

# INFORMATION SESSION

## FY24 “How to Apply” for Independent Artists

**Tuesday, August 8**

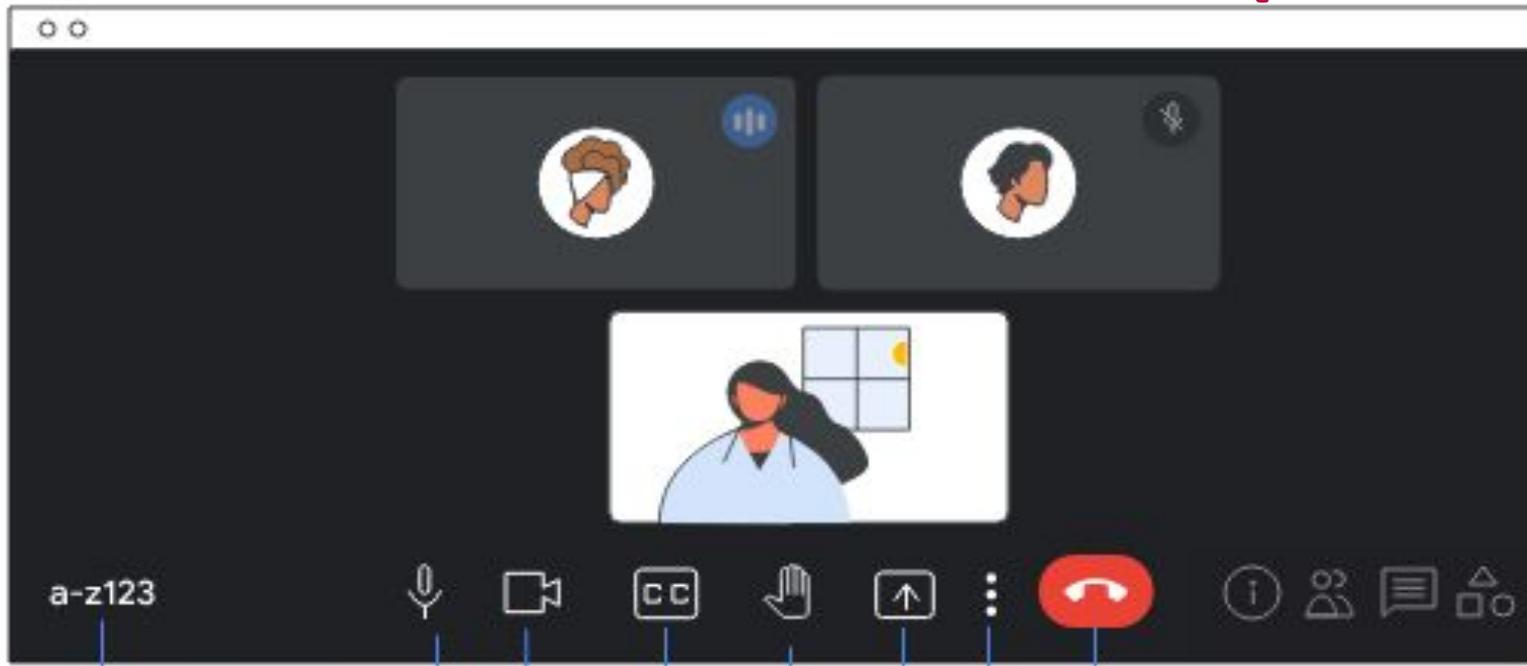
**Presented by:**

Emily Sollenberger & Laura Weiss  
Program Directors, Arts Services



**CREATIVITY**  
G R A N T

# Reference Shot of Features (1 of 2)



a-z123

Meeting code

Turn mic on or off

Turn camera on or off

Turn captions on or off

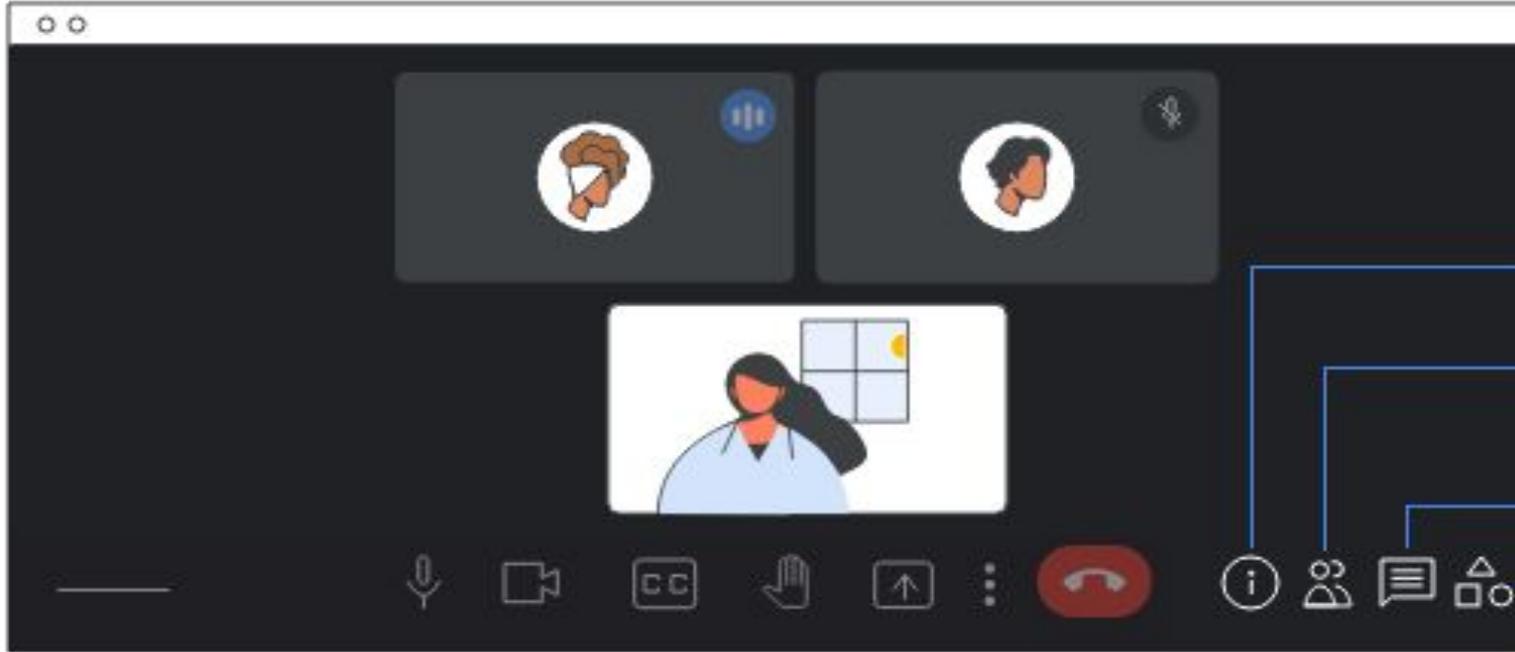
Raise your hand

Share your screen or give presentations

Leave meeting

Change settings, background, layout, and more

# Reference Shot of Features (2 of 2)



- Share meeting details with guests
- View, remove, and pin participants, and invite more people
- Send chat messages
- Use Breakout rooms, Polls, Q&A and other meeting features

## Land Acknowledgement Statement

We acknowledge the lands and waters now known as Maryland are the home of its first peoples: the Accohannock Indian Tribe, Assateague People's Tribe, Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians, Choptico Band of Indians, Lenape Tribe, Nanticoke Tribe, Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, Piscataway Conoy Tribe, Piscataway Indian Nation, Pocomoke Indian Nation, Susquehannock Indians, Youghiogheny River Band of Shawnee, and tribes in the Chesapeake watershed who have seemingly vanished since the coming of colonialism. We acknowledge that this land is now home to other tribal peoples living here in diaspora. We acknowledge the forced removal of many from the lands and waterways that nurtured them as kin. We acknowledge the degradation that continues to be wrought on the land and waters in pursuit of resources. We acknowledge the right of the land and waterways to heal so that they can continue to provide food and medicine for all. We acknowledge that it is our collective obligation to pursue policies and practices that respect the land and waters so that our reciprocal relationship with them can be fully restored.

