



2026 CLASSICAL COMMISSIONING PROGRAM: A RESPONSIVE SHIFT

Application Deadline: Thursday, September 25, 2025, 11:59 PM ET

Notification: November 2025

Grant Period: December 1, 2025 - December 31, 2026 (13-month grant period)

This program is funded by Chamber Music America, with generous support from the Sewell Family Foundation, additional program support provided by the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Amphion Foundation, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, and the CMA Endowment Fund.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- Chamber Music America's Classical Commissioning program began in 1984. Since then, CMA has funded nearly 300 new works providing grants to U.S.-based ensembles and presenters whose programming includes Western European and/or non-Western classical and contemporary music.
- CMA is pivoting in response to the National Endowment for the Arts' recent decision to rescind grant awards to ensembles and presenters across the country. (Read more: [here](#).)
- CMA's 2026 Classical Commissioning: A Responsive Shift program is being strategically redesigned to address this urgent gap, centering support around organizations and artists most impacted by the loss of NEA funding. CMA support through this grant may be used for general operating support for these performances/programs.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM (CONT.)

- For the upcoming 2026 cycle, the Classical Commissioning: A Responsive Shift program will specifically support ensembles and presenters:
 - Whose funding has been rescinded by the NEA in 2025;
 - That present or perform music by living American composers whose compositions are written in any of the musical styles associated with contemporary classical music;
 - That work within a chamber music framework (2–10 musicians, one per part).

GRANT FUNDING

Grant awards will be provided as follows:

- Approximately 16 grants of \$2,500 for ensembles
- Approximately 7 grants of \$5,000 for presenters

ELIGIBILITY

All applicants must:

- Provide a copy of their 2025 NEA funding termination letter as proof of rescission
- Show proof of 501(c)3 status
- Be a CMA member at the Organization level
- Have completed any classical/contemporary CMA-funded project, if applicable
- Have no overdue reports or financial obligations to CMA
- Agree to acknowledge CMA in all programs and press materials

ELIGIBILITY (CONT.)

An **ensemble** is eligible if it:

- Is based in the U.S. or its territories (the leader/primary member is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident)
- Primarily performs Western European and/or non-Western classical and contemporary music
- Consists of 2-10 musicians, either as a fixed roster, or a flexible collective (duos must perform as equal partners and publicize themselves as a duo)

A **presenter** is eligible if it:

- primarily presents Western European and/or non-Western classical and contemporary music

INELIGIBLE REQUESTS

Organizations whose primary presentations or performances are:

- opera
- chorus
- orchestra
- solo recitals
- music for dramatic works (staged or un-staged)
- incidental music for other media (such as dance or video/film)

PANEL REVIEW PROCESS

CMA staff will evaluate applications for:

- The applicant's alignment with the vision and goals of the Classical Commissioning: A Responsive Shift grant program
- The impact a grant would have on the applicant's ability to carry out their work presenting or performing music by living American classical/contemporary composers during the grant period

PANEL REVIEW PROCESS (CONT.)

When evaluating applications, panelists consider:

- the significance of the funding for the ensemble/presenter
- the impact a Classical Commissioning: A Responsive Shift grant would have on the ensemble/presenter ability to carry out their work presenting or performing music by living American classical/contemporary composers during the grant period

AWARDED GRANTEES

- Grant funds can be considered taxable income; grantees must comply with all applicable city, state, and federal laws, ordinances, codes, and regulations affecting the project.
- If awarded, grantees will need to complete all reporting to remain in good standing with CMA including:
 - receiving and managing the grant funds
 - filing the final report, reporting phone calls, and associated documents.
- CMA makes agreements with and makes grant payments to the applicant entity and communicates with the primary contact listed on the application.
- Grant funds will be disbursed as follows:
 - 100% of the award to be disbursed after signing the CMA grant agreement and providing all required grantee materials
 - Grantees will need to complete all reporting to remain in good standing with CMA.

THE APPLICATION

- CMA uses the online application platform Submittable. Go to cma.submittable.com to create a free Submittable account if you do not already have one.
- CMA recommends that you save your draft in an offline document as backup.
- To save the work you have done on your application, you must click SAVE DRAFT at the bottom of the form before exiting.
- You can return to your saved application to continue working on it by following the log-in instructions.
- The application will close promptly at **11:59 PM ET on Thursday, September 25, 2025**. Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted. Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline to avoid any last-minute complications.

REQUIRED UPLOADS/MATERIALS

- 501(c)3 letter of determination
- 2025 NEA funding termination letter

TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION

- Go to cma.submittable.com and click on "Classical Commissioning: A Responsive Shift."
- Complete all required fields.
- When complete, sign and date your application.
- Click "Submit" to send application to CMA; you will receive a confirmation email.

CMA RESOURCES

- [Prior CMA Grant Recipients](#)
- [Press & Announcements](#)

THANK YOU!

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