



Department of Economic and
Community Development

Office of the Arts

REGIONAL INITIATIVE GRANTS

FY2016 Application Guidelines

Regional Initiative Grants

FY2016 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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Important Note: These Application Guidelines include embedded links which provide further program information and resources. Be sure to access the electronic version at www.ct.gov/cct.

REGIONAL INITIATIVE GRANT PROGRAM

The Connecticut Office of the Arts (COA) developed this project grant in partnership with its nine [Designated Regional Service Organizations](#) which make up a valuable statewide service network. The Regional Initiative grant program (REGI) is a good fit for applicants primarily interested in small projects that support access to the creative process and/or creative experience, especially those projects that experiment with new ways to apply the arts within community. Grant projects can take many varied forms: engage in a specific community matter, reflect on personal experience, bring neighbors together, etc. See page 6, Review Criteria.

Note: Eligible entities may apply to ONLY one (1) grant category (See large circle to right- categories a. through f.). Applicants may NOT seek funding from two COA grant categories to fund one activity or connected activities.

Note: Applications in each project grant category are reviewed by panelists with specific expertise. A key to selecting which Project Grant Category is the best fit for your proposal, is to ask, “*What panel of experts should read, review, evaluate and score my proposal?*.” See page 9, Selecting the Right COA Project Grant.

The [FY2016 Grants At-A-Glance](#) provides important details for all six grant categories.

Project Grant Categories:

- a. Regional Initiative
- b. Arts Learning
- c. Arts & Community Impact
- d. Creative Arts Promoting Preservation ([SHPO](#))
- e. Public Art Community Projects
or

General Operating support:

- f. Supporting Arts in Place

ELIGIBILITY

The following are eligible applicants to the REGI program:

- ✓ Artists
- ✓ Arts Organization (501-c-3) with annual operating income under \$300,000
- ✓ Arts Programs of a 501-c-3 non-arts organization
- ✓ Municipal Arts Departments – all levels (A, B, C)
- ✓ Pre-K through 12 Schools
- ✓ Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs)

The following applicants are **NOT ELIGIBLE** to apply to the REGI program:

- ✗ [COA/DECD Line Items](#)
- ✗ [COA Designated Regional Cultural Service Organizations](#)
- ✗ Applicants applying to fund ongoing programs, operations, and/or capital or endowment funds.
- ✗ Applicants who have applied during the same grant period to any other FY2016 COA grant category.
- ✗ Any applicant that seeks funding from TWO COA grant sources to fund ONE activity or for connected activities (for instance: being the applicant for one grant request and being a named partner in another, both for the same activity).
- ✗ Incomplete applications, including those that fail to address all of the requirements described in the Guidelines and the associated Application, will be considered ineligible for funding, regardless of an applicant’s approved eligibility.
- ✗ An application submitted after the deadline is considered ineligible, regardless of an applicant’s approved eligibility.

Applicants should review the [Glossary of Application Terms](#) for more detailed eligibility qualifications and definitions.

Important Note for Applicants:

- Individual Artists may apply without a fiscal sponsor.
- An artist employed by an organization may submit an application as an individual artist OR via the organization within which they are employed, but not both.

GRANT PROGRAM SPECIFICS

The REGI grant program is administered by each of the nine Designated Regional Service Organizations (DRSOs), each within their own region of the state. The DRSOs are important partners of the CT Office of the Arts. The following program details apply to the Regional Initiative Grant Program:

- ➔ Proposals are fully funded or not funded at all.
- ➔ Grant requests must range between \$1,000 to \$5,000.

