Overview and Call for Applications

The deadline for submitting applications to Arts Forward Fund is
Thursday, August 27, 2020.

Arts Forward Fund is a collaborative partnership between The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, Greater Washington Community Foundation, and many other individual and institutional contributors, with a goal of helping arts and culture organizations in the DC region stabilize, adapt, and thrive despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In mid-May, the Cafritz Foundation interviewed leaders of arts organizations across the DC region to better understand the impact COVID-19 was having on their operations, finances, and ability to fulfill their missions. As expected, those interviews revealed significant challenges and financial vulnerability, but also optimism, resilience, and creativity in finding a path forward.

Arts Forward Fund was launched in June 2020 with an initial grant of $250,000 from the Cafritz Foundation, with an additional $250,000 available to match contributions from other funders. Supporters include the Harman Family Foundation, Weissberg Foundation, Linowitz Family Fund, Diane & Norman Bernstein Foundation, Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, England Family Foundation, and Philip L. Graham Fund. By mid-July, contributors had surpassed requirements for the Cafritz match, making nearly $1 million available for grantmaking.

The purpose of the Arts Forward Fund is to provide resources to support organizations as they make essential shifts needed to weather the COVID-19 pandemic, which may be protracted, and continue their vital role in the region’s economy and community life. The partners around the Arts Forward Fund table believe that arts and culture organizations are a critical part of the region’s economy, as well as essential contributors to our sense of community well-being and collective quality of life.

Beyond well-known cultural institutions that are household names, the arts and culture sector in our region includes scores of community-based groups that serve people of all ages, identities, and income levels. As we move forward, the steering committee is committed to doing this work with an equity lens. That means we will prioritize organizations that serve Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, and organizations with limited access to philanthropic capital. We will also prioritize requests that address longstanding racial inequities in organizations, in the arts and culture field, and in the broader community.
Call for Applications

Arts Forward Fund will be accepting applications for three types of funding:

1. **Capacity Building** — Grants to address the needs of individual organizations as they shift their programs and operations to adapt to the impact of COVID-19. Examples might include technology upgrades, online content platforms, business and financial planning, space utilization planning, equipment and/or consultants needed to ensure the safety of artists and audiences, or marketing and communications support for promoting online content. Capacity-building applications may include staff salaries needed to engage in the work or implement the project.

2. **Training** — Training grants will focus on group learning rather than individual professional development. We welcome applications from arts service organizations that represent many organizations with common training needs. Arts Forward Fund may also use the application process to identify common needs, opportunities for collaboration, and trusted training providers.

3. **Innovation** — Innovation grants will support solutions with implications for the broader arts community. Examples might include shared online content production facilities or platforms, or ticketing systems for paid online events. We encourage collaborative applications from organizations with similar needs.

Applications should focus specifically on how the requested grant will help the organization (or its members, in the case of arts service organizations) adapt to the new reality of COVID-19 and build a stronger, more equitable organization after the pandemic has passed. Grants will typically range from $10,000 to $50,000. We will be flexible in defining grant periods, but expect that most organizations will spend the funds within four to six months. Applicants may request multiple types of support from the categories listed above, but should not request more than $50,000.

Organizations should apply for work that they have identified as critical to organizational viability. The focus of these grants is on organizational development, innovation, and adaptation and the application should focus on strengthening your organization during this crisis (rather than on a "wish list" project that is not directly relevant to surviving/thriving during COVID-19).

**Eligibility Criteria**

Eligible applicants include:

- Arts and culture organizations serving the District of Columbia, Prince George’s and Montgomery counties in Maryland, Arlington and Fairfax counties and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax in Virginia. Applicants must be 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations or have a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. A fiscal sponsor need not be identified when the application is submitted but must be secured before a grant can be awarded.
• Organizations working across all artistic disciplines, including visual and performing arts, are eligible to apply, as are youth development organizations with an arts focus, arts education organizations, and grassroots arts organizations working for racial and social justice.

• Organizations with pre-COVID annual revenue of up to $10 million are eligible to apply. (Annual revenue is determined from financial statements for the most recently completed fiscal year.) There is no minimum annual revenue threshold for eligibility.

The following are ineligible for support:

• Individuals
• Private and public schools, including public charter schools
• Arts and culture organizations located in the DC region that are not focused primarily on serving the DC region
• Arts and culture organizations headquartered outside the DC region

Application Questions

The online application is available here.

Organizational Information

1. Organization name, address and full contact info
2. Name of person submitting request
3. Phone
4. Email
5. Geography served (open-ended)
6. Website (if available)
7. Annual revenue in the most recently completed fiscal year

Application Questions

1. Please provide a brief description of your organization, including your mission and goals; audiences, communities, and geographies served; number of people reached or served by each program (pre-COVID-19). Limit: 2,000 characters/300 words

2. How has COVID-19 affected your organization? As applicable, please include impact on finances, staffing, mission-critical activities, and ability to reach and engage with audiences and/or program participants. Limit: 2,000 characters/300 words

3. In the context of the types of funding described in the call for applications (capacity-building, training, and innovation) and the impact of COVID-19 on your organization, describe the work for which you are requesting support. Limit: 2,000 characters/300 words

4. Please tell us how the efforts you are proposing will help your organization adapt to the current environment and be more effective and equitable both during and after COVID-19. Limit: 1,000 characters/150 words

5. What else would you like to tell us? Limit: 1,000 characters/150 words
6. Amount requested
7. Grant period requested
8. Does the executive director or CEO of your organization identify as Black, Indigenous, or a person of color? (Y/N)
9. What percentage of your senior management team identifies as Black, Indigenous, or people of color? (Answer as percentage)
10. How would you describe your organization’s audience and/or the people it serves?
   a. Not racially diverse
   b. Racially diverse, but not representative of the broader community
   c. Includes those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, representative of the community
   d. Predominantly Black, Indigenous, and people of color
11. Which of the following best describes the composition of your board of directors?
   a. Not racially diverse
   b. Racially diverse, but does not reflect the community we serve
   c. Includes people who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, and reflects the community
   d. 50 percent or more identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color
12. How does your organization specifically advance diversity, equity, and inclusion both internally and in the broader community? Limit: 2,000 characters/300 words

Required Attachments
If you are not able to provide an attachment, please upload a note to help us understand your circumstances.

1. Financial statements (statement of activities, statement of financial position) for the most recently completed fiscal year (audited or internal)
2. Most recently available (not audited) statement of financial position (balance sheet)
3. Current year budget
4. Budget for this grant request, with specific information on how you will use grant funding. If you are requesting funds for salaries, please be specific about the positions to be supported. If you are requesting funds to purchase equipment or services, please provide information on these costs.

Process and Timeline
The deadline for submitting applications is Thursday, August 27, 2020.

Applications will be reviewed by members of the Arts Forward Fund Steering Committee, who are staff and volunteers representing financial contributors to the fund.

The steering committee plans to notify applicants of funding decisions on or before Monday, September 21, 2020.
Information Sessions

Arts Forward Fund plans to hold at least two informational webinars for organizations that have questions on eligibility or about the application. Information sessions will be announced by Greater Washington Community Foundation and other partner organizations. To receive notification when sessions are scheduled, email Gisela Shanfeld at Greater Washington Community Foundation at gshanfeld@thecommunityfoundation.org.

Due to the volume of anticipated requests we are unable to have one-on-one conversations with potential applicants.