



USArtists International

Program Guidelines 2023 – 2024

APPLICATION DEADLINES

My Engagement is Taking Place	Deadline to Apply	Certification and Invitation Letters Due	Decision Notification By
Between January 15, 2024 and June 30, 2025	September 29, 2023 11:59 PM ET	October 6, 2023	December 15, 2023
Between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025	March 27, 2024 11:59 PM ET	April 3, 2024	June 20, 2024 (Notification may be very close to the eligible engagement start date)

ACCESSIBILITY

These guidelines are available in a PDF or Word file at [our website](#). To request accommodation during any phase of your application process, reach out to Program Director, International Andrew Alness Olson at andrew@midatlanticarts.org.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Support for the presentation and touring of performing artists is central to the work of Mid Atlantic Arts. USAI® supports in-person performances by American artists at engagements at international festivals and global presenting arts marketplaces outside of the United States. The program funds individuals and ensembles across all performing arts practices and disciplines.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

USArtists International is designed to encourage the presence of U.S. performing artists on international stages and in the global arts community; to support engagements that develop and expand both the careers and artistic goals of U.S. performers by providing connections with presenters, curators, and fellow artists; and to promote justice in the arts community by elevating the diverse voices contributing to the vibrant array of creative expression in the United States. Although grant funds from the USArtists International program are restricted to the specific costs of eligible engagements as defined below, we strongly encourage artists that receive USAI funding to add on additional non-festival engagements to their tour while they are abroad. Given the high cost of international flights, both financial and environmental, it is important to expand your impact beyond a single festival appearance when possible.

Application Tracks

FESTIVAL/MARKET TRAVEL TRACK

Mid Atlantic Arts will accept applications to the USArtists International program that seek travel funding to perform internationally at eligible festival or performing arts market engagements. Application budgets should include only eligible, travel-specific expenses.* See [Grant Amounts and Eligible Expenses](#) below for further details. Panelists only score applications based on [reviewable criteria](#). **Applicants should communicate with Mid Atlantic Arts staff about any changes to an engagement after an application is submitted.** Due to the involvement of federal funds, any news about festival postponement or cancellation should be discussed with staff.

NON-FESTIVAL TRAVEL TRACK

Mid Atlantic Arts has partnered with [Ibermúscas](#) to increase artistic exchange between the Americas and beyond. As part of this initiative, in addition to international festival engagements, significant non-festival performance engagements will be eligible for support through USArtists International in Ibermúscas' 2023-24 member countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, and Uruguay. See [Program Eligibility](#) for additional eligibility requirements. Application budgets should include only eligible, travel-specific expenses.* See [Grant Amounts and Eligible Expenses](#) below for further details. Applications will be reviewed as part of the standard USArtists International panel process and competitive applications will strongly meet [program review criteria](#). Artists applying with a non-festival engagement must contact staff before applying to confirm eligibility at least 72 hours before the deadline by emailing andrew@midatlanticarts.org details on the proposed engagement.

*Please note that applicants applying to the festival travel track or non-festival travel track of this program are permitted to apply for up to three engagements; a mix of festival travel and non-festival travel is permitted.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Applications to USAI must meet eligibility criteria in **each of the following three areas** to be eligible for the program:

1. Artist Eligibility
2. Festival/Performing Arts Market/Non-Festival Eligibility
3. Engagement Eligibility

In addition, applications must not meet any of the [restrictions](#).

1. ARTIST ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible applicants must:

- be a dance, music, or theater ensemble or individual artist that work at a professional level; festivals and/or curators cannot apply on behalf of U.S. artists;
- be designated by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, **OR** apply using a U.S.-based [fiscal sponsor](#) that is designated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization;
- currently reside in the United States or its territories;
- be invited to perform at an international festival, performing arts market, or non-festival engagement that meets the eligibility guidelines in item 2 below;
- not have received a USAI grant within the past 12 months, regardless of when the festival(s) or market(s) take place. After receiving notice of grant approval, grantees cannot reapply until 12 months have passed from that date of notification;

- not be involved in the curation/programming, administration, or management of the festival or performing arts market for which they seek funding;
- be in good standing with Mid Atlantic Arts, with no overdue or outstanding required reports and/or grant documents;
- and meet residency requirements: USAI funding is only available to performances in which at least half of the **performers** are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. For all projects with international collaborators or accompaniment, at least half of the performers must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and the lead creative artist must also be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

Applicants will be assessed in part on the risk of noncompliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions as provided by the applicant's Certification and Statement of Assurances in the submitted application and the results of previous audits including adherence to Single Audit requirements as set forth by Federal statutes.

2. FESTIVAL/PERFORMING ARTS MARKET/NON-FESTIVAL ELIGIBILITY

Engagements must meet eligibility requirements for the corresponding guidelines below depending on the type of engagement with which you are applying.

To be eligible, festivals must:

- be curated;
- be organized primarily by a non-U.S.-based organization that is both financially and curatorially responsible for the festival;
- **not** require a registration, application, performance, venue rental or any other type of fee or amount paid by performers exceeding USD \$250;
- be international in scope with ensembles or solo performing artists representing at least two countries outside the host country, or have a U.S. theme with representation from at least three U.S. ensembles and/or solo performers;
- be open and marketed to the general public;
- and provide the applicant with a signed letter of invitation or signed contract to perform at the festival on festival or market letterhead and in English. If the letter is not in English, a translation (Google translate works) must be included with the original letter. In addition the letter must include:
 - a description of all financial or in-kind support offered by the festival or market towards eligible project expenses as identified in the USAI guidelines under [Grant Amounts and Eligible Expenses](#), such as hotels, flights, ground transportation, or per diems
 - if providing an artists' performance fee, the dollar amount of the fee
 - the artist/ensemble's performance dates, if known
 - number of performances, if known
- meet the USAI program's definition of a Festival in the [Definitions section](#) below. If applying for a fringe festival, see additional items in the [Fringe Festival definition](#).

To be eligible, Performing Arts Market engagements must:

- meet all festival eligibility requirements listed above with the exception that they do not need to be open and marketed to the general public and that they may charge artists for showcase participation.
- meet the USAI program's definition of Performing Arts Markets in the [Definitions section](#) below.

To be eligible, Non-Festival engagements must:

- take place in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, and Uruguay. Non-festival engagements in any other country are NOT eligible;
- meet all festival eligibility requirements listed above with the exception that they do not need to be international in scope or meet the definition of a festival;
- not be an artist residency;
- be at a venue with capacity for an audience of at least 400, or have multiple confirmed performances at a smaller venue to have capacity across all performances of at least 400. The offer letter from the presenting organization should include the capacity of the venue, and if applicable, the number of confirmed engagements.
- and artists applying with a non-festival engagement must contact staff before applying to confirm eligibility at least 72 hours before the deadline by emailing andrew@midatlanticarts.org details on the proposed engagement.

3. ENGAGEMENT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, engagements must:

- pay artists or provide artists with in-kind contributions *towards eligible project expenses* as defined in the USAI guidelines under [Grant Amounts and Eligible Expenses](#). This payment or support needs to be listed in the offer letter;
- and be at least 20 minutes in duration, which may be comprised of single or multiple works or excerpts from longer pieces.

Multiple Engagements: Artists/ensembles are limited to one application per program deadline. Each application allows an artist/ensemble to seek support for up to three eligible festival or performing arts market engagements as long as the artists/ensemble will not travel back to the U.S. between engagements. Applicants must provide separate **signed** letters of invitation or **signed** contracts for each festival and/or market. If you have additional engagements on your tour that do not meet eligibility guidelines, they should not be included in your application. Although these engagements cannot be included in the application and grant funds cannot be used directly in support of these engagements, we do encourage artists to seek out additional international performance opportunities to extend their time abroad after their eligible engagement.

DEFINITIONS

Festivals: For the purposes of USAI, a festival is defined as an event, primarily focused on the arts, consisting of live public performances by multiple international performing artists/ensembles in dance, music, or theater that takes place within a continuous period of three months or less. A festival must demonstrate a consistently high level of activity for its entire duration, including public performances and/or ancillary activities, such as workshops, lecture/demonstrations, public presentations, etc.

Fringe Festivals: USAI seeks to fund engagements that are artistically and financially beneficial for artists, and many fringe-festival engagements require substantial fees from, or significant financial risk borne by performers. Because of this, most fringe engagements are ineligible for grant support at this time. However, engagements that are part of fringe festivals may be eligible for USAI support if the engagement meets all the eligibility criteria for festivals. Fringe festival engagements are only eligible for consideration if all the following are true:

- the fringe festival venue is curated;
- artists/ensembles are not self-produced or self-selected;
- artists/ensembles receive support from the festival towards eligible expenses or a percentage of

- box office revenue;
- and artist/ensembles are not required to pay **any type of fee** or amount exceeding USD \$250 to participate.

Artists who wish to apply for a fringe festival engagement and are unsure if it is eligible should email andrew@midatlanticarts.org.

Performing Arts Markets: For the purposes of USAI, a performing arts market is defined as a curated or juried event with a maximum duration of two weeks featuring showcases of performing artists marketed primarily to performing arts industry professionals and in some cases, general audiences. The intent of a performing arts market is to provide artists and performing arts industry professionals with opportunities to develop and deepen professional relationships. Performing arts markets are frequently accompanied by panels, symposia, and workshops related to the marketing and promotion of the performing arts for industry professionals. Applicants with questions regarding performing arts markets should contact andrew@midatlanticarts.org to verify eligibility.

