



Digital Capacity Grants | FY2022 Guidelines

Building a strong digital foundation for arts and culture organizations is essential to Vermont's recovery from the impact of COVID-19. Many arts and culture organizations increased their digital capacity and expanded online programming in response to the challenges of the pandemic. Engaging with audiences through digital media will be an ongoing need for Vermont's arts and culture sector as we move forward.

In response to this need, the Vermont legislature approved \$1.15 million in funding to the Arts Council to help build the digital capacity of Vermont cultural organizations. Digital Capacity Grants are intended to support Vermont's arts and culture organizations as they navigate this transition by providing them with the skills, equipment, and expertise they need to serve their audiences and community.

Who May Apply

- Any Vermont-based 501 (c)(3) cultural organization whose mission is centered on arts and/or humanities may apply, including museums, historical societies, arts centers, and nonprofit theaters and galleries
- Organizations that received Cultural Relief (2020) or Cultural Recovery Grants (2021), Vermont Economic Recovery Grants, or other forms of state or federal COVID relief are eligible to apply for this grant

Fiscal Agents

An unincorporated group or a registered Vermont nonprofit that does not have federal tax-exempt status may use a fiscal agent. The fiscal agent must be a charitable nonprofit organization incorporated in Vermont as a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The [fiscal agent form](#) must be completed and uploaded with the application.

Who May Not Apply

- Organizations with outstanding or incomplete reporting for any Vermont Arts Council grant
- Universities, colleges, and academic departments. (Arts and cultural organizations that operate under the umbrella of a college or university with 501(c)(3) status may apply.)
- Pre-K through grade 12 schools
- Individuals
- Religious, political, or advocacy organizations

- Public libraries (please [visit the Vermont Department of Libraries](#) for other funding opportunities)

Grant Types and Amounts

No match is required. Partial grants may be awarded. The full grant amount will be paid on receipt of a signed contract and after June 15, 2022.

Organization Grants: Organizations may apply for funding to increase their own digital capacity. Organization grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 depending on the scope of the project and the organization's operating budget.

Collaborative Grants: A limited number of multi-year grants (up to three years; \$60,000 - \$150,000 total grant) will be available to support collaborative efforts designed to increase the digital capacity of a cultural community in a particular region or focused on a particular content area or type of cultural organizations. Examples could include:

- a public access channel collaborating with a group of local arts and humanities organizations for production services and training
- a group of museums collaborating on a virtual exhibition initiative

Please be in touch with program coordinator Amy Cunningham before applying for a collaborative grant.

What Digital Capacity Grants Support

We recognize that Vermont's cultural organizations have varying levels of digital readiness and different needs, from identifying the best equipment to live-stream a performance, to navigating streaming rights or hiring a website designer. Grant funds may be used for a broad range of activities related to creation, distribution, and marketing of digital content for public audiences, including:

- Enhancing an organization's website, including e-commerce/ticketing platforms
- Establishing a social media marketing strategy
- Digital initiatives to engage new audiences
- Equipment purchase or rental necessary for digital content
- Staff training related to digital content development
- Staff positions dedicated to digital work
- Contract services (for example, live captioners for virtual events, fees for web designers or attorneys)
- Cost of streaming platforms and/or licensing rights

Applicants may choose to apply for a specific project (a website redesign project or a virtual programming series, as examples) or several identified needs that collectively increase the organization's digital capacity.

Review Criteria

This grant is intended to strengthen the public-facing aspects of an organization's work and deepen or expand audience engagement.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- Potential of funding request to yield new skills, partnerships, or platforms that will support future digital or hybrid programming for the public
- Demonstrated need to expand digital capacity
- Plan to make effective use of grant funds, including consideration of accessibility needs and compliance with accessibility and nondiscrimination laws

Special Consideration

Organizations serving or led by members of communities traditionally under-resourced in the arts and humanities are encouraged to apply. These groups include:

- People of color or indigenous people
- People who identify as LGBTQ+
- People who live in Vermont's most rural areas
- People with disabilities
- People who identify as immigrants or refugees
- People whose first (or only) language is not English

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

In addition, preference may be given to an equitable geographic distribution of grant funds. First time applicants are encouraged to apply. Contact us if you need help.

Application and Deadline

The application deadline is **April 20, 2022 at 11:59 p.m.** Applications must be submitted through the Council's [online granting system](#).

Grant award notifications will occur by June 6, 2022. Funded activities for Organization Grants must be completed between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. Collaborative Grants may be multi-year to June 30, 2025.

Grantee Requirements

Grantees will be expected to sign a contract agreeing to specific funding requirements. A final report will be due thirty days after the end of the grant period.

Unique Entity ID

All grantees (or the fiscal agent) must have a Unique Entity ID (UEI) issued by the federal government. This is a free registration process that as of 2022, replaces the use of a DUNS number. Please [learn more here](#).

Access and Nondiscrimination Policy

The Vermont Arts Council is committed to supporting entities that maintain an environment free from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic bias, disability, citizenship, veteran status, or other category protected by applicable state or federal law.

Arts Council grant recipients must be in compliance with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (504), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the ADA Amendment Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325) which became effective on January 1, 2009.

Any updates to websites as part of this grant should adhere to the latest [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) standards. WCAG 2.1 was published in 2018; WCAG 2.2 is scheduled to be published in June 2022.

Questions?

The Council welcomes conversations in advance of your application. Our role is to help you prepare the strongest application possible and support your process.

Inquiries about Digital Capacity Grants should be [sent to Amy Cunningham](#). For questions about using the online granting system, please [send an email to Meredith Bell](#) or call her at 802.402.4478.