New Jersey State Council on the Arts

General Program Support (GPS)

Fiscal Year 2028 Grant Program Guidelines

Este documento también está disponible en español.

Deadline: November 19, 2026 12:00 PM ET NOON

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ACCESSIBILITY

The Arts Council is committed to ensuring its programs are accessible to all people. For assistance with accessibility accommodations related to this application, contact Access Coordinator Lindsay Dandeo at 609-984-7020 (NJ Relay 711) or lindsay.dandeo@sos.nj.gov.

ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts (Arts Council) is a division of the NJ Department of State, created in 1966 by Public Law Chapter 214 and consists of 17 Governor-appointed members and three ex-officio members representing the New Jersey Secretary of State, the Senate, and the Assembly. The Council's volunteer members are supported by a professional staff who carry out the Arts Council's programs and services from the State Capital in Trenton.

What We Believe

We believe the arts are central to every element we value most in a modern society including: human understanding; cultural and civic pride; strong communities; excellent schools; lifelong learning; creative expression; and economic opportunity.

Our Mission

In 1966, the legislature passed and the governor signed a law creating the Arts Council and directing us to do all that is necessary and appropriate to: support, encourage, and foster public interest in the arts; enlarge public and private resources devoted to the arts; promote freedom of expression in the arts; and facilitate the inclusion of art in every public building in New Jersey.

How We Are Funded

Public support for the arts in New Jersey comes from a dedicated, renewable revenue source - the Hotel/Motel Occupancy Fee - established in 2003. Additionally, the Arts Council receives an annual, competitive grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

As the largest grant funder of the arts in New Jersey, the Arts Council is committed to providing annual and multi-year grants to New Jersey's nonprofit arts organizations, arts projects, and artists. Strategic, responsive, and responsible grantmaking is the Arts Council's highest priority, ensuring programs and services are equitable, accessible, and have the greatest possible statewide impact.

Commitment to Public Benefit and Equity

In New Jersey, we know that diversity is one of our greatest strengths. The Arts Council embraces the principles of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. With a focus on learning, data, and accountability, we will continue to assess and challenge inequities, identify gaps in engagement and service, and focus on the details that shape systemic change.

WHAT IS A GENERAL PROGRAM SUPPORT GRANT?

General Program Support (GPS) grants provide annual support, over a three-year period, for the direct arts-related costs of a full-time (10 months or more) ongoing, New Jersey-based public arts program(s) that meets the Arts Council's eligibility criteria (pages 7-9). An arts program(s) may be proposed by non-arts missioned organizations, multimissioned organizations, or by arts-missioned organizations whose percentage of out-of-state activities make them ineligible for General Operating Support (GOS). Applicants are encouraged to thoroughly reference the Glossary and FAQ for additional GPS guidance and support.

Colleges and universities applying for GPS support must ensure the proposed program is designed for, open to, and promoted to the general public. Furthermore, the proposed program must not be affiliated with any faculty-based, student-based, or curricular activities.

Service organizations applying for GPS support should review the service organization definition in the Glossary for the purpose of this grant program. Applicants intending to apply in this panel category should contact the Program Officer in the appropriate panel category for support.

This grant is to be matched 3:1 ($3 earned or raised and spent per $1 received from the Arts Council). Please note that grant requests are not a guarantee of award level amounts. This guidance is meant to provide a context for the applicant, panelists, and the Arts Council.

GPS GRANT APPLICATION SCHEDULE

Please note that late submissions will not be accepted for any reason including technical/human error. Applicants are strongly urged to submit applications at least three days before the deadline. Requests for deadline extensions will not be permitted.

- **September 1, 2026** - GPS guidelines released.
- **October 6, 2026** - GPS application available in SAGE. (Grants management system).
- **September - November 2026 -** Application Assistance: schedule on Council website.
- **November 19, 2026** - **GPS applications due in SAGE by 12:00 PM ET NOON.**
- **January 12-14, 2027 - Hold for Correction Process.** Applicants will have the opportunity to correct broken links and/or incorrect documents during this period.
- **Spring 2027 -** Arts Council convenes review panels and makes recommendations.
- **July 2027 -** Arts Council votes on and announces grant awards.
- **July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2030** - Grant cycle for successful applications.

An organization may submit only one application in either the GOS or GPS grant program.

Important: Submission of an application does not guarantee eligibility or that all requirements have been met. An organization that has not met the eligibility criteria or whose application is incomplete will not advance to the panel process.

Note: An organization whose FY28 GPS application is not funded will have the opportunity to submit a GPS application at the Council's next top-of-cycle grant opportunity planned for FY31.

GRANT PERIOD ACTIVITIES

Each year, all activities attributed to this grant must take place between July 1 and June 30. Grant funds must be fully expended and all work completed by the end of the fiscal year.

Grantees will receive 75% of the award upon execution of the contract (fall) and the remaining 25% upon execution and approval of the final report (summer). A final report will be due after the completion of the fiscal year (June). Please check SAGE for the specific due dates.

This schedule will repeat itself each year for the three-year grant cycle pending contract stipulations and available funding which is contingent upon available Arts Council funding.

- Year 1 - FY28: July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028
- Year 2 - FY29: July 1, 2028 – June 30, 2029
- Year 3 - FY30: July 1, 2029 – June 20, 2030

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

The following assistance is available to help applicants compose and submit an application.

1. Arts Council Staff is available to help with questions specific to the application. Program Officers in each discipline are reachable by telephone and email. Prior to contacting a Program Officer, applicants should read the guidelines thoroughly.
2. Virtual office hours. Please check the Arts Council's website for details and schedules.
3. Recorded mini webinars. These mini webinars detail various aspects of the application process and can be found on the Arts Council's website.
4. Applicants should consult the Frequently Asked Questions and Glossary documents for additional guidance and support.

