

2025-2026

PRESERVING DIVERSE CULTURES DIVISION APPLICATION GUIDELINES

DUE DATES:

- **Strategies for Success Letter of Interest (LOI):** February 10, 2025, 5 p.m. EST
- **Strategies for Success Application:** March 17, 2025, 5 p.m. EST

LOIs & APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER DUE DATE

GRANT ACTIVITY PERIOD: September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026

PLEASE NOTE:

- **First-time applicants must submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) and be approved to submit an application. Guidance on what information to include and how to submit an LOI can be found on page 2. Approved applicants may only apply to participate at the Basic Level or Intermediate Level.**

Description

It is a goal of the Preserving Diverse Cultures (PDC) Division to support the creation, development, and stabilization of organizations, programs, and projects whose mission and artistic work are deeply rooted in and reflective of the perspectives of historically under-represented, diverse cultures including those whose members identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Additionally, the applicant's programs and staff are representative of or offer a unique perspective regarding diverse cultures including BIPOC communities.

The Division seeks to foster organizational stability, expansion of authentic and relevant arts and cultural programming in diverse communities including those whose members identify as BIPOC; and to support the training of capable administrators.

Division Programs

The Division offers the following funding opportunities to individuals and organizations with a focus on Pennsylvania's historically under-represented diverse populations including BIPOC communities:

Strategies for Success

Strategies for Success is a participatory multi-year, multi-level capacity-building program that addresses and supports organizational development with an emphasis on entities serving historically under-represented diverse communities including those whose members identify as BIPOC. A complete description of this program, eligibility and participation requirements, and award amounts can be found on page 3.

Additional Resources

When resources allow, the Division provides technical assistance, funding for professional development for individual artists, and consultancy support for organizations not eligible to participate in Strategies for Success. The Division also offers virtual and in-person organizational and professional development convenings, webinars, and workshops. The availability of these opportunities will be announced via the PCA website, email notifications, and social media.

2025/2026 TIMELINE

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| • Letter of Interest Submission Deadline | February 10, 2025, 5 p.m. |
| • Application Submission Deadline | March 17, 2025, 5 p.m. |
| • Grant Review Panel Sessions | May – June 2025 |
| • Recommendations Made to Council | July 2025 |
| • Applicant Notification | August 2025
<i>(Pending timely passage of state budget)</i> |
| • Grant Award Process Begins | September 2025 |
| • Program Period: | September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026 |
| • Final Report Due Date | September 30, 2026 |

Letter of Interest (LOI)

Complete the Letter of Interest by providing the following information:
(No more than 3 pages using a 10 pt font)

- Name of Organization;
- Contact name, email address and telephone number;
- Organization address;
- Website address;
- Nine-digit Federal Employer ID Number (FEIN;)
- For organizations who plan to use a fiscal sponsor, provide the name and nine-digit Federal Employer ID Number (FEIN) of the proposed fiscal sponsor;
- Basic Level applicants – provide an annual budget from the most recently completed fiscal year (i.e. an income statement showing income and expenses);
- Intermediate Level applicants – provide a copy of IRS Form 990 for most recently completed fiscal year or, if annual income is \$50k or less, a copy of the IRS Form 990 N and an annual budget;
- Mission statement;
- A brief description of the history of your organization;
- A description of artistic programming and/or services provided, audiences served, frequency and location(s);
- Describe your short-term and long-term organizational development goals. What organizational development goals would you like to accomplish within the next 12 months?

Submit LOI via email to Dana Payne at danpayne@pa.gov no later than February 10, 2025, 5 p.m. EST.

Funding Restrictions

PCA grant funds cannot be used for any of the following:

- Activities outside the performance period;
- Activities that have a religious purpose;
- Payments to lobbyists;
- Cash prizes and awards;
- Benefit activities; or
- Activities for which academic credit is given.

Unless authorized by Council, grant funds cannot be used for the following:

- Hospitality expenses (i.e., receptions, parties, gallery openings);
- Capital expenditures, including equipment costing \$ 500 or more;
- Competitions; or
- Performances and exhibitions not available to the general public.