- Funded activities must occur during the contracted funding period, namely, October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016 (though projects may be completed earlier than September 30, 2016).
- Applicants must reside in (or the applying organization must be located in) the DRSO region to which you are applying for funding. In cases where a municipality is served by more than one DRSO, applicants will be limited to apply to only one Designated Regional Service Organization.
- Arts Organization applicants (501-c-3 nonprofit agencies) must have annual operating income under \$300,000.
- All proposed project activities must take place within the DRSO region to which you are applying for funding.
- Only one application per eligible applicant is allowed.
- Projects must engage at least one Connecticut artist in a significant project role.
- Projects must be collaborative and require at least one community partner. There are no restrictions on partnership, therefore, applicants may name any individual, group or business as a project partner.
- Grant funds must be matched by the grantee at no less than 25% of the amount of REGI grant funding requested (for example, if you request \$1,000 in grant funds, you must show that you will be able to match at least \$250). Other state funding cannot be used to match a REGI grant award. Your matching funds can be satisfied using any combination of cash or in-kind (non-cash) contributions.
- Grants funds may be used to pay up to a maximum of 20% of administrative costs necessary to implement the proposed project.
- State grant funds may not be used to cover any expenses incurred before or after the period of the grant, including those costs associated with project planning.
- All awards are based on scores provided by an independent review panel (see Page 6, Review Criteria).
- Applicants selected for a grant award will be notified by late September, 2015

GETTING STARTED

ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM

Although Regional Initiative grants are administered by the state's Regional Service Organizations, it is a state grant program in partnership with COA. Applications are made via the state's e-grant system at <https://coa.fluidreview.com/>.

Note: E-mail and paper submissions, or any modified versions of the application, will not be accepted. All technical e-grant system questions should be directed to Tech Support at support@fluidreview.com.

GRANT PROGRAM DEADLINE

All Regional Initiative grants are due NO LATER THAN 11:59 PM, Thursday, July 23, 2015.

GRANT REPORTS

All grantees are required to submit a Final Report as a closing accounting of their project, due no later than 60 days after the end of the contract period (which may be filed earlier for projects that are completed earlier). Final Reports are submitted via the online portal: <https://coa.fluidreview.com/>. Final Reports include a Final Accounting Project Budget, narrative details including project outcomes and other details and documents that support your statements.

YOUR APPLICATION:

REQUIRED INFORMATION, RESOURCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

◆ Application: SECTION I

Your Basic Project Information

1. Your contact information. (name, address, phone number, email)
2. A Project Title. (up to 10 words)
3. Provide your project's goal(s) and a description of the community that will participate in your project. Include a simple outline of the main activities you will undertake within a specified timeframe. (up to 350 words).
4. Proposed Project Start and End dates.
5. A list of the project's main partners (provide contact information for each):

- a. Briefly describe your main project partner(s). (up to 100 words)
- 6. The Designated Regional Service Organization to which you are applying. (choose from the drop down menu)
 - a. A list of the Town or Towns where the project’s main activities will occur.
- 7. A Financial Overview:
 - a. If the applicant is an arts organization (private or public), enter the total amount of your Annual Operating Income. Use figures from your most recently completed fiscal year.
 - b. Your Total Grant Request amount.
 - c. Your Project Budget (use the Project Budget Template provided).

SECTION I: RESOURCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevant Review Criteria:

Relevant Across All Criteria

- ➔ **Question #3** – help the reader to understand how you are using the arts to address a community issue, need, desire, etc. Your outline of the project’s main activities should clarify how you will achieve your stated goal within a specific time period.
- ➔ **Question #5 & #5a.** – only provide information on key partners. Provide important information about each key partner that will help to underline their commitment to and interest in the project.
 - There are no restrictions on the type of entity that can serve as a project partner. Partners can include individuals, community-based organizations, municipalities, for-profit or nonprofit businesses, unincorporated groups, or any other suitable entity.
 - Additional partners can be included without restriction (one cross-sector collaborator is required).
- ➔ **Question #6a.** – list the municipality or municipalities in which the actual project activities will take place, which must be located within the DRSO’s covered territory. Review the full listing of [towns covered by each DRSO](#) on the CT Office of the Art’s web site.
- ➔ **Question #7a.** – this question is for arts organization applicants ONLY and will be used as final validation of the applicant’s eligibility. Organizations must use a final accounting from their most recently completed fiscal year (IRS Form 990 or other formal accounting materials reviewed by a Board of Directors) and may be required to submit proof to the grant program manager if additional questions arise. Annual operating income must be less than \$300,000 to be eligible to apply to this grant program.
- ➔ **Question #7b.** – applicants must use the supplied [Project Budget](#) template and should review the [Project Budget Instructions](#) and the [SAMPLE Budget](#).

