

## **Arts Access Guidelines FY2026**

Updated as of February 16, 2026.

DDOA awards small project-based grants to support the presentation and cultivation of performing, visual, literary, media, or folk arts in communities throughout the state. The Arts Access Grant provides program support to organizations that offer occasional arts programs and to organizations that do not meet the eligibility criteria for the Delaware Division of the Arts' (DDOA) General Operating Support and Project Support categories.

### **Arts Access Program Goals**

Arts Access funding is available for arts projects that accomplish one or more of the following:

- Provide experiences of artistic merit and integrity for the public
- Involve collaborations between artists or arts organizations and community and civic groups, government entities, or social service agencies
- Reach audiences and participants with limited access to the arts or to a particular art form
- Provide lifelong learning opportunities in the arts beyond the school setting
- Offer opportunities for the creation of new works of art
- Support arts programs in new or non-traditional venues
- Provide opportunities for artistic expression of a community's unique history, culture, or circumstances
- Provide opportunities for conservation, documentation, and appreciation of the artistic traditions of diverse cultures and communities

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible to apply for an Arts Access Grant, applicants must:

- Be an established unit of municipal, county, or state government within Delaware, OR be based and chartered in Delaware as a nonprofit organization; exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) or 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code; and eligible to receive donations allowable as charitable contributions under Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Applicants may include arts organizations, community-based non-arts organizations, schools, libraries, parks, etc.
- Be managing an arts program that involves the presentation of work by an artist or by artists.

Please note the following restrictions:

- Organizations that receive General Operating, StartUp, or Project Support from DDOA of the Arts are generally not eligible to apply.
- Schools are eligible to apply only if the proposed project takes place after school hours and is open to and promoted to the community at large.
- DDOA will not accept applications through fiscal agents.
- No individual may compile or submit an application on behalf of an organization if that individual is a member or relative of a member of the Delaware State Arts Council or Division staff

# ARTS ACCESS GRANT Guidelines

## Grant Awards and Match

For projects totaling *up to \$5,000* in eligible expenses:

- Applicants may request up to 80 percent of eligible costs, or \$2,500, whichever is less.

For projects totaling *more than \$5,000* in eligible expenses:

- Applicants may request up to 50 percent of eligible costs, or \$4,000, whichever is less.

Matching funds must be cash and may not come from the National Endowment for the Arts. Awards may be less than the requested amount, and some projects may not receive support. Proposals may be funded at less than the requested amount, or not at all. Prior funding does not guarantee future support.

Generally, organizations may receive a maximum of two Arts Access Grants each fiscal year (July 1-June 30). A series of events held over six months or less may be combined on one application. Two or more distinct types of programming, such as a festival or conference, and year-round activities, may merit two applications. Contact DDOA if you have questions about splitting your activities between applications.

## Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

### Expenses Eligible for Arts Access Support

Only the expenses listed below which are **directly related to the proposed arts project** are eligible for Arts Access Support:

- Artists' fees
- Marketing or publicity
- Contractual services (payments to outside entities/personnel for administrative costs related to the event or activity)
- Supplies and materials
- Facility rental/costs (only for venues not owned/leased by organization)
- Technical costs
- Travel and other operational expenses necessary to deliver this arts program

### Expenses Not Eligible for Arts Access Support

- General operations
  - Indirect costs – any portion of ongoing expenses related to daily operations
  - Administrative costs not directly related to the artistic portion of an event or activity
  - Facility costs not directly related to the artistic portion of an event or activity
  - Personnel already employed by applicant organization
  - Rent for facilities already owned/leased by organization
- Activities for which academic credit is given
- Activities outside Delaware
- Activities with fundraising as a primary purpose
- Awards, cash prizes or donations
- Bad debt
- Building, renovating, or remodeling of facilities
- Capital expenditures and non-consumables valued over \$3,000
- Traditional circus and athletic activities
- Contingency funds
- Expenses incurred outside the grant period
- Investments of any type
- Meals/refreshments
- Entertainment for private parties
- Entertainment not for artistic purposes
- Projects restricted to exclusive participation or enjoyment
- Projects which have sectarian or religious purposes
- Scholarships or research by individuals
- Lobbying
- Products and/or services not directly related to the artistic portion of an event or activity

# ARTS ACCESS GRANT Guidelines

## Evaluation Criteria for Arts Access Grants

Applications for Arts Access Grants are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Artistic Quality (the quality of the artistic product, process, or service and relevance to one or more of the Arts Access program goals)
- Availability of the Arts (the project provides increased access to diverse and quality arts programs, particularly in underserved communities)
- Management (the organization demonstrates the capacity to carry out, market, and evaluate the project, with qualified personnel, an effective marketing plan, and a fiscally responsible budget)

## Application Deadline

Arts Access Grant applications are accepted on an ongoing basis, but must be received at least six (6) weeks prior to the start of the project. Applications are reviewed in the order they are received, beginning in July of each year. When the funds allocated to this program are depleted, the application will be closed for the remainder of the fiscal year (ending June 30). Early applications (starting in July) are recommended, whenever possible. **Note: First-time applicants** for Arts Access should contact DDOA prior to beginning the application process in order to verify their eligibility and review the application process with staff. A copy of your **State of Delaware Certificate of Incorporation** and **IRS Nonprofit Determination Letter** must be submitted with your first application.

## smARTDE

If your organization has never applied to DDOA before, please read [these instructions](#). Once logged in, if you need help with the system, please read [these instructions](#) first.

## The Application

The Arts Access Grant application is available in [smARTDE](#) and includes:

- An organizational profile
- Narrative questions describing the project and how it meets the evaluation criteria
- A project budget
- Information about the artist(s)' background and experience
- A letter of intent or contract with the artist(s) (if applicable)
- Letters of support from partners (if applicable)

## Grant Review Process

Division staff members, in conjunction with DDOA Director, review Arts Access Grant applications using the evaluation criteria described above. The Director makes final grant decisions. For details on the grant review process and appeals procedure, read Delaware Division of the Arts [Grant Review Process](#).

## Notification of Grant Awards

Applicants will be notified of the funding decision within four (4) weeks of application submission. Awardees will receive full payment following notification of their award.

# ARTS ACCESS GRANT Guidelines

## Grant Payment Procedures

Grantees will be notified of awards via email, and payments will be issued according to the payment schedule issued with the award notice. Grantees may opt to receive payments electronically through ACH (recommended) by updating their information on Delaware's [eSupplier Portal](#). Payments via ACH and paper check are always **free**. However, ACH is much faster and more reliable than mailing a check. DDOA **strongly encourages grantees to use electronic/ACH deposit. Mailed checks are unreliable methods of payment and require additional processing time for Division staff.**

## Final Report

A final report will be available in [smARTDE](#) and is due within 30 days following the end date of the project. Failure to submit this form may preclude future Division of the Arts funding.

## Statement of Assurances

The Statement of Assurances is the contract that all Division grantees must sign. Grant applicants must indicate that their organization's authorizing official has read and agreed to the obligations of grant recipients should a grant be awarded. Receipt of state and federal grants carries with it certain obligations and responsibilities. By submitting a Division of the Arts grant application, applicants are affirming that they are familiar with the requirements of DDOA and the National Endowment for the Arts, as presented in DDOA of the Arts [Statement of Assurances](#), including but not limited to:

- Crediting DDOA appropriately on all materials
- Keeping public events current on DelawareScene.com
- Notifying DDOA of any significant changes to the programs, budget, or staff/board
- Providing complimentary tickets for use by on-site evaluators
- Compliance with Accessibility Requirements
- Submitting required Final Report