COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP SERIES 2026

Grants & Grant Writing Advice



Clockwise: Lily Silly Puppets (GAP Grant), Margaret Kops Kuveke (SOS Grant), Caroline Elem. Art Project (Arts Ed Grant) Kathy Lucas Grant (Artist in Community Grant), (All GAP Grants: Joe Crookston/Dryden Concerts, Lifelong Senior Theatre Troupe, Ithaca Concert Band, State of the Art Gallery.

COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP

CAP strengthens the arts in Tompkins County by supporting artists and arts groups, ensuring equitable access to the arts, and cultivating a creative culture that reflects our community's diversity.

- Annual Events
  - Ithaca Artist Market
  - Greater Ithaca Art Trail
  - Spring Writes Literary Festival
  - CAP-a-Palooza Vintage Art Annual Fundraiser
- CAP ArtSpace Gallery
- Professional Development Workshops
- Networking Events
- Grant Programs

CAP 2027 GRANT WORKSHOP

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Part 1

Grants in General

WHAT IS A GRANT?

Funding for Specific Purposes:
Grants are most often awarded to support specific activities, such as academic studies, community projects, or business initiatives.

Non-Repayable:
Unlike loans, grants do not have to be repaid, although stringent reporting requirements may be in place.

Grants Come From:
Grants can come from various sources, including federal, state, or local governments, private foundations, organizations, or corporations.

Application Process:
To receive a grant, applicants usually submit a proposal that details their project and how it aligns with the grantor's goals. This process is almost always competitive as it is not uncommon to have many more requests than available funds.

OTHER TYPES OF INCOME

- Ticket or Merchandise Sales
- Donations of Money or Services
- Trades
- Crowdfunding
- Fundraising Events
- Ad Sales
- Sponsorships
- Fellowships or Scholarships

HOW TO FIND GRANTS

Before You Search:

- Know what you need (budget, project).

Explore Possible Funding:

- Are you eligible?
- What are the funder's priorities? (View past recipients.)
- What is the size of their awards?
- When are the deadlines for applications and project completion?
- What else do you have to provide?
- Turnaround time. (When are awardees notified?)

There's a **recorded workshop on** ArtsPartner.org **(workshop page):** "*Funding the Project: Finding and Assessing Grants, Plus Other Fundraising Strategies" by Anna Warfield*

GRANT PROGRAMS ARE DIFFERENT

Each Funder Will Have Its Own:

- Goals and mission.
- Description of what can be funded and who is eligible to apply.
- Application format, length, and level of difficulty.
- Funder's availability for applicants to ask questions or submit drafts.
- Timeline for funded project.
- Process for how decisions are made.
- Decision-making criteria.

If Funded, There Might Be:

- Contracts and agreements.
- Financial and record keeping requirements.
- Funder acknowledgement requirements.
- Final and/or interim reporting requirements.

PREPARING FOR GRANT WRITING

You May Be Asked To Provide:

- Artist statement, bio, resume, or your organization's mission.
- Brief summary of proposal.
- Detailed description of project (who, what, when, where, why).
- Budget: expenses and expected income.
- Details of prior activities and outcomes.
- Qualifications of artists and/or organizers or collaborators.
- Impact, goals, expected outcomes.
- Expected and/or targeted audience (numbers, demographics).
- Timeline: (a straightforward outline of activities).
- How will you advertise, get the word out and get an audience?
- Letter of support or confirmation from partner organizations.
- Work samples.

GENERAL RESOURCES

- **Local Media Checklist** and **Music Venue list** at ArtsPartner.org ("Artist resources")
- **Equipment Lending Library** downtownithaca.com/lending-library/
- **Tompkins County Tourism Grants** tompkinscountyny.gov/tourism/grants
- **Human Services Coalition** hsctc.org/funders/: Workshop series and consulting services (e.g. board and staff relations) and local funder directory
- **NYSCA** (NYSCA.org): Grants for organizations, artists, and arts education.
- **NYFA** (NYFA.org): Individual artists - fiscal sponsorship, grants, classifieds, professional development, consults, portfolio review.
- **Candid Learning & Guidestar** (candid.org): Free nonprofit training and directories
- **New York Council of Nonprofits (NYCON):** Services for NYS nonprofits. Nycon.org
- **Other Grant Websites**
  Grantstation.com Grants.gov (federal)
  Association of Fundraising Professionals
- **Copyright Law** www.copyright.gov
- **Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts** www.vlany.org
- **NY Sales Tax information** http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/publications/sales/pub750.pdf

Part 2

CAP Grants Overview

CAP GRANT TIMELINES

November:

- Guidelines & application links are posted.

November to February:

- Publicity, outreach, workshops, draft reviews.

February:

- Application deadlines.
- Panel selection and orientation.
- Requests and information sent to panel.

