

THE NATIONAL **OPERA** CENTER  
**AMERICA**

**Opera Grants for Female Composers  
Commissioning Grants**

**Supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation**

**2019 Guidelines and Application Procedures**

OPERA America  
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[operaamerica.org](http://operaamerica.org)

## Opera Grants for Female Composers 2019 Guidelines and Application Procedures

OPERA America has long been committed to increasing the quantity and quality of new American operas, granting nearly \$18 million to the opera field to support the work of opera creators, companies and administrators. Fewer than five percent of those grants had been awarded to works by female composers. Through the generous support of the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, Opera Grants for Female Composers provide support for the development of new operas by women, both directly to individual composers and to OPERA America Professional Company Members, advancing the important objective to increase diversity across the field.

### Goal

In 2019, Commissioning Grants will help support OPERA America Professional Company Members in commissioning works by female composers. Grants of as much as \$50,000 will cover up to 50 percent of a female composer's fee for a full production of a commissioned new work.

### Funder

Opera Grants for Female Composers is funded by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

### Supported Activity

Commissioning grants are intended to help offset the composer's contract fee relating to the commission of a fully produced new work.

### Eligibility

- The lead applicant must be a Professional Company Member of OPERA America, based in the United States. Canadian PCMs, as well as International, Associate and Educational Producing Affiliate members of OPERA America, may participate as consortium members but are not eligible to submit applications directly. The majority of partner organizations must be based in the United States.
- The work's composer must self-identify as female and be a legal permanent resident or citizen of the United States (verification of citizenship may be requested prior to accepting any award).
- The commissioning agreement, if not already signed, must be fully executed by June 30, 2019.
- The work cannot premiere before July 1, 2019.
- The work must be scheduled to premiere no later than August 31, 2022.
- The lead applicant must be actively involved with the project and serve as the fiscal agent for the project. Either the lead applicant or a member of the consortium must be committed to premiering the work.
- If awarded, the lead applicant will disburse all funds received and provide all required financial and narrative documentation to OPERA America.
- A piece that has already had its premiere is not eligible for consideration.
- Commissioning Grants **do not fund** lab productions, workshops, readings or working performances.
- Works that have received past developmental support from OPERA America are eligible for Opera Grants for Female Composers: Commissioning Grants, but a work may not receive more than one Commissioning award.
- Applications will be advanced for consideration only if the applicant is current in membership dues, the submission of required surveys (including the Professional Opera Survey) and the submission of reports from prior grants.
- Applicants must have OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to the OPERA America website, in a prominent location on their websites.

## Funding Parameters

- Grants of up to \$50,000 will be awarded to cover up to 50 percent of the commissioning fee paid to the composer.
- Grant funds cannot be used to defray transportation and/or accommodation expenses related to the composer's travel in relation to the project, nor any "in-kind" expenses.
- Grant funds cannot be used to offset any rehearsal, production or performance costs.
- Grant funds cannot be used to cover any administrative or overhead budget items.
- Grant funds will be disbursed in two installments; 50 percent upon receipt of a fully executed commissioning agreement and 50 percent upon the submission of a final report, after the completion of the first fully staged world premiere.

## Timeline

The following timeline is in place for 2019 Commissioning Grants:

- **Application available online:** November 29, 2019
- **Intent to apply deadline:** March 27, 2019, 11:59 p.m. EDT (required for access to full application)
- **Application deadline:** April 24, 2019, at 11:59 p.m. EDT
- **Applications adjudicated:** May 2019
- **Grantees notified:** June 2019

## How to Apply

- Read these guidelines carefully before completing application materials.
- Applications must be submitted online at [operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard](http://operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard).
- Applicants will be advised of the suitability of the project for support and counseled on the eligibility of proposed expenses once their applications are submitted. Early submission facilitates the review and counseling process.
- Submit a complete, final application, including all supplementary materials, by **April 24, 2019**. Applications that are incomplete, late or sent via fax, mail or e-mail will not be accepted.
- Contact Claire Gohorel, grantmaking manager, at 646.699.5236 or [CGohorel@operaamerica.org](mailto:CGohorel@operaamerica.org) with any questions.

## Application Review

All final applications for Opera Grants for Female Composers are reviewed by an independent panel drawn from a pool of experts approved by the Board of Directors of OPERA America. No current board member or employee of OPERA America may serve on any panel. Individuals who stand to benefit from a grant are also ineligible to serve. Each panel represents the diverse disciplines involved in creating and producing new works. Panelists are also selected to reflect geographic diversity. Decisions of the panel are final.

The following review criteria are weighed equally by panelists to determine which applications will receive funding and at what level. Works eligible for support through Opera Grants for Female Composers must meet all criteria:

- **Artistic Merit:** Applications are judged on the artistic excellence — or the potential for excellence — of the work.
- **Quality and Distinction in Concept and Planning:** Applications are evaluated on the appropriateness, effectiveness and thoroughness of the planning process guiding the commissioning, development and production of the opera.
- **Evaluation:** Applications must articulate plans for evaluation of the work.
- **Organizational Resources:** Applications must convey the degree to which the applicant organization is able to carry out the proposed production. Managerial and artistic support, staff experience and financial resources will be considered.

An application is more likely to receive funding when it reflects the commitment of the company's professional leaders to the work. The company's leaders and other key individuals should be involved in the development of the application. These individuals should be available to OPERA America staff to answer questions about the application.

The most competitive applications will include examples of recent compositions that demonstrate the composer's ability to compose theatrical works for the trained voice and instrumental ensemble.

## **Grant Announcement**

- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their requests when the panel completes its review.
- All grant letters will contain an end date for the grant period. Requests for extensions must be made in writing.
- Funds may be withheld by OPERA America if a company is not current in its membership dues, the submission of required surveys and/or the submission of reports from prior grants.
- In general, advances of up to 50 percent of the grant amount will be extended upon request.
- The balance of the grant will be paid upon satisfactory completion of the narrative and financial reporting requirement following opening night of the production.
- All Opera Grants for Female Composers are restricted to the work described in the application. Funds advanced to the grantee by OPERA America must be repaid in the event the approved production is not carried out.
- 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 letter explaining the grant's terms and conditions, including financial documentation and narrative reporting requirements. These reports will be reviewed by the OPERA America staff. All reporting requirements must be completed before the grant will be fully paid.

Grantees are required to acknowledge OPERA America and other funders in the manner described by OPERA America in the award letter. Opera Grants for Female Composers recipients must maintain OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to OPERA America's website, in a prominent location on their websites and in program copy for performances of the work. Proof of these acknowledgments is necessary for the grant to be processed.

Opera Grants for Female Composers recipients may be asked to submit additional documentation or cooperate with OPERA America in sharing the results of their projects with the field. Applicants may be invited to provide information on the results of projects, even when not supported by Opera Grants for Female Composers.

## **Contact Information**

Contact Claire Gohorel, grantmaking manager, at 646.699.5236 or [CGohorel@operaamerica.org](mailto:CGohorel@operaamerica.org) with any questions.