



FY27 General Operating Support (GOS) Grant Application Guidelines

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 – General Operating Support (GOS) Grant

Applicants should thoroughly review the guidelines and the application before beginning the application process.

Application Deadline: **Friday, February 6, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.**

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

Grant Request: The grant request amount is **\$10,000** for all applicants, regardless of budget size.

Requirements for the Online Application:

- General Information
- Narrative Questions
- Budget Form
- Organization 990
- List of Programs for FY27
- Support Materials
- Board of Directors List
- IRS 501(c)3 Letter (required of some applicants)

Training Webinar

The FY27 General Operating Support (GOS) Grant Application Training Workshop recording is available [online](#).

Questions

If you have any questions about the guidelines or the application process, GCA staff members are available to answer your questions:

Allen Bell

Director of Grants and Research

abell@gaarts.org ▪ 404-962-4839

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

Pamela Ballard, Accessibility Coordinator

Pballard@Georgia.org ▪ 470-720-0663

Changes for GCA General Operating Support Grant in FY27

There are changes to some of the narrative questions, especially in the section labeled Qualities of the Arts Experience. See the Narrative Questions section on pages 12-13.

Additional items and clarifications have been added to the ineligible expenses list. See pages 16-17 for details.

This year, GCA is requiring all General Operating Support Grant applicants to upload their most recent 990 as part of the application attachments. See page 17 of the Guidelines for details.

Applicants should thoroughly review the guidelines and the application before beginning the application process.

INTRODUCTION

GCA Mission

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

Notes on 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 served.

We ask that you keep the following in mind when applying for a General Operating Support Grant:

- Our budget limits how many organizations we are able to fund, so some deserving applicants will not receive grants.
- Because of the large number of applicants, GCA staff members cannot preview your application or check to make sure it is complete prior to being submitted.
- Each year, GCA awards grants 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.
- 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.
- GCA staff members want to do all that we can to assist you with your application. Please do not hesitate to call or email us with questions.

ELIGIBILITY

Grant Description

General Operating Support Grants provide operating support for eligible nonprofit arts organizations located in Georgia.

Eligible Applicants

All eligible applicants must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) non-profit arts organization, which GCA defines as an organization which has an arts-based mission statement and at least 50% of its programming is arts-based.
- Be located in Georgia.
- Be registered with the Georgia Secretary of State.
- Have an annual operating budget of at least \$100,000 in the most recently completed fiscal year.
- Have completed all requirements of any previous GCA or State of Georgia grant awarded prior to FY26.

Who is NOT eligible to apply for a General Operating Support Grant?

- Individuals
- Organizations with fiscal agents
- Organizations that do not have their own IRS 501(c)(3) status
- Corporations or for-profit businesses
- Schools
- Libraries
- Colleges or universities, nonprofits associated with colleges or universities, or arts entities that are a part of colleges or universities
- Organizations that are based outside of Georgia
- Local government entities and arts institutions that are a part of local government
- Non-arts organizations

Organizations that are not eligible to apply for the General Operating Support Grant may be eligible to apply for the FY27 Project Grant or the FY27 Arts Education Program Grant: <https://gaarts.org/grants/>. This includes organizations with annual budgets that are smaller than \$100,000, organizations associated with colleges or universities, and organizations operated by local government.

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 not apply for general operating support for the Georgia chapter; however, they may be eligible to apply for a Project or Arts Education Program Grant if they 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 program expenses for programs in Georgia.
- Except for the description of the overall organization, the answers to application narrative questions must focus only on Georgia operations and programs.
- The applicant must have an advisory board specifically for the Georgia chapter.

GCA defines arts organizations as organizations with an arts-based mission and with at least 50% of programming that is arts-based. Arts-based programming may include, but is 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 or performances)
- Multidisciplinary arts projects
- Education in any of the arts fields referenced above, including workshops, demonstrations, classes, and field trips
- Artist guilds, communities, and residencies
- Arts service organization programs, including professional development and capacity building
- Arts festivals
- Artist residencies
- Arts integration
- STEAM (arts integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)

The following program types are not eligible for GCA funding:

- 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, reenactments
- Body art (face painting, body painting, tattoos)
- Non-arts recreation (inflatable jumpers, petting zoos, 5K races or other athletic events)
- Topiary or landscape art
- Interior design or beautification

Non-arts organizations may not apply for General Operating Support Grants Cultural Facilities Grants); however, non-arts organizations may apply for a grant to support an eligible arts project (i.e., Project, Arts Education, or Vibrant Communities Grants).

