

Opera Grants for Women Composers: Discovery Grants - 2024-2025

OPERA America

Opera Grants for Women Composers: Discovery Grants

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Generously funded by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation

Guidelines

Complete guidelines may be found [here](#).

Contact

For more information, contact Diana Hossack, director of grantmaking, at DHossack@operaamerica.org or 646.699.5236. You may also schedule a 15-minute grant consultation by using this [Calendly link](#).

Applicant Information

Composer First Name*

Character Limit: 250

Composer Surname/Family Name*

Character Limit: 250

Composer Email*

Character Limit: 254

Composer Citizenship Status*

Indicate if you have United States citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.

Choices

Yes

No

IDENTITY

To better understand the demographics of OPERA America's applicant pool and evaluate the impact on our grant programs, we invite you to provide information about your identity.

Applicant Gender Identity*

Do you identify as a woman composer?

Choices

Yes

Applicant Racial/Ethnic Identity

We invite you to optionally provide information about your racial and ethnic identity.

The list below is not an exhaustive list but is meant to provide clarity and context.

Arab — includes those with racial and/or ethnic identities historically originating from the Arabian Peninsula and neighboring territories, inhabiting much of the Middle East and North Africa.

Asian — includes those with racial and/or ethnic identities historically originating from the Far East, Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia.

Black — includes those with racial and/or ethnic identities historically originating from Africa, including African American, Caribbean, Latin American, etc.

Latinx — includes those with racial and/or ethnic identities historically originating from Central America, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South America, and other Latin nations.

Native American — includes those who identify as Aboriginal peoples, First Nations, Indigenous peoples, and/or Native peoples of the Americas with tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Pacific Islander — includes those with racial and/or ethnic identities historically originating from Guam, Hawaii, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

White — includes those who identify with ethnic groups originating in England, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, etc.

Choices

Arab

Asian

Black

Latinx

Native American

Pacific Islander

White

Additional - Applicant Racial and Ethnic Identity

Provide information about your racial and ethnic identity.

Character Limit: 250

Applicant Gender Pronouns

Please share the pronouns you use in reference to yourself (e.g., she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/their, ze/hir/hir, she/they, he/they, no preference, just name). To learn more about gender pronouns, click [here](#).

Character Limit: 250

Applicant Biography*

The biography should be in narrative form and limited to 1,000 characters. A resume may also be uploaded as a PDF, though it is not required.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Applicant Website

Character Limit: 2000

Personal Statement*

Provide a brief statement explaining your reasons for being drawn to the operatic medium. What inspires you creatively?

Character Limit: 3000

Teammate(s) (if applicable)

Teammate First Name

Character Limit: 150

Teammate Surname/Family Name

Character Limit: 250

Teammate Creator Type

Check all that apply.

Choices

Composer

Librettist

Teammate Email

Character Limit: 254

Teammate Citizenship Status

Indicate if this teammate has United States citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.

Choices

Yes

No

Teammate Racial/Ethnic Identity

Choices

Arab

Asian

Black

Latinx
Native American
Pacific Islander
White

Additional - Teammate Racial and Ethnic Identity

Provide information about this teammate's racial and ethnic identity.

Character Limit: 250

Teammate Gender Identity

Please share this teammate's gender identity.

Choices

Intersex
Man
Nonbinary
Transgender
Woman

Additional - Teammate Gender Identity

Share more about this teammate's gender identity.

Character Limit: 250

Teammate Gender Pronouns

Please share the pronouns this teammate uses in reference to themselves (e.g., she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/their, ze/hir/hir, she/they, he/they, no preference, just name). To learn more about gender pronouns, click [here](#).

Character Limit: 250

Teammate Biography

The biography should be in narrative form and limited to 1,000 characters. A resume may also be uploaded as a PDF, though it is not required.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Teammate Website

Character Limit: 2000

Teammate 2 First Name

Character Limit: 250

Teammate 2 Surname/Family Name

Character Limit: 250

Teammate 2 Creator Type

Check all that apply.

Choices

Composer

Librettist

Teammate 2 Email

Character Limit: 254

Teammate 2 Citizenship Status

Indicate if this teammate has United States citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.

Choices

Yes

No

Teammate 2 Racial/Ethnic Identity

Choices

Arab

Asian

Black

Latinx

Native American

Pacific Islander

White

Additional - Teammate 2 Racial and Ethnic Identity

Provide information about this teammate's racial and ethnic identity.

Character Limit: 250

Teammate 2 Gender Identity

Please share this teammate's gender.

Choices

Intersex

Man

Nonbinary

Transgender

Woman

Additional - Teammate 2 Gender Identity

Share more about this teammate's gender identity.

Character Limit: 250

Teammate 2 Gender Pronouns

Please share the pronouns this teammate uses in reference to themselves (e.g., she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/their, ze/hir/hir, she/they, he/they, no preference, just name). To learn more about gender pronouns, click [here](#).

Character Limit: 250

Teammate 2 Biography

The biography should be in narrative form and limited to 1,000 characters. A resume may also be uploaded as a PDF, though it is not required.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Teammate 2 Website

Character Limit: 2000

Creative Team History*

Describe the composer/librettist relationship. Have you worked together previously? Whether or not you have, explain why have you chosen each other for this project.

If you are both the composer and librettist, please describe your reason for serving in both capacities.

Character Limit: 1000

Work Samples

Composer Samples

Applicants are required to submit two work samples that best represent their musical voices and creative styles. Work samples need not be classical or operatic. Samples that demonstrate the creator's aptitude for theatrical storytelling are recommended.

At least one sample must feature voice(s) (not digitally generated). All samples should be:

- Hosted audio or video on sites like YouTube, Vimeo, Dropbox, and SoundCloud.
- Combined samples must be no longer than 20 minutes. Neither sample should exceed 10 minutes in length.

Scores or other forms of visual representation of a musical work are optional.

SAMPLE 1 - Composer

Composer Sample 1 Title*

Character Limit: 100

Sample from Grant Project*

Is this sample from the work you are requesting funds for as part of this grant? (This is not required.)

Choices

Yes

No

Composer Sample 1 Relevance*

Explain the reasons you are presenting this sample to support this application.

Character Limit: 2000

Composer Sample 1 A/V Link*

Character Limit: 2000

Composer Sample 1 A/V Password (if necessary)

Character Limit: 100

Composer Sample 1 Timings*

If you are not providing trimmed samples of the specific excerpt that you would like to be reviewed, please provide suggested timings (e.g., Play from 3'22"—7'49").

Character Limit: 250

Composer Sample 1 Composer Name*

Character Limit: 100

Composer Sample 1 Librettist Name*

Character Limit: 100

Composer Sample 1 Description*

Provide a brief synopsis of the sample, including roles, voicing, and information about this work sample, and credit the performing artists (e.g., soprano Sally Singer, bass Bobby Baritone).

Character Limit: 1000

Composer Sample 1 Score or Chart (optional)

Upload the score/chart below and provide any relevant notes about the score here.

Character Limit: 500 | File Size Limit: 4 MB

Composer Sample 1 Libretto Upload (optional)

File Size Limit: 4 MB

COMPOSER SAMPLE 2

Composer Sample 2 Title*

Character Limit: 100

Sample from Grant Project*

Is this sample from the work you are requesting funds for as part of this grant? (This is not required.)

Choices

Yes

No

Composer Sample 2 Relevance*

Explain the reasons you are presenting this sample in support of this application.

Character Limit: 2000

Composer Sample 2 A/V Link*

Character Limit: 2000

Composer Sample 2 A/V Password (if necessary)

Character Limit: 100

Composer Sample 2 Timings*

If you are not providing trimmed samples of the specific excerpt that you would like to be reviewed, please provide suggested timings (e.g., Play from 3'22"–7'49").

