



2026 Guidelines

Arts Education Grant

The Arts Education grant provides funding for Tompkins County artist residencies in K-12 public schools, after school programs, or student groups at community organizations.

Deadline:
Tuesday, February 10, 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 via email before starting the process.

Recommended: Grant Writing Workshops & Advice

Free Grant Information & Advice Sessions: Live and Zoom (or Watch Recording)

November 2025 through January 2026 (Registration required)

- We host multiple Zoom and live workshops in Tompkins County locations, all posted on our grants page at 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 Tompkins 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 grant).

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.

What is Arts Education?

- Weaving the arts into K-12 core curriculum, as well as teaching youth new artistic skills and abilities, is at the core of Arts Education.
- Art instruction (visual, dance, music, theatre, literary...) helps children with the development of motor skills, language skills, social skills, decision-making, creative problem solving, and inventiveness.
- Youth who participate regularly in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, have fewer disciplinary infractions, higher attendance, graduation rates, and test scores.
- Integrating art with non-arts subjects reaches students who might not otherwise be engaged in classwork.
- Arts Education projects allow the children to use their imagination and creativity to create their own interpretation of the art form being taught.
- Teaching curriculum through the arts makes difficult concepts more easy to understand. Although this is not a requirement for this grant, ideal arts education projects involve artists that use their art form to help students understand a non-arts subject or address a potential student challenge. For example, an artist can use fiber art to teach math and measurements; teach history through playwriting and performing; teach songwriting to explore current issues; or use art projects that foster collaboration for social skills.

About the Arts Education Grant Partnerships

- This Arts Education (AE) grant has two funding strands for pre-K through 12th grades.
 - **In-School or After-School Programs in Public Schools**
 - **Programs by or at Community Organizations**
- All Arts Education projects must be carried out in **partnership** with either a public school or with a Community Organization's group of K-12 learners. This latter can include (but is not limited to) an after school program, a library group, a club, or students receiving social services.
- The same group of students (ideally at least 12) must be present for at least 3 sessions.
- Funded projects can occur from January 1, 2026 through January 30, 2027.

Applicants Can be:

Either a Tompkins County artist (or group)

- If the applicant is an artist, the artist must be a Tompkins County resident as of January 1, 2026. (Residency is defined as the address on a driver's license or other form of ID.)
- Artist applicants must be at least 18, and not enrolled in a full time degree program in 2026.

Or a Tompkins County community based organization*, municipality, or Tribal Nation

(Note: Schools cannot be the applicant. The applicant must be the outside artist or group that is doing the arts residency or program)

- If the applicant is an organization or municipality, teaching artists can be from other regions.
- An applicant organization or municipality must be located in Tompkins County, and have as their primary mission providing services to residents of Tompkins County.
- **Exclusions***: The following direct NYSCA applicants cannot apply as they have already applied directly to New York State Council on the Arts for 2026 (whether funded or not). The 2025 Direct NYSCA Applicant list includes the following. (Note: We do not yet have the 2026 list but hope to by December.)

Cayuga Chamber Orch, Cherry Arts, Center for Transformative Action, Cinemapolis, Civic Ensemble, CSMA, Cornell Cinema, Cornell University, Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers, Downtown Ithaca Alliance, Hangar Theatre, Historic Ithaca, History Center, Ithaca College, Ithaca Murals, Ithaca Shakespeare Company, Johnson Museum, Kitchen Theatre, NYSEMA, 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.

General Information:

- For the purposes of this grant, **“art” is defined** as either visual art (painting, sculpture, fiber art, ceramics photography, drawing, etc.), the performing arts (theatre, music, playwriting, dance), literary (poetry, fiction or creative non-fiction, spoken word), or art film/video - as opposed to an activity the outcome of which is primarily rehabilitative, educational, spiritual, religious, therapeutic, or recreational.
- Artists teach **in-depth skill-based learning that teaches the students one or more of the art forms above**.
- Emphasis is placed on the **depth and quality of the creative process** by which students learn about the arts.
- Projects must focus on the **exploration of art and the artistic process**.
- Project must be **hands-on and participatory**.
- **Students need to create something** from their own imaginations using the art form (rather than primarily copying or memorizing).
- **The project can culminate in exhibitions, productions, or demonstrations.** (not a requirement).
- Along with the core group, there can also be an **“indirect group”** consisting of students who may indirectly benefit by experiencing the core group’s project.

In-School Project Requirements

1. Higher priority is given if in-school projects involve a **direct collaboration between at least one non-arts classroom teacher** and at least one teaching artist not currently employed by the partner school. Projects that are collaboratively designed, planned, and taught by the participating teaching artist(s) and non-arts teacher(s) are given high consideration.
2. **Students cannot be taken out of regular classes to participate, be self-selected, or hand-selected** by the teachers or teaching artists for participation in the program.
3. **Arts Education funds are not meant to supplement classes for existing art students or classes. Funds are not meant for upper level art instruction to art students.** However, it is recommended that the art, music, dance, and/or theater teachers participate in the project.
4. **The number of students benefiting** will be a funding consideration; at least 12 is recommended.
5. Project must involve **at least three hands-on art learning sessions** with teaching artist(s) and the core group of students. Each session should not be less than 30 minutes long. (Each time an artist connects with a group of students, separated by time, can be considered one learning session.) It is highly recommended that sessions are separated by time for reflection. It’s great if the students have activities related to the project with their classroom teachers in between teaching artist visits.
6. **A letter of commitment** from the school Principal (for public school programs) or Director (for community programs) is part of the application.
7. **Project must have an evaluation plan** in place to assess the level of student achievement and understanding.

After-School or Community Organization Requirements

- For the after-school or community-based setting, **#4 to #7 above apply.** (#1 to #3 do not.)
- After-school programs can be at public schools or community organizations.
- Since three sessions are required for the same group of students, drop-in programs are not eligible.

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 maximum request for an Arts Education grant is \$5,000.**
- **Note: A not-for-profit organization can submit up to three grant requests for entirely different projects with any combination of the three grants. **NEW:** The total of all three cannot exceed \$7,500.**

The Grant Can Fund:

- Artist fees
- Consumable supplies (used during the course of the project)
- Mileage (up to \$75)
- Space rental, printing, or other expenses directly related to the project.
- Staff or school teachers can be paid for hours spent that are not part of their regular salary.
- If an organization is the applicant, some administration expenses can be included.

The Grant Does Not Fund:

- Projects where the artistic component is not at the forefront. (Projects can also be rehabilitative, scientific, therapeutic, or educational but the teaching of the art form must be the main focus and goal.)
- Fees to artists that are students in high school or are currently enrolled in a degree programs in 2026.
- Programs in existing art classes to art students only.
- Programs where students are taken out of regular classes to participate, be self-selected, or hand-selected by the teachers or teaching artists for participation in the program.
- Projects with less than 12 participant students. (There might be exceptions to this. Email!)
- Project with less than 3 hands-on sessions with the core group of students.
- Programs with religious content.
- Local cultural organizations that have applied directly to New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) in 2026, whether funded or not.
- Projects taking place in private or parochial schools, or for home-schooled students.
- Stand-alone programs without the art learning sessions, e.g. a performance, or a visit to a cultural institution.
- College-level courses, scholarships, contests, or student performing groups.
- Staff salaries for time during their regular work day/salary. (Payment for hours outside of their regular hours can be part of the request.)

Funding Priorities:

- Higher consideration will be given if the project addresses specific non-arts related challenges that the students may have.
- Higher consideration will be given if the project fulfills a cultural need, or unmet need in terms of geography or community engagement, increases access to the arts, or reaches a broad and diverse student body.
- For In-School Programs: Higher Consideration will be given if the project meaningfully aligns with the student's curriculum.
- For In-School Programs: Higher Consideration will be given if the school's certified art, music, dance and/or theater teachers participate in the project in addition to a non-arts teacher(s).

Panel Review Criteria:

Panelists rate each request using the criteria below. Ratings range from “1” (does not meet any of the criteria) to “4” (meets and exceeds all criteria).

- Adherence to these guidelines and Funding Priorities stated above .
- Application clarity and completeness. Were questions answered in full?
- Depth and quality of the artist(s) interactions with students. Anticipated student impact.
- Number of students involved in the core group.
- Appropriateness of the educational and artistic goals and expected student outcomes of the project.
- Degree to which these goals relate to the proposed project activities and grade levels served.
- Quality of expertise and appropriateness of the proposed artists.
- Quality of evaluation plan.
- Appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget.

How Decisions Are Made

- A diverse panel composed of community leaders, artists, business people, and educators will be sent the Arts Education requests after the due date. They’ll have at least three weeks to review.
- 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) applicant’s budget, and/or c) place in the ratings.

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**. 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 keep CAP posted on program dates.
- Grants are considered as income, so funded individual artists 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 payment until proof of program scheduling is received.
- **Disclaimer:** CAP receives the funds to distribute to awardees directly from NY State. In 2024, CAP (and all statewide agencies administering this grant) did not receive funds until August, resulting in many postponed or cancelled projects. 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 or cancelled.

Arts Education Submission Instructions

Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 9pm

Questions: Robin at programs@artspartner.org

ArtsPartner.org

1. Arts Education BUDGET FORM

- The excel budget form is on the **grant page** at ArtsPartner.org in the Arts Education section and can also be downloaded from the Arts Education online application.
- (Your completed **budget form is then uploaded** to the application platform).
- **If you need any assistance** putting together a budget or understanding the budget form, we can help!
- See **Sample Budget** below.

2. Fill out Arts Education APPLICATION at 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.

“Pause” an application you are working on.

