

### **Challenge America**

These grants support projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations. Cost share/matching grants are for \$10,000. A minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount is required. Total project costs must be at least \$20,000 or greater.

#### **Deadlines:**

<b>Part 1 - Submit to Grants.gov</b>	<b>April 9, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>
<i>Prepare application material so that it's ready to upload when the Applicant Portal opens</i>	
<b>Part 2 - Submit to Applicant Portal</b>	<b>April 14-21, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>
<b>Earliest Announcement of Grant Award or Rejection</b>	<b>December 2020</b>
<b>Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance</b>	<b>January 1, 2021</b>

Note: To allow time to resolve any problems you might encounter, finalize your Grants.gov/SAM registration by at least March 18, 2020 and submit to Grants.gov by at least March 31, 2020.

### **CHALLENGE AMERICA: Grant Program Description**

The Challenge America category offers support primarily to small and mid-sized organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations -- those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. Age alone (e.g., youth, seniors) does not qualify a group as underserved; at least one of the underserved characteristics noted above also must be present. Provide details about the underserved audience you select in your application using relevant statistics and anecdotal information. Proposals should detail the efforts made to reach the identified underserved population. Grants are available for professional arts programming and for projects that emphasize the potential of the arts in community development.

The National Endowment for the Arts is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and fostering mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all individuals and groups.

Challenge America grants:

- Extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations.
- Are limited to the specific types of projects outlined below.
- Are for a fixed amount of \$10,000 and require a minimum \$10,000 cost share/match.

Partnerships can be valuable to the success of these projects. While not required, applicants are encouraged to consider partnerships among organizations, both in and outside of the arts, as an appropriate way to engage with the identified underserved audience.

To ensure that Challenge America funding reaches new organizations and communities, the National Endowment for the Arts has implemented a policy to limit consecutive-year funding.

Starting with grants that were awarded in FY 2013 (as indicated by a grant letter dated on or after October 1, 2012, and a grant number beginning with "13 - 78" or ending with "78-13"), an organization that receives Challenge America grants for three years in a row is not eligible to apply to the category for the following one-year period. Therefore, an organization that has received grants in FY 2018, 2019, and 2020 may **not** apply under these FY 2021 guidelines. That organization may apply for FY 2021 support under other National Endowment for the Arts funding opportunities including Grants for Arts Projects.

## Projects

This category supports focused, distinct projects that take place over limited periods of time and involve limited geographic areas.

**All projects must extend the reach of the arts to populations that have limited access to the arts due to geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.** The involvement of artists and arts professionals is essential. Each applicant must present a straightforward project that reflects **only one of the three project types below**. Grants are available **only** for:

- **Guest Artist project type, which refers to an arts event or events that will feature one or more guest artists.** The guest artist is engaged specifically for the proposed project, and is not considered a regular company member, board member, or staff of the applicant organization. The intention of the Guest Artist project type is to provide National Endowment for the Arts support to the applicant organization and its community to engage with an artist(s) and present a public event that might otherwise not be accessible to audiences that have historically been underserved.

Guest artist(s) should reflect the artistic disciplines of the National Endowment for the Arts, which may include musicians, composers, conductors, actors, directors, dancers, choreographers, curators, visual artists, writers, or media artists.

Allowable guest artist public event activities are broad, and may include a festival; exhibition; literary reading; musical, theatrical, or multi-media performance; media screening; broadcast; or lecture. The public event(s) may take place in an arts venue or a non-traditional arts venue, but it must be in a location that is accessible to the public. In addition to guest artist fees, there can be a range of other costs associated with the project, including supplies, venue costs, marketing, professional documentation of the project, and program enhancements specific to this grant project. Examples of program enhancements include interpretive material, transportation, program accommodations (e.g., sign language interpretation, audio description, Braille, tactile exhibit tours), catalogues, brochures, or

publications. Other enhancements such as specific lecture-demonstrations, pre- or post-event talks, or workshops relevant to the proposed arts event are also eligible.

The guest artist's active role in the required public event should be clearly described within the application narrative, including the schedule of activities.

NOTE: Projects that involve K-12 standards-based arts instruction are not eligible. (See Arts Education in the Grants for Arts Projects category.) Other classes and workshops are eligible expenses but must include a public event with active involvement by the participating guest artist.

- **Collaborative Marketing Campaigns, which may include unified promotion projects and/or cultural tourism projects incorporating the offerings of multiple institutions.** Unified promotion is defined as the professional assessment, design, and/or distribution of public relations and marketing tools (calendars, websites, radio and television, brochures, rack cards, signage, wayfinding, etc.) designed to benefit several local organizations in a community. Cultural tourism projects will market and promote cultural assets to enhance public engagement with arts and culture in communities and to populations that have been historically underserved. Note that campaigns should involve a partnership promoting the work of several organizations to extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations, **not** a promotional project for a single organization.
- **Public Art Projects, community-based and professionally directed.** Although many kinds of arts projects take place in the public realm, for the Challenge America category, the Public Art project type is intended to support primarily **visual arts projects, which may be temporary or permanent**, such as murals, sculptures, multi-media, or environmental art, developed **through a meaningful community engagement process**. Evidence of community involvement should be apparent in the planning, design, or fabrication of the work, and should include a professional lead artist. See "**Public Art Resources**" for additional information.

NOTE: The following are not eligible for support: Conservation, restoration, or repair of existing public art; or the development of a public art master plan. These activities may be supported in the Grants for Arts Projects category.

**For information on how to apply, see the "To Apply" box on the right.**

### **National Historic Preservation Act and/or the National Environmental Policy Act Review**

If you are recommended for a grant, your project may be subject to the **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)** and/or the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** and the National Endowment for the Arts will conduct a review of your project to ensure that it is in compliance NHPA/NEPA.

Some of the common project types that garner a NHPA review are:

- A project involving or occurring near a district, site, building, landscape, structure or object that is 50 years old and therefore potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (note that in some instances, buildings or structures may be included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places that are less than 50 years old).
- The commissioning and installation of temporary or permanent outdoor furnishings such as benches or market structures, or art such as a sculpture or mural.
- An outdoor arts festival.
- Design planning and services for projects that may involve a historic site, structure, or district.

This review and approval process may take up to several months to complete and may delay your project's start date and our ability to make a grant award/our ability to release grant funds. If you are recommended for an award which may have historic preservation or environmental concerns (NHPA/NEPA), you will be notified and asked to provide additional information. Thorough and complete information for all project activities and locations will expedite the review. The Arts Endowment cannot release an award and/or grant funds until the NHPA/NEPA review is **complete**.

**To learn more about the questions you will need to answer for the review of a project impacted by the National Historic Preservation Act and/or the National Environmental Policy Act , see here.**

### Accessibility

Federal regulations require that all National Endowment for the Arts-funded projects be accessible to people with disabilities. Funded activities must be held in a physically accessible venue and program access and effective communication must be provided for participants and audience members with disabilities. If your project is recommended for funding, you will be asked to provide detailed information describing how you will make your project physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities:

### Deadline

<b>Part 1 - Submit to Grants.gov</b>	<b>April 9, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>
<i>Prepare application material so that it's ready to upload when the Applicant Portal opens</i>	
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<b>Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance</b>	<b>January 1, 2021</b>

Note: To allow time to resolve any problems you might encounter, finalize your Grants.gov/SAM registration by at least March 18, 2020 and submit to Grants.gov by at least March 31, 2020.

