



METRO ARTS

NASHVILLE OFFICE OF ARTS + CULTURE

Operating Support Grant Criteria

FY26 GRANT CYCLE | FOR ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE Fall 2025 – June 2026
APPLICATION DEADLINE August 15, 2025, 11:59 p.m.

Grant Eligibility Criteria

Operating Support grants provide funding for the general operations of arts-focused nonprofit organizations based in Davidson County. An arts-focused organization is one whose primary mission is to directly support the performance, exhibition, or instruction of art and whose majority of programming supports the performance, exhibition, instruction, creation, or education in the arts. Art refers to several artistic genres including, but not limited to dance, film and media arts, craft, literary arts, music, performance art, multidisciplinary work, theater, or visual arts. Please contact us if you have questions regarding the definition of an arts-focused organization.

To receive an Operating Support grant from Metro Arts, the applicant must:

- Produce, present or directly support artistic programs, projects or works
- Have a primary mission to directly support the performance, exhibition, or instruction of art
- The majority of programming must support the performance, exhibition, instruction, creation, or education in the arts
- Be chartered in the state of Tennessee and tax-exempt under the IRS Code Section 501(c)(3)
- Have an IRS Letter of Determination with an effective date of exemption of July 1, 2024, or earlier*
- Have a business address located in Davidson County and operate most of its programs in Nashville.
- Have background checks for all adults who work with youth. If the organization works directly with minors (defined as persons under age 18), the applicant will be required to submit an attestation form that attests that all adults who participate in the programming or instruction of minors at the organization have satisfactory background checks within the last 5 years. This includes organizational staff, artists, and contract staff.

Metro Arts only provides Operating Support grants to eligible nonprofit arts organizations. For project support, please see Thrive Grant Guidelines.

*Organizations with less than one year 501(c)(3) status may be considered eligible for an operating support grant with evidence of operating with nonprofit fiscal sponsorship and/or artistic programming for at least one year. Please contact Metro Arts staff with any questions regarding eligibility.

There are certain types of organizations that cannot receive operating grants from Metro Arts:

- Non-arts organizations
- Organizations who receive operational budget amendments ("line items") from Metro, except for those that are provided by the Metropolitan Charter
- "Friends of..." organizations whose primary purpose is to support government agencies or initiatives
- Colleges or universities
- Public broadcasting stations
- Arts organizations that operate as a legal subsidiary of a non-art nonprofit organization

Eligible Expenses

Metro Arts grant funding can only be used to pay for certain types of costs. Make sure your request includes expenses that can be covered by Metro Arts funds.

Grant funds CAN be used for...	Grant funds CANNOT be used for...
Salaries	Capital Improvements
Artist Fees	Reduction of Debts
Program/Project Supplies	Activities & Programs with Religious Practices or Intent
Performance Space/Facility Rental	Political Lobbying Activities
Marketing and Promotion	Purchase of Real Property
Consulting Fees	
Equipment Rental and/or Purchase	
Fundraising Activities	