



2026 Guidelines Artist in Community Grant

The Artist in Community grant is for Tompkins County full-time resident practicing artists who wish to apply for funding for a project where their work will be shared with a pre-designated Tompkins County community of their choosing in an immersive or interactive way.

Deadline:
Friday, February 6, 2026, 9:00pm

Administered by:
Community Arts Partnership, ArtsPartner.org

Questions:
Robin Schwartz, Program & Grant Director, programs@artspartner.org

All CAP Grants: at ArtsPartner.org (grant tab)

Note: These Guidelines are very detailed!
If you have not applied before (or even if you have) it's always a good idea to run your request idea by Robin before starting the process.

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Recommended: Grant Writing Workshops & Advice

Free Grant Information & Advice Sessions: Live and Zoom (or Watch Recording) November 2025 through January 2026 (Registration required)

- CAP hosts multiple Zoom and live workshops in Tompkins County locations. Visit ArtsPartner.org.
- There's also a recorded version you can watch anytime.
- Robin Schwartz, CAP Program & Grant Director, discusses CAP's grants and (mostly) shares grant writing advice to help your requests rise to the top of the pile!

Recommended: Advice, Questions, Draft Review

Advice, Brainstorming, and Questions

Email Robin Schwartz, CAP Program & Grant Director (see above) anytime for advice, to brainstorm, and/or with questions. Reading these guidelines before contacting Robin is recommended.

Grant Draft Review

Robin can review application drafts. The earlier the better (to make time for any recommended changes), but she can view or comment on applications right up through the day of the deadline.

Drafts can be sent as either a word document or a pdf saved from the application's online platform. Sending a draft budget form along with narrative is recommended.

Be advised that although Robin facilitates the grant panel meetings, she does not make recommendations or state her opinions to the panel. Any recommendations that she may make when reviewing a draft is based on her experience and does not constitute a guarantee of funding.

Accommodations

If an artist needs assistance with any aspect of the grant process, please email.

Previous Applicant Alert

Funding is never guaranteed. The number and variety of applicants, the people on the decision making panel, the funding rules and criteria, and the amount of funds available change from year to year. Each request is rated based on the criteria listed in the guidelines, and the process is competitive.

New York State Council on the Arts and CAP Program & Priorities

This grant is part of [New York State Council on the Arts](#) (NYSCA) Statewide Community Re-grants Program (SCR) which CAP administers for Tom-pkins County. CAP has three NYSCA grants available in February for 2026 programming: **Grant for Arts Programs (GAP)**, **Artist in Community Grant**, **Arts Education Grant** (along with a locally funded Strategic Opportunity Stipend)..

SCR is a statewide effort to make exemplary arts programming available to geographically, ethnically, and racially diverse segments of the State's population, and to support the continued development of local cultural resources responsive to community cultural needs.

The program forms the cornerstone of NYSCA's partnership with local arts agencies throughout the state, providing a link between the Council and portions of the community that might not otherwise be able to access funding from NYSCA.

About the Artist in Community Grant

- This grant is for Tom-pkins County full-time resident practicing **artists who wish to apply for funding for a project where their work will be shared with a pre-designated Tom-pkins County community** of their choosing in an immersive or interactive way.
- Artists whose **ongoing work involves communities are strongly encouraged to apply**.
- This grant opportunity represents a **“live & work” investment in local artists**. It is designed to increase support for local artist-initiated community activities and to highlight the role of artists as important members of the community.
- The intention is not only for an artist to share their work, but also for community members to gain valuable insight into what it means to be a creative person.

Applicants:

- Applicant artists must be **current residents of Tom-pkins County** and have lived in Tom-pkins County for at least 8 months since 1/1/2025. Artists must expect to be full time residents through 12/31/2026, must be 18 years of age as of 1/1/2026, and must not be enrolled in a graduate or undergraduate degree program in 2026. Proof of official residency (example: driver's license) might be requested after submission.
- **Applicant artists must demonstrate an active art career.**

Art Forms Funded:

- Projects must have at their core an activity that is **fundamentally arts related and in line with art forms funded by NYSCA** (original visual art; performances of theatre, music, dance; poetry, fiction or creative non-fiction readings; film media, and the like) as opposed to an activity the outcome of which is primarily rehabilitative, educational, spiritual, religious, therapeutic, or recreational.

