



## **FY26 Project Grant Application Guidelines**

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GCA supports all types of arts projects 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 as well as those that have applied for decades.

**GCA encourages all eligible organizations to apply.**

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## BASIC INFORMATION

**Applicants should thoroughly review the FY26 guidelines before preparing the application.**

**Grant Description** Project Grants provide support for arts projects in Georgia.

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

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

**Grant Request** The minimum grant request amount is \$1,000 and the maximum grant request amount is \$5,000.

### **Requirements for the Online Application**

- General Information
- Project Details and Narrative Questions
- Budget Form
- Board of Directors List/Advisory Board List
- Support Material (including work sample)
- IRS 501(c)(3) Letter (required only of some applicants)

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

If you have questions about the guidelines or the application process, please contact:

**Tyrone Webb, Rural and Community Programs Manager**

[twebb@gaarts.org](mailto:twebb@gaarts.org) or 404-962-4044

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

**Karen Hampton, Accessibility Coordinator**

404-962-4097

[khampton@georgia.org](mailto:khampton@georgia.org)

## Changes for GCA Project 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.

The following changes have been made to the Project Grant program for FY26:

- Applicants may request up to \$5,000 for the Project Grant.
- Applicants may not apply for the Project Grant, General Operating Support Grant, or the Arts Education Program Grant in the same year. Applicants may apply for only one of these grants in a fiscal year.

Be sure to read the grant guidelines to ensure that you are aware of all changes to the grant program, including eligibility requirements, funding request amounts, and application details.

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

### **Introduction to GCA Grants**

GCA believes that the arts can transform communities, and our grants support those organizations whose work demonstrates a significant benefit to the people being served.

We ask that you keep the following in mind when applying for a Project Grant:

- Our budget determines how many applicants we are able to fund, so some deserving applicants will not receive grants.

- We try to keep changes to a minimum; however, there are variations in the guidelines and the application process from year to year. Applicants should carefully read the guidelines completely each year.
- Because of the large number of applicants, GCA staff members cannot preview your application or check to make sure it is complete.
- Each year, Project Grants are awarded to all types of organizations, from large to small, urban to rural, classical to contemporary, and first-time applicants to those that have applied for many years. We strongly encourage all types of eligible organizations to apply.
- Grant review panelists will not consider outside information when scoring. They will only score based on information that is included in the application.
- Grant review panelists are from all areas of the state, so make sure that your application is understandable to people who are not familiar with your community or organization.
- GCA organizes panels by application budget size so that each application is evaluated within a grouping of projects with similar resources.
- All panels are multi-disciplinary, so make sure that your application is understandable to people outside of your artistic discipline.
- Applications are reviewed by different panelists from year to year, so do not assume that panelists have knowledge of your past applications or your history with GCA.
- Grant funding decisions are based solely on the application score. An applicant's grant history with GCA, size, location, discipline, etc. will not have a bearing on FY26 funding decisions.
- Applicants awarded FY26 Project Grants will receive the full amount requested in the application unless the requested amount exceeds \$5,000 or is incorrect based on the amount of expenses or cash match.
- 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.
- The highest score awarded to an application varies every year, as do the number of applicants, the number of applications that are funded, and the funding cutoff score. For instance, a score of 85 one year may result in a grant, while the next year it may mean that the applicant is not funded.
- 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 application deadline. Applicants may not change information that has been submitted after the deadline. Double check your application before submitting it to make sure it is complete and accurate.
- If you discover that your submitted application is missing required information, or you need to change information, GCA staff members can reopen your application as long as the deadline has not passed. You must notify GCA staff in enough time that the application can be reopened, you can make edits, and you can submit the application again before the deadline.
- GCA staff members want to do all that we can to assist you with your application. Please do not hesitate to call or e-mail with questions.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Grant Description**

Project Grants provide support for arts projects in Georgia. Projects may be one-time events, such as a festival or exhibit, or a series of events, such as a roster of classes or a series of productions. Projects with multiple components must show that there is a cohesive thread and singular goal that ties the arts project elements together.

FY26 Project Grants will allow organizations to apply for capacity building projects. This could include projects such as hiring a consultant to help develop a fundraising plan or a strategic plan. The project must be arts-related. For instance, a development plan for a history museum is not an eligible project.