Helpful tip: Applicants seeking assistance are advised to contact Arts Council Staff well in advance of the application deadline. Please keep in mind that the volume of requests increases as the application deadline draws closer, and staff may not be able to return your call or email promptly. Your patience is appreciated. Deadlines will not be adjusted for unmet requests.

New GPS Applicants

Organizations new to Arts Council funding or the GPS grant opportunity are encouraged to speak with Arts Council Staff to discuss their organization's eligibility prior to filling out an application. This conversation should not replace the careful review of these guidelines, Glossary, FAQ, and online application assistance mini webinars.

GPS ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An applicant must meet all the following eligibility requirements at time of application in order to move forward to the panel process.

Applicants must be:

1. incorporated in the state of New Jersey as a nonprofit organization, college or university, or unit of government;
2. tax-exempt by determination of the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3);
   - Organizations registered as a foreign nonprofit or auxiliary, foundation, or "friends of" that only exist to fundraise/support another organization are ineligible to apply.
3. an organization in "good standing," which includes compliance with current Arts Council requirements, if currently a NJ Department of State grantee;
4. current with New Jersey's Charities Registration Bureau and Division of Revenue requirements;
5. registered in the federal System for Award Management and have its CAGE and UEI codes at time of application. Please see the System for Award Management Guidance section below for help on how to secure your organization's registration; and,
6. in compliance with all pertinent state and federal regulations including but not limited to: Fair Labor Standards, the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA); the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988; and Section 1913 of 18 U.S.C. and Section 319 of P.L. 101-121. Apart from all other provisions of law, particularly the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which bear upon all Council grantees, those grantees whose Council grant is composed all or in part of funds derived from the National Endowment for the Arts will be required to be in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 at the time of and as a condition of receipt of the grant under penalty of rescission and any others set forth under law.

System for Award Management

All applicants must register in and maintain current registration with the federal System for Award Management (SAM). Once registered, you will need to provide the Arts Council your SAM CAGE code. Register at www.sam.gov.

In addition, all grantees are required to have a Unique Entity ID (UEI) at time of application. Please view this short tutorial on how to obtain a UEI, capture your 12-digit alphanumeric code, and provide the Arts Council with your code. For assistance with entering your SAM CAGE code or your UEI into SAGE, contact the Arts Council's Operations team:

- Doug West, Operations Specialist: NJSCA.SAGE@sos.nj.gov, 609-300-6951 (NJ Relay 711)
- Robert Worshinski, Director of Operations: NJSCA.SAGE@sos.nj.gov, 609-633-1049 (NJ Relay 711)

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

In addition, an applicant must be able to demonstrate that it meets all of the following eligibility requirements at time of application. Applicants applying in the Service organization panel category are exempt from some of these requirements. Consult the FAQ and Glossary for complete requirement guidance.

Budget Threshold
The applicant must be able to demonstrate it has maintained a $100,000 arts program expense budget or higher beginning in FY25. Budget eligibility will be corroborated through narrative topic questions. This requirement was implemented alongside the staffing requirement to ensure that grantees have the administrative capacity to manage this grant.

Governance
The applicant must be governed by an independent board of directors responsible for the governance and administration of the organization, its programs, and finances. Colleges, universities, and municipalities have additional requirements in this area, see *Additional Requirements for Colleges, Universities, and Municipal Governments* below.

Mission
The applicant must have an active public-facing, on-going program (equivalent of at least 10 months annually) that has an artistic mission and focus for which it is seeking support.

New Jersey Audiences & Multicounty Impact
An eligible program must be based in New Jersey and be able to demonstrate that the majority (51% or more) of its audiences are from New Jersey. In addition, the program must be able to demonstrate that its audiences come from at least two New Jersey counties. Colleges, universities, and municipal governments have additional requirements in this area, see *Additional Requirements for Colleges, Universities, and Municipal Governments* below.

The prioritization of New Jersey audiences and multicounty/statewide impact are two longstanding eligibility requirements for Arts Council funding. It is one of the key specifications differentiating GPS funding from Local Arts Program support.

Public Arts Programming
The applicant organization must have been in existence and providing its eligible arts program or service for at least two years prior to the application (beginning FY25).

Staffing
The arts program must be managed by a full-time, administrative staff person (35 hours/week at minimum) who meets the Arts Council's eligibility criteria. This requirement may be fulfilled by two individuals who work less than full-time. Please refer to the Glossary and FAQ for additional details. The staffing requirement ensures that grantees have the administrative

capacity to manage this grant effectively and maintain consistent communication during business hours.

Strategic Arts Program Plan

A well-defined strategic program plan aligns all aspects of an organization's arts program towards achieving common goals, fostering unity, and ensuring long-term success. It is an essential framework for programmatic sustainability, viability, and growth. In order to be considered for a GPS grant, organizations must have a current arts program plan. The length of time denoted by the plan is up to the organization.

Additional Requirements for Colleges, Universities, and Municipal Units of Governments

If the applicant is affiliated with a college, university, or municipal government, it must demonstrate that it is both programmatically and administratively distinct from its parent organization. To qualify for eligibility, the following must also be in place:

1. the proposed program must be designed for and prioritize public engagement, easily accessible, and not associated with an academic department or classes;
    a. Grant funds cannot be used to support academic awards and work, including fellowships, scholarships, tuition, work study, or internship fees for student work, and it cannot support classes or workshops where college credit is given;
2. a community-based independent board or advisory committee responsible for the oversight of the proposed program;
3. an arts-based mission for the program that is separate from the parent organization;
4. an independent budget for the program that is separate from the parent organization; and,
5. demonstrated community support through the following:
    a. 25% of the revenue required for the 3:1 cash match must come from sources outside the parent organization. The Arts Council defines community support as corporate/foundation support, ticket/admission sales, and individual contributed revenue. County, State, and/or federal grants do not satisfy the requirement.
    b. If affiliated with a college or university, the applicant must provide programs or services to the general public and must document that its activities serve 75% or more non-student or faculty audiences across two or more counties.

My organization doesn't meet all the GPS eligibility requirements. What are our options?

Applicants that cannot meet all the Arts Council's GPS eligibility requirements are encouraged to consider applying for Arts Council support through their respective County Arts Agency (CAA), which receives a Local Arts Program (LAP) grant for this purpose.

- If you would like more information about the LAP opportunity, please contact Andrew Binger at 609-690-8312 (NJ Relay 711) and andrew.binger@sos.nj.gov or your CAA.

Applicant Capacity Check

Before applying, applicants are encouraged to critically examine their capacity for successfully managing a three-year GPS grant. Grantees must be prepared and able to uphold all GPS eligibility requirements for the duration of the grant period, including all State-mandated and Arts Council requirements. If a grantee has difficulty meeting the eligibility requirements and capacity benchmarks, the terms and conditions of its contract and funding can be impacted.

Below is a list of the responsibilities each grantee must assume. Please note that the majority repeat annually.

1. Register as a vendor with Department of Treasury's NJSTART before the submission of the GPS contract.
    a. The Quick Reference Guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to register your organization as a vendor in NJSTART.
2. Develop and manage a three-year ADA plan for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
    a. First-time grantees must complete the Cultural Access Network's Self-Assessment Survey and Planning Tool and submit an ADA plan via an online portal by **January 8, 2028**.
    b. For more information regarding this requirement, please contact Lindsay Dandeo at 609-984-7020 (NJ Relay 711) or lindsay.dandeo@sos.nj.gov;
3. Submit an audit/Form 990 within six months of the organization's fiscal year, unless your organization is a municipality, college, or university.
4. Maintain annual compliance with the NJ Charities Registration Bureau and Division of Revenue.
5. Work in SAGE to accurately complete and submit a contract and final report by the respective deadlines each year.
6. Engage in an Interim Conversation with your Program Officer at the mid-point of each fiscal year.
7. Host a site visit with your Program Officer at least once during the three-year grant cycle.

If you need help understanding how these eligibility requirements pertain to your organization, contact Arts Council Staff.

THE SAGE SYSTEM: HOW TO ACCESS AN APPLICATION

The Arts Council uses the System for Administering Grants Electronically (SAGE) to accept grant applications and manage grant awards.

For new users: In order to access the grant application, users must have a registered account. To set up a username and password, please click the New User link to request access to the site. Access and registration approval is NOT automatic and may take up to 48 hours. Therefore, do not wait to create a new account.

How to access the GPS application:

1. Log in to SAGE and go to the "View Available Opportunities" section.
2. Click "View Opportunities" under the NJSCA section. Search for the NJSCA application titled "General Program Support."
3. Click on the "Apply Now" button to create a new application. The Agreement Form asks you to certify that you have read the guidelines and meet the eligibility requirements.
4. If you affirm that you read the guidelines and meet all of the eligibility requirements, click on the "I Agree" button to create a new application. If you cannot affirm, contact Arts Council Staff.

For assistance with any aspect of SAGE, contact:

- Doug West, Operations Specialist: NJSCA.SAGE@sos.nj.gov, 609-300-6951 (NJ Relay 711)
- Robert Worshinski, Director of Operations: NJSCA.SAGE@sos.nj.gov, 609-633-1049 (NJ Relay 711)

GPS APPLICATION COMPONENTS

The application is comprised of 10 forms and two charts. (The Long-Term Residency Supplement form is optional.) All questions and support materials are required components.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the Glossary and FAQ documents in order to understand the full breadth of the application requirements. Consider these documents as an extension of the guidelines and a critical component to achieving success.

Note: The application and required support materials must be submitted in English. Please refer to the FAQ for information on translation assistance.

Organizational Profile Form: This form provides the essential information about the organization. The contact information listed in this form will be utilized by the Arts Council for all communication purposes for the duration of the grant. It is paramount that the information is current and accurate.

The Grant Contact should be the individual responsible for managing the grant in SAGE and is the organization's primary Arts Council contact. This person must have the ability to speak on behalf of the organization for the duration of the grant cycle during regular business hours.

Type of Support: General Program Support is preselected for all applicants.

Panel Category: An applicant must identify one panel category that best fits its organization. Consult the Glossary for definitions as new categories have been added or combined.

Funding Purpose Summary: This form asks for the purpose of funding which may be used in public materials. The statement is limited to approximately 50 words or 300 characters, and it should contain the basic "who, what, where, and when" information.

> Sample Statement: "The Arts Council's GPS grant will help support the Textile Workshop, a contemporary year-round program of the Garden State History Museum. The mission of the workshop is to foster the study and the appreciation of the artistic merits and cultural importance of the world's textiles through public programs, school-based residencies, and artist-in-residency opportunities."

Grant Narrative: The narrative will be composed in seven text boxes corresponding to each of the Narrative Topics. Each text box is limited to approximately 3,000 characters. The narrative should directly address the Evaluation Criteria (pages 13-14) through the Narrative Topics which are provided on pages 14-17.

Helpful tip: Each Narrative Topic should clearly and concisely communicate your organization's story to the panel and provide context for the materials in the application. The panel includes experts from outside of New Jersey who do not know your organization. Take care to carefully construct relevant information and details for reviewers who are new to your organization.

Long-Term Residency Supplement Form (optional): Organizations who have successfully completed two or more years of long-term, teaching artist-led residencies for youth aged 21 years and younger are eligible to request $10,000 for the support of one Long-Term Residency Supplement (LTRS). Successful applicants will receive funding for one LTRS each year of the three-year grant cycle. This is a supplementary arts funding opportunity in addition to GPS support and does not require a match. (See Appendix II for the LTRS Rubric.)

Americans with Disabilities Act Organizational Checklist Form: This form covers basic accessibility and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements. Areas queried include facilities, programmatic accommodations, marketing, employment, accessibility awareness training, and grievance procedures. In addition to the form's questions, applicants are required to upload their board-approved non-discrimination policy and grievance procedure. (If awarded, a comprehensive self-assessment and plan will be required of grantees by January 2028. See page 10 of these guidelines for further information).

Board Chart Information Review Page: This chart identifies who serves on the organization's current board and the advisory board (if applicable) for the program for which it is seeking support. If you are a returning grantee, please check for accuracy if the chart is already completed in SAGE and update as necessary.

Staff Chart: This chart identifies the program's current staff, which must include, at minimum, the administrative staff that meets the Arts Council's eligibility requirement. See the Glossary for details.

Finance Charts: There are two finance charts (Arts Program Income Chart and Arts Program Expense Chart) that comprise this portion of the application. Applicants will detail three years of financial information in the Income and Expense Charts for the **arts program's direct costs only**. Do **not** include pro-rated costs for non-direct program expenses. The budget chart will calculate a 10% overhead figure to the program's expense budget. Do not include figures that are listed in the Arts Council's ineligible expenses which are detailed in the Glossary and FAQ.

Helpful tip: Use the Budget Notes section to describe or explain the information listed in the finance charts. The review panel expects accompanying budget notes to provide clear information about the organization's complete financial picture.

Images – Support Materials: Programmatic quality demonstrated through high quality images is important. Please follow form instructions, found on pages 19-20.

Media – Support Materials: Programmatic quality demonstrated through high quality audio and/or media clips is important. Please follow the instructions, found on pages 20-21.

Documents – Support Materials: This form is made up of one, fill-in text box and seven upload fields. Double check your entries to make sure the link is functional and the documents are complete PDFs. (pages 21-22)

Application Certification: In order to complete your application, an authorized official must sign and certify the application in SAGE.

Submission Instructions: After you have carefully reviewed the application, submit the application by clicking on the "Apply Status" button, under the "Status Changes" section of your application. To confirm your submission, check the "Current Status" section on the Application Forms Menu for "Application Submitted."

You may go back to the "View Full Application PDF" link and print a final copy of your application submission for your records.

Helpful tip: Carefully check that all information is accurate and complete, links are functional, and all support materials are uploaded before submitting. SAGE may not catch all errors; do not rely solely on its functionality.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & RUBRIC

Review and reference the Evaluation Criteria in composing your organization's narrative. Successful narratives address the Evaluation Criteria and are clear, supported by budgets, and directly link to support materials. Panelists will look for evidence of organizational capacity in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria and score based on the rubric (Appendix I).

Helpful tip: Before you finalize your narrative, evaluate its effectiveness by scoring it through the rubric (Appendix I).

1. **High artistic quality** throughout the proposed arts program that provides public benefit and value through impactful and relevant arts experiences. (10 points)
2. Significant **public benefit and community engagement** based on a clear understanding of those served by the proposed program. (10 points)
3. Commitment to **equitable and inclusive policy and practices**. (10 points)
4. Commitment to **arts education and lifelong learning** in the arts. (10 points)
5. **Operational excellence and capacity** demonstrated through appropriate fiscal and administrative resources, governance, and strategic planning. (30 points)
6. An **appropriate arts program budget** that includes sufficient resources. (30 points)

In addition, applicants will be asked to detail their commitment to raising public awareness, support, and advocacy for the arts and artists.

GRANT NARRATIVE FORM

The Narrative Topics are the framework for writing the narrative. Compose a narrative that will provide a panelist, who does not know your organization, the ability to clearly understand it in relation to the Evaluation Criteria. If you have unique circumstances that are not specifically queried, address them in the appropriate section.

Helpful tips:

1. It is a good idea to craft the narrative in a separate document and copy and paste it into the corresponding text box.
2. Specifically reference any uploaded or linked support materials in the narrative.
3. Please refrain from the use of acronyms.

Section 1: Artistic Quality

Note: "Artistic quality" is relative to the organization's stated mission and goals.

Mission:

1. State the mission of the organization's proposed arts program or services.
2. Briefly articulate its primary priorities and goals as adopted by the board (advisory committee for colleges, universities, and municipalities) and detailed in the strategic plan.

Programs/Services:

1. Explain how the organization's annual goals and priorities for the proposed art program or services are identified.
2. Describe the process by which artistic decisions are made and how they are evaluated.

3. Describe how/if members of the intended audience and/or community are involved in the planning and development of the art program or services.

For service organizations: If the organization also includes direct engagement with New Jersey communities in its organizational priorities, that information should include explanation about how this direct community engagement is relevant to the organization's service priorities.

Section 2: Public Benefit and Community Engagement

1. Does the organization's proposed arts program or service take place in New Jersey?
2. How does the organization determine that 51% or more of its audiences live in New Jersey? (Fully explain how your organization determined this percentage.)
3. What counties and community(ies) does your program intentionally serve and engage? What are their unique characteristics and needs, and how do you know?
4. How does your program reflect and incorporate the needs of the community(ies) it serves through its work?
5. **For colleges and universities:** Explain the difference between arts programming designed to engage with the general public vs. curricular programming and programming in support of the college/university academic work. What practices are in place in order to increase public engagement?

<u>Artist Support</u>:

1. What does your program purposely do to engage and benefit individuals (artists) doing work in the arts? (Provide an overview of how the program does this work. Describe how this work intentionally benefits artists.)
2. What percentage of artists engaged and benefited by your program live in New Jersey?
3. How did your organization determine this percentage?

For service organizations: Detailed descriptions and explanations regarding communities served should focus on the community of organizations, artists, and individuals supported by the applicant and how engaging with those communities benefit the people of New Jersey.

Section 3: Equitable and Inclusive Policies and Practices

The Arts Council is dedicated to making the arts accessible and engaging for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Equitable and inclusive policies and practices in the nonprofit arts sector vary based on internal and external influences. This section asks organizations to describe its efforts in both its public-facing work and in its governance, employment, and administrative practices.

