

COMMUNITY ARTS GRANTS PROGRAM

Guidelines and Application

2007-2008

Meridian Council for the Arts

P. O. Box 1405

Meridian, MS 39302

Deadline to apply: November 30, 2007

***For more in formation contact: The Meridian Council for the Arts
at 693-2787***

About the Meridian Council for the Arts

The mission of the Meridian Council for the Arts is to foster and promote diverse art and cultural organizations, events, education, and individual artists in Meridian/Lauderdale County, Mississippi through leadership, partnership, collaboration, grants, and service.

The Meridian Council for the Arts is the official arts agency for the city of Meridian and Lauderdale County. It is chartered as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation with tax-exempt status.

Meridian Council for the Arts programs includes:

- Arts Advocacy
- Arts Education
- Arts Partners Program
- Community Arts Calendar
- Community Arts Grants Program
- Arts in the Park
- Threefoot Fine Art Festival
- MCA Web [page\(www.meridianarts.org\)](http://www.meridianarts.org)
- Special sponsored events

The Meridian Council for the Arts Community Arts Grants Program

The Community Arts Grants Program offers financial and technical assistance to arts organizations and artists in Meridian and Lauderdale County. Goals of the program are:

- To foster a vital and resourceful arts community.
- To provide cultural and arts education opportunities for every school in our community.
- To increase collaboration between arts organizations, schools, and local colleges and universities.
- To encourage a community that is involved in and strengthened through the arts.
- To promote arts and cultural programs/projects that increase public art education and awareness.

The Community Arts Grants Program provides grants to nonprofit organizations such as arts organizations, neighborhood associations, schools, colleges, universities, and public and social service agencies. Grants are awarded for program support and special project support, such as collaborations with arts organizations and artists, programs reaching low-to-moderate income audiences and other special needs. Grant applicants compete on the basis of the criteria presented in this package.

In addition to issuing grants, the Community Arts Grants Program provides assistance to artists, arts administrators, and volunteers through workshops, published materials, consultations and individual artist's grants.

Funding for the Community Arts Program is partially provided by the Arts in the Park Festival, the City of Meridian, the Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors, and the Mississippi Arts Commission.

Grant Period and Key Dates

Key dates:

- If help is needed before the deadline, please call 601-693-2787.
- Grants are awarded for the period from November 2007 through July 2008.
- Grant applications must be postmarked by November 30, 2007.
- **Grantees must submit a final narrative and financial report 30 days after the project completion date.**

Eligibility

Who may apply?

Organizations applying for grants must meet all of the following requirements:

- Be tax-exempt under Section 501 of the IRS Code or be a public agency or school
- Be in existence for at least one year
- Be based in Lauderdale County
- Be governed by a board of directors/trustees that meets regularly*
- Have all programs and events open to the public*
- Be a community-based arts organization or a service organization with a specific arts component with the primary purpose of delivering arts services directly to an audience*
- Have a formal approval of the application from its board of directors*
- Comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 as

amended. These bar discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or age.

- Have completed all requirements for Meridian Council for the Arts grants previously awarded to the organization.

***Does not apply to schools**

Grant Categories

What grants are available?

Organizational Support. Newly established organizations should apply under this category. No organization may receive organizational support for more than two years. The purpose of organizational support is to provide funds to expand high quality arts programming for the public. Funds may be used for expenses involved in the operation of the organization. Proposals may request up to \$1,000.

Examples of Appropriate Activities:

1. Computer software/training.
2. Administrative and artistic staff support.
3. Promotion, publicity, and newsletters.
4. The development of long range planning documents.

Project Support. Established organizations may apply for a wide variety of arts projects or arts components of larger projects. Projects must contain artistic, community outreach, and educational elements for consideration. A project will take over a finite amount of time and will be a part of an organization's overall program. Proposals may request up to \$2,000.

Examples of Appropriate Activities:

1. Projects that involve and promote Mississippi artists.
2. Visiting artist conducting master classes.
3. Workshops, festivals, and conferences
4. Touring projects that bring professional performers to the community.
5. Exhibitions of art by Mississippi artists and artists outside Mississippi.
6. Art in public places.

Project Collaborations. Two or more organizations may collaborate on a project. Project Collaborations are eligible for up to \$4,000. Applicants in this category must collaborate with at least one nonprofit community-based arts organization.

Examples of Appropriate activities:

1. Two or more arts organizations presenting a joint production.
2. Schools and an arts organization presenting arts education programming.
3. Social service agency and an arts organization presenting programming in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood.

4. Other collaborations involving established arts organizations and new, emerging groups.

All joint proposals should designate one organization as the fiscal agent to administer the grant and clarify in the verification letter exactly what the responsibilities are of each collaborator. Arts organizations applying for joint projects may also apply in other appropriate categories.

Student Ticket Support. Established organizations may apply for ticket support. The organization must show that the funds will be used to provide arts and cultural education and exposure opportunities that the students would not otherwise be able to have. Student ticket support may be provided to provide tickets for those who could not otherwise afford to attend. Student Ticket Support is eligible for up \$1 ,000.

Restrictions

The Meridian Council for the Arts will not fund the following:

- Scholarships, fellowships or tuition assistance
- Direct grants to individuals (individual artist grants available through separate application)
- Capital expenditures other than art objects for public spaces of display
- Costs incurred before the effective date of the contract or after project is completed
- Applications to reduce existing deficits
- Arts activities outside Meridian/Lauderdale County or those not open to the public
- Pageants, fund-raising events and hospitality costs
- Cash Awards
- Insurance Premiums, Office space rental, Legal fees, Permanent equipment purchases, and other general operating costs
- Janitorial service and general physical plant maintenance
- Applications for capital improvements
- Food and hospitality
- Publication of manuscripts or compositions not created as part of a Community Arts Grant-supported project of public presentation
- Applications from public agencies (with the exception of schools) established by city, county or state governments, unless collaborating with a nonprofit community-based arts organization or a service organization with an arts component
- More than one application for an individual organization in the same category

General Matching Requirements: All grant categories require at least a one-to-one (1:1) dollar match.

“One-to-one dollar match” means the applicant must cover at least half the cost of a project or program.

In-kind contributions cannot be used for the one-to-one (1:1) dollar match requirement, but the Arts Council wants to know about such contributions. Such contributions should include those services and supplies for which the applicant under normal circumstances would have to pay, but are donated without charge for the program. The value of volunteer time should be estimated and included only as it directly relates to the project/program and should be calculated at the current minimum wage. In general, board membership is not considered an in-kind contribution.

How to apply

Procedures for applying for a Community Arts Grant

- Read the application carefully before writing your proposal.
- Prepare your final proposal in advance of the deadline to allow time for proofreading, getting required signatures, acquiring appropriate support information and making copies.
- **Submit** one original, plus 5 copies of:
 1. The completed application form (attached)
 2. Your narrative, with all required information
 3. A completed budget form (attached)
 4. A list of your organization’s board members, including ethnic make-up
 5. Resumes of key paid or volunteer artistic and administrative personnel (not to exceed 2 pages)
 6. A list of the events and activities of your organization during the current year (or last year if your fiscal year began July 1)
 7. Up to three letters of support
- **Submit** one original only of:
 1. Proof of the date of the establishment or incorporation of your organization (and of your 501 (c) (3) status*
 2. The financial statement from your most recently completed fiscal year*
 3. Supplementary materials such as brochures, newspaper clippings, or sample program
 4. Your IRS determination letter verifying your tax-exempt status*

***Does not apply to schools**

- **Mail** the completed proposal to the Meridian Council for the Arts, P. O. Box 1405, Meridian, MS 39302. Proposals not postmarked by November 30, 2005 will not be considered. No exceptions will be made.

Please note:

- All applications must be typed; handwritten applications will not be accepted.
- Each grant application requires a separate application form.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- If you have questions regarding any aspect of the application form or process, please call Meridian Council for the Arts at 693-2787.
- The original application and attachments must be postmarked by November 30, 2007; late applications will be returned.

What Happens to Your Application

The application review process

Funding Recommendations. After completed applications are received and verified, they are reviewed by an appropriate review panel. The panel discusses applications and supporting materials and ranks the applications. The Meridian Council for the Arts Grants Committee will review the work of the panel, checking for incorrect reporting, potential conflicts of interest, and other potentially prejudicial information. After reviewing and discussing each proposal, the Grants Committee and the Meridian Council for the Arts Executive Committee will make funding recommendations to the Meridian Council for the Arts' Board of Directors, which will determine the awards.

Review Panels. Applications are reviewed by a panel of independent and objective experts in the arts. The panel may include experts from outside Lauderdale County. Every effort is made to ensure impartiality during the entire application review process. Panelists with a conflict of interest will not be permitted to discuss or vote on the applicant in question.

Notification. The Meridian Council for the Arts will notify all grants applicants of a decision by letter following the Meridian Council for the Arts' November board meeting.

After Receiving Grant. Grantees will receive 50 percent of the award within 30 days of notification.

Final Report. The final award monies will be paid after the Meridian Council for the Arts' approval of the final report, which must be filed within 30 days after completion of the project/program. If the report is not received within 30 days, the organization will not receive the final 50 percent of their grant.

After receipt of the final report, the Grants Committee will perform a review. This review will focus on evaluating the project's outcomes versus the initial proposal's goals as well as the accuracy and completeness of the report. If further information or revisions are needed, the organization will have 30 days from notification by the Committee to submit additional information or corrected report. If the second submission still does not meet the guidelines, the organization will not receive the final 50 percent of their grant.

Acknowledgement

In all published materials and announcements regarding the funded activity, grantees must acknowledge that the activity is supported in part by the Meridian Council for the Arts. Failure to do so will jeopardize funding under the grant contract. The MCA will supply its logo.

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed applying these criteria:

1. Attended Meridian Council for the Arts Grants Workshop (10 points)
2. Artist Merit (20 points)
3. Community Outreach (30 points)
4. Educational Value (25 points)
5. Administrative Ability (15 points)

Meridian Council for the Arts Grants Workshop (10 points) refers to:

- Sent representative of organization to Workshop led by members of the Meridian Council for the Arts.

Artistic Merit (20 points) refers to:

- High artistic quality based upon standards of community in which project is held
- Responsiveness to current and future art needs
- Innovation and creativity in programming and artist selection
- Vision and leadership of artistic staff and volunteers
- Activity furthers applicant's stated artistic mission

Community Outreach (30 points) refers to:

- Effectiveness of community involvement
- Effectiveness at furthering understanding of an art form in the community

- Innovation in programming to reach new audiences, including collaborations with other groups
- Legitimate efforts to involve diverse individuals on artistic, technical, administrative, policy, and audience levels, and to involve special audiences which could include the economically deprived, children, the elderly, the disabled, and geographically under-served neighborhoods
- Effectiveness of marketing efforts

Educational Value (25 points) refers to:

- Projects that promote the arts in education
- Projects that expand youth involvement in and access to the arts
- Projects that provide educational opportunities for the arts to youths and adults
- Projects that enhance arts appreciation for all citizens

Administrative Value (15 points) refers to:

- A continuing history of growth, stability and vision
- A long-range and/or short-range plan
- Evidence of effectiveness and efficiency of organization
- Evidence of self-evaluation standards
- A governing board that meets regularly and sets the policies of the organization
- Evidence of ability to deliver services effectively
- Clarity and completeness of financial information and general application information
- Affiliate Member of the Meridian Council for the Arts (\$35 Annually)

The Community Arts Grants Committee

The Meridian Council for the Arts' Grants Committee is composed of MCA Board of Directors. The committee establishes policy for the granting of funds to the arts, selects review panelists, reviews panel recommendations and makes funding recommendations.

Statement of Assurances

As part of the grant award contract agreement, **grantees must give assurance to the Arts' Council that they comply with all applicable Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations regarding the use of public funds.** These include but are not limited to assurances of compliance with Federal and State statutes relating to nondiscrimination which provide in part that no person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age be excluded from participating.