## Equity and Justice Statement

The arts celebrate our state's diversity, connect our shared humanity, and transform individuals and communities. The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) and its supporting collaborators are committed to advancing and modeling equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in all aspects of our organizations and across communities of our state.

MSAC and its grantees are committed to embracing equity and non-discrimination regardless of race, religious creed, color, age, gender expression, sexual orientation, class, language, and/or ability.

## **Vision**

The Maryland State Arts Council plays an essential role ensuring every person has access to the transformative power of the arts.

## **Mission**

Maryland State Arts Council advances the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland.

**Goal 1. Increase Participation:** Broaden MSAC's constituency, providing avenues designed to increase pathways to engagement

**Goal 2. Provide Intentional Support:** Embrace thoughtful and targeted approaches to serving known and yet to be known MSAC constituents

**Goal 3. Build Capacity:** Work strategically to further build organizational and governance capacity to ensure that MSAC is capable of vigorously delivering on its mission

**Goal 4. Leverage Connections:** Further enhance current relationships and involve additional partners, collaborators, and constituents who will benefit from and advance the work of MSAC

**Goal 5. Bolster Maryland Arts:** Showcase the high caliber, diverse and relevant work of Maryland's artists and arts organizations; their contributions to community vitality and MSAC's role as a catalyst

# Creative Meeting Actions

**Celebrate** being in the space with other creative people.

**Engage** with everyone's presence as a gift.

**Acknowledge** that together we know a lot.

**Enter** the conversation with curiosity and inquiry.

**Share** your idea and trust that it will be heard.

**Use** "I" statements.

**Focus** your language on the task at hand.

**Hold** one another accountable with care.

**Apply** "Yes, and!" - "I hear your idea and I'm going to add to it!"

**Balance** speaking and listening.

## MSAC Professional Development

Follow MSAC's Eventbrite page for updates about free professional development opportunities

- Topic-specific sessions on Financial Management, Legal Advice, Marketing Strategies, Strategic Planning, Board Engagement, and more.
- Coffee with the Council
- Creative Conversations
- Regional Office Hours
- Maryland Arts Summit (visit [mdarts.org](http://mdarts.org))

