



Ohio Sunset Review Committee  
Agency Questionnaire

Agency Name ART - Ohio Arts Council (OAC)

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Agency's primary purpose and its various goals and objectives

The Ohio Arts Council's (OAC) mission is to fund and support quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically. Its vision is to provide leadership and voice for the arts to transform people and communities. In the spring, the agency completed strategic planning for the next three years. Developed by utilizing feedback and data from OAC board and staff members, constituents, and surveys, the plan serves as a sector-wide strategy to guide and enhance Ohio's arts and cultural sector. Four interrelated goals (Invest, Engage, Innovate, and Lead) form the basis of the work the agency and its partners and grantees will undertake. Within each goal, mission-aligned objectives are outlined to guide investment and innovation activities, policy development, program prioritization, and resource deployment. [Click here to view the plan online.](#)

**INVEST:** Make bold, smart investments in the arts and culture.

- Secure adequate state, federal, and other resources to support Ohio's arts and cultural sector
- Commit public resources to invest in and support the work of Ohio artists and organizations in an equitable, transparent, and accessible manner
- Assess and improve all aspects of agency funding, services, and processes on an ongoing basis to better reflect constituent needs, goals, and outcomes

**ENGAGE:** Spark authentic arts dialogue and idea-sharing among the general public and the agency's constituents and stakeholders.

- Discover, develop, and share clear, compelling, and timely messages about the positive impact of the arts and creativity
- Coordinate, provide, and promote capacity building and professional development opportunities for individuals and organizations
- Convene a wide variety of constituents on an ongoing basis to identify and discuss arts-related trends, needs, research, and other topics
- Provide the highest level of accessible customer service to constituents and all members of the public

**INNOVATE:** Drive Ohio's arts community toward forward-looking creative evolution.

- Encourage experimentation and risk-taking designed to improve the accessibility, affordability, and diversity of arts experiences
- Support the design of new models and exploratory approaches to engage new arts audiences
- Recognize the impact and interaction of creative economic development and creative expression
- Modernize the agency's development and use of technology

**LEAD:** Play an active leadership role in the ongoing development of Ohio's arts and cultural sector.

- Cultivate valuable relationships among leaders at all levels in the public, private, and nonprofit arts and cultural sectors
- Develop and leverage mission-driven strategic partnerships and collaborations
- Work to shape arts, education, and cultural policy
- Improve the ability of individuals and organizations to measure and communicate their value and impact
- Enhance and invigorate agency visibility, vitality, and assets

Agency's past and anticipated workload, number of staff required to complete workload, and total number of staff

The OAC's primary function is investing directly in artists, arts organizations, schools, and nonprofits --thereby reaching children, seniors, and all ages in between in all corners of the state. Its grantmaking workload has remained fairly constant over the last decade, issuing approximately 1,200 grants each biennium while receiving roughly twice as many grant applications. This level of activity is anticipated to stay constant or slightly increase, thanks to additional grant dollars provided by the governor and state legislators.

In addition to its investment activity, the agency has also undertaken a number of critical projects --such as improving agency communications through a completely redesigned website and identity, modernizing its online grantmaking system and program guidelines, and enhancing resources available to constituents for capacity building and sharing of best practices.

The agency currently employs 16 mission-critical full-time equivalents (FTEs), which OAC leadership view believes is the minimum number necessary to carry out the agency's duties and meet the public's expectations. During the Great Recession, the agency eliminated more than half its staffing positions and subsequently has not replaced any. The OAC does not currently have the resources to expand beyond 16 FTEs, but agency leadership believes it can meet its mission with the current, streamlined team of professionals.

Agency's past and anticipated budgets and its sources of funding

The OAC has traditionally received funding through four funding sources: 1) the General Revenue Fund, 2) revenue received in the Management Expenses and Donations Fund, 3) fees to administer Percent for Art projects provided in state law, and 4) federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. The agency anticipates continuing to receive revenue and to budget expenses from these four sources. A brief elaboration on each fund follows:

1) The General Revenue Fund supports grants to artists, arts organizations, and nonprofits engaged in arts and cultural activities. A separate GRF line item is utilized for administrative costs. The OAC's GRF appropriation reached an all-time high of \$32.3 million in FY 2000-01, dipped to a 30-year low in FY 2010-11 during the Great Recession, and has recently been on the rebound. The agency's current GRF appropriation stands at \$28.9 million for the FY 2016-17 biennium, thanks to support from the governor and state legislature.

2) The agency's Management Expenses and Donations Fund primarily receives revenue from various state and external partnerships for services performed. The fund mainly defrays costs related to the state's arts tourism website run in conjunction with several convention and visitors' bureaus, the Governor's Awards for the Arts, and other special events and projects.

