APPLICATION TOOL KIT

Welcome, and thank you for applying to The Grit Fund!
This toolkit is meant to aid you in the application process and includes our: mission, history, application guidelines, core values, frequently asked questions (FAQs), a glossary of terms, and the sample timeline and budget forms needed to complete the Grit Fund application.

If you have any questions please contact Program Manager Khadija Adell at thegritfund@baltimoreartsrealty.com. You may schedule time from January through February to talk by phone or in-person about your application. We will also host general information sessions throughout the open application period that provide a chance to ask more in-depth questions about our application process.

Please see our website for a list of applicant resources, to register for our upcoming information sessions, and sign up for one-on-one meetings during open hours.

IMPORTANT DATES
APPLICATION OPEN: WEDNESDAY, JAN. 1ST, 2020 - SUNDAY, MAR. 1ST, 2020

INFORMATION SESSIONS:
SATURDAY, JAN. 18TH, 12pm-1:30pm & WEDNESDAY, JAN. 29TH, 6pm-7:30pm (IG LIVE)
SATURDAY, FEB. 8TH, 12pm-1:30pm & THURSDAY, FEB. 20TH, 6pm-7:30pm

These 90-minute sessions are to help applicants familiarize themselves with the Grit Fund application process. We will review the parts of the application and the tool kit created to help you submit a strong proposal. You can register for upcoming info sessions here.

MISSION

Grit Fund (GF) provides monetary awards--up to $7,000--to encourage the development and presentation of projects that contribute to the vibrancy and advancement of Baltimore’s arts and cultural landscape.

Grit Fund is a project specific award that prioritizes artistic initiatives that present opportunities for artists, cultural organizers and community members to develop collaborations that investigate place and space. We accept proposals from unincorporated artist-led initiatives that utilize the visual arts as a means to produce collaborative public facing projects.

Baltimore based artists age 21 and over are eligible to apply. Grit Fund projects must be based in Baltimore City or County and be accessible to the general public. Funded activities may include but are not limited to: exhibitions, publications, public events, public/place-based art, film...
screenings, the ongoing work of an existing arts venue or collective, and the founding of a new arts venue or collective.

HISTORY

Grit Fund was established in Baltimore in 2015 by The Contemporary (TC) with funding from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, as a part of the Regional Regranting Program—which “aims to support vibrant, under-the-radar artistic activity by partnering with leading cultural institutions in communities across the country.” Under the stewardship of The Contemporary (2015-2017), the Grit Fund granted over 30 Baltimore specific, artist-organized projects, totaling over $170,000 in three rounds of funding.

In 2018 the Andy Warhol Foundation partnered with Baltimore Arts Realty Corporation to steward Grit Fund through the 2019-2020 grant cycles.

GUIDELINES

What types of projects and arts initiatives are eligible for Grit Fund?

- Projects that are initiated by individuals and/or groups that currently reside in Baltimore City and/or Baltimore County;
- Projects that utilize visual art as a means of engaging, activating, and sharing with their audience;
- Collaborative projects led by visual and performing artists, cultural organizers, collectives, collaboratives, and/or artist-run spaces;
- Projects that are open and accessible to the general public;

Please note: Past Grit Fund grantees may apply as lead applicants, as long as one cycle has passed in between applications. I.e. a project granted in 2019 will be eligible to reapply in 2021.

Funded activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Exhibitions: interactive, participatory, online, etc.;
- Publications;
- Public events, happenings, performances, and other public/place-based arts;
- Film screenings;
- Festivals;
- The ongoing work of an existing arts venue or collective;
- The founding of a new arts venue or collective.

What types of projects are not eligible?

- Projects that are not based in Baltimore City or Baltimore County;
● Projects initiated or organized by existing incorporated entities (includes LLC’s, B Corps, 501(C)(3) organizations, and 501(c)(4) organizations), universities or schools (private, public, charter), religious institutions;
● Projects initiated or led by students currently enrolled in high school, college and/or university;
● Projects proposed by lead applicants younger than 21 years old*;
● Projects seeking support retroactively or seeking reimbursement for a past project;
● Proposals for funding to support a solo exhibition, travel costs, etc.
● Projects proposed by an individual artist to present their own work;
● Projects that do not have a public component.