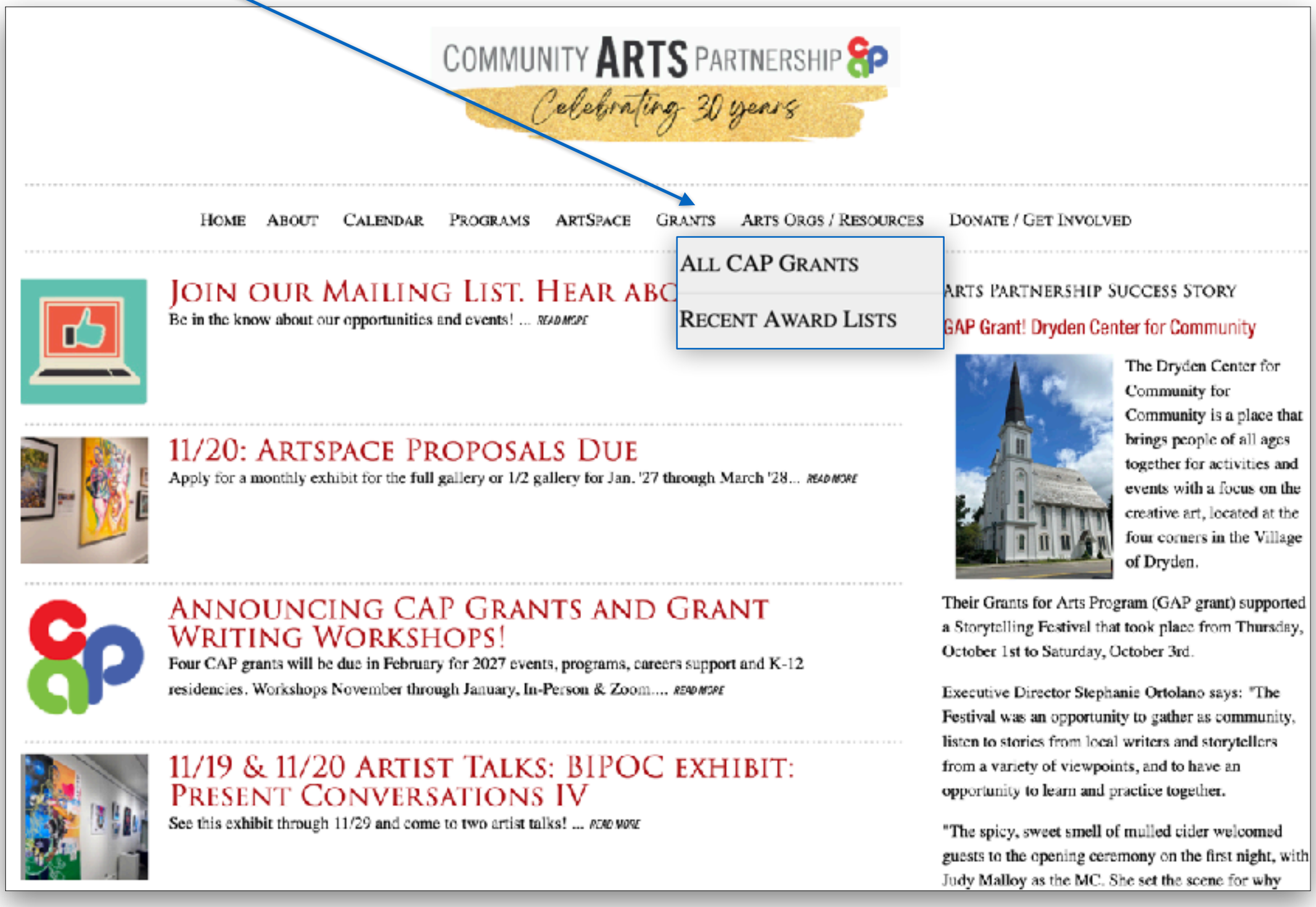
March:

- Panels meet, discuss, and rate requests.
- Funding decisions are made.
- Notification to applicants.

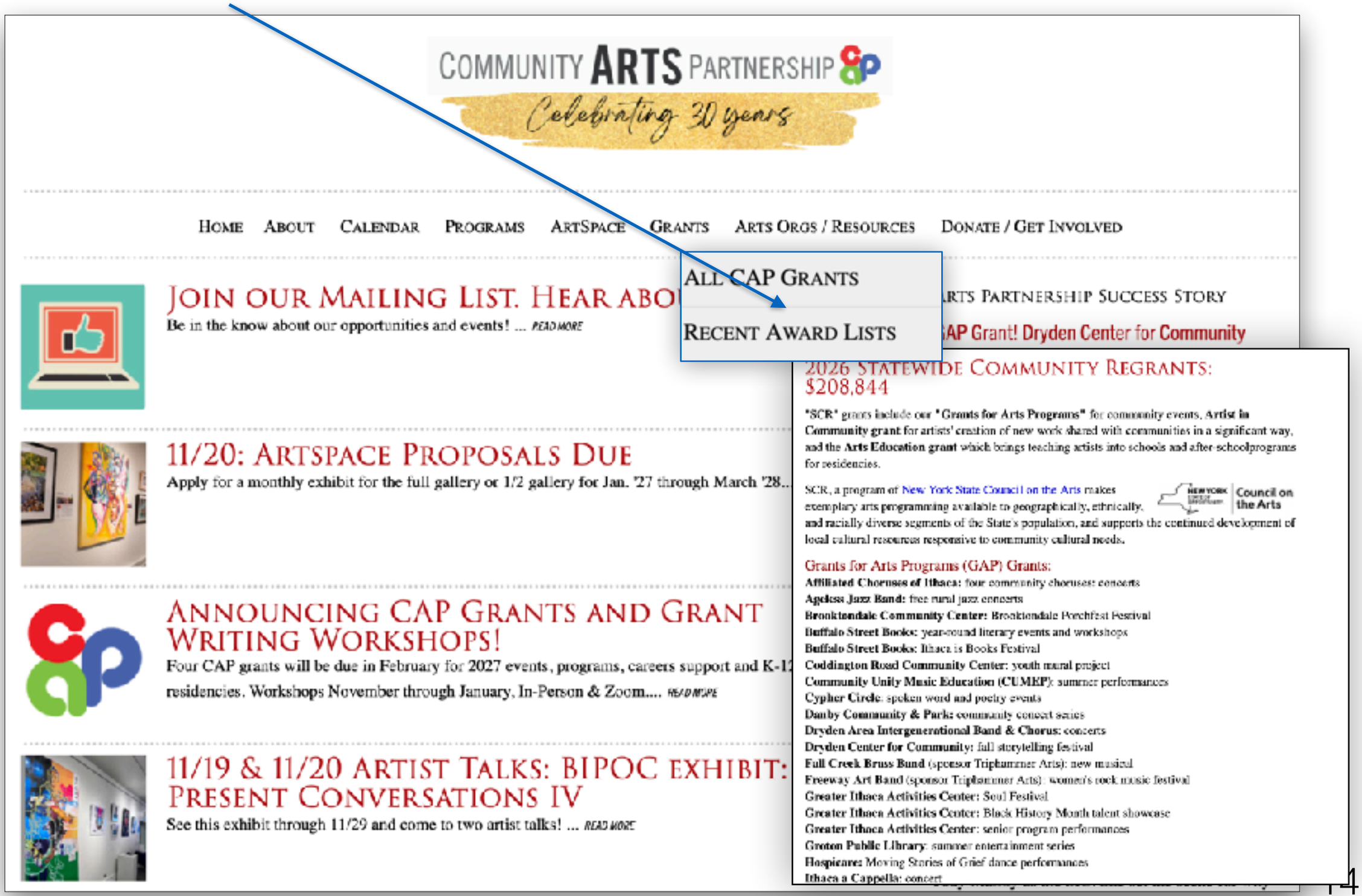
April to December:

- Contracts & agreements signed (W9 forms from individuals).
- Checks mailed when projects are underway and/or when CAP receives State funds.
- Grantee follows requirements set out in contract, such as funder acknowledgement.
- Final Reporting - by December 15, 2027.

