



The Opera Fund Repertoire Development Grants 2019–2020 Guidelines

Important Dates

- **Application available online:** May 15, 2019
- **Letter of intent deadline:** August 1, 2019, at 11:59 p.m. EDT
- **Application deadline:** September 16, 2019, at 11:59 p.m. EDT
- **Adjudication:** November 2019
- **Grantees notified:** December 2019

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The Opera Fund Repertoire Development Grants 2019–2020 Guidelines

The Opera Fund provides technical and financial support to OPERA America Professional Company Members and their producing partners as part of a North American effort to enhance the quality, quantity and creativity of new opera and music theater.

Goals

The goals of the program are to:

- Enhance the vitality of opera and music-theater in North America through the creation and production of new works;
- Develop a deeper and broader appreciation on the part of the general public for opera and music-theater companies;
- Encourage the creation of works that resonate with contemporary issues; and
- Encourage creative artists who will write and interpret new works.

Repertoire Development grants assist OPERA America Professional Company Members (PCMs) and their partners in meeting the special costs incurred for developing new North American opera and music-theater works. The Opera Fund supports experimental forms of work and methods of producing new pieces in traditional and alternative performance venues. The Opera Fund encourages diversity in all dimensions of a project, from the selection of the creative team and subject matter of the work to the casting of performing artists and technicians.

OPERA America encourages consortia to help leverage resources, increase the time available to observe and adjust a piece, and build awareness of new works among a broader audience. A consortium is defined by OPERA America as a partnership between producing organizations that leverages a broader range of expertise and resources on behalf of a project and guarantees subsequent performances of the work beyond its initial production run. Consortium projects in which creative artists demonstrate readiness to refine the work during the life of the consortium will be given a higher priority for support.

Funders

The Opera Fund, launched by the National Endowment for the Arts, is funded by:

- The Helen F. Whitaker Fund
- Lee Day Gillespie
- Lloyd and Mary Ann Gerlach
- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Supported Activities

Repertoire Development grants allow the creators and/or producers to assess and refine a work-in-progress. The primary intent of these grants is to provide financial assistance for the development of the work and the creative process, although some proposed projects may also serve an audience development purpose. The grant may be used to offset fees to creative artists, such as dramaturgs, recording expenditures for evaluation and archival purposes, or other costs associated with the development of a new opera or music-theater work, including but not limited to:

- Workshops
- Readings
- Revisions

The Opera Fund does not support direct production expenses.

Eligibility

- The lead applicant must be a Professional Company Member of OPERA America based in the United States. Canadian PCMs and International and Associate 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.
- Applications will be advanced for consideration only if applicant companies are current in membership dues, the submission of required surveys (including the Professional Opera Survey) and/or the submission of reports from prior grants.
- The lead applicant must be actively involved with the project and serve as its fiscal agent. The company must apply for grants from The Opera Fund, disburse all funds received and provide all required financial and narrative documentation.
- Applicants must have OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to the OPERA America website, in a prominent location on their websites.
- The composer and/or librettist must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States.
- Projects may not commence before January 2020.
- Projects may receive no more than two development grants over the lifetime of the work. A second application for a development grant may not be submitted until the first grant has largely been completed.
- Development grants may be used to revise a work following its premiere. This may include a work that received its premiere prior to the establishment of The Opera Fund. The composer and/or librettist must be involved in the project to be eligible for a development grant following a premiere.

Funding Parameters

- **Grant range:**
 - **Up to \$65,000 for consortium support**
 - **Up to \$35,000 for sole applicant support**
- The size of an individual grant varies according to the project's total costs as defined in the preliminary budget, the number of members in the consortium (if applicable) and the amount of funds available at the time of adjudication. It is OPERA America's intent to grant awards large enough to contribute substantially to the cost of a project.

- Grants cover up to 50 percent of eligible expenses since a contribution from the company demonstrates its commitment to the activity. Eligible costs include actual cash expenditures and in-kind contributions.
 - In-kind contributions are verifiable services and materials donated by individuals or organizations other than the applicant and their consortium partners. A reasonable amount of the budget may be attributed to in-kind revenue and expense; in cases where more than 25 percent of the total budget is in-kind, additional documentation may be requested.
- Only coach-class airfare will be covered by grants for applications requesting air transportation.
- The program does not fund:
 - Institutional overhead expenses,
 - Direct production expenses,
 - Costs for activities that have already begun, that have been incurred or that have been completed at the time the application is reviewed;
 - Fee or salary support for employees of the applying company or members of the participating companies' boards of directors, except in cases where an employee or board member is a composer or librettist of the new work;
 - Ticket subsidies,
 - Costs associated with marketing, educational materials or audience development activities; or
 - Set, costume or properties construction or rental expenses.
- A company may submit development grant applications for up to two projects in 2019–2020.

