



A/B Testing Grants: Supporting Experimentation in Audience Building

Funded by The Dr. M. Lee Pearce Foundation

Presented by Sarah Ivins, Director of Marketing and Communications; and Jenny Fornoff, Senior Manager for Grants

May 15, 2025

Important Dates



Intent to Apply Deadline: **June 5, 2025**



Full Application Deadline: **June 26, 2025**



Grant Period: **August 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026**



Reporting Deadline: **September 30, 2026**

Purpose of A/B Testing Grants



Activate findings from *Understanding Opera's New Audiences*



Implement strategies from *Engaging Opera's New Audiences*



Use A/B testing to identify effective audience-building tactics



Key goals: Experimentation, Audience growth and retention, and fieldwide learning

What is an A/B Test?

Experimental design:
Compare two approaches
(A = control,
B = variable)

Must be **purposeful,**
strategic, and
measurable

Example: Email subject
line with vs. without
personalization

Prevailing Hypotheses

Newcomers are more likely to return if...

...going to the opera is a one-of-a-kind experience that is bigger than just the performance.

...performances are fun, social, and part of their evening (but not their entire evening).

...they are offered a less expensive point of repeat entry.

...the cost of a ticket delivers high value by their standards.

...they build an appetite for opera by engaging with digital recordings before and after performances.

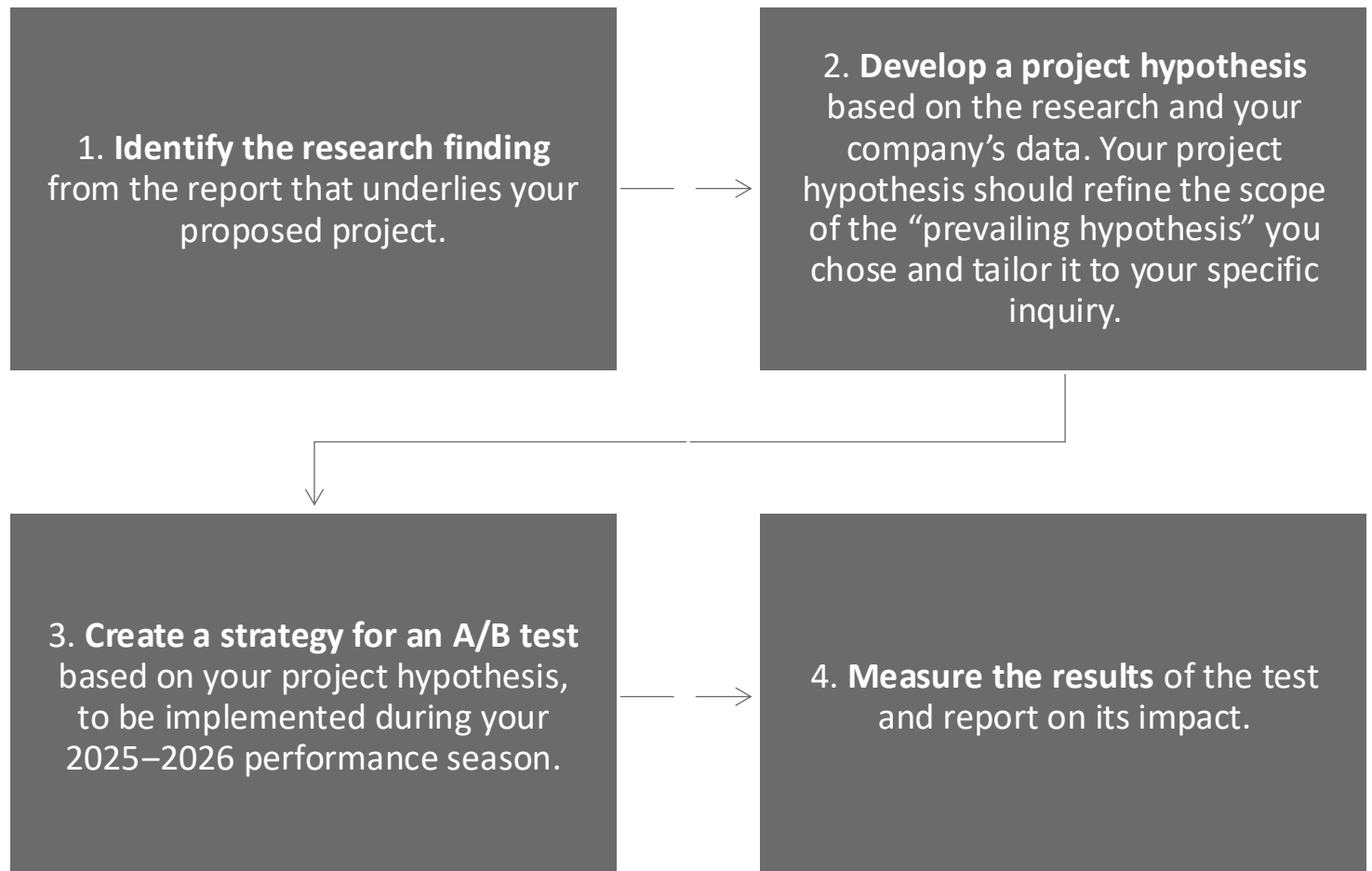
...they receive communications that are tailored to them.

...they can understand what's happening on stage from beginning to end.

...they have a frictionless experience from ticket purchase to post-show email.

...they can enjoy their experience without feeling they lack enough knowledge.

Developing Your Project



Intent to Apply



Keep it brief! Really – longest answer is 250 CHARACTERS



Our goal is to see the range of projects being proposed, so we can offer effective support where its necessary.



You MAY change your proposed project and the requested amount from the LOI to the full application.

Full Application



Example Projects

Discount Offers:

Encouraging return attendance via pricing incentives

Digital Content

Sharing: Sharing pre- and post-performance media

Tailored Emails:

Providing educational content to newcomers

Budget & Eligibility

- Grants range: **\$5,000 – \$50,000**
 - No funding match required.
 - Request should be reasonable for the size/scope of the proposed project.
 - You only need to show additional funding support if your project is more than \$50,000 (GenOps counts!)
- Total funds available: **\$300,000 (8–12 awards)**
- Eligible: U.S./Canada OPERA America Professional Company Members in good standing



Evaluation Criteria

Alignment with research

Strength of project
planning

Preparedness for
innovation

Potential for fieldwide
learning

Justified, realistic budget

In the spirit of learning,
granted projects will be
selected to test a variety
of possible
interventions.

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Questions & Support

For program questions: Sarah Ivins, sivins@operaamerica.org

For application questions: Jenny Fornoff, grants@operaamerica.org

Both or unsure? Just email grants@operaamerica.org