Community Engagement:

- **An essential element of this funding is the artist sharing their own work with a Tompkins County community engagement component.** The depth of the artists' interactions with community members (not only fellow artists) is important.
- **One type of community engagement can involve the artist creating new work based on community interactions.** Examples of this type of engagement are: A performance piece or creative writing based on interviews and/or interactions with a segment of the community; a public art mural created with community feedback or hands-on activities; the creation of art parallel to your work by a community group; stories and anecdotes collected from a community group that relate to the concept or content of the project.
- **Engagement can also be through a public program** that may take the form of an exhibition, performance, reading, screening, or artist talk. **However, the key word is “engagement.”** Projects need to be more immersive than the public seeing a performance or exhibit, attending a reading, or participating in a talk-back.
- **Since the nature and level of the community impact is an important criteria for this grant,** projects which do not have a guaranteed or intentional audience (such as workshops that people sign up for) may receive lower ratings. Events with a very small number of maximum attendees will receive lower ratings. For this reason, we prefer activities that partner with an existing community group, such as a teen program, a senior program. If an organization regularly attracts a significant number of attendees at events, i.e. more than 20, that can also work!
- **The community the artist works with should be chosen by the artist.** The community needs to be defined in the application, along with a timeline and specifics of community engagement.
- **Community Partner: If the applicant artist wishes to work with, schedule an event at, or partner with an organization,** such as a library, arts organization, human services organization, or any other local organization, CAP will contact that organization to verify that they are aware of the applicant's plans and are on board with the applicant working with them or their community. (The application asks for contact info.)
- **Note:** If a Community Partner is one of the organizations below (which apply directly to NYSCA), please get in touch with Robin before application submission. They can be community partners but with restrictions.

Cayuga Chamber Orch, Cherry Arts, Center for Transformative Action, Cinemapolis (Seventh Art Corp), Civic Ensemble, CSMA, Cornell Cinema, Cornell University, Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers, Hangar Theatre, Historic Ithaca, History Center in Tompkins County, Ithaca College, Ithaca Murals, Ithaca Shakespeare Company, Johnson Museum of Art, Kitchen Theatre, NYS Early Music Association, Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Healing, Opera Ithaca, Opus School of Music, Running to Places Theatre, Saltonstall Foundation, Sciencenter, Story House Ithaca, State Theatre, Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts.
- **Event sites that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** may be prioritized.
- A goal of SCR funding in general is that all of the **Artist in Community Grants that receive funding will collectively** reach broad and diverse audiences throughout the towns and villages of Tompkins County, and the City of Ithaca. **Working with rural or other under-resourced communities** may result in higher ratings.
- **Projects that make exemplary arts programming available** to geographically, ethnically, and racially diverse communities will also be given high consideration. **Projects that support the development of local cultural resources responsive to community cultural needs** will be given the highest consideration, as will projects that contribute to the artistic landscape of Tompkins County and its communities.

Timeline:

- **Projects must take place between January 1st, 2026 and January 31, 2027.** (Award notification will not occur until March.

Work Sample:

- An applicant artist must have an artistic **work sample** available via an online link.
- **The work sample is an important part of the funding decision.**

Grant Can Fund

- **Requested funding can be for event-related costs** such as participating artist(s) fees, consumable materials and supplies (up to \$1,000), printing, food (up to \$200), mileage (up to \$75) space rental for events, and publicity costs. Costs should be directly related to the community interaction.
- **Funds for the creation of new work** can be requested if the creation of that work involves the community and is shared back to the community (such as a public art mural with community input).

Grant Cannot Fund

- Activities that are primarily business or commercially related.
- Artists where the community is fellow practicing career artists.
- Students enrolled in a full-time degree program in 2026.
- Capital improvements or the purchase of permanent equipment.
- Activities where the core activity is primarily recreational, rehabilitative, religious, scientific, educational, therapeutic or activities with religious content.
- Art that is not in line with NYSCA's criteria to fund original visual art, and/or performance art (choreography, dance, playwrighting, theatre, music, music composition) and/or literature (poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction) or art film.
- Magic or illusion, yoga, martial arts, culinary arts, art therapy, science based projects, animal shows, and the like.
- Projects where a prohibitive participation fee is charged.
- Fundraising events, money for awards, prizes, lobbying costs, cash prizes, gift cards, certificates, acquisitions of art, or administrative costs unrelated to the project.
- Projects where the community engagement or the project itself is on a homeowner's property.
- Activities that are primarily geared towards an audience outside of Tompkins County or are likely to attract an audience that is not at least 90% a Tompkins County audience.
- Activities that take place in a school during the school day and/or are oriented to a school environment. (Check Artspartner.org for CAP's Arts Education Grant.)
- Activities that have taken place prior to January 1, 2026 or after January 15, 2027.
- Artists whose projects were previously funded but who did not properly acknowledge CAP and NYSCA as per contract, or otherwise comply with contract requirements, such as submitting a final report.

Request Amount, # of Requests

There are three grants programs that are part of NYSCA's Statewide Regrant Program (SCR).

- **Grants for Arts Program** ("GAP") Applicant is a not for profit.
 - **Artist in Community Grant** (AICG) Applicant can be individual artist or group of artists..
 - **Arts Education** (AE) grant. Applicant can be not-for-profit, individual artist, or group.
- The max request for each of CAP's SCR grants is \$5,000. If an artist is the applicant for this grant and also applies for a separate Arts Education grant, the total award from CAP cannot exceed \$7,500.

A Link to Recent Work Samples is Required:

The application requires up to two URLs where the panel can see samples of your work.

- **You do not have to show the work you will be sharing with a community** since you may not have created that yet. However, the work you share should be the same medium or discipline.
- **The links can be:** your website, vimeo, youtube, literary publication pages, artistic (not personal) instagram, and the like (without paywalls).
- **OR you can create a folder** in dropbox or google folder with work samples.
 - **Visual Artists:**
 - Folder: We would like to see recent work. If sharing a folder, no more than 5 images is required.
 - Website: If you are linking us to your website, please link to a page where there is recent work.
 - Instagram: If you are linking to instagram, provide the full URL (i.e. instagram.com/jjartist). We do not recommend linking to a social media site that is not 100% images of your work.
 - **Literary Artists:**
 - We would like to see a sample of recent work. The panel will not read more than 5 pages. 1 or 2 pieces is fine!
 - **Performing Artists:** Provide links to recent work. The panel will only view/listen to about 5 minutes.

The application asks for comments and context as follows:

Visual Artists:

- Date range of the work samples, i.e. "2023 to 2025"
- Provide any other descriptions or your work or context, inspiration, etc. you'd like the panel to know.

Writers (fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, prose):

- Date range of the work samples.
- Provide any other descriptions or context you'd like the panel to know.

Performers, art filmmakers:

- Date range of the work samples.
- The panel will listen to up to 5 minutes. You can indicate cues to a certain place in a track or film.
- Provide background or context of what we are seeing/hearing, (e.g. Is that you on guitar? Are you the composer? Are you the choreographer? One of the dancers? Is the work collaborative?)
- You may wish to place the sample in its larger context by explaining what came before and after. Provide any information you believe the panel will need to understand what they are viewing/hearing.

How Decisions Are Made

- A diverse panel composed of community leaders, artists, business people, and educators will be sent the application materials for the grant after the due date. They'll have at least three weeks to read all requests.
- The panel will meet on Zoom in early March to discuss each request and rate them based on the criteria below.
- Requests may or may not be fully funded based on a) availability of funds, b) an applicant's budget, and/or c) place in the ratings.

Rating Criteria and Request Priorities

Panelists rate the requests using the criteria below.

Ratings range is 1 to 5. "1" is lowest (does not meet any criteria) & "5" is highest (meets and exceeds all criteria).

Guidelines, Application, Budget:

- Request is aligned with the grant guidelines.
- Evidence that the applicant has read and referred to these guidelines and answered the application questions in full.
- Completeness, thoughtfulness, and use of plain, clear and accessible language.

Artistic Merit:

- Strength of the applicant's art based on the work sample provided.
- Artistic merit of the project.

Community Benefit:

- Depth of the artist's interactions with a Tompkins County community of their choosing.
- Extent and anticipated impact of the community involvement and that community's accessibility to the project.
- The artists's response to cultural and community needs.
- The potential for expanding public understanding and appreciation of the arts.

Feasibility:

- Quality of the proposed plan, demonstrating purpose, clarity, and a clear timeline.

Applicant's History:

- If applicant was funded in prior years for a CAP grant: Compliance with grantee requirements, alignment of prior funded projects to grant criteria, and prior success.

After The Deadline

- Applications received after 9:00pm on the deadline will not be accepted unless in the case of widespread electricity and wi-fi outages.
- Applications will be checked for eligibility, completeness, and accuracy. Applicants may be contacted for clarification and/or additional information.
- Applicants will be informed of decisions regarding their requests in (ideally) mid March.
- Grantees will be listed in CAP's publicity, website, and press.

Grantee Responsibilities if Funded

- All awarded artists must sign and return a **contract** acknowledging receipt of the award. The contract outlines the obligations and the procedures for the grant, providing a final report, and proper acknowledgement language on all publicity materials.
- A **required google form** will be available for keeping CAP posted on event dates, locations and times.
- Grants are income, so artist will provide a W-9 and receive a 1099.

When Does Award Payment Arrive?

- **Grant checks (or direct deposit to your bank)** will be sent after the contract is received.
- **Disclaimer:** CAP may choose to hold back payment until proof of event scheduling is received.
- **Disclaimer:** CAP receives the funds to distribute to awardees directly from New York State. In 2024, CAP (and all statewide agencies administering this grant) did not receive funds until August. This delay affected many of the funded projects. Some were postponed to the following year, and a few were cancelled. 2025 funds arrived in increments starting in March and were distributed according to funded event dates. We do not expect this delay in funding for 2026, but we cannot make that promise. Nor can we promise there isn't some sort of government issue with the funding in general despite CAP signing a contract. In the event of delayed funding, CAP will be very flexible if funded projects need to be postponed.

What to Submit by the Deadline

to Robin Schwartz programs@artspartner.org

Due: Friday, February 6, 9pm

ArtsPartner.org

1. Artist in Community Grant **BUDGET FORM**

- The Artist in Community grant budget form is available as an .xlsx on the ArtsPartner.org grant page (Find the Artist in Community Grant section) and also as a download from the online application.
- We highly recommend filling out the budget form before filling out the application.
- (Your completed budget form will then be uploaded to the application platform).
- If you need any assistance putting together a budget or understanding the budget form, we can help

2. Fill out Artist in Community Grant **APPLICATION:** commongrantapplication.com

REQUIRED: WATCH 5-MINUTE INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO

(There are many clickable links on the grant platform that will not bring you to the right place, so it's not entirely user friendly. Watching this video will save you time and energy.)

youtube.com/watch?v=b1TermKUhY8

SYNOPSIS:

HOW TO FIND OUR APPLICATIONS at commongrantapplication.com

First time users “Register” or “Login”

Click “Start Draft Application” from dashboard

Find on List: “Community Arts Partnership”
(Don't click “Community Arts Partnership”)

Click the blue button 

Locate: which grant you want to work on.
(Don't click the name of the grant).

Click the blue button 

NAVIGATE APPLICATION

- You'll see the sections of the application you'll need to fill out on the left side of your screen.
- You can navigate through the sections by clicking there or by using the back and forward buttons.
- * indicates required questions.
- Most of the fields have **character limits which include spaces between words**.
- “Save” frequently! If a glitch happens or you accidentally close the screen you won't lose data.
- “Pause” when you wish to stop working. Your work will be saved and you can go back anytime.
- When you log back in: “Resume Draft Application”

NOTE: APPLICATION QUESTIONS ARE LISTED BELOW

If you prefer to fill the application out initially in word or pages to then cut and paste into the grant application platform, the grant questions are listed below. Please **note the character limits with spaces**. (When working in word or pages - there is a box at the bottom of your screen showing number of “characters with spaces” for text that you highlight. For example, this paragraph including this sentence is 488 characters with spaces.)

TO SEND ROBIN A DRAFT of an application in progress.

See **“PDF Download.”** It’s best to also send your completed budget for draft review.

“SUBMIT” WHEN YOUR APPLICATION IS COMPLETE!

- If any fields were not filled out, you’ll see **“Not Ready for Submission”** and a list of incomplete fields.
- When your request is complete, click **“Submit.”**
- Once submitted, you will get a confirmation email and you can see your completed application by clicking on the “Grants” tab from the dashboard. You can create a PDF copy anytime.

TO WORK ON MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION

If you are submitting more than one CAP grant, you need to exit one be able to work on another.

To do this: **“Pause”** an application that you are working on..

Then, from the dashboard, click **“Exit draft application.”**

Then click **“Start Draft Application”** and follow the directions from above.

Artist in Community Questions on Application Portal

ARTIST CONTACT INFORMATION

- Contact person (*person writing application*): Name, AKA, Address, Website, Phone, Email, Pronouns
- Have you been a full time Tompkins County resident since 1/1/2025?
- Is it likely you may move from from Tompkins before 1/31/2026?
- Will you be registered in a full time graduate or undergraduate degree program in 2026?

PROJECT INFORMATION

Ongoing Work: *Tell us about your art career in general: primary current art form, recent artistic activities.. (approx. 1000 character limit with spaces)*

Summary Statement: *Summarize your request in one or two sentences. (550 character limit with spaces)*

Detail Statement: *Tell us about your project (4,700 character limit with spaces) Include lots of details and be sure to address the following:*

- *The art work or art form you will be sharing with communities.*
- *If applicable, tell us about other artists that are part of your project.*
- *If applicable, name organizations (Community Partners) you are partnering with (i.e. where are you holding your events.)*
- *What is the name and email of your contact for your Community Partner?*
- *Describe the community you are working with and the ways you will share your work.*
- *Do you already have a relationship with this community? If the community is the general public, how will you get an audience and guarantee participation?*

- What is the number of community members you expect to be directly interacting with? Are they in Tompkins County?
- If there is a secondary audience, describe. (i.e. people who will see a finished art project).

Optional Budget Notes: Use this section to explain the need for the expenses listed in your budget form. For example, if you list an expense for a videographer, please tell us what the videographer is for and what happens with the resulting video. If you list an “equipment rental” or explain what that is for and why it is needed. (1700 character limit with spaces)

Community Impact: Describe anticipated impact for your community. What will they learn, know, and experience? Does your project fill a need or a gap in your chosen community? (2400 character limit with spaces)

Past Community Projects: Describe (provide year) any past successful community projects or programs that you were involved with or initiated. This doesn't have to be local. (1700 character limit with spaces)

Project Timeline: Let us know your planned timeline (planning period, community interaction dates). (625 character limit with spaces)

Request Amount (must match budget form)

Possible Adjustments: Decisions are made based on available funds and an applicant's budget. If your request is recommended for funding at a reduced level, can you make up the difference or adjust the scope of your project? Please elaborate. (1425 character limit with spaces)

WORK SAMPLES

Provide up to two links- see instructions above

Comments and Context for Work Samples

Visual Artists:

- Date range of the work samples, i.e. “2023 to 2025”
- Provide any other descriptions or your work or context, inspiration, etc. you'd like the panel to know.

Writers (fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, prose):

- Date range of the work samples.
- Provide any other descriptions or context you'd like the panel to know.

Performers, art filmmakers:

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