

IDEA Opera Grants - 2025

OPERA America

IDEA Opera Grants

IDEA Opera Grants

Generously supported by the Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation

Important Dates and Deadlines

Intent to apply deadline: March 20, 2025

Required for access to full application

Application deadline: April 24, 2025

Adjudication: June 2025

Grantee announcement: No later than June 30, 2025

Grant activity period: July 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026

Guidelines

Complete guidelines may be found here.

Contact

For questions about your project eligibility or for technical assistance using the application platform, email Grants@operaamerica.org.

Applicant Information

Applicant First Name*

Character Limit: 150

Applicant Surname/Family Name*

Character Limit: 250

Applicant Creator Type*

Choices

Composer

Librettist

Composer/Librettist

Applicant Email*

Character Limit: 254

Applicant Citizenship Status*

Indicate if you are a United States citizen or permanent resident, or possess 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 how you identify.

Applicant Racial/Ethnic Identity*

IDEA Opera Grants are available to individual composers and/or librettists who identify with one or more of the following racial or ethnic heritages, which have historically encountered barriers in the opera industry:

- Asian — includes those who identify with nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Asia, including East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, including the Indian subcontinent.
- Black/African American — includes those who identify with nationalities or ethnic groups originating in any of the Black ethnic groups of Africa, including African American and Caribbean.
- Indigenous/Native American — includes those who identify as Indigenous peoples, American Indian/Native American, Alaska Native, First Nations, and/or Native peoples of the Americas and Australia with tribal affiliation or community attachment.*
- Latiné/Hispanic — includes those who identify with nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America, and other Latin nations.
- Middle Eastern or North African — includes those who identify with one or more nationalities originating in the Middle East, North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and neighboring territories.
- Pacific Islander — includes those who identify with nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

The above is not an exhaustive list but is meant to provide clarity and context for the purpose of the IDEA Opera Grants.

** If awarded an IDEA Opera Grant, individuals who identify themselves as Indigenous/Native American will be asked to provide proof of their enrollment in a federally recognized tribe, if applicable.*

Please select all that apply.

Choices

Asian
Black/African American
Indigenous/Native American
Latiné/Hispanic
Middle Eastern or North African
Pacific Islander
Additional

Additional - Applicant Racial and Ethnic Identity

If you selected "Additional" from the checklist above, please tell us what language best describes your racial or ethnic identity.

Character Limit: 250

Applicant Gender Identity

Please share your gender identity.

Choices

Intersex
Man
Nonbinary
Transgender
Woman
Additional

Additional - Applicant Gender Identity

If you selected "Additional" from the checklist above, please tell us what language best aligns with your gender 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). To learn more about gender pronouns, click [here](#).

Character Limit: 250

Applicant Biography*

The biography should be narrative and limited to 1,000 characters. The resume should be uploaded as a PDF.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Applicant Website

Character Limit: 2000

Personal Statement*

Provide a brief statement explaining the 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 Email

Character Limit: 254

Teammate Creator Type

Check all that apply.

Choices

Composer

Librettist

Teammate Citizenship Status

Indicate if your teammate is a United States citizen or permanent resident, or possesses 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 how your teammate identifies.

Teammate Racial/Ethnic Identity

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- Indigenous/Native American — includes those who identify as Indigenous peoples, American Indian/Native American, Alaska Native, First Nations, and/or Native peoples of the Americas and Australia with tribal affiliation or community attachment.*
- Latiné/Hispanic — includes those who identify with nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America, and other Latin nations.
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Please select all that apply.

Choices

Asian
 Black/African American
 Indigenous/Native American
 Latiné/Hispanic
 Middle Eastern or North African
 Pacific Islander
 Additional

Additional - Teammate Racial and Ethnic Identity

If you selected "Additional" from the checklist above, please tell us what best describes your teammate's racial or ethnic identity.

Character Limit: 250

Teammate Gender Identity

Please share your gender identity.

Choices

Intersex
 Man
 Nonbinary

Transgender
Woman
Additional

Additional - Teammate Gender Identity

If you selected "Additional" from the checklist above, please tell us the language that best describes your teammate's gender identity.

Character Limit: 250

Teammate Gender Pronouns

Please share the pronouns your teammate uses in reference to themselves (e.g., she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/their, ze/hir/hir, she/they, he/they). To learn more about gender pronouns, [click here](#).

Character Limit: 250

Teammate Biography

The biography should be narrative and limited to 1,000 characters. The resume should be uploaded as a PDF.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Teammate Website

Character Limit: 2000

Third Collaborator First Name

Character Limit: 150

Third Collaborator Surname/Family Name

Character Limit: 250

Third Collaborator Creator Type

Check all that apply.

