



## GRANTS TO ORGANIZATIONS

Guidelines and Applications for  
Operating Grants  
Project Grants  
Emergency Grants

See website for Deadlines

## GRANTS GUIDELINES

### SWAC Grant Program Information

The mission of the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council (SWAC) is to enhance the quality of life in our community by fostering arts awareness and education and by promoting a rich diversity of artistic experiences for all ages, all of which will be accomplished through leadership, support and funding of the arts.

To provide for the funding part of that mission SWAC has three arts grants programs available to any incorporated, non-profit 501(c)3 organization in Wicomico County.

Individuals may apply for SWAC grants if they seek and receive the support of a non-profit organization that will accept the financial and legal responsibility for the project. The grant will be made to the organization which can then, in turn, support the individual's project.

These grants are made available through SWAC and originate from the Community Arts Development program of the Maryland State Arts Council.

What follows is detailed information to help you prepare an application. If you are new at grant writing, or if you have questions, please don't hesitate to call 410-543-2787. SWAC will help you through the grant application process.

- **The Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council only awards grants to legally incorporated 501(c)3 non-profit organizations.**
- **All awards require a financial match since SWAC cannot be the sole fundor on any program.**
- **Any organization applying for or receiving operating grant funds from SWAC is not eligible to apply for project grant funds in the same funding cycle.**

The three grant programs SWAC offers are as follows:

- Operating Grants
- Project Grants
- Emergency Grants

## GRANT CATEGORY SPECIFICS

### Operating Grants:

- For ongoing support of Wicomico's larger, more active arts organizations that produce programs year-round. Awards can range between \$1,500-\$2,500 annually.
- Operating grants have to be matched on a 2:1 cash basis (SWAC can fund no more than a third of the total cost).
- Operating grants will be awarded in a two (2) year funding cycle. This means your application is made for 2 years of funding support for events taking place between July 1- June 30. If awarded, your organization will receive a check for the first year of funding (July 1- June 30). Then, you must file an interim report by June 30 to receive a second check for the next fiscal year, provided that the level and scope of the organization's activities remain the same.
- SWAC reserves the right to award an Operating grant on a one (1) year cycle to an applicant organization in the midst of organizational transition.
  - *To be eligible for an Operating grant agencies must:*
    - (a) have previously received a grant (in any category) from SWAC, AND
    - (b) operate year-round programs in Wicomico County, AND
    - (c) have an annual operating budget in excess of \$20,000.

Deadline: see website for this year's deadlines

### Project Grants:

- For Wicomico County performances, exhibits, activities and services in all the arts fields and disciplines. Awards can range between \$500-\$1,250 each.
- Project grants have to be matched on a 1:1 cash basis (SWAC can fund no more than one half of the total cost).

Deadlines: **usually mid to late June @ close of business (see website for date)**  
for projects taking place between July 1-June 30.  
**usually mid/late October @ close of business (see website for date)**  
for projects taking place between January 1- June 30.

### Emergency Grants:

- For emergency financial needs to cover unforeseen circumstances.
- Emergency grants have to be matched on a 1:1 cash basis (SWAC can fund no more than half of the total cost).

Deadlines • Emergency grants seek to meet emergency needs. Therefore there are no deadlines. Applications may be made at any time.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ALL SWAC GRANTS:**

- The proposed activity must be organized and presented by an incorporated non-profit 501(c)3 organization.
- All applicants **must** have on file with SWAC copies of their tax-exemption letter from the I.R.S.
- If the applicant is affiliated with a government agency, a letter of support from the Chief Executive of the department or agency must accompany the proposal.
- All applicants who received grant funds in the previous year **must** have a final report on file before a new application can be approved.
- Events must occur within the specified grant dates.
- An organization may apply for funds to support the work of an individual artist: otherwise, no direct funding is available for individual artists.
- All funded agencies must sign a grant contract verifying compliance with non-discriminatory hiring and attendance practices and assurances of accessibility of all programs to all persons.

## **ITEMS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR SWAC GRANT FUNDING**

- Capital construction, purchase of real property and/or equipment purchases.
- Direct support to individual artists (an individual's work may receive grant support **if** it is presented by a non-profit agency).
- Social functions, parties and receptions as the singular focus of a grant (such functions can be included as a minor part of a grant application).
- Activities that benefit only the members of an organization or those activities closed to all but an organization's membership.
- Tuition assistance.
- Out-of-state travel.
- City, County, or State affiliated projects that cannot demonstrate an ability to obtain partial funds from their own institution or government agency.
- Fund raising events or activities as the singular focus of a grant (such functions can be included as a part of a grant application, indeed are encouraged).
- Debt retirement or reduction.
- Arts activities which are therapeutic in nature, unless they have a public component.
- Arts activities which promote only one political or religious outlook, or which proselytize for specific political or religious beliefs and/or actions.

## REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council grants evaluation committee, made up of community members, artists and audiences, makes recommendations to SWAC's Board of Directors who make the final funding decision. SWAC's Board has the authority to raise, lower or otherwise change any evaluation committee recommendation. In practice, it very rarely does so.

