

2025 Operating Support Guidelines

Operating Support Grants support the operations of cultural nonprofit organizations, increasing the variety of cultural experiences available to residents and visitors in Central Florida. This comprehensive grant program recognizes the high value of arts and culture for our region and the established institutions that provide cultural programming for the public year-round.

WHAT'S NEW?

- The minimum award amount is set at \$10,000 for successful applicants.
- The maximum award amount is set at \$250k for successful applicants. Organizations funded at \$250k will only need to apply once every 3 years. Must complete all interim and end of year reporting requirements during the 3-year period and maintain 501(c)3 status.
- Organizations can only apply for Diversity in the Arts or General Operating Support

IMPORTANT DATES

- Application open: Tuesday, July 23, 2024
- Application deadline: Friday, September 6, 2024, at 11:59 pm
 - Staff question deadline Friday, August 30, 2024, at 1 pm
 - Staff courtesy review of proposal - request deadline Friday, August 23, at 5 pm
- Staff eligibility reviews of all applications: September 6 – September 14
- Panel Meetings: October 2024
- Executive Committee Approval: November 2024
- Board Approval and notification of award: December 2024
- Funding period: January-December 2025
- Final Report: February 2026

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

Organization Eligibility

- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) status for a minimum of three years as of the grant deadline, in good standing with [the State of FL Division of Corporations](#) & [the IRS](#). United Arts will verify the organization's current 501(c)(3) status.
- Unique Entity ID (formerly DUNS#)
 - UEI's have replaced the DUNS# identification system (read more about the transition [here](#)) and are assigned through SAM.GOV.
 - If your organization has a DUNS# / Sam.gov account (either active or in-active) a Unique Entity ID has already been assigned and can be found in your Sam.gov account. [Click here](#) for assistance in viewing your UEI.
 - If your organization is not registered in Sam.gov and you only want a Unique Entity ID (all that is required for United Arts Grants) [follow the steps in this guide](#).
- Completed three years of operations, providing year-round cultural programming (defined as at least four (4) productions, presentations, or instruction of performing, visual, literary, or media (digital and tech) arts, the sciences, or history and heritage per year). Programming must be open to the public. A four-show run of a single production does not satisfy this requirement
- Principal office located in Lake, Orange, Osceola, or Seminole county

- Arts and Culture, History, or Science as the primary mission
- Have received and successfully completed a Project Grant, Diversity in the Arts Grant or have received Arts and Culture Access funding from United Arts prior to applying for Operating Support
- Local governing board (may include members who reside outside Central Florida) that meets at least quarterly, operates in accordance with its bylaws, and reviews and approves the organization's financial statements
- All applicant organizations must have a checking account with a licensed financial institution
- Provide equal access and opportunity in employment and services and may not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, geography, age, varying abilities, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, familial status, citizenship status, or socioeconomic status.

Organizations that do not meet all criteria (or do not provide year-round programming) may be eligible for other United Arts programs. <https://unitedartscfl.org/grants/>

Organizations are NOT eligible if they are:

- A public or private entity governed by a county, municipality, school district, community college, college, university, or an agency of state government
- Media companies (TV/print)
 - Nonprofit, Public radio stations are eligible.
- Faith-based organizations – **eligible for project grants**
- Fraternal or sports organizations
- Political causes, candidates, organizations, or campaigns
- Hospitals, health, and disease-specific organizations – **eligible for project grants**
- Organizations that are a local arm of a state or national organization
- Organizations that are adjuncts to for-profit organizations
 - “Friends of organizations are eligible to apply only in lieu of the parent nonprofit organization
- Organizations that are primarily touring production presenters with budgets over \$5 million.

In all cases, final eligibility decisions are made by United Arts staff. Each organization is limited to one Operating Support application per deadline. Approval of one year of funding carries with it no assurance of continued funding in subsequent years. Applicants must be in good standing with any prior grant reporting, if applicable.

