



Folklife Network FY2025 Guidelines

DEADLINE: February 15, 2024

SUPPORT PERIOD: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



Individuals who do not use conventional print may contact the Maryland State Arts Council to obtain this publication in an alternate format. 410-767-6555 or msac.commerce@maryland.gov



For individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
TTY: Maryland Relay 1-800-735-2258 or 711

This publication is available as a PDF file on the MSAC website: www.msac.org.

Maryland State Arts Council

Overview

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) advances the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland.

The Council comprises an appointed body of 17 citizens from across the state, 13 of whom are named by the Governor to three-year terms that may be renewed once. Two private citizens and two legislators are appointed by the President of the Senate and by the Speaker of the House. All councilors serve without salary.

To carry out its mission, MSAC awards grants to not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations for ongoing arts programming and projects. MSAC also awards grants to individual artists and provides technical and advisory assistance to individuals and groups. MSAC reserves the right to prioritize grant awards.

MSAC receives its funds from an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, and, on occasion, contributions from private, non-governmental sources.

Authority

MSAC is an agency of the State of Maryland under the authority of the Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts.

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lieutenant Governor
Kevin Anderson, Secretary
Signe Pringle, Deputy Secretary
Steven Skerritt-Davis, Executive Director, MSAC

Mission and Goals

MSAC's mission is to advance the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland.

MSAC's most recent strategic plan outlines five goals:

1. Increase Participation: Broaden MSAC's constituency, providing avenues designed to increase pathways to engagement.
2. Provide Intentional Support: Embrace thoughtful and targeted approaches to serving known and yet to be known MSAC constituents.
3. Build Capacity: Work strategically to further build organizational and governance capacity to ensure that MSAC is capable of vigorously delivering on its mission.
4. Leverage Connections: Further enhance current relationships and involve additional collaborators, and constituents who will benefit from and advance the work of MSAC.
5. Bolster Maryland Arts: Showcase the high caliber, diverse and relevant work of Maryland's artists and arts organizations; their contributions to community vitality and MSAC's role as a catalyst.

Visit the About Us page at msac.org to read the full strategic plan and learn more about implementation actions.

Equity and Justice Statement

The arts celebrate our state's diversity, connect our shared humanity, and transform individuals and communities. The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) and its supporting collaborators are committed to advancing and modeling equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion in all aspects of our organizations and across communities of our state.

MSAC and its grantees are committed to embracing equity and non-discrimination regardless of race, religious creed, color, age, gender expression, sexual orientation, class, language, and/or ability.

The driving goals of MSAC's granting processes are:

- To yield a greater variety of funded projects
- To eliminate biases that may be found in any part of the granting process (e.g., applications, panelist procedures, adjudication systems)
- To acknowledge positions of privilege while questioning practices, shifting paradigms of status quo arts activities, and taking more risks
- To expand deliberations to include criteria beyond current conventions or Western traditions

Accessibility Policy

The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) is committed to making sure all Marylanders can access our programs and services. Everyone is welcome, and all events and activities sponsored by or operated within MSAC must be fully accessible both physically and programmatically. MSAC complies with all applicable disability-related statutes and regulations and seeks to ensure meaningful participation by all Marylanders regardless of need or ability.

Feedback Procedures

If guests would like to provide general feedback to MSAC about accessibility for MSAC's programs or programs funded by MSAC, contact MSAC at msac.commerce@maryland.gov.

Grievance Procedures

For programs or services provided by MSAC

If a program or service operated by MSAC, facilities operated by MSAC, or public meetings conducted by MSAC are inaccessible to persons with a disability or is illegally discriminatory and you want to file a grievance:

- If you have any questions or would like to discuss the situation before filing a grievance, contact the Accessibility Coordinator.
- To file a formal grievance, contact Dan Leonard, Director of EEO & Fair Practices and ADA Coordinator: daniel.leonard@maryland.gov

For programs or services that are not provided by, but are funded by MSAC

- Communicate the grievance to the sponsoring organization.
- If you think your grievance was not handled appropriately by the sponsoring organization, or if you have not received a response from the organization within thirty (30) days, contact MSAC to file a formal grievance at 410-767-6555 or msac.commerce@maryland.gov.