RESTRICTIONS

Under these guidelines, an application is not eligible if:

- artists/ensembles have been awarded a USAI grant within the past twelve months, regardless of when the festival(s) or market(s) occur. This is the Grant Award Date as listed in your Grant Award Agreement;
- at least half of *performers* are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents;
- applicants are student or youth ensembles, amateur groups, or groups comprised of participants from instructional programs (such as bands, music, or dance artists/ensembles of academic institutions);
- applicant is a for-profit entity even if using a fiscal sponsor, either individuals or ensembles;
- the artists seeking support are a collective; only one artist-or-ensemble entity is permitted on a single application;
- applicant or member of applicant ensemble is involved in festival or market curation, administration, or management of the festival or market for which they seek funding;
- or applicant is seeking funding for festivals or markets that:
 - take place within the United States or its territories of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands;
 - are not curated, or where artists/ensembles must produce their own performances, e.g. artists/ensembles that are self-selected, rent a venue, and/or receive no contribution towards the eligible expenses or a percentage of box office income from the festival or market;
 - require artists/ensembles to pay **any type of fee** in order to participate, including application or registration fees beyond the allowable limit of USD \$250;
 - present artists/ensembles in a showcase lasting less than 20 minutes, or in a workshop format;
 - do not have confirmed dates; applications to tentatively scheduled or yet unscheduled festivals are not eligible;
 - or consist primarily of activities other than public performances; that might include workshops, training or conference sessions, competitions, fundraisers, and primarily academic or curricular programs.

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

Panels composed of specialists in the fields of dance, music, and theater will review applications and make recommendations for support. Panels will reflect wide geographic, ethnic, and racial representation as well as diverse aesthetic and cultural points of view. Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

ARTISTIC MERIT:

- Potential impact of the engagement on the applicant's professional/artistic career
- Potential impact of the festival or market on its community
- Potential for voices, traditions, aesthetics, and/or art forms that have been historically underrepresented to gain exposure

ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE:

- Applicant's creativity, execution, and artistic rigor (as demonstrated in work samples)
- Applicant's impact on their field, locally and/or nationally

Additionally, USAI seeks to ensure that the breadth of America's creative expression is represented abroad. In alignment with Mid Atlantic Arts' strategic vision to promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and access, priority consideration will be given to exemplary applications that meet the review criteria, elevate artists and traditions that have been underrepresented in the organization's funding history, and promote justice for all communities. USAI works to promote the range of United States performing arts abroad and strives to support America's aesthetic, geographic, gender, and racial diversity.

GRANT AMOUNTS AND ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Given the number of artists and ensembles seeking funding, in order to provide funding to as many projects as possible while still providing adequate support, grant amounts are typically awarded between 70% and 95% of the requested grant amount. The percentage awarded is determined by the results of the application review. Given the unpredictable nature of international travel costs, we encourage applicants to not plan to rely on a USArtists International grant solely to support their project. Grants generally range from \$1,000 to \$12,000. Applicants can request \$1,000 to \$15,000. Eligible expenses are travel, housing, per diem, shipping, visa fees, performance fees, agents' fees related to participation in the international engagement, registration/application fees up to \$250, and fiscal sponsor administration fees, if applicable.

Expenses not listed in the USAI budget are not eligible for support. Funding awarded by Mid Atlantic Arts is restricted to the specific, direct costs of the project, as detailed above, and may not be used for indirect costs.

Airfare and the Fly America Act

USAI will only support airfare equivalent to economy class rates, purchased no less than 14 days prior to departure date. Any foreign air travel funded through USAI must be done on an approved U.S. flag air carrier as part of the Fly America Act, or a foreign air carrier under an air transport agreement with the United States, when these services are available. Tickets purchased through U.S. carriers but ultimately operated by a foreign carrier through a codeshare agreement would comply with the Fly America Act. Fly America Act guidelines can be found at: [Fly America Act](#).

ELIGIBLE GRANTEES/FISCAL SPONSORS

All grants made through USAI will only be awarded to U.S. dance, music, or theater ensembles and individual artists designated as nonprofit organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or to fiscal sponsors with 501(c)(3) nonprofit status acting on behalf of the artist(s)/ensembles. Nonprofit organizations should engage in fiscal sponsorship only if their executive leadership and boards of directors are fully aware of the obligations and liabilities they legally assume as fiscal sponsors. Nonprofit organizations serving as fiscal sponsors must provide this service as a part of their regular operations, and this service must be available to any artist that meets the respective organizations' published criteria for fiscal sponsorship.

