reporting wages and withheld taxes and must have approval from the organization's Board of Directors to sign for financial transactions and grant-related documents

Provide independently certified audited **financial statements** for FY18, FY19, and FY20 if its FY20 total expenses are \$750,000 or more; or provide either independently certified audited or reviewed financial statements for FY18, FY19, and FY20 if its FY20 total expenses are less than \$750,000

Complete an IRS Form **990/990-EZ** (Required for all budget sizes)

Be **incorporated and authorized** to do business in Ohio as verified by the [Ohio Secretary of State](#)

Meet **minimum income threshold** of \$100,000, as determined by a financial review/audit or 990 for fiscal year 2020

Have previously **received and successfully completed** at least two Project Support grants from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture

### WHO IS INELIGIBLE TO APPLY

The following types of organizations are ineligible to apply to the GOS program (this list is not meant to be exhaustive):

- Organizations whose primary mission is not arts and/or culture
- Organizations that are not in good standing with CAC and/or not in compliance with previous grants
- Organizations that are serving as fiscal agents or fiscal sponsors for an organization or program
- Religious institutions without a separate 501(c)(3) organization that specifically administers non-sectarian public programming
- Organizations that are the primary responsibility of a government agency
- National or state service organizations supporting organizations
- K-12 schools, including parent-teacher associations and similar groups
- Fundraising organizations of any kind or "friends of" or "foundation" established for the primary purpose of supporting the activities of or fundraising for another ineligible organization
- Private foundations of any kind
- Units of government
- Private libraries
- Cemeteries
- Individuals
- Organizations that are applying to another core (Project Support or Cultural Heritage) grant program in the same grant cycle

## FUNDING CRITERIA

### What are Funding Criteria?

The Funding Criteria are the principles that anchor the General Operating Support application: Public Benefit, Artistic and Cultural Vibrancy, and Organizational Capacity.

### Why Funding Criteria Matter

Panelists will use the Funding Criteria to evaluate and score the application. Your organization's commitment to Public Benefit, Artistic and Cultural Vibrancy, and Organizational Capacity should thread through your entire application. By demonstrating this commitment, organizations of any size and discipline can be successful in the panel process.

#### PUBLIC BENEFIT

An organization's ability to meaningfully and authentically engage its community to achieve its mission.

Demonstrate that it understands, respects, works with, and responds to its community

Articulate and demonstrate knowledge of its community to drive its work

Builds and strengthens meaningful relationships with and active engagement among its community, residents, and audiences; including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC)

Be accessible and inviting to its community and open to the public

#### ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL VIBRANCY

An organization's ability to create quality, mission-driven work that inspires and challenges its community.

Use equitable principles to engage a racially diverse team of arts and cultural professionals qualified to achieve the mission and to serve a racially diverse community and audience

Build the capacity of artists and creatives, including BIPOC arts and culture professionals, preparing them for rewarding careers locally and beyond

Develop partnerships based on principles of mutuality, co-creation and collaboration

Collaborate with artists and/or community partners to create experiences that build cultural understanding and inspire its community to think differently and/or creatively

Incorporate a process of reflection that ensures fresh programming

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

An organization's ability to successfully manage resources to their best use now and for years to come.

Equitably recruit, retain, and provide employment opportunities and board or volunteer engagement resulting in a racially diverse team that is qualified to carry out the mission

Plan as a team to set goals, measure progress and evolve

Plan strategically to achieve a stronger financial position



## APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS



**ALL ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS ARE EVALUATED BY A PANEL OF ARTS OR CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS FROM OUTSIDE THE REGION IN A TRANSPARENT PANEL REVIEW PROCESS.**

Panelists are chosen to represent a cross-section of professionals qualified to provide expert knowledge of specific arts or cultural disciplines, as well as for their management experience, professional knowledge of the sector and prior panel experience. The CAC staff make every effort to ensure that the panel is diverse in all respects. All panelists receive an honorarium for their service.