If you are unsure whether your organization is eligible to apply for a FY27 General Operating Support Grant, please contact GCA staff for clarification.

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

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 application is funded, applicants will be required to certify their eligibility for the award under this policy. If an applicant knows they are ineligible under this policy, the applicant should not submit an application. 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 arts programming that takes place in Georgia between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027.
- Submit a grant request amount of \$10,000.
- Have an annual operating budget of at least \$100,000.
- Include a public component for the programming.
- 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 application deadline of **Friday, February 6, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.**

Applications that do not meet these criteria will be ruled ineligible and will not be reviewed.

Use of Funds and Ineligible Expenses

Funds may be used for any eligible operating expenses within the funding period (July 1, 2026- June 30, 2027). Eligible uses of the grant include but are not limited to: salaries, rent, utilities, programming expenses, marketing, insurance, etc. Please see the Budget Form section beginning on page 15 for a list of ineligible expenses.

Funding Request Amount

The amount your organization must request for the General Operating Support Grant is **\$10,000**.

- Applicants will either be awarded a \$10,000 grant or not funded at all.
- Eligible applicants must have annual expenses of at least \$100,000 in the most recently completed fiscal year.

Application Deadline

The deadline to submit a FY27 General Operating Support Grant application is **11:59 p.m. on Friday, February 6, 2026**. The application with all required components must be completely uploaded into the application in the GCA online grant 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.

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 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 5:00 p.m. on the day of the grant 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 6, 2026**.

Applicants may submit their applications any time leading up to the deadline.

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 application information will not be accepted after the deadline.

These are the most common reasons that applications are 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 form is blank.
- The budget shows more expenses than income.
- The budget does not show that the organization has an annual operating budget

- of at least \$100,000.
- Programming takes place outside of the grant period (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027).
- Support Material does not contain a work sample.
- The applicant uploads incorrect or incomplete files for the budget, budget breakdown, Board list, or support materials.
- The organization’s programming is not arts programming.
- The applicant is not eligible to apply for GCA funding.
- The application is submitted after the deadline.

False Information

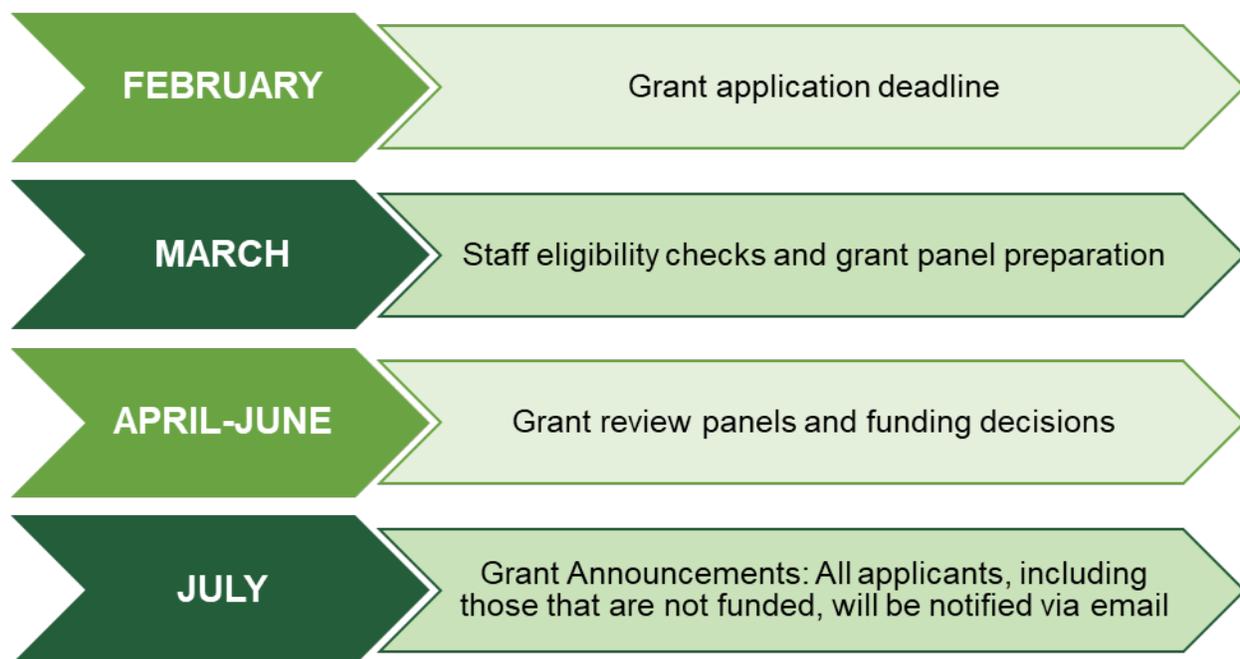
Any grant award made based on false, misleading, or otherwise misrepresented information in the application may be canceled by GCA at any time, at GCA’s sole discretion.

