Grassroots Arts Program

Application Webinar

January 14, 2026

North Carolina Arts Council

Grassroots Arts Program Applications

Due:
March 2, 2026 at 11:59 pm

Grant amount:
TBD

Project period:
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027

At the State level, the Grassroots Arts Program is an invitational grant category.

- In most cases the Grassroots County Partner is a local arts agency

- In some cases, N.C. Arts Council will collaborate with a unit of county government or a school system to manage and distribute Grassroots funds

Grassroots County Partners are required to submit either a full or update Grassroots County Partner application as indicated in the application schedule [PDF].
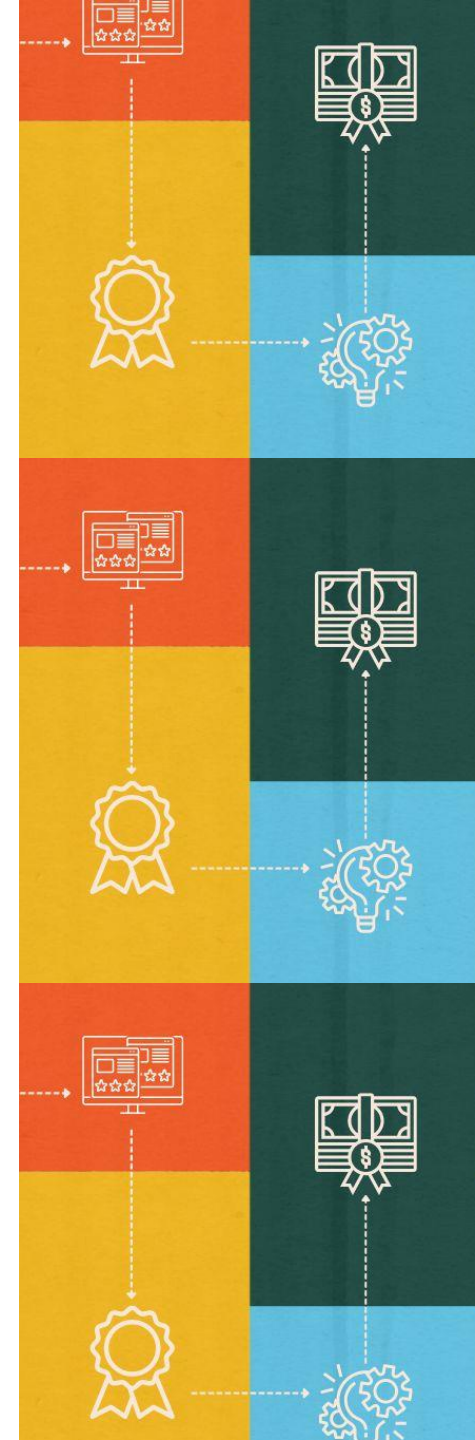
Getting Started

Application Tools on the Local Arts Council Resources Page

Local Arts Agency Resources Page | NC Arts Council

- Full Application schedule
- Grassroots Arts Program Base County Allotment Table: FY 2026-27

Grassroots Grant Guidelines

Grassroots Arts Program (GAP) Grants | NC Arts Council

- We recommend copying the narrative questions into a word document

Financial information

- Your organization will need to provide operating income and expenses for FY 2024-25, FY 2025-26 and projected financials for FY 2026-27.
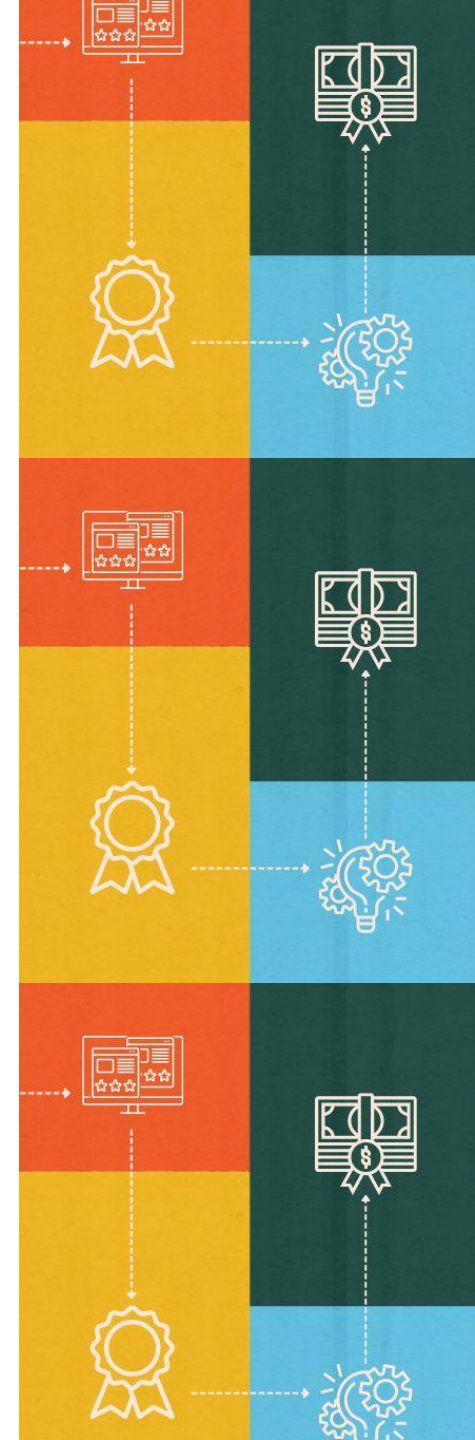
Guideline updates for 2026-27

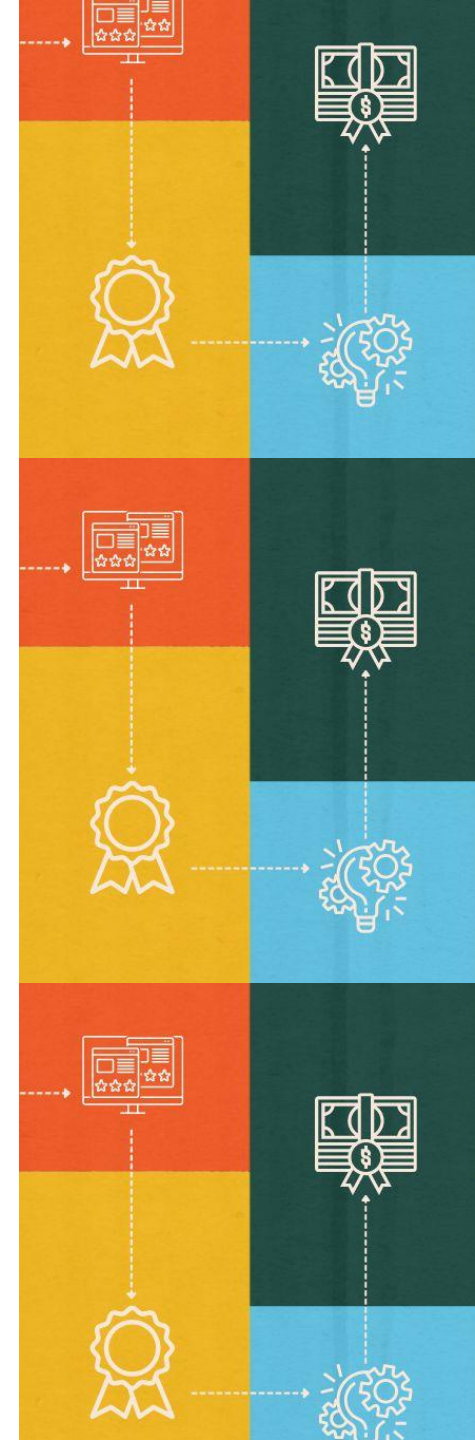## 1: New Language Around Partnerships

- **Grassroots County Partners**
  May use up to 50% of grant funds for operating expenses