Choices

Composer
Librettist

Third Creator Email

Character Limit: 254

Third Collaborator Citizenship Status

Indicate if your third collaborator is a United States citizen or permanent resident, or possesses 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 how your third collaborator identifies.

Third Collaborator Racial/Ethnic Identity

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Please select all that apply.

Choices

Asian

Black/African American

Indigenous/Native American

Latiné/Hispanic

Middle Eastern or North African
Pacific Islander
Additional

Additional - Third Collaborator Racial and Ethnic Identity

If you selected "Additional" from the checklist above, please tell us what best describes your teammate's racial or ethnic identity.

Character Limit: 250

Third Collaborator Gender Identity

Please share your gender identity.

Choices

Intersex
Man
Nonbinary
Transgender
Woman
Additional

Additional - Third Collaborator Gender Identity

If you selected "Additional" from the checklist above, please tell us the language that best describes your third collaborator's gender identity.

Character Limit: 250

Third Collaborator 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). To learn more about gender pronouns, click [here](#).

Character Limit: 250

Third Collaborator Biography

The biography should be narrative and limited to 1,000 characters. The resume should be uploaded as a PDF.

Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 1 MB

Third Collaborator Website

Character Limit: 2000

Creative Team History*

Describe the composer/librettist relationship. Have you worked together previously? 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 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 January 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

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: 2 MB

Project Information

Project Activity Type*

Choices

- Libretto Reading
- Workshop
- Working Performance
- Other

Other - Project Activity Type

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 September 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 September 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.

February 2024: Creative team meeting with composer, librettist, and dramaturg

April 2024: Libretto reading

May – October 2024: Revisions to the libretto, completion of excerpts or full piano/vocal score for workshop

Late October 2024: 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.

Budget

FUNDING PARAMETERS

Grants will cover up to 100 percent of eligible expenses, not exceeding \$18,000; 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;
- Costs associated with the project recording, including venue rental, recording personnel, and technical support for audio-visual needs;
- Equipment rental (e.g., lighting, sound, instrumental cartage);
- Graphic design, web design, and programs for project;
- Childcare and/or elder care while creators are in rehearsal or performance;
- Research materials (e.g., performance tickets, new works recordings, reference books);
- Transportation and housing for personnel related to creative meetings, rehearsals, and performances (Airfare is limited to coach class.); and
- Living expenses for the composer/librettist team (up to 30% of grant request).

Ineligible expenses include:

- Commissioning fees to composers and librettists;
- Set, costume, or properties construction or rental expenses for a staged production;
- Institutional overhead expenses if partnering with a producing organization;
- Expenses that are not connected specifically to the 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 five "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 \$18,000.

Character Limit: 20

Creative Team

Name any other creative or performing artists associated with this project, if known at this time (e.g., stage director, music director, lighting designer, dramaturg).

You are not required to have a full creative team in place at this time.

Creator 1 Name

Character Limit: 250

Creator 1 Role

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

Character Limit: 250

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 Email

Character Limit: 254

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 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 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

Work Samples

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

If you intend to advance an existing project, you are encouraged to submit excerpts from the work.

Composer Samples

Submit two samples (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.

At least one sample should feature voice(s) that are not digitally generated.

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

Although no previous experience with opera is required, we encourage you to submit any vocal music you have written and if possible, give some sense of your notational skills (e.g., scores, chord charts, or other graphic representations of your music).

MIDI recordings are permitted but not recommended.

SAMPLE 1 - Composer

Composer Sample 1 Title*

Character Limit: 100

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: 5000

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: 8 MB

Composer Sample 1 Libretto Upload (optional)

File Size Limit: 5 MB

COMPOSER SAMPLE 2

Composer Sample 2 Title*

Character Limit: 100

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: 5000

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: 5 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: 5000

Sample 1 - Librettist Upload*

Upload the sample below.

Character Limit: 500 | File Size Limit: 3 MB

Librettist Sample 1 Score or Chart Upload (optional)

File Size Limit: 5 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: 5 MB

Certification

Citizenship*

I certify that at all of the team members in this proposal are United States citizens or permanent residents, or possess Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. *This question applies to the composer/librettist team only.*

Choices

Yes

Identity*

I certify that my teammate (if applicable) and I identify with the racial and ethnic heritage communicated above.

Choices

Yes

Signature

Applicant Signature*

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

Character Limit: 100