

# GUIDELINES FOR PA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS' CREATIVE SECTOR FLEX FUND

**DUE DATE:** TBD by [the PA Partners in the Arts \(PPA\) partner organization for your region](#). Please contact [your regional PPA partner organization](#) for the exact date.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED**

**GRANT ACTIVITY PERIOD:** January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

**Agency Mission**  
To strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.

**Overarching Value: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**  
Promote equitable access for all Pennsylvanians to participate fully in a creative life and in the diverse forms of arts and culture in the commonwealth.

[arts.pa.gov](http://arts.pa.gov)

## Flex Fund Description

Flex Fund provides support to eligible applicants that provide consistent annual levels of artistic programming and/or arts services in Pennsylvania. One application per applicant per year may be submitted. Eligible uses of grant funds include but are not limited to operating or programming expenditures.

- Depending on the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' (PCA) budget and availability of funds, grant amounts will be \$5,000 per applicant.
- Annual grants are not guaranteed.

## Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation, or a unit of local government (counties, cities, boroughs, townships, and municipal authorities). Pre-K -12 public, private and parochial schools including all charter schools are NOT eligible. (K-12 schools should contact the Arts in Education Program of the PCA for other opportunities).
- Be located in Pennsylvania, except for nonprofit, tax-exempt corporations acting as a fiscal sponsor on behalf of an unincorporated group or not-for-profit limited liability company (LLC) that is located in Pennsylvania.
- Be registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations, except for local governments and fiscal sponsors.
- Have a history of at least TWO years of consistent arts programming in Pennsylvania.
- Have an annual average arts revenue of \$10,000 to \$200,000. PCA determines revenue size by a two-year average of Total Revenue of an organization's Form 990-Department of the Treasury-Internal Revenue Service. Non-arts organizations and/or arts organizations whose 990 is postcard, must attach a board/committee approved arts-specific program financial statement for their most recently completed two fiscal years. The program financial statement must include program revenue, including contributed and earned income and income realized from investments, as applicable, and expenses. In-kind is not included.

**Applicants that previously applied in Program Stream or Entry to Program Stream may now apply in this program if they meet the eligibility requirements.**

Unincorporated groups or Pennsylvania not-for-profit limited liability companies (LLCs) must apply through a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that acts as a fiscal sponsor. **Individuals and LLCs with fewer than two organizers/members are not eligible to apply.**

## Fiscal Sponsorships

Unincorporated groups and Pennsylvania not-for-profit LLCs with more than two member conducting arts activities in Pennsylvania for an expressly not-for-profit purpose must apply to the PCA through a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that serves as a fiscal sponsor. LLCs applying through a fiscal sponsor must meet the same requirements as other applicants, except for tax-exempt status. If an LLC has a purpose that is not-for-profit, its purpose must be stated in its certificate of organization filed with the Pennsylvania Department of State, a copy of which must be included in the application materials. Groups applying through a fiscal sponsor must meet the same requirements as other applicants, except for tax-exempt status and being registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations.

The fiscal sponsor is responsible for the administration of the grant award agreement (contract), including all reporting requirements, has discretion and control over the grant funds, and may charge a reasonable fee for its services. The fiscal sponsor receives the grant payment directly from the PCA and is responsible for ensuring the completion of the final reports.

Fiscally sponsored groups must have a fully executed, active agreement with the fiscal sponsor, a copy of which must be submitted with the application materials.

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**New Guidance:****Parent (and Related) Organizations**

A parent organization that includes separately identifiable and independent components (e.g., a university campus that has a presenting organization and a radio station) may apply for each such eligible component.

An eligible independent component must be a unit that is both programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization. This independent status is demonstrated by the component's:

- Unique mission, separate and distinct from the parent entity;
- Dedicated staff, with duties specific to the mission of the component;
- Independent board/committee, mostly consisting of members not associated with the parent entity and generally functioning with substantial oversight and management of the component;
- Separate budget, maintained by the component; and
- Two-year history of arts programming undertaken by the component.

To qualify as an eligible independent component, it should be equivalent to a stand-alone institution. A parent organization should consult with [the PPA partner organization for their region](#) to verify eligibility of the component before preparing an application.

**Matching Requirements**

- All grants must be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis in cash.
- In-kind goods and services may not be used to match PCA funds.
- Flex Funding grant funds cannot be used to match other PCA grants.