CAC staff members provide the applications and support materials to panelists approximately four weeks prior to the panel review in order to allow panelists sufficient time for their evaluation. During the panel review meeting, the panel will evaluate all eligible applications based on CAC's Funding Criteria:

**PUBLIC BENEFIT**

**ARTISTIC AND  
CULTURAL VIBRANCY**

**ORGANIZATIONAL  
CAPACITY**

CAC staff review applications for completeness but do not score or provide opinions. Staff will manage all administrative and logistical tasks necessary to conduct a successful panel review; provide panelists all documentation necessary to evaluate applications effectively; inform the panel in matters of CAC policy and procedures; provide all available objective information regarding an applicant to the panel, and serve as panel chair.



## APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS

### PRE-APPLICATION

#### Get Connected with CAC

News, updates, and events, including technical assistance workshops and webinars, will be posted on the CAC website and distributed via email. Sign up [here](#) and opt-in to receive CAC Grant Information to learn more. Add CAC's URL and staff email addresses to your email safe senders list, address book, or contact list to continue receiving important information from CAC. CAC will not extend any deadlines if our emails are sent to your spam or junk mail.

**All new GOS applicants must schedule an informational meeting with CAC staff before the eligibility check deadline (June 3, 2021).**

To schedule a meeting, please contact a [program manager](#).

KEY  
DATE

**ELIGIBILITY CHECK - DUE THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2021 BY 4:30PM ET**



#### Submit the Eligibility Check

All new GOS applicants and returning GOS grantees must submit an Eligibility Check via CAC's [online application system](#). CAC uses the Eligibility Check process to determine whether an organization meets the criteria to receive a grant.

#### REQUIRED DOCUMENTS INCLUDE:

- Audited or Reviewed financial statements for FY18, FY19 and FY20
- Articles of Incorporation
- Secretary of State certificate of good standing

CAC Staff will review documents, verify nonprofit status, and confirm eligible organization requirements. Within two weeks of the submission of the Eligibility Check, CAC will reach out to applicants regarding their eligibility status.

## APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS

### APPLICATION

#### Complete and Submit Online Application

If your organization is deemed eligible through the Eligibility Check process, Cuyahoga Arts & Culture will notify you via email and provide access to the application. Applications must be submitted online using CAC's [online application and reporting system](#). To be considered complete, an application must include all required application question responses and required materials.

KEY  
DATE

**APPLICATION DUE - THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021 BY 4:30PM ET**



#### BE PREPARED WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- Institutional Goals
- Organizational Overview
- Funding Criteria Narratives
- Additional Narratives
- Arts + Cultural [Support Materials](#)
- Organizational Support Materials
  - [SMU|Data Arts Cultural Data Profile](#) for FY18, FY19, and FY20\*
  - FY20 Audit or Review
  - Board of Directors List including affiliations
  - Current year organizational budget
- Statement of Assurances

**THE FULL SET OF APPLICATION QUESTIONS AND AN EXPLANATION OF EACH REQUIRED ITEM CAN BE VIEWED [HERE](#).**

Be sure to leave ample time should you have any unforeseen technology issues. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. After 4:30 pm ET applications will no longer be able to be submitted through the online system.

\*NOTE: We recommend starting the CDP well before the application deadline. It may require you to compile additional data about your organization. More information can be found [here](#).

## APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS

### POST APPLICATION

#### Public Panel Review

The Public Panel Review will take place virtually the week of September 27, 2021. CAC staff will notify all applicants of the panel review meeting dates, times, and will post all details on the CAC website in advance.

#### Appeals Process

CAC will only consider, and review appeals that are evidence-based and due to materially significant CAC processing errors that could have compromised an applicant's grant proposal. This does not include information that was in excess of the application's space limitations or information that was submitted after the application deadline. Any requests for appeals must be filed with the Executive Director within 10 working days after the conclusion of the panel review meeting. Requests received after 10 days will not be considered.

Please note: The panel's analysis and scoring of applications are not subject to appeal and therefore will not be considered for appeal by the CAC Board of Trustees. Neither grant awards nor grant award amounts are subject to appeal.



