



Application Guidelines

Application Deadline: Monday, March 9, 2020

Funding Period: July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

Community Organization Resource Grants (CORE), formally Operating Support Grants, may be awarded to arts, science or history agencies in Cumberland County whose programs are vital to the cultural life of the community and whose organizations have reached a size and maturity that assure their long term viability. The purpose of CORE Grants is to strengthen Cumberland County's major cultural (arts/science/history) institutions so they may deliver high quality cultural services to the citizens of Cumberland County. Another primary objective of the Arts Council is to strengthen and support the community by developing locally based artists and cultural professionals.

What We Fund

CORE Grant funds are intended to supplement the applicant organization's other sources of income, i.e. membership, patronage, private foundation grants, ticket sales, special event proceeds, etc.. CORE Grant funds must be matched by the organizations (See Page 3). Grant funds may support program, operating and administrative costs but will not fund the items detailed below.

Funding Restrictions for All CORE Grants

Grant funds may not be used for the following expenditures:

- Deficits
- Contingency funds
- Food or beverages for hospitality or entertainment functions
- Interest on loans, fines or litigation costs
- Lobbying expenses
- Tuition/scholarships for academic study
- Capital expenditures
- Endowments
- Programs that do not directly benefit citizens of Cumberland County

Sustained Funding

After an applicant organization has received a CORE Grant for three consecutive years, its minimum award will be protected by the following Sustained Funding provision if all of the following requirements are met:

- The applicant continues to satisfy ALL Arts Council eligibility requirements for the CORE Grant program.
- The applicant demonstrates a consistent level of excellence in programming and management (organizational and fiscal).
- Sufficient funding is available to the Arts Council.

If an applicant's Matching/Qualification Level (see definitions for Levels 1, 2 & 3 on page 3) increases or does not change, it will receive at least 90% of its previous year's Award, as long as funds are available.

If a Level 1 applicant fails to meet the minimum qualification requirements, the Sustained Funding provision will NOT protect its minimum award amount. The Grants Panel will use its own discretion to determine the award. In any case, no agency will receive a CORE Grant award if it fails to meet the Level 1 minimum qualification requirements for two consecutive years.

Who Is Eligible

Organizations meeting the eligibility requirements described below may contact the Arts Council for information on applying for a CORE Grant; however, eligibility does not guarantee either full or partial funding. Organizations that receive CORE funding are not eligible to receive Arts Council Project Support Grant awards during the same year. All the following requirements must be satisfied:

1. Private, nonprofit cultural arts organizations, in existence for a minimum of five years; classified by the IRS as a 501(c) (3).
2. Have a mission that focuses on the arts, history and/or science.
3. Maintain a primary location in Cumberland County, and provide ongoing cultural activities, programs and services that are generally accessible to the residents of the Cumberland County region.
4. Serve an educational function as well as an entertainment function and have programs, services and a budget that reflects this objective. An educational function may include, but is not limited to, such activities as workshops, classes or lectures.
5. Has an independent audit or financial statement (reviewed by an independent accountant) for the past two fiscal years.
6. Maintain a Board of Directors/Trustees whose commitment to the organizational well-being is demonstrated in the following ways considered important by the panel:
 - a) the composition of the board shows a commitment to represent our culturally diverse community
 - b) the board meets a minimum of four times each year
 - c) the approved by-laws designate a functional rotation policy with specified terms that limit the length of consecutive Board service at no more than nine years
 - d) a board, whose members support the organization with their individual resources including their financial commitment, volunteer time and sharing of skills / knowledge.
 - e) a board who employs best practices as well as adheres to the highest of professional standards
7. Employ at least ONE full-time (36+ hours/per week) professional staff member (with commensurate salary) responsible for the organization's daily operations and providing oversight for executive, program, educational, accounting, fundraising and technical functions.
8. Have a Board-approved Long Range Plan addressing institutional stability, fundraising, income development, arts education, audience development, and cultural diversity.
9. Have a Board-approved Conflict of Interest Policy.
10. Demonstrate the ability to generate significant earned income and other public/private support.
11. Provide programming in at least SIX different months of the year.

12. Have policies based upon accessibility to all citizens regardless of age, race, gender, national origin, disability, or religious belief.
13. Comply with all local, state and federal laws, as well as all funding requirements detailed in the Arts Council CORE Grant application package.
14. Ensure that the public is fully informed about the Arts Council's support of the funded organization as a CORE grantee as provided in the contract.
15. First-time applicant organizations must have previously received three Project Support Grants within the past six years, demonstrated the ability to deliver services to the community and have been in compliance with all Arts Council Project Support Grant requirements.

Who Is Not Eligible

Organizations are ineligible for Arts Council CORE Grants if they fit the following:

- Organizations that are considered educational institutions
- Presenting organizations. (Specifically those organizations who expend 70% or more of their total artistic/cultural professional fees on non-local resident artists or cultural professionals.)
- Public broadcasting media
- Churches or church-affiliated programs
- Festivals or other one-time annual, date-specific events
- Government institutions

For the above organizations - please see Project Support Grant guidelines for eligibility for Project Support grants.

