



IDEA Opera Grants (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility)

*Supported by the
Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation*

2022–2023 Guidelines and Application Procedures

Important Dates

- **Application available online:** September 2022
- **Intent to apply deadline:** October 19, 2022
- **Application deadline:** November 11, 2022
- **Adjudication:** December 2022
- **Grantee notification:** January 2023
- **Grant activity period:** February 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

OPERA America
National Opera Center
330 Seventh Avenue
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Since 1984, OPERA America has been committed to increasing the quantity and quality of new North American operas, granting \$20 million over the last four decades to support the work of opera companies and creators.

Purpose

IDEA Opera Grants (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility) are OPERA America's first grant program designed with a racial equity lens. Initiated in 2019, IDEA Opera Grants are generously supported by the Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation, a family foundation 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.

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 races and ethnicities, gender identities, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, geographies, budget sizes, or works presented.
- **Equity:** acknowledging that not everyone is starting from the same point, actively ensuring that everyone has the resources and opportunity to succeed, and working to achieve fairness with consideration of current and historic barriers to participation in opera.
- **Accessibility:** equitable admittance to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience.

Opera

OPERA America defines opera as a music-theater experience with a dramatic arc written for trained voice(s) of all genres and accompanied by instruments.

Composer/Librettist

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.

Artist Identity

IDEA Opera Grants are available to individual composers and/or librettists of Color who identify as:

- **Arab** — includes those who identify with one or more nationalities originating in the Arabian Peninsula and neighboring territories, inhabiting much of the Middle East and

North Africa.

- Asian — includes those who identify with nationalities or ethnic groups originating in the Far East, Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia.
- Black — includes those who identify with nationalities or ethnic groups originating in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, including African American, Caribbean, Latin America, etc.
- Latinx — includes those who identify with nationalities or ethnic groups originating in Central America, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South America, and other Latin nations.
- Native American — includes those who identify as Aboriginal peoples, First Nations, Indigenous peoples, and/or Native peoples of the Americas with tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- Pacific Islander — includes those who identify with nationalities and ethnic groups originating in Guam, Hawaii, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

The above is not an extensive list but is meant to provide clarity and context for the purpose of the IDEA Opera Grants.

Grant Awards

Grant recipients will receive:

- \$18,000 per team to support costs associated with the production of a workshop, reading, or other performance-based event and to create a high-quality video of the work in development.
- Complimentary registrations, transportation, and housing stipend (valued at \$2,250) for both members of the awarded teams to attend OPERA America's Opera Conference and New Works Forum.
- An OPERA America individual membership for the composer(s) and librettist(s) identified in the application of the awarded projects.
- An introduction in *Opera America Magazine*.

Supported Activities

IDEA Opera Grants support the exploration of opera as an artistic media through such activities as:

- A Libretto Reading: a reading in which the devised literature is read aloud for evaluation.
- A Workshop: an informal performance of some or all of a work to obtain feedback on specific elements of the piece. Workshops might be performed with piano and/or instrumental accompaniment.
- Working Performance: a partial or full run-through of a work, with piano or instrumental accompaniment, to obtain feedback for the further development of the piece. An audience may or may not be present.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be individual artists who identify as composers and/or librettists.

- Applicants must identify with a racial or ethnic heritage as described on pages 2–3.
- Applicants must demonstrate their ability to write music and/or text by providing work samples.
- Funding may not be applied to expenses incurred before February 1, 2023.
- Grant-funded activities must be completed by June 30, 2024.
- This program is open to creators from all performing arts disciplines.
- 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.
- Each application must indicate a team representative who will serve as the project’s fiscal agent, disbursing all awarded funds and providing all required financial and narrative documentation.
- The team representative may be either the composer or the librettist.
- At least 50 percent of team members must have United States citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.
- An artist can be a member of only one applicant team with one project.
- 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

- Three grants of up to \$18,000 will be awarded annually.
- Funding may not be applied to expenses incurred before February 1, 2023.
- Grant activities must be completed by June 30, 2024.