1. Describe your organization's diversity, equity, access, and inclusion learning journey and the goals the organization has developed. (Highlight progress that your organization has made in this area over the past three years.)
2. How does your organization ensure its governance, employment, and administrative practices are equitable and inclusive? (Share specific examples of how your organization creates an inclusive environment for its staff, members, volunteers, and/or collaborators. This answer pertains to your internal work rather than your public programming.)
3. How does your organization ensure its public-facing work is equitable and inclusive? (Share specific examples of your organization's active and deliberate efforts to engage, include, and represent all New Jersey residents through your proposed program.)
4. Please describe how your organization is currently meeting and/or exceeding accessibility requirements under pertinent state and federal laws, both programmatically (public-facing offerings) and internally (offices/employees). (Include the ways your facilities, rented venues, programs, and website are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Share your leadership, policy and decision-making practices around accessibility.)

Section 4: Arts Education and Lifelong Learning

Please note: This section of the narrative is a required component of the application and is not related to the optional Long-Term Residency Supplement.

1. Describe how arts education and/or lifelong learning is a part of the program's mission and goals.
2. Describe your program's arts learning activities in school and community settings for learners of all ages. (Be sure to detail the types of programming that you offer, the populations you serve, and how you adapt programming to be inclusive of all learners. Please include details of how your programs are evaluated, including any informal or formal assessments or feedback.)
    - If you provide professional development or ongoing learning to artists, teaching artists, educators, or others, please detail the types of programming that you offer, the populations you serve, and how you adapt programming to be inclusive of all learners. Please include details of how your programs are evaluated, including any informal or formal assessments or feedback.
3. Describe how your organization works with and supports teaching artists through its proposed program.
4. If your program provides enrichment activities such as lectures/demonstrations, docent tours, pre- or post-performance discussions, and gallery talks, describe how these activities deepen the artistic experience for participants.

Section 5: Operational Excellence and Capacity

Operations/Strategic Planning: The Arts Council views the strategic planning process as a key indicator of the organization's present situation and potential future. Evidence of solid planning

to guide operations and arts program development for the next three years is critical to obtain General Program Support.

1. Describe your organization's most recent arts program/service planning process, including the role of the board, staff, leadership, and community to shape goal setting.
2. Describe how your organization monitors and adjusts its progress on an annual basis.
3. If your organization is developing a new plan, describe the process in the context of the existing plan.

Fiscal Soundness:

1. What are the organization's policies and procedures for ensuring sound fiscal controls?
2. Detail how the organization develops and monitors its arts program budget.
3. Detail any assets and/or financial instruments that contribute to fiscal soundness relating to the program budget. (Be sure to state how the organization monitors the use of and long-term health of the asset/financial instrument. Examples could include: endowment, property, cash reserve, investments, lines of credit, etc.)

Section 6: Budgeting and Financial Resources

Amplify the information provided in the finance charts and detail the current financial picture of the arts program in relation to the organization. Provide an honest assessment of the organization's current financial picture.

1. Are there any significant changes within your organization's financial statement from the previous year? If so, why?
2. Explain why your organization projected arts program budget increases or decreases for FY28.
3. **For colleges, universities and municipalities**, describe the strategies employed to develop the appropriate revenue sources needed to meet the Arts Council's community support requirement.

Additional Narrative Questions:

Public Understanding/Advocacy: The Arts Council seeks to support organizations that advance the sector. How does your organization advocate for the arts in New Jersey?

1. Describe how your organization communicates with public officials, educators, business and community leaders, and others about the public value of its work and of the arts in general.
2. Describe any programs or services offered that contribute to better public understanding of the value of the arts to all sectors. Be sure to include any partnerships or collaborations.
3. Describe specific strategies or plans for increasing public understanding and appreciation of the arts.

LONG-TERM RESIDENCY SUPPLEMENT FORM (OPTIONAL)

Applicants with at least two years of teaching artist-led residency experience may request an additional **$10,000** to supplement the cost of one, long-term, (10-day or more) arts learning residency for each year of the grant period.

Long-Term Residency Supplement (LTRS) Program Requirements

1. Duration: Minimum of 10 days with the same teaching artist and core student group.
2. Setting: In-school (K–12), juvenile justice centers, or alternative secondary schools during the academic day.
3. Eligibility: Must serve NJ youth (age 21 and younger) through sequential arts learning. Preschool, college, and after-school programs are ineligible. Residencies must be free for the education provider.
4. Funding: 100% must cover direct residency costs (supplies, travel, artist fees). Administrative fees are capped at 10% ($1,000).
5. Artist Pay: Minimum rate of $80/hour.

Ineligible Activities

1. Out-of-state activities, summer camps, after school activities, or extracurricular clubs
2. Curricular activities (any activities that are credit-bearing)
3. Arts integration (where arts are supplemental to other subjects)
4. Assembly programs
5. Hospitality/per diem costs (i.e., food and beverages)

Narrative Requirements

In the text box provided, submit a response covering the following headings:

1. Organization: Detail your history with 10+ day residencies, including art forms, student demographics, and learning outcomes.
2. Staff/Support: Explain how you onboard, develop, and support teaching artists. Detail any partnerships used to implement the work.
3. Evaluation: Describe your assessment methods and how they inform future programming.

SUPPORT MATERIAL SECTIONS INSTRUCTIONS

Required support materials play a significant part in the evaluation process by reinforcing what is presented in the narrative. The support materials are important tools that provide the panel with a complete picture and basis for evaluation. Artistic quality demonstrated through support materials is important. The links and/or uploaded files submitted should present samples of your organization's and associated artists' best work.

Support Material Formats: The maximum file size you can upload is 13 MB. There is no size restriction for linked work samples. Do not submit links to password protected sites or pages, including Google Drive or SharePoint.

All support materials must be uploaded as PDFs or linked in SAGE. Should you have questions regarding this format, please contact Arts Council Staff.

Images – Support Materials Form

Applicants may upload up to 10 images from the past 18 months. Only one image per upload is permitted. Provide a brief description for each of the selections to add context for the panelists.