- **School, Municipal, etc. Partners**
  Not eligible to use grant funds for operating expenses
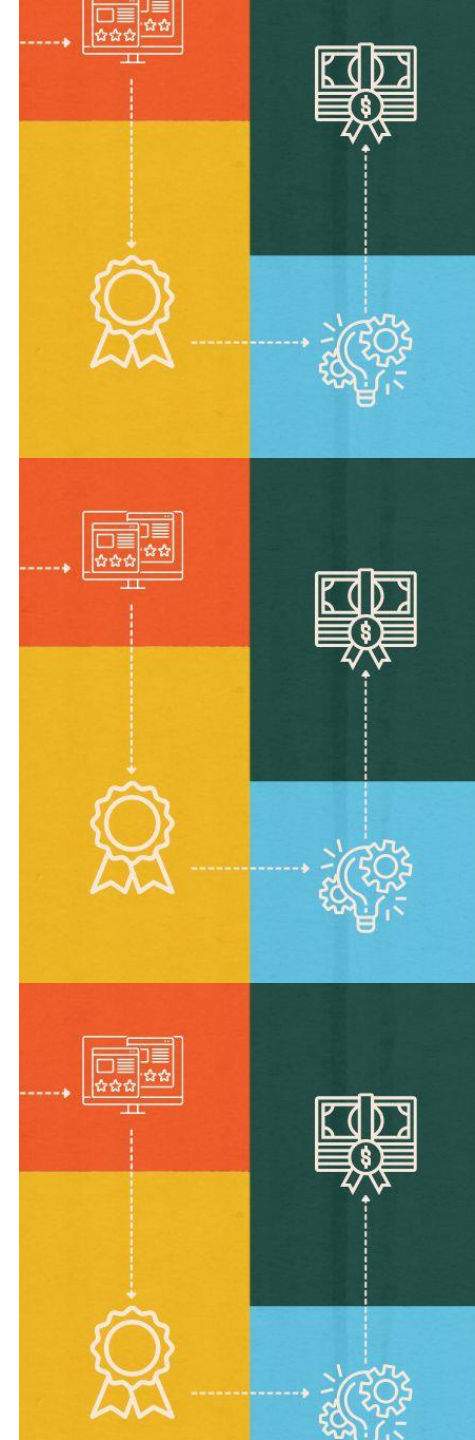
Guideline updates for 2026-27

2: Community Representation Percentage only applies to the 50% designated for arts programming or subgranting.
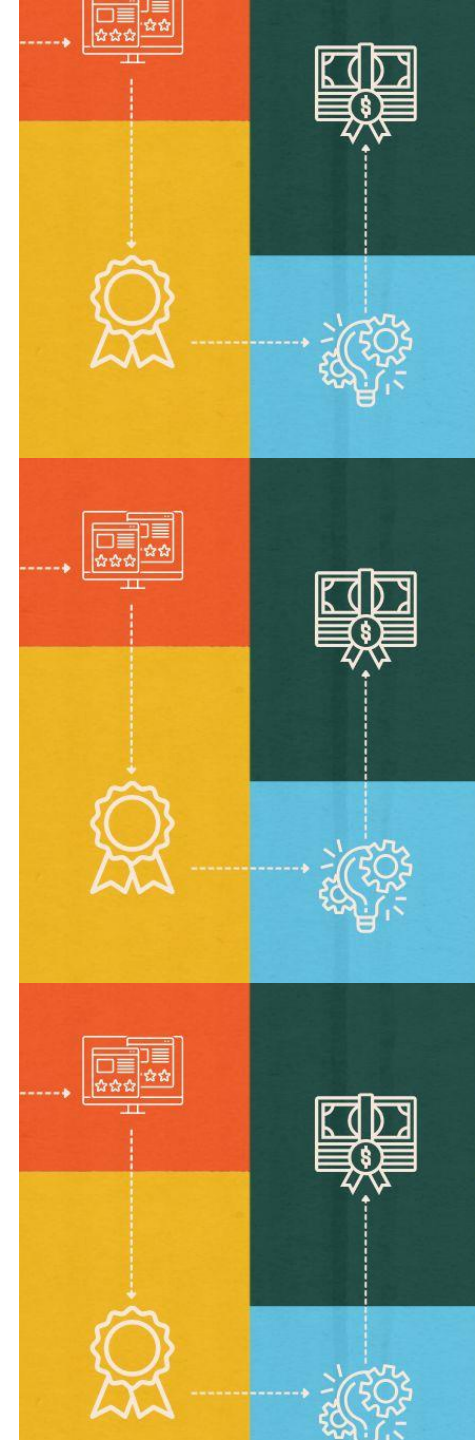
This change allows **all** arts organizations to use up to 50% of their total allotment for operating expenses.

Guideline updates for 2026-27

3. Allowable expenses have been expanded to include:

- Subgrants to individual artists
- Small capital expenditures
- Equipment and technology upgrades

New for 2026-27

New grant portal: [OPAL: Online Portal for Arts Leaders](#)

All applicants, whether they have applied to us in the past or are new to our grants, must register in the OPAL system before beginning an application.

Training resources for OPAL can be found at the following link: [Grant Platform Guide and Tutorials](#)

Please note: Current FY 2025-26 grantees will continue to use the GO Smart platform to submit final reports, which are due July 31, 2026.
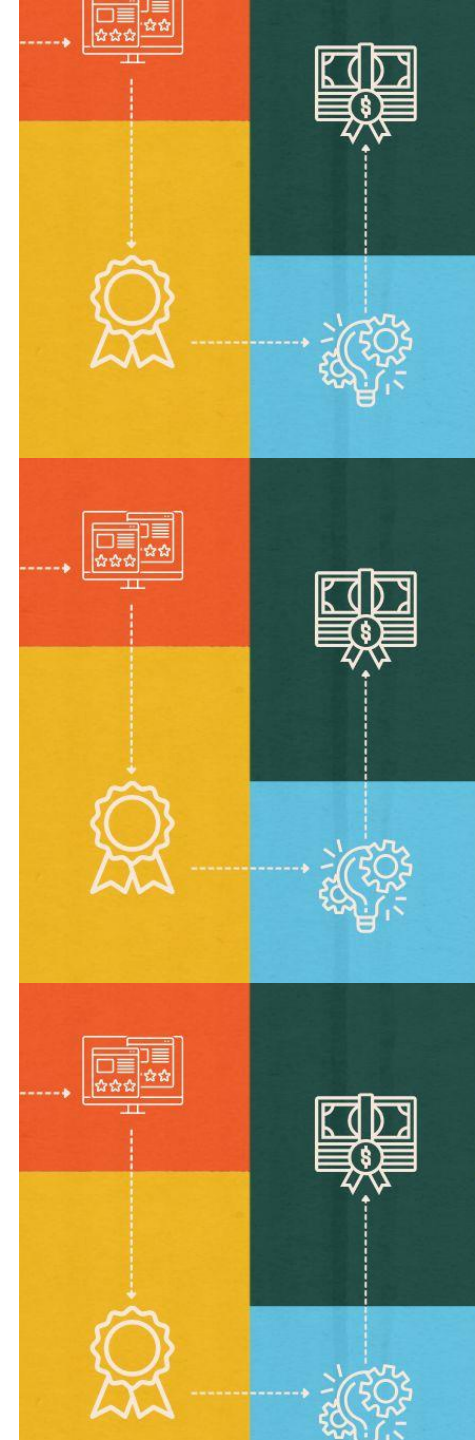
Registering an account in OPAL

On the OPAL homepage, click the "Register" button in the bottom-left corner.

From the "Registration Options" page, select whether you are applying as an organization or as an individual.

- Select **Organization**

Registering as an organization

Organization Search in OPAL: Follow the on-screen instructions to find your organization, then select the correct option and enter your contact information. Submit the form when complete.