Operations and Programming Eligibility

The proposed operations/programming must be cultural (arts, sciences, or humanities), occur in Lake, Orange, Osceola, or Seminole counties, and open to the public. Examples include performances, exhibitions, festivals, arts education, and the commissioning of new works. This grant funds both operating expenses (which could include overhead such as salaries, rent, technology, etc.) *and* programmatic expenses that support the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Grant dollars *cannot* be used for any of the following activities:

- Capital expenditures (including acquisitions or equipment), or any building, renovation, or remodeling of facilities
- Deficit reduction, bad debts, contingencies, fines and penalties, interest payments, litigation costs, or any other comparable financial costs
- Contributions to cash reserves and/or endowment funds
- Lobbying or attempting to influence federal, state, or local legislation
- Awards, prizes, or scholarships for use outside the applicant's programming
- Regranting, contributions, or donations

KEY DOCUMENTS – UPLOAD AS PART OF THE APPLICATION

- [Financial Form A](#)
- [Statistics Form C](#)
- Full Year Financial Statements (see [financial documentation chart](#) for more information and definitions)

- For organizations with revenue up to \$299,999 – internally prepared financial statements will suffice (balance sheet and profit & loss statement)
- Organizations with revenue averaging \$300,000 to \$499,999 – must provide compiled financials.
- Organizations with revenue averaging \$500,000 to \$899,999 – must provide reviewed financials.
- Organizations with revenue averaging above \$900,000 – audited financials required, plus management letter and response, if any
- Work Samples
 - Work samples are critical to your application and are considered carefully during the panel review process. Samples should demonstrate the quality of artistic content and technical ability.
 - Work samples should be recent, concise, and as relevant to the project as possible. We recommend limiting your selection to three or four substantive work samples relevant to the project.
 - If you submit audio and video samples, please submit no more than 3 per application. Individual samples should not exceed 5 minutes. if submitted clips exceed 5 minutes, indicate which 5-minute portion reviews should view.
 - Each application has an attachment limit - if your work samples are too large, reach out to Elyse@UnitedArts.cc for an alternative.

EVALUATION AND DECISION PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria:

The application will be scored based on the following criteria:

	Artistic Excellence	Artistic Merit	Board Governance & Financial Mgmt.	Community Impact + Access
Operating Support (GOS)	X	X	X	X
Diversity in the Arts (DITA)	X	X	X	X
Community Project Grants	X	X	Adjusted to fit project-based funding	X
Individual Artist Grants	X	X	Board governance is not applicable	X

Evaluation Criteria Definitions

Artistic Excellence

- The recognized quality of the artists and other key individuals, creative process, works of art, organizations, arts education providers, artistic partners, and/or services involved in the project and their relevance to the audience or communities the project aims to serve.

Artistic Merit

- The value and appropriateness of the project to the organization’s mission, artistic field, artists, audience, community, and/or constituency.
- Evidence of the ability to carry out the project based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, clarity of the project activities, resources involved, and the qualifications of the project’s personnel, partnerships and collaborations.
- Clearly defined goals and/or proposed outcomes and an appropriate plan to determine if those goals and/or outcomes are met. This includes, where relevant, measures to assess student and/or teacher learning in arts education.
- Evidence of direct compensation to artists, art collectives, and/or art workers.
- As Applicable - Ability to strengthen the arts sector through knowledge-sharing and resources.
- Exhibited diverse and inclusive decision making. Commitment and actions furthering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion.

Financial Management & Board Governance

- Fiscal Responsibility – the appropriateness of the budget (the clear and realistic presentation of the proposed budget during the grant period); demonstrated evidence of strong and/ or developing financial support from the community.
- Adoption and commitment to best practices in board governance (term limits, separation of power, recruitment efforts, approving financial statements, adherence to bylaws).
 - Includes sound nonprofit and financial policies and procedures [Board approved budgets, quarterly – board approved financial statements]
- Organizational stability [3-6 months operating cash]
- Demonstrated evidence of strong or developing financial support from the community
 - Diverse revenue streams (earned, contributed, grants)
- Evidence of a quality of strategic plan for the organization

Community Impact + Access

- Engagement with individuals whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, race or ethnicity, economics, or disability.
 - Ensure the ability to fund across all geographic areas represented in the grant pool.
- [Social Impact - Including cross-sector partnerships & collaborations.](#)
- Economic Impact
- Potential of the project activities to advance local economic, physical, or social outcomes desired by the community.
- Evidence of a marketing and promotion plan for the organization and/or project to reach and cultivate new audiences.

