



General Operating Support Grants for Organizations **FY25 Grant Guidelines**

OVERVIEW

ArtsinStark is committed to supporting cultural organizations in Stark County with unrestricted operating grants. The process by which ArtsinStark has provided operating support to constituent organizations in the past has been revised for the FY25 cycle to open the process to new applicants, increase transparency, balance stable funding with a competitive process, and support programming aligned with ArtsinStark's strategic focus on Arts & Education, Arts & Health, Arts & Economic Development, and Arts & Tourism.

In FY25 there will be an open application for unrestricted operating support; this process will result in a cohort of organizations with a five-year commitment from ArtsinStark. It is expected that an open application for this support will be available every five years with renewals in the years between.

GOALS OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ARTS FUND

Each year, ArtsinStark engages in the annual Campaign for the Arts, raising over one million dollars to support the ArtsinStark County. The goals of this fund are as follows:

1. To support facility and operating expenses for the Canton Cultural Center and its resident organizations. The fund supports building maintenance, security, insurance, and other costs affiliated with maintaining the facility as a resource and hub for the cultural community.
2. To provide unrestricted operating grants to select institutions in Stark County in recognition of their service to residents and visitors, their leadership in the cultural community, and their annual partnership in the Campaign for the Arts.
3. To support collaborative projects led by artists, organizations, and community partners through a competitive annual process in alignment with three of ArtsinStark's strategic priorities: Arts & Education, Arts & Health, and Arts & Economic Development.

Funds raised through the annual campaign will be allocated first to facility and operating expenses of the Canton Cultural Center. Grant funding will be split between operating and project-based grants; in FY25 it is anticipated that 70% of grant funds will be directed to Canton Cultural Center resident organizations and select leading institutions in Stark County as unrestricted operating funds. The final 30% of funding will be directed to artists, organizations, and community partners as project-based grants. For more detail on project-based grants, please review the guidelines for the Arts Impact Fund.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants for unrestricted operating funding must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Organizations must be tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3).
2. The principal office of the organization must be located in Stark County.
3. Applicant organizations must maintain a board of directors which meets at least quarterly.
4. Applicants must have year-round professional managerial and artistic leadership with at least one full-time salaried administrative or artistic director.

5. Applicants must be established organizations with a mission whose primary focus is arts and/or culture as well as year-round programming in cultural disciplines.
6. The organization's operating budget must be \$100,000 or more (demonstrated by the IRS 990) for at least four of the five most recently completed years.
7. Organizations must prepare and submit an audited financial statement, inclusive of management letter, in FY25. A review may be accepted on an as-needed basis during subsequent years of an organization's operating grant commitment.
8. Organizations must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title XI of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title VI, Title XI, Section 504, and the Age Discrimination Act prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, handicap, age, or sex.
9. Organizations must submit a complete set of application materials before the deadline.
10. Organizations must have received approval for all final reports related to previous grant funding from ArtsinStark.

The following organizations are not eligible for unrestricted operating support:

1. Organizations determined to be private foundations under Section 509 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code and filing a 990-PF.
2. Organizations with a significant portion of their activities devoted to historical and/or scientific exhibits or activities.
3. Social service organizations whose mission and programming are not primarily focused on arts and/or culture.
4. Colleges, universities, public and private schools, and units of government.

If eligible, these organizations should consider seeking support from the Arts Impact Fund.

EXPECTATIONS FOR FUND GRANTEES

Unrestricted operating grant recipients will take a leadership role in the Campaign for the Arts, working with fellow grantees to support Stark County's creative sector. It is expected that each operating support grantee will make a meaningful contribution to the campaign's events, messaging, and funds raised. The presence of project-based grants in FY25 and the potential expansion of the roster of operating grantees will provide new opportunities to make the case for support.