If you don't see your organization in the search results, follow on-screen instructions and proceed to **OPAL's IRS database** to search for your organization and complete all required information. **Tip:** Adding "North Carolina" to the State field will narrow your search. If you know your organization's EIN, that's the fastest way to find it.
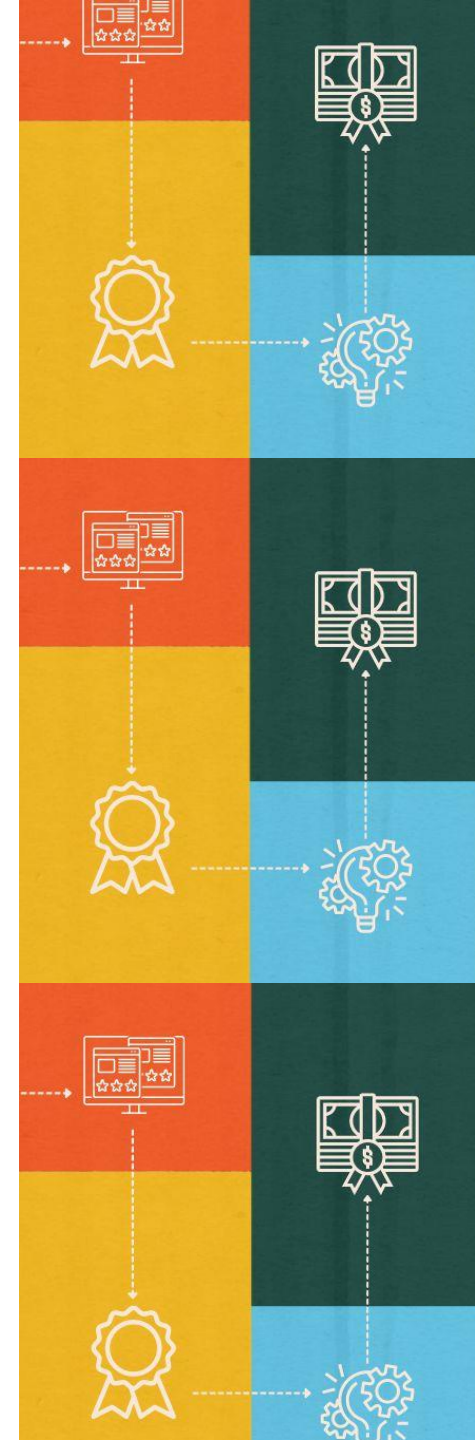
Complete registration and create password

After completing your registration as an organization, you'll see a confirmation message indicating your registration is complete. Check your email for a link to create your account password. If you don't receive the email after 30 minutes, please contact us for support.
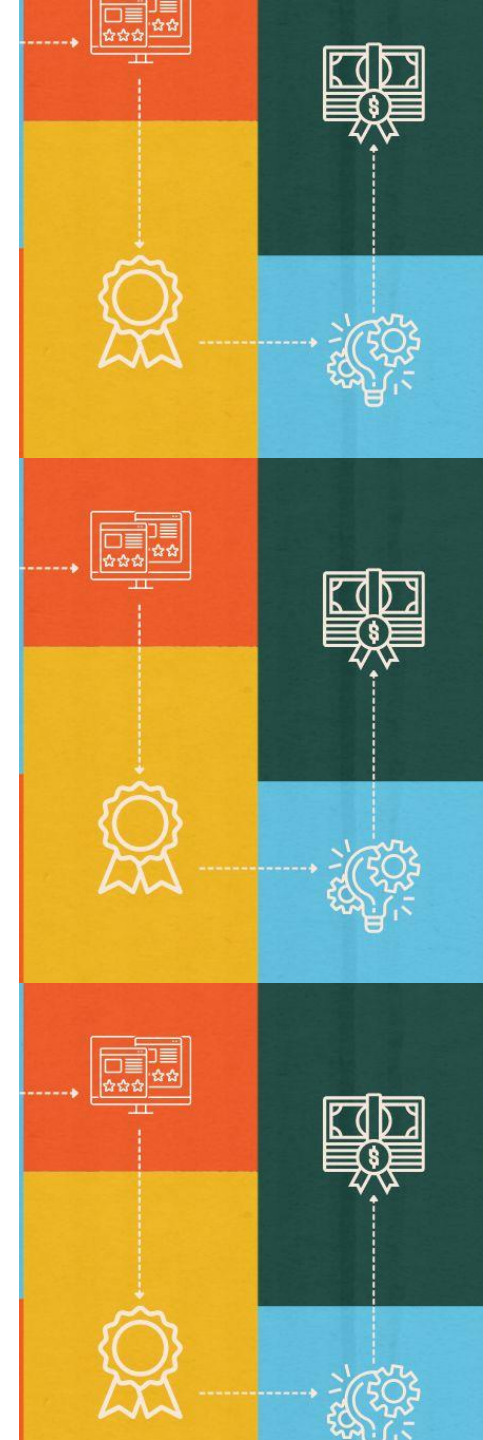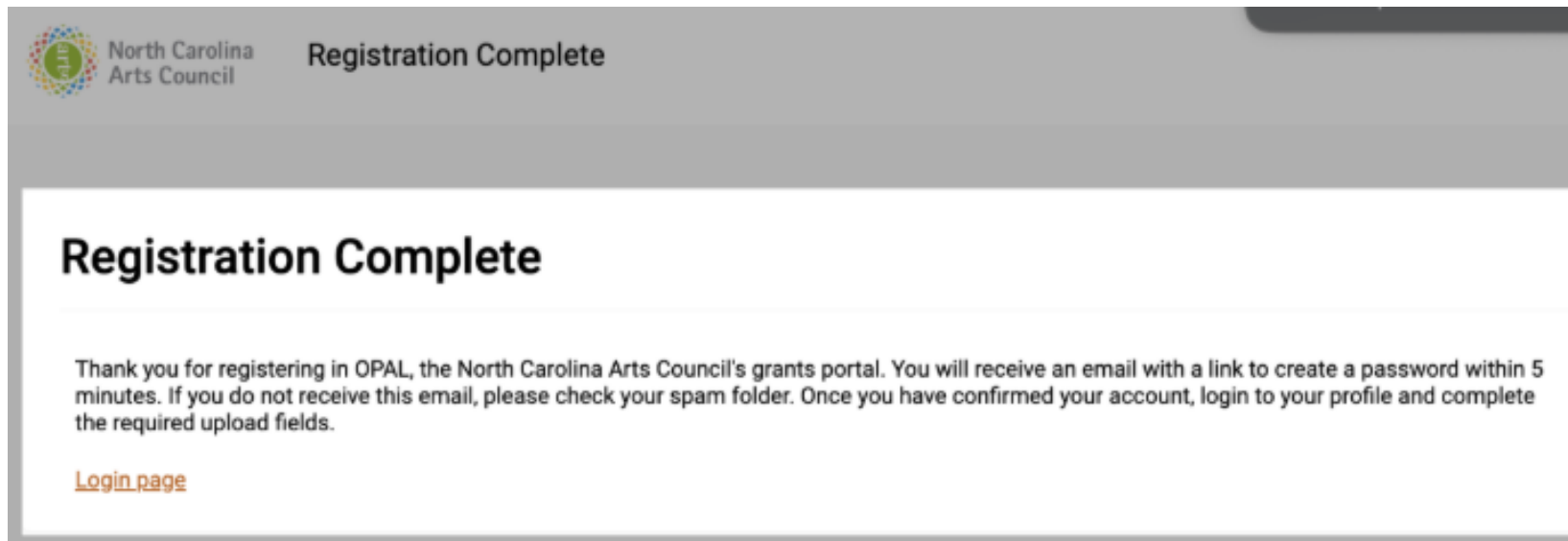
Sign in to OPAL

Sign in to OPAL using your credentials. You may be prompted to complete multi-factor authentication with a code sent to your email.

Tip: Select "Remember this device" to avoid repeating this step each time you log in.

Multi-Factor Authentication

✓ Verification code sent by email to a*****************@dncr.nc.gov. If you do not see the email, check your junk/spam folder.

