Purpose: The Arts & Science Council (ASC) strives to create a more vibrant cultural life for our community. To accomplish this goal, ASC annually invests resources from public and private sources in Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s arts, science and history/heritage organizations, educational, community and neighborhood-based groups and creative individuals. In addition to financial investments, ASC provides capacity building, professional development, technical assistance, and shared support services. Based on available resources, ASC annually determines the allocation of resources to specific grant programs for organizations and creative individuals. ASC grant funds are intended to supplement other sources of income available to the grantees (e.g. membership, patronage, sponsorships, grants, ticket sales, special events proceeds, etc.).

Goals: In order to advance ASC’s mission, grant making efforts will support organizations and initiatives that provide:

- Access to a vibrant cultural life for all.
- Excellence in all creative endeavors.
- Relevance of programming for a rapidly changing demographic.
- Sustainability of the cultural community.

Freedom of Expression: ASC promotes excellence and access in the creation, experience and active support of arts, science and history/heritage for all of the people of our community. ASC supports the freedom of audiences to experience a full range of expression and to respond to creative works. ASC supports the creative individual’s right to choose freely the subject matter of his or her work. It is neither the role of the ASC Board or staff to make program or program content decisions for grant recipients nor is receipt of ASC grant funds or calendaring of cultural programming an endorsement by the ASC Board or staff of programs or program content.

Communications Plan: ASC encourages open communication, dialogue and exchange between sponsoring organizations, creative individuals and the public. Operating support applicants are required to provide a Communications Protocol Plan approved by the applicant’s board that describes the applicant’s plan to address concerns raised by patrons or community members regarding programs or program content. ASC will provide sample Communication Protocol Plans to applicants upon request.

Grant Programs: ASC provides grants for Operating Support and Project Support and other purposes. Specific grant program eligibility, review criteria, matching and reporting requirements are available on the ASC website. Program eligibility, review criteria, matching and reporting requirements are reviewed periodically by the ASC staff, in consultation with applicants, panelists.
and Board Committees. Receipt of ASC grant funds in one period does not guarantee grant funds in future periods.

**Operating Support Grants:**

ASC has established a comprehensive review process to consider Operating Support grant applications. Each request is reviewed by a volunteer panel representative of the ASC Board of Directors and industry professionals. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. All Operating Grants require ASC Board of Directors approval.

ASC reserves the right to consider and reduce a previously awarded Operating Support Grant by the amount of any support awarded to the Operating Support Grant recipient by a corporate donor, the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, any municipality in Mecklenburg County or Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools to the extent that such award or support was previously granted to ASC.

**Operating Support Financial Accountability:**

The ASC Board of Directors strives to understand the financial needs of Operating Support grant applicants. At the same time, the ASC Board expects Operating Support grant recipients to have sufficient capacity to manage responsibly their operations and finances. Such capacity is critical to the long-term viability of the grantee. The ASC Board acknowledges that from time to time operating grant recipients may encounter operational and financial circumstances that necessitate assistance in order to remain stable.

While ASC is not a lender and has adopted a policy that prohibits emergency loans or funding, ASC has established methods to assist operating grant recipients in addressing financial accountability issues:

**Operating Support Advance Payment Policy:**

An organization awarded an Operating Support grant may request an advance payment, no greater than anticipated distributions to be received within the next 90 days, in the event of extraordinary financial need if the organization has fulfilled all ASC’s grant conditions.

The grantee must request the advance in writing at least one (1) week in advance (two (2) weeks advance notice preferred) and include documentation that the grantee has depleted all available financial resources prior to requesting an advance. The request should include the specific amount being requested and must be signed by both Chief staff officer (i.e. Executive Director or President/CEO) and Board Chair or Treasurer.

The Program & Services Committee will evaluate all requests and determine the appropriate amount to advance to the grantee. The Program & Services Committee will report all advance requests to the full Board of Directors at the next Board meeting.
Stabilization Assistance:

Consistent with ASC’s mission to ensure a “sustainable cultural community,” ASC may devote attention and resources to promote stability in the cultural sector. ASC stabilization efforts will be based on ASC’s capacity, both financial and personnel, to provide appropriate assistance.

Operating Support grant recipients may be considered eligible for stabilization assistance if they have:

A. Organizational or operational problems;  
B. Operating losses and/or financial difficulty; or  
C. Requested two (2) consecutive quarterly advance payments from the ASC.

Stabilization Assistance may include one or more of the following, as appropriate:

A. Technical Assistance Grant – ASC may require Operating Support recipients to participate in a technical assistance program designed to assist the grantee in improving its organizational, operational or financial accountability as a condition of the grant award.
B. Stabilization Team – For grantees facing significant challenges, ASC may require a formalized short term engagement between ASC and the Grantee. In such cases, a team will be assembled to assist the grantee through the challenging period. The team will consist of the executive leader and a board representative from the grantee, one ASC board member and a third-party who has working knowledge of the grantee’s operations, ASC’s President and COO. Ideally, the third-party should bring valuable skills and/or experiences to the conversation, and will be known to and acceptable to the grantee’s leadership.

i. Stabilization teams are not intended to stay in place in perpetuity. In general, ASC will disband a stabilization team within 24 months, absent improvement in the organization’s operating performance and continuing need for the team.
ii. ASC reserves the right to disengage at any time at its discretion due to lack of grantee participation and/or progress.

Project Support Grants:

Project Support grants (including but not limited to Program Grants, Capacity Building Support, and support for Creative Individuals) of $10,000 or less may be approved by ASC Staff and must be reported to the Board at its next meeting.

Grant requests out of cycle are at odds with ASC’s principles of fairness, accessibility, and equitable treatment. Accordingly, ASC will not entertain requests for grant consideration outside of its
established timelines for respective grant programs. Any requests outside of its established timelines will be deferred until the next grant round.

**ASC Grant Acknowledgement:** Grant recipients shall acknowledge the support of the ASC as outlined in contractual agreements for receipt of grant funds. Acknowledgement includes printed materials (newspaper, newsletter, postcards, annual reports, etc.), electronic media (TV, Radio, internet, etc.) as well as at public events where sponsors and donors are publicly recognized.

**Board Committee Responsible:** Programs & Services

**Amendments:**
**January 2017** – Policy amended to reflect consideration of loss of unrestricted funds formerly received by ASC being donated directly to Operating Support recipient and that consideration will be given to reduction of Operating Support to reflect shift of funding.
The Arts & Science Council (ASC) is committed to serving a diverse range of individuals and organizations through its programs and services and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or any characteristic protected by law.

I. Grant-making - Every individual or organization that meets the specific eligibility requirements for a grant program may apply to that program. No eligible applicant will be prevented from applying for or receiving a grant based on race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or any characteristic protected by law. ASC is not a political action committee. ASC's sole purpose in providing grant support to eligible applicants is to offer a broad range of quality programs which enhance and expand the cultural opportunities for the education and enjoyment of all citizens. As such, ASC will discourage grant applications from non-profit, public service organizations that seek to exclusively advance a particular agenda inconsistent with ASC's sole purpose. ASC has multiple grant programs with specific eligibility criteria. Some grant programs are restricted to non-profit organizations whose primary missions include an emphasis on arts, science, history or heritage programs and services. Other programs are open to any non-profit that operates as a public service organization and seeks to offer programs in the areas of art, science, history or heritage consistent with ASC's funding priorities.

II. Facility Usage - ASC will only hold meetings, conferences, seminars, social events or other gatherings of the ASC Board, its committees, or officers in clubs or other facilities which uphold stated nondiscriminatory practices pertaining to membership and guest privileges. Such facilities should not prohibit attendance and participation of attendees solely on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or any characteristic protected by law. Further, these facilities should reflect adherence to such policies through practice in their daily operations. This policy should not be construed to prohibit the use of religious facilities that require a certain religious belief as prerequisite to membership.

ASC requires its Operating Support recipients, their guilds, and other support groups or organizations sponsoring events, galas, or other benefits on their behalf to establish a similar policy and to be governed by the same in all their programming. ASC will exclude from funding consideration applications presented by any grant applicant whose policies and/or practices, ASC deems to be discriminatory and inconsistent with ASC's stated policy.
Board Committee Responsible: Governance Committee

Amendments:
June 2008 – Policy language brought into alignment with new Strategic Plan
January 2017 – Non-discrimination statement added to introduction, statement expanded to include gender identity and Committee responsible changed to Governance
Purpose and Goal of the Policy: The Arts & Science Council’s (ASC) fund-raising policies are intended to accomplish the following:

- Provide clear direction for ASC, our Cultural Partners and donors.
- Maximize dollars raised from the business community and their employees as well as the public at large to support Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s cultural organizations.
- Raise contributed revenues for ASC’s operating support, project and technical assistance grant programs and services.
- Minimize fund-raising expenses.
- Create the expectation that ASC, our Cultural Partners and donors will adhere to the spirit of this policy.
- Adhere to the Donor Bill of Rights

I. ASC Fund-Raising Activities

A. Community Engagement Campaign: The primary fund raising effort by ASC each year will be its Community Engagement Campaign.

i. The Community Engagement Campaign will seek support from corporations/businesses and their employees, foundations, and the public at large.

ii. ASC’s Community Engagement Campaign raises funds to support ASC’s grants to cultural organizations, education programs, and resources provided to the community.

iii. ASC’s Community Engagement Campaign accepts unrestricted and sponsorship funds and restricted gifts. ASC may sponsor or participate in special events or benefits to raise funds outside the Community Engagement Campaign.

a. For donors who wish to restrict gifts to one or more specific Cultural Partners through the annual campaign, ASC’s first response will be to suggest the donor make these contributions directly to their designee. The ASC’s staff is prepared to assist donors in making connections with the appropriate contact person at the desired cultural institution(s). If for some reason, the donor requests that ASC manage the gift and distribution of the funds, ASC will accept the gift but an appropriate fee for managing the gift will be assessed and no funds will be distributed to the designated organization until ASC receives full payment of the gift.
b. ASC will accept no contributions, grants, products or services that compromise the integrity of ASC.

B. Operating Support Partner Participation in Community Engagement Campaign: ASC conducts a Community Engagement Campaign in part to support its Cultural Partners. Operating Support Partners are asked to participate actively in the Community Engagement Campaign

i. For a successful campaign Operating Support Partners are asked to actively support ASC’s Community Engagement Campaign, including, but not limited to:

a. Solicit all board and staff members for a financial contribution to the ASC Community Engagement Campaign. Our goal is that 100% of the board and staff of Operating Support recipients will support the Community Engagement Campaign.

b. Provide volunteers and staff to serve as solicitors, participants of a speaker’s bureau or other events as needed;

c. Provide incentives for inclusion in the ASC donor card or other efforts related to the Community Engagement Campaign;

d. Provide mini performances, tickets/vouchers and/or presentations as appropriate at the kick-off celebration and employee campaigns.

II. Cultural Partner Independent Fund Raising: ASC recognizes that its Cultural Partners must raise and/or earn a substantial portion of their revenues from private sources. Cultural Partners are encouraged to develop comprehensive and well executed fund raising and earned revenue strategies.

III. Capital or Endowment Campaigns: Cultural Partners are asked to notify ASC well in advance of any plans for capital and endowment campaigns for information purposes only.

Board Committee Responsible: Community Engagement Committee in partnership with Program & Services Committee

Amendments:
January 2017 – Policy language brought into alignment with new Strategic Plan
ARTS & SCIENCE COUNCIL
Public Sector Funding Policy
Adopted June 11, 2008
Amended January 18, 2017

Purpose: The Arts & Science Council (ASC) has been designated by Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, and the Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill and Pineville as their lead cultural agency responsible for the distribution of available public resources for arts, science and history/heritage programming. ASC is designated by the North Carolina Arts Council (NCAC) as its Designated County Partner for the distribution of Grassroots Arts Program funds in Mecklenburg County. Additionally, from time to time, ASC may apply for and receive funding from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), NCAC, National Endowment for the Arts or other local, state or federal agency for support specific projects or initiatives. As a recipient of public funds, it is essential that ASC provide a high level of accountability and stewardship of the public’s resources.

Goal of the Policy: ASC public sector fund policies are intended to accomplish the following:

- Provide clear direction for ASC, our Cultural Partners and our governmental partners.
- Maximize public funds available to support arts, science and history/heritage programming in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.
- Provide an orderly, united appeal for public funds.
- Create the expectation that the ASC, its Cultural Partners and governmental partners will adhere to the spirit of this policy.

Requests for City, County and Municipal Funds: ASC will annually submit, on behalf of the local community, requests for funding from Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte. Cultural Partners will not approach the City or County for direct funding except under the following conditions:

- The Cultural Partner is contracted by the City or County to operate a facility that otherwise would be operated by the City or County.
- The City or County has specific funding opportunities to support program initiatives that advance specific City or County goals to serve the citizens and the Cultural Partner has a specific program that can advance the City or County’s efforts to meet that goal.
- The Cultural Partner leases a City or County owned facility and through that lease, the owner is obligated to provide a specified level of maintenance for the facility.

ASC will annually submit, on behalf of the local community, requests for funding from Mecklenburg municipalities to support programming and activities in the geographic area of the municipality, including support for ASC personnel assigned to satellite offices. Mecklenburg’s municipalities may choose to also accept applications from Cultural Partners directly.