



# **IDEA Opera Grants**

*Supported by the  
Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation*

**2021–2022 Guidelines & Application Procedures**

**OPERA America**  
National Opera Center  
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New York, NY 10001  
[operaamerica.org](http://operaamerica.org)

## Purpose

IDEA Opera Grants (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility) are OPERA America's first grant program designed with a racial equity lens. It is generously supported by the Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation, which is committed to promoting equal rights and social justice through education, music, and the law. This program provides support for the promotion and development of new works by artists of color who may not have worked previously in the field.

OPERA America believes that different perspectives, cultural histories, life experiences, and personal stories enrich the operatic repertoire. OPERA America is committed to supporting creators who reflect the diversity of the nation.

## Definitions

### IDEA

- **Inclusion:** authentic representation, empowered participation, and a true sense of belonging, beyond numerical diversity.
- **Diversity:** breadth of representation; it can mean different cultures and ethnicities, gender identities, ages, socio-economic backgrounds, geographies, budget sizes, or works presented.
- **Equity:** means recognizing that not everyone is starting from the same point but ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.
- **Accessibility:** equitable admittance to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience.

In this document, the author of the music will be referred to as the composer and the author of the text will be referred to as the librettist, although applicants may have prior experience as songwriters, poets, or playwrights.

IDEA Opera Grants are available to composer and librettist teams with racial or cultural identities that include African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and/or Native American (ALAANA) and with the abilities to create theatrical works for the voice and instrumental ensemble. Previous experience writing for the operatic medium is not required.

Opera can be defined as a music-theater experience for trained voice or voices accompanied by instruments with a dramatic arc.

## Important Dates

- **Application available online:** June 2021
- **Intent to apply deadline:** August 11, 2021
- **Application deadline:** September 22, 2021
- **Adjudication:** October 2021
- **Grantee notification:** November 2021
- **Grant activity period:** December 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

## Apply

Visit [operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard](https://operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard).

OPERA America invites proposals from creators with racial or cultural identities that include African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and/or Native American (ALAANA). Applicants must be able to demonstrate their ability to create theatrical works for the voice and instrumental ensemble. Applicants may request up to \$12,500 for activities that include the production of a workshop, reading, or other performance-based event.

## Supported Activities

Supported activities include, but are not limited to:

- Working performances, with or without an audience;
- Readings; and
- Workshops.

## Grants

Grant recipients will receive:

- \$12,500 per team to support costs associated with the production of a workshop, reading, or other performance-based event;
- A high-quality video portrait of the composer and librettist for promotional use and multi-camera footage of the work in development;
- Complimentary registration, travel, and housing to attend OPERA America's New Works Forum, an annual gathering that brings together producers, publishers, composers, librettists, and artists to discuss the creation and production of new operatic works;
- Complimentary registration, travel, and housing to attend the annual Opera Conference, the pre-eminent convening of opera company leaders, artists, trustees, volunteers, and other industry stakeholders; and
- An introduction in *Opera America Magazine*.

## Eligibility

- Although it is anticipated that creative teams will consist of both a composer and a librettist, the composer may also serve as the librettist and apply as a sole applicant. Projects involving more than two creators (i.e., one composer and two librettists) are also eligible.
- Applicants (composer and librettist) must identify with a racial or cultural heritage that includes African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and/or Native American (ALAANA) and have U.S. citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.
- The lead applicant may be either the composer or the librettist, who will serve as the fiscal agent for the project. If awarded, the fiscal agent will disburse all funds received and provide all required financial and narrative documentation.
- Applicants must demonstrate their ability to write for the opera/music-theater medium by providing samples of theatrical work for the voice and instrumental ensemble.
- Funding may not be applied to expenses incurred before December 1, 2021.
- Grant-funded activities must be completed by November 1, 2022.
- Applicants may only be affiliated with one proposal per application cycle.
- Recipients of IDEA Opera Grants may not reapply for an IDEA Opera Grant in a subsequent cycle.

## Funding Parameters

- Two grants of up to \$12,500 will be awarded annually.
- Grants will cover up to 100 percent of eligible expenses, not exceeding \$12,500; no matching funds are required. Additional expenses to complete the project are the responsibility of the creators.
- Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:
  - Vocalist, instrumentalist, and other performer fees;
  - Music director/conductor;
  - Dramaturg;
  - Stage director;
  - Vocal coach;
  - Sound designer;
  - Rehearsal and performance venue rental fees;
  - Stage manager;
  - Equipment rental (e.g., lighting, sound, instrumental cartage);
  - Graphic design, web design, and programs for project;
  - Child care and/or elder care while creators are in rehearsal or performance;
  - Research materials; and/or
  - Transportation and housing for personnel related to creative meetings, rehearsals, and performances. Airfare is limited to coach-class.