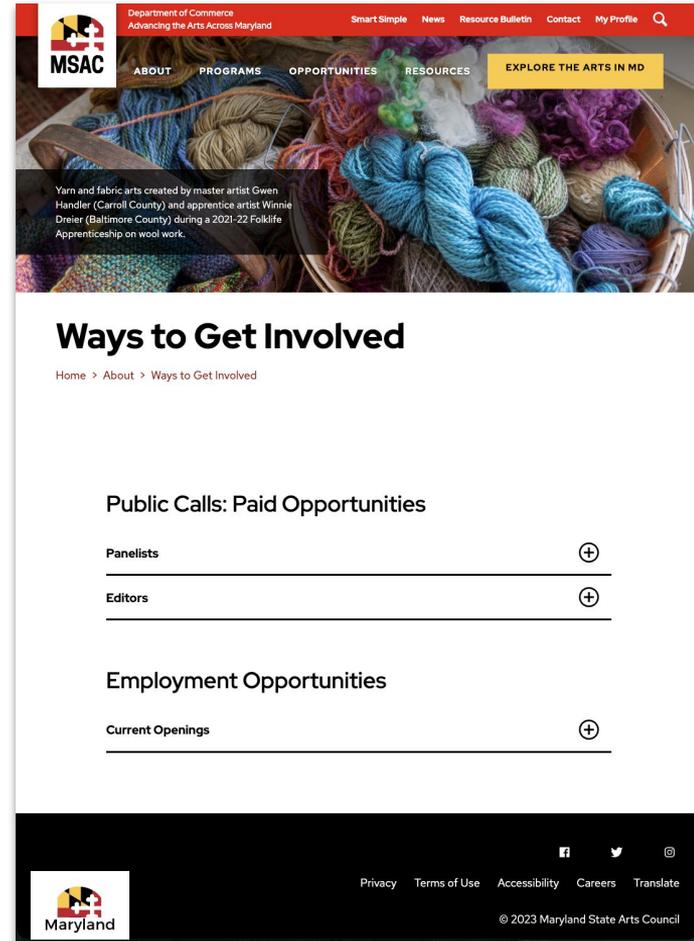


Propose a topic by emailing [msac.commerce@maryland.gov](mailto:msac.commerce@maryland.gov)  
Sign up for our mailing list at [tinyurl.com/MSACMailingList](https://tinyurl.com/MSACMailingList)

# Ways to Get Involved

MSAC relies on a diverse array of constituents from across the state to give input in a variety of ways.

- Panelists evaluate applications
- Editors give input on program policies
- Schedule of public calls and details at [msac.org/about/ways-get-involved](https://msac.org/about/ways-get-involved)
- Apply in SmartSimple
- Training and support
- Compensation provided for service



The screenshot shows the MSAC website's 'Ways to Get Involved' page. The header includes the MSAC logo, navigation links (ABOUT, PROGRAMS, OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCES), and a search icon. A yellow button says 'EXPLORE THE ARTS IN MD'. Below the header is a featured image of yarn and fabric arts with a caption: 'Yarn and fabric arts created by master artist Gwen Handler (Carroll County) and apprentice artist Winnie Dreier (Baltimore County) during a 2021-22 Folklife Apprenticeship on wool work.' The main heading is 'Ways to Get Involved' with a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > About > Ways to Get Involved'. The page lists 'Public Calls: Paid Opportunities' with expandable sections for 'Panelists' and 'Editors'. Below that is 'Employment Opportunities' with an expandable section for 'Current Openings'. The footer contains social media icons, a 'Maryland' logo, and links for 'Privacy', 'Terms of Use', 'Accessibility', 'Careers', and 'Translate'. The copyright notice is '© 2023 Maryland State Arts Council'.

# Today's Agenda

- Review of Creativity Program & Guidelines
- Creativity Grant Application - Project-Specific for Independent Artists
  - Helpful Hints for Applications
- Monthly review process
- Smart Simple grant platform
- Q&A



*Graphic: post from MSAC Instagram*

# Creativity Grant Overview

## Purpose of program:

- Supports activities/general operations for independent artists and organizations
  - Today we will focus specifically on what is available to independent artists
- Strengthens the vitality and sustainability of artists and small organizations to maintain a strong and stable arts infrastructure in the State of Maryland
- Serves the growing needs of relevant arts projects and collaborations within Maryland communities

# Creativity Grant Overview

- Funding available up to \$4,000
- Available to Independent Artists & Organizations
- Two “Tracks” - Project-Support OR General Operating (orgs only)
- Brief application (3 questions!)
- Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed monthly
- Eligible to receive one Creativity Grant per fiscal year

# Creativity Grant - Who Can Apply?

- Independent Artists
  - Without affiliation to an organization
  - Must be a Maryland resident, 18+ years of age
  - Cannot be enrolled in high school, undergrad or grad degree programs
  - Proposed project/activities must take place in Maryland
  - Only one app per project will be considered

# Creativity Grant - What can it support?

- Can support expenses directly related to the proposed arts activity including (but not limited to):
  - Artist fees/stipends
  - Consultant fees
  - Marketing/Promotions
  - Artistic materials & supplies
  - Space/venue
  - Equipment (connected to activities/non-capital)

# Creativity Grant - What can't it support?

- Re-granting, scholarships
- Capital improvements & permanent equipment
- Activities that aren't open to the public
- Activities that are primarily therapeutic
- Travel outside of MD
- Day-to-day expenses associated with the running of a for-profit business, including but not limited to LLC,C-Corp,S-Corp,etc.
- As with any MSAC grant, the funds cannot be used for political contributions, lobbying activities
- Not sure? Ask!

