Welcome!

Jake Goodman, Executive Director and Board Member
Tiffany Wilhelm, Program Officer/Operations
yvette shipman, Program Officer/Repair
Suraj Prasad, Emerging Leader of Color in Philanthropy Intern
Land Acknowledgement

Many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement bring us to where we are today.

Most of us are in or near the place now called Pittsburgh, an area with evidence of inhabitation for over 19,000 years. Centuries ago, the Monongahela, the Hopewell, and the Osage were stewards of this land. More recently this was a place where tribes and peoples came after they were forced off of their ancestral homes to the east by European colonizers. This includes the Seneca (part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy), the Lenape, the Shawnee, and the Mingo. The Seneca called this place Dionde:gâ (dee-on-day-gah) meaning "the forks."

We pay respects to the Elders and People of this land, past and present.
Overview

• Presentation (Questions welcome throughout)
• Who is in the space
• Additional Questions and Answers
History to Present

• The Fund was established in 2015 upon the death of community leader Gerri Kay to continue her life’s work. It seeks grantees who champion the rights of our communities’ diverse citizens, treasure the arts and support the lives of artists, pursue social and economic justice, and proactively provide safety net resources for those in need.

• As of the end of last year, the Opportunity Fund has an expanded board with four community members in addition to the two board members who are family of Gerri’s
Who Can Apply

• Organizations that are U.S.-based 501(c)(3) tax-exempt (nonprofit)

• Fiscally-Sponsored Programs and Projects
  ◦ The request must be submitted by a US-based fiscal sponsor
  ◦ Not just a "pass-through" relationship - the fiscal sponsor is responsible for the application, funding, reporting, etc.
  ◦ In our full application, we ask for the agreement between the fiscal sponsor and the sponsored group. We recommend that you work to craft this agreement carefully; it’s an opportunity to consider intellectual property, who owns what is created, how the work can be shared, etc.
What We Fund

**Arts**
- **Performing Arts**, with an emphasis on theatre, dance and music, especially classical chamber music and jazz, presented by small and mid-sized arts organizations
- **Visual Arts**, with an emphasis on craft and small to mid-sized organizations

**Social & Economic Justice**
- with a focus on Racial Justice
  - Black-Led Movement Work
  - Civil Liberties
  - Civil Rights, with special interest in Black and LGBTQ+ people, and other groups impacted by social injustice
  - Human Rights
  - Reproductive Freedom
  - Safety Net Resources for people in need, including social services, economic independence, housing, tangible aid, transportation, healthcare
The Process – Two Cycles Per Year

• **Cycle 1**: LOI is due by **January 15 at midnight**
  If invited, a Full Application is due **March 1** for award notification by **beginning of May**

• **Cycle 2**: LOI is due by **July 15 at midnight**
  If invited, a Full Application is due by **September 1** for award notification by **beginning of November**

**NOTE**: In some years, we shift deadlines slightly if they fall on a weekend or holiday. Our website and online grants system will always have the exact deadline.
The Process – Two Steps

• Step 1: “LOI” (Letter of Inquiry) – a short online application.

• Step 2: If invited, complete a Full Application – an online application that adds additional detail to your LOI.

• Most applicants complete both steps, including first-time applicants and past grantees. This assists us in knowing the complete group of applicants that will be reviewed through the panel and board process.
How much should I ask for?

- The majority of grants are around $15,000.
- There is no cap (small or large) on the amount that you may request, however it’s useful to ask for a realistic amount so that the budget you submit with a full application will be achievable.
- Average amount of grants = $13,500
- Amounts given most often = $10,000 and $15,000
- We have given grants as low as $1,000
- Website shows grants given to date (look for the lists for each grant cycle under the “Grants” tab)
Grant History To Date

• Each cycle is competitive.

• Example: The second cycle in 2020
  ◦ $783,000 in grants (including ~$100,000 to be given in the future years)
  ◦ 61 grants funded out of 114 LOIs, a total of $1,683,849 was requested.

• Example: The first cycle in 2021
  ◦ $1,112,500 in grants (including ~$150,000 to be given in the future years)
  ◦ 70 grants funded out of 108 LOIs, a total of $1.8M+ was requested.

• This year, due to an increase in the Opportunity Fund’s payout amount to 6%, we expect over $1 million to be awarded each cycle.
General Tips

• Most full applications are reviewed by a panel of community members who make funding recommendations to the board of directors. Strong applications include context and background for people who may be learning about your work for the first time.

• The Opportunity Fund is evolving and constantly learning, so things may change. Always look for current information on our website, including the most updated application materials.

• Multi-year support - right now, it’s rare. Contact us with specific questions.

• Set up a meeting with us if your idea or organization is especially complex or difficult to understand.
General Tips

• If you’re using lingo or acronyms from your field, define your terms. It’s a barrier for reviewers if they can’t understand what you’re writing about. Don’t assume knowledge.

• NEW – flexible character counts. It will still be worthwhile to pay attention to the character counts when writing your draft.

• Receiving a grant--and/or tremendous success with a grant, i.e. a stellar final report--is not a guarantee for future or every year funding. We’re not a reliable source of ongoing support at this time (even though we know how important that is!).
General Tips

• The strongest applications tell a story that makes sense.

• The **Budget** (the money you are asking for) is directly related to the activities in the **Design** section which are directly related to achieving your **Goals** which are measured through **Metrics**.
Intros

Questions and Answers
Contact Us

Jake Goodman
jgoodman@theopportunityfund.org

Tiffany Wilhelm
twilhelm@theopportunityfund.org

412-362-1300

You can review foundations at www.GrantAdvisor.org