- Ineligible expenses include:
  - Commissioning fees or living expenses for the applicants (composer and librettist);
  - Set, costume, or properties construction or rental expenses for a staged production;
  - Institutional overhead expenses if partnering with a producing organization;
  - Expenses that are not connected specifically to the project, including general administrative expenses and competition or contest application fees;
  - Tuition expenses;
  - Professional development fees;
  - Fundraising expenses; and/or
  - Ticket subsidies.

## Timeline

The following timeline is in place for the 2021–2022 IDEA Opera Grants:

- **Application available online:** June 2021
- **Intent to apply deadline:** August 11, 2021
- **Application deadline:** September 22, 2021
- **Adjudication:** October 2021
- **Grantee notification:** November 2021
- **Grant activity period:** December 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022
- **Promotional filming:** completed by November 1, 2021

Grant recipients will be invited to the New Works Forum and Opera Conference between January 2022 and June 2022.

## How to Apply

- A brief overview of the creative team and proposed project, known as an intent to apply, is required for all applicants, due by 11:59 p.m. EDT on August 11, 2021. OPERA America will provide individualized support to applicants based on their intent to apply to guide them to the full application. Only applicants who submit an intent to apply may submit a full application.
- All materials must be submitted online via the online grants system at [operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard](https://operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard).
- Submit a complete, final application by 11:59 p.m. EDT on September 22, 2021.
- Applications submitted without work samples as specified in the application will not be considered. Applications that are incomplete or late will not be accepted.
- Contact Diana Hossack, grantmaking associate, at [DHossack@operaamerica.org](mailto:DHossack@operaamerica.org) or 646.699.5236 with any questions.

## Application Review

An independent panel will review all final applications for IDEA Opera Grants. The panel will consist of independent experts with an understanding of diverse music styles, as well as producers from OPERA America member companies.

No current board member or employee of OPERA America may serve as a panelist. Individuals who stand to benefit financially from a grant are also ineligible to serve. Decisions of the panel are final.

Panelists evaluate the applications with the following criteria:

- **Artistic Merit:** The artistic excellence — or the potential for excellence — of the work and the merit of the creative team's body of work based on the samples provided.
- **Quality and Distinction in Concept and Planning:** The appropriateness, effectiveness, and thoroughness of the planning process guiding the proposed activity.
- **Evaluation:** Applications must articulate plans for measuring the success of the project. Goals should be realistic and achievable.

## Work Samples

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

- **Composers:** two samples (hosted audio or video on sites like YouTube, Vimeo, and SoundCloud) with at least one sample featuring a human voice or voices. Neither sample should exceed 10-minutes in length. Scores or other forms of visual representation of a musical work are optional.
- **Librettists:** two samples (written, audio, or video) that demonstrate their storytelling abilities. These can include, but are not limited to poetry, short stories, and excerpts of plays, operas, or music-theater works (score optional). Neither sample should exceed 10-minutes in length if audio/video or 10 pages if written.

## Grant Announcement

- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their requests after the adjudication.
- All grant letters will contain an end date for the grant period. Requests for extensions must be made in writing.
- Grantees may request up to 75 percent of the total award in one or more installments for expenses incurred on or after December 1, 2021.
- The final balance of the grant will be paid after the completion of the activities proposed in the application and upon the submission of the final report.

- All IDEA Opera Grants are restricted to the project described in the application. Funds advanced to the grantees by OPERA America must be repaid in the event the approved project is not carried out.
- The receipt of a grant at any stage of a project or activity does not guarantee continued support from OPERA America.

## Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will receive an award letter explaining the grant's terms and conditions, including financial documentation and narrative reporting requirements. OPERA America staff will review these reports. All reporting requirements must be completed before the grant will be fully paid.

Grantees are required to acknowledge OPERA America and other funders, including the Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation, in the manner described by OPERA America in the award letter. Recipients of IDEA Opera Grants must maintain OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to OPERA America's website, on their website (if they have one) and in programs for the funded activity, if available. The submission of proof of acknowledgment constitutes an element of the final report of the grant.

IDEA Opera Grant recipients may be asked to submit additional documentation or cooperate with OPERA America in sharing the results of their projects with the field.

## Contact Information

For more information, contact Diana Hossack, grantmaking associate, at [DHossack@operaamerica.org](mailto:DHossack@operaamerica.org) or 646.699.5236.