MSAC will work with you to provide assistance as appropriate.

Accessibility Web Page

MSAC has a dedicated accessibility page on msac.org that includes contact information for the accessibility coordinator, federal and state regulations, the organization's Equity and Justice statement, grievance procedures, an emergency preparedness plan, accommodation policies, and other accessibility resources for artists and arts organizations, and PECS images.

Language Access

MSAC makes language accessibility services available. Services include making translations of grant materials, remote American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, subtitles, braille translation, translation into languages other than English, and more. Please contact msac.commerce@maryland.gov for more information.

En Español/Spanish: MSAC pone a disposición servicios de traducción y accesibilidad de idiomas. Contacte msac.commerce@maryland.gov para más información.

中文普通话/Mandarin Chinese: 马里兰州艺术委员会(MSAC)提供翻译和语言无障碍服务。请联系 msac.commerce@maryland.gov 了解更多信息。

한국어/Korean: MSAC 는 한국어 지원을 돕고 있습니다. 자세한 문의사항은 msac.commerce@maryland.gov 로 연락 주시기 바랍니다.

Professional Grants Review Panels

To assist the Council in its decision-making, professionals in the arts are appointed to a variety of grants review panels. The function of panels is to evaluate applications from organizations and individuals and to offer policy recommendations to the Council. Each year, MSAC publishes an open call, and more than 100 individuals serve as grants review panelists for the Council's programs, including Grants for Organizations, Arts in Education, Independent Artist Awards, Public Art Across Maryland, Creativity Grants, Maryland Touring Grants, Maryland Touring Artist Roster, Maryland Traditions grants, and County Arts Development. Anyone wishing to serve should visit msac.org for detailed information and application forms for any open calls.

Staff

MSAC maintains a professional staff to administer its grants programs and Council-initiated programs. Staff members are available to provide technical assistance to the arts community.

Meetings

All Council and Grants Review Panel meetings are open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Act set forth in Title 3 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The dates, times, and locations of Council and Grants Review Panel meetings may be obtained from the MSAC website at www.msac.org or by contacting MSAC offices at (410) 767-6555.

Requirements For Grant Recipients

- Must comply with Title VI, Section 601, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no persons, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination related to, the arts.

- Must comply with Title IX, Section 1681 et seq. of the Education Amendments of 1972, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 6101-6107, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex or age.
- Must maintain complete and accurate records of all activities connected with the grant.
- Must have filed satisfactory reporting with MSAC for the most recently completed fiscal year.
- Must file a final report in alignment with the program requirements. Necessary reporting methods will be provided by MSAC in ample time to meet the deadline. Failure to report may jeopardize any future grant being received by the organization and may result in the organization being required to repay grant funds.
- Must give credit to MSAC in accordance with the [Recognition Guidelines](#) whenever and wherever credit is being given.
- Must notify the appropriate MSAC staff person in writing if a significant change is made in any MSAC-funded program or project.

Accessibility Requirements for Grant Recipients

Grantees must ensure that any programming remains accessible to all, and if needed, conduct programs in accessible venues other than their own organization in order to meet accessibility requirements.

Grantees are required to:

1. Comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, as amended.
2. Prohibit discrimination on the basis of: (a) political or religious opinion or affiliation, material status, race, color, creed, sexual orientation, or national origin; of (b) gender expression, sex, or age, except when age or sex constitute a bona fide occupational qualification; or (c) the physical or mental disability of a qualified individual with a disability.
3. Designate an Accessibility Point of Contact to ensure compliance, receive accommodation requests, and document grievances, and publish direct contact information for the Point of Contact to the public.
4. Create and publicly share a grievance procedure to allow stakeholders to address any events or programs that are inaccessible.
5. Upon request, submit documentation of operations and compliance with the above.

Notice: Certain personal information requested by the Department of Commerce is necessary in determining eligibility for grants. Failure to disclose this information may result in the denial of one or all of these benefits or services. Availability of this information for public inspection is governed by the provisions of the Maryland Public Information Act, Title 4 of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. This information will be disclosed to appropriate staff of the Department, or to public officials, for purposes directly connected with administration of the program for which its use is intended. Such information is routinely shared with state, federal, or local government agencies.