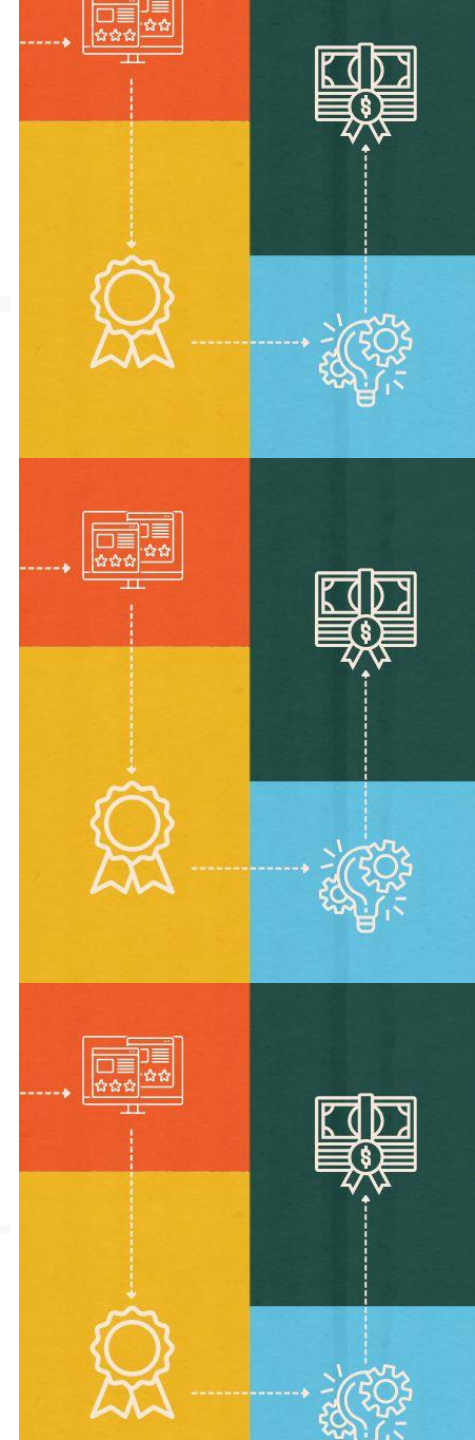Resend Code by Email

Verification Code:

Remember this device

Cancel   Submit

Applicant portal

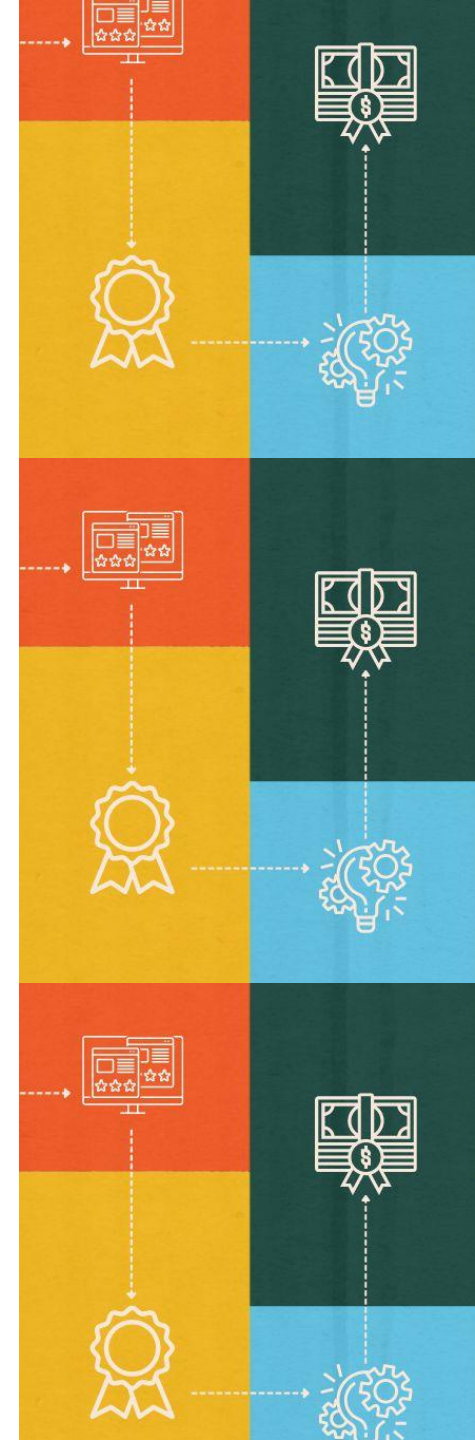When you sign into OPAL, you will access a customized portal for your organization that displays any applications, contracts, and reports in progress, as well as past completed items. Needed action items such as request revisions, contracts, and final reports due are also displayed on this page.

Find funding opportunities

Click "**Funding Opportunities**" at the top of your OPAL portal to view a list of grants.
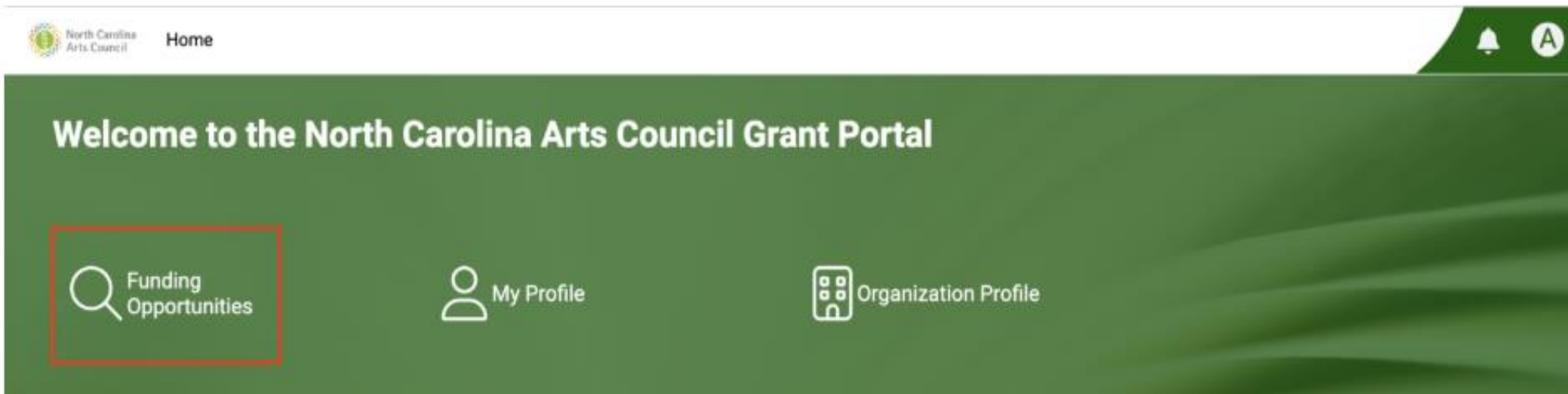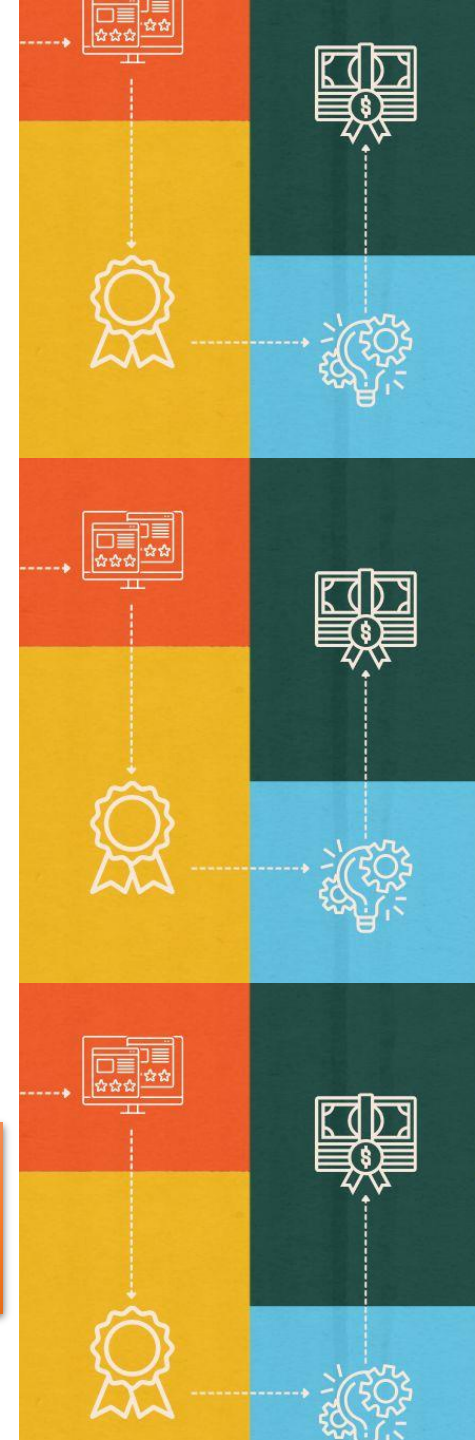
Start an application

On the "**Funding Opportunities**" page, find the Grassroots Grant and the "**Apply Now**" button next to it.