◆ Application: SECTION II

Understanding & Engaging the Community

1. Provide a brief explanation of how you know that your project proposal is relevant to the community you wish to engage. Tell the reviewer why your project activities appropriately reflect the mutual needs or desires of the community and how you will be able to successfully engage participants. (up to 250 words)
2. How will your project increase equal access to arts and culture? (up to 165 words)
3. How will your project deepen participation in the arts and creative activities and experiences? (up to 165 words)
4. Provide a brief explanation of how your project will apply the arts in new and imaginative ways. (up to 165 words)
5. Provide an explanation of how the project will be made accessible to persons with varying abilities. (up to 165 words)
6. How will you promote or market your project to the community? (up to 165 words)

SECTION II: RESOURCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevant Review Criteria:

Mutual Understanding & Interpretation

Engaging the Community

- ➔ **Question #1** – your short narrative should convey to the reader **WHY** the project proposal is relevant to all involved and relate directly to your answer to Application Section I, Question 3, above (your project’s goal, the community members who will participate, and a simple outline of the main activities).
- ➔ **Question #2** – equal access allows all members of the community to enjoy arts and cultural activities. How does your project support this goal?

- ➔ **Question #3** – tell the reader how your project will provide community members with a personal creative experience and how your project encourages participation in the arts and creative process.
- ➔ **Question #4** – how does your proposed project compare to what you usually do? Are you stretching yourself? Your organization? The community participants?
- ➔ **Question #5** – applicants can review the [Accessibility Resources](#) available on COA’s website for help in verifying the ways in which your project will be accessible.
- ➔ **Question #6** – how will your project promote participation?

◆ Application: SECTION III

Getting the Job Done

1. Briefly describe the CT artist or artists that will be involved in your project. What is the artist’s role within your project and why are they a good fit for this project? (up to 165 words)
2. Upload a sample of the selected project artist’s work that is directly relevant to your project proposal.
3. Describe the applicant’s and other key partner’s professional experience that will help the team to successfully carry out your project. (up to 165 words)
4. How will you know if your project is a success? (up to 200 words)

SECTION III: RESOURCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevant Review Criteria: *Simple & Effective*

- ➔ **Question #1** – tell the reviewer why the selected artist is the right person to support your project. The [Glossary of Application Terms](#) will provide detailed eligibility qualifications and definitions when hiring a Connecticut artist. Applicants can find help in their search for project artists by reviewing the COA [Directory of Performing & Teaching Artists](#) and the New England Foundation for the Art’s [Creative Ground](#) website.
- ➔ **Question #2** – when uploading samples of your selected artist work, select samples that are either directly related to your project or which show evidence of the critical skills needed for your project. In some cases, projects may need to show evidence of skills beyond an arts discipline. For instance, a project may hire an artist to provide therapeutic services, which should be in evidence within your proposal. See the e-grant system for restrictions on file size, etc. Video or audio files may not exceed 5 minutes in length.
- ➔ **Question #3** – inform the reader of special skills or experience that build confidence in your project.
- ➔ **Question #4** – how will you monitor progress toward your stated goal? Tell the reviewer what the project team will watch and evaluate to determine whether the project is on course or not. What might the project team learn from undertaking this collaborative venture?

REVIEW CRITERIA

HOW YOUR APPLICATION IS EVALUATED

Each Designated Regional Service Organization will convene a panel of independent reviewers who bring both strong community arts project experience and knowledge of the region in which your project would take place. All applications employ the same review criteria and review process. DRSO staff will **not** be involved in scoring proposals. Their role is to support constituents and manage the application, review and award process. Independent panelists comply with the state’s conflict of interest policy and disclose any interests before final panelist selections are made. Independent review panels evaluate and discuss all applications based solely on the criteria below. Panelists agree on final scores for each application and collectively provide funding recommendations to COA. An application’s maximum score is 60 points.