Appeals Process

MSAC takes great care during the grant review process to ensure fair and equitable distribution of grant monies based on stated criteria. Therefore, dissatisfaction with the denial of an award or with the amount of an award is not sufficient reason for an appeal. However, a grant request may be reconsidered if a procedural impropriety or error has affected its review.

Grounds for such reconsideration are:

- A decision based on review criteria other than those stated in these guidelines.
- A decision based on material provided to panelists and/or Councilors that was substantially incorrect, inaccurate, or incomplete despite the applicant having provided the staff with correct, accurate, and complete application information.

Based on the above, if an applicant believes there is legitimate reason for an appeal, the following steps must be taken:

- The applicant must discuss the problem with the program director who handled the application.
- To pursue an appeal, the applicant must write a letter to the MSAC Executive Director within 60 days following receipt of the grant award or denial letter requesting a reconsideration of the Council's decision and stating the grounds for the request.
- The applicant will receive written notification on the determination of the appeal within 90 days of the receipt of the written request for reconsideration.

Constituent Opportunities

Maryland Arts Directory

All MSAC constituents are invited to create a profile on the Maryland Arts Directory, an online resource for promoting, selling, and raising the profile of the work of Maryland artists and arts organizations. Joining the directory is free and available to all Maryland residents and organizations with a connection to the arts. Browse the directory at msac.org and log in or create a profile [here](#).

Professional Development

MSAC maintains a regular schedule of virtual and in-person professional development offerings, including webinars, networking events, regional meetings, and a statewide symposium. Follow MSAC's [Eventbrite page](#) to learn more about upcoming professional development opportunities.

Overview

Purpose

The purpose of the Folklife Network program is to fund organizations serving as regional folklife centers in Maryland. Regional folklife centers are defined as continuing programmatic or educational efforts made by an organization to support traditional arts, or community-based living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth. Grants are administered through the Maryland Traditions program and support activities that identify, document, support, or present the living cultural traditions of Maryland's diverse communities.

Description

The Folklife Network provides support for Maryland's eight regional folklife centers through funding and technical assistance intended to help centers to meet network goals.

Regional folklife centers' activities should:

- Serve the mission of the grantee organization
- Complement the mission of Maryland Traditions to identify, document, support, and present living cultural traditions
- Complement the mission of MSAC to provide leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland
- Support equity, diversity, and inclusion by promoting equitable access to the arts, fostering awareness of communities and traditions of color, and striving to amplify the voices of historically under-resourced cultures, both programmatically and administratively

Regional folklife centers fulfill the purpose of the Folklife Network by:

- Providing equitable and accessible support to traditional artists living or working in their region
- Engaging with MSAC in ways that strengthen and enhance an inclusive, collegial network of regional folklife centers across Maryland
- Encouraging and supporting traditional arts activity while championing creative expression, diverse programming, and lifelong learning throughout their jurisdictions
- Providing leadership that allows community artists to connect with broader networks of artists and cultural workers

Folklife Network grants represent unique collaborations between MSAC and local organizations supporting the traditional arts. Grants are reserved for organizations that demonstrate a strong awareness of the traditional arts needs and expectations in their areas of service, as well the ability to broadly align with the MSAC goal to ensure that every Marylander has access to the transformative power of the arts.

In each Folklife Network collaboration, MSAC is responsible for:

- Providing funding, guidance, resources, and support to aid in the creation and implementation of regional folklife centers' three-year plans

- Providing tools and resources to aid in regional folklife centers' infusion of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access in all aspects of their work
- Maintaining grantmaking and reporting schedules, facilitating regional folklife centers' access to MSAC application and reporting materials, and providing technical support as needed
- Making site visits to regional folklife centers as needed in order to discuss successes and challenges, log grantees' logistical needs for use in future MSAC policy and procedure revisions, and make public addresses at events on behalf of the State of Maryland
- Facilitating and encouraging creative exchanges among regional folklife centers in an effort to increase inter-region collaboration
- Providing branding materials that identify grantees as regional folklife centers

In each Folklife Network collaboration, the regional folklife center is responsible for:

- Adhering to all grantmaking and reporting requirements, as communicated by MSAC
- Identifying, documenting, supporting, and presenting traditional arts in a way that addresses the needs of the communities served by the regional folklife center
- Providing MSAC with ongoing updates of local needs and concerns through scheduled reports and additional communications
- Delivering traditional arts materials to Maryland Traditions for later archival deposit
- Facilitating either one Folklife Apprenticeship grant application or one Heritage Award nomination per grant cycle
- Using MSAC-provided branding materials to identify activities supported by grant funds

Grant Cycle

Funding

Folklife Network grants are \$85,000 and are disbursed annually.

The Council determines the allocation for all MSAC grant programs during its regular budgeting process in the spring preceding each fiscal year. The Folklife Network allocation for the fiscal year is divided equally among approved regional folklife centers to determine individual grant amounts. MSAC staff will be in touch with Folklife Network applicants as any updates about grant amounts are available.

Support Period

MSAC's Fiscal Year 2025 dates are July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025.

If awarded funds, grantee agrees to spend or obligate all funds by June 30, 2025. This means that the funds are expended, encumbered, or otherwise legally committed to be used, such that returning the unspent funds would cause the grantee legal harm.

Timeline

- Applications
 - Application publication: January 2
 - Application deadline: February 15

Eligibility

Eligible Folklife Network grantees must be Arts Organizations or organizations with dedicated Arts Programs, as defined by MSAC. Full definitions are below.

Arts Organizations or Arts Programs

- Must be one of the following:
 - 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (an organization with an IRS-designated 501(c)3 status).
 - Unit of government (a unit of government [town, city, county, state] with the capacity to undertake an arts program)
 - College or university (an established higher education institution in Maryland)

Organizations may receive one Folklife Network grant per year.

Independent artists are not eligible to receive Folklife Network grants, though the intention of the grant is that each regional folklife center serves as a resource center for traditional artists.

In FY 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025), MSAC will accept applications to support continuing activities at eight existing regional folklife centers:

- Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (Talbot County)
- Common Ground on the Hill (Carroll County)
- Creative Alliance at the Patterson (Baltimore City)
- Frostburg State University (Allegany County)
- Sandy Spring Museum (Montgomery County)
- St. Mary's College of Maryland (St. Mary's County)
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County (Baltimore County)
- Ward Foundation (Wicomico County)

Contact Information

MSAC staff offer the following technical assistance throughout the application process:

- Traditional arts application strategy and programming or budgeting guidance
 - Chad Buterbaugh, Deputy Director
 - chad.buterbaugh@maryland.gov
 - 443.469.8239
 - Ryan Koons, Folklife Specialist
 - ryan.koons@maryland.gov
 - 410.767.6568
- Grants logistics and technological assistance
 - Catherine Teixeira, Grants Director
 - catherine.teixeira@maryland.gov
 - 443.799.7256
 - Tammy Oppel, Grants Management Associate
 - tammy.oppel@maryland.gov
 - 410.767.8851
 - Kirk Amaral Snow, Grants Management Associate
 - kirk.snow@maryland.gov
 - 410.767.8865

Application Process, Review, and Reporting

Process

Before You Apply

Grantees serve as a designated regional folklife center following a successful initial application. Grantees may continue to serve as designated regional folklife centers based on continued strong performance, as illustrated through favorable panelist review of subsequent applications and fulfillment of grant requirements. In regions without regional folklife centers, and pending availability of funds, MSAC will advertise the opportunity and accept applications to establish a new Folklife Network grantee within the region. Organizations interested in serving as a regional folklife center in the future should contact relevant MSAC staff to discuss their ideas.

SmartSimple

All applications are submitted via the secure online grants management system SmartSimple. Log in or create a free account at marylandarts.smartsimple.com.

- Applicants are required to complete and submit their applications by electronic means, including the use of an electronic signature.
 - Applicants must click the “Submit” button and SmartSimple must accept the application by 11:59P.M. on the stated deadline date to meet the deadline. Upon successful submission, applicants will receive an onscreen confirmation message and an email from SmartSimple with a copy of the application within one hour. Please check spam or junk folders if the messages do not appear in email inboxes within this timeframe.
- Technical support for SmartSimple is available during regular office hours.
- Lost, misdirected or late applications are the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- Applicants must meet all revision deadlines after submission, as specified in writing, or the application will be withdrawn.

Use of Funds

Folklife Network funds may be used for any aspect of traditional arts work benefitting and open to the public. Typical types of traditional arts activities include but are not limited to:

- Exhibitions, performances, festivals, workshops, lectures, field schools, oral histories, ethnographies, archiving, and local partnerships

Folklife Network funds may not be used for:

- Programming not in support of traditional arts
- Activities not benefitting and open to the public
- Expenses for which the applicant has been awarded funds through another MSAC grant program (i.e., funds received through the Folklife Network program may not be spent on projects that are supported by funds from MSAC grant programs other than the Folklife Network).
- Capital improvements or purchases of permanent equipment
- Acquisition of capital assets
- Activities for the exclusive benefit of an organization’s members
- Contributions to any persons who hold, or are candidates for, elected office
- Contributions to any political party, organization, or action committee
- Activities in connection with any political campaign or referendum

- Lobbying activities

Each Folklife Network grantee is expected to support two other Maryland Traditions grants—the Heritage Award and the Folklife Apprenticeship—in their regions. Each fiscal year, grantees must assist local traditional artists in the completion of either a Heritage Award nomination or Folklife Apprenticeship application. Assistance may take many forms, including but not limited to performing artist interviews to gather and organize answers to application or nomination questions, advising on application or nomination strategy, or helping artists create and submit materials in SmartSimple. Contact MSAC staff with questions.

Application Types

There are two types of Folklife Network applications: on-year and off-year. On-year applications require a complete three-year plan for projected regional folklife center operations, including narrative, budget, and administrative information, with the option to submit supplemental materials. Off-year applications require similar information in a substantially abbreviated format. On-year applications are required every three years. Off-year applications are required in the intervening years.

MSAC staff, panelists, or councilors can recommend a regional folklife center be required to submit an on-year application in any subsequent fiscal year for reasons including but not limited to: submission of a weak three-year plan, grant noncompliance, or significant changes in budget, programming, operations, or leadership. Organizations may elect at any time to submit an on-year application.

Review Criteria

All on-year and off-year applications are evaluated according to the following processes.

On-year

- Regional folklife centers submit a three-year plan that details planned efforts to meet constituent needs and MSAC’s Folklife Network goals and expectations, and required financial reporting
- The plan is reviewed by MSAC staff and a review panel, which recommend that the application either be accepted or revised
- Any necessary revisions are made based on initial MSAC review

Off-year

- Regional folklife centers submit a draft plan, including: any changes to the previously-submitted three-year plan, and required financial reporting
- The draft plan is reviewed by MSAC staff, after which feedback and technical assistance are provided as needed
- Any necessary revisions are made based on initial MSAC review, and any major changes are reported to the Council

Folklife Network on-year application review is based on answers to the questions below. Rubric criteria for strong responses are included to provide details on what a successful answer should include. On-year applications include three review criteria: constituent service, three-year plan, and traditional arts, with financial and supplemental information following later.

CONSTITUENT SERVICE

State the vision, mission, goals and/or values of the regional folklife center.

The vision, mission, goals, and/or values are clear, specific, and appropriate to the work of a regional folklife center, defined as continuing programmatic or educational efforts made by an organization to support traditional arts, or community-based living cultural traditions or community based living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth.

Describe the regional folklife center's area of service. Include general descriptions of the area's demographics and data points to support the description.

The area of service is clearly, specifically, and thoroughly described, and includes demographics and data illustrating the regional folklife center's efforts to maintain an awareness of its constituency.

What are the current needs of the regional folklife center's constituents in relation to traditional arts funding, programming, and services?

The needs described are clear, specific, and thorough, and are clearly tied to the regional folklife center's work in supporting traditional arts in the area of service.

How did the regional folklife center determine these needs?

The methods described for identifying traditional arts needs in the area of service are clear, specific, and thorough.

For which program or programs does the regional folklife center intend to provide assistance during the grant cycle under consideration here?

- Folklife Apprenticeship [select-all-that-apply checkbox]
- Heritage Award [select-all-that-apply checkbox]

Unevaluated question

Briefly describe the type of assistance the regional folklife center intends to provide.

Unevaluated question

THREE-YEAR PLAN

Describe the process for developing the regional folklife center's three-year plan. Who was involved in the plan's creation, and how was community input solicited and incorporated?

The process description includes clear, specific details on how the plan involved community input, as well as who was involved.

List as many as five priorities for the regional folklife center over the next three years.

The priorities are described clearly, specifically, and thoroughly.

The button below activates a chart soliciting information on the regional folklife center's planned activities for the upcoming funding period. Complete the chart with as much detail as is available at the time of application [applicants will be able to click an "Activities Chart" button in SmartSimple].

Complete the chart according to the prompts at the top of each column. Add rows as needed using the Plus (+) button at the bottom left of the window. Delete rows as needed using the "X" button at the right of each row.

Brief description of activity	How will the activity address the regional folklife center's priorities?	How will the activity address an identified constituent need?	How will the activity, project or program address the Folklife Network's purpose and goals?

The planned activities, projects or programs clearly align with the regional folklife center's, mission, vision, values, or goals.

The planned activities, projects, or programs clearly align with MSAC's goals for the Folklife Network.

TRADITIONAL ARTS

Describe how the planned activities identify, document, support, or present community-based living cultural traditions handed down by example or word of mouth.

The description clearly, specifically, and thoroughly demonstrates the activities' connection to traditional arts, as well as their cultural, historical, and expressive roots.

Describe how the traditional arts featured in the planned activities provide a direct benefit to the cultures from which those traditions originated.

The description clearly, specifically, and thoroughly demonstrates the activities' connection to traditional arts, as well as their cultural, historical, and expressive roots.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The button below activates a chart soliciting information on the regional folklife center's estimated total traditional arts expenditures in the upcoming funding period. Complete the chart with as much accuracy as is possible at the time of application [applicants will be able to click an "Future traditional arts expenditures chart" button in SmartSimple].

Estimate the regional folklife center's total traditional arts operating budget for the upcoming funding period, including the use of MSAC Folklife Network funding. In the "Other" section, add rows as needed using the Plus (+) button at the bottom left of the window. Delete rows as needed using the "X" button at the right of each row.	
Traditional arts estimated expenditures - recurring activities	
Administrative expenses	
Activity expenses	
Total	
Traditional arts estimated expenditures - one-time or short-term activities	
[Applicant may add rows as needed]	
Total	

Traditional arts estimated expenditures - total	
Total	

Unevaluated question

For regional folklife centers with a traditional arts operating budget below \$600,000: Upload the organization’s most recently completed fiscal or calendar year Financial Statement, signed by a professional accountant or the organization’s fiscal officer. The signed Financial Statement must be submitted by the application deadline. For regional folklife centers with a traditional arts operating budget at \$600,000 or above: Upload the organization’s most recently completed fiscal or calendar year Independent External Audit, prepared by a CPA firm. The completed audit must be submitted by the application deadline.

Unevaluated question

ATTACHMENTS

Applicants will be asked to provide the following materials as part of the Attachments of the application:

- Uploaded names and short biographies for key staff and board members
- Optional written supplemental materials, including but not limited to catalogs, reviews, programs, brochures, or promotional materials compiled into a single PDF and not exceeding 20 pages
- Optional audiovisual supplemental materials, including but not limited to video or audio recordings, images, or slideshows linked and compiled into a single PDF with total review time not exceeding 10 minutes; if materials exceed this length, applicants must identify which portions panelists should review
- Uploaded W9

Folklife Network off-year application review is based on answers to the questions below. Off-year applications include the same three review criteria as on-year applications: constituent service, three-year plan, and traditional arts, with financial and supplemental information following later.

CONSTITUENT SERVICE

Describe any significant changes that have occurred in the past year, or changes that are anticipated in the coming year, to the way the regional folklife center serves its constituents.