DECISION PROCESS

- Staff Review/due diligence: Staff may contact applicants for more materials (only the most critical information); watch email closely in September. Add administrator@grantinterface.com to your safe sender list. When messages are sent via the UA Grant Portal, this is the email address they will come from.
- Panel Review: Applications are reviewed by panelists starting in mid- September.
- Panel Meetings (closed to the public/applicants): Each panel will discuss applications and their competitiveness to the evaluation criteria in a closed meeting; applicants will be notified of the date to stay near the phone in case of questions.
- Board Approval: Funding recommendations are approved by the United Arts Executive Committee and Board of Directors.
- Notification: The applicant’s CEO and Board Chair will receive their grant notification letters via email in December.

IF AWARDED

Grantee Requirements (During the Grant Period)

- ***Request Permission for Changes:*** Significant programming or budget changes must be requested in advance; changes may or may not affect the grant award amount. Grant funds that are unused by December 31 must be returned to United Arts.
- ***Notification:*** Grantees must keep elyse@unitedartscfl.org and beatriz@unitedartscfl.org on their email list, renew required insurance policies when they expire, and notify United Arts of any contact changes or changes in IRS tax-exempt status. United Arts will add grantees to its email list, including resources and opportunities.

- **Legal:** Grantees must comply with fair labor standards and a drug-free workplace; maintain a finance committee and independent audit committee of the board (per the Sarbanes-Oxley Act) and comply with PCI (see www.PCICompliance.org) and the US Patriot Act. Grantees must pay their obligations.
- **Insurance:** At the time of award acceptance, all grantees are required to provide a Certificate of Insurance, listing United Arts as the certificate holder, and proving current coverage for the funding period for the following types and limits of coverage from a licensed insurance carrier:
 - Commercial General Liability, \$500,000. United Arts must be additional insured (usually listed in the notes field).
 - Workers' Compensation as required by State of Florida Law
 - Grantees must submit a new copy of the insurance certificate whenever one of the policies expires.
- **Electronic payment:** Grantees must sign up for payment via ACH (electronic deposit), whereby funds will be directly deposited into the grantee's business account. This provides prompt delivery of grant funds by alleviating mail time and bank holds.
- **Inclusion:** Grantees must provide equal access and opportunity in employment and services and may not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, geography, age, varying abilities, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, familial status, citizenship status, or socioeconomic status. The make-up of the staff, board, audience, volunteers, artists, scientists, historians, and other decision-makers involved with grantee organizations should be inclusive of the diversity of the community and compatible with the organization's mission.
- **Acknowledgment:** Grantees must acknowledge the grant in all publicity and materials (whether printed, online, verbal, or other), with the United Arts logo and the statement "(Name of Grantee Organization) is funded in part by United Arts of Central Florida, your local agency for the arts." United Arts may publicize the grant using quotes and photos from applications and reports. Organizations based in or providing the majority of programming in the City of Orlando and/or Orange County will also be required to include those logos.
- **AEP Survey:** Grantees must participate in the Americans for the Arts' "Arts and Economic Prosperity" Impact Survey (which occurs every five years) to maintain eligibility for grants.
- **Recordkeeping:** Grantees must keep information (including description and photos of the funded programming, press or publicity about the programming, including use of logos or acknowledgment statement, and financial records) for the final report. Also, keep records about the grant activities and financials for at least five years after the grant period is completed; such records must be available for audit by United Arts representatives.

UNITED ARTS STAFF CONTACT

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Applicant-facing tutorials on how to use and navigate the United Arts Grant Portal can be found [here](#).