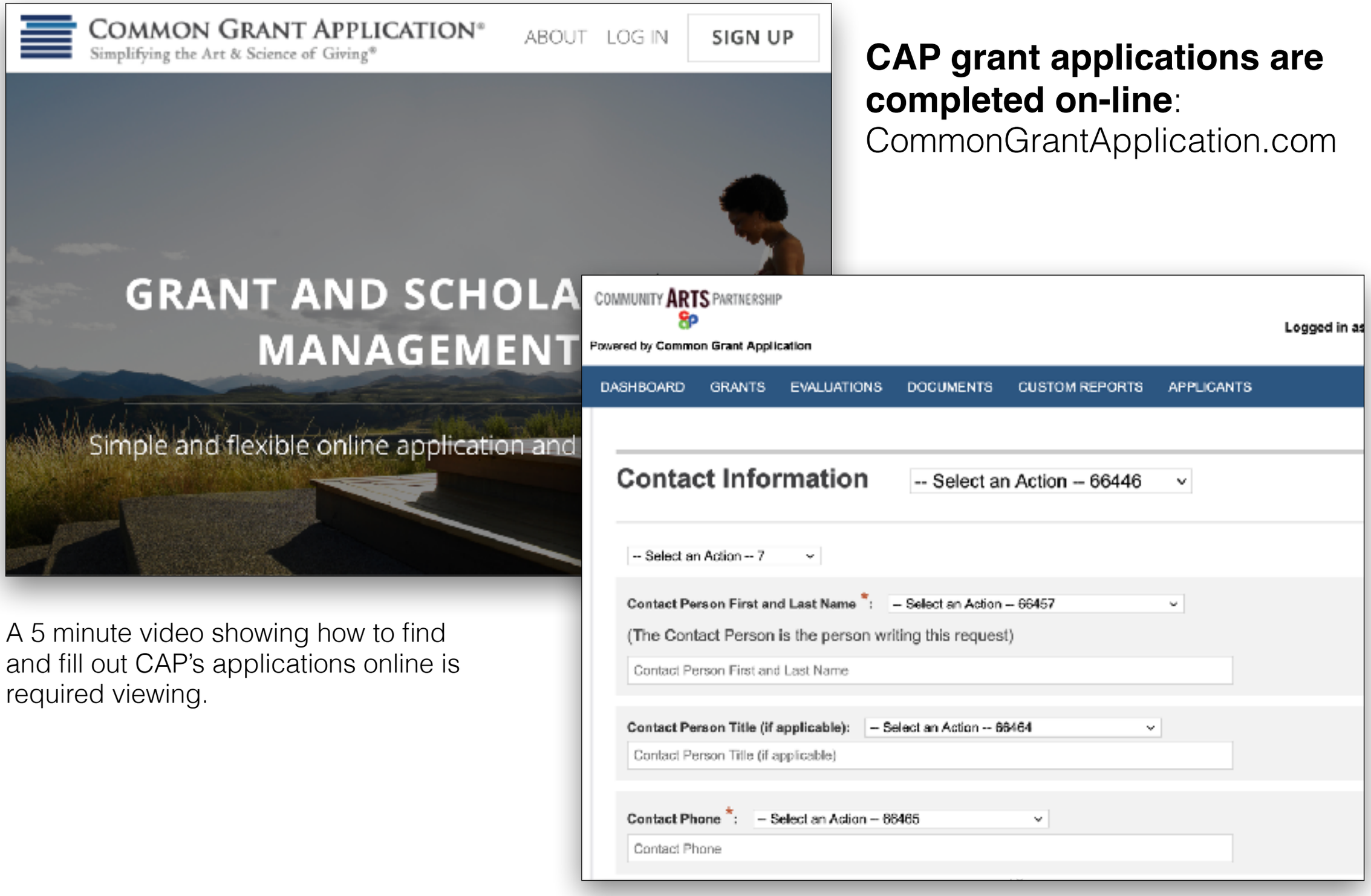
FIND CAP GRANTS on ArtsPartner.org



FIND RECENT AWARD LISTS



APPLICATION PLATFORM



CAP grant applications are completed on-line:
CommonGrantApplication.com

A 5 minute video showing how to find and fill out CAP's applications online is required viewing.

WHAT TYPE OF ART DO WE FUND?

Art Must Be At the Core:

Funded projects must have at their core an activity that is fundamentally arts related and inline with art forms funded by NYSCA (visual art exhibitions, public art, performances of theatre, music, dance; poetry, fiction or creative non-fiction readings; art film screenings, and the like).

As Opposed To:

Activities where the main outcome or core activity is primarily rehabilitative, spiritual or religious, educational, therapeutic, or recreational cannot be funded.

EACH CAP GRANT HAS IN-DEPTH GUIDELINES and INSTRUCTIONS

COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP

2027 Guidelines

Grants for Arts Programs

The GAP Grant funds exemplary arts programming open to the general public in Tompkins County.

APPLICATION DEADLINE
Thursday, February 4, 2027, at 11:59 pm

Who Can Apply

* Tompkins County not-for-profits organizations.
(Note: organizations applying directly to NYSCA cannot apply, nor can they be fiscal sponsors or community partners.)
* Municipalities and Tribal Nations
* Individual artists (or groups) using a Tompkins County not-for-profit as a fiscal sponsor.
* New this year: Individuals or groups can apply directly if there is a strong Tompkins County "Community Partner" which can be a for-profit business, a not-for-profit, or community organization.

CAP Grants Page

At ArtsPartner.org (Grant tab) you'll find information about four CAP Grants, Application budget forms, Grant writing workshop dates with registration links.

Questions and Assistance

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

Robin is available anytime to answer questions, offer advice or help navigate the grant process.

If you have not applied before - or even if you have - it's always a good idea to run your request by Robin before starting the application.

Accommodations:

If you need assistance with any aspect of the grant process, please email Robin.

About the GAP Grant

Purpose and Public Access

- The GAP Grant funds exemplary arts programming open to the general public in Tompkins County, such as performances (theatre, music, dance), visual art exhibitions, literary events (fiction, poetry, spoken word, creative non-fiction) and artistic films.
- GAP support enables artists and organizations to **enhance the artistic cultural climate** in our communities and neighborhoods through arts events.
- Programs can be live and/or virtual.

Defining "General Public"

- **Events must be open to, targeted to, available to, promoted to, and easily accessible to** the general public of Tompkins County and not primarily geared to an organization's membership, clients, followers, an out-of-county audience or an insular group.
- **Events must be geared primarily to Tompkins County residents.**
- (Events can be on college campuses if they are deemed easily accessible (e.g. parking) but will not be prioritized if the audience is believed to be mostly students (or most are not Tompkins County residents).
- Events can be geared towards **specific communities, cultures, or ages,** as long as anyone can attend.
- Events with a **limited or maximum number of attendees** cannot be funded.
- **Audience** size may be a consideration.