The grant application has different narrative questions depending on whether you are applying for an arts program or a capacity building project. If you are unsure of which category your project falls into, contact **Rural and Community Programs Manager Tyrone Webb** at [twebb@gaarts.org](mailto:twebb@gaarts.org) or 404-962-4044.

### **Eligible Applicants**

All eligible applicants must:

- Be located in Georgia;
- Be registered with the Georgia Secretary of State; and
- 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 a non-profit will be eligible to apply if a majority of the group's members live in Georgia.

Eligible applicants must be one of the following:

- A non-profit organization registered with the IRS (organizations must have their non-profit status by the grant deadline of February 7, 2025)
- A government entity such as a city, county, or local authority
- A public library
- A school
- An entity within a college/university that:
  - has its own community advisory board (see definition on page 20)
  - receives at least 20% of its income for the project 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 nonprofit status
- Corporations or for-profit businesses
- Organizations that are based outside of Georgia

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

Organizations with a parent organization based in another state, but with a chapter in Georgia may apply for arts project 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 be for only 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**

Please refer to the criteria on pages 6 and 7 to determine eligibility. Eligible applicants may only submit one FY26 Project Grant application. Applicants may not submit both a Project Grant application and Arts Education Program Grant application. Also, applicants may not submit both a Project Grant application and General Operating Support Grant application.

Eligible applications must:

- Include arts or capacity building programming 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.
- Include a public component in the arts programming. GCA defines a public component as an element of the project that is open to the general public. This element does not have to be free. Organizations may charge admission to the public component. *This requirement does not apply to capacity building projects.*
- Not include programming that promotes a specific religious doctrine, political party, or political candidate.
- Not include programs that are exclusively by or for students if the applicant is a school or college/university.
- Be submitted and received through GCA's online grant application system with no missing components by the deadline of **Friday, February 7, 2025, 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 or corrected material after the deadline.

### **Eligible Projects**

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

- Performances (dance, music, theatre, musical theatre, opera, storytelling, puppetry, and performance art)
- Visual arts exhibitions (two-dimensional, three-dimensional, photography, and digital)
- Media arts presentations (film, video, and audio)
- Literary arts readings (poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction)
- Folk & traditional arts performances or exhibitions (music, dance, theatre, storytelling, and crafts)
- Public art (murals, sculpture, public concerts and performances)



- Outdoor performances
- Arts festivals
- Multidisciplinary arts 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)
- Arts programs with seniors
- Arts programs with Veterans or military populations
- Arts programs in hospitals or residential care facilities
- Arts programs with incarcerated individuals

Eligible arts-based capacity building projects could include projects such as, but not limited to:

- Hiring a consultant to create a development plan
- Hiring a consultant to create a strategic plan
- Projects related to arts program development or arts management

GCA does not fund the following project types:

- Humanities (history, religion, philosophy, languages)
- Social sciences (sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, geography)
- Sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, botany)
- 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 or landscape art
- Interior design or beautification projects
- Renovations that are not specific to the implementation of an arts project
- Equipment or furniture that is not specific to the implementation of an arts project
- Signage that is not specific to the implementation of an arts project

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

If you are unsure whether your organization or project is eligible for a FY26 Project Grant, please contact GCA staff for clarification.

## **Funding Request**

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

GCA grants are **matching grants**. This means that the grant recipient must raise income from other sources to pay for a portion of the organization operating expenses proposed in the grant application budget. The required match for Project 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.

## **Use of Funds**

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 project-related salaries, rent, utilities, programming expenses, marketing, insurance, etc.

See the complete list of ineligible expenses on page 19 of the Guidelines.

## **Deadline**

**The FY26 Project Grant application deadline is 11:59 p.m. on Friday, February 7, 2025.** The application with all required components must be completely uploaded into GCA's online grant application system by the deadline. **GCA strongly encourages applicants to submit the application well in advance of the deadline so that there is time to upload all attachments and resolve any unexpected issues should they arise.** No changes to the application may be made, nor will additional material be accepted, after the deadline.