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. 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 National Endowment of the Arts: <https://www.arts.gov/accessibility-planning-and-resource-guide-cultural-administrators>. Additional accessibility information may be found on GCA’s website at <https://gaarts.org/tools-for-advancement/accessibility/>.

General Operating Support Grant Application Timeline

FY27 General Operating Support Grant notifications will be sent in early July 2026.



APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All FY27 applications must be submitted through the GCA online grant system. Applicants may access the GCA online grant system at: <http://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 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. Please note: this 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 show you any open grants to which you may apply. To start a request, click on the 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 every 100 characters entered or each time you click out of the field in which you are working.
- 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 pages will outline the specifics of each requirement. Do not submit material other than what is requested as it will not be evaluated by the Panel.

- General information (completed within the online application)
- Narrative Questions
- Budget Form
- Organization 990
- List of Arts Programs for FY27
- Support Material
- Board of Directors List
- IRS letter (if GCA has not funded the nonprofit applicant organization within the last three years)

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

You must answer the following questions within the online application. Do not embed links to outside sources in your answers. Panelists are not required to follow these links. There is a 3,000-character limit to the answer for each individual question, unless otherwise indicated.

Overview of Organization

- What is the organization's mission statement? (2,000 character limit)
- Provide a brief description of your organization. (2,000 character limit)
- Provide a description of how your organization will fulfill its mission in FY27, July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027. (Please be clear and specific in this answer. If the applicant is funded, the response to this question will become part of the grant contract and the grantee will report on progress made toward achieving these goals in the final report.)

Community Impact

- Describe the community the organization serves. This community could be defined by language, geography, age, economic status, physical ability, gender, ethnicity, etc., or any combination of these or other traits.
- How do the arts programs provided by your organization benefit the community you identified in the previous question?
- How does the organization actively engage underserved audiences and develop ongoing relationships with these communities? How are members of targeted underserved communities involved in the planning of programs? (GCA defines underserved audiences as 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 giving away free tickets or using an ADA accessible facility.
- In addition to utilizing a physically accessible venue, how does your organization ensure that people with disabilities can participate in and benefit from your organization's programs? For instance, a theatre may offer an autism-friendly performance which lowers the volume on music and eliminates blackouts. Applicants can find information and guidance on making their programs physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities by reviewing the resources under Accessibility on page 12 of the guidelines.

Qualities of the Arts Experience

- How will your organization ensure that the arts programs offered during the FY27 funding period, July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027, are thoughtfully planned and successfully executed? Please include specific arts program examples, including a discussion of the complete planning and production process.
- Describe the key individuals involved in management and artistic decision-making for the organization, including their experience and training.
- How will your organization ensure that the artists and/or arts instructors engaged in delivering programs this year create meaningful arts experiences for the community that your organization serves? Include information about the artistic backgrounds of the individuals and/or groups involved in the planning and artistic processes.

Organizational Capacity and Fiscal Stability

- How will your organization ensure that it has the organizational capacity and

fiscal stability to complete the proposed programs for FY27?

- How does the organization's board of directors contribute to the work of the organization to fulfill its mission and help ensure the organization's fiscal stability? (1,500 character limit)

ATTACHMENTS

The following items must be attached to your online application:

- Budget Form
- Organization 990
- List of Arts Programs for FY27
- Support Material
- Board of Directors List
- IRS 501(c)(3) Letter (only required 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 to ensure that panelists are able to open all attachments. If you attempt to upload a file type in an unaccepted file type 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 may be uploaded.
- Place the organization's name in a header or footer on each document in case panelists print out your material.
- If you scan material, make sure that it does not appear blurry, sideways, or upside down when viewed.

BUDGET FORM

NOTE: In an attempt to decrease the number of applicant errors within the budget section of the application, GCA is using a budget form which automatically transfers the totals from the breakdowns to the budget.

Complete the FY27 General Operating Support Grant Budget Form and attach it to the application. The form can be found at <https://gaarts.org/grants/General-Operating-Support-Grant/>. In the budget form, you will complete a short three-year organizational budget form and a more extensive budget form for FY27. 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 worksheet is for any in-kind donations. The total from each worksheet will autofill in the corresponding budget line

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.

