



FY 2020 Arlington Arts Grants Program
UrbanArias Appeal

arlington arts
FY 2020 Cultural Grant Guidelines

Appendix H. Appeals Process for FY 2020 Arts Grant Award

If an applicant is not satisfied with the Commission's grant award determination, the decision may be appealed.

Grounds for Appeal

The following are the only grounds for an appeal:

Influence of one or more Advisory Panel or Grants Committee member who willfully failed to disclose a conflict of interest

1. Erroneous interpretation of the application provided by the CAD Grants Office Staff, Advisory Panelists, or Grants Committee members at the time of review, despite the applicant providing accurate and complete information on the application
2. Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability
3. Decision based on criteria other than those listed in these Guidelines and Appendices.

Limitations on Appeals

Grant applications and appeals that the Commission determines incomplete or late cannot be appealed.

Appeal Process

To appeal a Commission decision:

1. Submit a written appeal addressed to Ms. Marsha Semmel, Chair, Arlington Commission for the Arts.
2. Ensure the appeal is received by 5:00 p.m. on the 10th business day after the date of notification.
3. The appeal may be submitted by email or hand delivered.
 - To email: Submit the appeal to CADportal@arlingtonva.us. If you do not receive an automatic confirmation email that your appeal was successfully received, you need to resubmit the appeal.
 - To hand deliver: Give the appeal to the receptionist at the front desk at Arlington Economic Development, 1100 N Glebe Rd, Suite 1500, Arlington VA 22201. You will be given a receipt with the date and time the appeal was received. Keep this receipt for your records. Office hours are Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
4. The appeal must be no longer than 500 words and must include the specific grounds for the appeal and cite applicable provisions of these Guidelines and Appendices upon which the appeal is based.
5. When an appeal has been received by the deadline, in the proper format, the Commission will consider the appeal at a regularly scheduled meeting.
6. The applicant will be notified of when his or her appeal will be considered and may be present at the meeting, but no presentation may be given on the applicant's behalf. Commissioners may ask questions of the appealing applicant.
7. A majority vote of the Commissioners who are present at the meeting is required to decide the appeal.

Review

The Commission will review all appeals in accordance with procedures outlined in these Guidelines. The Commission's final recommendations will be forwarded to the County Board.

Attachment 2.
FY 2020 Arts Grants Program Appeals
UrbanArias Appeal Letter

Dear Chairperson Semmel,

UrbanArias would like to appeal the Arlington Arts Commission's denial of our FY20 grant application, under grounds for appeal #2, "erroneous interpretation of the form at the time of review". To the extent that the Commission's decision was based on the fact that the proposed project will not take place in Arlington, we also appeal under grounds #4, "decision based on criteria other than those listed" (the Guidelines place no restrictions on a project's location; this was confirmed by cultural affairs staff at the informational meeting in November).

The cultural affairs office has kindly provided a summary of the Commission's reactions to our proposal, which is to produce a new production of the opera GLORY DENIED in January 2020; the two principal complaints identified were that the production takes place outside Arlington, and that the project is not a new production, but a replica of what we did in 2011.

We apologize for any confusion we caused: we are proposing to produce the same *opera*, but not the same *production* (as we stated in response IV. 1. of the application). This means that the director and scenic concept will be different, the orchestra will be bigger, the action and interpretation will be different, and the whole production will reflect the sophistication and expertise we have gained over the last ten years. This is not a repeat, but a new look at a very important chamber opera with a new creative team.

We note that the Commission wanted to see more outreach activity in Arlington, which is a very reasonable request. We are absolutely planning on at least one outreach/panel event for this opera to take place in Arlington, to take advantage of Arlington's natural position as a host to military organizations. As noted in our application, baritone Michael Mayes is eager to partner with us in this outreach in Arlington. We also intend to offer military/veteran discounts to appropriate Arlingtonians.

Regarding the location of this production – there were unfortunately no appropriate venues available in Arlington next season. As the Commission knows, we were able to produce at Signature Theatre after Artisphere closed, but that venue is no longer able to accommodate rentals from other companies. Synetic is similarly unavailable. The nature and professionalism of our productions require a venue that can handle our various technical and scheduling needs, as well as the needs of our audiences.

Despite all of this, we are still committed to finding ways to perform in Arlington, as we have done for the last nine years (we have an improv show coming up at Busboys and Poets in Shirlington, for example, and are planning others here next season). We would like to thank the Commission for its understanding of the venue challenges we face, and for its unflagging support for our unique product over the last decade.

We hope you will regard this appeal favorably, and we thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Robert Wood

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FY 2020 Grant Review Summary

Urban Arias

Many on the review panel had concerns that the performance was not in Arlington and would not engage Arlingtonians. Panelists would have liked to see them perform or do some sort of engagement in Arlington. The scoring by many of the panelists reflected this in question number one and question number four. *(1. How does the proposed program foster excellence and diversity of arts and culture in Arlington? 4. How will these activities meet a specific need in Arlington)* A few panelists mention that this brand of unique performances of contemporary operas are not available elsewhere in the region therefore it did meet the specific need in Arlington even if they aren't performing within the county border.

Panelists also felt that this project was not new but a repeat of a project they did early on with the hopes of growing a new audience for this opera. They did not specify how they were going to do this outreach. Some noted that the production value has increased from the first time they did this almost a decade ago when Urban Arias first started performing. This time they will have live music as they are partnering with a Chamber Orchestra. There were no doubts that Urban Arias could handle this project, but the question by one panelist was if this is a new level of creativity for the company. Many shared those sentiments.

The panelists felt that Urban Arias embraces diversity in casting and that also attracts a diverse audience. It was mentioned on several of the scoring sheets that this was the only contemporary opera company in the area. They bring in high quality artists to perform.

Many of the panelists were appreciative Urban Arias wanted to do outreach to veterans and military organizations as well as provide discounts to youth and seniors.

In terms of managerial competence, the panel felt that Urban Arias has shown steady growth and is poised to take on new projects. The organization has been a good steward of both large and small grants. They have received grants from very well-respected granting organizations.

Some panelists felt they did a great job capturing feedback but others felt they could gather more data by closely tracking ticket sales and social media capacity.