# Creativity Grant - Application

- Choose your track:
  - **Project-support (Artists, Orgs)**
  - General Operating (Orgs only)
- 3 Narrative Questions
  - Generally the same questions for both tracks
  - Independent artists will need to focus on one specific project/program/event proposal
- Organizations must also upload a financial statement (not needed for independent artists)

# Creativity Grant - Application (Project-Specific)

1. Describe your proposed arts activity/event/project and the geographic area the project will serve. Within your response, include a detailed description of the proposed project, including planned community engagement and intended impact of the arts activity.

*An Excellent to Outstanding response includes a clear, specific, and thorough explanation of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes clear and thorough evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs*

# Creativity Grant - Application (Project-Specific)

## Helpful Hints!

Describe the activity with specific details of WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, and WHY within your first narrative

Approach your narrative as if the reader has no idea what you're proposing! Give them the full picture of what you're hoping to do.

A useful exercise is having a trusted friend/family member/colleague/etc who knows nothing about your proposal read your draft application and have them "poke holes" in it - fill in the blanks where they were unclear before submitting

## Creativity Grant - Application (Project-Specific)

2. Describe the timeline of your proposed arts activity. Within your response, include a detailed schedule of the project, including specific timing as it relates to steps of planning, promotional efforts, expenditure of funds, implementation and execution of events/activities, and evaluation

*An Excellent to Outstanding response includes clear, specific, and realistic timeline demonstrating a realistic schedule, including specific timing as it relates to expenditure of funds, planning, promotional efforts, implementation of events/activities, and evaluation*

# Creativity Grant - Application (Project-Specific)

## Helpful Hints!

Include a full timeline/schedule of the entirety of the project from beginning to end

Consider a weekly or monthly listing (or other time increment) with specific dates/timeframes that share all steps of the process. Include all steps of planning, implementation, execution, and evaluation of the project

## Creativity Grant - Application (Project-Specific)

3. Describe the overall budget for the proposed project. Within your response, include a clear listing of all projected expenses for the project, sources of income beyond the MSAC request, and how MSAC funding would be used.

*An Excellent to Outstanding response includes clear, detailed, and realistic financial plan for income and expenses tied to the proposed project*

# Creativity Grant - Application (Project-Specific)

## Helpful Hints!

Include a clear list that shows specific line items for all planned income and expenses - and a description to how you got to the total.

*(ie - Artist Fee = \$500: Hourly rate of \$25/hr for 20 hours)*

The response must be within the context of the narrative; attachments of other budgets/financials will not be considered for Project-specific applications

# Creativity Grant - Application

- Attachments include w-9, Electronic Signature
- Financial Statement (orgs only)

The full application & scoring rubric can be found on [msac.org](http://msac.org)

## *Creativity Grant Application Scoring Rubric - Project Support*

**Describe your proposed arts activity/event/project and the geographic area the project will serve. Within your response, include a detailed description of the proposed project, including planned community engagement and intended impact of the arts activity.**

Includes a clear, specific, and thorough explanation of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes clear and thorough evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs	Includes a clear explanation of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes clear evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs	Includes an overview of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes some evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs	Includes an unclear explanation of the artist's proposed arts activity/event/project, which includes minimal evidence of intended community impact; including engagement, intention, timeliness, and/or inspiration in relation to the defined community's needs	
<b>Excellent to Outstanding</b>	<b>Good to Very Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Marginal to Fair</b>	<b>No Evidence</b>
<b>34-36 Points</b>	<b>25-27 Points</b>	<b>16-18 Points</b>	<b>7-9 Points</b>	<b>0 Points</b>