Allowable Expenditures

- Artist fees
- Artistic programming expenses
- Facility/venue and equipment rental (equipment rental not to exceed \$500)
- Marketing expenses
- Staffing
- Staff development materials (fiscal management systems, publications, workshops)
- Conference fees (registration, lodging, and transportation - not to exceed \$750)
- Organizational development consultancy fees

Fiscal Sponsorship

Unincorporated groups and Pennsylvania not-for-profit LLCs with more than two 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 PCA and is responsible for ensuring the completion of the final reports.

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

For additional information on the role of a fiscal sponsor, contact:

Dana Payne, Director of DEI Initiatives, Diverse Cultures & Heritage at danpayne@pa.gov or 717-525-5544.

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.

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STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS GUIDELINES

NEW APPLICANT LETTER OF INTEREST (LOI) DUE DATE: February 7, 2025, 5 p.m. EST

APPLICATION DUE DATE: March 17, 2025, 5 p.m. EST

PLEASE NOTE LOIs & APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER DUE DATE

GRANT PROGRAM PERIOD: September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026

FINAL REPORT DUE DATE: September 30, 2026

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ABOUT

Strategies for Success is a participatory, multi-year, multi-level capacity-building program that addresses and supports organizational development with an emphasis on entities serving historically under-represented diverse communities including those whose members identify as BIPOC. This program is significant in its design, intentionally creating long-term relationships between the Division and participating organizations through the provision of up to ten years of support for capacity building and consultation.

Support is provided through implementation awards, technical assistance, and professional development workshops and conferences. Grantees work with a self-selected organizational development consultant during the program period to help them reach their short and long-term goals. Participation in this program is based on three levels of organizational readiness - Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced.

Funding and continued participation at each level is dependent on meeting eligibility and participation requirements, including an annual evaluation.

ELIGIBILITY

Organizations applying to Strategies for Success must be deeply rooted in and reflective of the art, culture, history, and heritage of a historically under-represented, diverse culture including those encompassing populations who identify as members of one or more BIPOC communities (e.g. African American, Latinx, Asian, Native American, and/or Hispanic).

Basic Level Applicants

- Must have at least two consecutive years of active arts and cultural programming;
- Average annual budget of less than \$24,000 (*based on the two most recently completed fiscal years*);
- Applicants must have an established board or community support group;
- Applicants must have a Federal Tax Identification number. Unincorporated groups must apply through a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that serves as a fiscal sponsor.

Intermediate Level Applicants

- Must have at least three consecutive years of operation;
- Average annual budget exceeding \$24,000 (*based on the two most recently completed fiscal years*);
- At least one staff position working a minimum of 20 hours per week;
- Formal board of directors with committee structure and regular meetings;
- Formal bookkeeping system, regular office hours, and accessible place of business;
- Evidence of successful fundraising;
- Consistent community and audience support;
- Programming that is an artistically significant and effective presentation of cultural activities;
- Federal Tax Identification Number and determination as a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization or a pending application.

Advanced Level

- Must have at least ten consecutive years of operation;
- Average annual budget greater than or equal to \$125,000 (*based on the two most recently completed fiscal years*);
- At least two full-time, salaried staff members;
- Formal, structured board of directors with committee structure and regular meetings;
- Formal bookkeeping system, regular office hours, accessible place of business, and an annual audit, or review of financial statements prepared by a CPA (as applicable);
- Long-range plan (for at least three years in the future);
- Evidence of structured annual fundraising activities;
- Established marketing program;
- Established community support and awareness;
- Annual programming that is artistically significant and an effective presentation of cultural activities;
- Federal Tax Identification Number and determination as a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization or a pending application.

PARTICIPATION LEVELS

BASIC LEVEL

The **Basic Level** supports unincorporated ensembles, independent grassroots arts organizations, and artist cooperatives that are relatively new to formalized funding processes and/or in need of administrative and/or programmatic stabilization; arts programs within social service or community-based organizations and other non-arts organizations interested in developing professionally staffed arts programs.

Basic Level Organizational Development Priorities:

Operating models, strengthening organizational structure, board/advisory committee development; financial planning and management; development and fundraising planning, and artistic program support.

Once accepted into this level, organizations may be funded annually for a maximum of four years.

Grant Award

The Basic Level awards up to \$10,000 per year in non-matching funds.

The required allocation for this grant award is as follows:

\$6,500 to support program and staff expenses;
\$3,500 to support organizational development consultancy fees.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

The **Intermediate Level** supports independent grassroots arts organizations, ensembles, and artist cooperatives in need of administrative and/or programmatic stabilization; arts programs within social service or community-based organizations and other non-arts organizations engaged in developing professionally staffed arts programs.

Intermediate Level Organizational Development Priorities:

Building internal capacity through the implementation or augmentation of at least one staff position, specialized staff training, long-range planning, and the creation of programmatic initiatives.

Once accepted into this level, organizations may be funded annually for a maximum of four years.

Grant Award

The Intermediate Level awards up to \$15,000 per year. A partial match of \$9,000 is required.

The grant award is to be allocated as follows:

- \$9,000 for implementation or augmentation of up to two staff positions (***match required**);
- \$2,500 for programming;
- \$3,500 for consultancy fees.

ADVANCED LEVEL

The **Advanced Level** supports arts organizations with at least ten years of consistent arts and cultural programming who are considered pillars of their community evidenced by a track record of quality presentations and commitment to and from their community.

Advanced Level Organizational Development Priorities:

Scalable fundraising strategies, long-range strategic planning, facility development, board development and expansion, and special programmatic initiatives that address long-term stability.

Once accepted into this level, organizations may be funded annually for a maximum of three years.

Grant Award

The Advanced Level awards up to \$25,000 per year. **A 100% match is required.**

Advanced Level Allocation – Advanced-level applicants can request funding to support any or all of the following categories - staffing, programming, organizational development, consultancy.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- Participating organizations should discuss with their board of directors the impact that a consultant will have on the growth of the organization and plan accordingly;
- Participating organizations must have their organizational development consultant complete and submit a progress report on an annual basis;
- Participating organizations should identify at least one representative who will participate in an annual update meeting with the program director;
- Participating organizations must participate in an annual organizational assessment;
- Participating organizations must participate in at least one virtual or in-person capacity-building workshop or webinar.

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HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be submitted using ESA (Electronic Single Application). Applicants applying through a fiscal sponsor must submit their application through the fiscal sponsor's ESA account.

STEP 1 START EARLY! Do not wait until the last minute to apply. Due dates are non-negotiable. It is strongly recommended that you begin the online application at least **2-weeks BEFORE** the due date to address any unforeseen developments that may prevent a timely submission.

STEP 2 READ THIS DOCUMENT THOROUGHLY. Review program objectives, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and the due date.

STEP 3 REGISTER & APPLY. The Electronic Single Application (ESA) platform allows PCA applicants to navigate the funding application process and submit all required components entirely online. You must register for an account in order to apply for funding via ESA. Once you have an account, the ESA site will help you navigate the application process for the funding program of your choice. <https://grants.pa.gov/>

Applicants using a fiscal sponsor must submit their application through the fiscal sponsor's ESA account.

Check your browser compatibility. ESA works with Edge and Google Chrome. It is recommended that you use the latest version of these browsers.

New applicants should register for a Vendor Number (also known as SAP Vendor Number) -> [Vendor Registration | Office of the Budget | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#)
Select the *Non-Procurement* link. You will then be taken to a registration page. Please provide the required information requested and wait until the SAP vendor number for your organization is issued.

STEP 4 Select the Preserving Diverse Cultures grant program application

STEP 5 SUBMIT ONLINE by the applicable DUE DATE. Be prepared to complete and submit your application, in its entirety, by the due date.

PLEASE NOTE: Payments are no longer being made by paper check. For additional information and to register for ACH payments, please visit the following:
<https://www.budget.pa.gov/Services/ForVendors/Pages/Direct-Deposit-and-e-Remittance.aspx>

NEED HELP?

- For **technical** and **login** questions, contact ESA Customer Service Center at: **833-448-0647** or egrantshelp@pa.gov
- For all questions, concerns, and issues with **Keystone Login**, please review the following help documents -> <https://keystonelogin.pa.gov/> or call: **877-328-0995**
- For questions about grant program content and attachments, contact **Dana Payne, Director of DEI Initiatives, Diverse Cultures & Heritage** at danpayne@pa.gov or **717-525-5544**.

