



FY26 Arts Education Program Grant Guidelines

GCA supports all arts education programs and organizations, from small to large, emerging to established, traditional to contemporary, rural to urban, and community-based to professional.

Each year, grants go to first-time applicants and those who have applied for decades.

GCA encourages all eligible schools, organizations, and agencies to apply.

ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM GRANT • FY26 GUIDELINES

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BASIC INFORMATION – FY26 Arts Education Program Grant

Applicants should thoroughly review the FY26 Arts Education Program Grant Guidelines before preparing their application.

Grant Description: Arts Education Program Grants support Georgia Learning Standards-aligned arts learning projects for K-12 students by nonprofit organizations, local government agencies, libraries, or schools in Georgia.

Deadline: Friday, February 7, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.

Link to the online application: <http://gaarts.org/apply>

Training Webinar: An online training webinar will be recorded for potential applicants. A recording of this webinar will be available at <https://gaarts.org/grants/arts-education-program-grant/> after December 15th.

Grant Request: The minimum request is \$1,000, and the maximum request is \$5,000

Please Note: The Arts Education Program Grant is a reimbursement grant and requires a 50% match. Review the guidelines for detailed information.

Requirements: Online Application Form
Narrative Question Answers
Budget Form
Support Materials
IRS 501(c)3 Letter (only required for some applicants)

Questions

If you have questions about the Arts Education Program Grant application, guidelines, or the application process, please contact Emily Yewell Volin, Grants and Arts Education Programs Manager, at evolin@gaarts.org or 404-962-4015.

People with disabilities requiring assistance with this information or information in a different format, please contact:

Karen Hampton, Accessibility Coordinator
khampton@georgia.org ▪ 404-962-4097

Changes for GCA Arts Education Program Grant in FY26

For the past five years, GCA's grant budget has been supplemented by federal COVID relief funds, which are no longer available. Beginning in FY26, GCA's grant funding will return to pre-COVID levels.

For FY26, GCA has changed the guidelines for the Arts Education Program Grant.

Significant Changes include:

- The minimum request is \$1,000 and the maximum is \$5,000.
- There is no longer a partnership requirement for the Arts Education Program Grant application.
- Applicants may only apply to the Arts Education Program, the Project Grant, or the General Operating Support Grant during FY26. Applicants may apply for only one of these three grant programs.
- Public Schools:
 - Can submit contact information for the school principal and district superintendent in cases where a School Council or Advisory Board are not in place.
 - Can submit an annual operating budget or a district operating budget instead of a 3-year organizational budget.
- Applicants will not include ineligible expenses in the application budget form.
- Applications will be scored in five categories:
 - Arts Education Program Design Goals and Evaluation (20 points)
 - Student Impact and Accessibility (20 points)
 - Program Effectiveness (20 points)
 - Georgia Learning Standards Alignment and Assessment (20 points)
 - Ability to Complete the Program (20 points)

Projects for Students: Should We Apply for a Project Grant or Arts Education Program Grant?

Organizations with community-based arts enrichment programs for Pre-K-12 students, such as summer camps, should apply for Project Grants.

Organizations developing projects for K-12 students with school curriculum and/or focus on delivering Georgia Learning Standards-based or multidisciplinary programs, including arts instruction, should apply for Arts Education Program Grants.

If you have questions about the type of grant that best suits your project, don't hesitate to contact GCA Grants Staff.

INTRODUCTION

GCA Mission

The mission of the Georgia Council for the Arts is to cultivate the growth of vibrant, thriving Georgia communities through the arts.

Introduction to Arts Education Program Grant

GCA believes that the arts can transform students, classrooms, and schools. Our Arts Education Program Grant supports schools and organizations whose work demonstrates the meaningful intersection between excellence in the arts and education for K-12 students.

Grant Description

The Arts Education Program Grant supports arts education programs produced by Georgia organizations, schools, or agencies. Programs may be one-time events, such as an arts assembly or visiting artist program, or a series of events, such as a teaching artist residency, afterschool program, or summer arts program, and align with Georgia Learning Standards. Programs with multiple components must demonstrate that there is a cohesive thread and singular goal that ties the elements together. The program must serve K-12 students; however, programming does not have to occur at a school or during school hours.

FY26 Arts Education Program Grant applications may request support for virtual programs, which may be live-streamed or recorded.

The grant amount ranges from \$1,000 to \$5,000. Applicants may only submit one Arts Education Program Grant application during FY26. Organizations must choose to apply for only one of the following FY26 grant programs: General Operating Support, Project Grant, or Arts Education Program Grant.

Notes on GCA Grants

GCA believes that the arts can transform communities, and our grants support organizations whose work significantly benefits the people served.

We ask that you keep the following in mind when applying for an Arts Education Program Grant:

- The guidelines and application process vary from year to year. Applicants should read the guidelines thoroughly each year. **Please reference page four of this guidelines packet to see a list of major changes to the FY26 arts education grant.**
- Arts Education Program Grants are awarded to all types of schools and organizations, from large to small, urban to rural, and first-time applicants to experienced grantees. GCA strongly encourages all kinds of eligible schools, organizations, and agencies to apply.

- GCA grants are **reimbursement grants**. This means that the grant recipient organization will expend funds on the items proposed in the grant application budget and then request reimbursement for a percentage of those expenses.
- Applicants awarded FY26 Arts Education Program Grants will receive the total amount requested in the application unless the requested amount exceeds \$5,000 or is incorrect based on the total expenses or cash match.
- Because of the large number of applicants, GCA staff cannot preview applications or check to ensure their completion.
- The limits of GCA's budget determine how many applicants the agency can fund, so some deserving applicants will not receive grants.
- The highest score awarded to an application varies yearly, as do the number of applicants, the number of applications funded, and the funding cutoff score. For instance, a score of 85 one year may result in a grant, while the following year may not be high enough for the applicant to be funded.
- Grant review panelists will not consider outside information when scoring. They will only score based on information that is included in the application. Grant funding decisions are based solely on the application score. An applicant's grant history with GCA, size, location, discipline, etc., will not affect FY26 funding decisions.
- Grant review panelists come from all over the state, so make sure that the application narrative communicates with people who may not be familiar with your community or organization.
- GCA organizes panels by program budget size to evaluate each application within a grouping of programs with similar resources.
- All panels are multi-disciplinary, so make sure your application is understandable to people outside your artistic discipline.
- Applications are reviewed by different panelists yearly, so do not assume that panelists know your organization's past applications or history with GCA.
- Applications that are late or are not complete will be ruled ineligible and will not be reviewed by the panel. Applicants may not submit the missing material after the grant deadline. Applicants may not change information that has been submitted after the deadline. Double-check your application before submitting it to ensure it is complete and accurate.
- If you discover that your submitted application is missing the required information or you need to change information, GCA staff members can reopen your application if the deadline has not passed. You must notify GCA staff with enough time that the application may be reopened, you can make the edits, and you can resubmit the application before the deadline.

GCA staff members want to do all we can to assist you with your application. Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail us for assistance with your application. **Staff members can assist until the office closes at 5 pm on Friday, February 7, 2025.**

FY26 ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM GRANT GUIDELINES

Eligible Applicants

All eligible applicants must:

- Be located in Georgia.
- Have completed all requirements of any GCA or State of Georgia grant received in or prior to FY24. Organizations that received FY25 grants may apply for FY26 funding.

Performing arts groups such as a band or a chamber music quartet organized as non-profits will be eligible to apply if a majority of the group's members live in Georgia.

An eligible applicant must be one of the following:

- A non-profit organization located within Georgia and registered with the Georgia Secretary of State and the IRS; organizations must have attained non-profit status before the grant deadline of February 7, 2025.
- A school
- A public library
- A government department or agency, such as a city, county, or local authority
- An entity within a college or university that:
 - has its own community advisory board (see definition on page 21)
 - receives at least 20% of its income for the program from outside of the college/university
 - is not an academic department within the college/university
 - manages its own budget

Who is NOT eligible to apply?

- Individuals
- Organizations with fiscal agents
- Organizations that do not have their own IRS 501(c)3 non-profit status
- Corporations or for-profit businesses
- Organizations that are based outside of Georgia

Schools, School Foundations, and PTAs/PTOs

GCA will only accept one grant application serving a specific school in a fiscal year. Schools or school systems may apply, foundations supporting a school may apply, or PTAs/PTOs may apply; however, more than one of these entities may not apply in the same year for a program serving the same school.

Parent Organizations and State Chapters

GCA will accept applications from parent organizations but not fiscal agents. GCA defines a parent organization as one with which a subsidiary entity has a long-term, legal relationship, and the parent organization has the ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the entity. A fiscal agent is an organization that allows an applicant entity to apply for funding using the fiscal agent's non-profit status but does not have a legal, binding, long-term relationship with the applicant, nor does it ultimately have fiduciary responsibility.

Organizations with a parent organization based in another state but with a chapter in Georgia may apply for arts education program support for the Georgia chapter; however, they must meet the following requirements:

- The chapter must have programming in Georgia.
- The chapter must be registered with the Georgia Secretary of State.
- The chapter must have a Georgia business address.
- The organization registration in GCA's online grant system must use the Georgia chapter address.
- Proposed programming in the application must take place in Georgia.
- All GCA grant funds, and at least the required matching amount, must be spent on programs in Georgia.
- The budget included in the application must only cover Georgia program expenses.
- Except for the description of the overall organization, the application narrative must focus only on Georgia programs.
- The applicant must have an advisory board specifically for the Georgia chapter.

Debarment and Suspension Policy

GCA will not award any grant to applicants who are or have in the past been debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from receiving funds from federal agencies. Additionally, GCA will not award any grants to applicants who, within the past three (3) years:

- Have been found liable in civil court for or criminally guilty of fraud.
- Have been found liable in civil court for or been found criminally guilty of any crime related to obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public transaction or contract.
- Have been found liable in civil court or been found criminally guilty of any violation of federal or state antitrust statutes, embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.
- Are currently under indictment for any crimes mentioned above.
- Have had a public transaction terminated for cause or default.
- Have been deemed ineligible to do business with the federal government under any statute or regulation.

If an applicant's application is awarded, applicants will be required to certify their eligibility for the award under this policy. If an applicant knows that the applicant is ineligible under this policy, the applicant should not submit an application. If the applicant is unable to certify to GCA that the applicant is eligible under this policy, the applicant will be required to provide an explanation. If GCA determines that an applicant who has received a grant was or has become ineligible under this policy, GCA will cancel the grant.

Eligible Applications

Eligible applications must:

- Include Georgia Learning Standards-aligned arts education programming for K-12 students that takes place in Georgia and is completed between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.
- Include at least a 50% cash match in the budget.
- Utilize a venue or location accessible to people with physical disabilities.
- Not include programming that promotes a specific religious doctrine, political party, or candidate.
- Be submitted and received through GCA's online grant application system with no missing components by the **February 7, 2025, deadline at 11:59 p.m.**

Applications that do not meet these criteria will be ruled ineligible and will not be reviewed. Applicants may not submit additional material after the deadline.

Eligible Projects

All proposed projects must be **ARTS EDUCATION** projects. Eligible arts education projects include both in-person and virtual arts education projects. Arts education projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Performing Arts (dance, music, theatre, musical theatre, opera, storytelling, puppetry, and performance art)
- Visual Arts (two-dimensional, three-dimensional, photography, and digital)
- Media Arts (film, video, and audio)
- Literary Arts (poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction)
- Folk & Traditional Arts (music, dance, theatre, storytelling, and crafts)
- Public Art (murals, sculpture, public concerts, and performances)
- Multidisciplinary Arts Education Projects
- Education in any of the arts fields referenced above, including workshops, classes, demonstrations, and field trips
- Artist Residencies
- Arts Integration
- STEAM (arts integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)

GCA does not fund the following:

- Projects that are primarily science, social science, or history-based
- Culinary arts
- Fashion

- Competitive dance
- Martial arts
- Magic shows, circus arts, balloon twisters, parades, fireworks, or reenactments
- Body art, such as face painting, body painting, or tattoos
- Non-arts recreation, such as inflatable jumpers, petting zoos, 5K races or other athletic events
- Topiary/landscape art
- Interior design or beautification projects
- Renovations that are not specific to the implementation of an arts education project
- Equipment or furniture that is not specific to the implementation of an arts education project
- Signage that is not specific to the implementation of an arts education project

If you are unsure whether your organization or project is eligible for an FY26 Arts Education Program Grant, don't hesitate to contact GCA staff for clarification.

Arts Education Program Eligibility

Arts education programs eligible for funding include Georgia Learning Standards-aligned:

- Arts programs delivered to K-12 students in a variety of disciplines, including visual art, music, theatre, dance, media arts, and creative writing
- In-school, after-school, or summer arts programs delivered to K-12 students
- Arts integration or STEAM programs in K-12 classrooms
- Teaching artist residencies in K-12 classrooms
- Arts assembly programs at K-12 schools
- Virtual programs delivered to K-12 students, including live streaming and recorded programs

Applicant programs should address a specific need within a particular school or among a specific student population and have measurable outcomes.

Applicant programs must be aligned with Georgia Learning Standards in Fine Arts and, if arts-integrated or STEAM, also align with the Georgia Learning Standards for the core content areas involved in the program: <https://inspire.gadoe.org/standards>.

Applicant programs must include an assessment for the Georgia Learning Standards in Fine Arts and, if relevant, the core content standards listed in the application.

For multi-disciplinary projects, the budget must be exclusively for the **ARTS EDUCATION** component(s).

Eligible programs may include professional development in the program scope and budget but may not be solely comprised of professional development.

The Arts Education Program Grant is intended to fund a specific program or project, not to support all of the annual programming for an organization or school.

Funding Limitations

Unfortunately, GCA cannot fund all the worthy organizations or schools that apply for funding. As a result, panelists are trained to evaluate applications with consideration given to thoughtful programs that will most significantly benefit the students of Georgia and with clear measures to demonstrate the program's positive impact.

GCA K12 Teaching Artist Registry Resource

The Georgia Council for the Arts K-12 Teaching Artists Registry features experienced teaching artists skilled in various arts disciplines who are available to work with K-12 students statewide. All artists are background-checked and competitively evaluated, ensuring high-quality performances, workshops, and residencies for schools and organizations.

Professional Learning Providers in the registry can create custom programs, and artists with GCA STEAM-Ready Designation are specially trained to meet Georgia STEAM-certified school requirements.

Please note that the FY26 Arts Education Program Grant does *not* require hiring a registry artist. To work with a registry artist, contact them directly via the information included on their profile page. Teaching artists independently manage their fees, availability, and bookings. Link to the Georgia Teaching Artists K12 Registry: <https://gaarts.org/arts-education/teaching-artists-registry/>.

Funding Request

Applicants may request no less than \$1,000 and no more than \$5,000. The grant request may not exceed 66% of the total project expenses. The budget must show a 50% cash match for the requested amount.

GCA grants are **matching grants**. This means the grant recipient must raise income from other sources to pay for a portion of the organization's operating expenses proposed in the grant application budget. The required match for Arts Education Program Grants is 50%. This means that the organization must raise at least one-third (1/3) of the income for the project from sources other than the grant and must have expenses that are at least 1.5 times the grant amount. For example, if an organization receives a grant for \$5,000, then the income from other sources must be at least \$2,500, and the total expenses must be at least \$7,500.

GCA grants are **reimbursement grants**. This means that the grant recipient organization will expend funds on the items proposed in the grant application budget and then request reimbursement for a percentage of those expenses.

Use of Funds

The funds may be used for any eligible arts project expenses within the funding period (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026). Eligible uses of the grant include, but are not limited to, arts education program-related salaries or fees, rent, utilities, programming expenses, accessibility needs, marketing, insurance, etc. See the complete list of ineligible expenses on page 20 of the Guidelines.

Deadline

The application with all required components must be uploaded entirely into GCA's online grant application system no later than **11:59 p.m. on February 7, 2025**. **GCA strongly encourages applicants to submit the application well before the deadline so that there is time to upload all attachments and request technical assistance, if necessary.** No changes to the application can be made, nor will additional material be accepted after the deadline.

If an applicant wants to amend a submitted application, the applicant must contact a GCA staff member before the grant deadline. There must be enough time for the staff member to reopen the application and for the applicant to make the needed changes and resubmit the application before the deadline. GCA staff members can reopen an application, but the applicant must make the changes and resubmit the application before the deadline.

Please Note: GCA staff will not be available to assist with questions or resolve technical issues after 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 7, 2025, the day of the application deadline.

GCA will not accept applications after the deadline for any reason, including technical issues with the applicant's computer system or problems with the online application system that occur after the **GCA office closes at 5:00 PM on Friday, February 7, 2025**.

Applicants may submit their applications any time before the deadline. However, to be fair to all applicants, the deadline is not flexible, and GCA cannot allow applicants to amend their applications after the deadline.

Ineligible Applications

Applications submitted after the deadline that do not contain all of the required information or are submitted by applicants who do not meet the eligibility guidelines will be ineligible. The panel will not review them. Additional information will not be accepted after the deadline.

These are the most common reasons that applications are deemed ineligible for review; however, this list does not include every reason an application may be deemed ineligible for review:

- The application is missing the required information.
- The applicant does not use the budget and budget breakdown form provided by GCA.
- The budget form is blank.
- The project occurs outside the grant period (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026).
- The applicant uploads incorrect or incomplete files for the budget, budget breakdown, Board list, or support materials.
- The program is not an arts education program.
- The program does not align with Georgia Learning Standards.
- The applicant is not eligible to apply for GCA funding.
- The application is submitted after the deadline.

Can you submit BOTH an Arts Education Program Grant application AND...			
a General Operating Support Grant application?	a Project Grant application?	a Vibrant Communities Grant application?	a Cultural Facilities Grant
NO	NO	MAYBE	YES
		If your organization is not awarded an Arts Education Program Grant, check the Vibrant Communities Grant guidelines in July to see if your organization is eligible to apply for Vibrant Communities.	

False Information

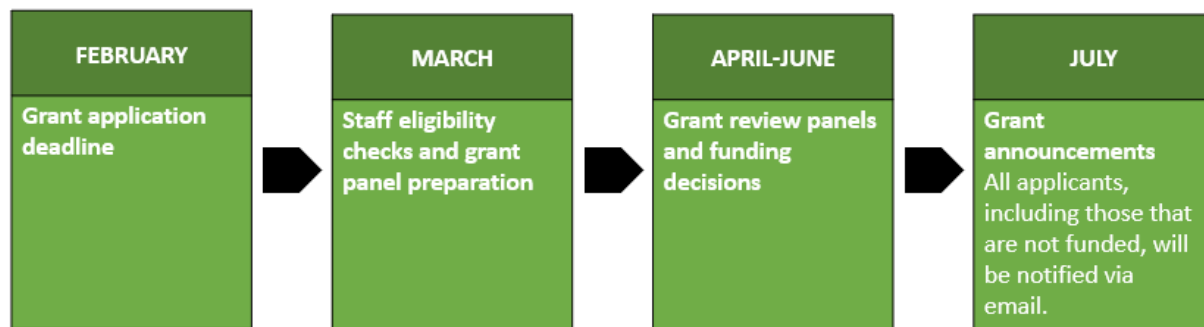
Any grant award made based on false, misleading, or otherwise misrepresented information in the application may be canceled by GCA at any time, at GCA’s sole discretion.

Accessibility

Any program funded by a GCA grant, in whole or in part, must take place at a location that is physically accessible to all Georgia citizens. In addition, we ask grantees to take all steps possible within reason for the organization's budget size to increase programmatic accessibility. For instance, a theatre production could include sign language interpreters and assistive listening devices to make the program accessible to people with hearing disorders. Applicants may include the cost of access accommodations as part of their project’s budget, including sign language interpreters, audio describers, and other accessibility professionals.

For information and guidance on making your programs accessible to people with disabilities, review the [Accessibility Planning and Resource Guide for Cultural Administrators](#) and the [Brief Accessibility Checklist](#) on the National Endowment of the Arts website. Additional accessibility information may be found on GCA’s website at <https://gaarts.org/tools-for-advancement/accessibility/>.

Arts Education Program Grant Timeline



APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All FY26 applications must be submitted through GCA's online grant application system. Applicants may access this system at <http://gaarts.org/apply>.

If you have already set up an account in GCA's online grant application system

Enter your e-mail address and password on the login page and click **Log On**. If you forgot your password, click **Forgot your Password?**, and an email to reset it will be sent to the e-mail address of the organization's contact person.

If this does not work or the contact person is no longer at your organization, please submit a Change of Information Form under the Apply tab in the online grant system. GCA will verify the new contact person and e-mail the new login information. Please note: this may take up to a week.

If you have not set up an account in GCA's online grant application system

On the login page, click **Create New Account** and enter the required registration information. Once you have entered the information, click **Create Account**. You will be taken to the Email Confirmation page to confirm that you are receiving emails from the system. Follow the onscreen instructions and click the **Continue** button to finish the registration process.

Completing the Online Application

When you complete these steps, you will land on the **Apply Page**. This page will display any open grants to which you may apply. To start a request, click on the blue **Apply** button under the grant you would like to apply for.

Once in the application:

- If you want a copy of the application, click the **Question List** button.
- Once you have completed the form, you may click the **Application Packet** button to download a copy of the questions and your responses.
- Note that fields with an asterisk (*) are required.
- The system will auto-save every 100 characters typed or every time you click out of a field.
- Some fields have character limits. Responses that are longer than the set limit will be saved, ***but*** an error message will appear informing you that the limit has been exceeded. You will not be allowed to submit the form until the length of the response has been decreased.
- If you save and exit the system, you will access the draft of your application from your **Dashboard** the next time you log in. Pick up where you left off by clicking the pencil icon to the right of the request.
- The Collaborate feature allows multiple individuals to work on a single application. With this feature, applicants may also add a new user for their organization's account in GCA's online grant system. The Collaborate feature helps address several common scenarios, including:
 - Multiple applicants from an organization need to work together on a request.
 - An applicant needs someone else to upload a document, fill out certain questions, or sign off on their request (e.g., a fiscal sponsor or executive director).
 - An applicant needs an efficient way for someone else to view and (in some cases) submit their request.
 - An organization works with a grant writer.
 - An organization has a new staff member who would like to submit a request.

Below are the basics of how this feature works:

- One applicant must go through registration as usual. Once they open the first form in the process, they will see the option to invite collaborators to the request in the top right corner of the page.
- After the applicant clicks Collaborate, they will see a pop-up that prompts them to enter the email address of the person they're inviting to collaborate, type a message, and select the collaborator's permission level (view, edit, or submit).
- Within the collaborator pop-up, the applicant can also manage existing collaborators. They can resend an invitation, change permission levels, or remove a collaborator from their request.

Requirements

The following items are required as part of the application.

Applicants will complete this information using the online application:

- General Information
- Arts Education Program Details and Narrative Questions

Applicants will complete or create these items and attach them to the online application:

- Program Budget Form (including breakdowns)

- Board of Directors/Community Advisory Committee List (**Not required of public schools**)
- Support Material
- IRS 501(c)(3) Letter (required only of some applicants)

The following pages outline the specifics of each required application section. **Please do not submit any additional material other than what is requested, as the panel will not evaluate it.**

ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM DETAILS AND NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

You must answer the following questions within the online application. Do not embed links to outside sources in your narrative. Panelists are not required to follow these links. If you want to direct the panel to a website, include that link in the Support Material.

Arts Education Program Details

- Choose a short title for your program.
- Arts Education Program Type: please choose one of the options provided in the online application.
- Enter the Program Start and End Dates.
- Enter the number of individuals who will benefit from the proposed project, including participating adults, children/youth, and artists.

Narrative Questions

Unless otherwise indicated, there is a 1,500-character limit to the answer for each question.

Arts Education Program Design, Goals, and Evaluation

- Fully describe the arts education program for which funding is being requested. Include the specific arts education activities that will take place and where.
- What are the goals of the arts education program described above?
- How will the stated program goals be measured?

Student Impact and Accessibility

- Who is the target student audience for the proposed arts education program, and how will the program engage them? Will the proposed arts education program benefit the students who are the target audience in a meaningful way? How did consideration of student needs inform the program design?
- In addition to ensuring ADA compliance for physical accessibility of the space being utilized for the program, what action(s), if any, will the applicant take to increase access to the program for people with specific physical, hearing, vision, or other disabilities? For school applicants, how will the program address the needs of students with IEP or 504 plans? For information and guidance on making your programs physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities, review the [Accessibility Planning and Resource Guide for Cultural Administrators](#) and the [Brief Accessibility Checklist](#) on the National Endowment of the Arts website. Additional accessibility information may be found on GCA's website at <https://gaarts.org/tools-for-advancement/accessibility/>.

- How will the applicant implement the proposed program to accommodate students who are underserved? GCA defines underserved students as those who lack access to arts education because of any barrier, such as language, geography, economic status, etc.

Program Effectiveness

- Describe the relevant knowledge, qualifications, and experience of:
 - the program's management
 - artistic personnel
 - academic personnel
 - teaching artists (if applicable)
- Provide an example of recent programming produced by the applicant that demonstrates impactful work in arts education. If the applicant does not have a history of creating, presenting, or producing arts education programs, describe how the applicant institution is prepared to deliver impactful work in arts education.

Georgia Learning Standards Alignment, Assessment, and Curriculum Design

- List the Georgia Learning Standards that align with this program. All proposed programs must list learning standards and assessment measures based on the Fine Arts Learning Standards. If the proposed program is an arts integration or STEAM program, the application must list standards and assessment measures from the included Fine Arts content area(s) and the Core Content area(s). A complete list of Georgia Learning Standards is available at <https://inspire.gadoe.org/standards>.
- Is the program designed as part of a sequential and ongoing curriculum?
 - If so, describe how the program fits within the appropriate sequential and ongoing curriculum.
 - If not, explain how the program contributes to student learning through academic progress, knowledge building, career exploration, and/or skills development in the specified artistic discipline(s).

ATTACHMENTS

The following items must be attached to your online application:

- Arts Education Program Grant Budget Form (including budget breakdowns)
- Board of Directors/Community Advisory Committee List – Public schools may list the school principal and district superintendent if no School Council or Advisory Council are in place.
- Support Material
- IRS 501(c)3 letter (required only for some applicants)

Please keep the following in mind when attaching documents:

- File upload fields will only accept one file per field.
- Upload fields have size limits. If you attempt to upload a file larger than the set MB limit, you will receive an error message that the file is too large and **will not** be saved.

- GCA will only accept Word (.doc or .docx), Excel (.xls or .xlsx), or PDF (.pdf) files. If you attempt to upload a file in an unaccepted format, you will receive a warning and will not be able to upload the file.
- Once a file has been uploaded, it may be deleted by clicking the red X next to the file name, and then a new file can be uploaded.
- Put the organization's name in a header or footer on each document in case panelists print out your material.
- If you scan material, ensure it does not appear blurry, sideways, or upside down on screen.

BUDGET FORM

NOTE: *To reduce applicant errors in the budget section of the application, applicants will use a budget form, which combines the budget and budget breakdowns and automatically transfers the totals from the breakdowns to the budget. Applicants should NOT recreate the Budget Breakdown Form. If applicants cannot figure out how to complete the form, they should contact GCA Grants Staff for assistance.*

Complete the FY26 Arts Education Program Grant Budget Form and attach it to the application. The form can be found at <https://gaarts.org/grants/arts-education-program-grant/>. The form contains a series of worksheets, the first of which is the Arts Education Program Budget Form.

Section 1

The first part of the form asks for a Three-Year Budget Comparison. In this chart, enter your organization's total operating income and expenses for your most recently completed fiscal year, your current fiscal year, and the upcoming fiscal year. The figures you enter should be your organization's overall operating budget/actuals, not the budget/actuals for the project alone. In this section, schools should include either the school's annual operating budget or the district's operating budget for the current year only.

Section 2

Section 2 asks for a budget for the program for which you are requesting support. **The budget submitted with this application must be for a project that takes place during GCA's FY26, which is July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026.**

- The lines highlighted on the budget form require a breakdown.
- There are eight subsequent worksheets corresponding to the eight budget lines requiring breakdowns.
- The breakdowns should list the components that make up the total for that budget line. The ninth additional worksheet is for any in-kind donations.
- **The totals on the worksheets will automatically populate the main budget on the first spreadsheet.**

GCA grants are matching grants. Therefore, the income side of the budget asks you to show where the funds will come from to match the grant request amount.

Please keep the following in mind when completing the application Budget Form:

- Do not include in-kind in the income or expense parts of the budget. In-kind will be listed in a separate question on the budget form.
- Include the entire budget for the proposed program, not just the portion that you hope to pay for through the grant.
- The grant request may not exceed 66% of total expenses.
- You may prorate overhead expenses into the budget for the program.
- The total income and expenses do not have to be equal; however, the total expenses should not be more than total income.

Under expenses, the budget includes five categories:

- **Personnel – Administrative:** This is the budget for employees in an administrative role who will receive a W2. Salaries for school or nonprofit employees working on the program in an administrative role may be pro-rated based on the percentage of their time allocated to the program and included in this figure.
- **Personnel – Artistic:** This is the budget for employees in an artistic role who will receive a W2. Salaries for school or nonprofit employees working on the program in an artistic role may be pro-rated based on a percentage of their time allocated to the program and included in this figure.
- **Outside Fees:** This is the budget for contractors in any role, including artists and accessibility professionals, who will receive a 1099.
- **Marketing:** This is the budget for all marketing expenses, including print (printed programs and guides, brochures, postcards, mailers, etc.), broadcast (television and radio), and digital (website, email marketing, social media ads, web-based ads, etc.).
- **Remaining Expenses:** This is the budget for all other expenses, such as rent or mortgage, utilities, insurance, travel, supplies, equipment, maintenance, and professional services.

Under income, the budget includes several categories, some of which require breakdowns and some that do not. For the categories that include breakdowns, it is helpful for panelists to know if income line items are confirmed, estimated, or proposed. Notes in the budget breakdown might look like this:

- \$1,000 XYZ Foundation Confirmed by a letter from the foundation
- \$2,000 ABC Foundation Estimated based on previous contributions
- \$5,000 LMNOP Foundation Proposed – first-time request submitted

The percentage of salaries for employees working on the program and paid by the applicant nonprofit or school may be included under the appropriate income category, such as school, school district, or applicant cash, and count toward the required match.

The following budget-related issues will cause an application to be ruled ineligible:

- The budget is missing either expenses or income.
- Expenses are more than income.

- The budget is missing breakdowns.
- The budget breakdowns differ significantly from the budget itself.

Ineligible Expenses

Due to prohibitions in the Georgia Constitution, by other state regulations, or by policy, there are expenses that the Georgia Council for the Arts does not fund. **Ineligible expenses should not be included in the budget.**

The following are ineligible expenses:

- Capital expenditures or equipment, which are permanent fixtures or equipment with a useful life of over one year that cost more than \$5,000. This includes:
 - Buildings or real estate
 - Renovations or improvements involving structural changes
 - Roads, driveways, parking lots, or other related projects or repairs
 - Permanent or generally immobile equipment
- Fundraising event expenses (fundraising events are events planned to raise money that are not related to the organization’s mission)
- Programming outside of Georgia
- Tuition for college/university study
- Scholarships, prizes, or endowment funds
- Debt and interest associated with capital expenditures
- Depreciation
- Bad debt
- Alcohol, concessions, food or drinks
- Entertainment expenses (receptions, refreshments, parties, staff or cast parties, staff awards, flowers, etc.)
- Late registration fees for conferences
- Fees paid to lobbyists
- Travel and accommodation expenses that are over the rate allowed by the state of Georgia (see <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120> for a breakdown of travel rates)
- Any air travel not on a U.S. flag air carrier or a foreign air carrier under an air transport agreement with the United States when these services are available
- Prohibited telecommunications and video surveillance services and equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities
- Goods for resale, including concessions, promotional merchandise, clothing, or other items purchased for sale
- Improvements to arts facilities that also serve as private residences
- Any expenses labeled as miscellaneous, other, additional expenses, discretionary expenses, slush fund, etc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS/COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE LIST

Choose the following category for your organization and follow the instructions for listing your board/community advisory committee. At the end of the list, briefly describe the total contributions (monetary and/or in-kind) made by board members.

Non-Profit Organizations

List the following for each Board member:

- Name
- Position on board (if applicable)
- Corporate, business, or community affiliation
- Number of years on the board
- Board term end date
- City and County of residence

Schools

List the following:

- School Principal
 - Principal Name
 - Title
 - School Name
 - City and County of School
- District Superintendent
 - Superintendent Name
 - Title
 - School District Name
 - City and County of Board of Education Office

Units of Government or Libraries

A **Community Advisory Committee** must be established that provides oversight to the organization or agency. At least 60% of the committee's members must be from the organization's community, not government officials or staff.

List the following for each Committee member:

- Name
- Position on committee (if applicable)
- Corporate, business, or community affiliation
- Number of years on the committee
- Affiliation (government official, staff of organization, or community member)
- City and County of residence

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Support Material refers to material submitted by an applicant in addition to the other required material detailed elsewhere in the guidelines. Support material may include any material submitted by an applicant that gives panelists a deeper understanding of the arts education program. This could consist of selections from lesson/unit plans, study guides, teacher guides, and evaluation instruments. Photos of artists and/or instructors working with students may also be submitted. Support material may also include resumes, letters of support, surveys, survey results, sketches, videos, etc. You may also include details in the Support Material that you could not include in the narrative.

The Support Material for each applicant must include a work sample demonstrating the quality of the organization's work and/or the artists involved with the program. For example, a dance company could include a video of a performance or lesson, a museum could consist of photos of work that will be exhibited and a sample teachers' guide, or a school program could show examples of student work, curriculum, and assessments used in past years. Panelists will be evaluating program efficiency, so include enough material that the panel can assess the impact of the work that will take place. **Applications that do not include a work sample will be ineligible for review.**

- The minimum requirement for Support Material is a single work sample (i.e., one video, audio sample, excerpt, photo, lesson plan, study guide, etc.). The maximum amount of Support Material is:
 - 10 pages total within a single PDF document
 - 5 minutes of audio/video
- The 10 pages can be comprised of photos, links to websites, or documents.
- Audio/video samples should be included as internet links. Please briefly describe the material that panelists will see/hear in your sample. Online samples may be any length, but panelists are only required to watch/listen to five (5) minutes of material.
- Do not provide links to Dropbox, Google, Hightail, or any other file-sharing service.
- The size limit for Support Material PDF files is 20 MB.

IRS 501(c)(3) LETTER (only required of some applicants)

A non-profit applicant who has never received a GCA grant or has not received a grant from GCA since FY19 should include a copy of the organization's IRS 501(c)(3) letter. A letter from the state indicating that the applicant has non-profit status cannot be submitted in place of the IRS 501(c)(3) letter. A nonprofit organization that does not have 501(c)(3) status by the grant deadline date is not eligible to apply. ***This requirement does not apply to state college/university entities, government entities, public schools, or organizations funded by GCA since FY23.***

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

When all of the fields are complete, apply by clicking the Submit button on the last page of the application. If any required fields are not completed or a response to a text question type is longer than the set limit, the system will not allow the application to be submitted. An error message will appear listing the fields that need to be completed or edited. These fields are outlined in red so they are easy to identify. GCA must receive the application before **11:59 PM on Friday, February 7, 2025.**

PANEL REVIEW PROCESS

After the grant application deadline, GCA staff will review submitted applications to ensure all required material is included. Complete applications will be forwarded to panelists for review. Incomplete applications or applications submitted by ineligible applicants will be ineligible for review and will not be forwarded to grant review panels. Applicants will be notified if the application is not sent to the grant panel.

GCA works to assemble diverse grant panels based on the panelists' artistic disciplines, residency within the state, ethnicity, gender, organization size, experience, etc. School applications will be adjudicated together with other school applications.

Panels are organized by program budget size so that each proposed program is evaluated alongside programs with similar resources.

GCA staff members prepare a report on applicants who did not fulfill the requirements of previous grants, such as late final reports or incomplete projects. Panelists read the applications and staff reports and submit preliminary scores and comments. An overall preliminary score for each applicant is determined by dropping the highest and lowest scores and averaging the remaining scores. Panelists are then provided access to preliminary scores and comments from the other panelists.

Following a review of preliminary scores and comments from peer panelists, the panelists are allowed to amend their preliminary scores. Once the application scores are finalized, the high and low scores are dropped, and the remaining panel scores are averaged to calculate the applicant's final score.

Once all panels are complete, all applicants are ranked by score for each grant type. Applicants with the highest scores in each grant category are funded. GCA funds as many applicants as possible, moving down the list of organizations until the grant funds are exhausted.

Scoring

Panelists will use this scoring matrix to inform their scoring decisions:

Maximum available points	POOR	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
20	1-2	3-5	6-10	11-16	17-20

Criteria

Panelists will evaluate the applications based on the following criteria:

Arts Education Program Design, Goals, and Evaluation (20 points)

- Is the arts education program description specific, clear, and realistic?
- Does the applicant have clear, measurable, attainable goals for the program?
- Does the applicant have a method to evaluate their success at achieving the identified goal(s)?

Student Impact and Accessibility (20 points)

- Is there a clear target student audience and an explanation for how the program will engage that audience?
- Will this program benefit the students who are the target audience in a meaningful way?
- Did consideration of student needs inform the program design?
- In addition to utilizing an accessible venue, are any practices being implemented to improve the experience for students with specific hearing, vision, or other disabilities? For school applicants, will the program address the needs of students with IEP or 504 plans?
- Are there any practices being implemented to accommodate students with language, geographic, economic, or other barriers?

Program Excellence (20 points)

- Does the applicant have knowledgeable people managing the program?
- Are knowledgeable, qualified, and experienced artistic personnel and/or teaching artists involved in the program?
- Are knowledgeable, qualified, and experienced academic personnel and/or management involved in the program?

Georgia Learning Standards Alignment, Assessment, and Curriculum Design (20 points)

- Does the arts education program effectively align with and include assessment for grade-level appropriate Georgia Learning Standards in Fine Arts?
- If the proposal is for an arts integration or STEAM program, does the program effectively align with the assessment for grade-level appropriate Georgia Learning Standards in Fine Arts and the relevant core content area(s)?
- Is the arts education program a meaningful part of a sequential and ongoing curriculum or other identified program representing academic progress?

Organizational Capacity and Fiscal Stability (20 points)

- Does the applicant institution have the capacity to deliver the proposed program?
 - Is the program budget sufficient for the proposed program?
 - Are the income goals reasonable?
 - If the applicant is a school, is the Principal and Superintendent information provided?
-

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about the Arts Education Program Grant, please contact Emily Yewell Volin, Grants and Arts Education Programs Manager, at evolin@qaarts.org or 404-962-4015 before 5 p.m. on Friday, February 7, 2025.

ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please complete all of the questions in the online application and attach all required components. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Applicants cannot submit additional information or material after the deadline of 11:59 p.m. on February 7, 2025.

GCA Online Grant System

The FY26 Arts Education Program Grant application will be completed online. The application is available here: <http://gaarts.org/apply>.

Online Application

The following items must be completed within the online application:

- General Information and GCA Data
- Authorized Officials
- Arts Education Program Details and Narrative Questions
- Signature Page

Attachments

The following items must be uploaded to the online application:

- Program Budget Form
- Board of Directors/Community Advisory Committee List. Public schools may list the school principal and the district superintendent instead. Support Material

If Applicable

This requirement does not apply to state college/university entities, government entities, public schools, or organizations funded by GCA since FY23.

- IRS 501(c)3 letter

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The FY26 Arts Education Program Grant application deadline is **February 7, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.**

GRANT PANELIST NOMINATIONS

Panelists review all GCA Grants. GCA seeks qualified individuals to serve on grant panels in April and May 2025 to review FY26 General Operating Support, Project, and Arts Education Program Grants. We aim to develop diverse panels based on geography, artistic discipline, and type of organization, among other factors. We especially need panelists who live outside of the metro Atlanta area. Not everyone who volunteers to serve will be appointed to a panel, but if we need someone with that volunteer's background and experience, we will be in touch.

If you are interested in serving as a panelist or would like to nominate someone to serve as a panelist, please send a short bio or resume to Allen Bell, Director of Grants and Research, at abell@gaarts.org or 404-962-4839.