



NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations

Supported by the Howard Gilman Foundation

2023–2024 Guidelines and Application Procedures

Important Dates and Deadlines

- Intent to apply deadline: November 17, 2023, 11:59 p.m. ET
Required for access to full application
- Application deadline: December 29, 2023, 11:59 p.m. ET
- Applications adjudicated: January 2024
- Grantees notified: February 2024
- Grant period: March 1, 2024 – February 28, 2026

Important Links

[OPERA America Website](#)

[OPERA America Grants Portal](#)

For program information, contact Diana Hossack, director of grantmaking, at DHossack@operaamerica.org or 646.699.5236.

OPERA America website and Grants Portal require different usernames and passwords.

If you need to reset your password for OPERA America's website, go [here](#).

For Grants Portal information, contact [Diana Hossack](#), director of grantmaking.

OPERA America
National Opera Center
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
operaamerica.org

OPERA America, the national champion for opera, is pleased to announce the launch of NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations. The program provides flexible operating support to help smaller opera organizations in New York City innovate, produce, and engage audiences and their communities. The program is made possible by generous support from the Howard Gilman Foundation.

Program Scope

NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations will provide two-year grants supporting targeted administrative areas and/or project grants to opera organizations based in the five boroughs with budgets below \$250,000 for use in specific strategic areas (e.g., marketing, fundraising, production, etc.) or for a specific project of their choice.

Definition of Opera & Opera Organizations

OPERA America defines opera as a music-theater experience with a dramatic arc written for trained voice(s) of all genres and accompanied by at least one instrument.

Any organization that identifies as primarily engaging with opera according to OPERA America's definition will be eligible to apply, provided they meet the requirements of the program.

Organizations will be asked to identify up to two strategic areas for focused investment. Focus areas include but are not limited to:

- Marketing (audience development, advertising, website designs/upgrades)
- Development/Fundraising (grant writing, special event management, donor prospecting/stewarding)
- Artistic (paying/increasing artists fees, commissioning fees)
- Production (costs related to venue and rentals on costumes, technical, lighting, and equipment, etc.)
- Personnel (hiring staff or consultants, increasing staff time/salaries)

Priority consideration will be given to applicants that are founded by, led by, or primarily serving people from the global majority, people with disabilities, or people whose primary language is not English. It is encouraged that proposed projects serve and/or celebrate the city's vibrant cultural communities, or reflect the innovation of the company through its programming, concepts, and/or methods of producing.

Organizations may propose projects or strategic initiatives outside of these categories, but such projects should be discussed with OPERA America prior to submitting an application.

Grant Awards

NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations will provide two years of grant support of between \$5,000 and \$15,000 per year (\$10,000 – \$30,000 total). Grant amounts

will be determined by an independent panel. It is OPERA America's intent to make awards large enough to contribute substantially to the cost of a project.

Grantees will be invited to participate in peer learning groups with other grantees whose projects have similar goals. Through these facilitated virtual check-ins, grantees will share information and ideas, learn from OPERA America staff, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Eligibility

- Eligible organizations must engage primarily with opera and may be producing entities, educational organizations, choirs or choruses, creative incubators, or something completely different.
- Applicants are NOT required to be members of OPERA America

Applicants must be:

- New York City-based organizations; with preference given to companies based in, or serving, communities outside of Manhattan.
- 501(c)3 organizations or fiscally sponsored organizations with operating budgets under \$250,000. Both operating expenses and revenue of the most recently completed fiscal year must be under the \$250,000 threshold.
- Engaged primarily in opera, as defined above. All types of programming are eligible; the organization is not required to produce full opera productions for the public.
- Able to demonstrate programming within the 12 months prior to application. It is recommended that the organization also be able to outline programming planned for the upcoming 12 months, although funding is not contingent on fixed planning.

Annual grantees of the Howard Gilman Foundation are ineligible to apply for NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations. Additionally, organizations that receive a NYC Opera Grant and subsequently reach a budget over \$250,000 may not apply directly to the Howard Gilman Foundation until the full funding period is over.

