

# 2025 - 2026 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

## ENTRY TRACK

**DUE DATE:** February 18, 2025, 5 p.m. EST

**PLEASE NOTE THAT NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED**

**GRANT ACTIVITY PERIOD:** July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

### Entry Track Description

Entry track is the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' (PCA) point of entry for organizations or programs to the Arts Organizations and Arts Programs track (AOAP). Entry track supports eligible arts organizations and arts programs that have a history of at least TWO years of consistent arts/cultural programming. Applicants must apply in Entry track until recommended for AOAP, which is based on panel review and assessment totals. Grant funding is disbursed on a reimbursement basis for eligible expenditures.

### NEW

Please note: grant awards may be subject to the National Endowment for the Arts' (a federal agency) General Terms and Conditions-Appendix A:

<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/GTC-PARTNERSHIP-FY21-rev-6.28.22.pdf>

### Organizational classification

For the purposes of the Entry track application, all applicant organizations are classified as **ONE** of the following:

- **Arts Organization** – An eligible nonprofit corporation whose mission is to create, perform, present, promote or serve the arts sector (e.g., symphonies, arts councils, theatres, art museums).
- **Arts Program of Non-Arts Organization** – A solely arts-related program of a larger, eligible, nonprofit corporation or unit of government whose mission is not solely arts-related (e.g., charitable or community service organization).

Please note: there are different requirements for Arts Organizations versus Arts Programs, noted in the eligibility section below.

***If you are unsure how your organization is classified, please contact the PCA.***

### Organizational eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation, or a unit of local government (counties, cities, boroughs, townships, and municipal authorities).
  - Please note that Pre-K -12 public, private and parochial schools and programs including all charter schools, and affiliated booster organizations are NOT eligible. (K-12 schools should contact the Arts in Education Program of the PCA for other opportunities).
- Be located in Pennsylvania, except for nonprofit, tax-exempt corporations acting as a fiscal sponsor on behalf of an unincorporated group or not-for-profit limited liability company (LLC) that is located in Pennsylvania.
- Be registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations, except for local governments and fiscal sponsors.
- Have a history of at least TWO years of consistent arts programming in Pennsylvania.
- Have an annual average arts revenue of more than \$200,000. PCA determines revenue size by a two-year average demonstrated by:
  - **Arts Organization:** form 990 of the U.S. Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service
  - **Arts Program of Non-Arts Organization:** applicant's board approved, arts-specific program financial statement.
  - The program financial statement must detail program revenue, including contributed and earned income and income realized from investments, as applicable, and expenses. In-kind is not included.
- PCA Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) partners must apply in ENTRY regardless of arts revenue size.

Unincorporated groups or Pennsylvania not-for-profit limited liability companies (LLCs) must apply through a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that acts as a fiscal sponsor. **Individuals and LLCs with fewer than two organizers/members are not eligible to apply.**

#### Agency Mission

To strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.

#### Overarching Value:

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
Promote equitable access for all Pennsylvanians to participate fully in a creative life and in the diverse forms of arts and culture in the Commonwealth.

[arts.pa.gov](https://arts.pa.gov)

**Agency Mission**

To strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.

**Overarching Value:**

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
Promote equitable access for all Pennsylvanians to participate fully in a creative life and in the diverse forms of arts and culture in the Commonwealth.

[arts.pa.gov](http://arts.pa.gov)

## Funding restrictions

- Activities that occur outside the Performance Period.
- Activities that have a religious purpose.
- Payments to lobbyists.
- Cash prizes and awards.
- Benefit activities.
- Hospitality expenses (e.g., receptions).
- Competitions.
- Performances and exhibitions not available to the public.
- Activities for which academic credit is given.

## Fiscal sponsorships

Unincorporated groups and Pennsylvania LLCs with two or more members conducting arts activities in Pennsylvania for an expressly not-for-profit purpose must apply to the PCA through a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that serves as a fiscal sponsor. LLCs applying through a fiscal sponsor must meet the same requirements as other applicants, except for tax-exempt status. If an LLC has a purpose that is not-for-profit, its purpose must be stated in its certificate of organization filed with the Pennsylvania Department of State, a copy of which must be included in the application materials.

Groups applying through a fiscal sponsor must meet the same requirements as other applicants, except for tax-exempt status and being registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations.

The fiscal sponsor is responsible for the administration of the grant award agreement (contract), including all reporting requirements, has discretion and control over the grant funds, and may charge a reasonable fee for its services. The fiscal sponsor receives the grant payment directly from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is responsible for ensuring the completion of the final reports.

Fiscally sponsored groups/LLCs must have a fully executed, active agreement with the fiscal sponsor, a copy of which must be submitted with the application materials.

## Requirements for independent component units under a parent organization

A parent organization that includes separately identifiable and independent components (e.g., a university that has a presenting organization and a radio station) may apply for each such eligible component.

An eligible independent component must be a unit that is both programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization.

This independent status is demonstrated by the component's:

- Unique mission, separate and distinct from the parent entity;
- Dedicated staff, with duties specific to the mission of the component;
- Independent advisory committee or board;
- Separate finances that are distinguishable by and applicable to the unit.

**The items on the above list are all now required responses in the application.**

To qualify as an eligible independent component, it should be equivalent to a stand-alone institution. A parent organization should consult with PCA staff to verify eligibility of the component before preparing an application. Parent organizations applying with only one separate component also need to demonstrate the above bullets.