Arts Focus

- Funded events must have at their core an activity that is **fundamentally arts related** and is in line with art forms funded by NYSCA that can include **visual art exhibitions and public art; performances of theatre, music, dance,** literary events such as readings, along with showings of locally produced films.

Funding Period

- Events must take place between **January 1st, 2027 and January 31, 2028.**

Local Artists and Artistic Quality

- **The presentation of art by Tompkins County artist(s)** as the core activity is a priority.
- **An exception** may be made to bring in artists that represent art, art forms, or culturally related work not currently represented in Tompkins County, although **paying local artists** may remain a priority.
- Grants are available for arts programs of **high artistic merit and quality.**
- **The qualifications and caliber of participating artists** is a part of the evaluation process.

Costs GAP Can Fund

- GAP can fund costs directly related to the requested public event such as:
- Participating artist fees (paying local artists is a priority)
- Marketing, publicity and printing costs
- Space usage for the project

3

Three Applicant Pathways)

...s the requirements for the pathway you plan to use.

	KEY POINTS
...kins County ...ations) educational ...l Local govern... ...ation possess in	• Eligibility requirements • Documentation may be required
...ct or unincorpo... ...ing through an ...rent fiscal spon...	• The fiscal sponsor is the official applicant and receives the award. • Documentation may be required • Letter of Agreement Required
...group can apply ...y closely with an ...ity Partner.	• An individual is the applicant and receives the award. GAP achieves the fiscal sponsor • Community Partner eligibility requirements • Partner Letter of Commitment required

...unty Not-for-Profits

...orporated or registered to do business in NY State
...must apply - see section below.)
...NY State (e.g. some museums and libraries)
...l Nation present anywhere within NY State
...kins County with a Tompkins County mailing address, have as their ...dents or Tompkins County, and focus on active Tompkins County ...(exception: Tribal Nations)

...r Groups With Not-for-Profit Fiscal Sponsor

...s may apply using an eligible not-for-profit fiscal sponsor ...eligibility described under Pathway #1.
...l applicant for the grant and will be sent the grant award if funded ...e their own events, their sponsored requests are not in competition.)
...nizations cannot be the Fiscal Sponsor - see section below.)
...IRS requirements such as collecting W-9's and issuing 1099's, ...ensuring that reporting requirements are met. (Generally the ...reporting requirements but the sponsor is ultimately responsible.)
- The sponsor can take an admin fee.
- **Individuals** applying through a Fiscal Sponsor must be 18 years of age at the date of submission, be a current **Tompkins County resident,** and must **not be enrolled in a full-time degree program** in 2027. Robin may reach out after the deadline for proof of year-round Tompkins County residency.
- **Groups** applying through a Fiscal Sponsor must be based in **Tompkins County.**

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WHAT'S IN THE GUIDELINES?

(Sample from GAP Grant):

- Info about Applicant Assistance & Support
- The Role of NYSCA and CAP
- About the GAP Grant
- Costs the Grant Can and Cannot Fund
- Who Can Apply? (and Who Cannot)
- Required Documentation with Application
- Maximum Request Amount / Number of Requests
- How Decisions are Made
- After the Deadline
- When Does Award Payment Arrive?
- How to Submit an Application
- Budget Form Instructions and Budget Sample
- List of Questions on Online Application

Part 2

Four CAP Grants

CAP's GRANT PROGRAMS

Grants for Arts Programs (GAP)

Due: Thurs, February 4, 2027, 11:59pm

Artist in Community Grant

Due: Mon, February 8, 2027, 11:59pm

Arts Education Grant

Due: Wed, February 10, 2027, 11:59pm

A Program of New York State Council on the Arts' (NYSCA) Statewide Community Regrant Program (SCR), administered by CAP for Tompkins County.

We have **$200,000** to distribute for all three grants.

Strategic Opportunity Stipend (SOS)

Due: Wed, February 17, 2027, 11:59pm

A CAP Grant funded by both a private foundation & the Tompkins Today and Tomorrow Fund from the Community Foundation of Tompkins County.

We have **$20,000** to distribute.

NYSCA'S SCR PROGRAM

CAP administers New York State Council on the Arts' Statewide Community Regrants (SCR) for Tompkins County.

- SCR funds three CAP grants:
  Grants for Arts Programs, **Artist in Community,** and **Arts Education.**
- SCR brings state arts funding to communities state-wide with local decision making.
- The grants goals: community benefit, reaching geographically, ethnically, and racially diverse parts of the county, and meeting local cultural needs.

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Council on the Arts

GAP GRANT (Grants for Arts Programs)

For:

- The GAP Grant funds exemplary arts programming open to the general public in Tompkins County, such as performances (theatre, music, dance), visual art exhibitions, literary events (fiction, poetry, spoken word, creative non-fiction) and artistic films.
- GAP support enables artists and organizations to enhance the artistic cultural climate in our communities and neighborhoods through arts events.

Who Can Apply:

- Tompkins County not-for-profit Corporations. (Note: organizations applying directly to NYSCA cannot apply, nor can they be fiscal sponsors or community partners.)
- Municipalities and Tribal Nations.
- Individual artists using a Tompkins County not-for-profit as a fiscal sponsor.
- New this year: Individuals or groups can apply directly if they have a strong Tompkins County "Community Partner" which can be a for-profit business, a not-for-profit or community organization.

Max Request: $5,000.

NEW YORK STATE | Council on the Arts

(DIRECT NYSCA APPLICANTS can't apply)

- Local not-for-profits that have applied directly to NYSCA in 2027 (whether funded or not) cannot apply for SCR grants, serve as a fiscal sponsor, or serve as a Community Parter.
- They can, however, be rented as venues.
- CAP will have a DNA list in December, but for now we believe it will be:

Cayuga Chamber Orchestra
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
Opera Ithaca
Opus School of Music
Running to Places Theatre
Saltonstall Foundation
Sciencenter
Story House Ithaca
State Theatre
Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge & Healing
Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts

ARTIST IN COMMUNITY GRANT

For:

- Tompkins County full-time resident practicing artists who wish to apply for a grant to create NEW WORK within a community setting with community involvement - whether through direct hands-on art making or through input/ feedback/interaction.

Artists Who Apply:

- Must be current full-time residents of Tompkins County since 10/1/2026.
- Expect to continue full-time residency through 12/31/2028.
- Must be 18 years of age as of 1/1/2027.
- Must not be enrolled in a 2027 full-time graduate or undergraduate degree program.
- (Note: artists applying directly to NYSCA cannot apply.)
- Required online work sample.

Max Request: $5,000.

