

Frequently Asked Questions / Visual Arts Fund Grant

- We welcome questions about your application and will gladly offer guidance as needed. Feel free to contact us via email or phone to discuss your project, or to set-up a time to meet in-person.
- Because many applications describe complex projects, we recommend having someone outside the applicant group review your proposal for clarity and completeness.

How do I apply for a Visual Arts Fund grant?

When the grant opens online there will be an 'Apply Now' button on the VAF webpage that will take you to the application portal. Once you have created an account, or logged into an existing account, you will find directions for completing and submitting your application. Application questions are available on the VAF webpage and in a downloadable PDF of the grant guidelines. You may prepare your grant in advance using the provided questions as a guide and then enter the prepared content into the online portal once the application opens.

If I have applied to the VAF in the past, can I use my same login credentials?

Yes. If you have already set up an account on the VAF application portal, you may use the same username and password to apply for this year's VAF grant.

Can I submit my application in Spanish?

Yes. Please find the application questions and requirements provided in Spanish in a downloadable PDF on the VAF webpage. You may submit your application, including your visual support materials, via email by the due date of September 26 at 5:00 pm (Central Daylight Time). If you have questions in Spanish regarding the application or your project proposal, please email vaf@midwayart.org and we will respond within 2-3 business days.

If I have already been the Lead Organizer for a funded project, can I apply again?

If your grant period and project is complete by the application deadline and you have submitted your final survey, you are eligible to apply. Please note that the VAF is not intended to sustain projects.

If I want to apply for funding toward a larger project, should I apply with the entire project or just the portion that the VAF will fund?

This depends on the complexity of the project. Please contact us via email or phone to discuss.

Can I partner with a nonprofit?

The Regranting program funds projects that do not have access to other funding sources and supports activities happening outside of traditional visual arts venues. Nonprofits are able to apply for grants and receive tax-deductible contributions, unlike the majority of artist-organized projects.

Can I include purchasing equipment, paying rent, or renovating a space in my budget?

Yes, but please consider the percentage of your budget going toward these items. Previous applications with budgets that have a high percentage dedicated to equipment, rent, or renovations have not been as competitive as those with a higher percentage devoted to programming expenses. Please contact us via email or phone to discuss if you have questions regarding your budget.

What if I do not know all of the artists/collaborators who will be involved when I apply?

There will be an opportunity for you to let the jurors know how you will determine who will be involved with your project. If you will be inviting individuals to participate/collaborate, mention the individuals you would ideally like to work with, your connection to the individuals, and how you plan to invite them. If you plan to use a call for submissions, let the jurors know how you will select individuals and what criteria you will use when considering submissions.

How do I determine if my project involves the work/practices of other individuals?

The VAF does not fund an individual artist presenting their own work. If you are organizing the project on your own, are you offering other artists opportunities they might not have otherwise, such as an exhibition, screening, inclusion in a publication, etc.? If you have collaborators, can everyone involved claim ownership and be included in the decision-making process? Please contact us via email or phone to discuss if you are unsure of your project's eligibility.

Do I need to have a location/space confirmed when I apply?

No. We ask that you let us know where your project will ideally take place: a park, a garage, an empty storefront in your neighborhood, on a bus, online, etc. This information helps the jurors better envision your project.

What if my project already exists in some form?

If you would like to submit an application for a project that has already begun (i.e. an exhibition space, publication, series, website, etc.), your request for funding should coincide with a next step (reaching out to a new community, etc.) or new initiative (paying artists involved, a new series, etc.) Please contact us via email or phone if you would like to discuss.

What qualifies as publicly accessible?

You determine your audience and how to make the project publicly available to them, such as producing an event/exhibition/screening that is free and open to the public, an online project that is available to anyone using the web, or a publication that can be distributed and available free of charge. Projects cannot charge admission or other fees to the public or to participants; grant funding should be used to cover costs associated with producing the project. You may include a component of your project that raises additional funds to continue the project or donate to a cause, such as selling t-shirts, publications, other goods, but the primary activity of the project must be free of barriers for artists and community members to participate.

Does my project need to be ADA-Accessible?

If you are using a project location that may not be physically accessible to all visitors, Midway staff will work with you to find ways to anticipate visitors' accessibility needs, communicate accessibility challenges, and accommodate requests.

How do I submit visual support materials if the project has not already begun?

Your Visual Support Materials should help the jurors envision the overall project. If your project involves working with artists, we recommend that you submit images or videos of works by the artists that you would like to work with. You could also show images of exhibitions/publications/screenings/spaces/etc. that inspire what you would like to do. You could submit a drawing or diagram if it makes sense with your project. Website links included as visual support material must be relevant to the project and offer additional information on your ability to realize the proposed project.

How do I determine fair pay for artists involved?

Fair pay should be based on your total budget and the number of individuals involved. The VAF supports artists being compensated for the work they do, although we have observed that budgets with a high percentage of funds going to a small number of artists are less competitive overall. Your budget must be feasible, showing that you can cover all costs associated with the project while also compensating those involved. Your budget does not have to offer pay to those involved, but if it does, it should be fairly distributed. Lead Organizers may budget up to 15% of the total grant requested as a stipend for their time overseeing the project (\$1,500 max for a \$10,000 grant); others involved with the production of the project should be compensated fairly for their time as well.

How many grants will be awarded?

The jury will determine six grants to be awarded \$10,000.

What will the jurors consider when reviewing my application?

Artistic Excellence, Community Impact, and Feasibility

Who will review the applications?

An outside jury panel of three arts professionals, including individuals living outside of Minnesota, will review the applications online and meet to determine the projects that will receive funding. Midway's staff will facilitate the review process and be available to assist the panel as necessary.

When will grant recipients be notified?

Grant recipients will be notified in mid-December and grant funds will be disbursed in January.

Will we need to report on the grant?

At the close of the grant in June 2028, Grantees will be asked to fill out a brief four question survey related to activities accomplished during the grant period. The survey must be completed in order for the Lead Organizer and/or the project to be eligible for future VAF funding.

As the Lead Organizer, will I be responsible for reporting the grant funds on my taxes?

Yes. If your project is funded, you will complete a provided W9 form and will be responsible for reporting the grant funds on your taxes. With most of the funds being paid out to produce the event and pay others involved, you will only be responsible to pay tax on the amount that you keep as a personal stipend. The VAF offers Lead Organizers a free tax-info session to learn best practices for tracking and recording expenditures associated with the grant and filing an IRS Schedule C (Form 1040).

Do I need to have fiscal sponsorship to apply to the VAF?

No. The VAF grants are intended for artists who do not have fiscal sponsorship and are working outside of traditional non-profit structures. If you have a fiscal sponsor already that is ok, although if your project is awarded a grant, we will disburse funding directly to you vs. through your fiscal sponsor. Please contact us via email or phone if you have questions.

How do I contact Midway if I have more questions?

Please email vaf@midwayart.org or call us at (612) 605-4504 if you have additional questions about the program. We also encourage you to call if you would like to discuss your idea or have specific inquiries related to the eligibility of your project proposal.