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Michigan Arts & Culture Council Announces New Grantmaking Initiatives to Strengthen Equitability and Transparency

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Lansing, MI - The Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC) today announced several new grantmaking initiatives that dramatically strengthen the agency's ability to provide equitable, fair, and transparent funding opportunities to organizations that help ensure all Michigan communities thrive from the civic, economic, and educational benefits of arts and culture.

MACC's main focus is to guide the distribution of grants to entities who provide arts and cultural programs and services throughout Michigan, and envisions a state where communities celebrate creative expression and every person has access to, or participates in, arts and cultural experiences.

In the fall of 2023, MACC partnered with the Michigan Office of Continuous Improvement (OCI) to analyze the current grant application process and redesign the process to better meet customers' needs and increase efficiency. MACC focused its work on several goals, including elimination of inefficiencies, potential program consolidation, restructuring, or elimination; fully documented processes in compliance with federal and state requirements; and creating policies and procedures to eliminate conflicts of interest in the granting process. The Council did this work in close collaboration with the Michigan Attorney General's Office.

Leading into this process, a comprehensive survey of the arts and culture field was facilitated by the OCI, garnering feedback from over 600+ individuals and organizations across the state who had previously worked with MACC. This data driven analysis from across the state has informed the next chapter of the MACC. An executive summary outlining the process and major findings can be found on the MACC website here. Below is an overview of the major changes MACC has implemented for fiscal year 2025.

NEW TO THE MICHIGAN ARTS & CULTURE COUNCIL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 (FY25)

- **Simplified Application** – MACC applicants will now experience a significantly more simple and concise application process. Instead of applying in multiple different grant categories and preparing a separate application for each, applicants will now submit a single grant application per fiscal year that encompasses all available funding opportunities.
- **Application Fee Elimination** – MACC will no longer charge application fees, increasing access for organizations to apply for funding opportunities.

- **Funding Distribution Rebalance** - MACC has removed barriers that will allow smaller, emerging, and historically underrepresented organizations to apply for larger amounts of funding than before. Organizations of any budget size are welcome to request the maximum grant amount in each category, leveling the playing field for all organizations to access available public funding.
- **Cash Match Reduction** - Awardees in all FY25 grant programs will now be required to make a 25% (1:4) cash match based on the awarded amount, a large reduction from previous MACC programs that required a 100% (1:1) match. This further reduces the financial burden for organizations to qualify for MACC funding.
- **New Grant Evaluation Process** – To eliminate the potential for bias in application evaluation, MACC is retiring use of the peer-review grant panel process and will no longer score applications based on a subjective 0-100 scale. MACC is switching to a compliance-based funding model where applications are adjudicated objectively on a binary “eligible for funding” or “ineligible for funding” scoring system based on the applicant’s ability to satisfy the requirements of the application and prove it is compliant (in good standing) with both the State of Michigan and federal government.

“With valuable input from the field and a strong commitment to being good stewards of public funds, we are excited to be moving MACC into a new era of funding opportunities and processes. It is our hope that barriers are removed, and equitable funding access is improved to support arts and cultural programs across the state” says Alison Watson, Executive Director, Michigan Arts & Culture Council.

A series of webinars, in-person workshops, and virtual office hours outlining the upcoming improvements will be held May - July. More information can be found on the [MACC website](#).

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