



IDEA Opera Residencies

*Supported by the
Katherine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund of
The Scherman Foundation*

2021–2022 Guidelines & Application Procedures

OPERA America
National Opera Center
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New York, NY 10001
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Purpose

IDEA Opera Residencies (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) are OPERA America's first grant program designed to welcome early-career composers and librettists of color living in New York City into the field. The program provides direct grants, residencies, mentorship, and career support to artists who have the potential to shape the future of opera. This initiative, generously supported by the Katherine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund of The Scherman Foundation, is the first artist residency program offered by OPERA America at its state-of-the-art facility, the National Opera Center in New York.

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, socioeconomic backgrounds, geographies, budget sizes, or works presented.
- **Equity:** recognizing that not everyone is starting from the same point but ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.
- **Access:** equitable admittance to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience.

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

Applicants must be early-career or new to opera, i.e., those who have not yet received commissions, fellowships, or grants in the field of opera. Previous experience writing for the opera medium is not required.

IDEA Opera Residencies are available to individual composers and/or librettists with racial or cultural identities including African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and/or Native American (ALAANA).

Important Dates

- **Application available online:** June 2021
- **Intent to apply deadline:** July 28, 2021
- **Application deadline:** August 25, 2021
- **Adjudication:** September 2021
- **Grantee notification:** October 2021
- **Grant activity period:** January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Apply

Visit operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard.

Grants

Grant recipients will receive awards of approximately \$25,000, including:

- A \$10,000 direct grant to explore opera as an artistic medium through the creation of arias, scenes, monologues, or a full work;
- A stipend of up to \$5,000 in career or promotional support, such as website development, graphic design, photography, portfolio recording, travel, or other resources;
- A one-year residency at OPERA America's National Opera Center in Midtown Manhattan for use of the state-of-the-art rehearsal and performance facilities and recording services (valued at \$7,500);
- Mentorship from field leaders and training, including a two-part Opera Entrepreneurship Workshop; and
- Introduction to the field at OPERA America's New Works Forum and Opera Conference between January and May/June 2021 (exact dates TBA) with complimentary registrations and transportation stipend (valued at \$2,250).

Supported Activities

IDEA Opera Residencies will support the exploration of opera as an artistic media through the creation of arias, monologues, scenes, or even a full work that culminates with any of the following:

- A libretto reading. A reading in which the devised literature is read aloud.
- A workshop. An informal performance of some/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.

NOTE: These are examples of typical developmental activities and are not meant to limit the goals of any application.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be individual artists who identify as composers and/or librettists.
- Applicants must be early-career or new to opera, i.e., those who have not yet received commissions, fellowships, or grants in the field of opera.

- Applicants must identify with a racial or cultural heritage including African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and/or Native American (ALAANA).
- Applicants must reside in one of the five boroughs of New York City and have U.S. citizenship, permanent residence, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. (Proof of residency and citizenship will be requested.)
- Applicants must demonstrate their ability to write music and/or text by providing work samples.
- Applicants may only be affiliated with one proposal per application cycle.
- Recipients of IDEA Opera Residencies will serve as fiscal agents for the projects. If awarded, fiscal agents will disburse all funds received and provide all required financial and narrative documentation.
- Recipients of IDEA Opera Residencies may not reapply for IDEA Opera Residencies in a subsequent cycle.

Funding Parameters

- Grants will cover up to 100 percent of eligible expenses, not exceeding \$10,000; no matching funds are required. Additional expenses to complete the project are the responsibility of the creators.
- Funding may not be applied to expenses incurred before January 1, 2022.
- Grant-funded activities must be completed by December 31, 2022.
- **Eligible expenses include but are not limited to:**
 - Vocalist, instrumentalist, and other performer fees;
 - Music director/conductor;
 - Dramaturg;
 - Orchestrator, arranger, copyist;
 - Stage director;
 - Vocal coach;
 - Sound designer;
 - Rehearsal and performance venue rental fees;
 - Stage manager;
 - Equipment rental (e.g., lighting, sound, instrumental cartage);
 - Living expenses for the applicant (up to 25% of grant request);
 - Childcare and/or eldercare while creators are in rehearsal or performance;
 - Research materials (e.g., performance tickets, new work recordings, reference books); and
 - Transportation and housing for personnel related to creative meetings, rehearsals, and performances (airfare is limited to coach class).
- **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; and
- Fundraising expenses.
- A stipend of up to \$5,000 in career or promotional support, such as website development, graphic design, photography, portfolio recording, travel, or other resources, will be provided to grantees. Although a specific promotional budget is not required at this time, please describe the intended activities in the narrative portion of the application. Do not include these expenses in the budget template.

Timeline

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

- **Application available online:** June 2020
- **Intent to apply deadline:** July 28, 2021
- **Application deadline:** August 25, 2021
- **Adjudication:** September 2021
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How to Apply

An intent to apply is required for all applicants and is due by 11:59 p.m. ET on July 28, 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.
- Submit a complete, final application by 11:59 p.m. ET on August 25, 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 or 646.699.5236 with any questions.

Application Review

An independent panel will review all final applications for IDEA Opera Residencies. 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. The decisions of the panel are final.

Panelists evaluate the applications based on the following criteria:

- **Artistic Ability:** The artistic quality of the work samples.
- **Creative Potential:** The potential to enrich the art form and the field.
- **Impetus for Opera:** Applicants' motivations for expressing themselves through opera.
- **Evaluation:** The articulation of realistic and achievable goals for evaluating the residency period in relation to the applicant's artistic practice.

Work Samples

Applicants are required to submit work samples that best represent their unique 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). 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). Neither sample should exceed 10 minutes in length, if audio/video, or 10 pages if written.

Narrative Statements

Applicants are required to submit written narrative statements describing:

- Learning goals for the residency, including plans for experimenting with the art form or developing a specific theatrical work;
- Career skills that would benefit from targeted mentorship;
- Intended use of promotional resources; and
- Specific outcomes for evaluating the Residency experience.

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 direct grant in one or more installments for expenses incurred on or after November 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 Residency 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

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 Katherine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund of The Scherman Foundation, in the manner described by OPERA America in the award letter. Recipients of IDEA Opera Residencies who have a website should feature OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to OPERA America's website.

Recipients of IDEA Opera Residencies 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 or 646.699.5236.