If your organization applies to the Challenge America category, it may not submit another application to the Grants for Arts Projects category. See "**Applicant Eligibility/Application Limits**" for further information.

### **Contact**

**Challenge America Specialists:** [challengeamerica@arts.gov](mailto:challengeamerica@arts.gov) or 202-682-5700

**TO APPLY**

- **Grant Program Description**
- **We Do Not Fund**
- **Application Calendar**
- **Applicant Eligibility**
- **Award Information**
- **Application Review**
- **Award Administration**
- **Other Information**
- How to Apply
  - **How to Prepare & Submit an Application**
  - **Part 1: Submit to Grants.gov**
  - **Part 2: Submit Materials to the Applicant Portal (PDF)**
- **FAQs**

**APPLICANT RESOURCES**

- **Application Checklist**
- **Online Tutorial: Using the Grant Application Form (GAF)**
- **Challenge America Guidelines Webinar (TBD)**
- **Webinar for Challenge America Applicants Interested in Applying to Grants for Arts Projects (TBD)**
- **Grants.gov Support**
- **SAM.gov Help**
- **Sample Application Narratives**
- **Accessibility Checklist**
- **Accessibility Questions for Recommended Applicants**
- **Recent Grants**
- **Public Art Resources**
- **Program Evaluation Resources**
- **National Endowment for the Arts Historic Preservation Review Process**

## CHALLENGE AMERICA: Application Calendar

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Note: To allow time to resolve any problems you might encounter, finalize your Grants.gov/SAM registration by at least March 18, 2020 and submit to Grants.gov by at least March 31, 2020.

Applicants are required to use Grants.gov. See "[How to Prepare and Submit an Application](#)" for further information.

An organization may submit only one application to either [Grants for Arts Projects](#) or [Challenge America](#) (see "[Application Limits](#)" for the one exception to this rule).

**Late, ineligible, and incomplete applications will not be reviewed.**

In the event of a major emergency (e.g., a hurricane or Grants.gov technological failure), the National Endowment for the Arts Chairman may adjust application deadlines for affected applicants. If a deadline is extended for any reason, an announcement will be posted on our website.

Do not seek information on the status of your application before the announcement date that is listed above.

**If you have questions:**

**Email:** [challengeamerica@arts.gov](mailto:challengeamerica@arts.gov)

**Call:** 202-682-5700



202-682-5496 Voice/T.T.Y. (Text-Telephone, a device for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.)



Individuals who do not use conventional print should contact the Arts Endowment's Accessibility Office at 202-682-5532 for help in acquiring an audio recording of these guidelines.

CFDA No. 45.024

OMB No. 3135-0112 Expires TBD

December 2019



## CHALLENGE AMERICA: We Do Not Fund

Under these guidelines, funding is **not** available for:

- Direct grants to individuals. (We encourage applicant organizations to involve individual artists in all possible ways.)
- Awards to individuals or organizations to honor or recognize achievement.
- General operating or seasonal support.
- Cash reserves and endowments.
- Costs for the creation of new organizations.
- Construction, purchase, or renovation of facilities. (Design fees, preparing space for an exhibit, installation or de-installation of art, and community planning are eligible. However, no National Endowment for the Arts or cost share/matching funds may be directed to the costs of physical construction or renovation or toward the purchase costs of facilities or land.)
- Commercial (for-profit) enterprises or activities, including concessions, food, T-shirts, or other items for resale.
- Subgranting or regranting, except for state arts agencies, regional arts organizations, or local arts agencies that are designated to operate on behalf of their local governments or are operating units of city or county government. (**See more information on subgranting.**)
- Costs to bring a project into compliance with federal grant requirements. This includes environmental or historical assessments or reviews and the hiring of individuals to write assessments or reviews or to otherwise comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and/or the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Individual elementary or secondary schools -- charter, private, or public -- directly. Schools may participate as partners in projects for which another eligible organization applies. Local education agencies, school districts, and state and regional education agencies are eligible. If a single school also is a local education agency, as is the case with some charter schools, the school may apply with documentation that supports its status as a local education agency.
- Projects that replace arts instruction provided by an arts specialist.
- Generally, courses in degree-granting institutions.
- Literary publishing that does not focus on contemporary literature and/or writers.
- Generally, publication of books, exhibition of works, or other projects by the applicant organization's board members, faculty, or trustees.
- Exhibitions of, and other projects that primarily involve, single, individually-owned, private collections.
- Projects for which the selection of artists or art works is based upon criteria other than artistic excellence and merit. Examples include festivals, exhibitions, or publications for which no jury/editorial/curatorial judgment has been applied.
- Expenditures related to compensation to foreign nationals and/or travel to or from foreign countries when those expenditures are not in compliance with regulations issued by the U.S. Treasury Department Office of Foreign Assets Control. For further information,

see <http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/> or contact our Office of Grants Management at [grants@arts.gov](mailto:grants@arts.gov).

- Project costs supported by any other federal funding. This includes federal funding received either directly from a federal agency (e.g., National Endowment for the Humanities, Housing and Urban Development, National Science Foundation, or an entity that receives federal appropriations such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting or Amtrak); or indirectly from a pass-through organization such as a state arts agency, regional arts organization, or a grant made to another entity.
- Activities that occur over an extended period (e.g., projects that span a full season, long-term residencies, most large-scale projects).
- Competitions other than design competitions.
- Projects that involve curriculum-based instruction in the arts.
- The same organization (parent or component) for more than three consecutive years, even if for different projects.
- Social activities such as receptions, parties, galas.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Contributions and donations to other entities.
- Gifts and prizes, including cash prizes as well as other items (e.g., electronic devices, gift certificates) with monetary value.
- General miscellaneous or contingency costs.
- Fines and penalties, bad debt costs, deficit reduction.
- Lobbying, including activities intended to influence the outcome of elections or influence government officials regarding pending legislation, either directly or through specific lobbying appeals to the public.
- Voter registration drives and related activities.
- Marketing expenses that are not directly related to the project.
- Audit costs that are not directly related to a single audit (formerly known as an A-133 audit).
- Rental costs for home office workspace owned by individuals or entities affiliated with the applicant organization.
- Visa costs paid to the U.S. government.
- Costs incurred before the beginning or after the completion of the official period of performance.

All applicants should carefully review the **Assurance of Compliance** and Appendix A of our **General Terms and Conditions (GTC)** which detail other requirements that govern awards.

## **CHALLENGE AMERICA: Applicant Eligibility**

Nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organizations; units of state or local government; or federally recognized tribal communities or tribes may apply. Applicants may be arts organizations, local arts agencies, arts service organizations, local education agencies (school districts), and other organizations that can help advance the goals of the National Endowment for the Arts.