GCA staff will not be available to assist with questions or to resolve technical issues after 5:00 p.m. on the day of the application deadline. If an applicant wants to amend an application that has been submitted, the applicant must contact a GCA staff member prior to the deadline, and 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 prior to the deadline. GCA staff members can reopen an application, but the grantee must make the changes and resubmit the application before the 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 p.m. on Friday, February 7, 2025.**

Applicants may submit their applications any time leading up to the deadline. In order to be fair to all applicants, the deadline cannot be flexible and GCA cannot allow applicants to amend their applications after the deadline has passed.

### Ineligible Applications

Applications that are submitted after the deadline, that do not contain all of the required information, or are submitted by applicants that do not meet the eligibility guidelines will be ruled ineligible and will not be reviewed by the panel. 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 required information.
- The applicant does not use the budget and budget breakdown form provided by GCA.
- The budget shows more expenses than income.
- The budget does not show a cash match for the grant request.
- The budget form is blank.
- The project takes place outside of the grant period (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026).
- There is no work sample included in the Support Material.
- The applicant uploads incorrect or incomplete files for the budget, budget breakdown, Board list, or support materials.
- The project is not an arts project.
- The applicant is not eligible to apply for GCA funding.
- The application is submitted after the deadline.

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

## False Information

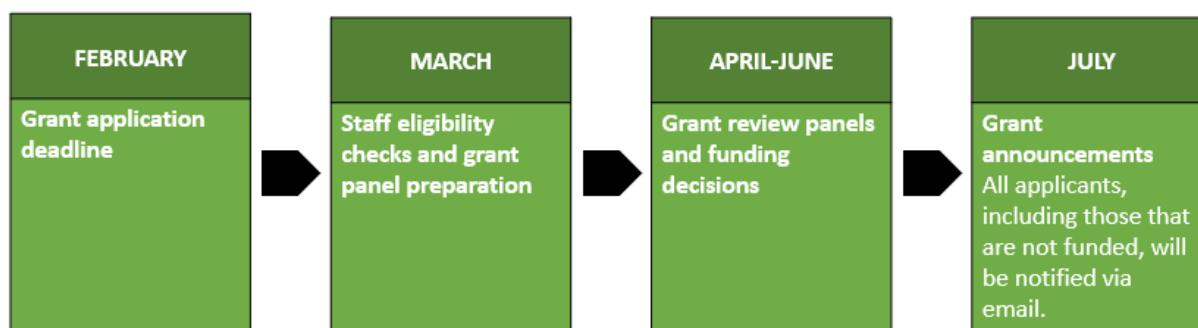
Any grant award made based on false, misleading, or otherwise misrepresented information in the application may be canceled by GCA at any time, at GCA's sole discretion.

## 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 budget size of the organization to increase programmatic accessibility. For instance, a theatre production could include sign language interpreters and assistive listening devices in order to make the program accessible to people with hearing disorders.

For information and guidance on making your programs accessible to people with disabilities, review the *Accessibility Planning and Resource Guide for Cultural Administrators* on the website of the National Endowment of the Arts: <https://www.arts.gov/accessibility-planning-and-resource-guide-cultural-administrators>. Additional information may be found on GCA's website: <https://gaarts.org/impact-of-the-arts-in-georgia/accessibility/>.

## Project Grant Timeline



## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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

### **If you have already set up an account in the GCA online grant system**

On the login page, enter your e-mail address and password and click **Log On**. If you forgot your password, click **Forgot your Password?** and an email to reset the password will be sent to the e-mail address for 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, which is under the Apply tab in the online grant system. GCA will verify the new contact person and e-mail the new login information, which may take up to a week.

### **If you have not set up an account in the GCA online grant system**

On the login page, click **Create New Account** and enter the required registration information. To create an account, you will need your organization's Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN). 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 grant application opportunities to which you may apply. To begin a request, click on the blue **Apply** button under the grant for which you would like to apply.

Once in the application:

- Once you have completed the application form, you may click the **Application Packet** button to download a copy of the questions and your responses.
- If you would like a PDF copy of the application, click the **Question List** button.
- All fields with an asterisk (\*) are required fields.
- The system will auto-save the application content every 100 characters entered or each 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 together 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, 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 on 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 permission level (view, edit, or submit) for the collaborator.

- 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.

You will complete this information online:

- General Information
- Project Details and Narrative Questions

You will create or complete these items offline and then upload them to your online application:

- Budget Form
- Board of Directors List/Advisory Board List
- Support Material
- IRS 501(c)(3) Letter (required only of some applicants)

The following pages, which outline the specifics of each requirement, should be completed within the online application. Do not submit any additional material other than what is requested, as it will not be evaluated by the Panel.