3) Fees to administer Percent for Art projects stem from state law requiring state agencies to expend 1% of construction or renovation project costs on purchasing, commissioning, and/or installing public art for qualifying capital projects that exceed \$4 million. Of the project costs, the OAC retains a fee of up to 5% for the process of procuring an artist, executing contracts, and installing artwork, and an additional minimal fee to facilitate site visits and proposal costs.

4) Federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) are received through a competitive grant process in which all states participate. For six years running, the OAC has earned the second-largest grant from the NEA for state arts agencies in the nation, exceeded only by California due to its larger population. NEA grants typically total around \$2 million biennially, and 100% of the agency's federal funding is invested in individuals and organizations via grants.

Number of members of its governing board or other governing entity and their compensation, if any

In sum, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) section 3379.02, the OAC is governed by a board composed of 15 voting members appointed by the governor, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, as well as 4 non-voting legislative members (i.e., 2 from the House and 2 from the Senate, from differing political parties within each chamber). Members serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses connected to OAC business.

Voting members' terms are five years (although mid-term appointments are possible), and legislative terms are two years. Gubernatorial appointees must have broad knowledge and experience in the arts, and a majority of the board must constitute individuals who are not professional artists.

For more detail, please see ORC section 3379.02 in its totality, replicated below:

*“There is hereby created the Ohio arts council, which shall foster and encourage the development of the arts in this state and the preservation of Ohio's cultural heritage. The council shall consist of fifteen voting members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate, two nonvoting members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker, and two nonvoting members of the senate appointed by the president. The members appointed from each house of the general assembly shall not be from the same political party. Terms of office for members appointed by the governor shall be for five years, commencing on the second day of July and ending on the first day of July. The legislative members shall be appointed within ten days of the convening of the first regular session of each general assembly and shall serve through the thirty-first day of December of the following year. Each member shall hold office from the date of his appointment until the end of the term for which he was appointed. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which his predecessor was appointed shall hold office for the remainder of such term. Any member appointed by the governor shall continue in office subsequent to the expiration date of his term until his successor takes office, or until a period of sixty days has elapsed, whichever occurs first. The governor shall name the chairman and vice-chairman of the council, and they shall serve in such positions at his pleasure. Members of the council shall serve without compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred in connection with official business of the council. Persons appointed to the council by the governor shall have broad knowledge and experience in the arts. At least a majority of the members of the council shall be persons other than professional artists. In making appointments to the council, the governor may appoint such professional artists as are necessary, in his judgment, to ensure that the council is broadly representative of all the arts.”*

Additional notes

The OAC appreciates the opportunity to present information before the Sunset Review Committee and thanks members of the General Assembly for their past and present support. This year marks 50 years of public support for the arts and culture in Ohio through the OAC.

The state's investment in Ohio's creative sector and arts infrastructure generates great economic benefits. The arts are a proven economic driver. They attract new business, support tourism, create and retain jobs, and produce tax revenue. Arts communities are crucial to the financial health and vitality of their surrounding regions. Innovative enterprises employ accountants, engineers, and laborers in addition to performers, curators, artists, and others. They buy from local businesses and make communities better places to live, work, play, and raise families. To this point, recent research by Bowling Green State University shows that Ohio's creative industries support nearly 231,000 jobs, contribute almost \$32 billion to the state's economy, and generate approximately \$3.4 billion in annual tax revenues (federal, state, and local combined).

Through public investment, the OAC leverages a high match ratio from its grantees. \$53 in local and private funding matches every one OAC dollar. With the OAC's budget only constituting 0.04% of total GRF appropriations, the state's funding for the arts goes a long way and demonstrates broad public support.

Ohioans know their tax dollars are invested in the arts—and strongly believe in continuing this investment. According to a 2014 OAC statewide public survey, 91% of Ohioans believe public funds should be invested in the arts, and 83% know that public funds support the arts in Ohio.

In addition, the arts strengthen education, aiding success inside and outside the classroom. The arts prepare students to succeed in an economy driven by innovation and creativity. Ongoing research confirms a positive relationship between arts education and improved academics for all students. An education that includes the arts helps to train our workforce and produce creative, critical thinkers and problem-solvers that are attractive to employers.

To better accomplish its mission, the OAC has incorporated lasting cost-saving measures into its operations through lengthening grant cycles, streamlining procedures, reducing administrative burdens on the agency and its grantees, decreasing grant review expenses. The agency has also emphasized developing strategic partnerships in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to save state dollars on program, administrative, and technology costs.

If reauthorized by the Sunset Review Committee, the board and staff of the OAC will continue to work effectively and efficiently to advance and strengthen the arts in Ohio. Thank you again for your work and for your consideration.