

2020
Operating Support Grant
Application Guidelines



KeepArtHappening.org

2020 OPERATING SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Background

The Arts and Education Council, through the **Operating Support Grant Program**, provides limited, unrestricted support to arts organizations in the St. Louis bi-state area providing arts and arts education programs that address community needs. The Arts and Education Council believes a region rich with arts and cultural experiences is critical to creating and sustaining vibrant communities. The goal of the Arts and Education Council is to drive community impact by promoting our ***Elements of a Vibrant Community***.

Elements of a Vibrant Community

By supporting a wide variety of art forms and providing strategic leadership for the arts in the broader community, the Arts and Education Council creates an environment where the growing impact of the arts is felt and celebrated by the entire community. The ***Elements of a Vibrant Community*** provide a focus for the Arts and Education Council's community investments and strategic program initiatives by:

1. ***Building Creativity and Innovation*** by attracting and retaining talent, visitors and businesses to the region.
2. ***Energizing Communities and Forging Connections*** by widening participation in local arts experiences that deepen feelings of engagement and connection of residents to neighborhoods.
3. ***Inspiring Kids and Engaging Minds*** through the arts in a way that promotes the development of 21st century skills like creative thinking.
4. ***Building Bridges Between Cultures*** by promoting cross-cultural understanding through increased availability to and access of arts experiences that include and represent all races and ethnicities.
5. ***Enriching Lives*** by widening participation in arts experiences that deepen feelings of joy and connection to the community.



Operating Support Grant Requirements

Operating Support Grants are one-year awards. To be eligible for funding from the Arts and Education Council, an organization must fulfill all grant requirements for the duration of the grant period; accurately represent its program and activities in all documents submitted to the Arts and Education Council; and continue to meet the minimum eligibility requirements. To be eligible for an **Operating Support Grant**, an organizations' annual operating budgets **must** fall within the following categories:

Operating Support Level	Annual Operating Budget
Level I	\$3 million and greater
Level II	\$1 million - \$2,999,999
Level III	\$500,000 - \$999,999

Determination of Award Amount

Funding for the **Operating Support Grant** varies annually. The Arts and Education Council cannot predict or predetermine the lowest, fundable rating in any given year therefore, grant award amounts may vary year-to-year.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for an Operating Support Grant, organizations must meet **all** the following criteria:

1. The organization (*or the entity for which it is a part*) must:
 - a. Be an IRS Section 501(c)(3) non-profit in good standing in the state of Missouri or Illinois;
 - b. Remain a 501(c)(3) for the duration of the grant period or the grant will be forfeited;
 - c. Be located in one of the Arts and Education Council's 16-county bi-state region that includes **Missouri counties** of Jefferson, Franklin, Lincoln, St. Louis City and County, St. Charles, Warren and Washington *and* **Illinois counties** of Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair.
 - d. Have a primary mission to provide to the general public, programs or activities in areas directly concerned with arts, arts education or cultural heritage;
 - e. Have received funding from the Arts and Education Council in at least three of the last five years;
 - f. Have an appropriately broad and diverse board of directors of at least ten (10) or more active members (not including paid staff) and meet at least quarterly;
 - g. Employ at least 1 FTE and /or contract professional and/or administrative staff (full time is defined as a minimum of 30 hours per week);
2. Operate under a reasonable, board-approved budget
 - a. The organization's annual operating budget is \$500,000 to \$3 million (See chart above).
 - b. Provide accurate and detailed financial statements reflecting activity for the prior year audited, most recently completed fiscal year **AND** the current year projections.
 - c. Have maintained a balanced budget over the organization's past three consecutive fiscal years;
3. Organizations are eligible to **apply for and receive only one Operating Support Grant per year**.
4. Meet all other criteria and requirements as outlined in this document.

2020 Operating Support Grant Timeline

Information Workshop	Applications Open	Applications Due	Proposal Review	Funding Notification
March 13, 2020	March 16, 2020	April 24, 2020 by 3:00 pm	May 18, 2020	June 5, 2020

Proposal Funding Process and Criteria

The Arts and Education Council would like very much to fund every worthy organization presented to us, however, the number of requests for consideration far exceeds our ability to fund them. **Please view [Proposal Writing Tips](#) and the [Grant Terminology Glossary](#)** for assistance in writing your best application. All eligible applications will be reviewed by the **Grants and Programs Committee of the Arts and Education Council**. This committee represents a cross section of the Arts and Education Council's Board of Directors, comprised of community members and corporate partners.

The Arts and Education Council staff **does not score** applications. The Arts and Education Council staff manages the **administrative, financial and logistical tasks** necessary to conduct a successful and fair panel review including:

1. Provide reviewers with **training and materials** to ensure an effective evaluation;
2. Inform reviewers of the Arts and Education Council's **policies and procedures**;
3. Provide reviewers with **objective information** regarding applicant organizations and programs;
4. Provide **recommendations** to reviewers regarding the **financial health** of applicant organizations; and
5. Thoroughly and objectively **answer reviewer questions**.

Applications will be scored and rated according to the Arts and Education Council's review criteria. Reviewers will use the criteria to evaluate and score applications on a scale of "1 to 100". Rating is directly correlated to

1. **Mission of the applying organization**;
2. **Consistency** of organizational mission with the **mission of the Arts and Education Council**;
3. **Demonstrated community need, outreach and potential impact** of the organization;
4. **Artistic quality** of the programs produced by the organization;
5. **Diversity** of target or impacted audiences across all programs of the organization;
6. **Fiscal health** of applying organization as demonstrated by financial statements and budgets presented;
7. Strong **artistic leadership**;
8. Recognition of **artistic excellence** and programs as verified with awards, recognition and local media;
9. A **dedicated audience base** across programs demonstrated by consistent attendance numbers and ticket sales;
10. Established **system of hiring** local professional artists and developing talent; and
11. Ongoing efforts to **assess and evaluate audience needs** through surveys and other basic evaluation tools.

Grant payments will be made quarterly: 3rd Quarter, 2020; 4th Quarter, 2020; 1st Quarter, 2021; and 2nd Quarter, 2021.

Financial Review & Criteria

Proposals must include detailed financial statements reflecting activity for the **most recently completed fiscal year** and the **current year projections**. (*Uploaded to online application.*) Each applicant organization will complete the “**Financial Information Worksheet**” (*Downloaded from online application, completed and re-uploaded to online application.*) Applicant organization’s financial information will be analyzed in a separate review process by the Arts and Education Council Accounting staff. Each financial summary will be given one of three designations:

Designation	Definition
Pass	Organization meets all minimum financial requirements.
Cautionary	Operations are not balanced over two years, but the differential is less than 10% of the organization’s 2-year (<i>Last year Completed and Current Year Projections</i>) average annual expenses.
Fail	Organization does not meet minimum financial requirements.

Application Submission

The **online application** and **Financial Information Worksheet** will be accessible from our website beginning **February 10, 2020** at the following link **2020 Operating Support**.

All application materials must be submitted via the online grantmaking system by **3:00 p.m. Friday, April 24, 2020** Central Standard Time.

At 3:00 p.m. on Friday, April 24, 2020 Central Standard Time the system will no longer allow you to submit your application. Late applications will not be accepted. No Exceptions!

Contact Information

For questions regarding the **proposal, programmatic and financial information**, contact **Cynthia Davis, Director of Grants and Programs** at Cynthia-D@keeparthappening.org or via phone at 314.289.4007.

For questions regarding the **online submission of proposals**, contact **Jessiree Jenkins, Grants and Programs Coordinator** at Jessiree-J@keeparthappening.org or via phone at 314.289.4015.