Grant Award

Grants will cover up to 100 percent of eligible expenses, not exceeding \$18,000; 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;
 - Costs associated with the project recording, including venue rental, recording personnel, and technical support for audio-visual needs;
 - 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 (e.g., performance tickets, new works recordings, reference books);
- Transportation and housing for personnel related to creative meetings, rehearsals, and performances (Airfare is limited to coach-class.); and
- Living expenses for the applicant (up to 30% of grant request).
- Ineligible expenses include:
 - 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
 - Ticket subsidies.

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How to Apply

- Read the guidelines carefully before completing any application materials.
- All materials must be submitted online via the [Grants Dashboard](#).
- A brief overview of the creative team and proposed project, known as an intent to apply, must be submitted by October 19, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Only applicants who submit an intent to apply may submit a full application.
- Applicants will receive notification if the intent to apply form has been advanced to the application stage.
- OPERA America will provide individualized support to applicants based on their intent to apply to guide them to the full application.
- Complete applications, including work samples, must be submitted by November 11, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Applications submitted without work samples as specified in the application will not be considered. Applications that are incomplete, late, or sent via mail or email will not be accepted.
- No applications will be accepted unless an intent to apply form has been submitted on or before October 19, 2022, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Application Review

All applications for the IDEA Opera Grants are reviewed by an independent pool of experts approved by OPERA America's board of directors. The panel will consist of professionals of varied races and ethnicities with different areas of expertise and experience with diverse musical styles, as well as producers from OPERA America member companies.

No current OPERA America employee may serve as a panelist. Individuals who stand to benefit financially from a grant are also ineligible to serve.

All panel decisions are final.

Using the following criteria, panelists evaluate the applications through a cultural humility lens, which is a practice of honoring the cultural values and perspectives of the applicants, while self-reflecting on how one's own background and the background of others impact the review of applications.

- **Artistic Ability:** The artistic quality of the creative team and the proposed work based on the application and samples provided.
- **Quality and Distinction in Concept and Planning:** The appropriateness, effectiveness, and thoroughness of the planning process guiding the proposed activity.
- **Evaluation:** The articulation of realistic and achievable goals for evaluating the proposed project.

Work Samples

Applicants are required to submit work samples that best represent their voices and creative 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, Dropbox, and SoundCloud) with at least one sample featuring voice(s) (not digitally generated). Combined samples must be no longer than 20 minutes. 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 and/or audio or video) that demonstrate storytelling abilities. These can include but are not limited to poetry, short stories, and excerpts of plays, operas, or music-theater works (score optional). Combined written samples should be no more than 20 pages in length. If submitting audio-video samples, combined samples must be no longer than 20 minutes. Neither sample should exceed 10 minutes in length. Scores or other forms of visual representation of a musical work are optional.

Narrative Statements

Applicants are required to submit written narrative statements providing:

- A personal statement;
- Explanation about the proposed work;
- Description of project; and
- Information about the work's creative team.

Grant Announcement

- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their requests after the adjudication.
- Awarded applicants will receive an agreement explaining the grant period and the terms and conditions. Requests for extensions must be made in writing.
- Grantees may request up to 75 percent of the total direct grant in one or more installments for expenses incurred on or after February 1, 2023.
- 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 Grant awards are intended to support the activity described in the application. Significant changes to the activities or goals must be discussed with and approved by OPERA America staff.
- The receipt of a grant at any stage of a project or activity does not guarantee continued support from OPERA America.

Reporting Requirements

Awarded applicants will receive an agreement 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.

IDEA Opera Grant recipients 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 who have a website should feature OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to OPERA America's website.

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

Staff Contact Information

For more information, contact Diana Hossack, director of grantmaking, at DHossack@operaamerica.org or 646.699.5236.

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Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation

