Montana Arts Council
Strategic Investment Grant (SIG) Guidelines

The Montana Arts Council (MAC) is the agency of state government charged with promoting the arts to make a positive difference in the individual and collective lives of the citizens of the state. It accomplishes this mission by helping to develop the creative potential of all Montanans, advance education, create economic vibrancy and revitalize communities through the arts. The Montana Arts Council is funded by state and federal tax dollars. Strategic Investment Grants provide public dollars to support activities taking place within the state and the nation that benefit the citizens of the state of Montana.

Program Description
Strategic Investment Grants (SIG) is a program that provides up to $1,000 in matching funds to professional artists, nonprofit 501(c)(3) arts organizations and Preschool–Grade 12 teachers in Montana to pursue an art-related activity. Applicants are awarded grants in one of the following categories:

Professional Development | Market Expansion
Public Outreach Arts Activities | Challenges and Emergencies

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Eligible Applicants
Applicants must be 18 years of age, a U.S. citizen and a resident of Montana. (Residency requires having lived in Montana for at least one full year prior to the activity start date.)

Applicants must be one of the following:
- ☐ Artist: Visual, literary, performing, folk, traditional or other type of artist seriously pursuing his/her art career, whether s/he is an emerging, mid-career or established artist, or a group of collaborating artists.
- ☐ Preschool-Grade 12 Teacher: Currently employed as a Pre K – 12 Teacher who wants to develop skills in an art form or in teaching an art form.
- ☐ Arts Organization: An Arts Organization that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization incorporated in the state of Montana with a mission to produce and/or promote the arts; be based in Montana and operating for at least one year; show solid and extensive outreach to a larger community.

Ineligible applicants include:
- ☐ High school students and degree-seeking college students (graduate or undergraduate) and non-degree seeking students receiving college credit for the proposed activity
- ☐ Currently enrolled participants in the market-ready workshops of the Montana Artrepreneur Program (MAP)
- ☐ Individuals applying for a repeat of a previously funded activity
- ☐ Recipients of Public Value Partnership funding of $2,000 or more in the same fiscal year
- ☐ History-based, civic or other non-arts organizations (Artist/Arts Organizations may partner with such an organization provided the proposed activity is primarily the arts. Only one application may be submitted for the activity.)
- ☐ Higher education institutions

- Montana Arts Council staff or members of its current governing body, or anyone connected to them by one degree of relationship --by blood, marriage or shared household. (Eligibility resumes one year after leaving the Council or staff.)

Activity Criteria
- Be of artistic value and to the benefit of an artist or community. "Community" is defined as, but not limited to, geographic, demographic, political, educational, economic, ethnic, or social, where common interests and values are shared.
- Encourage public outreach extending beyond the individual or organization applying, making it worthy of state funding.

Ineligible activities include:
- Activities based in the schoolroom. (School activities may apply through MAC's Arts Education programs.)
- Arts activities that feature primarily student artists.
- Activities or travel that takes place outside of the United States.
- Research.
- Fund-raisers.

Grant Categories
Grants are awarded in four categories to assist the artist, teacher or arts organization in accomplishing a particular activity. Please select the category that is most applicable to your situation based on the category description. The application questions are tailored to the category you select.

Professional Development: Grants to help build individual art skills and knowledge, arts careers and/or arts businesses.
Eligible examples
- Attend a seminar, conference, workshop or residency program to develop specific artistic or business skills
- Engage a recognized professional for training purposes or to develop strategic or business plans
- Travel support for expenses associated with a professional opportunity such as participating in an exhibition or a conference

Market Expansion: Grants to help increase exposure and improve marketing or promotion, opportunities for exhibition, performance and/or sales to a wider or new audience.
Eligible examples
- Printing and advertising for a specific activity
- Exhibiting at retail or wholesale trade shows or booking conferences
- Attending a public reception to promote work
- Public presentation that brings in new audiences

Public Outreach Arts Activities: Grants for ongoing or one-time arts activities by arts organizations and/or artists that are designed to reach a new or expanded audience.
Individuals may apply for support such as:
- Performances or exhibitions
- Workshops or a series of learning opportunities
- Demonstrations of traditional or contemporary arts
- Public readings
- Opportunities for community participation in the arts

Organizations may apply for support for an exemplary arts program such as:
- A single exhibition, performance, or 2-3 related events, such as a reading series
- An annually or regularly recurring event, such as a festival
- An artist residency or commission
- A literary publication
- A traditional arts program that presents and documents Montana's traditional arts and artists
- Opportunities for community participation in the arts

Challenges and Emergencies: Grants to provide resources for artists or arts organizations experiencing challenges or emergencies that impede your ability to continue your work.
Eligible examples
- ☐ Flood, fire, earthquake, storm, etc.
- ☐ Theft, vandalism
- ☐ Severe illness or unexpected physical impairment

Funding
Grants of up to $1,000 are available and must be matched 1:1 with other funds or support (cash and/or in-kind). See the Budget section for specific details. Grant monies will be distributed until the funding for the fiscal year (July 1-June 30) is depleted. Applicants may submit multiple applications but may not be funded for more than a combined total of $1000 per fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

For Organizations: Expanding your participation and audience is the program's goal for organizations. Bringing in a different outside artist/performer/writer etc. each year is acceptable. The application will be more competitive if you can express how this activity adds something to the work/presentations previously done.

For Individuals: Expanding your career and expertise or skills is the program's goal for individuals. The application must be for a different direction or marked expansion from a previous activity.

Application Deadline
The deadline to submit applications is the fifteenth (15th) of each month. If the application deadline is a weekend or holiday, applications may be submitted on the first business day following the deadline. The online application system will accept applications until 11:59 p.m., M.S.T. (or M.D.T as applicable), however; agency staff is only available to answer questions and provide technical support until 5:00 p.m. *It is recommended you apply at least two months prior to your activity. Activities will not be funded retroactively.* Challenges and Emergency applications will be reviewed when submitted and are not subject to the same deadline and review structure.

Application Criteria
- ☐ Provide clear, complete information on the activity with enough detail for the committee to comprehend the vision and full scope of the activity.
- ☐ Have a clear and balanced budget, showing both the cost of the activity AND the cash or in-kind match, with all grant funds requested tied to eligible costs. ***If you are confused about the budget, please contact staff before you submit your application. Incorrect budgets will be returned to the applicant and not reviewed by the committee.***
- ☐ Be complete with all information requested.
- ☐ Hard-copy applications will not be accepted. You must apply online. If you do not have reasonable access to a computer or high speed internet connection or have other technology challenges, please contact Kristin Han Burgoyne kburgoyne@mt.gov or 406-444-6449.

Budget
A one-to-one match of cash and/or in-kind services is required.
- ☐ *Definition of one-to-one match:* One-to-one match means every dollar from MAC is matched with a dollar from another source. To receive the full $1000 award a budget of $2000 or more in eligible expenses must be incurred within the grant period.
- ☐ *Definition of In-kind:* In-Kind is a donation of services, materials or fees. For example, if a consultant regularly charges $1000 but gives you a reduced rate of $600. The full value is $1000 but $600 is a fee (sect 1 on the budget form) and $400 is an in-kind donation (sect 7). Another example is the local newspaper regularly charges $350 for an ad but they are giving it to you for free. The in-kind value is $350. A rental fee waiver for a performance space that would usually cost $250 but is provided to you for free. The in-kind value is $250.
- ☐ Please see the samples of correct budgets
    - **Eligible expenses:**
        - ☐ Costs for the activity spent after the application review date
        - ☐ See the budget form for eligible expenses (fees, meals, lodging, travel etc.)

Ineligible expenses:

- ☐ Costs for materials, supplies or publishing that are associated with the normal production of your art form. For example, we will not fund: art supplies, paint, framing, editing, post production, cd duplication, etc. The exception is supplies for workshops.
- ☐ Website development. Artistic resourcefulness and the use of free or inexpensive website development tools is encouraged.
- ☐ General ongoing business expenses such as business cards, office supplies, etc.
- ☐ Ongoing personal, household and professional business expenses (rent, daycare, mortgage, meals at home, internet services, time spent researching or producing artwork/product).
- ☐ Indirect costs are costs that are not directly accountable to a cost object (such as a particular project, facility, function or product). Indirect costs include administration, personnel and security costs not directly associated with the activity. While we understand indirect costs (IDC) may be a part of the budget, you may not use grant funds or match to pay indirect costs.
- ☐ Applicant labor or time.

Eligible revenue:

- ☐ *Definition of Revenue:* the money that will pay your expenses: it is not profit. This includes the MAC grant dollars and other sources of revenue.
- ☐ *Applicant cash* is the money the artist or organization pays out of their own pocket. It is the check you write or the amount you charge on your credit card to provide the matching amount.

Ineligible revenue:

- ☐ Costs for the activity spent before the grant review date.
- ☐ Artists in Schools & Communities funding.

Using a Fiscal Agent

Applications may be submitted using a fiscal agent, which is a 501(c)(3) incorporated nonprofit tax-exempt arts organization that has been deemed eligible by the Montana Arts Council. Public Value Partnership grantees may be used as an umbrella fiscal agent. You must contact the Montana Arts Council prior to submitting a grant application if you intend to use a fiscal agent. A copy of the IRS letter of acknowledgment that an application for tax-exempt status has been filed must be submitted to the MAC prior to receiving a grant. The fiscal agent is the recipient of the grant award but may elect to have the funds dispersed directly to the benefitting organization or individual. The fiscal agent becomes the legal applicant of record, redistributes the grant funds to the project coordinator and is responsible for all the requirements of the specific grant category. This includes contracts, fiscal records and final reports. Acting as a fiscal agent does not make the organization ineligible to apply for SIG funding in another application if they are eligible.

Review Process

Generally, applications are reviewed by teleconference at 10:00am on the second Wednesday of each month. Challenges and Emergency applications are reviewed when they are submitted. All Montana Arts Council grant review meetings are open to the public. Applicants will be identified by name and all information submitted is public information. Applications are reviewed by a subcommittee of MAC council members from across Montana.   The public may listen to these teleconference meetings. Please call the office (406-444-6430) to confirm meeting time and inform us that you plan to attend.

Applicants are requested to refrain from contacting council members, individually or as a group, before or during the teleconference meeting process. Applicants attending the teleconference meeting as observers will not be allowed to speak about their application, thereby not having an unfair advantage over those who are not in attendance.

The minutes from the review teleconference are available upon request and applicants are encouraged to contact MAC staff after the review to receive these minutes. Committee discussions provide insights about effective grant writing and how your application is perceived and understood.

Contacts & Accessibility
For questions, concerns, budget or technical assistance, or to request a large-print or alternate format guideline or application, please contact Kristin Han Burgoyne, Grants and Database Director & Accessibility Coordinator, kburgoyne@mt.gov or 406-444-6449. If you are uncertain or have any questions about the application and process, it is highly recommended you contact Kristin before you submit your application.

To Apply
Logon page (a link is also available on our website):
https://www.grantinterface.com/Common/LogOn.aspx?eqs=y0IvNTomAgVA2A0t7dII-H8njA1NVVBa0

Application Fields
General Information Please fill out completely, paying special attention to items that are mandatory.

Narrative Questions
In addition to a general narrative describing the activity, all applications require answers specific to the application category:

Professional Development
List the most significant outcomes to this activity.
Describe the program (residency, workshop etc.) the applicant plans to attend or present.
(Arts Organizations Only) Who from your organization is attending? What is his/her job title?

Market Expansion
To whom do you wish to expand your market and where are they located?
Why at this time do you think this proposal will work?

Public Outreach Arts Activities
Who is involved in your activity?
Describe the community you plan to serve and how they will benefit from this activity.
How will you or your group benefit from your activity?

Challenges and Emergencies
How does this impede your ability to continue your work?
How specifically will the grant funds help you?

Community
How is this of artistic value and to the benefit of an artist or community? "Community" is defined as, but not limited to, geographic, demographic, political, educational, economic, ethnic, or social, where common interests and values are shared.