- Fiscal sponsors that are willing to assume full responsibility for the grant may sponsor one or more organization that does not yet have its own nonprofit Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 501(c)(3) status but that otherwise meets the criteria for eligibility.
- The fiscal sponsor will be legally, financially, administratively, and programmatically responsible for the award. As the official grantee, the fiscal sponsor must submit all documentation, final reports, and any amendment request that would affect the terms and conditions of the award.
- Fiscal sponsors of applicants may not also be involved in or be a sponsor of the festival for which the applicant is applying.
- The signing representative of the fiscal sponsor may not be a member of the applying ensemble or be traveling with the ensemble to the festival or performing arts market.

If you need assistance finding a fiscal sponsor, please visit [our website](#) or contact andrew@midatlanticarts.org.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND REQUIRED MATERIALS

Applications must be submitted on or before the published deadlines at 11:59 PM Eastern Time through the [Mid Atlantic Arts grant portal](#). The USAI online application includes:

1. **Application Summary**
2. **Festival and/or Market Information**
3. **Two Work Samples and Description:** Please see [this Work Sample Preparation Guide](#) for details on how to prepare your work samples, which should be submitted as links.
4. **Application Narrative**
5. **Biographies of the Principal Artist(s)**
6. **Participant List**
7. **Budget Detail**

The following two requirements must be included for an application to be complete:

8. **Signed letter(s) of invitation or signed contract(s) from each festival(s) or market(s).** Letters and contracts must be provided in English and on festival or market letterhead. If the invitation is provided in a language other than English, run the letter through Google Translate or another translation platform and upload the original and English translation to your application as one combined PDF. The signed invitation or contract **must** also include:
 - a description of all financial or in-kind support offered by the festival or market, such as hotels, flights, ground transportation, or per diems
 - **if providing an artists' performance fee, the amount**
 - performance dates, if known
 - number of performances, if known

If the signed letters of invitation or signed contracts are not available at the time the application is submitted, they may be added to the grant application portal by:

- **October 6, 2023** for applications submitted September 29, 2023
- **April 3, 2024** for applications submitted March 27, 2024

9. **Certification** is a final step in the submission of the online application.

- Each application must be certified by the authorizing official of the artist/ensemble by the application deadline. Applicants with 501(c)(3) status will be prompted to certify before submitting their application.
- If the applicant is using a fiscal sponsor, **both** the artist/ensemble and the authorizing official for the fiscal sponsor must certify the application. After the artist/ensemble has certified and submitted by the deadline, the application will be sent to the fiscal sponsor for their certification. Fiscal sponsors must certify the application no later than one week after the application deadline.

AWARD PAYMENTS AND FINAL REPORTS

If awarded, 90% of the grant amount will be sent by check to the grantee (or fiscal sponsor, if applicable) approximately 45 – 60 days prior to the engagement following the review and signing of a grant award agreement sent via email. A final report for the funded project is required no later than 30 days after the project completion date. The final report, made available in the online portal at the time the grant is awarded, requires brief descriptions of the completed project, evidence of funder crediting, and an accounting of expenditures of the funded activities. Final report instructions are included with grant award documents when grantees are notified of the award. The final 10% of the grant amount will be sent by check to the grantee (or fiscal sponsor, if applicable) once the final report has been reviewed and approved by Mid Atlantic Arts staff.

RESOURCES

In addition to the USAI budget guide and work-sample preparation guide mentioned above, Mid Atlantic Arts website includes a number of resources:

- A [frequently-asked-questions document](#)
- A regular schedule of [webinars](#), as well as recordings of past webinars
- Links to [fiscal sponsorship resources](#)
- A [database](#) of dance, music, and theater festivals and a [frequently-asked-questions page](#) about its use. Please note that this database includes festivals submitted in applications; inclusion of a festival in the database does not necessarily mean the festival meets eligibility requirements, nor is the database comprehensive—exclusion of a festival does not mean it is not eligible.
- Please check and abide by [all recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).
- You are welcome to contact Program Director, International Andrew Alness Olson at Andrew@midatlanticarts.org, or Program Associate, Fellowships and International Stephanie Reyes at sreyes@midatlanticarts.org with questions.

PROGRAM FUNDING

USAI continues the important tradition in the United States of the public and private sectors working collaboratively to support the arts. USAI is a program of Mid Atlantic Arts in partnership with the National

Endowment for the Arts and the Mellon Foundation. Support for grantees traveling to the Baltic States, Central Asia, Central, East and Southeast Europe, and Mongolia is provided by Trust for Mutual Understanding. Applications are submitted to Mid Atlantic Arts.

USArtists International is supported by:

