

APPENDIX 5

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ARTS LEGAL ASSISTANCE

What is the Arts Legal Assistance Program?

The Arts Legal Assistance Program is a collaboration between the Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC) and the Columbus Bar Association (CBA) to provide pro bono legal support to individual artists and emerging cultural organizations on a limited basis.

Who is eligible for support through the Arts Legal Assistance Program?

Emerging cultural organizations with an annual budget under \$500,000, as well as individual artists are eligible to participate in the program.

How does the program work?

The Columbus Bar Association has created a roster of local attorneys who are willing to provide pro bono legal assistance through the program. Interested artists or arts organizations fill out a short application and send it to GCAC. Once GCAC confirms the applicant's eligibility, GCAC forwards the application to the CBA, and the CBA contacts a local attorney interested in helping the applicant. The attorney then contacts the applicant directly to provide assistance.

What kind of legal issues does the program address?

Currently, lawyers participating in the program can provide assistance in three areas: (1) questions related to 501(c)(3) nonprofit status; (2) questions related to leases and other contracts; and (3) questions related to trademark and copyright issues.

Can I get help for a personal legal matter through the program?

No. The program is focused on helping artists and arts organizations with disputes related to their creative endeavors. The Columbus Bar Association may be able to refer you to an attorney for a personal legal matter.

How long after submitting an application will it be until I hear from an attorney?

The time frame varies, but typically an applicant will hear from an attorney within a week or two after submitting an application.

Is there a limit to how many times an applicant may participate in the program?

Yes. Currently, each applicant may participate twice per year.

Can I participate in the program if I want to form a cultural organization, but have not yet done so?

Yes. Provided that the cultural organization is envisioned as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, an applicant may apply for assistance with formation of the organization.

How do I know when I may need legal assistance through the program?

Some common situations in which artists or cultural organizations may need legal assistance include signing leases for studio or exhibition space, signing agreements with galleries or exhibition spaces, signing agreements with publishers or producers, forming a cultural organization, re-organizing a cultural organization, seeking 501(c)(3) nonprofit status from the IRS, copyrighting and protecting copyrighted works, etc.

Who can I contact with questions about the program?

Artists or representatives of cultural organizations who have questions may contact Ruby Harper at the Greater Columbus Arts Council at 614-221-8406. Attorneys interested in participating may contact Marion Smithberger at the Columbus Bar Foundation at 614-221-4112.