The budget submitted with this application must be for funds that will be spent during GCA’s FY27 fiscal year, which is July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

- Do not include in-kind in the income or expense parts of the budget. In-kind will be listed in a separate tab on the budget form.
- Include the entire operating budget for the organization, not just the portion that you hope to pay for through the grant.
- **Do not include ineligible expenses in the budget form.** A list of ineligible expenses is included below on pages 16-17.
- The total income and expenses do not have to be equal; however, the total expenses should not be more than total income. **Budgets that show more expenses than income will not be eligible for review.**
- Provide an explanation for anything in the budget that may be confusing for panelists, such as an unusual expense. You may include this explanation on the Notes tab in the budget form.
- Applicants will be awarded the full grant request amount or no funding at all. The total amount available to be awarded as grants depends on GCA’s budget, which will not be known until sometime after the grant application deadline.

Total Organization Expenses from Most Recently Completed Fiscal Year Fiscal	Request Amount
Must be at least \$100,000	\$10,000

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:

- XYZ Foundation \$10,000 Confirmed by a letter from the foundation
- ABC Foundation \$20,000 Estimated based on previous contributions
- LMNOP Foundation \$15,000 Proposed – first-time request submitted

Below is a list of **ineligible expenses**. GCA grant funds cannot be used to pay for these items:

- Capital Expenditures/Equipment, which are permanent fixtures or equipment with a useful life of over one year that cost more than \$10,000 or the capital level cost established. This included:
 - Buildings or real estate/land purchases
 - Construction, renovations or improvements involving structural changes
 - Roads, driveways, parking lots or projects/repairs
 - Permanent or generally immobile equipment
- Fundraising event expenses, as well as general fundraising expenses
- Programming outside of Georgia
- Programs that are not arts-based
- Tuition for college/university study
- Scholarships, gifts, prizes, or awards. This includes cash prizes, gift certificates/gift cards, or any other cash equivalents with monetary value
- Endowment funds or cash reserves
- Debt and interest associated with capital expenditures
- Depreciation
- Bad debt, fines and penalties or deficit reduction
- Alcohol, concessions, food, or drinks, including snacks, per diem for meals, etc.
- Entertainment expenses, such as receptions, refreshments, staff or cast parties, staff awards, flowers, etc.
- Late registration fees for conferences
- Fees paid to lobbyists, lobbying activities
- Goods for resale, including concessions, promotional merchandise, clothing, or other items purchased for sale
- Improvements to arts facilities that also serve as private residences
- Severance pay, legal settlements
- Travel and accommodation expenses that are over the rate allowed by the state of Georgia (see <http://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
- Audit costs that are not directly allocable to a federally required Single Audit
- Contributions or donations to other entities or regranted funds

- Fiscal sponsorships
- Rental costs for home office workspace owned by individuals or entities affiliated with your organization
- Vehicle purchase costs
- Visa costs paid to the US Government
- Any expenses labeled as miscellaneous, other, additional expenses, discretionary expenses, slush fund, etc.

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.
- The budget is missing both the three-year budget comparison and the previous year's budget breakdown.

ORGANIZATION 990

Upload your organization's most recent 990. The 990 will be used to confirm the organization's eligibility to apply for the General Operating Support Grant based on minimum total annual expenses of at least \$100,000 and to confirm the figures provided in the budget for the most recently completed fiscal year.

If your organization is on a June-July fiscal year, then you should upload the FY25 990. If your organization is on a January-December fiscal year, you should upload a 2025 990 if available; however, a 2024 990 will be accepted. If your organization has an alternate date range for your fiscal year, then upload the most recent 990 available.

LIST OF ARTS PROGRAMS FOR FY27

Please upload a list of your organization's arts programs planned for FY27 (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027). Programs may include exhibits, performances, classes, publications, conferences, residencies, readings, workshops, public art, etc. The list should include the names of the program, the name of the artists or groups, and estimated number of participants. For applicant organizations with a large number of programs, please limit your list of programs to two (2) pages.

- Your organization may list programs individually or group them together. For example, you could list a Warhol exhibit and a Picasso exhibit separately or you could group them together under the title Art Exhibits.
- The programming must take place between July 1, 2026, and June 30, 2027.
- All listed programs must take place in Georgia. Programs taking place outside of Georgia should be excluded.
- List only programs produced, presented, or coordinated by the applicant organization.
- Re-granting entities should not list programs presented by the organizations receiving grants.

