



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

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# PROJECT GRANT BASICS

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR OAC PROJECT APPLICANTS

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>OAC Project Grants</b>	2
<b>French-Language Services</b>	2
<b>Assessing Grant Applications</b>	2
<b>Selection of Advisors and Jurors</b>	3
<b>Finding Out About a Grant Decision</b>	5
<b>If You Get a Grant</b>	5
<b>Support Material Tips</b>	
Support material is important	6
Digital stills	6
CD, CD-ROM, DVD and videotape (VHS)	6
Computer-based media formats	7
You must . . .	7
You should not . . .	7
Helpful hints	8
Return of support material	8
<b>Definitions of Commonly Used Terms</b>	8
<b>For More Information</b> – OAC contact information	10
<b>Quick Reference</b>	10
Questions and answers to help you apply for an OAC project grant	

*PROJECT GRANT BASICS* CONTAINS GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT OAC PROJECT GRANTS  
AND SHOULD BE USED AS A COMPANION TO SPECIFIC PROJECT PROGRAM GUIDELINES.

*CE DOCUMENT EXISTE ÉGALEMENT EN FRANÇAIS.*

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## *OAC Project Grants*

Ontario Arts Council (OAC) project programs provide support to artists and organizations to foster a vibrant and diverse arts community in Ontario. The programs help to meet the OAC's strategic priorities by funding activities that sustain excellence and recognize regional activity, cultural diversity and Franco-Ontarian and Aboriginal identity. They also provide opportunities for arts education, public participation and community involvement in the arts.

Project grants offer funding to professional artists, ad hoc groups, collectives and organizations for the creation, production, presentation and distribution of arts and arts services. Project funding is not automatically renewed from year to year.

Project grants are available in all granting offices at the OAC. If you want to apply for project funding, but are not sure what programs are available or where your artistic practice fits in, please get in touch with us – see the contact information on page 10.

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## *French-Language Services*

The OAC is committed to providing services to the public in French in accordance with the requirements of the *French Language Services Act*.

Applications submitted in French to programs outside the Franco-Ontarian Arts Office are translated by accredited translators into English prior to assessment. English translations of applications submitted in French are made available to applicants upon request, for their information only, after results have been announced. The OAC does not translate works of art (e.g. film scripts) or written material that is not a required element of the application.

Panel and jury meetings in programs outside the Franco-Ontarian Arts Office are held in English. If there are French-language applications in those competitions, at least one assessor is Francophone. If a competition receives enough French-language applications, a separate jury meeting with Francophone assessors is convened.

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## *Assessing Grant Applications*

**Juries** are generally used to assess grant applications in project programs. Juries evaluate applications using specific program criteria in the context of the OAC's strategic priorities and decide which applicants should receive grants. In programs that do not have pre-determined grant levels, they also decide the amount of each grant. The number of grants given out and the amounts of grants are based on the program budget. The jury's decisions are authorized by the OAC's executive director.

**Advisory panels** are used to provide advice and help set priorities in some project programs. Advisory panels do not make grant decisions. Officers make final grant recommendations to the OAC's executive director and the OAC board based on advisors' comments, the OAC's strategic priorities, the program budget and the number of applications to the program.

**Third-party recommenders** are artistic organizations that make recommendations to the OAC on who should receive funding in some programs that give grants to individuals. Recommenders receive applications directly from artists and forward grant recommendations to officers for authorization and payment by the OAC.

Advisors, jurors and third-party recommenders review each application in terms of specific program assessment criteria that vary from program to program. Please refer to the assessment criteria listed in individual program guidelines.

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## *Selection of Advisors and Jurors*

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Advisory panels and juries are made up of artists and other arts professionals.

OAC granting officers choose advisors and jurors who:

- have broad knowledge and experience of the relevant art form, arts organizations and related issues;
- have knowledge of the cultural needs of a particular region or community;
- will provide fair and objective opinions and
- are able to articulate their opinions and to work in a group decision-making environment.

The composition of an advisory panel or jury should represent the range of applications in the competition and include arts professionals representing regional, culturally diverse, Aboriginal and Francophone artistic practices and communities in Ontario.

The OAC encourages community members to provide names of people who may be interested in being on advisory panels or juries. You may send these names on the OAC's *Recommended Juror/Advisor Form* at any time. Advisors and jurors are paid honoraria for their services and are reimbursed for their expenses.