### KEY DATES

**PUBLIC PANEL REVIEW - WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2021**

**BOARD MEETING - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021, 4 PM ET**

#### COMPLETE ERS FORM

All organizations that receive a score of 75.00 or higher must complete the [Eligible Revenue and Support Form](#) for FY18, FY19 and FY20

The ERS form is where organizations enter its annual sources of funding. It is used to determine the base revenue figure for each organization in the GOS pool, which is used in the funding formula.

A program manager will reach out to organizations recommended for a GOS grant after panel is concluded.

#### Board Meeting

Panel scores and grant amounts will be approved at the November CAC Board of Trustees meeting. This meeting is open to the public, and applicants are welcome to attend but not required.

GOS grant amounts are determined by a [formula](#) designed to distribute funding to recommended organizations by considering several factors including:

- The total amount allocated to be granted for that GOS cycle;
- The averaged operating budget for the previous three fiscal years (FY18, FY19, and FY20) of each organization, as determined by each applicant's Eligible Revenue and Support (ERS) forms; and
- The aggregation of all GOS grant recipients' operating funds as determined by ERS forms; and
- The maximum annual grant amount for any one organization will be adjusted in proportion to changes in the allocation.

## PANEL SCORING FRAMEWORK AND DESCRIPTIONS

### PANELISTS WILL USE THE FOLLOWING SCORING FRAMEWORK AND DESCRIPTIONS TO ASSESS EACH APPLICATION:

#### PUBLIC BENEFIT (45 points):

Weak: 1 – 23  
Fair: 24 – 33  
Good: 34 – 38  
Strong: 39 – 42  
Exceptional: 43 – 45

#### ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL VIBRANCY (35 points):

Weak: 1 – 18  
Fair: 19 – 25  
Good: 26 – 29  
Strong: 30 – 32  
Exceptional: 33 – 35

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY (20 points):

Weak: 1 – 10  
Fair: 11 – 14  
Good: 15 – 16  
Strong: 17 – 18  
Exceptional: 19 – 20

### SCORING DESCRIPTIONS

**Exceptional:** The applicant has provided overwhelming evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that this funding criterion is fully met. Responses are clear and directly address this funding criterion. The support materials are clear, highly relevant and lead to a deeper understanding of how the criterion is met.

**Strong:** The applicant has provided clear evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that this funding criterion is met. Responses are clear and address this funding criterion. The support materials are clear, highly relevant and lead to a deeper understanding of how the criterion is met.

**Good:** The applicant has provided sufficient evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that this funding criterion is met. Responses are generally clear but do not consistently address this funding criterion. The support materials are relevant but provide only some understanding of how the criterion is met.

**Fair:** The applicant has provided limited evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that this funding criterion is met. Responses may not be clear and may not address this funding criterion. The support materials may not be relevant and may not provide additional understanding of how the criterion is met.

**Weak:** The applicant has provided insufficient evidence throughout the application that demonstrates that this funding criterion is met. Responses are unclear and/or do not address this funding criterion. The support materials may not be relevant and may not provide additional understanding of how the criterion is met.

#### YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SCORE

During the panel review meeting, panelists will score each application on a point scale from 1 to 100 based on the Funding Criteria.

The panelists' scores will be averaged for each application to determine the panel score.

Any applicant receiving an averaged panel score of 75.00 or higher will be recommended for a GOS grant; scores are not rounded.

Any applicant receiving a panel score lower than 75.00 will not be recommended for a grant.

CAC staff will notify all applicants whether they will be recommended for funding via email within two weeks of the conclusion of the panel review meeting.

## GRANT RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS

**GRANT PERIOD: ALL FUNDED ACTIVITIES AND GRANT EXPENDITURES MUST OCCUR DURING THE GRANT PERIOD, JANUARY 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2022.**



The grant amount is paid during each calendar year pending grant agreement compliance. All funded activities and expenditure of grant dollars must occur during the respective calendar year.