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

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

3. School or Community Partner Note of Commitment

- **(Note: This can be sent after the deadline but before February 17th)**
- **Forward or send an attachment or forward an email to Robin’s email (see above).** We require simple statement of commitment from the school Principal (for public school programs) or Director/President (for community programs). The intent is to confirm that the school or partner is aware of and on board with the request.

Artist in Community Questions on Application Portal

APPLICANT INFORMATION*

- Name (*person writing application*), Pronouns
- (If applicant is a Cultural Organization) Name of Organization, and EIN Number
- Tompkins County Address
- Email, Phone, Website
- (For Individual Applicants) Are you over 18 years of age as of 1/1/2026?
- (For Individual Applicants) Are you in college full time in 2026?
- For Public School Programs (Name the school(s))
- For Programs with Community Partners (Name of Community Organization)
- Name and Email of School or Community Partners Contact

PROJECT INFORMATION

- **Name of Project*:** (up to 8 words)
- **Proposed Project Date Range*:** (There's a more detailed timeline question below. For this field, just write the start and end dates, e.g. "March to April 2026")
- **Grant Amount Requested*:** (must match budget form)
- **Core Group Grade(s) and Number of Students*:** (The core group are the students that meet with the same teaching artist(s) a minimum of 3 visits. List the grades(s) and total number of students (e.g. Two 3rd grade classrooms, 42 students)
- **Number of Core Group Contact Sessions*:** (Just list one number)
- **Indirect Group Grade(s) and Number of Students:** (The indirect group are students that might participate marginally, i.e. via an exhibit, presentation, or performance) List the indirect group grade(s) and approximate number of students.
- **Summary Statement*:** (750 characters with spaces) Summarize your request in one or two sentences.
- **Teacher and Artist List*:** (1000 characters with spaces) List the names and emails of teaching artists, and (if applicable) classroom teachers, and others involved in your project. Example: John Gibson, 2nd grade teacher, jgibson@icsd.k12.ny.us / Tara Rivera, teaching artist, tara@gmail.com
- **Detail Statement*:** (6000 characters with spaces) (Tell us about your project. Address the following questions. (You don't need to address in the order listed – just make sure the questions are addressed.)
 - What is the art form that the teaching artist(s) will be teaching? Describe.
 - Is there a topic or theme associated with the project? Please describe.
 - Describe the grade/classes that will comprise your core group. Tell us (if applicable) about an indirect group impact.
 - Describe what the students will be doing during this project and the role of the teaching artist and/or school teachers. Include project impact. (Please go into some detail)
 - FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS: If you are working with a community organization, how will you and that organization guarantee participants, i.e. an existing group.
- **Optional Budget Notes:** (1700 characters with spaces)
Use this section if there are items on the budget form which need explaining (and not explained above). For example, if you listing printing costs, what is that for? If you listed an admin cost, what is that for?
- **Goals, Outcomes, Assessments*:** (3500 characters with spaces)
What do you want the students to know, understand or be able to do as a result of this project?
Are there any specific challenges you are trying to address? Learning Standards you are trying to meet? (Details are good.)
How will you measure the extent to which the students have met the learning goals?
- **Previous Similar Projects*:** (1700 characters with spaces) :
Have you conducted this or similar projects in the past? Tell us about that! What have you learned along the way?
- **Project Timeline*:** (1000 characters with spaces): Provide a timeline of the project activities. Include any planning meetings, artist contact sessions with students, sessions where teachers will work with students before or between teaching artist sessions, any reflection meetings, evaluation, etc. This can be in list format, e.g. "September - planning, October 1, 8, 15 - classroom sessions..." If you do not know exact dates, write preferred months.
- **Reduced Funding*:** (700 characters with spaces):
If you receive funding at a reduced level, would you be able to adjust your project? What are crucial costs?

Sample Budget

Applicant Organization or Artist Name: Renee Jones					
Project Name: Stories Take Off					
FOR	List EXPENSE	(EXPLAIN EXPENSE in detail)	List any INCOME that may be offsetting this expense	(EXPLAIN INCOME in detail)	SUBTRACT: “Expenses” minus “Income”
Teaching Artist(s)	\$3,000.00	Six 45/min minute sessions x two classrooms = 12 sessions at \$250/ea	\$500.00	BOCES contribution	\$2500.00
Teacher After-School Time					\$0.00
Materials, Supplies, Printing	\$360.00	paper, paint, markers (\$200), Printing (\$160)	\$200.00	school contribution	\$160.00
Not for profit admin (if applicable)					\$0.00
Travel	\$50.00	6 trips 12/mi each = 72 miles x .70 = \$50			\$50.00
Other Expenses or Income	\$250.00	Planning with classroom teachers. one session \$250			\$250.00
TOTALS	\$3,660.00		\$700.00		\$2,960.00
				Grant Request (\$5,000 max) →	\$2,960.00