



Cultural Sustainability



FAQs about Cultural Sustainability

Cultural Sustainability is a new pilot grant program offered by the six U.S. Regional Arts Organizations (USRAOs) in partnership with The Wallace Foundation. It will give general operating support grants to arts and cultural organizations rooted in communities of color with annual operating expenses up to \$500,000.

In total, M-AAA will award 22 general operating grants of \$50,000 across our six-state region of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and the Native Nations that share this geography.

Cultural Sustainability grants will be administered by each of the USRAOs within their individual, multistate regions. Grant guidelines and technical assistance programming will reflect the needs of each USRAO's respective region.

The FAQs below address the grant guidelines developed by M-AAA for our region, with feedback from two roundtable sessions held in October.

General Information about the US Regional Arts Organizations and the Cultural Sustainability Grant Program

What is a Regional Arts Organization?

The US Regional Arts Organizations (USRAO) are a national collective of six place-based, nonprofit arts service organizations that strengthen America's infrastructure by increasing access to creativity for all. They comprise [Arts Midwest](#), [Mid-America Arts Alliance](#) (M-AAA), [Mid Atlantic Arts](#), [New England Foundation for the Arts](#) (NEFA), [South Arts](#), and [Creative West](#).

Mid-America Arts Alliance represents the heartland states of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and the Native Nations that share this geography.

As a collective, the USRAOs serve artists, arts organizations, and creative communities through programs that reflect and celebrate the diversity of the field.

We partner with the National Endowment for the Arts and others to develop programs that advance arts and creativity.

More information about the USRAOs can be found at usregionalarts.org.

What does M-AAA mean by “culturally driven” organizations or businesses?

Culturally driven organizations focus on promoting, preserving, and developing cultural practices and values, often related to specific communities or ethnic groups. They work in areas like cultural preservation, education, artistic expression, social justice, and community empowerment. Examples include Indigenous cultural centers, minority museums, and organizations promoting endangered languages.

What does M-AAA mean by “underrepresented communities”?

Underrepresented communities refer to groups whose opportunities to experience the arts or receive arts funding have been limited by geography, race/ethnicity, economics, or disability.

Age (e.g., youth, seniors), gender, or sexuality alone do not qualify a group as underrepresented.

What is the timeline for applying for the Cultural Sustainability Grant?

Applications will open on October 30, 2024, and close on January 10, 2025.

How much funding is available through the Cultural Sustainability Grant?

Grants of \$50,000 are available.

What can the funding be used for? What can't the funding be used for?

Funding can be used for general operational expenses such as rent, utilities, salaries, infrastructure, and day-to-day business expenses. It cannot be used for capital projects (e.g., new construction, land purchases), compensation of foreign nationals in embargoed countries, international travel, lobbying, or membership in social/civic organizations.

What types of support does the Cultural Sustainability Grant provide?

The grant provides \$50,000 for operational expenses and technical support through June 2026.

Is this grant program a one-time opportunity or will it be available in the future?

Currently, Cultural Sustainability is a one-time opportunity to measure the interest and impact of general operating support for small organizations.

Eligibility and Application Requirements

My organization is not a nonprofit, can we still apply?

Yes. Nonprofits, fiscally sponsored groups, artist-led businesses (LLCs, S Corps), and state or federally recognized tribal governments are eligible to apply.

Does our fiscal sponsor have to be located in the M-AAA region? And does the fiscal sponsor have to meet the eligibility requirements?

No. The fiscal sponsor does not need to be located in-region or meet the eligibility requirements. However, M-AAA prefers in-region partnerships.

Our organization has never received a grant from Mid-America Arts Alliance, can we still apply?

Yes, and first-time applicants serving underrepresented communities are prioritized.

Our organization recently received a [INSERT NAME] grant from Mid-America, can we still apply?

Yes, unless it's an ArtsHERE or another USRAO Cultural Sustainability grant, which would make your organization ineligible.

Can sole proprietors and creative consultants apply for this grant?

No, sole proprietors and creative consultants are not eligible.

Can organizations that are not primarily arts organizations apply for the grant?

Yes, if they have three years of arts and cultural programming focused on underrepresented communities.

The guidelines say that organizations must have a three-year history of arts programming before the application deadline. Our organization's programming was disrupted by the pandemic. How do we account for this in the application?

The three years of activity do not need to be consecutive or connected to the date of formation/incorporation.

Our organization/business is established in M-AAA's region, but provides programming outside the region, are we eligible to apply?

M-AAA's priority is to work with organizations that are located within and have an arts and cultural presence in the region.

Does this grant opportunity require a match or cost share?

No, this grant does not require a match or cost share.

Documents and Legal Requirements

What documents should I refer to and submit for our organization's annual operating budget?

- Nonprofits and Tribal Governments: Form 990 (Line 18) or Form 990-EZ (Line 17)
- Single-Member LLCs: Form 1040, Schedule C (Line 28)
- Multiple-Member LLCs (Partnership): Form 1065 (Line 22)
- S Corporation: Form 1120 (Line 21)
- Corporations: Form 1120 (Line 27)
- Fiscally Sponsored Organizations: Submit any budgetary information outlining the organization's revenue and expenses for the last three fiscal years.

We are waiting for confirmation of our status as a 501(c)(3) organization. When do we need to have our letter of determination?

The letter of determination must be available by the application deadline.

What is a UEI, why does my organization need it, and how does my organization get one?

A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) is used to identify businesses eligible for federal grants, replacing the DUNS number. To get one, visit www.fsd.gov.

What is an EIN, why does my organization need it, and how does my organization get one?

An Employer Identification Number (EIN) identifies a business entity for tax purposes. To obtain one, visit www.irs.gov.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Will you accept an application from two or more eligible organizations working in partnership?

No, only single organizations are eligible to apply.

Can I apply to multiple Sustainability Programs?

No, only one application is permitted across all Cultural Sustainability programs offered by the US RAOs.

If your organization is located outside of M-AAA's six-state region of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, or Texas, you still may qualify for a Cultural Sustainability grant through another US. Regional Arts Organization. [Learn more here.](#)

Grant Use and Matching Funds

Our organization received an ArtsHERE Grant, can we apply for Cultural Sustainability?

No, if you've received an ArtsHERE Grant, you cannot apply for Cultural Sustainability.

Our organization received a [INSERT NAME]. Can we use this grant as a match?

Yes, you can use it as a match.

Training, Meetings, and Reporting Requirements

What commitments (training, meetings, convenings, reporting and frequency of all) are expected / required if we are awarded this grant?

Grantees are expected to participate in monthly cohort sessions, workshops, one-on-one meetings with consultants, and complete quarterly surveys and evaluations.

Review and Feedback

Who is reviewing or how is the application being reviewed?

A majority BIPOC panel of arts leaders, professionals, and practitioners from the M-AAA region will review the applications.

Will feedback be provided on draft applications?

No. However, M-AAA offers roundtable discussions and office hours to discuss the application process with staff.

If my organization does not get selected for a grant, will panel feedback be provided?

Yes, feedback will be provided at the time of grant status notification.

Further Assistance and Contact Information

How can I find out more about the application process and requirements?

Visit the M-AAA Cultural Sustainability website at www.maaa.org, or attend office hours listed on the website.

I have more questions! Whom do I ask?

For more questions, contact culturalsustainability@maaa.org and a program officer will respond.