The evaluation panel reviews the applications and final report statistics compiled by SWAC staff. Other than maintaining records and managing the process, SWAC staff has no input into funding decisions.

The grants evaluation committee attends local arts events. The impressions formed of events (artistically and managerially) are taken into consideration when grants evaluations take place. SWAC does recognize when potential conflict of interest issues might arise and requires each member of the grants evaluation committee to disclose in writing their involvement in local organizations by filling out and signing a Conflict of Interest form. Any evaluator who serves on an arts board or is a participant in an event being considered for funding is excused from that particular discussion and leaves the room until a funding decision is made in their absence.

## REVIEW PROCESS

For project grant applications and year one of operating grant applications, funding will be determined through the following process:

- A.) Panelists receive a copy of each application to read and review on their own.
- B.) The committee meets to discuss each application and make a funding recommendation to SWAC's Board of Directors based on the following criteria:
  - Program artistic quality
  - Community impact
  - Determination of financial need
  - Managerial soundness
  - In the project grant category, new applicants will be given priority.

For year two of operating grants, continued funding approval will be based on:

1. Consistent level and scope of organization's activities
2. Any changes to SWAC budget impacting funding ability

For emergency grant applications, funding will be based on:

1. the emergency or unexpected reason why funds are needed
2. the availability of funds (*dependent on the amount of money left in SWAC's grants budget*)
3. other funding options available to the applicant
4. all above stated funding criteria

## GRANT RECIPIENT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Grantees will add SWAC to their mailing lists and to their newsletter lists.
2. Grantee will hold the event/program within the time frame and in the manner outlined in its grant application. SWAC must approve any major changes in advance and in writing.
3. In promotional materials, advertising and programs, use of the attached logos is required to acknowledge that this event, *"was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council, awarded by the Maryland State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts."* **Do NOT state that it was "sponsored" by SWAC, MSAC, or NEA.**
4. The grant award is stipulated as requiring a cash match. (Operating grants require a two-to-one [2:1] cash match: Project grants and Emergency grants require a one-to-one [1:1] cash match.) **Failure to make this cash match will jeopardize future grants.**
5. Accurate and complete financial figures are required so that they may, in turn, be submitted to the Maryland State Arts Council.
  - (a). For Project grants and Emergency grants, a final report form must be filed within 30 days of the completion of the funded event/program, or, **not later than June 30.**
  - (b). For Operating grants, an interim report must be filed at the end of the first full year of funding (June 30). A final report must be filed by June 30 of the second year.
6. Grantees must have on file an Accessibility Questionnaire for all facilities in which funded performances, exhibits, rehearsals, classes, management and board meetings are held. These forms will need to be in SWAC's files PRIOR to the release of grant funds.
7. Grantees will need to sign assurances of compliance with federal law certifying that the program for which support is sought will be open to all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

## GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Get Forms -- Pick up this year's grant application forms, available approximately six weeks before the deadline date to determine in which category to make your application. Emergency grant applications are available any time.
2. Any Questions? -- If you have any questions about the application or process call or email at 410-543-2787 or arts4shore@yahoo.com.
3. Submit Final Application -- For Project and Operating grants submit the final proposal packet by close of business on the final grants application deadline day. The packet submitted must consist of:
  - one signed original proposal for the SWAC office;
  - plus 8 copies of the proposal for committee members;
  - plus 8 copies of any printed materials you'd like to attach for the committee to review.Emergency grants applicants need only the original application, no additional copies are necessary.
5. Grants Committee Assessment -- Your application is sent to the grants evaluation committee for its review along with all applications received. The committee will make recommendations on funding levels for each application. (See pg. 5 for full review process description).
6. Board Of Directors Approval -- The committee recommendations are then brought to the SWAC Board of Directors at the next monthly meeting for the Board's final approval.
7. Notification & Award Contract -- You will receive a notification letter and an Award Contract that will indicate your funding level (approx. one month after you submit your application. You may also have to complete an Accessibility Assurance Form when using a facility new to you.
8. Check Sent -- Upon the signed return of your Award Contract & Accessibility Assurance Forms a grant check will be processed (approx. two weeks after you return the Award Contract).
  - Operating grant award checks will be distributed on an annual basis.
9. Grievance Policy -- If an applicant believes a funding decision was based on misinterpreted information the applicant has the right to address the grants evaluation committee, outline the grievance and request reconsideration.
10. Final Report Filed -- Upon completion of your funded arts program a final report must be filed with SWAC. This final report for Project grants and Emergency grants must be filed no later than June 30 or future funding will be jeopardized. For Operating grants, an interim report must be filed at the end of the first full year of funding (June 30) and a final report must be filed no later than June 30 of the second year of funding.

## PREPARATION INFORMATION

In order to make fair and equitable comparisons between grant applications *it is required* that you use this format for your grant application. If you would like a copy of the application and guidelines in a Microsoft Word format, you can download the forms from [www.543arts.org](http://www.543arts.org), or email us at [arts4shore@yahoo.com](mailto:arts4shore@yahoo.com) or call 410-543-2787. Make no changes to the questions or application format. Each year we make adaptations to the grant forms. Please do not use old forms.