Funds for the FY26 grant cycle will be raised during the FY25 grant period. Grantees can expect to participate in the Campaign for the Arts in the following ways:

1. Share printed, emailed, and/or social media messaging with their constituent and donor lists. ArtsinStark will prepare materials to be shared as part of the campaign, and each grantee will work with the ArtsinStark team to determine the best strategy and logistics for distribution. Proprietary donor lists are not required to be shared.
2. Take a leadership role in at least one campaign event, designed in consultation with the ArtsinStark development team. Creative approaches and collaboration between grantees are encouraged.
3. Solicit support from their board of directors and senior staff, with a target of 90% participation.

Grantees can also expect to receive one or more site visits during the grant period, and to participate in quarterly gatherings with fellow grantees to discuss community issues, opportunities for collaboration, challenges facing the county's arts sector, and the progress of the Campaign for the Arts.

APPLICATION PROCESS IN FY25

All applicants will complete an online application form, including uploading financial documents to establish eligibility and background materials to accompany the application.

The components of the application will include:

1. Basic organizational information.
2. Staff and board information.
3. An organizational operating budget.
4. A budget for activities taking place in and serving Stark County, including administrative expenses to support those services; for some organizations this may be the same as the operating budget.
5. Narrative questions related to:
 - a. Core mission-based activities
 - b. Engagement with communities
 - c. Demonstrated impact on Stark County
 - d. Alignment with strategic priorities
 - e. Management approach

All applications will be reviewed by a panel of arts and community leaders who have been vetted for conflicts of interest. The review process will determine a) inclusion on the roster of operating support grantees, with an expected funding commitment through FY29; b) a score for each application based on the evaluative criteria, and c) a funding recommendation based on the rubric below.

CRITERIA AND FUNDING

Applications will be evaluated and scored using the following criteria:

1. Impact on Stark County (40%)
 - a. Breadth and/or depth of programmatic reach to residents and visitors
 - b. Collaboration with other organizations
 - c. Services to marginalized communities
 - d. Artistic excellence and innovation
 - e. Alignment with ArtsinStark Arts & strategy
2. Organizational stability (30%)
 - a. Financial responsibility
 - b. Evidence of diverse funding streams
 - c. Growth over time
3. Accessibility (20%)
 - a. Evidence of effort to reduce barriers to participation, particularly for marginalized groups
 - b. Opportunities for lower-income people to participate
 - c. Inclusive practices for people with disabilities
4. Clarity of Proposal (10%)
 - a. Clear narrative
 - b. Compelling materials
 - c. Clear budget presentation and notes

In FY25 the total amount of funding for operating grants will be related to the success of the Campaign for the Arts. Grant funding will be allocated from the campaign, operating grants are expected at this time to be 70% of the total grant funding pool. Each award will be comprised of the following:

1. Base funding: A percentage allocation based on the organization's operations in Stark County in the most recently completed fiscal year. The target percentage for this allocation in FY25 is 2% - 4% of each organization's eligible operating expenses.
2. Score-based funding: An additional allocation of the remaining funds in the pool, if any. Organizations receiving similar scores will receive similar allocations, with higher scores receiving higher allocations.

Funding can be allocated to any expenses of the organization that support services in Stark County.

EXPECTED GRANT CYCLE

Release dates and deadlines will be shared later in the fiscal year, along with details about technical assistance for applicants in completing their applications. At this time the expected calendar is as follows:

September 2023:	FY25 operating grant application released
October 2023:	FY25 operating grant application deadline
November 2023:	FY25 Arts Impact Grant application released
January 2024;	FY25 Arts Impact Grant application released
Feb-April 2024:	Peer review panels convened
May-June 2024:	Award notification

After award announcements applicants may review their application with an ArtsinStark staff member who will share feedback from the peer panel application review. Grantees will be expected to sign and return a grant agreement and required insurance documentation. Operating grant payments will be made in 10 monthly instalments starting in the first quarter of the grant period. Grantees will be expected to acknowledge ArtsinStark in all programs and marketing materials for supported activities.

Grantees will be required to complete a final report after their funded program has concluded. ArtsinStark will publish the final report form and instructions when the reporting period begins. Operating grantees will fill out a renewal application in the coming years.