To be eligible, **the applicant organization must:**

- Meet the National Endowment for the Arts' "**Legal Requirements**" including nonprofit, tax-exempt status at the time of application. (All organizations must apply directly on their own behalf. Applications through a fiscal sponsor/agent are not allowed. **See more information on fiscal sponsors/agents.**)
- Have completed a three-year history of arts programming prior to the application deadline. For the purpose of defining eligibility, "three-year history" refers to when an organization began its programming and not when it incorporated or received nonprofit, tax-exempt status.
- Have submitted acceptable Final Report packages by the due date(s) for all National Endowment for the Arts grant(s) previously received.

An organization whose primary purpose is to channel resources (financial, human, or other) to an affiliated organization is not eligible to apply if the affiliated organization submits its own application. This prohibition applies even if each organization has its own 501(c)(3) status. For example, the "Friends of ABC Museum" may not apply if the ABC Museum applies.

All applicants must have a DUNS number ([www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)) and be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM, [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)) and maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete, and should a grant be made, throughout the life of the award.

See "**How to Prepare and Submit an Application**" for the documentation that is required to demonstrate eligibility.

The designated state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) and their regional arts organizations (RAOs) are not eligible to apply under the Challenge America guidelines. **SAAs and RAOs** may serve as partners in projects. However, they may not receive National Endowment for the Arts funds (except as provided through their designated grant programs), and SAA/RAO costs may not be included as part of the required cost share/match. SAAs and RAOs are eligible to apply through the Partnership Agreements guidelines.

### **Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian Applicants or Projects**

We provide support for projects featuring Native American, Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian arts across all National Endowment for the Arts disciplines. (**See more information here.**)

**Ineligible applications will not be reviewed.**

## Application Limits

If an organization applies to the Challenge America category, it may not also apply to the Grants for Arts Projects category.

You may apply to other National Endowment for the Arts funding opportunities, including Our Town, in addition to Challenge America. In each case, the request must be for a **distinctly different project or a distinctly different phase of the same project**, with a different period of performance and costs.

An organization that has received Challenge America grants in FY 2018, 2019, and 2020 may **not** apply for a Challenge America grant under these FY 2021 guidelines. That organization may apply for FY 2021 support under other National Endowment for the Arts funding opportunities including Grants for Arts Projects.

For this category, exceptions to the one-application rule are made only for parent organizations that have separately identifiable and independent components; this includes city or county governments.

A parent organization that comprises separately identifiable and independent components (e.g., a university campus that has a presenting organization and a radio station) may submit an application for each such component. In addition, a parent organization also may submit one application on its own behalf for a **distinctly different project**. The parent organization must meet the eligibility requirements for all applicants. NOTE: A related organization that performs grant administration duties for a parent organization (e.g., a college foundation that administers grants awarded to a college and its components) may submit applications for components and the parent organization in lieu of such applications being submitted by the parent. The related organization must meet the eligibility requirements for all applicants.

An independent component must be a unit that is both programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization, have its own staff and budget, and generally have an independent board that has substantial responsibility for oversight and management. To qualify as independent, a component should be equivalent to a stand-alone institution with a separate mission.

The following **do not qualify** as independent components:

- Academic departments of colleges and universities.
- Programs and projects of organizations.

For example:

- An art museum on a university campus serves the general public and does not grant degrees. The museum board, not the university trustees, manages the museum's budget, staff, and programming. In this example, the art museum essentially is a stand-alone organization and qualifies as an independent component.
- A symphony association sponsors a youth orchestra in addition to its professional orchestra. Some symphony musicians serve as faculty for the youth orchestra; there is some overlap of membership between the symphony trustees and the youth orchestra's advisory board; and

the executive director for the symphony association serves as CEO for both the professional and youth orchestras. In this case, while the youth orchestra may be an important program of the symphony association, it is not equivalent to a separate institution and therefore does not qualify as an independent component.

A parent organization should consult with **our staff** to verify the eligibility of its component before preparing an application.

## **CHALLENGE AMERICA: Award Information**

### **Grant Amounts, Cost Share, and Matching Funds**

All grants are for \$10,000.

Our grants cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the project. All grants require a nonfederal cost share/match of at least 1 to 1. For example, if an organization receives a \$10,000 grant, the total eligible project costs must be at least \$20,000 and the organization must provide at least \$10,000 toward the project from nonfederal sources.

### **Period of Performance**

Our support of a project can start no sooner than the "Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance" listed on the **Application Calendar**.

Grants awarded under these guidelines generally may cover a period of performance of up to two years. **The two-year period is intended to allow an applicant sufficient time to plan, execute, and close out its project, not to repeat a one-year project for a second year.**

Any planning costs that are included as part of the project must be incurred during the established period of performance. No pre-award costs are allowable in the Project Budget. Project costs that are incurred before the "Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance" will be removed from the Project Budget.

A grantee may not receive more than one National Endowment for the Arts grant for the same project during the same period of performance.

## CHALLENGE AMERICA: Application Review

### Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed on the basis of the following criteria:

The **artistic excellence** of the project, which includes the:

- Quality of the artists, arts organizations, works of art, or technical services that the project will involve, as appropriate.

The **artistic merit** of the project, which includes the:

- Potential of the project to reach underserved populations -- those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.
- Potential to make quality arts or cultural resources more widely available.
- Appropriateness of the project to the organization's mission, audience, community, and/or constituency.
- Ability to carry out the project based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, the quality and clarity of the project activities and goals, the resources involved, and the qualifications of the project's personnel.
- Appropriateness of the proposed performance measurements.

**NOTE: We fund arts projects, and make grants only for specific, definable activities. Your application may be rejected if it does not sufficiently describe the project activities.**

### What Happens to Your Application

Applications are evaluated according to the "Review Criteria." After initial staff processing, applications are reviewed by a diverse group of arts experts and other individuals with broad knowledge of the specific types of projects in this funding area. Following further staff review, these recommendations are forwarded to the National Endowment for the Arts Chairman.

The Chairman reviews the recommendations for grants in all funding categories and makes the final decision on all grant awards. Applicants are then notified of funding decisions.

After notification of funding decisions, applicants with questions may contact the staff. **Any applicant whose request for funding has not been recommended may ask for an explanation of the basis for denial. In such instances, the National Endowment for the Arts must be contacted no later than 30 calendar days after the official notification.**

See the "**Application Calendar**" for information on when we expect to announce grant awards and rejections, and the earliest dates by which projects may begin.

**Risk Assessment:** All recommended applications undergo a review to evaluate risk posed by the applicant prior to making a federal award. This may include past performance on grants, meeting reporting deadlines, compliance with terms and conditions, audit findings, etc.





## **CHALLENGE AMERICA: Award Administration**

### **Award Notices**

The "Earliest Announcement of Grant Award or Rejection" date for your category on the **Application Calendar** tells you when we expect to announce grant decisions.

Note that the "announcement" is likely to take the form of a preliminary congratulatory message, a request for project/budget revisions, or a rejection notification. The official grant award notification (i.e., a notice of action authorized by the National Endowment for the Arts Office of Grants Management) is the only legal and valid confirmation of award. Receipt of your official award notification can take several months depending on a number of factors such as whether additional information is needed for your project, the number of awards to be processed, whether the agency has its appropriation from Congress, etc.

### **National Historic Preservation Act and/or the National Environmental Policy Act Review**

If you are recommended for a grant, your project may be subject to the **the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)** and/or the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** and the National Endowment for the Arts will conduct a review of your project to ensure that it is in compliance NHPA/NEPA.

Some of the common project types that garner a NHPA review are:

- A project involving or occurring near a district, site, building, landscape, structure or object that is 50 years old and therefore potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (note that in some instances, buildings or structures may be included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places that are less than 50 years old).
- The commissioning and installation of temporary or permanent outdoor furnishings such as benches or market structures, or art such as a sculpture or mural.
- An outdoor arts festival.
- Design planning and services for projects that may involve a historic site, structure, or district.

This review and approval process may take up to several months to complete and may delay your project's start date and our ability to make a grant award/our ability to release grant funds. If you are recommended for an award which may have historic preservation or environmental concerns (NHPA/NEPA), you will be notified and asked to provide additional information. Thorough and complete information for all project activities and locations will expedite the review. The Arts Endowment cannot release an award and/or grant funds until the NHPA/NEPA review is **complete**.

**To learn more about the questions you will need to answer for the review of a project impacted by the National Historic Preservation Act and/or the National Environmental Policy Act , see here.**

## Accessibility

Federal regulations require that all National Endowment for the Arts-funded projects be accessible to people with disabilities. Funded activities must be held in a physically accessible venue and program access and effective communication must be provided for participants and audience members with disabilities. If your project is recommended for funding, you will be asked to provide detailed information describing how you will make your project physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities:

- Buildings and facilities (including projects held in historic facilities) should be physically accessible. This includes, but is not limited to: ground-level entry, ramped access, and/or elevators to the venue; integrated and dispersed wheelchair seating in assembly areas; wheelchair-accessible box office, stage, and dressing rooms; wheelchair-accessible display cases, exhibit areas, and counters; and wheelchair-accessible restrooms and water fountains.
- The programmatic offering should be accessible either as part of the funded activity or upon request, where relevant. This can include, but is not limited to: contact information for requesting accommodations; electronic materials and websites; print materials in alternative formats, such as large-print brochures/labels, Braille, and electronic/digital formats; accommodations for performances, tours, and lectures, such as audio description, tactile opportunities, sign language interpretation, and real-time captioning; closed/open captioning of video and film; and assistive listening devices.

**See the Nondiscrimination Statutes in our "Assurance of Compliance" for additional information. For technical assistance on how to make your project fully accessible, contact the Accessibility Office at [accessibility@arts.gov](mailto:accessibility@arts.gov), 202-682-5532 Voice or the Civil Rights Office at 202-682-5454 or 202-682-5082 Voice/T.T.Y., or see our online Accessibility Resources.**

## Changes in Projects

Applicants must notify the National Endowment for the Arts immediately of any significant changes in their project that occur after they have submitted their application. If the project or the organization's capacity changes significantly before an award is made, the Arts Endowment may revise or withdraw the funding recommendation.

Grantees are expected to carry out a project that is consistent with the proposal that was approved for funding by the National Endowment for the Arts. If changes in the project are required, the grantee must submit a request with justification for the change(s) through a proper REACH account for the award for review by the Office of Grants Management. **Approval is not guaranteed.** Detailed information is included the National Endowment for the Arts General Terms & Conditions for Grants to Organizations.

## Project Reporting and Evaluation

We ask all applicants to define what they would like to achieve, how they will evaluate the degree to which it is achieved, and, upon completion of the project, what they have learned from their experiences. Such feedback need not entail large-scale or expensive evaluation efforts. You should do what is feasible and appropriate for your organization and project. When a grant is

completed, you must submit a final report and answer questions detailing your accomplishments, who benefited, and the resulting impact of your project as well as list the involvement of key partners, funders, and artists. Arts Education grantees who apply for a Direct Learning Grant will be required to describe the assessment methods used to assess learning.

The Arts Endowment staff will assign one of the agency's objectives to your project: Creation, Engagement, Learning (all Arts Education grantees will be assigned the Learning objective), or Our Town. Before applying, review the reporting requirements for the agency's objectives: Standard -- for Creation, Engagement, Learning; Arts Education, for all Arts Education grantees; or Our Town. Reporting requirements for Our Town are different from -- and more extensive than -- the reporting requirements for the other objectives. If you have any questions about the agency's objectives or the associated reporting requirements that may be required if you receive a grant, contact the staff before applying.

Beyond the reporting requirements for all grantees, selected Grants for Arts Projects grantees will be asked to assist in the collection of additional information that can help the National Endowment for the Arts determine the degree to which agency objectives were achieved. You may be required to provide evidence of project accomplishments including, but not limited to, work samples, community action plans, cultural asset studies, programs, reviews, relevant news clippings, and playbills. Remember that you are required to maintain project documentation for three years following submission of your final reports.

### **Implementation of Title 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards**

This guidance from the federal government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) establishes clarity and consistency of the pre- and post-award requirements applicable to federal grantees. Under the authority listed above, the National Endowment for the Arts adopts the OMB Guidance in 2 CFR part 200 under §3255.1 Adoption of 2 CFR Part 200. This part gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance and supplements the guidance as needed for the National Endowment for the Arts.

### **General Terms & Conditions**

Federal and agency requirements that relate to grants awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts are highlighted in our *General Terms & Conditions* (GTC). The GTC incorporates the adoption of 2 CFR Part 200 by reference. The document also explicitly identifies where the National Endowment for the Arts has selected options offered in the regulation, such as budget waivers and requirements for use of program income. It also includes agency requirements for cost share/matching funds reporting requirements, amendment processes, and termination actions.

### **Legal Requirements:**

**NOTE: This list highlights some of the significant legal requirements that may apply to an applicant or grantee however, it is not exhaustive. More information regarding these and other legal requirements may be found at Appendix A of our General Terms & Conditions which sets forth the National Policy and Other Legal Requirements, Statutes,**

**and Regulations that Govern Your Award. There may be other applicable legal requirements that are not listed here.**

1. By law, the National Endowment for the Arts may support only those organizations that:

- **Are tax-exempt.** Organizations qualifying for this status must meet the following criteria:
  1. No part of net earnings may benefit a private stockholder or individual.
  2. Donations to the organization must be allowable as a charitable contribution under Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.

For further information, go to the **Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) website**.

Organizations who have had their IRS status revoked are not eligible for National Endowment for the Arts support. It is your responsibility to ensure that your status is current at the time of the application and throughout the life of your award.