**Funding Restrictions**

Grant funds cannot be used for any of the following:

- Activities outside the activity period of the grant.
- Activities that have a religious purpose.
- Payments to lobbyists.
- Cash prizes and awards.
- Benefit activities.
- Hospitality expenses (i.e., receptions, parties, gallery openings).
- Capital expenditures, including equipment costing \$500 or more.
- Competitions.
- Performances and exhibitions not available to the public.

**Application Process**

Applications must be submitted to the applicable [PPA partner](#). The PPA partner is based on the Pennsylvania county of residence of the applicant, or in the case of fiscal sponsorship, the unincorporated group or not-for-profit LLC. Application due dates are TBD by the PPA Partner for the grant activity period of January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024. Late applications will not be accepted. Applications must be submitted every year.

**Application Review Process**

- PPA partner staff review applications for eligibility
- Applicants will be notified of the status of their applications, award amounts, and grant award agreements.
- **PPA partner advisory panels evaluate them based on the following criteria:**

**Community Value**

Applicant demonstrates:

- Artistic offerings that strengthen its community culturally, educationally, and/or economically.
- Artists and artistic offerings and services involve and are meaningful to the community being served.
- Relevant arts learning opportunities and creative endeavors for community members.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Value**

Applicant demonstrates:

- Apart from being audience members or beneficiaries, community members are central to the design of the applicant's work.
- Plans and action-oriented practices toward diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in ways that are relevant to the community, including efforts to reach new audiences.

**Stewardship Value**

Applicant demonstrates:

- Planning processes appropriate to its organization, mission, and goals.
- Capacity to carry out programs and projects as planned.
- Appropriate financial planning and oversight practices.

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## Appeals Process

Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) recognizes that errors may occur in the PPA application process. PPA is committed to acknowledging any errors and responding to rectify the effects of an error. The appeals process enables applicants to identify these errors and omissions and bring them to the attention of the PPA partner. Appeals to the Board of the designated Partner may result in an increase in the PPA award amount if the applicant can satisfactorily document that the application was misrepresented or improperly reviewed through no fault of the applicant. Appeals are awarded only if the error or omission had a substantial effect on the evaluation and assessment of the advisory panel.

Appeals are not intended to provide the applicant with an opportunity to challenge the evaluation and assessment of the advisory panel. Disagreement with the judgment of the advisory panel or the amount of the award is not grounds for an appeal.

Applicants considering an appeal should contact their PPA partner for advice and guidance. The appeal of an award decision must be made in writing within ten business days from the date of the notification of the award from the Partner. Letters of appeal should be addressed to the PPA partner. The letter should identify the error or omission and the effect such error had on the recommendation of the advisory panel. Partners must immediately forward an appeal to the PCA's PPA Program Director. If the appeal is supported by the Partner, funds will be awarded only if they are available.

## About PCA

The PCA is a state agency under the Office of the Governor. The PCA's mission is to strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts. By leveraging the immense potential of Pennsylvania's arts and cultural sector, the PCA supports jobs, builds community, inspires lifelong learning, promotes the commonwealth nationally and internationally, and sparks innovation. For more information about the PCA, visit [arts.pa.gov](http://arts.pa.gov).

## Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts Overview

Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) is a partnership between local organizations and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA). Operating in all 67 Pennsylvania counties, [PPA partners](#) re-grant PCA funds to support a wide variety of local and community arts activities. PPA goals include:

- Expanding constituent access to the arts by (a) making arts programs available to communities that may have been underserved in the past by state arts funding, and (b) supporting a wide variety of arts activities in communities, developed in a variety of local settings.
- Encouraging and supporting local decision making in regranting of arts dollars.
- Increasing awareness of and advocacy for government support and funding for the arts at the local and state levels.
- Enabling the PCA to provide increased assistance to its broad constituency throughout the state.

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## How to apply

**STEP 1 READ THIS DOCUMENT.**

**STEP 2 APPLY THROUGH** the applicable [PPA partner organization](#).

**STEP 3 SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION ONLINE** through your [PPA partner organization](#).

**No hard copies are required.**

## Need help?

- For technical and login questions or questions about content and attachments, contact the applicable [PPA partner organization](#) for your region.
- For general questions about the PCA's PPA partnership, contact [Amanda Lovell](#).