## **PROJECT 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 would like to direct the panel to a website, include that link in the Support Material.

### **Project Details**

- Choose a short title for your project.
- Project Discipline: please choose one of the options provided in the online application.
- Enter the Project 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**

There is a 1,500 character limit to the answer for each narrative question unless otherwise indicated.

#### **Overview of Organization**

- What is the organization's mission statement? (*500 character limit*)
- Briefly discuss the organization and its history and give a short overview of the type of services/programming the organization offers.

- Describe the area where the organization is located, the community the organization serves, and what makes the organization important to the community. The community served may be defined by geography, age, physical ability, gender, ethnicity, etc., or any combination of these traits.
- Describe how your organization or the work of your organization reflects the diversity of the state of Georgia and how it is accessible to the community being served.

### **Project**

- Fully describe the arts project for which funding is being requested. Include the following information (*2,500 character limit*):
  - Describe the specific arts activities that will take place and where.
  - Describe the artists involved, including a synopsis of their experience as related to the proposed project.
  - Identify additional stakeholders in the implementation of the arts project and how they will be involved (local organizations, community members, etc.).
- How will your organization ensure the overall quality of the arts project and that it will be completed successfully?
- Give an example of recent arts programming that demonstrates your organization's capacity for project implementation.

### **Community Impact**

*The Community Impact section of the narrative includes separate questions for those applying for Capacity Building Projects and those applying for Arts Programming Projects. (See the Grant Description and Eligibility sections on pages 8-9 for definitions and examples of both types of projects.) The online application will ask you to choose either Arts Programming or Capacity Building for your type of project.*

- **Arts Program Project** - You should answer the five questions marked Arts Program in red in the Community Impact section. You should then skip the three questions in green for Capacity Building and complete the questions in the Goals section.
- **Capacity Building Project** - You should skip the first five questions in red in the Arts Program section and answer the three Capacity Building questions in the Community Impact section indicated by the green text.

### **Arts Program questions:**

- Why are you undertaking this project? How will the community you serve benefit from this project?
- For the community being served by your organization, which was identified in the Overview section of the narrative, what specific subset of this group will be served by this project? Why have you identified this group? How will you reach this group of people? How will this project help your organization develop an ongoing relationship with the target audience? (For instance, if you serve people in a particular city, perhaps your target audience for your project are people in a specific neighborhood, or people over a certain age.)

- How will the organization **actively** engage underserved audiences with the project? How will this project help your organization develop an ongoing relationship with a specific underserved community?

*Please note the following when preparing your answer to this narrative question:*

- *Underserved audiences are those groups that lack access to the arts because of any barrier, such as language, geography, economic status, physical ability, etc.*
- *The answer should not focus exclusively on using an ADA compliant facility. All grantees are required to utilize a facility that is physically accessible.*
- *Applicants should address programmatic as well as physical accessibility for people with disabilities. For instance, a theatre may offer an autism-friendly performance which lowers the volume on music and eliminates blackouts. For additional ideas, see the resources under Accessibility on page 12 of the guidelines.*
- *The answer should not focus exclusively on giving away free tickets unless it is a component in a larger plan to involve a specific audience.*

#### **Capacity Building questions:**

- Why is your organization undertaking this project?
- How will this project strengthen your organization?
- How will the community your organization serves ultimately benefit from this project?

#### **Goals**

**NOTE: If your organization is funded, the goal(s) you cite in this section will become a part of your grant contract and you will report on them in your FY26 Project Grant Final Report. For assistance in setting goals and evaluating outcomes, go to *Getting Started with Program Evaluation* - [https://gaarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/georgia-evaluation\\_final.pdf](https://gaarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/georgia-evaluation_final.pdf)**

- What is the specific goal/outcome for the project?
- How will the organization evaluate whether or not the goal has been met? Describe the evaluation tools that will be used. (Note: Project goals should focus on how the project will benefit the community, not just the organization.)

