

The MENA Theater Makers Fund FAQs

The MENA Theater Makers Fund offers general operating support and cohort-based engagement to under-resourced theater organizations that support and uphold MENA communities. [See Program Guidelines here.](#)

BACKGROUND

- **Is this only a one-time program? Will there be other opportunities to apply for this program?**

At this moment, we only have funding for this initial program, but there are active conversations with The Wallace Foundation for extension of this program. Please stay tuned for more information.

- **How many awards will be granted?**

Up to 18 organizations will be granted with unrestricted awards of \$30,000 to \$45,000 each.

- **We're a lean staff—how often will we have to participate in the engagement cohorts? Can we skip them? Will there be make-up sessions for the cohorts?**

Awardees will be invited to participate in a cohort to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and mutual support among those committed to sustaining and creating theater by MENA artists and serving our diaspora MENA communities. Participation is strongly encouraged but not required.

We anticipate two cohort meetings in Fall 2026 and 2027. Both will allow in-person (with financial support from MENATMA) and virtual attendance. In addition, MENATMA staff and/or board members will offer one-on-one check-ins with each grantee to provide personalized support throughout the grant program.

- **Can the award be applied to multi-year programming instead of a single year?**

The award is unrestricted and can be used as needed during the two-year award period, which runs from July 2026 to June 2028.

ELIGIBILITY

- **Can organizations anywhere in the US apply?**

Yes. We are seeking to support a broad range of organizations geographically, across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and/or U.S. territories and other U.S. jurisdictions.

- **Can individuals apply for this opportunity?**

No, individuals are not eligible to apply for funding. In addition, federal agencies, municipal, county, and state government entities, as well as schools and universities, are also ineligible to apply. However, if you are part of an artist collective or ensemble that has been organized for at least three years, you are eligible to apply as a collective. Please note that you must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization or use a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For your convenience, we are providing a list of Fiscal Sponsors in our Guidelines.

- **Are 501c4 organizations eligible to apply for the grant opportunity?**

No, c4 organizations are not eligible to apply.

- **Do I have to be a theater organization to be eligible?**

Yes. We define “organization” to include, 501(c)(3) nonprofit theaters, fiscally sponsored theaters, and artist collectives and ensembles with a fiscal sponsor. Please note that a collective or ensemble is defined by two or more artists with a minimum of a three-year working history.

- **Is there a minimum budget requirement for eligibility to apply?** No, there is no minimum budget requirement to apply, but you must provide budget information for at least three years.

- **Do the three years of programming have to be continuous?**

No, there can be a gap in the programming. As long as there is a documented history of three years of recent theater programming.

- **We are a self-supporting department at a university that has its own advisory board. Are we eligible to apply?**

No, you are not eligible to apply. Even though your department is self-supporting, you are still part of a university system, which is ineligible under the guidelines.

- **Does this award require matching funds?**

No, matching funds are not a requirement to apply or get approved.

- **What can the funding be used for? What can it not be used for?**

As general operating support, the award can be used for any expenses to keep an organization afloat, whether it's rent, utilities, salaries, etc. However, funding cannot be used for the sole benefit of any private shareholder or individual, capital improvements,

lobbying, and political campaign activities. There will be additional funding for individual artists from your communities that are selected by the recipient organization.

APPLICATION

- **Can we save our application and come back to it another time?**

No, your progress cannot be saved. We recommend that you prepare your responses in a separate document then copy and paste to the application.

- **Does the application have to be completed and submitted in English?**

Yes, the application must be submitted in English.

- **The guidelines mention an average of less than \$500k annually over three years. Can you clarify for which fiscal years, as well the fiscal year start date?**

This requirement refers to your own organization's three most recently completed fiscal years. For example, if your organization's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30, we would be looking at the current year budget and two completed fiscal years ending June 30, 2025 and June 30, 2024.

- **What financial documents are you requesting?**

We are requiring all applicants to submit either their 990s, or their Profit & Loss statements and Balance Sheets from their most recent three fiscal years.

- **For supplemental work samples, what is the maximum number of videos I can submit?**

Please limit videos to no longer than 5-minutes. If your video is longer than 5-minutes, please specify which five minutes you'd like the panelists to watch in the information field. Links must either be password-free or the password must be clearly included in the description of the video.

You may also upload 1 PDF if desired. This can include community testimonials, partner quotes, photos, and/or excerpts from annual reports. This material gives reviewers additional context about the organization, its leadership, team, and programming.

- **When will applicants be notified of their status?**

All applicants will be notified of their award status by Tuesday, June 30, 2026.

I still have questions about the application process, who can I contact?

If you still have questions, you are welcome to contact:

Sarah Dahnke, General Manager, at Sarah@MENATheater.org