Generally, an advisor or juror can serve on project programs only once a year within an OAC office.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Advisors and jurors are required to keep the contents of all applications and discussions during the assessment meeting confidential.

Advisors and jurors must not disclose that they have been selected as assessors. Names of advisors and jurors are released with grant results following each program competition.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The OAC is particularly concerned with potential conflicts of interest. There are two dimensions of conflict of interest – **direct** and **indirect**. There are also two kinds of direct conflict of interest – **financial** and **private**.

- An advisor or juror is in a **direct** conflict of interest with a particular application if he or she, or a member of the advisor/juror's immediate family (spouse or equivalent, son or daughter, parent, sibling or member of the immediate household) has a **financial** interest in the success or failure of the application. If the applicant is an organization, staff or board members of the organization, or members of their immediate families, would be in direct conflict. If the applicant is an individual, immediate family members would be in direct conflict.
- An advisor or juror is in a **direct** conflict of interest with a particular application if he or she has a **private** interest in the success or failure of the application. If the applicant is an organization, staff or board members of the organization, or members of their immediate families (spouse or equivalent, son or daughter, parent, sibling or member of the immediate household) would be in direct conflict. If the applicant is an individual, members of his/her immediate family, as described above, would be in direct conflict. For applications from individuals and organizations, a private interest also includes affiliations or activities that compromise or unduly influence decision-making.

Any reason that makes it difficult for an advisor to evaluate an application objectively may create an **indirect** conflict of interest.

Officers do not choose advisors or jurors who are in **direct** conflict of interest with any of the applications being assessed. If a direct conflict of interest becomes apparent, the officer will ask the assessor to stand down from the panel.

All advisors and jurors are asked to sign forms to identify **indirect** conflicts of interest as a further means of documenting the integrity of the process. At the advisory panel or jury meeting, the officer answers any questions and facilitates a discussion on the assessor's impartiality and decides how the situation will be managed.

## OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

In an advised program, written assessments may be used by the officer to provide specialized analysis of an organization when necessary. The officer shares knowledge gained from these reports with the members of the advisory panel or jury to help them make decisions about the application.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISOR OR JUROR

Before the meeting to assess applications, advisors and jurors become familiar with the program, its assessment criteria and the OAC's strategic priorities. They read all applications and written support material, making notes about each application in the context of the program assessment criteria and OAC priorities. At the meeting, the assessors review audio/visual support material and discuss the applications, using their knowledge and expertise in a group decision-making environment. In advised assessments, advisors identify funding priorities; in juried assessments, jurors identify grant recipients and amounts.

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### *Finding Out About a Grant Decision*

A letter informing you whether or not you have received a grant will be sent once decisions are made, about 4 months after the deadline.

We do not give grant results by telephone or email, so please *do not* call or email us for this information.

If you have been awarded an outright grant, your cheque will be included with the notification letter. If you have been awarded a conditional grant, the grant cheque will be issued when the conditions have been fulfilled.

**IMPORTANT!** The grant notification letter will describe any conditions associated with a grant. It is the responsibility of an organization receiving a conditional grant to share this information with its board of directors or governing body.

Program officers can provide limited feedback about your application in some programs. Please see individual program guidelines for further information.

Decisions in all OAC project programs are final and cannot be appealed. However, if there is evidence that due process was not followed, the OAC will investigate.

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### *If You Get a Grant*

You must send a report by the date identified in the grant notification letter. If you do not submit a satisfactory report by that date, we will not accept or process any grant application in your name until a report has been received. The OAC may require you to repay the grant. See individual program guidelines for more information on submitting a report.

Grants must be used for the purposes for which they were given within two years from the date of the grant notification from the OAC.

You must acknowledge the support of the OAC either by the use of OAC's logo or as a written acknowledgement as outlined in the grant letter.

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## Support Material Tips

### SUPPORT MATERIAL IS IMPORTANT

You *must* send in support material if it is required. Along with the written application, support material is a significant part of your proposal and has a substantial impact on the assessment of your project's artistic quality.

Send only material that best represents your work and relates to what you are proposing in your application. Weak support material detracts from an application that may otherwise be strong.

It is important to send in samples of your recent work, although you may wish to include past work as well.

Your work must be clearly presented to make a memorable and positive impression. Advisors and jurors have very limited time to view and hear support material. Clearly label your CDs, videotapes etc. and ensure they match your support material list.

**While we try to stay up to date with audio-visual equipment and computer software, we cannot run every format that may be available. See the list below to see what formats we use. Remember: if you are unsure, it's always best to check with us to see whether we have the equipment to view your support material.**

### DIGITAL STILLS

- Still images should be of the best possible quality.
- Professional-quality documentation help your chance of success.
- Use the right lighting conditions to photograph your art work.
- Only your work should be visible on the image; crop out anything else.
- Submit JPEG files only.
- For optimum viewing set your file to be no more than 1024 pixels wide and 768 pixels high.
- Submit files of 1 MB maximum.
- Submit RGB, sRGB or grayscale colour mode files only (no CMYK).
- Number and title each file (digital still); make sure the number is before the title so that the order of the images will correspond to your image list.
- Write your name or your organization's name on the CD or DVD.

### CD, CD-ROM, DVD AND VIDEOTAPE (VHS)

- If you are using any of these media to show your work, make sure they are of good quality.

- ❑ Make sure your film or video is on VHS or DVD format.
- ❑ Clearly label your videotapes and discs with your name and the title of your work.
- ❑ Include only **one work per VHS tape**. If you are sending two pieces of work, you must send them on two separate videotapes.
- ❑ If you are burning your own CD, be sure that the process has been properly finalized.

## COMPUTER-BASED MEDIA FORMATS

- ❑ We can use Quicktime, RealOne Player, PowerPoint, JPEG and PowerDVD.
- ❑ All computer-based support material is shown using a data projector or large-screen data/television monitor, with sound fed through a stereo system.
- ❑ You must ensure that both the picture and sound (if applicable) are present on the media provided.
- ❑ To avoid unnecessary hissing or noise, ensure that the CDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs are of high quality.
- ❑ In some programs you may choose to submit a website where your work is available. However, we cannot guarantee that internet service will be interruption-free when your material is viewed by the panel.

## YOU MUST . . .

- ❑ Cue all videotapes to the section you wish reviewed. Include this information on your support material list (e.g. “start watching at 2 min. 30 sec.”).
- ❑ Complete the support material list provided in the application. Clearly identify the contents of videotapes, CDs, DVDs, JPEGs, etc. on the list. Provide instructions on how to navigate your CD-ROM or website.
- ❑ Be sure the support material is representative of your work and of the work of other artists involved in the project. Give specific credit on the support material list (e.g. writer, art director, choreographer, performer).
- ❑ Label all work with artist contact information (see Return of Support Material below).

## YOU SHOULD NOT . . .

- ❑ Submit 35mm slides.
- ❑ Submit audio cassettes.
- ❑ Submit compressed files.
- ❑ Submit material that requires software, plug-ins, extensions or other executables that need to be downloaded or installed.

- ❑ Submit files by email.
- ❑ Submit any other component of your application on your CD-ROM or DVD.

## HELPFUL HINTS

- ❑ Test all videotapes before you send them in to ensure they have been properly recorded and cued.
- ❑ Be sure that digital images are saved on a CD-ROM in JPEG format and each file size is not larger than 1 MB.
- ❑ Test your CDs, CD-ROMs, DVDs before submitting to the OAC to ensure they have been formatted correctly and run smoothly.
- ❑ You may, if you wish, include a comment about the reasons for your selection.
- ❑ Never send documentation of your work you made as a student to any visual arts or media arts program.
- ❑ Do not send more than the number required; the assessors will consider only the number specified.
- ❑ Please call the OAC if you have any questions regarding your support material.

## RETURN OF SUPPORT MATERIAL

Generally, material is returned immediately after the assessment meeting and before sending grant results. The OAC recycles print materials such as program books, brochures and other printed items unless otherwise requested. Support material is returned at the OAC's expense using Canada Post Parcel service. It generally takes two to three weeks after mailing for you to receive the package. You may also pick up your support material by calling our receptionist at 416-961-1660 or 1-800-387-0058 to make arrangements.

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## *Definitions of Commonly Used Terms*

The following terms are used in various OAC documents, including those found in the application packages for project grants. Please refer to these definitions to help you fill out the forms as required.

- APPLICANT** An artist or organization applying to the OAC for a grant to help undertake or complete a specific project.
- APPLICATION** A request for a sum of money to help undertake or complete a specific project. The request is made by submitting an application package to the OAC. Applications are made to programs and must be sent to the OAC by the program deadline.
- Application Package** – An application package has several parts – an application form, an application summary, a project description, etc. Each application form for a project program has a checklist of the items you must send to the OAC; the required items vary from program to program.

- ARTIST STATEMENT** An artist statement describes your artistic vision for the project and how the vision is reflected in the activity you are proposing. It helps the reader of your proposal understand why you want to do the project. The artist statement answers the question “why” and the project description answers the question “how.”
- ASSESSMENT** The process of judging an application.
- Assessor** – A person from the artistic community selected by the OAC to read applications and to give advice or to make decisions about who should receive funding. There are three kinds of assessors – advisors, jurors and third-party recommenders. See page 2 of this guide for more information about assessors.
- Assessment Criteria** – Common standards by which all applications to a particular program are judged.
- Assessment Method** – The type of assessment used to judge applications – advised, juried or third-party recommender.
- CO-APPLICANT** One of two artists or organizations applying to the OAC for a grant to work on a specific project. A co-applicant is an equal partner in the project.
- DEADLINE** The final date that you can send your application to the OAC. All applications to a particular deadline in a program are assessed together.
- ELIGIBLE, ELIGIBILITY** The qualifications needed to be able to apply for OAC funding.
- GRANT** An amount of money given to an artist or organization who is successful in the assessment process.
- Outright Grant** – Most project grants are outright; that is, cheques are included with the letters notifying applicants they will receive grants.
- Conditional Grant** – If a grant is conditional, a cheque will not be sent until specific requirements described in the notification letter have been met by the applicant.
- OFFICE** Every artist or organization applying for a grant does so through one of the OAC’s granting offices. Some offices support a specific artistic form – dance, literature, music, theatre, visual/media arts; each artistic form is called a discipline. The OAC also has offices that offer grants for specialized activity in more than one discipline – arts education, Aboriginal arts, Chalmers, community/multidisciplinary arts, Compass, Touring and Franco-Ontarian arts.
- ORGANIZATIONS** Incorporated not-for-profit companies as well as ad hoc groups, collectives and other unincorporated organizations that are mainly composed of professional artists and arts professionals and operate on a not-for-profit basis. For-profit book and magazine publishers may apply to Compass and Touring.
- PARTICIPANT** An artist, consultant, mentor or organization who is essential to a project but does not apply for, or receive, a grant.
- PROJECT** An activity or event that is undertaken by, or includes, professional artists and/or arts organizations.
- PROGRAM** Each OAC office has a number of programs to which artists and organizations can apply for grants. Programs have deadlines for applications and fixed budgets. All applications to a particular deadline are assessed together.
- Program Guidelines** – Detailed explanations of how a program works, including the program description, priorities, specific applicant eligibility, grant levels, assessment method, assessment criteria and application procedures.
- PROFESSIONAL ARTIST** Someone who has developed skills through training and/or practice, *and* is recognized as such by artists working in the same artistic tradition, *and* has a history of public presentation or publication, *and* seeks payment for her or his work *and* actively practises his or her art. Short breaks in artistic work history are allowed.

**RÉSUMÉ** A brief summary of professional or work experience and qualifications that relates to an application for support from the OAC.

**SUPPORT MATERIAL** Samples of artistic work that you have completed or are working on, such as manuscript pages, documentation of visual art and CDs of performances or samples of brochures, posters, etc. that illustrate previous or current projects. Each program at the OAC has different requirements for support material; you can find them in the guidelines for each program.

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## *For More Information*

Janice Lambrakos, Information Services Coordinator (English)  
1-800-387-0058 ext. 7429    416-969-7429    jlambrakos@arts.on.ca

Luciana Pierre, Francophone Arts Associate Officer (French)  
1-800-387-0058 ext. 7400    416-969-7400    lpierre@arts.on.ca

Reception (bilingual)  
1-800-387-0058    416-961-1660    info@arts.on.ca

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## *Quick Reference*

### *Questions and answers to help you apply for an OAC project grant*

#### **1. How do I find out if I'm eligible for a grant?**

Individual program guidelines contain eligibility requirements. To find out what programs are available, you can go to our website: [www.arts.on.ca](http://www.arts.on.ca) or call or email one of the contacts above.

#### **2. Where can I get an application? Can I get one online?**

Applications and program guidelines for most project programs are available for downloading on our website: [www.arts.on.ca](http://www.arts.on.ca). Or you may call or email to have the material mailed to you.

#### **3. How much money can I apply for? Will I receive what I ask for?**

OAC project programs have varying levels of grants. See the individual program guidelines for details about grant levels. Because of the number of applications we receive and the limited funds that are available, grants awarded may be smaller than the amount requested.

#### **4. Can I fill out my application in French?**

Oui. See page 2.

#### **5. Can I talk to someone before I fill out my application?**

Yes. If you need to speak to someone, see the last page of individual program guidelines to find out who to contact. We recommend that if you are applying for a grant for the first time, you speak to OAC staff to make sure you are eligible.

**6. Can I apply for a grant at any time?**

No. There are specific deadlines for applications for each project program. Late applications will not be accepted. You will find deadlines listed in the individual program guidelines, in the OAC's deadlines calendar and on the OAC's website: [www.arts.on.ca](http://www.arts.on.ca). You may call or email to have a list of deadlines mailed to you

**7. Can I email or fax my application to you?**

No. Applications must be mailed, couriered or delivered in person. See individual program guidelines for application procedures.

**8. Do I really need to send in support material?**

Most programs require support material as part of a complete application; others recommend you send in appropriate images, audio-visuals, brochures or posters to help you support or explain your application. But please, do not send in original works of art. See pages 5 to 8.

**9. What if my application is missing something?**

Incomplete applications are ineligible and will be returned to you, so make sure your application is complete, signed, accurate, legible and submitted in the right order with the correct number of copies. You may wish to have someone else review your application before you send it to the OAC just to make sure it is complete.

**10. What if I miss the application deadline date?**

Your application will be returned.

**11. Will you let me know when you receive my application?**

No. We do not do this automatically.

**12. Then how can I find out whether you've received my application?**

If you want to hear back from us when we receive your application, send a self-addressed, stamped postcard with your application. We will then send it back to you. However, do not expect to hear from us until after the deadline date; we do not open applications until after the deadline.

**13. How long do I have to wait for a decision on my application? Do I hear from you if I don't receive a grant?**

We will send you a notification letter approximately 4 months after the deadline whether you receive a grant or not. Decisions will not be given by telephone.

**14. Who decides whether I get a grant?**

The OAC uses a process of *peer assessment* to make decisions, and operates at "arm's length" from the government to make sure grants are based on artistic criteria. *Juries* are composed of artists and other professionals in the field who decide who gets grants in some programs. *Advisory panels*, also composed of artists and other professionals in the field, provide advice and help set priorities in other programs, but they do not make final grant decisions. *Third-party recommenders* –

organizations chosen from the artistic community – make recommendations for funding on the OAC’s behalf in some of the programs for individual artists. See pages 2 to 3.

**15. If I get turned down, can I appeal?**

No. Decisions are final and cannot be appealed. However, if there is evidence that due process was not followed in the decision-making procedures, the OAC will investigate.

**16. If I get turned down, when can I apply again?**

Often, you can apply to the next deadline. But programs have differing rules about reapplication. Refer to the individual program guidelines for specific rules.

**17. Can I find out why I was turned down?**

Limited comments on your application can be provided in some programs. You can find out from the individual program guidelines whether this applies.

**18. Can I apply for more than one grant at a time?**

You may not apply to more than one OAC program for the same activity unless you have received notification that your first application has not been successful. However, you may apply to different programs for different activity at the same time.

**19. If I get a grant one year, can I apply again another time?**

Generally, you cannot receive funding for the same project more than once. As well, some programs have limitations on the number of times you may apply for a different project. You can find out what these limitations are from the individual program guidelines.

**20. If I get a grant, do I have to pay taxes?**

Individuals receiving OAC grants have to pay taxes. T4As are sent at the beginning of the next calendar year.

**21. If I get a grant, do I have any responsibilities to you in return?**

Yes, you are required to do several things. 1) You must turn in a report to us by the date written in your grant notification letter. If you do not send in an acceptable report by this date, the OAC will not accept or process any other grant application in your name, and may require you to repay your grant. 2) Grants must be used for the purposes for which they were given within two years. 3) You must acknowledge the support of the OAC. See page 5.

Ontario Arts Council  
151 Bloor Street West, 5th Floor  
Toronto ON M5S 1T6  
416-961-1660 / 1-800-387-0058  
[www.arts.on.ca](http://www.arts.on.ca) / [info@arts.on.ca](mailto:info@arts.on.ca)