- **Compensate all professional performers and related or supporting professional personnel on National Endowment for the Arts-supported projects at no less than the prevailing minimum compensation.** (This requirement is in accordance with regulations that have been issued by the Secretary of Labor in **29 C.F.R. Part 505**. This part does not provide information on specific compensation levels.)
  - **Ensure that no part of any National Endowment for the Arts-supported project will be performed or engaged in under working conditions which are unsanitary or hazardous or dangerous** to the health and safety of the employees involved.
2. **Some legal requirements apply to every applicant, for example:**
- **Compliance with the federal requirements that are outlined in the "Assurance of Compliance"** below.
  - **Debarment and Suspension procedures**. The applicant must comply with the record keeping and other requirements set forth in Subpart C of 2 CFR 180, as adopted by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2 CFR 32.3254. Failure to comply may result in the debarment or suspension of the grantee and the National Endowment for the Arts suspending, terminating and/or recovering funds.
  - **Federal Debt Status (OMB Circular A-129)**. Processing of applications will be suspended when applicants are delinquent on federal tax or non-tax debts, including judgment liens against property for a debt to the federal government. An organization's debt status is displayed in the System for Award Management (SAM). New awards will not be made if an applicant is still in debt status as of September 1.
  - **Labor Standards (29 C.F.R. pt 505)**. If a grant is awarded, the grantee must comply with the standards set out in Labor Standards on Projects or Productions Assisted by Grants from the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities.
  - **The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988** (41 U.S.C. 701 et seq. and 2 C.F.R. Part 3256). The grantee is required to publish a statement regarding its drug-free workplace program as well as comply with other requirements.
3. **Some legal requirements apply depending upon what the grant is funding, for example:**
- If your project activities have the potential to impact any structure that is eligible for or on the National Register of Historic Places, adjacent to a structure that is eligible for or

on the National Register of Historic Places, or located in an historic district, you will be asked to provide additional information about your project or take additional action so that the agency can review and comply with the **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**. NHPA also applies to any planning activities that may affect historic properties or districts. The additional agency review must be completed prior to any agency funds being released.

- If your project activities have the potential to impact the environment or environmentally sensitive resources, you will be required to provide information in accordance with the **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**. The additional agency review must be completed prior to any agency funds being released.
- If your contract is over \$2,000 and involves the construction, alteration, or repair of public buildings or public works, it must contain a clause setting forth the minimum wages to be paid to laborers and mechanics employed under the contract in accordance with **The Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA)**.

4. **Some legal requirements apply depending upon who the Applicant is, for example:**

**The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990** (25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) – which applies to any organization that controls or possesses Native American human remains and associated funerary objects and receives Federal funding, even for a purpose unrelated to the Act (25 USC 3001 et seq.).

**Assurance of Compliance**

**By signing and submitting its application form on grants.gov, the Applicant certifies that it is in compliance with the statutes outlined below and all related National Endowment for the Arts regulations and will maintain records and submit the reports that are necessary to determine compliance.**

We may conduct a review of your organization to ensure that it is in compliance with these statutes. If the Arts Endowment determines that a grantee has failed to comply with these statutes, it may suspend or terminate the award, and/or recover funds. This assurance is subject to judicial enforcement.

The Applicant certifies that it does not discriminate:

- On the grounds of race, color, or national origin, in accordance with **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), implemented by the National Endowment for the Arts at 45 U.S.C.1110.
- On the grounds of disability, in accordance with **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** (29 U.S.C. 794) and the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** ("ADA"), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 12101-12213), implemented by the National Endowment for the Arts at 45 U.S.C. 1151. The ADA's requirements apply regardless of whether you receive federal funds.
- On the basis of age, in accordance with the **Age Discrimination Act of 1975** (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) implemented by the National Endowment for the Arts at 45 U.S.C.1156.
- On the basis of sex, in any education program or activity, in accordance with **Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972** (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.).

Applicant will inform the public that persons who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, sex, or age may file a complaint with the Director of Civil Rights at the National Endowment for the Arts.

Applicant will forward all complaints for investigation and any finding issued by a Federal or state court or by a Federal or state administrative agency to:

Director, Office of Civil Rights  
National Endowment for the Arts  
400 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20506

Applicant shall maintain records of its compliance and submission for three (3) years. The Applicant will compile, maintain and permit access to records as required by applicable regulations, guidelines or other directives.

The Applicant must also certify that it will obtain assurances of compliance from all subrecipients and will require all subrecipients of National Endowment for the Arts funds to comply with these requirements.

The United States has the right to seek judicial or administrative enforcement of this assurance.

For further information and copies of the nondiscrimination regulations identified above, contact the Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or 202-682-5082 Voice/T.T.Y. For inquiries about limited English proficiency, go to <http://www.lep.gov>, the **FOIA Reading Room**, or contact the Office of General Counsel at [GeneralCounsel@arts.gov](mailto:GeneralCounsel@arts.gov) or 202-682-5418.

## **CHALLENGE AMERICA: Other Information**

### **Access for Individuals with Disabilities**

The Accessibility Office assists applicants in making accessibility an integral part of their planning so that organizations and activities are inclusive for staff, panelists, artists, and audiences. For more information, resources, and technical assistance, contact the Accessibility Office at [accessibility@arts.gov](mailto:accessibility@arts.gov), 202-682-5532 Voice, or see the **Accessibility section of the website**. The Art Endowment's Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or 202-682-5082 Voice/T.T.Y. also provides technical assistance on how to make projects fully accessible.

### **Civil Rights**

The Office of Civil Rights at 202-682-5454 or 202-682-5082 Voice/T.T.Y. is available to investigate complaints about compliance with accessibility standards as well as other federal civil rights statutes. For inquiries about limited English proficiency, go to <http://www.lep.gov>, the **FOIA Reading Room**, or contact the Office of General Counsel at [GeneralCounsel@arts.gov](mailto:GeneralCounsel@arts.gov) or 202-682-5418.

### **Standards for Service**

We have set the following standards for serving applicants. We pledge to:

- Treat you with courtesy and efficiency.
- Respond to inquiries and correspondence promptly.
- Provide clear and accurate information about our policies and procedures.
- Provide timely information about funding opportunities and make guidelines available promptly.
- Promptly acknowledge the receipt of your application.
- Ensure that all eligible applications are reviewed thoughtfully and fairly.

We welcome your comments on how we are meeting these standards.

Email: [webmgr@arts.gov](mailto:webmgr@arts.gov), attention: Standards for Service. For questions about these guidelines or your application, see "**Agency Contacts**." In addition, applicants may receive an invitation to participate in a voluntary survey to provide feedback on the grant application guidelines on our website and any experiences consulting with our staff.

### **Paperwork Reduction Act Statement**

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at an average of 12 hours per response. This includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We welcome any suggestions that you might have on improving the guidelines and making them as easy to use as possible. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden,

to: **webmgr@arts.gov**, attention: Reporting Burden. Note: Applicants are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.



## CHALLENGE AMERICA: How to Prepare and Submit an Application

We urge you to read these instructions in their entirety before you begin the application process. Submitting an application is a multi-step process:

- **Part 1:** Submit to Grants.gov the “Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organization Form.” Refer to the Part 1 instructions for important information and deadlines.
- **Part 2:** Complete the “Grant Application Form (GAF)” and upload items through the Arts Endowment’s Applicant Portal. Refer to the Part 2 instructions to learn more about how and when to access the Applicant Portal.

### Tips

#### View a Guidelines Webinar:

- We will conduct a live Challenge America Guidelines webinar on TBD, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time featuring an overview presentation followed by a Q&A session. **Click here to register** for the upcoming webinar and for an **archive of the webinar** after it is concluded.
- We’ll also hold a webinar for previous Challenge America applicants who are interested in applying to Grants for Arts Projects instead of Challenge America on TBD, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time. **Click here to register** for the upcoming webinar and for an **archive of the webinar** after it is concluded.