How to Apply

The following timeline is in place for 2019–2020 grants:

- **May 15, 2019:** Application available online
 - **August 1, 2019:** Intent to apply deadline at 11:59 p.m. EDT
 - **September 16, 2019:** Application deadline at 11:59 p.m. EDT
 - **November 2019:** Applications adjudicated
 - **December 2019:** Grantees notified
- Read these guidelines carefully before completing any application materials.
 - Intent to apply forms and applications must be submitted online at operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard.
 - No applications will be accepted unless an intent to apply form has been submitted on or before the deadline of August 1, 2019.
 - Submit a complete, final application, including all supplementary materials, by September 16, 2019. Applications that are incomplete, late or sent via mail or e-mail will not be accepted.
 - Contact Claire Gohorel, grantmaking manager, at CGohorel@operaamerica.org or 646.699.5236 with questions.

Application Review

All final applications for The Opera Fund are reviewed by an independent panel selected from a pool of experts approved by the Board of Directors of OPERA America. No 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, as well as artists and individuals with special expertise in

interdisciplinary programming and audience development. Panelists are also selected to reflect geographic diversity. Decisions of the panel are final.

The following review criteria are weighed by panels to determine which applications will receive funding and at what level. Applications with compelling musical samples, strong artistic vision and thoughtful creative statements are more likely to be funded. After considering artistic merit, the panel considers the remaining criteria. Projects eligible for support through The Opera Fund must meet all criteria (listed in order of importance):

- **Artistic Merit:** Applications are judged on the artistic excellence — or the potential for excellence — of the work and on the merit of the creative artists involved.
- **Contemporary Resonance:** An application is more likely to receive funding if it links the subject matter or theme of the new work to issues that are current in the public consciousness.
- **Quality and Distinction in Concept and Planning:** Applications are evaluated on the appropriateness, effectiveness and thoroughness of the planning process guiding the proposed activity.
- **Robust Partnership/Collaboration:** Where appropriate, applications must communicate the ways project participants have been or will be involved in the design, planning and realization of the proposed activities. In the case of consortia, only applications demonstrating consensus on the creative direction of the project will be considered for grants.
- **Evaluation:** Applications must articulate plans for assessing the results and impact of the activity beyond ticket sales and reviews. Goals should be realistic and achievable.
- **Organizational Resources:** Applications must convey the degree to which the applicant organization or consortium is able to carry out the proposed project. 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 leadership to the activity for which support is requested. The company's leadership and other key individuals, including potential consortium members, should be involved in the development of the application. These individuals should be available to OPERA America staff to answer questions about the application.

Grant Announcement

- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their requests by mail after the panel completes its review.
- All grant letters will contain an end date for the grant period. Money not expended at the end of the grant period will revert to The Opera Fund unless an extension of the grant period is secured. 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 requirements.
- All Opera Fund grants are restricted to the project described in the application. Funds advanced to the grantee by OPERA America must be repaid in the event the approved project is not carried out.

- The following rules apply when a grant is awarded to a consortium:
 - The lead applicant will serve as the fiscal agent and will be responsible for disbursing funds among consortium members as specified in the application.
 - Should a consortium not materialize after a grant has been awarded, the lead applicant may keep its share of the original grant if it completes the project in the manner described in the original application. The applicant company's grant amount, however, cannot exceed the maximum amount allowed for sole applicant support. Monies exceeding this limit must be returned to The Opera Fund.
- The receipt of a grant at any stage of a project or activity does not guarantee continued support from The Opera Fund.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will receive an award letter explaining the grant's terms and conditions, including the financial documentation and narrative reporting requirements. These reports will be reviewed by 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 Fund recipients must maintain OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to OPERA America's website, in a prominent location on their websites. The submission of proof of acknowledgment constitutes an element of the final report of the grant.

Opera Fund grant recipients may be asked to submit additional documentation or cooperate with OPERA America in sharing the results of their projects with the field.

Staff Contact Information

For more information, contact Claire Gohorel, grantmaking manager, at CGohorel@operaamerica.org or 646.699.5236