THREE-YEAR PLAN

Summarize the regional folklife center’s proposed activities for the upcoming fiscal year. Describe how the proposed activities fit within the regional folklife center's three-year plan.

TRADITIONAL ARTS

Describe any significant changes to the way the traditional arts featured in the planned activities provide a direct benefit to the cultures from which those traditions originated.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION [identical to on-year application requirements; see above]

ATTACHMENTS

Applicants will be asked to provide the following materials as part of the Attachments of the application:

- Uploaded names and short biographies for key staff and board members

Financial Requirements

MSAC must be consulted if, during the granting period, re-budgeting results in more than a 10 percent fluctuation from expenditures estimated in the application (e.g., more than \$8,500 of an \$85,000 grant being allocated to expenses other than those listed in the initial application). MSAC staff will approve, deny, or request more information on the proposed change based on the grantee's capacity to undertake proposed changes and alignment with the mission of MSAC and Maryland Traditions.

All applicants are required to submit a current signed [W-9 Form](#) upon application submission. The address on the W-9 Form must match the address of the applicant information entered in SmartSimple.

All grantees must be in Good Standing as a business with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation at the time of application submission and if approved, throughout the term of the grant agreement; status can be found by searching the [Maryland Business Express site](#).

Review

MSAC convenes a group of panelists to evaluate on-year applications. Each panelist supplies qualitative comments for all application questions.

Panelists review Folklife Network applications twice:

- Once remotely and independently, at which time an initial recommendation is made
- Once after conversation with other panelists at a meeting facilitated by MSAC staff, including Maryland Traditions team members, at which time all panelists will discuss applications and have the opportunity to amend their recommendations based on discussion

Panelist Selection

Panelists are selected via a public application process. Applicants who are arts administrators, cultural workers, or specialists in capacity building possess the necessary expertise to evaluate applications, though all potential panelists are given consideration.

Panelist Review

Each application is evaluated using the review criteria above. Panelists will enter scores and comments based on review criteria that mirror each of the prompts in the application form.

Funding Amounts

Regional folklife centers will be funded at the total grant amount or not at all. Grants may fund the entirety or a portion of the traditional arts activities at a regional folklife center.

Notification and Payment

The individual listed as the primary contact in the application will receive all notifications. Notifications from SmartSimple will be sent from noreply@smartsimple.com.

The grantee will receive payment within approximately 6 to 8 weeks from the date of receipt of a fully executed Grant Agreement Form. More info on the payment processing timeline can be found [here](#).

Those who are prior MSAC grant recipients can elect to receive grant payments via direct deposit. To sign up for direct deposit, please follow the instructions and complete the required GADX-10 form from the [Comptroller of Maryland](#).

New grant recipients will receive grant funds via check made payable to the name and address indicated on the grantee's W9.

MSAC grants are generally considered taxable income. Payments are issued by the State of Maryland and no Social Security, State, or Federal income taxes are withheld. Individuals receiving grant awards will receive a 1099 from the State of Maryland after the end of the calendar year in which the grant was paid. Specific questions regarding the taxability of your award should be directed to the IRS, the Office of the MD Comptroller, or your tax advisor.

If the grantee owes any Maryland state taxes or other state liabilities, the General Accounting Division (GAD) of the State Comptroller's office may intercept grant payments and hold them until the liability is resolved. Should this be the case, GAD will send written notice of this directly to the grantee via mail. MSAC is not provided further information as it is confidential; grantees will be able to find more info and discuss options with the Central Collections Unit (CCU) at 410-767-1642.

Reporting

Final Report

If awarded, the grantee must file a final report online in SmartSimple. The report will be added to the grantee's SmartSimple profile as soon as the Grant Agreement Form is fully executed.

The final report deadline is August 15, 2025. The final report describes how funds were spent over the most recently completed granting period. The final report collects narrative, fiscal, and demographic information in keeping with MSAC and National Endowment for the Arts requirements. Successful completion of a final report is required for organizations to be eligible to apply for future Folklife Network funds.

Failure to submit reports may jeopardize current and/or future MSAC grants and may result in the required return of grant funds to the State of Maryland.