Panel assessments are the primary consideration in determining grant funding. As COA’s programs and services intend to achieve broad geographic reach, such considerations may also factor into funding decisions. Following the panel review process, DRSO staff will present funding recommendations to the COA arts staff. Final approval will be by vote of COA’s Connecticut Arts Council.

A. Mutual Understanding & Interpretation (20 points maximum)

Application Section I – Your Basic Project Information

Application Section II – Understanding & Engaging the Community

This criterion reflects the ability and spirit of the applicant and their partners to initiate a collaborative undertaking that clearly demonstrates WHY and HOW the proposed project is a genuine reflection of mutual needs or desires of the community members to-be-engaged.

- To what extent does the proposed project catalyze relationships in the community?
- To what extent were the project partners thoughtfully engaged in the planning process?
- To what extent is the proposal relevant to the community or communities to-be-engaged?

B. Engaging the Community (20 points maximum)

Application Section I – Your Basic Project Information

Application Section II – Understanding & Engaging the Community

This criterion reflects a project's ability to create opportunities to broaden equal access to arts activities and experiences, in any and all creative forms, as well as deepen participation in the creative process by creating *with*, rather than *for*, members of the community. Compelling applications will use imaginative means of engaging citizens and will experiment with new ways to apply the arts and creative experience, including activities that take place outside of traditional arts venues.

- To what extent will the proposed project broaden equal access to arts and culture in the community, including persons with varying abilities?
- To what extent will the project deepen participation in the arts?
- To what extent does the project apply the arts in new and imaginative ways in this community?
- Will the project's plan for promotion and marketing support goals for broadened access?

C. Simple & Effective (20 points maximum)

Application Section I – Your Basic Project Information

Application Section III – Getting the Job Done

This criterion reflects the role of the arts in the proposed project and the degree to which the proposal demonstrates feasibility and practicality.

- To what extent is the artistic merit suitable for the community outlined in the proposal?
- To what extent are the project's goals and the applicant's outline of activities appropriate, feasible, and realistic?
- Is the budget accurate, appropriate and realistic? Are in-kind contributions reasonably valued?
- To what extent do the project partners demonstrate the commitment and ability to carry out the intention and scope of the proposal?
- To what extent will the project partners monitor progress and learn from experience?

FISCAL INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Up to 20% of your state grant request can be allocated to pay your project's administrative expenses. The applicant and other partners may be assigned state funds from the grant to cover such costs.

DEFINITIONS

- ➔ **Administrative Costs** – these are costs related to running the whole organization as opposed to direct expenses related to a specific department, program or special project. Administrative expenses offer a wide

benefit to the company, transcend typical departmental lines and support necessary functions. They include expenditure for such things as utilities costs (heating, cooling, electrical power, water, phone and internet), and general expenses such as office rental, office supplies, insurance, etc.

- ➔ **Allocating Administrative Costs** – a portion of some expenses that seem tied to one department, such as accounting or legal, can be considered administrative because they benefit the entire organization and are also necessary to successfully implement a program or special project. Such costs are allocated, or proportioned, to better reflect actual program or project costs. Likewise, it is customary practice to logically apportion the salaries of managers and general administrators to various programs and projects, as they are involved in many different areas of the operations necessary to those programs and projects.
 - Your proposed project budget may allocate certain administrative costs that are needed to undertake and implement your project – for example, such costs as insurance, postage, telephone, or a reasonable portion of the salary of a supporting staff member. Note that your project’s assigned Manager can be either a partner’s current staff member (recorded as an allocated administrative expense) or a specifically contracted individual (recorded as a direct project cost).
- ➔ **Not Administrative Expenses** – For the most part, any expenses that are limited to a particular department or project, and which do not offer direct benefit to other areas of the organization, should not be counted as administrative expenses. For example, the cost to contract an artist hired to perform at a special event is not be considered an administrative cost.

MATCHING REQUIREMENT

Receiving an REGI grant award requires a mandatory match of no less than 25% of your grant request. Applicants may use any combination of non-state of Connecticut cash sources and/or in-kind contributions to their match. While it is not a requirement for matching funds to be confirmed at the time of application, proposals that can verify funding sources at the time of application are favorably reviewed.