Character Limit: 1000

Composer Sample 2 - Composer Name*

Character Limit: 100

Composer Sample 2 - Librettist Name*

Character Limit: 100

Composer Sample 2 Description*

Provide a brief synopsis of the sample, including roles, voicing, and information about this work sample, and credit the performing artists (e.g., soprano Sally Singer, bass Bobby Baritone).

Character Limit: 1000

Composer Sample 2 Score or Chart (optional)

Upload the score/chart below and provide any relevant notes about the score here.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 4 MB

Composer Sample 2 Libretto Upload (optional)

File Size Limit: 4 MB

Librettist

Submit two samples (written and/or audio or video) that demonstrate your storytelling abilities. These can include but are not limited to poetry, short stories, and excerpts of

plays, operas, or music-theater works.

Combined written samples should be no more than 20 pages in length.

If submitting audio-video samples, combined samples must be no longer than 20 minutes. Neither sample should exceed 10 minutes in length.

Scores or other forms of visual representation of a musical work are optional.

Although no previous experience with opera is required, we are especially interested in seeing any lyrics, poetry, or theater work you may have written.

LIBRETTIST SAMPLE 1

Librettist Sample 1 Title*

Character Limit: 100

Librettist Sample 1 Relevance*

Explain the reasons you are presenting this sample to support this application.

Character Limit: 2000

Librettist Sample 1 A/V Link

Character Limit: 2000

Librettist Sample 1 A/V Password (if necessary)

Character Limit: 250

Librettist Sample 1 Sample Timings

If you are not providing trimmed samples of the specific excerpt that you would like to be reviewed, please provide suggested timings (e.g., Play from 3'22"—7'49").

Character Limit: 500

Librettist Sample 1 Composer Name

Character Limit: 250

Librettist Sample 1 Librettist Name

Character Limit: 250

Librettist Sample 1 Description*

Provide a brief synopsis of the sample.

Character Limit: 1000

Sample 1 - Librettist Upload*

Upload the sample below.

Character Limit: 500 | File Size Limit: 4 MB

Librettist Sample 1 Score or Chart Upload (optional)

File Size Limit: 4 MB

LIBRETTIST SAMPLE 2**Librettist Sample 2 Title***

Character Limit: 250

Librettist Sample 2 Relevance*

Explain the reasons you are presenting this sample to support this application.

Character Limit: 2000

Librettist Sample 2 A/V Link*

Character Limit: 2000

Librettist Sample 2 A/V Password (if necessary)

Character Limit: 250

Librettist Sample 2 Timings

If you are not providing trimmed samples of the specific excerpt that you would like to be reviewed, please provide suggested timings (e.g., Play from 3'22"–7'49").

Character Limit: 1000

Librettist Sample 2 Composer Name

Character Limit: 250

Librettist Sample 2 Librettist

Character Limit: 250

Librettist Sample 2 Description*

Provide a brief synopsis of the sample.

Character Limit: 5000

Librettist Sample 2 Upload*

Upload the sample below.

Character Limit: 500 | File Size Limit: 4 MB

Librettist Sample 2 Score or Chart (optional)

File Size Limit: 4 MB

Work Information

Work Title*

Title or working title of the opera in development

Character Limit: 250

Work Summary*

Submit a plot summary of the work associated with the application.

Character Limit: 1500

Creative Impetus*

Explain why you are drawn to create this work at this time, and why you are choosing to tell this story with music.

Character Limit: 2000

Intellectual Property

“Existing work” includes items such as a novel, short story, film, or life story. Please select the appropriate choice from the drop-down menu below.

Choices

This is my own original work.

This is based on existing work protected by copyright. I have secured rights to this material.

This is based on existing work protected by copyright for which I have not yet secured rights.

This is based on existing work that is in the public domain. Rights do not need to be secured.

Rights Documentation

If the work is based on an existing work protected by copyright, please attach the rights documentation. Rights must be secured by the adjudication of applications in December 2024.

