Introduction

The Council’s Professional Assistance programs provide arts and humanities organizations with the opportunity to acquire new or additional programmatic, planning, managerial, fiscal and artistic skills. Organizations are encouraged to address their long-term programmatic and managerial needs through Professional Assistance funding.

Eligibility

Applicants for either Technical Assistance or Scholarship Aid funds must be nonprofit corporations incorporated in Massachusetts. All applicants must have filed an Annual Report each year with the Secretary of State under Chapter 180, Section 26A of the General Laws (not to be confused with a form PC filed with the Attorney General).

Assistance is available to organizations and municipal agencies with cultural programs and services, whether or not they are receiving funds through other Council programs.

Elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, churches and religious denominations or societies may not apply for funding through this program.

Section I: Technical Assistance

This program supports short-term technical consultancies that will produce measurable change within the organization. Applicants may request up to $1,000 to hire a consultant to address specific problems or issues and to provide expertise not available on the organization’s board or staff.

The program responds to organizational and managerial needs in such areas as short and long-range planning, needs assessment, board development, fiscal management, marketing and promotion, audience development, and fundraising. Through recent consultancies:

- The Asian-American Resource Workshop in Boston engaged in long-range planning and board development.
- Danny Sloan Dance Company in Boston created a system for bookings and promotion.
- The Peabody Museum of Salem developed and analyzed a membership survey.

The program also responds to organizational needs in the areas of artistic growth, programmatic development and education. With support from the Council:

- The North Shore Jewish Historical Society in Lynn received guidance in the design and mounting of a major exhibit.
- The American-Portuguese Genealogical Society of Taunton developed a genealogical cataloging system.

- Actors at StageWest Theatre in Springfield learned vocal skills and dialects.
- The faculty at Performing Arts School of Worcester explored new creative movement techniques as related to their curriculum.

The Council will also consider consultancies where training is not the primary focus, but which provide information that benefits an organization’s programming or management, or address the cultural needs of a community. Consultants supported through Council funds have:

- Designed technical theater facilities for the Berkshire Public Theatre of Pittsfield.
- Provided the Photographic Resource Center in Boston with a space design that meets its programmatic needs.

Criteria for awarding funds

- Appropriateness of the technical assistance project to the needs of the organization.
- Qualifications of the consultant(s).
- Commitment of the board, staff and other key participants to work with the consultant.
- Clarity of the applicant’s plan to use the consultant’s time.
- Potential of the consultancy to produce measurable results or change within the organization or community.
- Ability of the applicant to use the information provided by the consultant and to implement, when appropriate, consultant’s recommendations.
- Potential of the consultancy to aid the applicant in providing excellent programs or services to the residents of Massachusetts.
- Financial need.

Technical Assistance funds are limited. In making awards, the Council considers whether its funds will be used most effectively. For this reason, organizations should determine whether workshops or other training programs are available to address their needs through Scholarship Aid funds (see page 4) before applying for a consultancy.

The Council will also consider joint applications from organizations that wish to work with a consultant to address common problems or community arts development. Larger awards may be available for joint applications.
How to apply

Telephone interviews are the first step. To arrange an interview, contact the Organizational Support staff at the Council at (617) 727-3668. After discussions about the applicant’s programs, budget and plans for a consultancy, an application form will be provided. Council staff is available to assist in preparing the application.

Applicants select their own consultant(s) and arrange the details of the proposed consultancy (including the topics to be discussed and the number of days of the consultant’s time needed) before filing the Technical Assistance application with the Council. The consultant may not be a current or recent board or staff member of the applicant organization.

Organizations may request up to $1,000 to offset consultant fees at a rate of up to $100 a day (for not less than 4 hours a day, excluding travel).

Organizations may submit more than one application in a fiscal year and may develop a plan for up to three consecutive consultancies in a fiscal year.

Implementation

Organizations that complete a Technical Assistance consultancy may request additional matching funds of up to $500 to implement the consultant’s recommendations. With the assistance of implementation funds:

- Zephyr Press of Somerville prepared a catalog to market their publications through direct mail.
- Historic Deerfield prepared television public service announcements as part of an audience outreach plan.
- Boston Musica Viva developed a trustee manual as a tool for board recruitment and to clarify board member responsibilities.

After completing the Technical Assistance consultancy, an organization should discuss its ideas for project implementation with Organizational Support staff at the Council. An application form will be provided after the phone interview.

Section II: Scholarship Aid

Scholarship Aid funds are available to assist the artistic or managerial development of staff, board members or volunteers of cultural organizations.

The Council will consider requests for assistance to attend workshops, master classes, conferences, or seminars on topics related to artistic improvement, arts administration or organizational management. The Council will match up to $250 to offset registration fees, tuition costs, or workshop expenses. Council funds may not be used to cover costs of travel, food or lodging.

Criteria for awarding funds

- Relevance of the training program for the member of the organization.
- Qualifications of the faculty involved in the training program.
- Potential of the training program to further develop the individual’s skills.
- Potential that the training program will aid the applicant organization in providing programs or services.
- Financial need.

Applicants should determine whether scholarship support is available from the sponsor of the training program before contacting the Council. In many cases—corporate workshops on data processing, for example—reduced fees may be available.

How to apply

Contact the Organizational Support staff at 617-727-3668 to discuss plans and receive an application form.

Section III: Professional Assistance procedures

Deadline

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis from July 1 to April 1.

Applications must be submitted at least eight weeks before the proposed consultancy or training program begins.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Notification

Technical Assistance and Scholarship Aid awards are announced approximately six weeks after a completed application is received.
Conditions of funding

The Council does not usually require a dollar-for-dollar match to its funds for a Technical Assistance consultancy (up to $1,000). However, if an organization receives funds for more than three consultancies in one fiscal year, a match may be required.

All funds awarded through Scholarship Aid and Implementation require a one-to-one match.

Consultancies or training programs must occur within the contract period.

If a consultancy does not meet expectations, organizations should notify the Council immediately to discuss the possibility of amending the contract.

All funds are awarded under a written contract for services and are paid on a reimbursement basis to the contracted organization. It is the contractor's responsibility to arrange a payment schedule with the consultant.

A final narrative and fiscal report form, provided by the Council, must be filed within 30 days of the completion of the Technical Assistance consultancy or Scholarship Aid training program. Technical Assistance contracts also require a written final report from the consultant.

The final report(s) must be filed with the organization's request for reimbursement. Reimbursements will not be processed without the required final report(s).

Assurances

The Council requires each funding applicant to sign a Statement of Assurances as part of any funding application. This statement includes assurances that the applicant will comply with all existing legislation that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in any Council supported activity.

Affirmative Action

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity not only as a matter of law but as a policy designed to encourage the participation of all segments of the Commonwealth's population in the Council's programs.

The requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and related legislation have been augmented by the Council's own policy of affirmative action, applicable to both personnel practices and funding assistance programs. The goal of this policy is to guarantee full and equal access to Council programs and services for all residents of the Commonwealth.

Handicapped Constituents

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 specifically prohibits discrimination against handicapped individuals in programs supported with public funds. The Council has issued a memorandum describing the responsibilities of organizations receiving Council funds required by this legislation. All organizations receiving Council funds are required to sign a compliance form.

Religious Organizations

The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts prohibits the use of public money for the purpose of founding, maintaining or aiding any church or religious denomination or society. In compliance with this requirement, the Council will not accept applications from churches and religious denominations or societies for programs that further the religious activities of the applicant or that benefit, exclusively or substantially, only the members of the applicant organization.

Organizations that are affiliated with a church or religious organization but are separately incorporated, and which operate programs that are substantially cultural and non-denominational, for the public, will continue to be eligible for Council awards and will make recommendations to the Council concerning eligibility.

Acknowledgement

In all published material and announcements regarding the activity or program supported by Council funds, the sponsoring group must acknowledge state assistance with the following statement: "This program is supported in part by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, a state agency whose budget is recommended by the Governor and approved by the Legislature."

Reconsideration Policy

If an organization's application is not funded, the organization may request reconsideration of the Council's decision. If the organization can demonstrate that the Council failed to follow published application and review procedures, all requests must be submitted in writing within 30 days of the Council's announcement of its decision, and should be directed to the Council chairman.