Applicants are required to compensate artists as follows:

- Opera-producing entities must pay all performing artists, musicians, conductors, stage directors, designers, and others;
- Community choruses must pay all guest artists, musicians, and soloists who are not already chorus members;
- Competitions must pay all accompanists and artists serving as faculty or adjudicators; and
- Educational arts organizations must pay all performing and teaching artists.

Exceptions and/or other scenarios may be considered but must be approved in advance by OPERA America staff.

The following organizations are NOT eligible:

- Organizations or programs embedded within larger institutions, such as a school, university, or other music organization, that have a budget over \$250,000.
- Organizations requiring artists to pay to participate (i.e., a company that requires payment for the artists to perform or a vocal competition charging an entry fee).

How to Apply

- Read the guidelines carefully before completing any application materials.
- All materials must be submitted online via the [Grants Dashboard](#).
- An intent to apply form is required for all applications and is due by November 17, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Only applicants that submit an intent to apply may submit a full application.
- Applicants will receive notification if the intent to apply form has been advanced to the application stage.
- Submit a complete final application, including all supplemental materials, by December 29, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. ET.
- Applications that are incomplete, late, or sent in person or via mail, fax, or email will not be accepted.

Application Review

All final applications for NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations are reviewed by an independent panel of experts approved by the board of directors of OPERA America. The panel will consist of professionals of varied races and ethnicities, as well as gender identities, representing opera company general directors, independent producers, composers and librettists, professors, and other individuals relevant to the proposed projects. The majority of the panel will be active professionals who have substantial experience working in New York City and with smaller companies. No current OPERA America board member or employee may serve on the panel. Individuals who stand to benefit from a grant are also ineligible to serve.

All panel decisions are final.

Using the following criteria, panelists will evaluate the applications through a cultural humility lens, which is a practice of honoring the cultural values and perspectives of the applicants while reflecting on how one's own background and the background of others impact the review of applications.

Applications will be evaluated according to:

- The alignment of the applicant's mission and history with its unique role within the New York arts community;
- The alignment of the applicant's proposed programming/activity with its organizational goals; and
- Quality and distinction in the concept, strategy, and planning of the proposed activity.

Consideration will be given to organizations that reflect the city's racial and ethnic diversity onstage and offstage, in board rooms, and in the communities they serve. OPERA America believes that different perspectives, cultural histories, life experiences, and personal stories enrich the operatic repertoire.

Award Announcement

- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their requests after the panel completes its review.
- Grantees will be required to speak with OPERA America's project manager to activate their grant and receive panel feedback.
- Applicants that do not receive an award may request application feedback from OPERA America staff.
- All award agreements will contain a start date and an end date for the grant period.
- The receipt of a grant at any stage of a project or activity does not guarantee continued support from OPERA America.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will receive an award agreement explaining the grant's terms and conditions, including required narrative and financial documentation.

The full payment for the first year will be made no later than February 29, 2024 after a signed agreement is uploaded to OPERA America's Grants Portal.

Disbursement of funds for the second year will be contingent on active participation in the peer learning groups (described above). The second payment will be disbursed no later than January 31, 2025.

Grantees may be asked to provide a short-written report or participate in a final conversation with OPERA America staff at the conclusion of the grant period. In no way will the information negatively impact the funding of this grant or chances of future grants from OPERA America. The goal is to capture the learning from grantees associated with the project, as well as understand the challenges and success of this new initiative.

Recipients of NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations may be asked to submit additional documentation or cooperate with OPERA America in sharing the results of their projects with the field both during and after the grant period.

Awardees are required to acknowledge OPERA America and the Gilman Foundation in the manner described in the award agreement. Recognition of the awarded project is required in all print and digital materials distributed to the press and general public. Proof of these acknowledgments is necessary for the final payment of the grant.

Recipients of a NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations award must maintain OPERA America’s logo, including a hyperlink to OPERA America’s website, in a prominent location on their website.

Application Guidance

Prospective applicants are invited to learn more about the program at:

- An online information webinar in October 2023 (video available afterward)
- A meeting at OPERA America’s National Opera Center in November 2023

Contact Information

For more information, contact Diana Hossack, director of grantmaking, at DHossack@operaamerica.org or 646.699.5236.

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NYC Opera Grants: Support for Small-Budget Organizations are made possible through the generosity of the Howard Gilman Foundation.