Capacity Building
Engaging Outside Expertise to Strengthen Internal Organizational Knowledge

The Capacity Building program supports organizations' efforts to engage outside expertise to improve business practices or add new knowledge and skills that forward organizations' missions. Awards may fund outside fees associated with technical assistance projects, planning or evaluation work, staff professional development opportunities, or other initiatives that upgrade an organization's ability to do what they do. Registration costs for in-person professional development conferences or virtual learning opportunities may also qualify. These internally focused projects help Ohio arts providers address new challenges, modernize practices and procedures, and strengthen their ability to serve their constituents.

GRANT AWARDS: Applicants may request up to one half of outside fees. The maximum request is $5,000. All awards require a 1:1 cash match exclusive to the outside fees. Capacity Building grantees generally receive their full request.

ELIGIBILITY: All applicants must possess nonprofit status or nonprofit intent. Applicants may be: 1) arts and cultural organizations in any arts discipline (literature, performing arts, visual arts, traditional arts, multidisciplinary arts, etc.); 2) other organizations that provide arts programming (government entities, social service agencies, etc.); or 3) educational organizations (public, private, charter, and parochial schools from pre-kindergarten through university level) that demonstrate a commitment to arts programming in a larger community setting.

Eligible activities include:
- **Conference attendance or training** designed to build staff, board, or volunteer skills via professional instruction. Training can also include professional development workshops, mentoring, or other skill-building activities.
- **Consultant-led plan development** designed to lead staff, board, or volunteers to enhanced capabilities (e.g., strategic planning, accessibility plan development, succession planning, disaster preparedness planning, etc.).
- **Consultant-led research** designed to build organizational knowledge or inform work (e.g., community needs assessment, program evaluation, feasibility studies, etc.).

IMPORTANT: Projects must focus on a single area of intentional organizational capacity building.

Ineligible activities include:
- Requests to attend a conference whereby the primary focus is not professional development (e.g., serve as a conference presenter, market as a booth exhibitor, book an upcoming season's performers, etc.).
- Requests for simple fee-for-service projects that result in consultant-created resources or tools not likely to increase organizational staff/board/volunteer capacity (e.g. website development, database development, grantwriting/fundraising services, etc.).
- Requests to hire contractors to carry out an organization's day-to-day work.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

May 1 annually (for activities taking place July 1-next June 30) and November 1 annually (for activities taking place January 1- June 30) at 5 p.m.

STAFF CONTACTS

Brianna Dance
Central and Southeastern Regions
brianna.dance@oac.ohio.gov
614-728-4427

Patrick Roehrenbeck
Northeastern Region
patrick.roehrenbeck@oac.ohio.gov
614-728-4413

Jim Szekacs
Western and North Central Regions
jim.szekacs@oac.ohio.gov
614-728-4449

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- Requests to hire a consultant who also serves as a contractor, staff, or board member of the applying organization.
- Requests to support a suite of unrelated and/or ongoing activities.

Please refer to Appendix A for other OAC funding restrictions that may affect your project's eligibility.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS: Capacity Building grants are six-month or one-year awards for *internal organizational development* projects that engage the services of outside professional expertise to improve practices, build skills, or engage in planning or professional development. Outside expertise may include a consultant, conference, or content- expert training. All OAC funds must be directed to outside personnel fees; funds may also be used for the registration costs, travel, and lodging associated with sending staff to an professional development conference. Grantees must provide the administrative time and supplies needed to complete each project.

After accepting the grant award in ARTIE, grantees may request a partial payment of 50% of their total grant award. To request a partial payment, grantees must complete an online request certifying that the grant activity has been partially completed and expenses have been incurred. No partial payments will be made within two months of the ending date on the grant agreement. Final payment of the grant will be processed once a final report is received and approved. OAC staff may request additional information regarding grant activities prior to approving the final payment.

HOW TO APPLY: Capacity Building program applications must be submitted via the ARTIE system. Please refer to Appendix F for a step-by-step look at applying for, accepting, and managing a grant through this program.

Documentation of the proposed activities from the expertise provider must be uploaded to the ARTIE system and must include a description of activities, date(s) of activities, and cost. Examples may include a proposal from a consultant outlining the scope of activities, timeline, and cost; a conference schedule with session descriptions and registration costs; or a quote from a content-expert training company outlining services, cost, and tentatively identified dates. Documentation must be uploaded to the ARTIE system.

Note: *Participating staff members, board members, and/or volunteers must be identified at the time of application.*

EVALUATION AND SCORING: A panel of OAC staff evaluates each Capacity Building application and makes funding recommendations. The OAC Board is the only body authorized to make final funding decisions and ratifies recommendations. The process is competitive and not all applications are funded.

REVIEW CRITERIA: Applications will be awarded funds provided they satisfy these review criteria:

☐ Project will have a deep and lasting impact on organization's ability to achieve its mission
☐ Project responds to a stated need affecting the organization or its effectiveness
☐ Project will improve internal organizational practices in a meaningful way
☐ Consultants, contractors, and/or educational leaders are qualified to carry out project as described
☐ Participants are appropriately selected, and a clear description of activities is provided
☐ Project costs are reasonable for the activities as described

TIMELINE: The following timeline outlines the Capacity Building grant lifecycle. Any deadline falling on a Saturday, Sunday, or state holiday, is extended until the next business day.

Task/Deadline	FY 2026 Applications	FY 2027 Applications
Application Available in ARTIE	November 2024	November 2025
Application Deadline at 5 p.m. (For Projects July 1—next June 30)	May 1, 2025	May 1, 2026

Grant Award Announcement	July 2025	July 2026
*Grant Agreement Deadline	1 month after grant notification	1 month after grant notification
Application Available in ARTIE (For Projects January 1 – June 30)	July 2025	July 2026
Application Deadline at 5 p.m. (For Projects January 1—June 30)	November 1, 2025	November 1, 2026
Grant Award Announcement	January 2026	January 2027
*Grant Agreement Deadline	1 month after grant notification	1 month after grant notification
*Final Report Deadline	30 days after project end date	30 days after project end date

*If the OAC does not receive your grant agreement and final report before their specified deadlines, your grant is in danger of immediate cancellation. Grantees who fail to submit required and acceptable final report packages may not receive any other OAC funding for five years following the due date of the final report they failed to submit.