NEW YORK STATE | Council on the Arts

ARTS EDUCATION GRANT

For:

- Tompkins County teaching artist residencies in pre-K-12 public schools/after school programs, or for a closed group of pre-K-12 learners at community organizations.

Applicants Can Be Artist:

- Must be current full-time residents of Tompkins County since 10/1/2026.
- Expect to continue full-time residency through 12/31/2028.
- Must be 18 years of age as of1/1/2027.
- Must not be enrolled in a 2027 full time graduate or undergraduate degree program.
- (Note: artists applying directly to NYSCA cannot apply.)

Applicants Can Also Be:

- Tompkins County Arts Organizations, Municipalities, Cultural Organizations.
- (Note: organizations applying directly to NYSCA cannot apply)

Max Request: $5,000.

NEW YORK STATE | Council on the Arts

SOS (Strategic Opportunity Stipend)

For:

- CAP's SOS grant is for artists who have a consistent record of producing art and a clear career path ahead.
- Artists can apply for a specific and strategic opportunity anywhere in the world taking place from January 1st, 2027 to February 29th, 2028
- The opportunity should take their artistic career to the next level.

Applicants Can Be Artist:

- Individual artists who are full-time residents of Tompkins County.
- Priority may be given to longer term residents who have lived in Tompkins County since January 2026 and plan on living in Tompkins County through at least 2029.

Max Request: $800

Community Foundation of Tompkins County
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Part 3

Grant Writing Advice

COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP

It’s a Competition

“If my request fits the guidelines, I’ll get funded.”

Not True

GRANT PANELS & CRITERIA

- Each CAP grant has it's own decision-making 7-8 person panel.
- All panelists receive an orientation and read all of their requests.
- Each panel meets on Zoom to discuss the requests. Robin facilitates but doesn't vote or advocate.
- After the meeting, panelists rate each request based on the criteria in the grant's guidelines.
- CAP staff turns the ratings into funding recommendations based on the ratings, the applicant's budget, and available funds.
- Funding recommendations are sent back to the panels for approval.

GRANT PANELS & CRITERIA

Sample from GAP Grant:

Panel Rating Criteria

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

Community Benefit:

- The panel considers all applications as a whole to ensure that funded requests collectively reach broad and diverse audiences throughout Tompkins County, which can include rural audiences, culturally diverse segments of the county's population. and broad demographics such as age, ethnicity, race, and economic status.
- Projects are prioritized and receive a higher rating if they demonstrate that they are providing successful access to under-resourced or diverse communities.
- Projects are prioritized if they support the development of local cultural resources responsive to specific community cultural needs.
- Requests should contribute to the artistic landscape of Tompkins County and its communities.

Sample from GAP Grant (con't):

Community Interest, and Promotion:

- Is there demonstrated community interest, support, and benefit?
- Can the applicant effectively promote the funded event to the general public? Do they have an effective promotion and marketing plan that can reach new audiences?
- *(Robin from CAP has a Marketing Advice/Checklist that will be sent to grantees - or email Robin anytime.)*

Artistic Quality and Artist Support

- Artistic quality and program quality is considered along with caliber and credentials of participating artists.
- Are funds being used to pay artists?

Guidelines, Application, Budget:

- Adherence to these guidelines and alignment with GAP Grant funding preferences.
- Application clarity and completeness. Were all questions answered in full?
- The budget appears to be accurate and not padded.

Feasibility:

- Clearly defined project objectives.
- Demonstrated ability of personnel to administer project.

Applicant's History (if previously funded):

- Past compliance with gran requirements (acknowledgment language and reports, and prior success.)

GRANT PANELS & CRITERIA

Sample from Artist-in-Community Grant:

Guidelines, Application, Budget:

- Request is aligned with the grant requirements and parameters.
- Application questions are answered in full using clear and accessible language.
- The budget is realistic.

Artistic Merit:

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

Community Involvement:

- Depth and quality of the artist's interactions with a Tompkins County community.
- Extent and anticipated impact of the community involvement and their accessibility to the project.
- The artist's response to cultural and community needs and community benefit.
- Is the project directed to geographically, ethnically and racially diverse segments of the county?
- The potential for expanding public understanding and appreciation of the arts.

Project Feasibility:

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

Applicant's History:

- If applicant was funded in prior years with CAP, past compliance with grantee requirements may be considered.

GRANT PANELS & CRITERIA

Panel Rating Sheet Sample

CGA#	Applicant (or Sponsor)	Project	Request		Community	Audience	Artistic & Event Merit	Guidelines and Application	Comments or Concerns. Do you think this should be funded?
107334	Affiliated Choruses of Ithaca	**Making Harmony Happen Concerts :**Ithaca Comm Chorus, VOICES, Summer Sing, Transpose Ithaca Queer Singers	$5,000.00	acithaca.org					
107272	Ageless Jazz Band	**Free Rural Jazz Concerts in Dryden, Danby and Tburg:** July to October	$2,304.00	https://www.agelessjazz.org/					
107345	Brooktondale Community Center	**Brooktondale Porchfest Festival**	$5,000.00	brooktondalecc.org					
107332	Children's Reading Connection (for BSB)	**8 -10 community literary and/ or arts workshops and/or events**	$5,000.00	https://buffalostreetbooks.com/					
107283	Children's Reading Connection (for Ithaca is Books)	**Ithaca Is Books F literary programm** 10-13 downtown It							
107360	Coddington Road Community Center, Inc	**Youth Mural Proje Community Cente**							
107291	Community Unity Music Education (CUMEP)	**CUMEP Summer Performance:** Jul							
107154	Danby Community and Park	**Danby Communit Series:** Klezmer, N traditional fiddle tu improv, classical/ch							
107350	Dryden Area Intergenerational Band & Chorus	**Dryden Area Inter Band & Chorus 2**							
107328	Dryden Center for Community	**Fall Storytelling F** weekend of storyte spoken word event this fall.							