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

The following items must be attached to your online application:

- Budget Form
- Board of Directors List/Advisory Board List
- Support Material including a work sample
- IRS 501(c)(3) Letter (required only of 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 that is larger than the set MB limit, you will receive an error message that the file is too large and the file **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 file format you will receive a warning and you 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 the material.
- If you scan material, make sure it does not appear blurry, sideways, or upside down.

## **BUDGET FORM**

***NOTE:*** *In order to cut down on applicant errors within the budget section of the application, applicants will use a budget form, which combines both 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 are unable to figure out how to complete the form, then they should contact GCA Grants Staff for assistance.*

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

### **Section 2**

Section 2 asks for a budget for the project for which you are requesting support. The lines highlighted on the budget form require a breakdown. There are eight subsequent worksheets which correspond 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.**

The income side of the budget asks you to show where the funds will come from to pay for the project expenses. This must include at least a 50% match for the GCA request amount. That means that if you request, for instance, \$3,000 from GCA, then your budget should show at least \$1,500 in additional income from other sources.

Please keep the following in mind when creating your budget:

- 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 project, not just the portion that you hope to pay for through the grant.
- Your grant request may not be more than 66% of total expenses.

- You may prorate overhead expenses into the budget for the project.
- The income and expenses do not have to be equal; however, the total expenses should not be more than total income.
- The budget must show a 50% cash match. In-kind does not count towards the match. For example, if an applicant is requesting \$3,000 from GCA, the budget must show at least \$1,500 additional dollars coming from other sources.
- The cash match may not come from other state of Georgia agencies or the National Endowment for the Arts, unless the applicant is a public college or university. In that case, at least 20% of the matching income must come from sources other than the State.

Under expenses, the budget includes five categories:

- **Personnel – Administrative:** This is the budget for employees in an administrative role who will receive a W2.
- **Personnel – Artistic:** This is the budget for employees in an artistic role who will receive a W2.
- **Outside Fees:** This is the budget for contractors in any role, including artists, 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, professional services, etc.

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 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 does not include a cash match for the grant request.
- 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 regulations of the state, or by policy, there are expenses that GCA does not fund. **Ineligible expenses should not be included in the budget or the breakdowns.**

### **The following are ineligible expenses:**

- Capital expenditures/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 projects/repairs
  - Permanent or generally immobile equipment
- Fundraising event expenses (Fundraisers are events planned to raise money that are not related to the organization's mission.)
- Programming outside of Georgia
- Programs that are not arts-based
- 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, such as receptions, refreshments, 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/County of residence

### **Units of Government**

A **Community Advisory Committee** must be established that provides oversight to the organization and 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/County of residence

### **Colleges/Universities**

A **Community Advisory Committee** must be established that provides oversight to the applicant organization and at least 60% of the committee's members must be from the community, not students, faculty, or staff of the educational institution. Do not submit the Board of Directors list for the college/university. 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 (student, faculty, or staff of the college/university or community member)
- City/County of residence

### **SUPPORT MATERIAL**

Support Material refers to material submitted by an applicant that is in addition to the other required material detailed elsewhere in the guidelines. Each applicant has the freedom to include in Support Material items that will help the panel better understand the organization, the project, the community being served or the artists involved. Support Material may include items such as resumes, reviews, photos, letters of support, surveys, survey results, videos, teacher guides, recordings, newspaper articles, resumes, etc. You may also include information in the Support Material that you were not able to include in the narrative.

**The Support Material for each applicant must include a work sample which shows the work of the organization and/or the artists involved with the project.**

For example, a dance company should include video of a performance, a museum should include photos of work that will be exhibited, an art festival should show examples of artists that have exhibited in past years, etc. Organizations applying for a capacity building project should include a resume or letters of recommendation for the consultant. **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, or photo). The maximum amount of Support Material is:
  - 10 pages total within a single PDF document
  - 5 Minutes of audio or video
- The 10 pages can be made up of photos, links to websites, and/or documents.
- Audio/video samples should be included as internet links. Please provide a short description of 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 minutes of material.
- Do not provide links to Dropbox, Hightail, or any other file sharing service. These links sometimes time out before panelists have had a chance to access the files.
- The size limit for the Support Material PDF file is 20 MB.