*Proposed projects may include collaborators who are under the age of 21, but must have a lead applicant who is at least 21 years old.

Grit Fund values...

● **Collaboration:** A process of decision making, that involves two or more people. Collaborative processes can be used to decentralize power and create a generous, open frameworks that can allow for multiple authors. This process of decision making is considered essential to the realization of the idea, project, space, etc.

● **Cultural integrity:** The creative work demands a level of rigor and commitment to integrity and ethical use of material with specific cultural origins and context. Characteristic of cultural integrity can be observed in: "1) the background and connections of artists and partners to the cultural context, issue/topic, traditions, community, population, and/or place that is the focus of the work; 2) the way a work of art is conceived and developed; 3) awareness and understanding of cultural values and forms (cultural competence); and 4) in the way the work involves and is experienced by stakeholders."

● **Accessibility:** The work prioritizes public access and values the participation and inclusion of differently abled audiences. The work has a quality of openness and considers the needs of a diverse audience.

● **Risk-taking:** The creative work assumes risk by subverting dominant norms, values, narratives, standards, or aesthetics. The risk is not in the predetermined "success" of the work, but in the journey to creative product and the decision making along the way.

● **Stickiness:** The creative work achieves sustained resonance, impact, or value. The work is memorable and creates the potential for the audience's consciousness, attitude, body, actions, etc. to be positively impacted. The stickiness of the creative work can be strengthened by the resourcefulness of its authors.

The values listed above help to guide Grit Fund’s review process and are used to evaluate all proposals. These values are influenced by the Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change framework created by Animating Democracy-- as "a tool to build practical knowledge and resources for measuring social impact, evaluating aesthetic dimensions, and equalizing power in evaluation."

Alongside our values, project are evaluated with consideration for:
- **Artistic strength**: The innovative, creative, and conceptual strength of the project.
- **Feasibility**: The capacity to carry out and complete the project within the allotted time and resources.
- **Public interface**: The public accessibility of the work.

**FAQs**

How does Grit Fund define “artists” and “cultural organizer”?
Grit Fund utilizes a flexible definition of an artist--one which incorporates many disciplines, mediums, formats, educational backgrounds, and experience. Those who self-identify as artists; and those who identify their creative practice as art-based, are included in our definition.

We utilize *Arts & Democracy’s* working definition of cultural organizing, which states:

“Cultural organizing exists at the intersection of arts, culture and activism. It is a fluid and dynamic practice that is understood and expressed in a variety of ways, reflecting the unique cultural, artistic, organizational and community context of its practitioners. Cultural organizing is about integrating arts and culture into organizing strategies.”

If you are unsure if your work as an artist or art-based cultural organizer fits within our definition, please contact us at thegritfund@baltimoreartsrealty.com.

Why does the project need to be artist-led? Does everyone involved need to identify as an artist?

The funding for Grit Fund comes from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, which emphasizes its commitment to the advancement of the visual arts. All Grit Fund proposals and awarded projects should be led by a person or collaborative that identifies as an artist(s) and/or centers art-based practices in their work.

While we ask that the project is artist-led, we encourage projects to involve people from different disciplines and backgrounds, as not everyone engaged in the production of the work needs to identify as an artist.

What is the maximum amount of funding I can apply for?

The maximum amount of funding that can be applied for is $7,000.

How long is the award period?

The Grit Fund award period is one year from the date funds are awarded. For example: If you are awarded funding in May 2020, your grant periods run until April 2021.

What does unincorporated mean?
Unincorporated describes any business, organization, collective, initiative, project, etc. that is not formed and/or registered as a legal corporation. This includes LLC’s, B Corps, 501(C)(3) organizations, and 501(c)(4) organizations), universities or schools (private, public, charter), and religious institutions.

I am an individual artist looking for funding for my public solo exhibition, is the Grit Fund for me?

Grit Fund prioritizes projects that center collaboration, and/or present the work(s) of more than one author, artist, organizer, community, etc. If you are requesting funds to produce a solo exhibition for one artist’s work, you may apply, but it is unlikely that this type of project will be funded.

Are there any reporting requirements for the grant?

Reporting for Grit Fund happens at two points during the grant process. There is a mandatory in-person midterm check in meeting with lead applicants and the program manager. This conversation is an opportunity for grantees to reflect on the process of their project thus far, and to discuss the successes and challenges of the work. After this meeting, the remaining 20% of project funding is issued.