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Roles*

For example, in an opera adaptation of *The Avengers*, a cast list might look like this: Captain Marvel, Soprano; Black Widow, Mezzo-Soprano; Spiderman, Tenor; Black Panther, Baritone; The Hulk, Bass.

For a list of common voice types in opera, please [click here](#). You are welcome to include non-traditional/alternate voice types, and may explain those choices below.

Character Limit: 1000

Chorus

If this work utilizes a chorus, indicate the number of singers in the chorus by voice type (e.g., Soprano: 4, Alto: 2, Tenor: 6, Bass: 1).

For a list of common voice types in opera, please click [here](#). You are welcome to include non-traditional/alternate voice types, and may explain those choices below.

Character Limit: 500

Instrumentation*

Please list the instrument(s) you will utilize in your work (e.g., “I will write for 1 piano, 1 violin, 1 viola, 1 cello, and 1 Iranian santur”).

Character Limit: 2000

Scenic Breakdown*

Provide a scenic breakdown of the opera. You may use either a character/scene breakdown, storyboard, or dramaturgical outline that narrates the theatrical arc of the work. Please refer to [this link](#) for examples.

Character Limit: 5000

Score (optional)

Please upload as much of the score as is available. A partial score is acceptable.

Character Limit: 250 | File Size Limit: 5 MB

Libretto (optional)

Please upload as much of the libretto as is available. A partial libretto or an outline is acceptable.

Character Limit: 250 | File Size Limit: 4 MB

Project Information

Project Activity Type*

Choices

Libretto Reading
Workshop
Working Performance
Other

Other - Project Activity Type

Share more about your project activity.

Character Limit: 500

Project Description*

Describe the specific activities for which funding will be used.

Character Limit: 1000

GRANT ACTIVITY PERIOD

While the development of the project may have commenced, the scope of the funded activities proposed cannot cover expenses incurred outside of the award period, and the budget should be restricted to anticipated expenses between **July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.**

Proposed Project Start Date*

Funding may not be applied to expenses incurred before July 1, 2025.

Character Limit: 10

Proposed Project End Date*

Grant-funded activities must be completed by June 30, 2026.

Character Limit: 10

Timeline*

Provide a timeline for the development of the work, including the activities for which you are requesting funding. An example of a timeline is included below for your reference.

July 2025: Creative team meeting with composer, librettist, and dramaturg

September 2025: Libretto reading

October - December 2025: Revisions to the libretto, completion of excerpts or full piano/vocal score for workshop

January 2026: Piano/vocal workshop (5 days), recorded by videographers (day 6)

Post-workshop: Creative design meeting with the stage director, librettist, composer, and media designer

This is an example. Your timeline may include other activities.

Character Limit: 2000

Please update these fields if anything has changed since you submitted the intent to apply.

Evaluation

Learning*

Share what you hope to learn during this grant period.

Character Limit: 2000

Goals*

What are your short- and long-term goals for this project? What milestones do you hope to achieve during the grant period?

Character Limit: 2000

Evaluation*

How will you evaluate the progression of your work undertaken during the grant period? Who will be part of your evaluation teams? How will you know if changes are needed? How will you adjust your plans/timeline if a change is required?

Character Limit: 2000

Creative Team

You are not required to have a full creative team in place at this time. Share the names of any other creative or performing artists associated with this project, if known at this time (e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg).

Creator 1 Name

Character Limit: 250

Creator 1 Role

(e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg)

Character Limit: 250

Creator 1 Email

Character Limit: 254

Creator 1 Biography

You may choose to upload your teammate's resume in PDF format, provide a brief bio (1,000 characters or less), and/or share a link to their website here.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Creator 1 Website (Optional)

Character Limit: 2000

Creator 2 Name

Character Limit: 250

Creator 2 Role

(e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg)

Character Limit: 250

Creator 2 Email

Character Limit: 254

Creator 2 Biography

You may choose to upload your teammate's resume in PDF format, provide a brief bio (1,000 characters or less), and/or share a link to their website here.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Creator 2 Website (Optional)

Character Limit: 2000

Creator 3 Name

Character Limit: 250

Creator 3 Role

(e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg)

Character Limit: 250

Creator 3 Email

Character Limit: 254

Creator 3 Biography

You may choose to upload your teammate's resume in PDF format, provide a brief bio (1,000 characters or less), and/or share a link to their website here.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Creator 3 Website (Optional)

Character Limit: 2000

Creator 4 Name

Character Limit: 250

Creator 4 Role

(e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg)

Character Limit: 250

Creator 4 Email

Character Limit: 254

Creator 4 Biography

You may choose to upload your teammate's resume in PDF format, provide a brief bio (1,000 characters or less), and/or share a link to their website here.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Creator 4 Website (Optional)

Character Limit: 2000

Budget

FUNDING PARAMETERS

Grants of up to \$15,000 will be awarded.

Funding may not be applied to expenses incurred before July 1, 2025.

Grant activities must be completed by June 30, 2026.

Grants will cover up to 100 percent of eligible expenses, not exceeding the amount of the grant award; no matching funds are required. Additional expenses to complete the project are the responsibility of the creators.

- Eligible expenses include but are not limited to:
 - Vocalist, instrumentalist, and other performer fees;
 - Music director/conductor;
 - Dramaturg;
 - Orchestrator, arranger, copyist;
 - Stage director;
 - Vocal coach;
 - Sound designer;
 - Rehearsal and workshop venue rental fees;
 - Stage manager;
 - Equipment rental (e.g., lighting, sound, instrumental cartage);
 - Childcare and/or eldercare while creators are in rehearsal or workshop;
 - Research materials (e.g., performance tickets, new work recordings, reference books);
 - Living expenses for the composer of up to 30% of grant request; and
 - Transportation and housing for personnel related to creative meetings, rehearsals, and performances. (Airfare is limited to coach class.)

- Ineligible expenses include:
 - Commissioning fees to composers and librettists;
 - Set, costume, or properties construction or rental expenses for a fully staged production;
 - Institutional overhead expenses if partnering with an organization;
 - Expenses that are not connected specifically to a project, including general administrative expenses and competition or contest application fees;
 - Tuition expenses;
 - Professional development fees;

- Fundraising expenses;
- Ticket subsidies; and
- Any other expenses incurred in relation to a fully produced premiere for public presentation.

Applicants are required to submit a budget for the proposed project, listing anticipated expenses and any revenue.

SAMPLE BUDGET

Below is a sample budget breakdown for a potential project funding a piano workshop. This is just one proposed model for your consideration. No item contains a standardized rate because there are not any. The best suggestion for a budget layout is to take the budget you have available, start with the highest responsibilities/fees, and work down from there.

5-Day Workshop for New Opera Based on a Budget of \$14,000
Piano workshop in NYC. No travel or housing costs required.
5 days workshop with public/invited event on last day
6 hours per day (2x3 hour session; i.e., 10-1 and 2-5 with one-hour break)

\$2000 - Conductor/Music Director (1 person)
\$2000 - Stage Director
\$1500 - Piano/Coach (1 person)
\$1250 - Dramaturg
\$1250 - Stage Manager
\$3750 - 3 Singers - principal roles (\$1250 each)
\$2250 - 3 Singers - secondary/ensemble roles (\$750 each)

This is an example. There are many factors that would influence the line items differently in your unique project.

Budget*

OPERA America provides an Excel worksheet outlining many possible expenses for your consideration. You do not need to complete every line. There are other lines in each budgetary section to add other expenses if necessary.

Please use the budget worksheet here to provide your budget. Upload it as an Excel document.

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Total Requested Funding*

Please indicate your total request below. You may request up to \$15,000.

Character Limit: 20

Certification

Citizenship*

I certify that at least 50 percent of the team members in this proposal have United States citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.

Choices

Yes

Signature

Applicant Signature*

By typing your name below, you acknowledge that the information contained in this application and its attachments is accurate and complete.

Character Limit: 100