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

A non-profit applicant that has never received a GCA grant or has not received a grant from GCA since FY23 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 non-profit organization that does not have 501(c)(3) status by the grant deadline date is not eligible to apply. *This requirement to submit an IRS letter does not apply to state college/university entities, government entities, public schools, or nonprofit organizations that have been funded by GCA since FY23.*

### **Submitting the Application**

When all of the fields are complete, submit the application by clicking the Submit button on the last page of the application. If any required fields were not completed, or a response to a text question type includes more characters 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 that they are easy to identify.

GCA must receive the application prior to **11:59 p.m. on Friday, February 7, 2025.**

## **PANEL REVIEW PROCESS**

After the grant application deadline, GCA staff will review submitted applications to ensure that 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 forwarded to the grant panel.

GCA works to assemble grant panels that are diverse in terms of artistic disciplines, residency within the state, ethnicity, gender, the size of their organization, their experience, etc.

Panels are organized by applicant budget size so that each applicant is being evaluated against organizations with similar resources.

GCA staff members prepare a report on applicants that 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 given access to comments from the other panelists as well as preliminary scores.

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 all grant funds are exhausted.

### **Scoring**

Panelists will use this scoring matrix:

<b>Maximum available points</b>	<b>POOR</b>	<b>WEAK</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>
<b>40</b>	1-8	9-16	17-24	25-32	33-40
<b>20</b>	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20

## **Criteria**

Panelists will evaluate the applications based on the following criteria:

### **Project** (20 points)

- Is the description of the project clear? Is it do-able? Has the applicant considered all facets of the project?
- Does the organization have qualified people working on the project?
- If artists are being hired for the project, are their skills and experience appropriate for the project?
- Is the organization able to ensure the quality of the project?
- Is the organization able to ensure that the project will be completed successfully?
- Does the project support the mission of the organization?

### **Community Impact** (40 points)

#### **Capacity Building Projects**

- Does the organization have a clear and compelling reason for undertaking this project?
- Will the project strengthen the organization?
- Will the project ultimately benefit the community being served?

#### **Arts Programming Projects**

- Does the organization have a clear and compelling reason for undertaking this project?
- Will this project benefit the community that the organization serves?
- Is there a clear target audience and a clear plan to reach that audience?
- Will this project help develop an ongoing relationship with the target audience?
- Does the organization actively engage underserved audiences beyond giving away tickets and utilizing an ADA accessible facility? Will the project help the organization develop an ongoing relationship with the targeted underserved audience?
- Does the organization or its work reflect the diversity of the state of Georgia?

### **Goals** (20 points)

- Does the applicant have clear, measurable, attainable goals/outcomes for the project?
- Does the applicant have a method to evaluate their success at achieving their goal?
- Is the goal of the project focused on the community being served rather than exclusively on the organization?

### **Fiscal and Organizational Stability** (20 points)

- Is the budget sufficient for the proposed project and are the income goals reasonable?
- Are there any concerns about the organization which would have an impact on the ability to carry out the project?
- Is the application well-prepared?

## **PROJECT GRANT SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST**

**Be sure to 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.**

### **GCA ONLINE GRANT SYSTEM**

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

### **ONLINE APPLICATION**

- General Information
- Project Details and Narrative Questions

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Budget Form
- Board of Directors List/Advisory Board List
- Support Material including work sample
- IRS 501(c)(3) Letter (required only of some applicants)

### **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

The FY26 Project Grant application deadline is **Friday, February 7, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.**

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### **GRANT PANELIST NOMINATIONS**

All GCA Grants are reviewed by panelists. GCA is seeking qualified individuals interested in serving on grant panels in April and May 2025 to review FY26 Bridge, Project, and Arts Education Program Grants. We seek to develop panels which are diverse based on geography, artistic discipline, and type of organization, among other factors. We especially have a need for 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 your background and experience, we will be in touch.

If you are interested in serving as a panelist, or if you would like to nominate someone to serve as a panelist, please send a short bio or resume to Tyrone Webb, Rural and Community Programs Manager, at [twebb@gaarts.org](mailto:twebb@gaarts.org) or 404-962-4044.

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*If you have questions, please contact GCA Grants Staff:*  
**Tyrone Webb, Rural and Community Programs Manager**  
[twebb@gaarts.org](mailto:twebb@gaarts.org) or 404-962-4044  
**Allen Bell, Director of Grants and Research**  
[abell@gaarts.org](mailto:abell@gaarts.org) or 404-962-4839