#### View the Grant Application Form (GAF) Tutorial:

This tutorial provides an overview of the Grant Application Form (GAF) to assist you during Part 2 of the application process: [Online Tutorial: Using the Grant Application Form](#)

#### Ensure that your application is complete with this checklist:

- [Challenge America Application Checklist](#)

## CHALLENGE AMERICA Guidelines: Part 1: Submit to Grants.gov

Complete and submit the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form to Grants.gov.

**Register or renew/verify Grants.gov and SAM.gov registration | Go to the Grant Opportunity Package | Fill out the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form | Submit your application to Grants.gov | Track Your Application**

<b>Part 1 - Submit to Grants.gov</b>	<b>April 9, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>
<i>Prepare application material so that it's ready to upload when the Applicant Portal opens</i>	
<b>Part 2 - Submit to Applicant Portal</b>	<b>April 14-21, 2020 at 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time</b>
<b>Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance</b>	<b>January 1, 2021</b>

Note: To allow time to resolve any problems you might encounter, finalize your Grants.gov/SAM registration by at least March 18, 2020 and submit to Grants.gov by at least March 31, 2020.

### 1. Register or renew/verify Grants.gov and SAM.gov registration:

- Before submitting to Grants.gov, your organization must register or renew/verify its current registration with both **Grants.gov** and the **System for Award Management (SAM)**. Registrations with Grants.gov and SAM must be active for you to be able to submit your application. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in your inability to submit to Grants.gov.
- Go to Grants.gov's **Organization Registration** to create a new organization registration.
- **Grants.gov Contact Center:** Call 800-518-4726, email **support@grants.gov**, or consult the information posted on the Grants.gov website at **Support**. The Grants.gov Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. NOTE: You must contact Grants.gov for help. Grants.gov is not a National Endowment for the Arts system and is outside of our control.
- **SAM Federal Service Desk:** Call 866-606-8220 or see the information posted on the SAM website at **SAM Help**. NOTE: You must contact SAM.gov for help. SAM.gov is not a National Endowment for the Arts system and is outside of our control.
- Registration in SAM.gov and Grants.gov can take several weeks. Exceptions to the deadline will be considered only for registration or renewal issues that are the result of failures on the part of DUNS, SAM, or Grants.gov as determined by the National Endowment for the Arts. To be considered for this exception, you must provide documentation of a DUNS, SAM, or Grants.gov failure dating from at least March 18.
- In addition to these instructions, you should periodically check the **Grants.gov blog** or the **Grants.gov homepage** for tips, updates, and alerts.

## 2. Go to the Grant Opportunity Package:

Access the Grant Opportunity Package with the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form on Grants.gov by clicking on the link for your deadline:

**[CLICK HERE TO GO TO THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY PACKAGE ON GRANTS.GOV](#)**

[Funding Opportunity Number 2020NEA01CA]

When you go to Grants.gov through the link above, the Grants.gov “View Grant Opportunity” screen will open. Choose “Apply” in the “Action” area. On the next screen, choose “Apply” again. You will be prompted to enter your Grants.gov Username and Password.

You will apply using a Grants.gov Workspace. To create a Workspace, look for the “Application Filing Name” field above the “Create Workspace” button (you must be logged in as the Authorized Organization Representative or AOR to be able to see this button and create the Workspace). Enter the legal name of your organization, click the “Create Workspace” button, and follow the screens from there. If you want to **learn more about using Grants.gov’s Workspace, see here.**

For detailed instructions on how to complete and submit the required forms through Workspace, see here.

You will submit the substantial part of your application during Part 2.

## 3. Fill out the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form:

**NOTE:** All asterisked (\*) items and yellow fields on this form are required and must be completed before you will be able to submit the form. Do not type in all capital letters when completing the form. Enter information directly into the form. Do not copy from an old Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form or another document and paste into the form.

**1. Name of Federal Agency:** Pre-populated.

**2. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:** Pre-populated.

**3. Date Received:** This will be filled automatically with the date that you submit your application; leave blank.

**4. Funding Opportunity Number:** Pre-populated.

**5. Applicant Information:**

a. **Legal Name:** The name provided here must be the applicant's legal name as it appears in the current IRS 501(c)(3) status letter or in the official document that identifies the organization as a unit of state or local government, or as a federally recognized tribal community or tribe. (Do not use your organization's popular name, if different.)

If you are a parent organization that is applying on behalf of an **eligible independent component**, do not list the name of the independent component here. You will be asked for that information later.

**b. Address:** Use Street 1 for your organization's physical street address. This address should agree with the address that you used for your SAM.gov registration. In addition, use Street 2 for your organization's mailing address if it differs from the physical street address.

In the Zip/Postal Code box, organizations in the United States should enter **the full 9-digit zip code** that was assigned by the U.S. Postal Service. If you do not know your full zip code, you may look it up at [www.usps.com/zip4/](http://www.usps.com/zip4/)

**d. Type of Applicant:** Select the item that best characterizes your organization from the menu in the first drop down box. Additional choices are optional.

**e. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):** Enter the 9-digit number that was assigned by the Internal Revenue Service; do not use a Social Security Number.

**f. Organizational DUNS:** All organizational applicants for federal funds must have a DUNS number, which is recognized as the universal standard for identifying organizations worldwide. **The number that you enter here must agree with the number (either 9 or 13 digits) that you used with the SAM (System for Award Management) as part of the Grants.gov registration. Otherwise, your application will not be validated by Grants.gov and will be rejected. Confirm your DUNS with SAM.gov before filling out this form.**

**g. Congressional District:** Enter the number of the Congressional District where the applicant organization is located. The Congressional District that you enter here must agree with the Congressional District that you used with the SAM (System for Award Management) as part of the Grants.gov registration. Use the following format: 2 character State Abbreviation-3 character District Number. For example, if your organization is located in the 5th Congressional District of California, enter "CA-005." If your state has a single At-Large Representative or your territory has a single Delegate, enter your 2 character state/territory abbreviation and "-000." If you need help determining your district, go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and use the "Find Your Representative" tool.

## **6. Project Information:**

**a. Project Title:** Enter "N/A." You will provide a project title in the Arts Endowment's Applicant Portal during Part 2 of the application process, not in Grants.gov. Anything you enter in Grants.gov will not be used in the review of your application.

**b. Project Description:** Enter "N/A." You will provide a project description in the Arts Endowment's Applicant Portal during Part 2 of the application process, not in Grants.gov. Anything you enter in Grants.gov will not be used in the review of your application.

c. **Proposed Project Start Date/End Date:** Enter the beginning and ending dates for your requested period of performance, i.e., the span of time necessary to plan, execute, and close out your proposed project. The start date should be the first day of the month, and the end date should be the last day of the month. Our support of a project may start on **January 1, 2021** or any time after. While a period of performance of up to two years is allowed, we anticipate that most Challenge America projects -- including planning and closeout time -- will be substantially shorter. Your budget should include only the activities and costs incurred during the requested period of performance.

### **7. Project Director:**

Provide the requested information for the Project Director. Select a Prefix (e.g., Ms., Mr.) even though this is not a required field.

Provide contact information, including an e-mail address that will be valid through the announcement date for your category. Due to restrictions from the Department of Homeland Security we are not able to send emails to alias addresses that forward to another email account. Do not enter this type of email address.

### **8. Primary Contact/Grant Administrator:**

Provide the requested information for the individual who should be contacted on all matters involving this application and the administration of any grant that may be awarded. For colleges and universities, this person is often a Sponsored Research, Sponsored Programs, or Contracts and Grants Officer. Select a Prefix even though this is not a required field. For the Telephone number field, use the following format: 000-000-0000. Due to restrictions from the Department of Homeland Security we are not able to send emails to alias addresses that forward to another email account. Do not enter this type of email address.

In some organizations, particularly smaller ones, this individual may be the same as the Project Director. If this is the case, you may check the "Same as Project Director" box and not repeat information that you have already provided in Item 7. (If the Primary Contact/Grant Administrator is the same as the Authorizing Official, complete all items under both 8 and 9 even though there will be some repetition.)

### **9. Authorized Representative:**

Enter the requested information for the AOR (Authorized Organization Representative) who is authorized to submit this application to Grants.gov. Select a Prefix even though this is not a required field. Due to restrictions from the Department of Homeland Security we are not able to send emails to alias addresses that forward to another email account Do not enter this type of email address.

The AOR must have the legal authority to obligate your organization (e. g., be a senior member of the staff such as an Executive Director, Director of Development). See specific requirements for who can serve as an AOR for colleges and universities. Contractors, including grant writers or grant consultants, or administrative support staff cannot serve as an AOR.

**NOTE: By clicking the "I Agree" box at the top of Item 9, this individual will be certifying compliance with relevant federal requirements on your organization's behalf.** (These requirements can be found in the "Assurance of Compliance" section of these guidelines.)

The "Signature of Authorized Representative" and "Date Signed" boxes will be populated by Grants.gov upon submission of the application.

#### **4. Submit your application to Grants.gov:**

- To begin the submission process, log on to Grants.gov and go to the Forms tab on the Manage Workspace page. Click the "Sign and Submit" button, under the Forms tab.
- **Be certain that you are satisfied with your Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form before you click this button. No revisions to your form are possible through Grants.gov once it is submitted.**
- Once you complete and submit your application, you will see a confirmation screen explaining that your submission is being processed. Take a screenshot and retain the Grants.gov Tracking Number that you receive in the application submission confirmation screen.
- If you wait until the day of the deadline to submit your application you are taking a significant risk! We strongly suggest that you submit your application no later than March 31, 2020. This should provide ample time to resolve any problems you might encounter.
- We will not accept late applications. The only exception is for a technological failure on the part of Grants.gov, as determined by the National Endowment for the Arts. To be considered for this exception, you must provide documentation of a Grants.gov technological failure dating from March 31, 2020 or earlier. We will consider and address your situation as appropriate. We will not make exceptions for applications that are the result of user error, including failure to register in SAM.gov or to verify that your application was validated by the Grants.gov system through **Track My Application**.
- Failure to successfully submit the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organizational Form through Grants.gov will make you ineligible to complete Part 2 of the application process.

#### **5. Track Your Application:**

- Verify that your application was validated by the Grants.gov system. Go to **Track My Application** to confirm the validation and track the progress of your application submission through Grants.gov. Take a screenshot of your validation confirmation for your records. Do not wait until the day of the deadline to verify your submission in case you encounter any difficulties.

For a detailed list of Workspace statuses, see here.

#### **6. Prepare to Complete Part 2:**

- Read the **Part 2 instructions** to learn about how and when to access the Applicant Portal to submit material and upload items.

- To access the Applicant Portal, you'll need your **Agency Tracking Number/NEA Application Number**. The National Endowment for the Arts assigns the number to your application 1-2 business days after you submit your Grants.gov application.

### **Additional Help**

For additional help on how to use Grants.gov, see the Grants.gov website at **Support**. You also can send email to the Grants.gov Contact Center at **support@grants.gov** or call them at 800-518-4726, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## CHALLENGE AMERICA APPLICATION CHECKLIST

### BEFORE APPLYING (Finalize by at least March 18)

- Finalize your entity registration/renewal with the System for Awards Management (SAM.gov)
- Register/Renew with Grants.gov

*Why do I need to register/renew so far in advance of the application deadline? See here.*

### PART 1: GRANTS.GOV (Submit by at least March 31 for the April 9 application deadline)

- Submit the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organization Form through Grants.gov

*Why do I need to submit this form in advance of the application deadline? See here.*

### PART 2: APPLICANT PORTAL

- Log in to Grants.gov and go to "Check Application Status" to get your Grants.gov tracking number and agency tracking number to use as your username and password for the Applicant Portal. The Applicant Portal will be open April 14-21, 2020.
- Complete & submit the Grant Application Form (GAF) by 11:59 pm ET on April 21, 2020. Confirm that all tabs are correctly filled out before hitting Save and Submit.
  - Tab 1: View Application Data
  - Tab 2: Organizational Information
  - Tab 3: Arts Programmatic History
  - Tab 4: Project Information
  - Tab 5: Project Budget
  - Tab 6: Items to Upload -- Required Work Samples (Excess pages and items not listed in the guidelines will be deleted.)

#### WORK SAMPLES

- Video
- Audio
- Digital Images
- Documents
- Websites
- Tab 7: Organization & Project Data



## RESOURCES

- Watch the Challenge America webinar
- Watch the Grant Application Form tutorial
- Contact Challenge America staff with any questions

FULL GUIDELINES CAN BE FOUND HERE

## CHALLENGE AMERICA: Frequently Asked Questions

### **How can I find out when new guidelines are released?**

National Endowment for the Arts guidelines are modified every year. Sign up for the notification service provided by Grants.gov, the federal government's online application system.

### **Sign up here.**

To receive discipline-specific newsletters, sign up on our website [here](#).

### **Does my project have to be new? Does it have to be big?**

No. Projects do not have to be new. Excellent existing projects can be just as competitive as new activities. Projects do not need to be big either; we welcome small projects that can make a difference in their community or field.

### **What do you mean by 'small and mid-sized' organizations?**

The National Endowment for the Arts does not specifically define "small and mid-sized," as those terms can mean different things in different places around the country. These labels have different meanings depending on the geographic location of an organization and the artistic discipline. For example, the size of a theater located in one city may differ from the size of a museum in another. Likewise, the same operating budget size may be considered large or small - depending on these same factors. Challenge America reviewers should be able to understand your organization within its own unique environment. Including area demographics can help your application illustrate that environment. If you are unsure whether your organization is a good fit, don't hesitate to reach out to a staff member to discuss.

### **Does my project have to be outside the scope of my regular programming?**

No, a project can be a part of an applicant's regular season or activity. For example, a performance by a guest artist that is part of a concert hall's regular season could constitute an acceptable project. Other projects might be a workshop production of a work in progress or a charrette sponsored by a community design center. What is important is the specificity of the activities involved. Also, there can be no overlap with projects for which you already are receiving other National Endowment for the Arts or federal funds.

### **Can I apply for MORE National Endowment for the Arts funding for a project supported by an earlier grant?**

Yes. If you have previously received a grant to support an earlier phase of a project (for example, for research for a documentary, or early development work on a new play or choreographed work) you may re-apply to the National Endowment for the Arts for additional funding to support a later phase (for example, the post-production/editing/distribution phase of the documentary, or the final development/premiere of the new play or dance). However, each application must clearly describe the specific phase of work to be supported, and there can be NO overlapping project costs between the awards.