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APPLICATION NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Please respond to the application narrative questions below. Questions 5-13 are aligned with and directly correspond to the criteria used in the application evaluation process. The entire application narrative should be no more than five (5) pages using a 10 pt font.

Applicant Overview

1. Provide your mission statement. If you represent an arts program within a larger non-arts organization that does not have an arts-specific mission, provide an artistic statement and the goals of your arts program.
2. Briefly describe the community you serve and why.
3. Describe how your organization will use the requested funds based on the allocation requirements for the participation level requested – Basic, Intermediate, Advanced.
4. Describe the role that Strategies for Success will play in your organization's development.

Community Value (0 – 30)

Applicant Demonstrates:

Artistic products and/or services that strengthen its community culturally, educationally, and/or economically.

5. Over the past year, how did your artistic products and/or services support your community culturally, educationally, and/or economically? (Your response may include a description of the value provided to your community, whether adding to its cultural landscape, educational opportunities, or economic opportunities promoted directly or indirectly within your community).

Artists and artistic products and/or services involve and are meaningful to the community being served.

6. Over the past year, describe how artistic decisions were made and by whom. How did you know your artistic products and/or services were meaningful to your community?

Relevant arts learning opportunities for community members.

7. Over the past year, describe how you defined and determined the impact of your arts learning initiatives within your community.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Value (0 – 30)

Applicant Demonstrates:

Apart from being audience members or beneficiaries, community members are central to the Design of the applicant's work.

8. Over the past year, describe your community's involvement in your work, methods you used to reach your community, and feedback related to your artistic products and/or services.

Plans and action-oriented practices toward diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in ways that are relevant to your community.

9. Over the past year, describe your organization's plans and work to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and/or access. How did you know that your plans and actions were relevant to your community?

Stewardship Value (0 – 40)

Applicant Demonstrates:

Planning processes appropriate to the organization, mission, and goals.

10. Describe your most recently completed planning process, including who was involved. Describe the key findings, the short-term and long-term goals that were established or amended following this planning process, and how you track and measure progress.
11. Describe your organizational development goals for the September 1 – August 31 program period. Goals should be aligned with the organizational development priorities established for the level at which your organization participates – Basic, Intermediate, or Advanced. If you are a returning program participant, what is the status of the goals that you established for the current program period?

Capacity to carry out programs and projects as planned.

12. Over the past year, how did you ensure that you were able to carry out your programs or projects? To what degree were you able to carry out programs as planned?

Appropriate financial planning and oversight practices.

13. Describe your financial planning and oversight practices, including who participates in and is accountable for financial management and organizational oversight. Describe the financial condition of your organization and key actions taken to ensure adequate resources are available to carry out your mission or arts program.

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REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS FOR ALL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS APPLICANTS

In addition to providing responses to the narrative questions included in this document, applicants are required to upload the following, as applicable, to the Addendum section in ESA:

- Key artistic and managerial staff and brief biographies.
- Board of directors with professional affiliations
- A description of how Board of Directors members and/or staff are representative of or offer a unique perspective regarding diverse cultures or communities.
- **Basic Level and applicants** - Annual budget from the most recently completed fiscal year (i.e. an income statement showing income and expenses).
- **Intermediate Level applicants** - Copy of IRS Form 990 for most recently completed fiscal year or, if annual income is \$50k or less, a copy of the IRS Form 990 N and an annual budget.
- **Advanced Level applicants** - Copy of IRS Form 990 for most recently completed fiscal year.
- **Intermediate & Advanced Level applicants** - Copy of most recent strategic plan.
- Organizational development consultant agreement.
- A succinct, one-page list of arts activities from the past two years. Include the following:
 - Date(s) and location (venue)
 - Type of activity – concerts, workshops, performances, exhibitions, etc...
 - Number of artists involved
 - Attendance totals
- Work Samples: You may submit up to three links of artistic content or programmatic highlights generated during the past two years. Note: links can include file-sharing sites (Google Drive, DropBox, etc.), YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, websites, etc. Please be sure to grant proper access as applicable.

For non-arts organizations:

Attach a Board/Committee approved arts-specific program financial statement for the most recently completed fiscal year. The arts-specific program financial statement must include program revenue, including contributed and earned income and income realized from investments, as applicable, and expenses. In-kind contributions are not to be included.