When responding to application questions, provide answers in 10pt type or larger and do not reduce copy to fit the page.

It is not necessary to attach any cover pages or go to the expense of bindings or wrappings.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Why does SWAC have a grants program?**

The arts world believes that arts decisions are best made locally. That is why the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a small Federal agency, allocates funds to each state arts council for the purpose of making grants within each state. The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) follows the same pattern (not all states do). MSAC allocates funds to each county arts council to make grants to local arts agencies. MSAC's program has been in place since the mid-1970's.

### **Why can only incorporated non-profit organizations receive grants?**

These grant funds originate from taxpayers. As a result, accountability of how, when and why these funds are used is very important. An organization that has a legally liable Board of Directors helps to ensure that funds are used for the requested purpose.

### **Does an organization have to be an arts organization to receive a grant?**

No. SWAC has funded health-care agencies and churches. The criteria are that the program has to be an arts program, that it must have a public component (where everyone can attend), and that it does not promote a singular religious or political point of view.

### **Do you fund programs that are ongoing or those that occur only once?**

SWAC recognizes the difficulty in the arts world to receive operating support and for continuing programs. That is why the Operating grant category was developed. As long as a program is a good one SWAC believes it deserves continuing support.

### **Can you make applications in more than one category?**

Any organization applying for or receiving Operating grant funds from SWAC is not eligible to apply for Project grant funds in the same funding cycle. Emergency grants can be applied for regardless of other SWAC funding.



**We apply each year. Why do we need to repeat information such as our history, which doesn't change year-to-year?**

Operating grant applications only need to be made once every two years. Applications are reviewed by a Grants Evaluation Committee and its personnel changes each year. Therefore, we need to supply each committee member with complete information each year.

**The budget form doesn't match the form we use. Why can't we just attach our existing budget?**

Everyone keeps their books differently. Evaluating 8-10 applications each with different budget formats would be confusing for the evaluators. Also, SWAC's budget format is a derivation of the one MSAC uses so that those who do, or perhaps intend to, apply to MSAC directly for funds will only need to redo their budget once.

**Can applications be made to both SWAC and MSAC?**

Yes. However, state money cannot be matched by state money. In other words, you can't put together a proposal in which MSAC and SWAC are the only sources of income (thereby matching each other). This is a state requirement.

**Why do these grants have to be matched?**

Neither SWAC nor MSAC want to be the sole fundor of a project or an organization. Remember the taxpayer source of these grant funds: this makes it important for evaluators to know that others in the community also value this program and are willing to support it financially, through ticket purchases, advertising, donation or memberships.

**Why aren't in-kind contributions allowed as part of our financial match?**

This is a Maryland State Arts Council regulation that SWAC must uphold.

**SWAC's grant amounts haven't gone up much in the past few years. How come?**

SWAC's funding from MSAC comes based on the *proportion* of the population that lives in Wicomico County as compared to the rest of the state. Although Wicomico's population has grown, its proportion in the state hasn't changed much in the past few years. Therefore, there has been no appreciable expansion in grant funds.

**For Emergency grants, what do you define as an "emergency" purpose?**

SWAC understands that emergencies arise and wanted to create a way to be able to help. An organization that faced unannounced rent increases for an exhibit that was to open in two weeks is the actual situation that led to SWAC's creation of the Emergency grants.

Perhaps an example would help. A theatrical production will need costumes for the actors. That is a given and purchasing costumes would not, all by itself be valid for an Emergency grant. However, if the costumes were damaged in an accident a week before the show opened and needed immediate replacement, this would be a valid Emergency grant application.

**Are grants evaluated on their own merits or are they competitive?**

When first reviewed, grants are evaluated on their own. The question that is asked is: "how much funding does this applicant merit?" regardless of how much funding is available. Then when applications have been considered, the amounts are totaled. At that point if the desired funding exceeds what is available (usually the case), then hard decisions have to be made. As cuts to the original figures are made it does become a comparison and a competitive process between applicants.

**Why does a project have to be completed within a specified time frame?**

June 30th is the end of the fiscal year for SWAC, MSAC and NEA. Because grants do become a competitive process it is important that events take place within the timeframe proposed. Why? If it doesn't there are three ramifications: (1) reports to MSAC and NEA become delayed or require difficult footnotes to explain why certain attendance and artistic questions cannot be answered; (2) failure to implement a project as it was proposed shows an inability to manage an activity, not an impression one wants to leave with fundors; (3) since grant making does become competitive each grantee received funds that would otherwise have gone to someone else. Failure to implement a program means two programs suffered, not just one.

**Why do you need final reports and why do you need them by June 30th?**

At the conclusion of a grant a final report is required. Remember the process by which these funds came to Wicomico County? Reverse it. All SWAC grantee final reports are collated by SWAC to send to MSAC in one report. MSAC, in turn, collates all the county reports it receives and sends them on to the National Endowment for the Arts. Delays in providing information to SWAC ripples upward through that process.

Please call the Arts Council at 410-543-ARTS(2787) if you have other questions not covered here. We want to help you make the best and most successful grant application possible.