### **Can my partner organizations also apply for National Endowment for the Arts funds to support our collaborative work?**

A partnering organization may apply for funds to support a joint effort but there can be NO OVERLAPPING PROJECT COSTS between the applications. For example, if you are a dance company, and you are applying for the development of a new work and a presenting

organization/theater is also applying for a residency/performance project that includes your company and the presentation of the new work, you must ensure that the costs are kept separate. You cannot include travel costs in your budget if these same costs are also reflected in the presenter's budget. You cannot include as cost share/match any income that is derived from a federal grant made to another entity (e.g., if a presenter includes your artist fees as an expense in their budget, you cannot use that as income in your own budget). In short, you should communicate closely with your partners to be sure that you are each clear on the division of costs and activity between the applications.

**In addition to the work samples, are there other items that we should upload into the Applicant Portal?**

No. The Applicant Portal is where you will be filling out the different narrative fields and also where you will upload your work samples. Follow the directions on the work sample size and types, which are outlined in the instructions on the right side of the guidelines under the "To Apply" box, "Prepare Application Material." Do not include additional materials that do not demonstrate the artistic excellence and artistic merit of your project. Only upload materials that we request. Other items that you include will not be reviewed.

As you consider your work sample uploads, remember that you want to submit work that is appropriate for your project. For example, if you are doing a visual arts project make sure that you include work samples from the artist(s) you are working with. If you are going to be doing a music project, include video or audio files to provide a reference point for our reviewers to judge artistic excellence. Still photographs are nowhere as effective as video for illustrating the excellence of a performing arts project, such as a dance production.

**Will you contact me if my application is missing anything?**

No. Because of the volume of applications, we have a strict approach to incomplete applications. For your application to be considered complete, every item that is required **MUST** be included in your application package, which must be submitted no later than the application deadline date under which you are applying. **Staff will not contact applicants to request missing material.** Don't let that happen. Use the "How to Prepare and Submit an Application" section for your category to make sure that you have included every item. Have the completeness and accuracy of your application package double-checked by a responsible staff member who understands the importance of this task. Allow at least six weeks to prepare your application, the work samples, and other supplementary information. We can't stress this enough: Do not wait until the day of the deadline to submit! We suggest setting an internal application deadline for your organization that is 24-48 hours before the actual application deadline.

**If my application is determined to be incomplete, may I add the missing item(s) and resubmit the application?**

No. The staff has to check thousands of applications. By the time that an application is identified as incomplete, it will likely be several weeks after the application deadline. An organization cannot add missing items and resubmit the application after the application deadline. We encourage you to double-check your application package against the "What makes a complete application" section to make sure that nothing is missing.

We are unable to accept any new or updated information after the application deadline.

**Can I get a sample application?**

Yes. See the **FOIA Reading Room, Frequently Requested Records** for information on what is available as sample application material and how to request it.

**How soon after the "Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance" for my deadline does my project have to begin?**

The National Endowment for the Arts' support can start any time on or after that date.

**Can my project start before this date?**

No. Proposed project activities for which you're requesting support cannot take place before this date. Ask the National Endowment for the Arts to fund only the portion of your project that will take place after the "Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance." If you include project costs that are incurred before the "Earliest Beginning Date for National Endowment for the Arts Period of Performance" in your Project Budget, they will be removed.

**How long can my project last? May I apply for another project during this period?**

We generally allow a period of performance of up to two years. Challenge America grants generally are smaller in scope and shorter in duration than other projects. It is anticipated that most projects -- including planning and close-out time -- will be substantially shorter.

If you get close to the end of your grant period and think you need more time, you may request an extension from our Office of Grants Management, but approval is not guaranteed.

As long as it meets all other eligibility requirements, an organization may apply for another project (with totally different project costs) the following year even if a National Endowment for the Arts-supported project is still underway. Note that if you receive an extension on a previous year's project, it may affect your grant period for your new proposed project.

**If my application is rejected, can I find out why?**

After notification, applicants who have questions may contact the staff responsible for handling their application. Any applicant whose request for funding has not been recommended may ask **for** an explanation of the basis for rejection. In such instances, the National Endowment for the Arts must be contacted no later than 30 days after the official notification.

**Can federally recognized tribes apply?**

Yes.

In keeping with federal policies of **Tribal Self Governance** and **Self-Determination**, we may provide support for a project with a primary audience restricted to enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe. Applicants (federally recognized tribal governments, nonprofits situated on federally recognized tribal lands, or other nonprofits whose mission primarily serves federally recognized tribal enrollees) should consult with to verify their eligibility before preparing an application.

**Can non-federally recognized tribes apply?**

Yes, as long as the applicant is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organization. Projects for non-federally recognized tribes and indigenous groups may be supported, but project participation can't be restricted to only tribal members.

**Can Native Hawaiian groups apply?**

Yes, as long as the applicant is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organization. Projects for Native Hawaiians may be supported, but project participation can't be restricted to only Native Hawaiians.

**The "We Do Not Fund" section says that subgranting is not allowed. What is subgranting?**

Subgranting is defined as regranting funds to an individual or organization for activities that are conducted independently of your organization and for the benefit of the subgrantee's own program objectives. A subgrantee is not directly employed by or affiliated with your organization.

Examples of subgranting include:

- Awards and prizes.
- Payment to an individual or organization to obtain training or technical assistance for their own benefit with little or no involvement from your organization. (Allowable activities would include services that are offered or coordinated by your organization such as making your facilities available, conducting workshops or conferences, or providing hands-on assistance. These activities also should be monitored and evaluated by your organization.)
- Production funds awarded to an individual or organization through a competitive review process with little or no subsequent involvement from your organization.

Most organizations that apply to the National Endowment for the Arts can't subgrant federal funds to individuals or organizations. Congress prohibits the National Endowment for the Arts from making grants for subgranting activity, with exceptions only for state arts agencies, regional arts organizations, and local arts agencies designated to operate on behalf of local governments. Eligible local arts agencies must have completed a three-year history of subgranting in the arts in order to apply for a subgranting project.

**My organization wants to apply for support of its apprenticeship program. How can I clarify in my application that my project does not include awarding subgrants even though my budget may include fees to individual artists?**

The key to avoiding the appearance of subgranting is the involvement of your organization.

Many types of projects can and should include fees to individual artists. For example, a budget for an apprenticeship program might include fees paid to artists. These fees are not considered subgranting if your organization provides substantive supervision of and involvement in the mentor-apprentice relationship. This might include:

- Planning a detailed description of the individual master-apprentice course of study.
- Monitoring and evaluating the progress of the activity including conducting site visits.
- Documenting apprenticeship activities including reports from masters and apprentices.
- Arranging public exhibition or performance opportunities for masters and apprentices.
- Archiving material related to the apprenticeships and publicly distributing information about the apprenticeship program and its activities.

Note that simply "checking in" on the activity, including obtaining progress and final reports, does not qualify as substantive involvement in the project.

You can provide evidence of your organization's involvement with this activity through project-related information on your website, announcements and evaluations of public events, and archival documentation.