Scoring Instructions: Enter "5" to "1"

Exceptional / Outstanding (5) Exceptionally strong model with essentially no weaknesses
Excellent / Very Good (4) Very strong with some minor weaknesses
Good / Satisfactory (3) Some strengths but with at least one moderate weakness
Marginal / Fair (2) At least one or more major weakness
Poor (1) Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses
Not Scorable (0) Not scorable or too many major weaknesses; or the criteria is not addressed in the request

A minor weakness is one that is easily addressed that does not substantially lessen impact
A moderate weakness is one that does lessen impact.
A major weakness severely limits impact

GRANT WRITING ADVICE

Preparation:

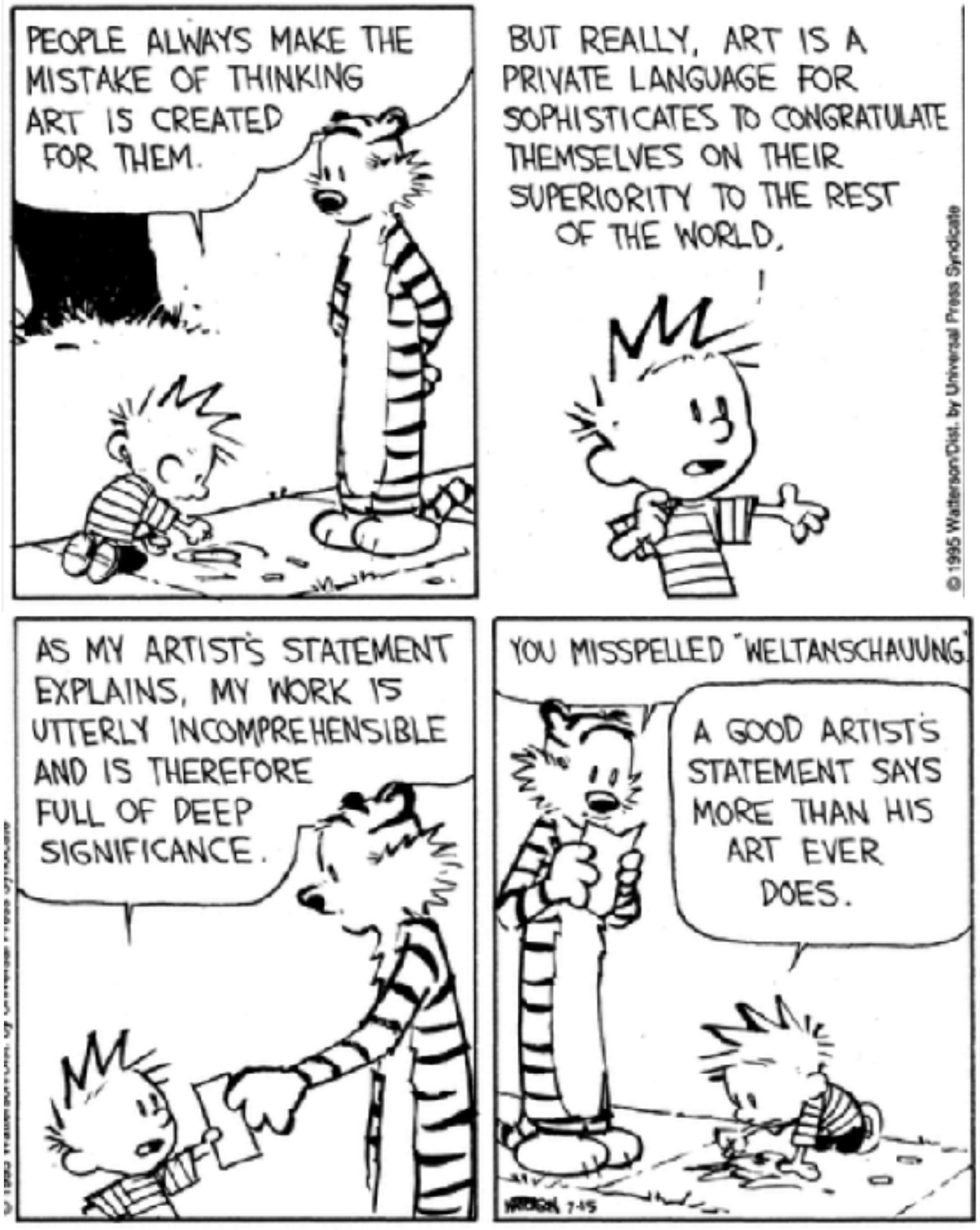
- **Read the guidelines carefully.** Then read them again. Do not skip this step.
- Email Robin anytime with questions.
- Consider your time and resources - do you have time to carry out the funded project?
- Take careful note of the grant's funding criteria.
- Read through all the application questions before starting to fill it out.
- Complete the budget form before you write the narrative.
- Follow directions EXACTLY - do not improvise.
- Leave yourself plenty of time.

GRANT WRITING ADVICE

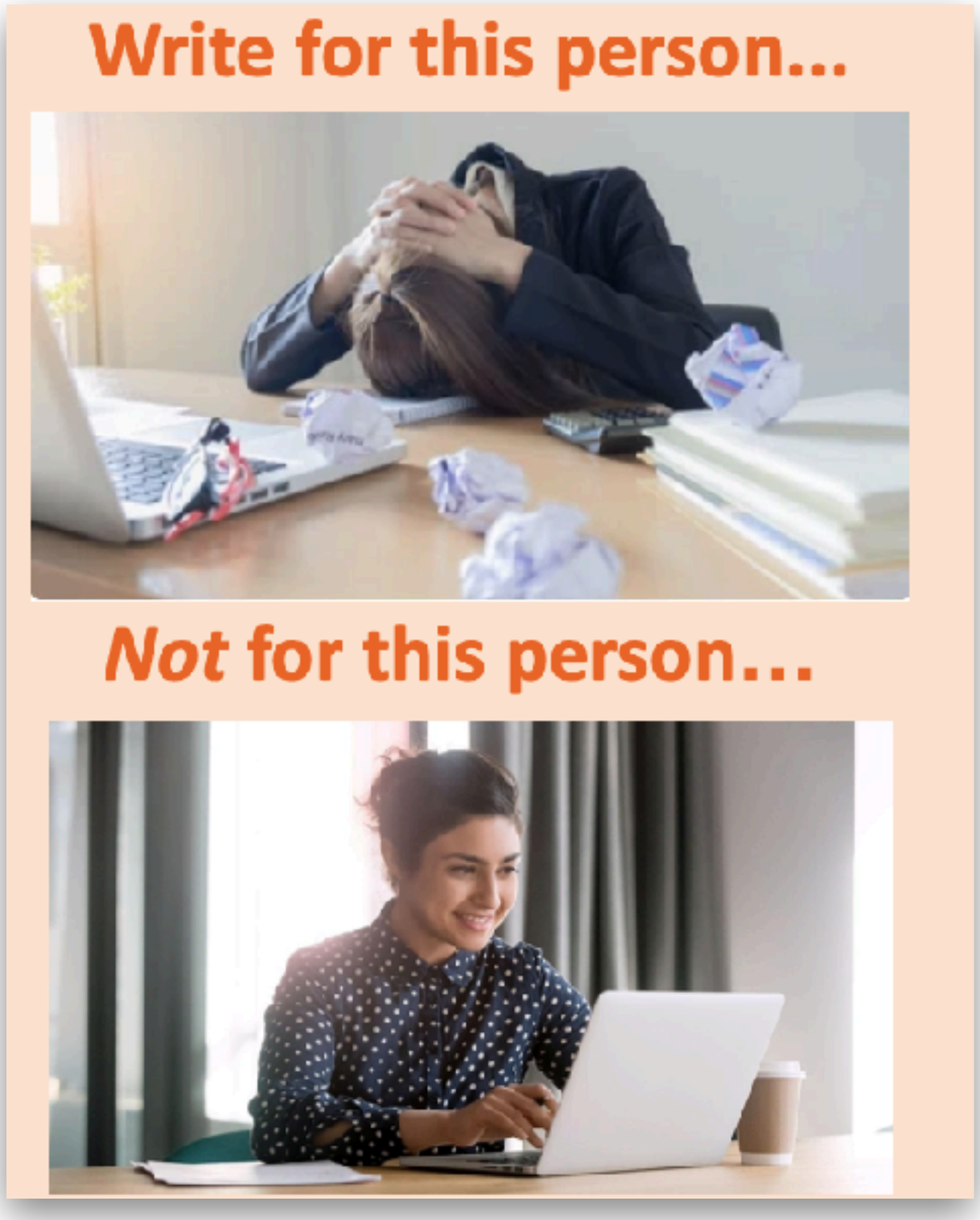
- Keep your narrative clear and factual.
- Do not use abstract, vague, or academic language.
- Do not make the panel work to understand you.
- Sound like a human.
- Read the questions carefully and make sure you answer what was asked.
- Details are good - the who, what, where, when, and why.
- Use full sentences (and not bullets).
- Do not exaggerate or make up facts or numbers.
- Do not project an attitude.
- Read what you write out loud to make sure it makes sense.
- Have someone else proofread for clarity and completeness.
- Take advantage of a draft review by Robin, CAP Program & Grant Director.