## Application process

- Applications are submitted online to the PCA.
- PCA staff reviews applications for eligibility.
- Applications are reviewed by advisory panels. Panels evaluate each application based on published PCA criteria (see below).
- The Council annually reviews funding parameters. Awards are generally approved at the PCA's July Council meeting.
- Those receiving awards will be sent communication outlining the next steps in the grant process, including the reimbursement payment process.
- **Reimbursement materials/Final Reports are due no later than 30 days after the grant period closes (the grant period closes on June 30, 2026).**
- **Grant will be canceled if grantee fails to submit reimbursement materials by July 30, 2026.**
- In addition, if the reimbursement materials/final report remains incomplete or unacceptable after September 30, 2026, the agreement will be terminated.

**Agency Mission**

To strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.

**Overarching Value:**

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
Promote equitable access for all Pennsylvanians to participate fully in a creative life and in the diverse forms of arts and culture in the Commonwealth.

[arts.pa.gov](https://arts.pa.gov)

## Application review criteria

Applications are evaluated by advisory panels based on the following criteria:

### Community Value

Applicant Demonstrates:

- Artistic offerings and/or services that strengthen its community culturally, educationally, and/or economically.
- Artists and artistic offerings and/or services involve and are meaningful to the community being served.
- Relevant arts learning opportunities for community members.

### Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Value

Applicant Demonstrates:

- Apart from being audience members or beneficiaries, community members are central to the design of the applicant's work.
- Plans and action-oriented practices toward diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in ways that are relevant to your community, including reaching new audiences.

### Stewardship Value

Applicant Demonstrates:

- Planning processes appropriate to the organization, mission, and goals.
- Capacity to carry out programs and projects as planned.
- Appropriate financial planning and oversight practices.

## Required Attachments

**If any of the following items are not submitted, the application will not be considered for funding.**

- IRS Determination Letter confirming nonprofit 501(c) status (does not apply to Local Governments)
- **Arts Organizations:** attach the TWO most recently submitted form 990 IRS tax filings.
- **Arts Program of Non-Arts Organizations:** attach a board/committee approved, arts-specific program financial statement for the most recently completed TWO fiscal years. The program financial statement must include program revenue, contributed and earned income, and income realized from investments, as applicable, and expenses. In-kind is not included.
  - **For entities applying through a fiscal sponsor:**
    - Attach the fiscally sponsored entity's arts-specific program financial statement for the TWO most recently completed fiscal years. The program financial statement must detail program revenue, including contributed and earned income and income realized from investments, as applicable, and expenses.
    - Attach the Sponsorship Agreement between the fiscal sponsor and the sponsored entity.
    - **LLCs MUST also submit their Certificate of Organization-Domestic Limited Liability Company filed with the Pennsylvania Department of State Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations. At least Two organizers/members must be listed in the Certificate of Organization.**
- Provide a succinct (no more than one page) list of arts activities (for example: 3 concerts, 2 workshops, 5 exhibitions). THIS WILL BE SHARED WITH THE PANEL. Three links to artistic content or programmatic highlights generated during the previous two years may be submitted. (Note: links can be to websites or file sharing sites (Google Drive, DropBox, etc.), YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, etc. Please be sure to grant proper access, as applicable.

---

## How to apply

**STEP 1. READ THIS DOCUMENT.**

**STEP 2. REGISTER and APPLY THROUGH** Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Electronic Single Application (ESA):

<https://grants.pa.gov/>

**STEP 3. SUBMIT ONLINE by FEBRUARY 18, 2025, 5:00 p.m. EST.**

**No hard copies are required.**

Please note that ACH must be established to make grant payments. Please [sign up for ACH](#) grant payments if you have not already done so.

**Agency Mission**

To strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.

**Overarching Value:**

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
Promote equitable access for all Pennsylvanians to participate fully in a creative life and in the diverse forms of arts and culture in the Commonwealth.

[arts.pa.gov](https://arts.pa.gov)

## Need help?

- **For technical and login questions**, contact the egrants help desk at: (833) 448-0647 or [egrantshelp@pa.gov](mailto:egrantshelp@pa.gov).
- **For all questions, concerns, and issues with Keystone Login** call: (877) 328-0995.
- **For questions about content and attachments**, contact one of the following PCA staff:
  - **Ian Rosario**: [irosario@pa.gov](mailto:irosario@pa.gov) or (717) 525-5548
  - **Seth Poppy**: [spoppy@pa.gov](mailto:spoppy@pa.gov) or (717) 787-1520
  - **Amy Gabriele**: [agabriele@pa.gov](mailto:agabriele@pa.gov) or (717) 525-5547

More details and instructions on certain components of the application process can also be accessed [here](#).

## Appeals Process

PCA recognizes that errors may occur in the PCA application process. PCA is committed to acknowledging any errors and responding to rectify the effects of an error. The appeals process enables applicants to identify these errors and omissions and bring them to the attention of the PCA. Appeals may result in a change in the determination of eligibility or the PCA award amount if the applicant can satisfactorily document that an error or omission occurred through no fault of the applicant. Appeals are awarded only if the error or omission had a substantial effect on the PCA's evaluation of an application or its determination of an applicant's eligibility.

Appeals are not intended to provide the applicant with an opportunity to challenge the assessment of the application's status or viability. Disagreement with the judgment of the application review is not grounds for an appeal. Missing the published application due date or failure to submit required information or documentation are not grounds for appeal.

Applicants considering an appeal should contact the applicable PCA Program Director for advice and guidance. The appeal must be made in writing to the PCA Deputy Executive Director within ten business days from the date of the notification of the award status from the PCA. Appeal letters should identify the error or omission and the effect such error had on the results of the PCA's application review process. If the appeal is supported, funds will be awarded only if they are available.

## About the PCA

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) is a state agency under the Office of the Governor. The PCA's mission is to strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts. By leveraging the immense potential of Pennsylvania's arts and cultural sector, the PCA supports jobs, builds community, inspires lifelong learning, promotes the commonwealth nationally and internationally, and sparks innovation. For more information about the PCA, visit [arts.pa.gov](https://arts.pa.gov).