

# Grant Guidelines



## About The Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development

*Investing in the financial sustainability, management, governance and growth capacities of small arts and culture organizations located in six-county Chicago metropolitan region.*

The nonprofit arts and cultural sector faces major challenges brought on by technological advances, demographic changes, funding fluctuations and shifting consumer behaviors. The Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development is a funder collaborative developed to support small arts and cultural organizations in the six-county Chicago metropolitan region as they respond to these challenges by helping them build their operating capacity, improve their financial sustainability, diversify audiences and strengthen management and board governance.

## Funding Opportunities

Grants are made to arts and cultural organizations with operating expenses between \$50,000 and \$999,999. Funded projects may take a variety of forms, each tailored specifically to the organization receiving the award. The majority of our grants support consulting fees and associated project costs related to working with outside experts.

Examples of the types of project eligible for funding, include, **but are not limited to:**

- Restructuring the organization for new demands and new ways of doing business
- Partnering or merging with other organizations for greater reach and impact
- Research and testing new ways to engage and reach audiences
- Strengthening financial management and fund development capacity
- Improving board functioning and governance
- Establishing or refining personnel or volunteer management systems
- Business, strategic and succession planning
- Rethinking organizational structures, format, approaches to doing business

Applicants are strongly encouraged to think creatively and to focus on critical capacity-development needs that, if addressed, would enable the organization to do its best work.

Most grants range in size from \$3,000-\$10,000, although the Arts Work Fund may consider grants up to \$15,000.

The Arts Work Fund understands that organizational development is an ongoing process. We expect that organizations will utilize our grants to take a progressive step forward. Given that, we welcome organizations to apply for additional support upon completion of their currently-funded project. Organizations need not wait a year, nor is there a limit on the number of grants an organization can receive.

Applying to or receiving a grant from the Arts Work Fund does not prohibit or impact an organization's ability to apply separately to funders that are members of the Arts Work Fund collaborative.

## Ineligible Costs

- Operation and program expenses
- Debt retirement, endowments or capital campaigns
- Fundraising events/lobbying activities
- Staff salaries
- Purchase of computers or other equipment
- Purchase of software, unless integrally related to the project for which funding is being sought
- Annual audits
- Conference or workshop fees
- Reimbursement for work completed prior to a grant award

## Organizational Eligibility

Arts and cultural organizations that meet the following criteria are welcome to apply for a grant:

- A mission primarily focused on presenting, producing, or providing arts programming and/or on serving and enhancing the capacity of individual artists or small arts and cultural organizations;
- A three-year operating history after incorporation as an Illinois nonprofit;
- A current IRS 501(c) (3) public charity designation determination letter;
- Annual operating expenses between \$50,000 and \$999,999, as reflected in the most recently filed I.R.S. Form 990 or audit;

- At least one paid staff and a minimum of five board members;
- Located in and serve the six-county Chicago metropolitan region (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties); and
- If a former Arts Work Fund grant recipient, must have submitted a final report for previous grant activities. (The final report may be filed together with a new application for funding.)

**Note:** Programs organizationally or financially connected to colleges, universities, or religious organizations are unlikely to receive a grant from the Arts Work Fund, even if the program is operated separately.

## How To Apply

### Step 1. Application Cover Sheet

Complete the application cover sheet available at: [www.artsworkfund.org](http://www.artsworkfund.org).

### Step 2. Proposal Narrative

Provide up to 5 pages of narrative that addresses the following:

1. What does your organization do? Please describe what your organization produces, presents and/or provides, and a brief history.
2. What significant organizational challenges has your organization faced over the past two years? Describe how you have addressed these challenges to date.
3. What is the organizational development project for which you seek funding?
4. Why is this project important to the organization at this time? Discuss how your organization came to understand the need for this project.
5. What do you hope to achieve through this project? What impact do you hope it will have on your work? Please be specific about how you plan to measure the quality, impact and success of the proposed project.
6. Who will be responsible for implementing this project? For projects using outside consultants, please attach a copy of the consultant's proposal. Consultant proposals should include: consultant summary of the organizational issue(s) to be addressed, detailed scope of work (including project outcomes/deliverables and timeframe), fee justification (i.e. number of hours and hourly billing rate), and consultant qualifications.

**Note:** Applicants are strongly encouraged to solicit at least three bids from possible consultants prior to selecting the one identified in the application to the Fund. Organizations submitting proposals with fewer bids should explain why competitive bidding was not pursued.

### Step 3. Attachments

Please include the following:

- Project budget (including cash and in-kind),
- Detailed organizational operating budgets for the previous, current, and next fiscal year\*
- List of organizational funding commitments and the amount contributed from these sources in the last and current fiscal year,
- Current list of board members (including business or community affiliations),
- IRS 501(c) (3) public charity designation determination letter,
- Most recent audited financial statement or, for organizations not required to conduct an audit, the IRS Form 990, and
- A copy of any consultant's work plan (see above). Include any announcements or other materials used to solicit and select a consultant.

\* Applicants may use the Illinois Cultural Data Project to generate the required budget information. Arts Work Fund also has a budget form at [www.artsworkfund.org](http://www.artsworkfund.org) for your convenience.

### Submission of Materials

There are two ways to submit applications:

1. Submit the proposal cover sheet, proposal narrative and all required attachments via the online cover sheet, available on our website at [www.artsworkfund.org](http://www.artsworkfund.org); or
2. Submit the proposal cover sheet online, and then submit the narrative and attachments via email to [Marcia@artsworkfund.org](mailto:Marcia@artsworkfund.org), and/or via mail to:

**Marcia Festen, Director**  
 Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development  
 P.O. Box 577309  
 Chicago, IL 60657-7309