GRANT WRITING ADVICE

Don’t Do This



GRANT WRITING ADVICE



- Understand that CAP panelists may be reading over 70 requests.
- Help them by prioritizing clarity.
- Back up generic statements with real life examples.
- Don’t assume the panelists are fellow artists.
- Don’t assume the panelists know about you or people, places or
- \\
- pevents you mention in your application. Explain these items.

GRANT WRITING ADVICE

- Connect to the hearts of panelists.
- You want them to think: “I really want to go to that event!” or “Wow, how exciting!”
- It’s okay to convey your own excitement or enthusiasm.
- If applicable, write about the community that will benefit from your project or your inspiration. Include testimonials from audience members, audience stories, and/or improved lives.
- Tell us why your program/project matters.

GRANT WRITING ADVICE

Budget & Narrative Match

Your written narrative and your budget provide the same information in two different ways. Each needs to tell the same story.

For example, a cost included in the budget should be mentioned and explained in the narrative.

IN NARRATIVE	IN BUDGET
The concert will include 15 musicians	15 @ $100/ea = $1,500
We will be recording the concerts, using filmmaker Taylor Quinn and then posting them on social media and our website.	$600 - filmmaker and light editing

GRANT WRITING ADVICE

Commons Mistakes:

- Didn't read the guidelines: (It shows).
- Unclear: The panel can't tell what the request is all about.
- Incomplete: Unanswered questions lower your score.
- Mystery Budget: Expenses aren't explained.
- Padded Budget: Costs are made up or inflated.

Part 4

Grant Writing Samples

GRANT WRITING SAMPLES

Question From GAP Grant:

Project Details (6000 character limit with spaces)
Here's where you can write a detailed, clear, concise, and factual description of your event(s).

Address the questions below. (You do not have to address the questions separately - just make sure the information is included.)

- Describe the event - (what, where, when)
- Who are the participating artists? (summarize if there are multiple artists)
- Who is organizing the event?
- What are your goals? (i.e. audience size, make-up of audience, audience experience)
- Address demonstrated community interest based on past experience.
- Talk about program quality. Don't assume the panel knows anything about your organization or event.
- Address your funding needs. Note that the decision making panel will be closely examining your budget and will look to this narrative to understand your expenses. For example, if you have "marketing costs" in your budget, explain those in this section. If you have a "recording" cost in your budget, tell us what the recording is for. In other words, the budget should be explained in this narrative.

GRANT WRITING SAMPLES

Not-So-Great Answer:

Johnstown is a town that lost its industrial base twenty years ago, and suffered serious economic decline from which is never fully recovered. Not only has the town seen a loss of shops and municipal services, it has also lost population. In the 1970 census, Johnstown was listed as having over 30,000 people living within its town limits. Today, we have fewer than 22,000 people.

We have been presenting an important chamber music series in Johnstown since 1991, and regularly receive very positive press reviews for our efforts. Our exciting concerts are presented in the town's high school auditorium and are sometimes attended by over 50 people. Our ten musicians are drawn from the faculty of the local junior college, which was founded in 1982 and has several professional and technical degree programs. We perform a variety of music, from chamber to the moderns, and vary the ensemble to include trios, quartets and the full chamber orchestra.

We are proud of our ability to publicize our concerts widely, including a newspaper ad, local radio spots and a mailer to our membership. We hope the panel recognizes our significant accomplishments in this relatively poor community, and fully supports our request this year.

GRANT WRITING SAMPLES

Why the Answer Is Not-So-Great:

The panel is left with too many questions.
They would be unable to rate this request against the grant's criteria.

- *What is the connection of the town's decline to the events?*
- *The narrative just says "We have been presenting." Who is "We"?*
- *How many concerts are there a year? Two? Ten?*
- *When are the concerts? Weekends? Afternoons? Nights?*
- *Where are the concerts? Are the concerts scheduled yet?*
- *What is the content of each concert?*
- *Is there an admission fee?*
- *They say concerts are sometimes attended by 50 people. What about the rest of the time?*
- *Are these professional musicians? (It says they are faculty but are they music faculty?)*
- *They mention "the ensemble." Who is the ensemble?*
- *Who is the audience? Is it community members or students/fellow faculty from the college? (Without this information, the panel can't determine whether the audience is from the County the grant is serving.)*
- *No social media? It mentions a mailer to membership? How many/who is that? They may not be doing a great job getting the word out.*

GRANT WRITING SAMPLES

Not-So-Great Budget:

PROJECT EXPENSES	Provide Breakdown Below	A. TOTAL EXPENSES
Artistic Personnel	**5 x 3 x 100**	**$1,500**
Technical Personnel		
Space Rental		**$500**
Equip. Rental Supplies	**Music Stands**	**$350**
Travel		**$75**
Advertising Promotion		
Remaining Operating Expenses (itemize)	**Rental Scores, recording space**	**$550**
	TOTAL	**$2,975**

PROJECT INCOME	Provide Breakdown Below	B. TOTAL INCOME
Admissions		**$850**
Membership, Dues		
Contributions Individual		**$250**
Contributions Corporate		**$250**
Other (explain)		
	TOTAL	**$1,250**

GRANT WRITING SAMPLES

Why the Budget Is Not-So-Great:

The costs mentioned in the budget are not explained in the narrative or in the "budget breakdown" column.