### Grant Agreement and Compliance

Recipients must sign a grant agreement each year of the two-year grant period. Grant agreements will be issued following Board approval at the 2021 and 2022 November meetings. To be considered an active grant recipient and receive funding, recipients must sign a grant agreement and meet the requirements therein.

### CAC Grant Funding Restrictions

Grant Recipients shall use the General Operating Support Grant solely for operating expenses relating to programs or activities directly concerned with Arts or Culture heritage. Prohibited uses of this grant are:

- costs of any programs or activities located outside of Cuyahoga County;
- activities that are not open to the general public;
- fundraising or benefits;
- regranting;
- scholarships, tuition assistance, awards or cash prizes;
- deficit reduction or elimination, trust endowments, cash reserves, penalty or litigation fees, loans, or interest on loans;
- capital improvements, facilities or equipment;
- religious ceremonies or events advancing or inhibiting a particular religious ideology;
- cost of receptions, food and beverages;
- agent's fees for programs contracted through commercial agencies;
- travel outside of the United States; or
- advocacy of specific political causes or candidates.

### Matching Funds

GOS grants are matching grants. Applicants are required to leverage CAC funds to secure additional income from other sources. This program requires a 1:1 cash match. The matching funds may come from any source. Sources of your matching funds can include, but are not limited to, foundation or government grants, private donations, ticket sales, and member dues. Matching funds may not include other funds from CAC. This includes any CAC co-funded grants. Contact CAC staff with any questions.



## GRANT RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS



### Events Calendar and Credit Requirements:

Grant Recipient shall submit events through CAC's online event system in order to ensure a broad representation of their programming is included in the event system. Recipients shall have active events for each month that the organization has public programming.

Grant Recipients shall also acknowledge funding from CAC and the citizens of Cuyahoga County at their publicly funded programs. Grant recipients that do not comply with these expectations may be subject to a reduced final grant amount. [Calendar and Credit Requirement details can be viewed here.](#)

### Technical Support Participation

A senior staff person or board member must participate in at least one CAC hosted workshop and/or technical assistance opportunity each year of the grant period.

### Reporting Requirements

All 2022-23 GOS grant recipients will submit yearly goals and have four online reports to submit throughout the cycle: mid-year and year-end reports in 2022 and 2023. These reports allow CAC to better understand progress made against goals, offer support where necessary, and provide an opportunity for organizations to reflect on their activities during the year. Reports consist of a narrative portion, financial documentation, and other required support material; instructions will be posted online at least 60 days in advance of deadlines. Grant recipients that submit a late final report, or do not submit a final report, may receive a reduced or revoked final grant amount.

### Maintaining Good Standing:

To receive CAC funds, a grant recipient must maintain its good standing with CAC during the grant period. A grant recipient is in good standing if it:

- Fully and completely meets all requirements as stated in the grant agreement for the duration of the grant period;
- Accurately represents its organization and its activities in all documents submitted to CAC. This includes, but is not limited to, the eligibility check, application, final report and all other reports and forms; and
- Continues to meet the [eligibility criteria](#).

A grant recipient not in good standing with CAC will be officially informed of this status in writing.

## LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



CAC'S ONLINE  
APPLICATION + REPORTING  
SYSTEM



GENERAL OPERATING  
SUPPORT APPLICATION  
QUESTIONS



TOOLS FOR APPLICANTS



CAC GRANT  
PROGRAM TEAM



GRANT PROGRAMS  
WORKSHOPS AND Q&A  
SESSIONS



SUPPORT MATERIALS



SMU | DATAARTS GUIDE  
(CULTURAL DATA PROFILE)



2022 GRANT  
PROGRAMS GUIDE



OHIO REVISED CODE,  
CHAPTER 3381



GLOSSARY



CAC'S FUNDING FORMULA  
HANDOUT



ELIGIBLE REVENUE  
AND SUPPORT



CALENDAR AND CREDIT  
REQUIREMENT DETAILS



CACGRANTS.ORG



ONLINE APPLICATION  
REPORTING SYSTEM GUIDE