For applicants applying through a fiscal sponsor:

Attach the fiscally sponsored organization's financial statement, in addition to that which is required for the level for which you are applying, for the most recently completed fiscal year. The financial statement must include revenue, including contributed and earned income, income realized from investments, as applicable, and expenses.

Attach the Sponsorship Agreement between the fiscal sponsor and the organization being sponsored. 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 three organizers/members must be listed in the Certificate of Organization.

NOTE: Upload these documents, as applicable, to the *Other* section in the Addenda section of the application.

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APPLICATION & FUNDING PROCESS

The following information relates to the application and funding process of the PCA, and to the subsequent procedures once an award has been made. Please thoroughly review program guidelines prior to submitting an application.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Applications are reviewed by PCA staff for eligibility and appropriateness. The PCA uses an advisory panel review process to make recommendations for the Council's consideration. The Council reviews funding options annually and sets the parameters for funding. Funding recommendations are approved at the July Council meeting.

The advisory panel will evaluate and apply the weighted criteria (see page 6) to an applicant's past and current performance to determine a recommended award. Participation on advisory panels rotates and applicants should not assume that panelists have any prior knowledge of the applicant:

- The information provided in the application is the principal source of information for advisory panel review;
- Applications should be clear, complete, and concise in presenting all information;
- The responsibility for making a compelling case for PCA support rests entirely with the applicant;
- Only the information required by the PCA will be presented to the advisory panel;
- Applicants must adhere to the character limits specified for the application narrative, addenda materials, and work samples;
- The advisory panel may recommend little or no support if information is missing, incorrect, or unclear.

FUNDING PROCESS

The recommendations of the advisory panel are reviewed and approved by the Council prior to making awards. The Council does not obligate itself to make a formal explanation of its awards. Program directors are available to advise applicants. However, this advice does not represent the decision of the Council nor bind the Council in future determinations.

Those receiving awards will receive an email providing instructions for completing the Grant Award Agreement (contract) setting forth any conditions, restrictions, and changes imposed by the Council, and must return revised budgets, project descriptions, and any other requested documentation in order for the award process to begin. The recipient will use the Grant Award Agreement to specify how funds will be used. The use of funds is subject to PCA approval. Upon signing the Grant Award Agreement, recipients certify that they will accept the terms, conditions, and provisions referred to in the Grant Award Agreement. Recipients also agree to accept any conditions, restrictions, or changes imposed by the Council unless the recipient objects in writing within 30 days of the mailing of the award letter. The PCA is required to verify that the recipient has complied with all terms of the contract.

PAYMENT PROCESS

Requests for payment are initiated by the PCA upon approval of the fully executed Grant Award Agreement. Awards are subject to review by several state agencies. It can take two-to-four months for payment to be issued after the PCA approves the Grant Award Agreement. Often, PCA funds will not arrive by the start date of the project or program period. The PCA does not issue payment. Payments are issued by the Pennsylvania Department of the Treasury and do not arrive at the same time each year. The issuance of payments is dependent on the timely passage of the state budget. Applicants should be aware of this and plan their cash flow accordingly.

APPEAL PROCESS

The PCA recognizes that errors may occur in the application process. The 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 Council. Appeals of the Council's decision may result in an increase in the PCA award amount if the applicant can satisfactorily document that the application was misrepresented or improperly reviewed through no fault of the applicant. Appeals are awarded only if the Council believes that the error or omission had a substantial effect on the recommendation of the advisory panel or PCA staff review.

Appeals are not intended to provide the applicant with an opportunity to challenge the evaluation and assessment of the advisory panel or PCA staff review. Disagreement with the judgment of the advisory panel or PCA staff review, or the amount of the award is not grounds for an appeal. Applicants considering an appeal should contact the PCA's Deputy Executive Director for advice and guidance. The appeal of an award decision must be made in writing within ten business days from the date of the notification of the award. Letters of appeal should be addressed to the PCA Executive Director. The letter should identify the error or omission and the effect such error had on the recommendation of the advisory panel or PCA staff review. If the appeal is supported by the PCA's Council, funds will be awarded only if they are available.