- Applicants should not list programs produced by their members.
- Organizations should not list programs presented by another organization renting the applicant organization’s venue or facility.
- Organizations that present programs that are not arts-based should list only arts programs.
- Do not list fundraisers or marketing material such as brochures, flyers, postcards, posters, ads, class schedules, etc.
- If your organization produces extensive programming, you do not have to list each program, but you should list enough so that the panel gets a sense of the breadth and depth of the programs you will provide in FY27.
- For programs that are not yet confirmed, list tentative or proposed programs and the details that you know at this time, or describe the type of program your organization is considering.

Example List of Programs

Name of Program	Name and Short Description of Artists/Groups/ Instructors	Estimated Number of Participants
Guitar classes	Jane Doe, the high school music teacher	22
Classical music series	Concerts by: John Doe Claudette Zeldin Bill Smith Jane Johanssen Robert Borowski Clive Johnson	320 per concert
Art classes	Sarah Gilead, local acrylic painter and art professor	25

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 may include in Support Material items that will help the panel better understand the organization, the organization’s programs, the community served, or the artists involved. Support Material could include items such as resumes, reviews, photos, letters of support, surveys, survey results, videos, teacher guides, recordings, newspaper articles, etc. You may also include information in the Support Material that you were not able to include in the answers to the narrative questions.

The Support Material for each applicant must include a work sample which demonstrates the artistic work of the organization and/or the artists involved with the arts programming.

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. **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/video
- The 10 pages can be made up of any combination of photos, links, copy, articles, etc.
- Audio/video samples should be included as internet links within a document uploaded to the Support Material section. 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 timeout before panelists have had a chance to access the files.
- If you do not want your video/audio sample to be public online, you can choose to make it private on sites such as YouTube or Vimeo.
- The size limit for the Support Material PDF file is 15 MB.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Upload a list that includes the following information 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

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.

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 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.

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 organizations will be ineligible for review and will not be forwarded to grant review panels. Applicants will be notified if the application will not be reviewed by the panel.

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

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

GCA staff members prepare a report on applicants that did not complete the requirements of previous grants, such as late final reports or incomplete projects. Panelists read the applications and staff reports and submit scores and comments. The high and low scores are dropped, and the remaining scores are averaged to arrive at the applicant's final score.

Once all panel reviews 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 ranked by score, until all grant funds are exhausted.

Notes about the Panel Review Process

- 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 your organization.
- GCA organizes panels by applicant budget size so that each application is evaluated within a grouping of organizations 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 FY27 funding decisions.
- 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

Scoring

FY27 General Operating Support Grant panelists will use this scoring matrix:

Maximum available points	POOR	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
50	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50
25	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25

Criteria

Panelists will evaluate the applications based on the following criteria:

Community Impact (50 points)

- Is there a clear tie between the community served and the mission of the organization and its programs?
- Does the applicant clearly identify the community served and how it benefits from the organization’s programs?
- Does the organization actively engage underserved audiences and develop ongoing relationships with these communities?
- Does the organization ensure that people with disabilities can participate in and benefit from its programs?

Qualities of the Arts Experience (25 points)

- Does the organization propose programs for FY27 that align with the mission of the organization and fit the community served by the organization?
- Does the organization ensure that the arts programs offered during the FY27 funding period will be thoughtfully planned and successfully executed?
- Does the organization have qualified individuals involved in management and artistic decision-making?
- Do artists and/or arts instructors engaged in delivering programs have the potential to have a meaningful impact on the community served?

Organizational Capacity and Fiscal Stability (25 points)

- Does the organization demonstrate that they have the organizational capacity to implement the proposed programs for FY27?
- Does the organization present a reasonable and sufficient budget for the FY27 funding period (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027)?
- Does the organization’s Board of Directors have a strong role in helping the organization fulfill its mission and ensuring the fiscal stability of the organization?

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT 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 FY27 General Operating Support Grant application will be completed online. The application is available here: <http://gaarts.org/apply>.

ONLINE APPLICATION

Applicants must complete the online application, which is comprised of the following components:

- General Information
- Narrative Questions

ATTACHMENTS

Applicants also must upload the following attachments to the online application:

- Budget Form
- Organization 990
- List of Arts Programs for FY27
- Support Material
- Board of Directors List
- IRS 501(c)(3) Letter (required only of some applicants)

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The FY27 General Operating Support Grant application deadline is **Friday, February 6, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.**

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 2026 to review FY27 General Operating Support, 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 assigned to a panel, but if we are in need of 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 Allen Bell, Director of Grants and Research, at abell@gaarts.org or 404-962-4839.

*Questions? Contact: **Allen Bell, Director of Grants and Research,**
abell@gaarts.org, 404-962-4839*