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Claimed in-kind contribution estimates will be reviewed for reasonableness. Making use of in-kind contributions is not required. Applicants should review the [In-Kind Contributions](#) information on COA’s website for further information.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Materials
- Space rental or Occupancy costs (maintenance, security, insurance, utilities, etc.)
- Payments to contracted artistic, technical or administrative professionals
- Supplemental project insurance
- Project-specific permits and fees
- Artist fees
- Legal fees directly associated with the project
- Printing, advertising and marketing costs
- Limited brick and mortar expenses **ONLY** as directly associated with the project (for instance, building a temporary platform for a presentation)

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Expenses incurred outside of the funding period, including planning costs
- Activities already funded by another COA program during the same fiscal year
- Interest payments on loans
- Activities to eliminate or reduce existing deficits
- Scholarship assistance for academic or non-academic programs
- Fundraising costs
- Political contributions
- Lobbying activities & fees
- Legal fees not associated with the project
- Religious programming, activities or paraphernalia
- General brick and mortar construction costs, facility construction or capital improvements
- Any expenses not related to the project

GENERAL FISCAL INFORMATION

- Grant funds must be applied toward arts-based projects that impact Connecticut towns and communities and benefit Connecticut residents as indicated in your application.
- COA intends to fully fund those requests that are awarded.
- Grant awards will be paid from the managing Designated Regional Service Organization.

- The amount of available state funds for this program are dependent on state and federal annual appropriations as allocated by the Governor and the Connecticut General Assembly and as awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts. This amount varies from year to year; therefore, program funding may vary.
- Grantees will not receive funding for a newly approved 2016 Regional Initiative grant until: 1) any prior COA funded project is complete, and 2), any mandatory final reports have been received.
- COA may utilize Guide Star or other such services to access financial records of non-profit organizations.
- COA reserves the right to request additional financial documents from applicants.
- At the end of the funding period, all grantees must complete a Final Report. As part of the Final Report, grantees will be required to provide:
 - ✓ accounting of actual expenses including the allocation of COA grant funds,
 - ✓ confirmation of the match by providing the sources of both dollars and in-kind contributions,
 - ✓ evaluation and assessment data pertaining to the grant-funded activities.

QUESTIONS, CONTACTS & APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS & RESOURCES

Contact Tech Support at support@fluidreview.com for technical related questions.

SELECTING THE RIGHT COA PROJECT GRANT PROGRAM

A key to selecting which project grant is the best fit for your proposal, is to ask the question, “Who will best understand our proposal?” This is an important factor as each grant program employs experts in a particular field or fields most relevant to that category. You should reflect on your proposal in relation to the program’s panelists.

PROJECT GRANT CATEGORY	PANEL REVIEW TEAM COMPRISED OF:
Arts Education	<i>Arts Educators, School Teachers & Leadership, Teaching Artists, Curriculum Designers, etc.</i>
Arts & Community Impact	<i>Arts and Non-Arts Professionals with significant experience in community arts projects</i>
Arts Promoting Preservation	<i>Preservation Professionals, CT History Professionals, Arts Professionals, etc.</i>
Public Art	<i>Public Artists, Public Art Program Professionals, Public Space Design Professionals, etc.</i>
Regional Initiative	<i>Local and Regional representatives from the arts and non-arts sectors</i>

ADDITIONAL APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Applicants should review the [Connecticut Office of the Arts Grant Overview Guidelines](#), as all guidelines are strictly enforced. In addition, all grantees must comply with:

- [The Department of Economic and Community Development Ethics Statement](#).
- State single audit requirements, as may be applicable.
- All municipal, state and federal ordinances and laws (if applicable), which should be confirmed prior to submitting your application.

Note: Applicants should be aware that all collected information is considered public record.

REGIONAL INITIATIVE GRANT PROGRAM MANAGERS

Please review the listing of [Designated Regional Service Organizations](#) that manage and support this COA grant program. Towns served by the service organizations are provided on the Designated Regional Service Organization webpage.