Artist Opportunity Grant
Guidelines and Tips

Artist Opportunity Grants (AOGs) remove financial barriers between artists and game-changing experiences to advance their careers. If you are an artist who is 18 years old or older, live in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Mercer, Lawrence, Somerset, Venango, Washington, or Westmoreland county and are not enrolled in an undergraduate art degree program you can receive an AOG. You can apply for between $250 and $2,500.

These grants will not help you make your art. AOGs will help you acquire skills to improve your work, pay for childcare while you acquire those skills, document your work, ship your work, buy a plane ticket, pay residency and lesson fees and many other expenses that other grant programs do not cover.

These grants support artists: self-taught or classically trained, makers, musicians, actors, writers, poets, performers, dancers, digital or analog, multi-platform. Emerging or established, all are welcome and encouraged to apply. AOGs are for people – not bands, organizations or groups of artists.

How to apply:
1. Read the AOG guidelines below.
2. Download the application.
3. Gather the required grant applications materials.
4. Complete the application.
5. Email your completed application and supporting materials to aog@pittsburghartscouncil.org by midnight on the day of the deadline.

Artist Opportunity Grants are panel-reviewed. Applicants will receive notice of funding decisions approximately 8-10 weeks after the grant deadline.

Special thanks to The Heinz Endowments, The Pittsburgh Foundation, and the Hillman Foundation, whose generous support makes Artist Opportunity Grants possible. Thanks also to the New York Foundation for the Arts, whose Special Opportunity Stipend program served as a model for this fund.
AOG Guidelines

These guidelines will give suggestions for writing the strongest application you can. After reading these guidelines, take some time and think about whether what you want to do fits within this grant program.

If you have any questions, we are here to help. Contact Grants and Membership Manager Shaqui Scott at sscott@pittsburghartscouncil.org or 412-391-2060 ext. 223 with any questions or concerns.

What is a “game-changing experience to advance your career?”

There is no right way to succeed as a working artist. Each AOG application details an opportunity that could be very important to that artist. However, successful applications do have some things in common.

- The experience is something that artist has not done before;
- There is a direct connection between the experience and reaching a career goal; and
- It is the right time in the artist’s career for this experience.

The best way to understand the types of opportunities these grants fund is to take a look at past grants at www.pittsburghartscouncil.org/aog.

What is a “career goal?”

Career goals are as individual as the artists who achieve them. Many factors impact the goals artists set for themselves including the type of work you create and whether you are emerging, established or in the sunset of your career. But common factors are that reaching the goal will build career momentum or build your resume. Examples include:

- Opportunities to expose your work to key audiences/collectors/editors;
- Learning skills that will help evolve your work;
- Exploring a new discipline;
- Studying with a new instructor/teacher/mentor.

Fundable opportunities do not have to be selective, just closely connected to your career goal. Many applications for selective opportunities do not tell us how important this experience could be for your work. If this experience is very selective or prestigious, please tell us.

What is not funded through Artist Opportunity Grants?

- Creating new work
- Performances or projects by artist collectives, ensembles, bands, or collaborations
- Primarily commercial endeavors such as booth fees to sell your work at a festival, the costs for pressing CDs or printing the cover art, setting up an e-commerce site or paying to promote your work online
- Travel costs for anyone other than the artist applying
• Marketing or PR
• Audition fees, studio rent, or materials to make your art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible Expenses</th>
<th>Ineligible Expenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel costs for the artist applicant (plane tickets, mileage, meals, and accommodations if you are more than 100 miles from home)</td>
<td>Travel expenses for anyone else OR Opportunities that have already happened OR Experiences that are underway before the panel meets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costs to document the opportunity or your work</td>
<td>Curatorial costs or curatorial projects</td>
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<td>Framing/mounting/shipping work for an exhibit</td>
<td>Supplies to create the work (including printing photographs) or self-publishing costs</td>
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<td>Conference registration costs</td>
<td>Teaching opportunities or opportunities designed to improve teaching skills</td>
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<td>Tuition, registration fees and other fees associated with the opportunity</td>
<td>Opportunities while you are enrolled in an undergraduate art degree program or any activity for which you would receive academic credit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childcare expenses</td>
<td>Pet sitting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson fees to study with a mentor</td>
<td>Your own artist fees or studio rent</td>
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<td>Costs to professionally mix and master music you have already recorded</td>
<td>Medical, legal, administrative, marketing, PR or accounting fees/expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment worth up to $500 necessary for the opportunity</td>
<td>Equipment not related to the opportunity or that costs more than $500</td>
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**Residencies:**
AOGs can fund residencies even if you are going to create work while there. AOGs cannot pay for the materials you will use to create during the residencies.

**Application tips:**
- You – the artist applicant – are responsible for including all information that the panelists need to understand your application.
- Share a draft of your application with a friend who does not work in your discipline to make sure you did not leave out anything important.
- Identity is Personal: We ask you to describe your identity in your own words because we want to see you through your eyes.
- The panelists want to know how this experience is new and unique for you and what you want to accomplish.

**Tools and tips for calculating travel expenses:**
• **How to estimate the cost of driving your own car:** Figure out how many miles you will drive and multiply that by the [IRS Mileage Rates](#).

• **How to estimate hotel and food costs:** Look up the daily reimbursement allowed (per diem) for US Government employees for your destination and multiply that by the number of days you will stay.

• **Inside the US:** [Office of Management and Budget Per Diem Rates for Travel in the US](#)

• **Outside the US:** [State Department Per Diem Rates for Travel Outside the US](#)

**IMPORTANT:** If you have recently received an AOG, you must wait at least 18 months before applying for another.

**About the AOG Application**

The Artist Opportunity Grant application includes a cover letter and answers to four questions. Your answer for each question cannot be more than one page long. These questions will lead you through the information the panelists want to know.

**Cover Letter: The Details**

The application cover letter tells us where you live, how to reach you and a little bit about your identity. We gather this information not just to report to our funders but also to make sure this process is fair and transparent.

**Question 1:** Tell us what kind of art you make and the next few steps in your career. Because we do not ask for work samples it is important you tell us directly and clearly.

**Question 2:** Describe the experience/opportunity you want us to fund.

**Question 3:** Tell us how this experience will help you achieve your career goals.

**Question 4:** How much will the experience cost? Which expenses do you want the grant to cover?

**Required Supporting Materials**

Your application is not complete unless you submit the following documents with your application.

- **REQUIRED FOR EVERYONE:** A resumé or CV (no more than two pages) documenting your career as an artist. Please include:
  - The milestones in your career. Tell us about the achievements that meant the most to you or gave your career some momentum.
Your art education. Formal or self-taught, you learned about art, share how.
Please do not include details of your non-art jobs.

**REQUIRED IF** you had to apply for/were invited to the experience you must submit a letter or email:
- Confirming the invitation/acceptance; and
- The date and location of the opportunity.

**REQUIRED IF** you are applying to study with a mentor you must submit:
- Letter or email confirming that you have been accepted as a student/mentee;
- Specifying the dates you will be studying; and
- A bio of mentor/instructor/teacher.

**OPTIONAL FOR EVERYONE:** Up to three pages of information about the opportunity.
Some suggestions:
- A description of the organization/event/experience from a website;
- Reviews or news articles or blog posts about the experience; or
- Materials that demonstrate the impact of the experience.

**Submit Your Application**
- All applications and supplemental materials must be submitted by email to aog@pittsburghartscouncil.org no later than 11:59 p.m. on the day of the deadline.
- Applications can be submitted as either PDFs or Microsoft Word documents (.doc or .docx).
- If you cannot submit the application in these formats please contact Shaqui Scott at sscott@pittsburghartscouncil.org to find a way for you to submit your application.
- We encourage everyone who applies to complete a profile on the Pittsburgh Artist Registry www.pittsburghartistregistry.org so we can link to your profile when we announce our grantees.

**What Happens Next?**
- **Confirmation Email:** Within two days of the grant deadline you will get an email confirming that we received your application. If you do not receive a confirmation email, contact Shaqui Scott to make sure we received your application.
- **GPAC Review:** GPAC staff read all the applications to make sure they are complete and eligible for a grant.
  - If your application is incomplete, we will send you an email and ask you to submit the missing materials.
  - If your application is ineligible it will not be reviewed by the grant panel and we will send you an email to let you know.
- **Panel Review:** A grant panel will meet and score the eligible applications approximately six weeks after the application deadline.
  - Each panel is made up of four or five local artists.
The artists are selected after the application deadline to make sure that the panelists have the expertise needed to assess this group of applications.

The panelists receive paper copies of the application materials two weeks before the panel meets.

The panelists read and assess each application.

The panel meets for a day to discuss the applications and agree on a consensus score for each applicant.

Each application receives a score between 1 (terrible) and 5 (awesome).

These application guidelines are the basis for the panel guidelines and score the panel gives your application.

**Good news or bad news?**

About 10 days after the panel meets you will receive an email letting you know if you received a grant.