

***OHIO ARTS COUNCIL  
ONLINE GRANTS APPLICATION  
SYSTEM***

***NASAA Assembly 2007  
Grant Officers Peer Group  
Thursday, December 6, 2007***



Ohio Arts Council



# Since the year 2000

- **Budget shortfalls**
- **Advancement in technology**
- **Public's involvement in the arts**



## **In response (after research and planning,) the OAC:**

- Streamlined 24 programs down to ten (no longer discipline-based)
- All deadline dates changed
- No printed hard copies of our Guidelines
- Program coordinators were assigned to four regions of the state
- The online grants system (OLGA) was developed



## **BENEFITS TO AN ON-LINE GRANTS APPLICATION SYSTEM EXTERNAL (APPLICANTS/GRANTEES)**

- No more paper applications!
- Core information entered only once
- Manage all applications from one place
- Past applications accessible at any time
- Multiple users complete different sections
- Other paperwork submitted online
- No more calculators!
- Access is available anytime, anywhere
- Correspondence done via email
- Two-year grantees only enter information once
- One set of support materials
- Individual artist applications increased due to digital images
- OPGA can determine too much verbiage



## **INTERNAL BENEFITS (STAFF/AGENCY)**

- No data entry by grants office
- Immediate access to grantees' applications
- Efficient communication management
- Saved money on postage
- Automatic generation of panel books
- Three systems in one!
- Custom Reports
- Do not have to check budgets
- Can work from home
- Uniform look and readability of grant applications
- Able to change forms, questions easily
- No more slide projectors



## **BENEFITS TO PANELISTS**

- Uniform look
- I can read the applications!
- Review and score online during panel meetings
- Able to view organization's websites
- No paper scoring
- Digital images provide better visual quality and efficiency for the panelists



# OUR KEYS TO SUCCESS

## Timeline for the Successful Creation of OLGA

### Research (began in Winter, 2003)

- What were other states using?
- Researched those sites and spoke to representatives
- Two project managers (Grants Office Director, IT staff)
- Researched other grants systems within state government
- List of what of *our* requirements, needs and wants were for a system
- Surveyed the field



## Planning (Spring/Fall/Winter 2003)

- Once initial research was begun, we met with three vendors
- Project managers traveled to Austin, Texas and Denver
- WESTAF makes presentation to OAC staff
- WESTAF confirmed as vendor
- Artfox database is documented
- E-grant committee formed
- OAC staff committees formed to develop new Guidelines, program requirements and application forms





## Implementation (Early Spring/Fall 2004 & Winter/Spring 2005)

- Memo of understanding signed by OAC and WESTAF
- Weekly calls with WESTAF
- System design begins
- Name for e-grants system chosen
- New staff structure goes into effect
- Testing begins
- New Guidelines go live on Web
- Seven regional meetings across state
- OLGA is launched on November 1, 2004 for FY2006 deadlines
- Satisfaction survey to applicants
- Grant review begins
- Grants awarded



## **IMPLEMENTATION BARRIERS**

### **Barrier**

Previous to OLGA, we had many different hard copy application forms and supplemental forms. In order to make the design of OLGA cost-effective, we needed to standardize what information we asked from applicants.

### **Solution:**

1. Came to agreement that some information wasn't critical.
2. Designed "modules" (Participation, Budget, Applicant Info, etc.) and used those modules to create forms for each program. For example, all programs use one of three budget modules: the 3-column one used in Sustainability (only); the "project" one used for AA, AI, CB, etc.; and a unique one for AIR. There are two Participation modules: one for Sustainability and another that is used for all project based activities.



## **Barrier:**

Convincing our constituents that this would make the process easier.

## **Solution:**

1. Advance notice that OLGAs were coming;
2. OLGAs workshops
3. A lot of time spent designing the “front end”



## **Barrier:**

Eliminating apprehension of Grants Office staff that this new system would eliminate their jobs

## **Solution:**

1. No data entry but Grants staff now spends a lot of time checking information that is inputted, helping constituents, panelists, etc.
2. In-house training on the concept of “change is good”



## **BARRIER:**

**OLGA was part of a multitude of major changes occurring *simultaneously*:**

1. Complete revamping of our funding programs and Guidelines (going from 28 funding programs down to 10)
2. Changing staff positions
3. Physical relocation of staff w/in the office
4. New deputy director
5. Moving to an online application process



## **SOLUTION:**

1. “Grants season” hiatus
2. Extended all grants for a second year
3. Combined several panel meetings
4. Spent LOTS of time in staff committee meetings



## **BARRIER:**

Training all staff on how to use OLGA

## **SOLUTION:**

1. WESTAF trained staff on how to use OLGA
2. Program coordinators had their own screen



## **BARRIER:**

What to do with support materials?

## **SOLUTION:**

1. Four sets to one set
2. Electronic submission for digital images in the IC Excellence program





## **BARRIER:**

Handling technical questions about using the online system

## **SOLUTION:**

We were in the process of hiring a new grants coordinator. One of the main qualifications was customer service/helpdesk experience.



## **HOW MUCH DID SHE COST?**

The initial cost of OLGA was \$105,271.

This covered the following items:

Development

Travel & Training

15% overhead

Fixes after testing

Project Management

Documentation

Testing

Graphic Design

### **License and Maintenance Fee per year:**

\$10,000 plus extra for any additions, changes, etc.