Funding Opportunities

Visit the North Carolina Arts Council Grants Dashboard to determine which grant categories you are eligible to apply for and to identify your staff contact.

1-11 of 11

| Fiscal Year	Grant Category	Application Close Date	Notes	Apply Button
FY26-27	Sustaining Support (Update Cycle)	03/02/2026 11:59 PM	Invite-only: theater, multi-arts, music, folklife, and arts in education disciplines ONLY	Apply Now
FY26-27	TAPS + Artist Support Grant for Lead Partners	03/02/2026 11:59 PM		Apply Now
FY26-27	Project Support	03/02/2026 11:59 PM	Open to arts projects of all disciplines	Apply Now
FY26-27	Grassroots Arts Program (Full Application)	03/02/2026 11:59 PM		Apply Now
FY26-27	Grassroots Arts Program (Update Application)	03/02/2026 11:59 PM		Apply Now
FY26-27	Sustaining Support (Open Call) + Statewide Service Organizations	03/02/2026 11:59 PM	Sustaining Support open call: literature, visual arts, film, and dance ONLY and Statewide Service Organizations	Apply Now

Start an application

Click the "**Start Application**" button to begin filling out your application.
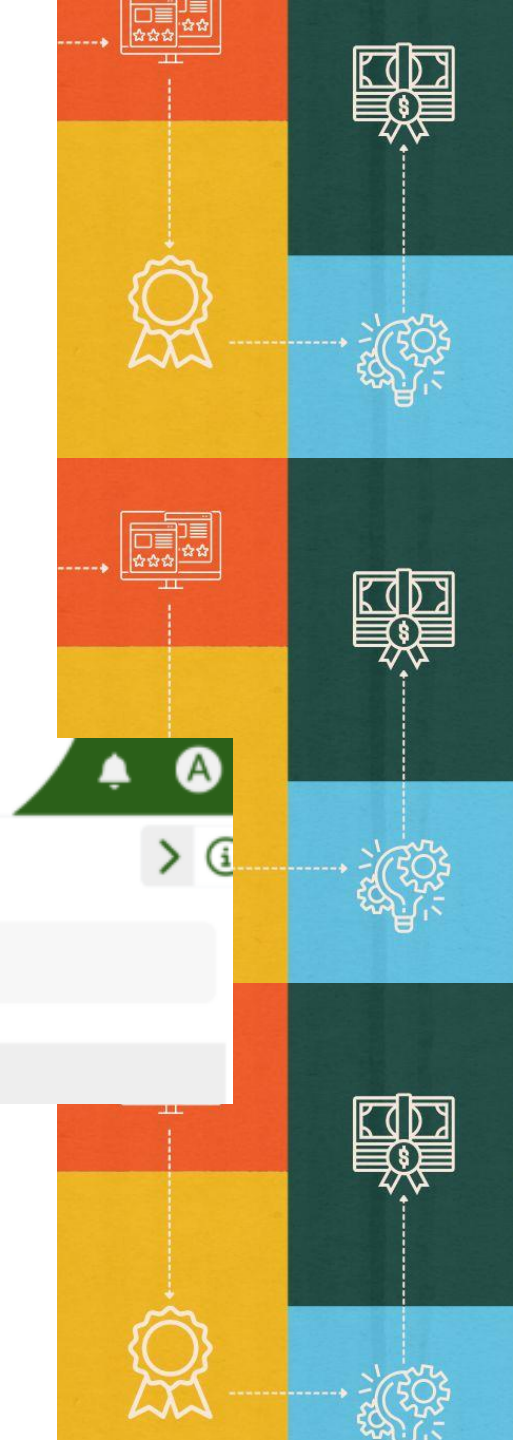
Navigating your application

- The notes function can be used to communicate with your N.C. Arts Council staff contact

- Collaborators

Add a collaborator

Select Collaborators button to add a grant collaborator. Use the "**+**" button to enter their information and use the **"Invite"** button. Once invited, collaborators will receive an email with instructions on how to proceed. Collaborators cannot submit applications.

Navigating your application

CONTACT **BEFORE YOU BEGIN** ORG INFO NARRATIVE BUDGET LOCAL SUPPORT MATERIALS WORK SAMPLES CERTIFICATION

Navigate the application from left to right via the tabs at the top of the page

- Use the "Save Draft" button to save your answers. **There is no auto-save**.

- Use the "Submit" button only once you have completed all tabs.

Profile information

Information on the "**Contact**" tab of your application is auto-filled from your profile. Use your profile avatar (a circle with an initial on the upper-right hand corner of the page) to access and edit your profile.

Application Contact

If the person completing the application is different than the organization contact, select "No" in the drop-down menu and enter their information.

* Is the contact for this grant application the same as the organization contact (listed above)?

Select One
Select One
Yes
No
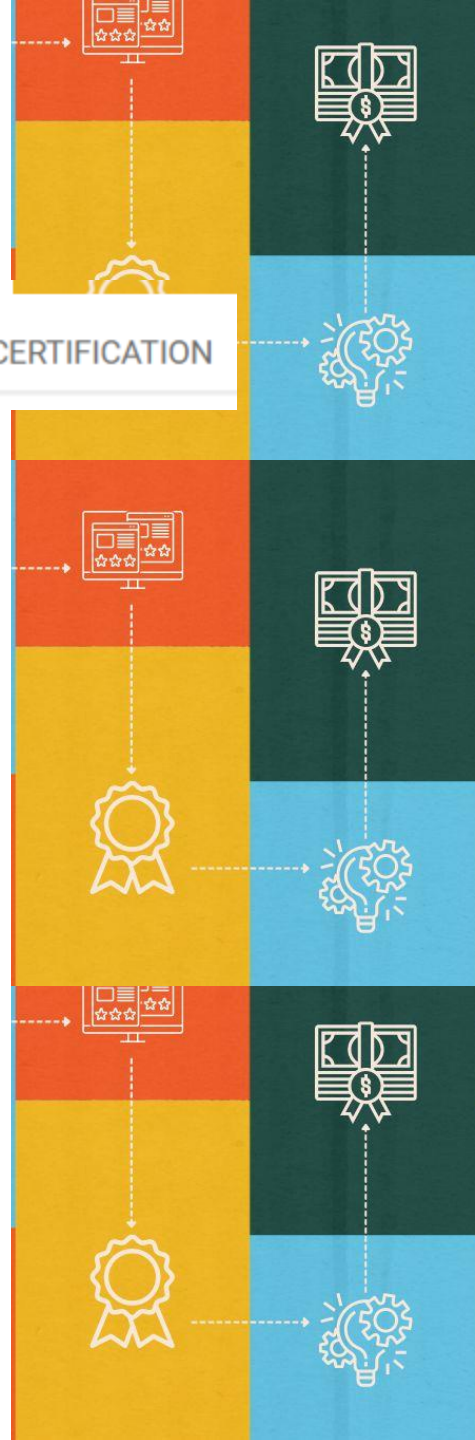
Authorized Signatory

The **authorized signatory** is the person authorized to sign grant contracts and documentation on behalf of your organization.

Authorized Signatory

* Authorized Signatory

This information is required. The authorized signatory is the person who signs the grant contract. Add or update signatory information in your organization's profile before submitting this application.

Name:
Title:
Phone:
Email:
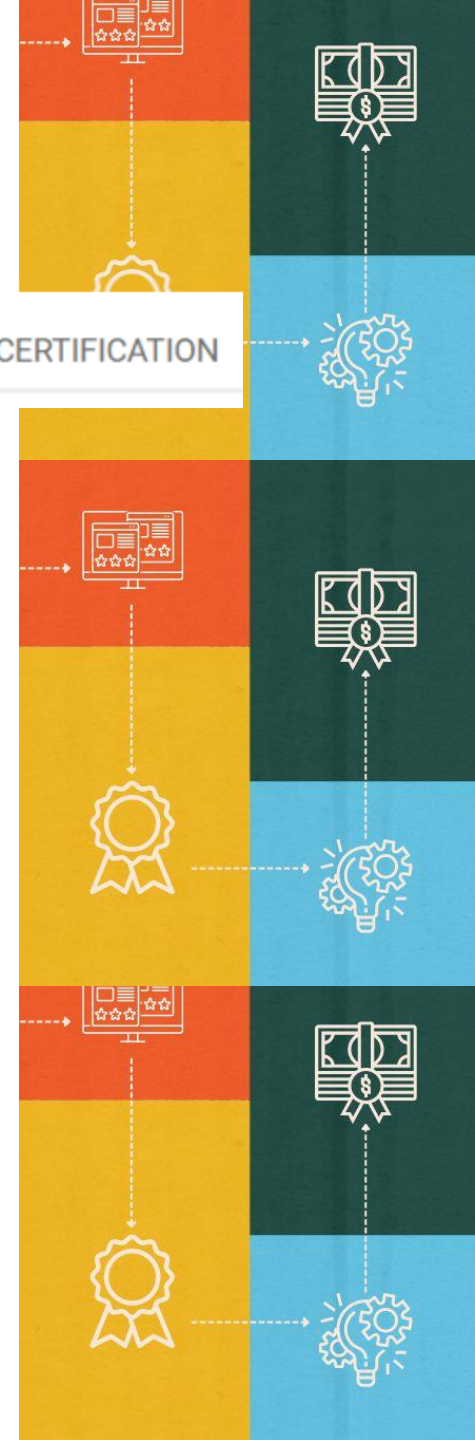
Before you begin

Certify you have done the following with your initials:

* Reviewed the Guidelines, as well as General Grant Policies and Eligibility Criteria for North Carolina Arts Council grants.

* Spoken with my staff contact at the North Carolina Arts Council.

* Are aware and agree to comply with all requirements related to the distribution of Grassroots Arts Program funds.

North Carolina Arts Council staff are available to [answer questions and provide assistance](#) as you prepare your grant application, including accessibility assistance or accommodations.
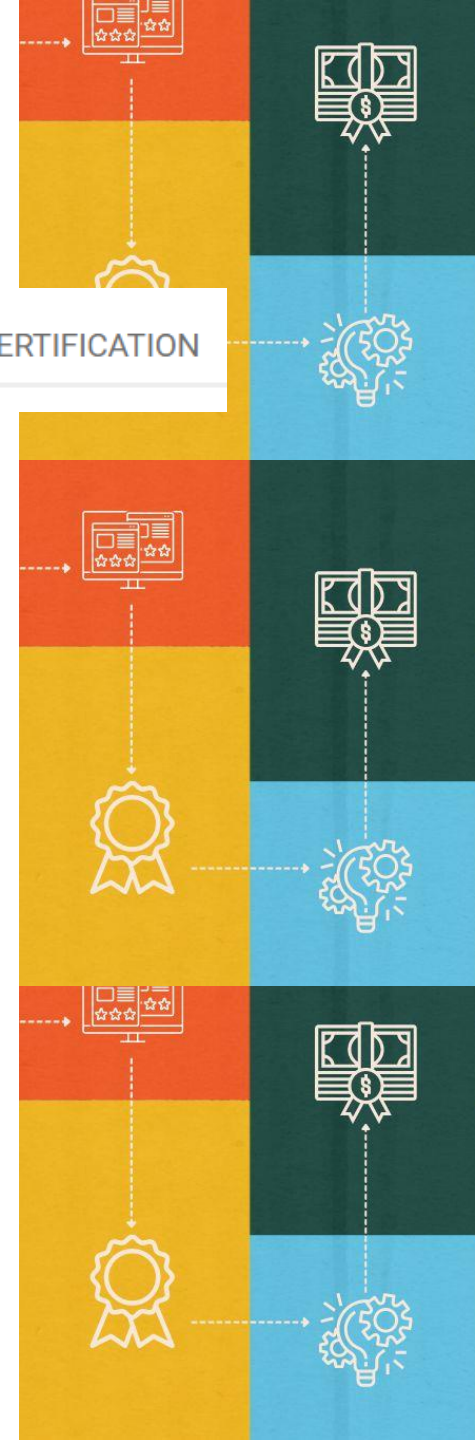
Organization Information

If you are a school or municipality select **Yes** and move onto the next section.

* Are you a public school or municipality?

No

Select One
Yes
No
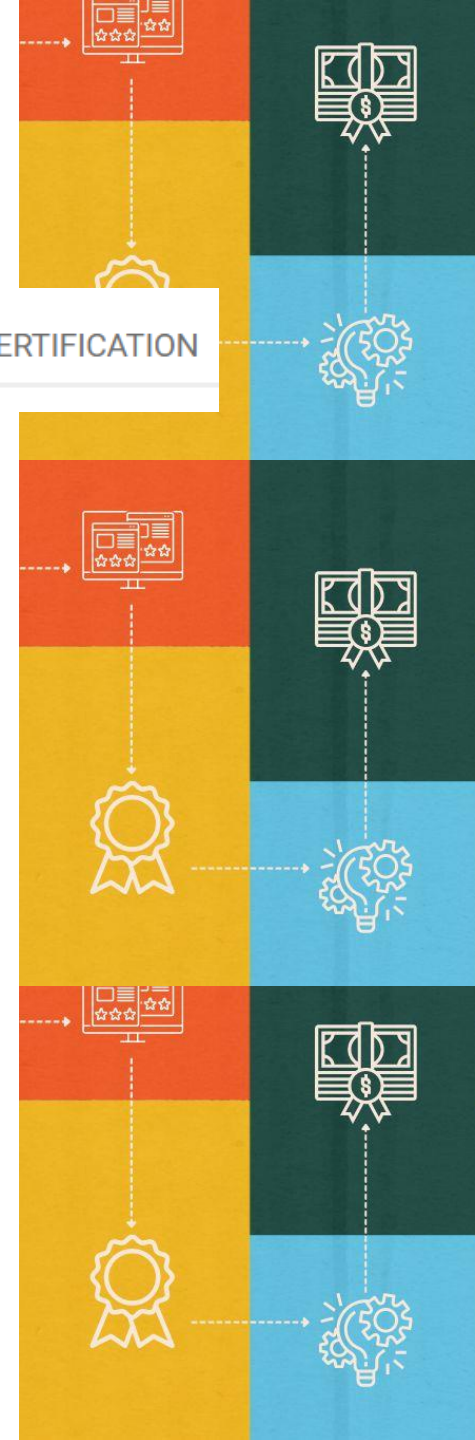
Organization Information

Add your Organizational Income & Expense **totals** for FY 24-25, FY 25-26 and FY 26-27 and complete the following questions:

* **Does your organization have an accumulated deficit totaling 5% or more of your last fiscal year's operating budget, or are you showing a shortfall for the last, current, or upcoming fiscal year?**

Select One ⌄ ↺

* **Upload a financial statement or audit for your most recently completed fiscal year.**

📤 **Drop files here or browse files**
Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: PDF, DOC

↺

* **Upload a list of your organization's current board members with contact information and board terms using this template**

Link: Board of Directors template

📤 **Drop files here or browse files**
Maximum file size: 2 GB

Budget Table

Use the "**Add Details**" button on the page to add your budget information.
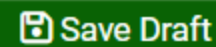
* Budget

Expenses

Income

≡ Add Details ↺
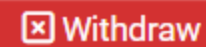
* Enter your total organizational budget (expenses) for the upcoming fiscal year

[   ] ↺

‹ Back

🖫 Save Draft   ✓ Submit   ⊠ Withdraw

Budget Table

Follow on-screen instructions to build your budget table:

- Click the "+" to add new rows; use the dropdown to select the expense type.

- **You must add a line for <u>every</u> dropdown expense and income type in <u>every</u> section.**
  - Enter 0 if an expense or income type is not applicable.

- Refer to <u>budget glossary</u> for defined budget terms.
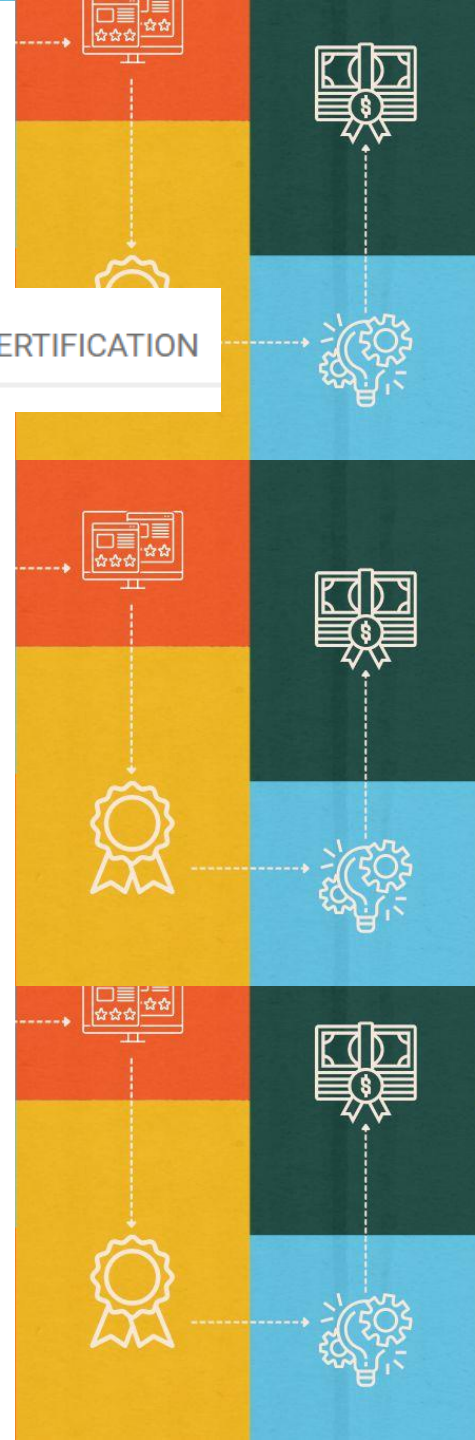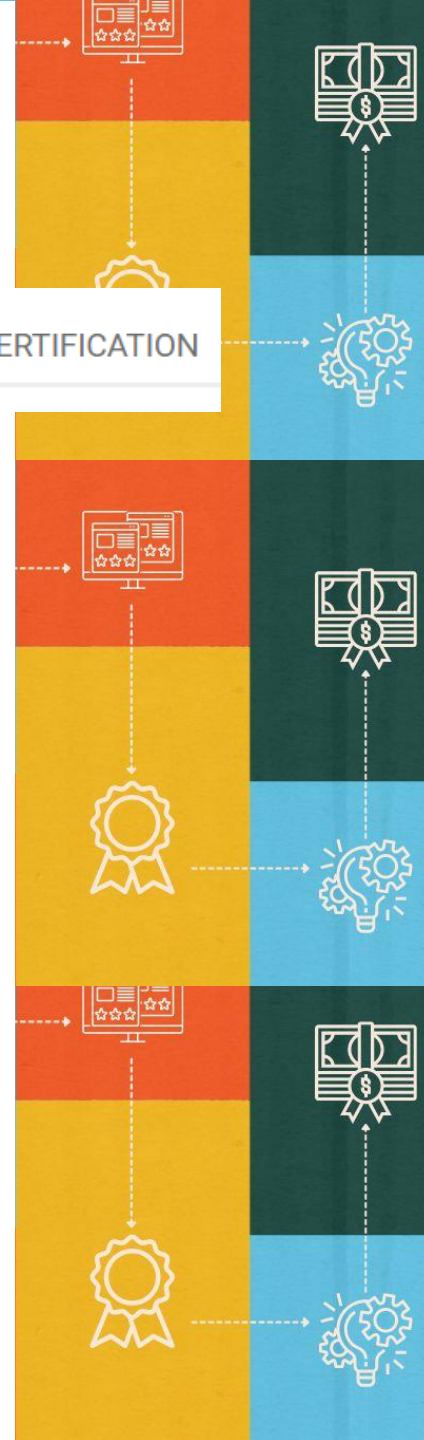
Budget Table

CONTACT | **BEFORE YOU BEGIN** | ORG INFO | NARRATIVE | BUDGET | LOCAL SUPPORT | MATERIALS | WORK SAMPLES | CERTIFICATION

Expenses

Personnel (A-G)

Personnel	Prior FY	Current FY	Upcoming FY
Select One			

Select One
A. Administrative
B. Artistic
C. Educational
D. Technical/production
E. Support
F. Fringe benefits
G. Fees/employment taxes

| | $0.00 | $0.00 | $0.00 |

| | Prior FY | Current FY | Upcoming FY |

Remember to save your work frequently!

Save Draft | Submit | Withdraw

Local Government Support Itemization

If you received financial or in-kind support from a local government source, enter that information on this tab by clicking the "Add Details" button.

* **Local government support itemization**

[☰ Add Details] ↺

Select the best category below for each local government support answer set.

> **ⓘ Instructions**
>
> Please list each source, name, and amount of local government support for the current fiscal year.
>
> - **Category:** Select the category of local government support.
> - **Full Name:** Give the full name of the local government agency or organization that provided support.
> - **Amount:** Enter the dollar amount of local government support.

Category	Full Name	Amount
Select One ▾		

Select One
Grant or contract with local government partner, reflected in your operating budget
Investments provided by local government partner not reflected in your operating budget
Facilities or in-kind investment

$0.00

Save

Grassroots Arts Program

Update Application Narrative Questions

Update Application Narrative

Grant Title:

For Organization Support and Grassroots (Full and Update) categories

- Type "Arts programs and administrative support"

* **Please enter the upcoming fiscal year Grassroots Arts Program state allocation for your county**

Consult the upcoming fiscal year Grassroots Arts Program "Base County Allotment Table" under the Grassroots Arts Program (GAP) Application Tools header to determine your allocation amount.

* **What is the projected amount of your Grassroots Arts Program allocation that will be spent for arts programming?**

* **What is the projected amount of your Grassroots Arts Programs allocation that will be spent for operating support?**

Update Application Narrative

* Describe any significant changes in your organization (i.e. staff, facilities, financial, or organizational structure changes) that have occurred since your last application

500 words left

* Provide a description of the programs you will conduct with your upcoming Grassroots Art Program funds. Include information about the artistic content of each program (i.e. artists involved, how and why they were chosen, and rate of payment for their services)

500 words left

Support Materials

Applicants have the option to submit additional support materials to strengthen their grant proposal and provide evidence that builds a strong case for the application. A few examples to consider include a current strategic plan, sample brochures, or marketing materials for new initiatives. Please provide a brief description for each item.

📤 **Drop files here or browse files**

Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: PDF, DOC

Grassroots Arts Program

Full Application Narrative Questions

Full Application Narrative

Grant Title:

For Organization Support and Grassroots (Full and Update) categories

- Type "Arts programs and administrative support"

* Please enter the upcoming fiscal year Grassroots Arts Program state allocation for your county

Consult the upcoming fiscal year Grassroots Arts Program "Base County Allotment Table" under the Grassroots Arts Program (GAP) Application Tools header to determine your allocation amount.

* What is the projected amount of your Grassroots Arts Program allocation that will be spent for arts programming?

* What is the projected amount of your Grassroots Arts Programs allocation that will be spent for operating support?

Full Application Narrative

County overview

Briefly describe the county you serve; include population and demographics. Describe notable economic, social, and cultural changes in your county in the past three years. Describe how your organization contributes to the local and state economy. Include employment and visitor statistics, and any other forms of economic impact data you track. (500 words)

Examples of what you might include:
- What is your county known for?
- How many incorporated towns are in your county?
- Who are the largest employers?
- Who are your community partners?
- Include economic data and list any major schools/universities.
- What is your organization's role is in your county?

Narrative – Programs and Services

Programs and Services

Describe key artistic programs and activities your organization has planned for the upcoming fiscal year. Indicate if these programs occur annually and how they serve the geographic diversity of the county. Describe how program choices demonstrate improvement or innovation. If chosen, describe artists selected for programs and indicate which programs utilize Grassroots Arts Program funding.

Examples of what you might include:
- Key artistic programs. Not past programs but planned programs for next fiscal year.
- Highlight the variety of art forms in your programming– visual, music, dance, theatre, traditional/folk, etc.
- What artists are you bringing in? How did you choose them?
- Community engagement and collaborative programs.
- Talk about how you integrate accessibility and inclusion into your programming.
- How are these programs serving your ENTIRE county?
- Do not include fundraisers.

Narrative – Programs and Services

Describe services you provide to arts organizations in the county and how your organization partners with them

Examples:
- How do you maintain relations with other arts organizations in your county?
- What methods do you use to learn what other local arts organizations are doing in your county?
- How do you support each other's missions?

Describe services you provide to individual artists in your county and your participation in the Artist Support Grant program

Examples:
- Do you have a directory? Community resource portal?
- Host roundtables and meetings?
- Continuing education and training opportunities?
- Arts markets? Fiscal sponsorship? Gallery space? Studio space?

Narrative – Programs and Services

CONTACT   **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**   ORG INFO   NARRATIVE   BUDGET   LOCAL SUPPORT   MATERIALS   WORK SAMPLES   CERTIFICATION

Describe the overall process used to subgrant Grassroots Arts Program funds to other groups. Include information on how the availability of funds is publicized, subgrant process timeline, assistance offered to applicants, application review system, and composition of subgrant panel.

- How do you recruit new applicants and educate them on the grant guidelines?
- Where do you promote grant availability?
- How do you compose your panel? Explain how your recruitment process ensures diverse race, age, profession, geography in the panel make up?
- Monitoring and reporting progress. How do you plan for and avoid last minute problems?

Narrative – Programs and Services

Describe arts in education programs you conduct and/or fund that benefit youth in your community.

- How many schools do you serve?
- Afterschool, during school, summer camps?
- Community workshops?
- Who are your teaching artists? How do you support their growth?

Narrative – Programs and Services

Describe how your organization engages populations in your county who have limited opportunities to experience arts programs due to factors such as education, geography, ethnic or cultural diversity, or economic constraints. Include outreach or artistic programs you conduct and fund for the aforementioned communities.

- How is accessibility and inclusion part of your overall mission?
- How do you connect with various populations in your community?
- Do you have an advisory committee devoted to diversity and inclusion?
- Do you achieve this via subgrants? Internal programs? Both?

Narrative – Organizational Strength

CONTACT   **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**   ORG INFO   NARRATIVE   BUDGET   LOCAL SUPPORT   MATERIALS   WORK SAMPLES   CERTIFICATION

List names, titles, and responsibilities of key staff members. Provide salary range and benefit information for staff positions. Describe the board of directors' system for evaluating organizational leadership.

- Full time vs part time?
- Salary vs hourly?
- How long they have served in their roles?
- Describe any benefit packages offered to employees

Describe your board of directors and key responsibilities, including committee participation requirements. Describe your organization's board rotation policy and how new members are recruited/trained.

- Board member qualifications, demographics, and committees
- Responsibility of board members to recruit
- Board member expectations
- Financial requirements

Narrative – Organizational Strength

CONTACT **BEFORE YOU BEGIN** ORG INFO NARRATIVE BUDGET LOCAL SUPPORT MATERIALS WORK SAMPLES CERTIFICATION

Describe your organization's planning process and timetable for updating strategic plans. Briefly summarize key goals and objectives of your current strategic plan

- What are the key points of your current plan?
- When was your last strategic plan completed?
- What is your evaluation process like? How do you inform the process?
- How often do you refer to this plan?
- Anything new, interesting, or a point of departure?

Briefly describe the facilities in which your organization conducts its primary operations. Indicate if you own, lease, or occupy donated space

- Tell us about you space of operation
- Partnership with the city or county?
- What is unique about your space?

Narrative – Organizational Strength

CONTACT   **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**   ORG INFO   NARRATIVE   BUDGET   LOCAL SUPPORT   MATERIALS   WORK SAMPLES   CERTIFICATION

Describe your organization's financial condition. Include information about debt, deficits, endowments, surpluses, or cash reserves. Describe how your organization exercises effective fiscal control and accountability

- Do you have financial policy and procedures in place?
- What's you external auditing process like?
- Do you have a finance committee?
- Line of credit?
- Cash reserves?

Describe your organization's fundraising strategies. Include information on your annual fund campaign and fundraising events. Specify the percentage of annual revenue toward your operating budget garnered from these activities

- Annual Fund timeline and plan
- Signature fundraisers

Narrative – Organizational Strength

CONTACT   **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**   ORG INFO   NARRATIVE   BUDGET   LOCAL SUPPORT   MATERIALS   WORK SAMPLES   CERTIFICATION

Describe your organization's marketing strategies, including information about use of your website and social media for promotion. Describe how you evaluate the success of these efforts

- Annual marketing plan
- Social media strategy
- Media partners or sponsors
- How do you measure success?

Support Materials

Applicants have the option to submit additional support materials to strengthen their grant proposal and provide evidence that builds a strong case for the application. A few examples to consider include a current strategic plan, sample brochures, or marketing materials for new initiatives. Please provide a brief description for each item.

📤 **Drop files here or browse files**

Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: PDF, DOC

Support Materials

CONTACT **BEFORE YOU BEGIN** ORG INFO NARRATIVE BUDGET LOCAL SUPPORT [MATERIALS] WORK SAMPLES CERTIFICATION

Required Uploads (Full Application)

- Upload a list of your prior fiscal year subgrants (template provided)

- Upload a list of your prior fiscal year programs or subgrantees that document how you met the community representation requirement (template provided)

Required uploads

* Upload a list of your prior fiscal year subgrants using this template

Link: Previous fiscal year subgrant list template

⬆ Drop files here or **browse files**
Maximum file size: 2 GB

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* Upload a list of your prior fiscal year programs or subgrantees that document how you met the multicultural requirement using this template

Link: Previous fiscal year multicultural requirement template

⬆ Drop files here or **browse files**
Maximum file size: 2 GB

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Work Samples

Works Samples (Full Application)

- Submit artist work samples that demonstrate the talent of the artist(s) you plan on presenting in the coming fiscal year. Provide at least three and no more than ten work samples (images, audio files, video files, or documents).

ℹ Work Samples

Submit artist work samples that demonstrate the talent of the artist(s) involved. Provide at least one and no more than ten work samples (images, audio files, video files, documents) by uploading work samples directly or providing URL links in the web link collection form and uploading. Do NOT submit highly edited promotional materials. Include this information for each work sample:

- Title
- Artist/Company
- Date premiered or created
- Time stamp of work sample
- Description and additional information

* Work Samples

Upload weblink form and/or work sample files.

📁 **Drop files here or browse files**
Maximum file size: 2 GB

↺

‹ Back   💾 Save Draft   ✓ Submit   ⊠ Withdraw   Next ›

Certification Page

* **Certification**

By initialing I certify that all information contained in this application is true and accurate.

5 characters left

‹ Back   💾 Save Draft   ✓ Submit   ☒ Withdraw   Next ›

Questions?

If you need help with your application, or have specific questions, contact:

Eastern North Carolina

Sam Gerweck

(919) 814-6523

sam.gerweck@dncr.nc.gov

Western North Carolina

Janelle Wienke

(919) 814-6506

janelle.wienke@dncr.nc.gov

Grassroots Arts Program

Application Webinar

North Carolina Arts Council
www.NCArts.org

A DIVISION OF
DNCR
North Carolina Department of
Natural & Cultural Resources

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