Arts Basic to Education
Submit sufficient support material to demonstrate artistic and educational quality.

Dance
Submit sufficient support material to document artistic quality, particularly of the artists and artistic merit, number and types of participants, quality of work, and quality of environment to demonstrate production and education values.

Folk & Traditional Arts
Upload work samples that demonstrate your organization's range of art forms and activities, artistic excellence, and engagement with the communities you represent and serve.

Literature
Submit sufficient support material to document artistic quality, particularly of any New Jersey writers, workshop leaders, etc. who are engaged for programs.

Media Arts
Upload images that demonstrate artistic, education, and production values. Provide links or upload work based on the different disciplines involved in the program. If other types of programs or services, such as producing events or artists' services, are provided, applicants should provide documentation.

Multidisciplinary
Upload images to demonstrate artistic, education, and production values. Provide links or upload work based on the different disciplines involved in the program. Consult the Performing Arts Presenters and/or Visual Arts sections for submission selections and instructions.

Music
Upload images to demonstrate artistic, education, and production values. Provide links or upload work based on the different disciplines involved in the program. If other types of programs or services are provided, applicants should provide documentation.

Performing Arts Presenters
Upload images to demonstrate artistic, education, and production values. Provide links or upload work based on the different disciplines involved in the program. If other types of programs or services are provided, such as producing events or artists' services, applicants should provide documentation.

Theatre
Applicants are encouraged to submit a work sample in accordance with the rules governing their Actors' Equity Agreement. Upload images or provide links to demonstrate production values.

Service
Provide links or upload work based on the disciplines served. Consult the Performing Arts Presenters and/or Visual Arts sections for submission selections and instructions.

Visual Arts Applicants (and all Museums regardless of discipline)
Include up to four images of the space and/or installation of an exhibit(s). The remaining images should detail exhibited and proposed-to-be-exhibited works by artists who have committed to participation or are under consideration. Floor plans of exhibition spaces are helpful. For exhibitions of contemporary artists' work, samples should be of recent works, unless the exhibition is a retrospective or has a historical perspective.

Media – Support Materials Form

List the selections in the order you wish them to be accessed and note specific time stamps. The panel will view/listen to no more than 10 minutes of total work. Important: Promotional videos are not permitted and samples must be from the past 18 months.

Arts Basic to Education
Submit sufficient support materials to demonstrate educational quality, as well as inclusive and responsive programming. Videos should highlight high quality instruction with students of any age. Documents may include lesson plans or educational support materials for educators and/or students.

Dance
Submit media that documents artistic quality, particularly of the artists and artistic merit, number and types of participants, quality of work, and quality of environment to demonstrate production and education values.

Folk & Traditional Arts
Submit work samples that demonstrate your organization's range of art forms and activities, artistic excellence, and engagement with the communities you represent and serve.

Literature
Submit work that documents artistic quality, particularly of New Jersey writers, workshop leaders, etc. who are engaged for programs.

Media Arts
Submit video samples to demonstrate artistic, education, and/or production values. Applicants should provide links or upload work based on the different disciplines involved in the program. If other types of programs or services, such as producing events or artists' services, are provided, applicants should provide documentation.

Multidisciplinary
Upload video or audio samples to demonstrate artistic, education, and/or production values. Organizations must provide links or upload work based on the different disciplines involved in the program.

Music
Upload video or audio samples to demonstrate artistic, education, and/or production values. If other types of programs or services are provided, applicants should provide documentation.

Performing Arts Presenters
Upload video or audio samples to demonstrate production values based on the different disciplines involved in the program. If other types of programs or services, such as producing events or artists' services, are provided, applicants should provide documentation.

Theatre
Applicants are encouraged to submit a work sample in accordance with the rules governing their Actors' Equity Agreement.

Service
Provide links or upload work based on the disciplines served. Consult the Performing Arts Presenters and/or Visual Arts sections for submission selections and instructions.

Visual Arts Applicants (and all Museums regardless of discipline)
Submit sufficient support material to document artistic quality, if applicable.

Documents: Support Materials Form

This form is made up of one fill-in text box and seven upload fields. Double check your entries to make sure the link is functional and the documents are complete PDFs.

1. **Organization Website** (link)
2. **Brief Bios of Key Personnel/Artists Credentials**

The qualifications of individuals in key artistic, administrative, or educational roles (paid staff, board members, or volunteers) must be provided. Include artistic and education credentials for artists who are providing instruction or educational services, as well as biographical summaries related to individuals' functions. Do not include resumes.

- Provide credential summaries (brief biographical sketch) of artists engaged or a sample summary when there are a large number of artists engaged.

3. **Strategic Program Plan**
   The strategic program plan must provide the goals and objectives of the program. The plan must contain the following components:
   - action steps for the realization of articulated goals;
   - clear benchmarks to measure success;
   - a realistic, detailed timeline;
   - a budget to realize the goals within the timeline; and,
   - an update that briefly notes what goals or objectives have been attained to date, if applicable.
4. **Board-Approved Conflict of Interest Policy for Employees and Board Members**
   Important: Include the date it was approved by the board and when it will expire.
5. **Equity and Inclusion Practices Policy (if applicable)**
6. **FY25 Audit or FY25 Form 990***
   Applicants must upload their FY25 audit or Form 990 for the same fiscal years (Form 990-N is not acceptable). Consult the Glossary to determine which financial documentation your organization is required to submit. In all cases in which a management letter is referenced in the audits, a copy should be submitted. An applicant's response to any audit findings must be included.
7. **FY26 Audit or FY26 Form 990***
   A critical element of application review is the analysis of current financial reports. We understand that an organization's fiscal year may impact its ability to include its latest financial document. If the FY26 audit/Form 990 is not completed by the application due date, the applicant may substitute its FY24 report and a statement detailing why the FY26 form is not available. Please note that the absence of the FY26 audit/Form 990 may impact the review panel's assessment.
   Note: A combined audit that includes more than one fiscal year does not replace the upload requirements for items 6 and 7.