- Individual artists - *Please see Regional Artist Project Grant guidelines.*
- Private foundations
- Organizations with annual financial statements reflecting negative results during the three most recent years that would cause the deliberations panel to have doubts about the going concern of the organization. (Note that the term *going concern* refers to the assumption that an organization has the resources to continue operating in the foreseeable future. Additions to or re-evaluations of fixed assets cannot be used to offset a cash flow or income deficiency).

Operating Support Matching Dollar/Qualification Levels

CORE Grant Applicants must use their previous year's audit to determine their maximum funding request and matching requirement amounts. The maximum amount of applicant's request is based on their prior year audited operating income less any in-kind contributions. Please see Arts Council staff to determine your maximum eligible amount.

There are THREE distinct levels of applicants within the CORE Grant program:

- **LEVEL ONE:**
 - Organizations with operating budgets \$75,000-\$349,999 – 2:1 match
 - The organization must employ at least ONE full-time professional staff member
 - Must have been in continuous operation for at least five years.
- **LEVEL TWO:**
 - Organizations with operating budgets \$350,000 - \$749,999 – 3:1 match
 - These organizations must employ at least ONE full-time + ONE full-time equivalent professional staff members
 - Must have been in continuous operation for at least eight years
- **LEVEL THREE:**

- Organizations with operating budgets over \$750,000 – 4:1 match
- These organizations must employ at least ONE full-time + TWO full-time equivalent full time professional staff members
- Must have been in continuous operation for at least ten years

Evaluation Criteria

The Grants Panel considers the following criteria through a weighted evaluation process when reviewing CORE Grant applications.

Programming Excellence and Innovation (40 points)

- Create, foster and achieve innovative, distinctive and stimulating programs.
- Attract and nurture high quality creative professionals.
- Commitment to education demonstrated by appropriate expenditures for arts education programs & activities.
- Proven ability to develop, implement and assess successful programs & services; as well as the ability to evaluate and solve past problems in programs & services.
- The number of paid artists/cultural professionals participating in its programs & services evidenced by providing a local, in-state and out of state breakdown.

Community Impact and Collaboration (30 points)

- Number of individuals benefiting from the applicant's programs & services.
- Evidence of the applicant's commitment to develop new audiences; specifically multicultural, senior citizen and/or other special constituency audiences.
- Multi-cultural involvement in administration, governance, programs and services.
- Evidence of the applicant's programming which engages active duty, veterans, retirees and their families. Please include any collaborations and any gaps in existing programing that your organization has identified and how you are addressing these gaps.

Management Excellence and Transparency (30 points)

- Administration
 - Success of the organization in serving its culturally focused mission.
 - Commitment of the leadership to be transparent in conducting the business of the organization.
 - Professional staff expertise; staff diversity; staff training and appropriate means for evaluating staff performance.
 - Active Board involvement; board development and appropriate means for evaluating Board performance.
 - A planning process that involves the Board, staff and members of the community. The process will include a means of assessing the needs of the community. A current Action Plan and Long Range Plan with specific cultural, management and administrative goals appropriate to the organization.
- Financial Stability and Accountability
 - The budget should include evidence of realistic planning, strong management and an effort to generate income from other appropriate sources.
 - Evidence of cash reserve.
 - Adherence to internal controls policies that ensure financial accountability.
 - For organizations with an accumulated deficit: A Board approved measurable, realistic deficit reduction plan.
 - For applicants with a budget of \$300,000 or more: a clean audit as evidenced by a “no materials weakness” letter from an independent auditor.
- Past Performance

- The actual performance of the organization over the past year, in comparison with its stated plans for the year.
- Timely submission of accurate and complete financial and programmatic reports in the prior year.

Application Process

All applicants must complete the two-page CORE Grant application and provide the required attachments for review by the Grants Panel.

The Panel consists of volunteers with professional experience in the arts, education, grants, finance, and management. A member of the Panel will be an Arts Council Trustee.

The application requires comprehensive financial information and other support materials for use by the Grants Panel in its review of the applicants. The applicant organization's Executive Director/CEO and an elected officer of the applicant's Board of Directors/Trustees will be interviewed by the Panel, which allows for in-depth review and discussion of current issues facing the applicant organization. The written application and interview process are the applicant's opportunity to present its best case for funding support. The Panel makes funding decisions based on information provided by the applicants and the Arts Council staff. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

All applying organizations should be willing to uphold the integrity of the application process and should be committed to the highest level of ethical standards and transparency. Organizations applying for funding should understand that all submitted information and supporting documents will be shared with the deliberations panel in order to arrive at funding decisions. The Panel reserves the right to schedule a site visit to supplement their understanding of the application.

Additionally, once an organization has been awarded funding, the contract requires that all financial reports will be shared with local government entities to support the distribution of dedicated funding streams.

Composing Your Narrative

The application narrative is one of the required attachments to the two-page CORE Grant application. **Please organize your narrative using the titles and outline system shown below.** The grants panel evaluates and provides a numeric score in each of these categories. Your award is directly related to your numeric scores. Your narrative cannot exceed ten 8-1/2 x 11 pages. Please include a header or footer on each page that identifies the applicant organization and the page number.

1. Program Excellence and Innovation

Describe

- a. The organization's programs & services in the past year, as well as your plans for the coming year.
- b. The organization's education program in the past year, and your education program plans for the coming year, include both youth and adult education programs.
- c. The assessment procedures for each program.
- d. The number of artists participating in your programs & services. Include the total fees paid to artists and the number of artists employed in the past year, as well as projections for the coming year. Provide employment figures for local (Cumberland

County), in-state, and out-of-state artists. Describe other services offered to artists.

2. Community Impact and Collaboration

- a. Describe the geographic & demographic reach of your organization's programs & services in the past year, as well as your expectations for the coming year.
- b. Describe your organization's efforts to expand community impact in the past year, as well as your planned efforts in the coming year. Include outreach to utilize new cultural professionals and develop new audiences.
- c. Describe your organization's partnerships with other cultural arts & community organizations during the past year, and any planned partnerships for the coming year.
- d. Describe the specific efforts by your organization to make programs accessible to those who have limited cultural arts opportunities due to educational, geographic, cultural, physical, economic or other constraints. Give examples of successful efforts, e.g., discounted or free access for underserved populations, usage of sign language interpreters and availability of Braille or large print materials.
- e. Describe your organization's programming engaging active duty, veterans, retirees and their families in the upcoming year. Please include any collaboration with other agencies. If your organization has identified any gaps in existing programs, please identify these gaps and how your organization is addressing them.

3. Management Excellence and Transparency, Financial Stability and Accountability, Past Performance:

Describe-

- a. The mission, current goals and long range plans of your organization.
- b. The organization's administrative & performing/exhibiting facilities. Indicate whether the organization owns, leases, or utilizes donated space.
- c. The organization's financial condition. Address specifically any debts, deficits, endowments, surpluses and cash reserves. Describe your principal sources of revenue including earned income and other private support, and plans for long-term financial stability.
- d. The organization's commitment to diversity in relation to your mission, current goals and long range plans. Provide specific examples of administrative and programming efforts in the past year and planned efforts in the coming year.
- e. The organization's long range planning process. Include details of the process that involve the Board of Directors/Trustees, staff and members of the community.

4. Marketing and Cultural Tourism

- a. Describe your organization's overall marketing plan. Be specific regarding the types of advertising (e.g., newspaper, radio, TV, visitor's guides, rack cards, brochures, posters, and websites).
- b. Estimate the impact of your programs on cultural tourism in Cumberland County. Will you market your programs to areas outside Cumberland County, and if so, how? Describe your target audiences outside Cumberland County.
- c. Describe the expected economic benefit to our community as a result of this marketing activity.

Attachment List

- The 2-page application
- The application narrative (10 page maximum, use outline format shown above).
- Create a budget comparison spreadsheet with the following for your organizations income/expense

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Year end 2018-2019	Budget 2019-2020	Current year through 12/31/2019	Budget 2020-2021

- Copy of 2019-2020 printed materials acknowledging Arts Council support of programs & services (*only complete if not on file*)
- Names and addresses of current Board of Directors/Trustees with term expiration dates.
- Staff organizational chart (*if changed from previous year*)
- Employee evaluation form (*if changed from previous year*)
- Job descriptions of key positions (*if changed from previous year*)
- Certification of Executive Director/President/CEO evaluation signed by Board President/Chair. (*Certification must have taken place in the prior 12 months*)
- Copy of previous year's audit or professional financial review (2018-2019) with management letters prepared by an independent CPA, and your board's response to the management letter (*only if not already on file*)
- Note the following is due within 6 months (by December 31st) after the organization's year end:
 - Organizations with annual budgets of \$300,000 or more must submit a formal independent audit on an accrual basis by a CPA, management letter and your board's response.
 - Organizations with annual budgets between \$50,000 and \$300,000 must submit a reviewed or compiled financial statement prepared on an accrual basis by a CPA, approved and signed by the organization's treasurer.
- Board-approved Strategic Plan (*most current, must include time frames and person with lead responsibility*)
- Current Charitable Solicitation License
- IRS tax determination letter (*if not on file*)
- Mission Statement (*if not on file or changed in the last year*)
- Conflict of Interest Policy (*if not on file or changed in the last year*)
- Assessment Policy (*if not on file or changed in the last year*)
- Organizational Bylaws (*if not on file or changed in the last year*)

If you have any questions, please contact Kennon Jackson, Grants Manager, at 910-323-1776, ext. 222 or kennonj@theartscouncil.com