# Creativity Grant - Grant Amount

- Available up to \$4,000
- One grant per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30)
- Creativity Grants are an “all or none” grant
  - If awarded, you will receive the requested amount
  - We do not offer a percentage or portion of requested amount

# Monthly Application Review Process - NEW!

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, reviewed and awarded monthly.

Creativity Grant applications submitted by the last day of the month will be reviewed by the panel in the following month, with notifications to follow early the following month

*For example: Applications received in August (8/1-8/31) will be reviewed in September; notifications will be sent by early October.*

# Monthly Application Review Process - NEW!

All applications are reviewed by the panelists

(Previously applications requesting \$2000 or less were reviewed by staff)

- Creativity Grant program has a total of 15 panelists for the year.
- Due to the number of applications of recent, we are activating two groups of 5 panelists to split the monthly applications.

# Notifications

If you're awarded - congratulations!

- You're only eligible for one Creativity Grant per fiscal year
  - Once awarded an FY24 Creativity Grant, you are not eligible to apply again until the FY25 cycle opens
- You must sign and return your Grant Agreement Form via Smart Simple
- Payment takes approximately 6-8 weeks from the date of receipt of a fully execute Grant Agreement Form

# Notifications

## Final Reports

- Applications submitted between June 2023 and December 2023 will have a Final Report deadline of August 15, 2024. Applications submitted between January 2024 and April 2024 will have a Final Report deadline of December 31, 2024
- Grantee agrees to spend or obligate all funds by their assigned Final Report date. This means that the funds are expended, encumbered, or otherwise legally committed to be used, such that returning the unspent funds would cause the grantee legal harm.

# Notifications

If you're not awarded - try again!

- This is a very popular and competitive program - don't give up!
- Program Directors can gather feedback from the panelists who reviewed your application, and send their feedback and recommendations, which are connected to the review criteria
  - To request this, complete the link sent in your Decline notification email

# Creativity Grant - FAQs

**My project is still in the early planning stage. Can I still apply?**

Possibly! We recommend reviewing the application and rubric carefully. Much of the scoring is based on specific details and thorough descriptions. If details are still in the early stages, you may consider waiting until there's a more concrete vision or plan. Connect with a Program Director to discuss further.

**I'm looking for funding to support living expenses and I don't have a specific project in mind. Can I apply for a Creativity Grant?** No. A Creativity Grant is intended for project-specific support. An application must contain details associated with a specific project to be eligible. Artists looking for support for day-to-day expenses should consider the Grants for Artists program instead.

# Creativity Grant - FAQs

**My project has received previous Creativity funding. Can I apply again in a new fiscal year?**

It depends - a project can only be funded once. However, if there are different “phases” or iterations of the project, future funding may be possible if the grant would clearly support different expenses. Talk with your Program Director to verify eligibility.

**I’m eligible and applying to the the Professional Development Grant, can I also apply for Creativity in the same month?**

Yes! You can apply and receive multiple grants in the same fiscal year – and the same month. Each grant program has different goals and purposes to support different needs.

# Creativity Grant - FAQs

**My project is already complete. Can I submit for reimbursement of expenses?**

No - we cannot reimburse for previously completed projects. You must submit an application before the completion of a project to be considered eligible.

**I would like the grant to cover expenses associated with bringing a non-Maryland artist to Maryland. Is this allowed?**

Possibly. If the grant funding would support a non-MD artist, it is recommended that you share a clear description as to why this particular artist would bring significant value to your project and to Maryland audiences. Check in with PDs if you have any questions about eligibility.