- *Personnel: What is 5 x 3 x 100? Five concerts, three people each? Or three concerts, five people each? The narrative mentioned 10 musicians, so…*
- *Why do they need to buy music stands? What have they done in the past?*
- *What is the space rental for? The narrative didn't explain.*
- *Who is the $75 travel fee for?*
- *No advertising expenses. They mention newspaper ad and radio spots and postcards.*
- *What is "recording space"? Are they recording the concert? Is it for public access or just their own archive? (Because the latter wouldn't be fundable.)*
- *Apparently, they are charging admission. How did they end up with $850. 50 people at $17 each? Any sliding scale?*
- *Also, the income adds up incorrectly.*
- *Grant request number is incorrect. Should be expenses minus income.*

GRANT WRITING SAMPLES

Much Improved Answer:

The Johnstown Arts Group has been presenting chamber music concerts in Johnstown since 2015. Our ten current musicians are drawn from the music faculty of the local Johnstown Junior College. (See attachment for a brief paragraph about each musician.)

“JAG” performs a variety of music for community performances, from the classics to the moderns, and varies the ensemble to include trios, quartets, and the full group. Many of us play multiple instruments and the ensembles include string, woodwind, brass, and percussion. We enjoy making music together, and discovering new composers. Our mission is to share the music and our love for the music with our local community. This year we are concentrating on our rural communities and the local Latinx community.

The board of directors is made up of five of the musicians in the group who meet eight times a year and perform all tasks associated with the logistics of the concerts.

We have three concerts scheduled for 2027. The first will be on Sunday, February 9th at 2pm and will feature a quartet playing a piece by a New Mexico composer duo, Momoko Dern and Darnell Bean. Their music is a fusion of classical and jazz, and is very exciting and challenging to play. This concert will be in the rural town of Medusa at the Medusa Fire Hall, in collaboration with the Medusa Library.

The second concert will be in May and will feature the full chamber group (8 musicians) playing music by Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla. This concert will be in the city of Johnstown and will be co-sponsored by the Johnstown Latino Civic Association.

Much Improved Answer (con't):

The last concert will be in October. We do not yet know the program, although we are thinking of doing a concert of Aaron Copland's work that will celebrate our local service workers who we will invite.

Each concert will be on a Sunday and will start at 2pm. All will be held at ADA-compliant and accessible locations with ample parking and where locals tend to congregate.

We advertise the concert as free, although we will also suggest donations (no pressure) of $15 (or more) after each concert. We find that the best time to ask for donations is during applause and we have our musicians at the exits with empty drums for donations. We hope for $500 per concert.

Attendance at these concerts in the past has not been wonderful, although we have an enthusiastic core of followers. With the requested grant funds, along with new ideas and innovations, we would like to increase our audience size and visibility in the community. Our goal is to increase attendance from about 25 per concert to at least 75 and to bring in new audiences.

We will make a strong effort to interest families. One way to do this will be to work with our local libraries, such as Jean Morrow of the Johnstown Library (Youth Services and Community Engagement Director) to help spread the word. Jean has also invited our group to be featured in a separate family event, where we show families and children our instruments and how they work! We will also invite these audiences to our concerts. We believe that these individual invites are a great way to gain fans and spread the word.

Much Improved Answer (con't):

For 2027, we plan on beginning each concert with entertaining and interesting information about the composers and the work we will perform. We'll tell them what styles to look for as we play and signal them when that occurs. JAG members will encourage audience members to stay after the concert to chat and we plan on live Zooming with the living composers!

We would like part of the grant funds to help with the cost of publicity so that we can get the word out more effectively. We currently send out a mailer to our membership (150 people) and utilize whatever free publicity the local newspapers offer. This year we would also like to create a website for the group, gather more names for our mailings, print and distribute posters, put out road signage to inform everyone who drives through Johnstown on Route 78 to visit our website (everyone in town will see those signs!), send an e-blast using the college's listserv and pay for three print ads in the Johnstown paper (one before each concert). We will also work closely with the rural community not-for-profits and Medusa village offices and the Civic Association. We will use boosted Facebook events, and start using Instagram.

We would also like to pay the musicians $250 each for each performance. In the past we have only been able to pay $25 each. We pay a minimal fee of $150 per concert to the High School for a custodian ($450). We have recorded our concerts in the past, but have not shared the resulting videos. This year we would like to pay local filmmaker David Schmidt $200 per concert to both record and do some light editing.($600). We will post the edited videos on our new website.

GRANT BUDGET

Much Improved Budget:

PROJECT EXPENSES	Provide Breakdown Below	A. TOTAL EXPENSES
Artistic Personnel	1st concert: 4 musicians / 2nd: 8 musicians / 3rd: 3 musicians. Total 15 @ $250 each	$3,750
Technical Personnel		
Space Rental	Custodian for three concerts @ $150 each	$450
Equip. Rental & Supplies		
Travel		
Advertising Promotion	3 display ads @300 each ($900) / Social Media boosts ($250) 100 posters $50	$1,200
Remaining Operating Expenses (itemize)	Recording and editing	$600
	TOTAL	**$6,000**

PROJECT INCOME	Provide Breakdown Below	B. TOTAL INCOME
Admissions	Donations at three concerts.	$1,500
Membership, Dues		
Workshops, Sales		
Contributions Ind	Annual Donors	$500
Contributions Business	Johnstown Bank Contribution	$500
	TOTAL	**$2,500**

Grant Request: $3,500

NEXT STEPS

- Read the guidelines of the grant(s) are interested in.
- Email Robin ANYTIME with questions or for guidance.
- We recommend you complete the budget form first.
- Then work on the application (online or offline).
- Recommended: Send a draft of both the narrative and budget.
- START EARLY

Robin Schwartz
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ArtsPartner.org

MOVING FORWARD IF NOT FUNDED

- Each of our grants has very specific goals and criteria. Many good projects just don't fit, so not receiving funding is not necessarily about a project's worth.
- Ask for advice and feedback.
- If you'd like to apply again, we can talk about how to better fit our grant's criteria.

Thank you!

COMMUNITY
ARTS
PARTNERSHIP