

FY27 Arts Industry Operating Support Grant Application Evaluation Rubric

Artistic Merit (organizational health: strategy, governance, capacity, financial health) – 35% of Total Score

Strategic Planning	0-1 points: There are no formal planning or evaluation processes in place.	2-4 points: There is evidence of methods for planning or evaluating organizational health.	5-7 points: Strategic planning informs organizational practice and includes health metrics and evaluation.	8-9 points: Planning is integrated, data-informed, and used to drive strategic growth and organizational learning with strong methods for evaluation.
Governance (staff)	0 points: There is little or no staff structure to manage operations effectively.	1-2 points: There is evidence of governance, management, and staffing to support the work of the organization.	3-4 points: Staff roles and responsibilities are defined; governance supports staff management and development.	5-6 points: Governance and management are highly effective; staff development is well-aligned with mission and goals.
Governance (board)	0 points: Board is inactive, unclear in its role, or not engaged.	1-2 points: There is evidence of board governance to support the work of the organization.	3-4 points: Board provides appropriate oversight and guidance; some involvement in strategic and financial decisions.	5 points: Board is fully engaged and strategic; provides strong leadership, oversight, and advocacy.
Governance (volunteers)	0 points: Volunteer involvement is unstructured or insufficient.	1 point: Volunteer involvement is appropriate to support the work of the organization.	2 points: Volunteers are well-trained and coordinated for meaningful contributions.	3 points: Volunteers are well-trained and strategically aligned with organizational goals.
Financial Support for Professional Learning & Accessibility	0 points: No investment in accessibility or board/staff development.	1 point: There is an investment in professional learning and/or accessibility by the organization's board and staff.	2 points: Board and staff receive regular and appropriate support for professional development and accessibility efforts.	3 points: Professional learning and accessibility are priorities with robust, ongoing investment across the organization.
Income	0-1 points: Organization struggles to generate income; frequent shortfalls.	2-4 points: There is sufficient income to support arts programming or access to cash to cover occasional shortfalls.	5-7 points: Income sources are stable; reserves or contingency funds are in place for emergencies.	8-9 points: Organization has diversified, sustainable income streams and strong financial reserves.

Artistic Excellence (quality and relevance of programs and services) – 40% of Total Score

Mission Alignment	0-1 points: Arts programs and services show little or no alignment with the mission.	2-3 points: The arts programs and services are aligned with the mission.	4-6 points: Programs and services demonstrate clear and intentional alignment with mission.	7-8 points: Intentional, explicit alignment between programs and services and the organization's mission.
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Programs Breadth and Quality: SMART Goals	0-1 points: SMART Goals are vague, missing, or not measurable; no clear planning.	2-3 points: SMART goals are present, with some measurable and time-bound elements.	4-5 points: SMART goals are fully developed, measurable, and time-bound; they guide planning, execution, and evaluation.	6-7 points: SMART goals are exemplary, fully integrated across all program stages; goals drive innovation and continuous improvement.
Programs Breadth and Quality: Strategies	0-1 points: No clear strategies for program development or delivery are evident.	2-3 points: Some strategies are outlined, but might lack goal alignment.	4-6 points: Strategies are clearly defined and appropriate for achieving program goals.	7-8 points: Strategies are comprehensive, innovative, and directly aligned to program goals; they are reviewed and refined.
Programs Breadth and Quality: Capacity for Execution	0-1 points: Organization lacks material and human resources, or systems to implement programs.	2-4 points: Capacity exists; there are gaps in human and material resources, some systems exist to implement programs.	5-7 points: Strong systems, as well as human and material resources, are in place to support successful implementation.	8-9 points: Skilled human resources, ample material resources, and systems that ensure sustainable implementation.
Programs Breadth and Quality: Program Evaluation	0-1 points: Little or no evaluation methods are in place; no data is collected or reviewed.	2-3 points: Basic evaluation is present, though limited in use for improvement.	4-6 points: Evaluation is implemented regularly with relevant metrics; findings are used for improvement.	7-8 points: Evaluation is systematic, thorough, and data-driven; results are consistently used to inform and enhance programs.

Public Participation – 25% of Total Score

Knowledge of Participants	0 points: Little to no understanding of who participates in programs or why participation is limited.	1-2 points: Surface level understanding of participant demographics and behaviors.	3-4 points: Data-driven understanding of participant demographics and behaviors.	5 points: Deep, data-driven understanding of participant demographics and behaviors; strategies are informed by this knowledge.
Assessment of Participation Barriers	0 points: Little or no methods are in place to assess participation barriers.	1-2 points: The organization has methods for assessing and understands participation barriers.	3-4 points: A system for assessing participation barriers is implemented and regularly reviewed; data is used to inform programming strategies.	5-6 points: Strong, continuous assessment system identifies barriers and tracks progress on eliminating them.
Continual Improvement	0 points: The organization rarely or never adjusts programs based on participation challenges.	1-2 points: The organization continually implements changes to overcome participation barriers.	3-4 points: Improvements are regularly made based on participation data and community feedback.	5-6 points: A culture of continuous improvement is embedded; changes are strategic, responsive, and measurable.

Engaging with your Broader Community (e.g., partnerships, corporations, advocacy, other nonprofits, service opportunities, schools, etc.)	0 points: There is minimal or no engagement with external community groups or partners.	1-2 points: The organization occasionally engages with its broader community; some alignment with mission.	3-4 points: Active engagement with multiple sectors; partnerships are maintained and contribute to mission delivery.	5 points: Deep, reciprocal relationships with diverse community partners; engagement enhances impact and mission reach.
Alignment with SCAC Mission (to expand access to the arts and foster creativity for all South Carolinians.)	0 points: Organization's work does not clearly relate to the SCAC's mission.	1 point: Organization's work shows some alignment with the SCAC's mission, but the connection may be limited in impact or intentionality.	2 points: Organization's mission and programs intentionally and actively support the SCAC's mission.	3 points: The organization's mission and programs serve as a leader, model, or strategic partner in advancing access to the arts and fostering creativity.