   * Colleges, universities, and municipalities are exempt from documents #6 and #7.

GPS APPLICATION COMPONENT CHECK LIST

Before submitting your application, use the following checklist to ensure you have fully completed all forms and charts. Incomplete applications will not advance to the panel process.

- ☐ **Organizational Profile Form:** Fully provide all the essential information about the organization.
- ☐ **Type of Support:** Select General Program Support.
- ☐ **Panel Category:** Select the panel category that best applies to the program.
- ☐ **Funding Purpose Summary:** Compose a brief statement that details the purpose of Arts Council funding.
- ☐ **Grant Narrative:** Compose narrative responses to each of the Narrative Topics.
- ☐ **Long-Term Residency Supplement Form (optional):** This is a supplementary funding opportunity in addition to your GPS request.
- ☐ **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Organizational Checklist Form:** This form covers basic accessibility requirements. Applicants must also upload the following two documents:
  - ☐ Board-approved non-discrimination policy
  - ☐ Board-approved grievance procedure
- ☐ **Board Chart Information Review Page:** List either the organization's current board or the advisory board for the program.
- ☐ **Staff Chart:** Fully complete the program's current staff list and the two governance/leadership questions.
- ☐ **Finance Charts:** Fully complete three years of financial data in two finance charts.
- ☐ **Images – Support Materials:** Upload up to 10 images following form instructions.
- ☐ **Media – Support Materials:** Upload up to 10 work samples following form instructions.
- ☐ **Documents – Support Materials:** This form consists of one fill-in text box and nine upload fields.
  - ☐ Organization Website (link)
  - ☐ Brief Bios of Key Personnel/ Artistic Credentials
  - ☐ Strategic Program Plan
  - ☐ Board-Approved Conflict of Interest Policy for Employees and Board Members
  - ☐ Equity and Inclusion Policies (if applicable)
  - ☐ FY25 Audit or FY25 Form 990 (Colleges, universities, and municipalities are exempt)

- ☐ FY26 Audit or FY26 Form 990 (Colleges, universities, and municipalities are exempt)

☐ **Application Certification:** An authorized official must sign and certify this SAGE form.

☐ **Submission Instructions:** Follow the directions to submit the application before the **November 19, 2026 12:00 PM ET NOON deadline.**

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: FY28 GPS RUBRIC

Evaluation Criteria 1: High artistic quality demonstrated through the proposed program/service that provides public benefit and value through impactful and relevant arts experiences.

Assess the application in relation to the proposed arts program. Consider the process by which they make artistic decisions, and how the community is engaged in the applicant's programs and services. **10 POINTS TOTAL**

Relevant Assessment Areas: Grant Narrative Section 1, images, media, organizational website, strategic program plan

Assessment Scale:

- **10 points – Exemplary Evidence**: The application provides clear, specific, and thorough details about the organization's goals and priorities for its programs and services. The application details a clear and thorough process for how artistic decisions are made and evaluated. Inclusion of the organization's audience/community is thoughtfully integrated into the organization's programs and services.
- **8 points – Strong Evidence**: The application provides a clear explanation about the organization's goals and priorities for its programs and services. The application details a process for how artistic decisions are made and evaluated. Inclusion of the organization's audience/community is present in the organization's programs and services.
- **5 points –Some Evidence**: The application includes some details about the organization's goals and priorities for its programs and services. The application provides limited information on how artistic decisions are made and evaluated. There is limited information regarding the inclusion of the organization's audience/community in their programs and services.
- **2 points – Weak Evidence**: The application provides an unclear overview of the organization's goals and priorities for its programs and services. The application provides weak or unclear information on how artistic decisions are made and evaluated. It is unclear how programs and services include the organization's audience/community.
- **0 points – No Evidence:** The application provides little to no evidence of the organization's goals and priorities for its programs and services. The application provides little to no evidence as to how artistic decisions are made and evaluated. There is no evidence that the organization's programs and services include the organization's audience/community.

Evaluation Criteria 2: Significant public benefit and community engagement based on a clear understanding of those served by the program.

Assess the proposed art program's ability to provide significant public benefit, community engagement, and artistic support. Information provided by the applicant is clearly based on a sound understanding of the communities in its service region and the needs of artists.
10 POINTS TOTAL

Relevant Assessment Areas: Grant Narrative Section 2, images, media, organizational website, strategic program plan

Assessment Scale:

- **10 points - Exemplary Evidence:** The application demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the artists, arts community, and community(ies) served, including characteristics and needs. The arts program achieves clear, measurable artist and community benefits and engagement strategies.
    - For Colleges, Universities and Units of Government: There are clear and specific details demonstrating the proposed program is programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization. The program prioritizes public engagement over student/faculty/employee engagement.
- **8 points - Strong Evidence:** The application documents that the applicant has a good understanding of the artists, arts community, and community(ies) served, including characteristics and needs. The arts program achieves some measurable artist and community benefits and engagement strategies.
    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: The proposed program is programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization. The program has details about public engagement that is separate from student/faculty/employee engagement.
- **5 points - Some Evidence:** The application shows that the applicant has a basic understanding of the artists, arts community, and community(ies) served, including some characteristics and needs. The arts program shows limited artist and community benefits and engagement strategies.
    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: There are unclear details demonstrating the proposed program is programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization. The program lacks clarity about how it prioritizes public engagement over student/faculty/employee engagement.
- **2 points - Weak Evidence:** The application lacks clear evidence of the artists, arts community, and community(ies) served, with minimal artist and community benefits and engagement strategies. There is unclear evidence proving that the majority of programs and services take place in New Jersey.
    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: There are limited details demonstrating that the proposed program is programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization. The program has limited

to no details about how it prioritizes public engagement over student/faculty/employee engagement.

