Review Criteria Help

Applications are reviewed by a panel composed of members of the public who are selected for their expertise in a discipline area. Evaluation of the applications is based on the review criteria. Scoring is weighted based on the importance of different criteria to the particular grant.

Panel recommendations are presented to Maine Arts Commission, who approves the review process at a Commission meeting. Notifications are sent to all applicants following this meeting.

This documents offers advice for understanding the review criteria that will be used in evaluating your application.

Project Overview – Provide a description of what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. This is often accomplished with a summary statement and a general timeline. Make sure you include all parts of a project (planning, production, promotion exhibition, evaluation, etc.). Be as precise as possible about where the grant funding will be applied.

- Does the project align with the purposes of funding?
- Is the applicant able to convey ideas articulately?
- Is the project interesting and presented in a way that is clear and complete?
- Is it apparent why funding is needed and where grants funding will be directed?
- Is the project description supported by the materials and budget?

Artistic Strength – Clearly describe the artistic quality of the project. This can be shown through the caliber of the producer/creator and the support materials.

- How is the project artistically strong?
- How is the applicant artistically strong?
- Is the project of professional caliber when compared to projects on a national level?
- Are the work samples strong? How many years of experience are behind this project?
- Is the project created by a professional? Volunteers? Community? Children? Students?

Creative Practice – Explain how the project will be a benefit to the applicant and how it aligns with an applicant's development and creative growth. This can include the value to the applicant in undertaking the project itself, but also how it may lead to future opportunities, enhance a skill-set, encourage partnerships, and develop the applicant's portfolio.

- How will the project be of creative benefit to the applicant?
- How will the applicant create opportunities from the project?
- Does the project align with the creative practice of the applicant?
- Is the project innovative, creative, and encouraging of new opportunities?
- Does this project highlight the applicant in an effective way?

Community Impact – Define the impact the project will have in a community. Consider the broad reach of the project, the contextual elements that contribute to the project, partnerships, collaborations, and populations that inform the project. The 'community' can be defined however an applicant chooses, whether that be a neighborhood, audience members, gallery patrons, members in a small printmaking collective, etc.

- How will the project be of a benefit to others?
- What partnerships or collaborations are supported in this project?
- Does the applicant have established community connections?
- Is there a clear strategy for engagement with others in this project?
- Are there significant elements of social good that come from this project?

Capacity – Illustrate project feasibility as identified through the project budget, capabilities of the applicant, abilities of the project team, previous accomplishments and a strategy for completion.

- Does the applicant have the ability to complete this project?
- Does the applicant have the resources to complete this project?
- Is there a realistic and clear budget and timeline for this project?
- Does this project have diverse support? (Cash matches/ Other grants/ Patron base/ etc.?)
- Does the applicant have a record of past success?

Application Quality – Demonstrate a high quality throughout the application, including clarity of ideas, quality of supporting materials, and appropriateness of the application to funding goals.

- Is the application complete, with information that supports the project?
- Can the application be clearly understood?
- Can reviewers access the application information quickly and easily?
- Do reviewers need to assume information or connect-the-dots with project plans?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors?

Evaluation – (Project Grant for Organizations only) Explain what your expectations are for this project and what will define success. Please detail the systems which will be used in evaluating how the project performs. Include how you plan to use the findings to inform future projects.

- Is there a reliable system to evaluate the project?
- How does the project evaluation fit within the organization?
- Is it clear how the applicant evaluates this and other projects?
- Are there appropriate standards relating to the project evaluation?
- Will the evaluation results be used in a constructive way?