The final report due at the end of the grant period is the only formal report that is required in order for projects and lead applicants to be considered for future funding. This is a narrative based report that can be submitted in writing or via audio/video.

What do you mean by collaborative?

Grit Fund defines collaborative as more than one person coming together to author a particular project, program, event, or initiative. You may apply for an award as an individual (lead organizer), but your project, program, or initiative, must provide an opportunity for others to collaborate on the work.

What types of projects does Grit Fund support?

Grit Fund supports unincorporated artist-led initiatives. We prioritize creative projects that present opportunities for artists, cultural workers, and community members to develop unexpected collaborations that investigate place and space. Potential projects may include, but are not limited to: exhibitions (real or virtual), publications, public events, public/place-based art, film screenings, festivals, the ongoing work of an existing arts venue, collective, or event, and the founding of a new arts venue, collective, or event.

What types of projects are not eligible for funding?

- Projects that are not based in Baltimore City or Baltimore County;
● Projects initiated or organized by existing incorporated entities (includes LLC’s, B Corps, 501(C)(3) organizations, and 501(c)(4) organizations), universities or schools (private, public, charter), religious institutions;
● Projects initiated or led by students currently enrolled in high school, college and/or university;
● Projects proposed by lead applicants younger than 21 years old*;
● Projects seeking support retroactively or seeking reimbursement for a past project;
● Proposals for funding to support a solo exhibition, travel costs, etc.
● Projects proposed by an individual artist to present their own work;
● Projects that do not have a public component.

* Proposed projects that include collaborators who are under the age of 21 must have a lead applicant who is at least 21 years old.

I know the fund only supports collaborative projects, but I think my project should be considered because it is highly participatory and involves the audience directly. Can I apply?

The jury may review and consider a proposal from an individual artist seeking to present their own work if they present a strong argument for active audience participation that demonstrates a true collaboration.

Does the Grit Fund support work outside of the visual arts?

While Grit Fund supports interdisciplinary practices, projects should be strongly connected to the visual arts. Performing or media arts are eligible when visual art is a key component of the finished project.

While my group is not a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, I want to present my work in a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization’s space and use their facilities. Is my project still eligible for funding?

Yes. If your work is to be shown or accessed in a nonprofit organizations space you still eligible for funding.

Can I apply for a grant to acquire equipment?

Equipment that is necessary for the completion of your project is an allowable expense, but the focus of your funding should support the production of the work, and its public facing display.

Can I apply to fund general operating for a new or existing art space?

Grit Fund is a project specific award. While Grit Fund supports “the ongoing work of an existing arts venue or collective, and the founding of a new arts venue or collective,” this grant is not meant to fund general operating costs.
Can I include artist fees in my budget?

Yes! We believe that artists and cultural organizers, deserve to be compensated for their time and labor. When creating your budget for Grit Fund it is important to include an artist’s fee. This figure should account for the scale of your project, the value of your time, the resources available to you, and the total budget for your project.

Do we need to have a confirmed venue to apply?

No. We understand that projects can grow and evolve from the application phase through the production period and beyond. We do not require you to have confirmed venues, or written commitment from any service, affiliate, presenter, or space you choose to engage.

Who should be listed as the lead organizer?

Grit Fund supports projects, programs, and initiatives that are artist-led. For the purposes of this grant that means that the lead organizer(s) should be a self-identified artist.

If you are proposing your initiative as a collective, group, or multi-author project, the lead organizer(s) should self-identify as artist(s). It is not a requirement that all members of the project self-identify as artists, or work in the visual/performing arts.

Please elaborate on the roles of the lead organizer, collaborators, and participants, if it is relevant to the feasibility of your project.

Do you have to be a U.S. citizen to apply?

No. However, the lead organizer must have a social security number (SSN) in order to receive payment of the award. If you have any further questions please contact us at thegritfund@baltimoreartsrealty.com.

How much funding can I request for my project?

Grit Fund awards projects up to $7,000. You may submit a request for up to that amount. Your amount requested should reflect the cost of the work proposed.

If the cost of your project exceeds $7,000, please specify what the amount requested from Grit Fund will be supporting. If Grit Fund is one of several funding sources, please submit the additional income (actual or projected--grants, donors, artist contribution, crowdfunding, etc.) in your budget.

Will our application be more competitive if we apply for less funding or if we apply for the maximum amount?

You may request a range of funding between $1000 (min.) and $7,000 (max.).
The strongest, most competitive applications clearly present their needs, their vision, and their ability to actualize their ideas. We ask that your proposed funding amount reflect the needs of your project.

**Do I need to secure matching funds?**

No. Grit Fund does not require projects to secure matching funds in order to be awarded. If your project costs exceed the maximum amount awarded through Grit Fund, please consider including the additional sources of income you will be accessing and/or applying to.

**How will the grant payment be disbursed?**

The grant will be disbursed in two payments. 80% of funding will be released upon receipt of the signed grant agreement. The remaining 20% will be released halfway through the grant period once grantees have their midterm meeting with the program manager. The date for the midterm check in will be determined by the grantee(s) and program manager and will be included in the grant agreement.

**What is the tax obligation if I receive a grant?**

All monies received through a grant are considered taxable income. Grit Fund advises awardees to consult an accountant or tax professional for the most current information regarding obligations for taxable income.

**How can I learn about past funded projects?**

From 2015-2017 The Grit Fund was stewarded by The Contemporary. You can view past Grit Fund projects from 2015-2017 at [https://contemporary.org/gritfund/](https://contemporary.org/gritfund/), to see the projects that have been funded in past cycles. Projects post-2017 can be accessed [here](https://contemporary.org/gritfund/).

**I have more questions, what should I do?**

Talk to us! We would be happy to connect via email, phone, or in-person. You may also register to attend one of our information sessions or workshops. Please see the Resource section of our site for more information.

**GLOSSARY**

**Innovation:** The creation of a new idea, device, or method. Innovation can also be used to describe the contemporary contextualization and improvement of an older method, idea, device, structure, presentation, form, technique, etc. The Grit Fund provides funding for projects that utilize and/or communicate innovative processes and/or outcomes.
Collaboration: A process of decision making, that involves two or more people. This process of decision making is essential to the actualization of the idea, project, initiative, etc. The Grit Fund accepts proposals from creative projects that center collaboration, and could not be achieved without the contributions of two or more people, groups, etc.

Equity is the just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential, regardless of race, gender, ability, sexuality, age, educational background, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, citizenship, etc. “Equity aims to equip everyone, especially those who have been left behind, with the resources that allow them to contribute and prosper...Equity addresses race forthrightly and productively, but it is not about benefiting one group at the expense of another.”

- Definition sourced from PolicyLink Mission statement.

Cultural Organizing: Cultural organizing exists at the intersection of arts, culture and activism. It is a fluid and dynamic practice that is understood and expressed in a variety of ways, reflecting the unique cultural, artistic, organizational and community context of its practitioners. Cultural organizing is about integrating arts and culture into organizing strategies. It is also about organizing from a particular tradition, cultural identity, and community of place or worldview to advance social and economic justice.

- Sourced from “Working Definition of Cultural Organizing,” by Arts & Democracy

In-kind costs are an important facet of your overall budget. These are services, goods, materials, labor, time, and other assets contributed to a project not rendered in the form of money.

Sample scenario: You have a friend who is a professional photographer and videographer and they agree to donate their time, equipment, and editing services to documenting your project. Their standard rate is $150/hour, and the total amount of time they are donating would be valued at $1,800 (12hrs). This cost should be included in your in-kind budget line.

Generosity: The creative work demonstrates a level of openness, and values equity and accessibility.

Commitment: The creative processes and products embody conviction to the cause espoused through the work.

Rigor: Carrying a level of thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and commitment to accuracy and cultural integrity.

Openness: The creative work deepens impact by remaining open, fluid, transparent, subject to influence, and able to hold contradiction. “The creative work is accessible and offers multiple entry points for people to engage in the research and development stages, artmaking, and/or presentation and engagement around products.”

Resourcefulness: Imaginative use of available resources drives artistic innovation and
demonstrates responsible social and environmental practice. Resourcefulness can be seen in the way projects utilize the capital at their disposal, including but not limited to: human capital (time and energy), financial capital (grant funding, in-kind, crowdfunding, etc.), physical space, materials, social network, etc.