Worthy of Investment
To be competitive, applications should include outreach extending beyond the individual or organization applying, making it worthy of state funding. Why is this a worthy investment of state dollars?

Income
If increased income is one of the desired outcomes, how will this be achieved?

Attachments
- Budget form
- You are encouraged to provide supporting information as appropriate to your grant including: Letters of Support, Organization History, Bio or Resume of Applicant, Bio or Resume of Consultant, Mentor or Artist, Work Samples, Supporting Documentation (business plan, artist statement, newspaper articles, photos, invoices, etc). Additional information that supplements your application including any reviews, rewards, accolades, or audience surveys, or evaluations that demonstrate the quality of your organization and its programs.

Tips and Things You Should Know about the Online Application Technology

- Give yourself plenty of time. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE FINAL DAY to begin this online process.
- If you do not have an existing MAC grant account: Click "Create New Account" to register and create an applicant profile. If you already have an account with the online grant management system (Foundant Grant Lifecycle Manager): Enter your login (e-mail address) and the password you chose when you set up your account. Click the "Log On" button. On the left side of the screen is a green bar with "Apply" in white text. Click "Apply" and click the appropriate link to access a blank application form. If you have forgotten your password, do not create a new account. Instead, click the Forgot your Password link, enter your User ID, and your password will be emailed.
- Type and save your narrative answers in a word processing document and cut-n-paste into the application form. There have been instances of the web application crashing and taking narrative answers with it. Always keep a word processing document backup.
- Narrative fields have a character count at the bottom. Punctuation and spacing are included in the count.
- If your application is in draft status for three months or more it will be marked as "abandoned" in the online system. Abandoned applications will be deleted after six months and can no longer be accessed.
- Application packet shows how the application will appear to the reviewers as a pdf file. You can save this pdf to your hard-drive, print it or send it as an email attachment. If something you have attached in an upload field does not appear correctly in the packet format, convert the document to a pdf file and re-upload it.
- It is recommended you convert word processing documents to pdf files before uploading them to maintain formatting. To convert a file (or multiple files) to a single pdf you have several options. If you have Adobe (or similar) software or a newer version of some word processing programs you may be able to select "print" and then select the "pdf" option in the menu (instead of the printer you usual use). There are also several free software options on the internet. MAC does not recommend any particular software but mycutepdf.com is an example of free software for creating pdf's. If you are struggling with this technology please contact MAC staff (kburgoyne@mt.gov) as early as possible and we will try to assist you. During the final days before the deadline many applicants are requesting assistance. The earlier you can submit your requests the more likely someone on staff will be able to assist you before the deadline.
- If you want to attach a document that is only available in hard copy you have two options. If you have access to a scanner, you can scan the document, save the file, and upload it to the application form. Or you can use the fax-to-file option in the green side bar on the left side of the application form. This will allow you to create a .pdf file by faxing a document to the number provided in the instructions in the application form. Please note the quality of the image will be fax-quality so this option is not recommended for photographs or high-quality print materials. You can also contact staff for assistance.
- If at all possible, please follow a naming convention that identifies the applicant and the document. (example: Burgoyne_resume.pdf or Burgoyne_SIGBudget.xls). There is a maximum of 72 characters file name limit and the name should NOT contain spaces or characters other than letters, numbers, underscores and hyphens.
- If your supplemental materials are audio/video clips that are not available on your website and do not fit in provided upload fields or you have additional supplemental materials to attach to your application that are smaller than 8 mb they may be submitted via email. You can also utilize programs like You Send It and Drop Box to submit supplemental materials.
- Only one file can be uploaded to each upload field. If an applicant has more than one file that needs to be uploaded to a field (a series of bios, for example) please combine the files. This can be done one of several ways.
  - o If the files to be uploaded are in a format that is editable (such as Word or Excel), the applicant can take multiple Word or Excel documents and combine them into one file and upload that document.
  - o If the files are not easily edited (PDF or hard-copy documents), they may be combined by using the fax-to-file tool in the green column on the left. For example, sending two resumes in a fax would result in one PDF file containing both resumes.
  - o The applicant may also contact MAC staff (kburgoyne@mt.gov) for assistance with combining files.