# Creativity Grant - FAQs

## **How can I share work samples/letters of support/reviews/etc.?**

External documents are not considered as part of the review of the Creativity Grant application. Panelists will only review the three narrative questions per the scoring criteria. Do not include important information in links or other documents, as they will not be considered.

## Helpful Hint - Apply early!

While you are eligible to apply any time for the Creativity Grant, we encourage you to apply early, whenever possible.

Payment is processed outside of the MSAC offices. If awarded, payment will take approximately 6-8 weeks to be received. Take this into consideration when determining when to apply.

## Helpful Hint - Application Draft Feedback

Before submitting your application, Emily/Laura are available to review and/or meet about your application and offer feedback on your draft.

Email your Program Director to request feedback on your draft. Allow for at least 15 business days to receive written feedback. At certain times throughout the year, it could take longer. Please do not expect immediate feedback responses.

# Smart Simple

All applications must be submitted through Smart Simple  
([marylandarts.smartsimple.com](http://marylandarts.smartsimple.com))

As an applicant, you will need to register with Smart Simple to apply.

## Login

✉ Email

🔒 Password

Login

[Forgot Password?](#)

New to the System?

Register

## Welcome to Maryland State Arts Council Portal

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) encourages and invests in the advancement of the arts for all Marylanders. Its grants and programs support artists and arts organizations in their pursuit of artistic excellence, ensure the accessibility of the arts to all citizens and promote statewide awareness of arts resources and opportunities.

Google Chrome is the recommended browser for completing applications in SmartSimple.

Go to [marylandarts.smartsimple.com](http://marylandarts.smartsimple.com) to register and/or log-in

## My Applications

12

Funding Opportunities

0

In Progress

0

Submitted

6

Approved/Declined



Click on “Funding Opportunities” on your Smart Simple dashboard

## Opportunity Details

Arts in Education Grant

Apply Now

Arts in Education Teaching Artist Roster Application

Apply Now

Creativity Grant

Apply Now

Emergency Grant

Apply Now

Presenting and Touring Roster Application

Apply Now

Professional Development Opportunity Grant

Apply Now

Public Call

Apply Now



Click the **“Apply Now”** button to open the application



1. Click "Save Draft" at the bottom of this screen to begin the application. Please note, you will not be able to begin work on the application until you click "Save Draft."
2. Click "Save Draft" after completing each tab in order to save your work.
3. To navigate between tabs, click on the desired tab or use your browser's back button.
4. Click on the MSAC logo in the top left corner to go back to your profile. Be sure to click "Save Draft" at the bottom of the application prior to returning to your profile page.

*Please note: To return to a saved draft application, click "In Progress" from the Grantee Home dashboard. From there, select the draft application to be edited and/or submitted. Do not return to the Funding Opportunities area to search for the grant application again, as this will result in creating multiple applications.*



Starting September 1, 2022, the Unique Entity ID (UEI) field will be a REQUIRED field for all organizations (including nonprofit organizations, government entities, and schools/universities) applying for funding from MSAC. This will take the place of a DUNS number, which will no longer appear on organizational profiles. After 9/1, an organization without a UEI may be considered ineligible for funding. Independent Artists do not need to obtain a UEI.

Webinar Video (~57 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLCuPo2cQ4U>

Quick Start Guide: <https://msac.org/media/570/download?inline>

CONTACT INFORMATION

PROGRAM DETAILS

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ATTACHMENTS

ELECT

SIGNATURES

Grant Contact Name:

NEXT >

Save Draft

✓ Submit

You have to click **"Save Draft"** to begin any application!

# Questions

**We are here to help!**

**Emily: [emily.sollenberger@maryland.gov](mailto:emily.sollenberger@maryland.gov)**

**Laura: [laura.weiss@maryland.gov](mailto:laura.weiss@maryland.gov)**

# Thank You!



To learn about similar topics, news & to keep in touch, please join our mailing list at [tinyurl.com/MSACsMailingList](https://tinyurl.com/MSACsMailingList)