- **0 points - No Evidence:** The application fails to demonstrate an understanding of the artists, arts community, and community(ies) served, with no artist or community benefits or engagement strategies. There is little to no evidence demonstrating the majority of programs and services take place in New Jersey.
    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: There are few to no details demonstrating the proposed program is programmatically and administratively distinct from the parent organization. The program does not prioritize public engagement over student/faculty/employee engagement.

Evaluation Criteria 3: Commitment to inclusive and equitable policy and practices.

Assess the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. The applicant's proposed arts program is clearly supported through meaningful and measurable internal and external strategies and goals. **10 POINTS TOTAL**

Relevant Assessment Areas: Grant Narrative Section 3, strategic program plan, conflict of interest policy, and equitable and inclusive policy and practices

Assessment Scale:

- **10 points - Exemplary Evidence:** The application clearly articulates that the organization has a strong commitment to all parts of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion with specific, actionable strategies for each component within internal and external policies, governance, employment, administrative practices, programs, and services.
    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: The program is easily accessible to the general public.
- **8 points - Strong Evidence:** The application articulates that the organization has a commitment to all parts of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion with some actionable strategies for each component within internal and external policies, governance, employment, administrative practices, programs, and services.
    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: The program is accessible to the general public.
- **5 points - Some Evidence:** The application shows that the organization has a general commitment to some parts of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion with actionable strategies for some components within internal and external policies, governance, employment, administrative practices, programs, and services.
    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: Details on how the general public can access the program are unclear.
- **2 points - Weak Evidence:** The application demonstrates that the organization has a minimal commitment to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion with vague strategies for some or all components within internal and external policies, governance, employment, administrative practices, programs, and services.

    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: Details on how the general public can access the program are limited or lacking.
- **0 points - No Evidence:** There is little to no evidence of the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion within internal and external policies, governance, employment, administrative practices, programs, and services.
    - For Colleges/Universities and Units of Government: The program does not prioritize access to the program by the general public.

Evaluation Criteria 4: Commitment to arts education/lifelong learning in the arts.

Assess the organization's commitment to lifelong learning/arts education through the proposed arts program. The applicant provides relevant opportunities for arts learning through training, skill development, and knowledge-building in the arts. **10 POINTS TOTAL**

Relevant Assessment Areas: Grant Narrative Section 4, strategic program plan

Assessment Scale:

- **10 points - Exemplary Evidence:** The application provides comprehensive details for the arts program's arts education and lifelong learning activities, plans of support, programs, and/or services. There is a clear understanding of populations and inclusive learning practices. There are clear, measurable outcomes and assessment methods included.
- **8 points - Strong Evidence:** The application provides solid details for the arts program's arts education and lifelong learning activities, programs, and services. There is a good understanding of populations and inclusive learning practices. There are measurable outcomes and assessment methods included.
- **5 points - Some Evidence:** The application provides a basic plan for the arts program's arts education and lifelong learning activities, programs, and services. There is a limited understanding of populations and inclusive learning practices. There are limited outcomes and assessment methods included.
- **2 points - Weak Evidence:** The application contains minimal details for the arts program's arts education and lifelong learning with unclear outcomes.
- **0 points - No Evidence:** There are no details in the application for the art program's arts education activities and lifelong learning is not evident.

Evaluation Criteria 5: Operational excellence and capacity demonstrated through appropriate fiscal and administrative resources, governance, and strategic planning.

Assess the organization's capacity to successfully implement sound fiscal controls and appropriate administrative resources. The applicant engages in sound governance and strategic planning practices to ensure it can successfully carry out the work of its mission. **30 POINTS TOTAL**

Relevant Assessment Areas: Grant Narrative Section 5, Staff Chart & Staff Bios, audit, budget charts, strategic program plan

Assessment Scale:
Focus: Governance and Strategic Planning 15 Points

- **15 points - Exemplary Evidence:** Governance structures and strategic program planning processes are robust; transparent; inclusive of the board, staff, and community; and effectively guide the program towards its objectives.
- **11 points - Strong Evidence:** Governance and strategic program planning are well-structured, relevant, and generally effective in guiding the program.
- **7 points - Some Evidence:** Governance and strategic program planning are present but lack full effectiveness in guiding the program.
- **3 points - Weak Evidence:** Governance and strategic program planning are weak, with limited effectiveness in guiding the program.
- **0 points - No Evidence:** Governance and strategic program planning are ineffective and fail to guide the program.

Focus: Financial Oversight 15 points

- **15 points - Exemplary Evidence:** The application clearly demonstrates the development and management of the organization and its board's fiduciary responsibilities. Structures, plans, processes, and fiscal controls ensure that all financial activities, strategies, and reviews are conducted in accordance with legal and ethical standards and are explained with clarity and specificity.
- **11 point - Strong Evidence:** The application shows the development and management of the organization and its board's fiduciary responsibilities. Structures, plans, processes, and fiscal controls ensure that all financial activities, strategies, and reviews are conducted in accordance with legal and ethical standards.
- **7 points - Some Evidence:** The application shows that the organization meets the standard oversight responsibilities. Some or all details regarding management of the organization, its board's fiduciary responsibilities, and legal and ethical standards are unclear or lacking.
- **3 points - Weak Evidence:** The application demonstrates a partial understanding of financial oversight responsibilities. Some or all details regarding management of the organization, its board's fiduciary responsibilities, and legal and ethical standards are inconsistent or reactive, and internal controls reviewed irregularly.
- **0 points - No Evidence:** The application fails show that the organization ensures compliance or monitor financial health effectively.

Evaluation Criteria 6: An appropriate program budget that includes sufficient resources.

Assess the appropriateness of the art program's budget and financial narrative. Assess whether the applicant has sufficient resources to support its activities. **30 POINTS TOTAL**

Relevant Assessment Areas: Grant Narrative Sections 5 & 6, budget charts, audits, strategic program plan

Assessment Scale:

- **30 points - Exemplary Evidence:** There are comprehensive and well-documented fiscal resources in place, demonstrating a clear alignment with strategic program goals. Any changes in financial statements or in programmatic budget are clearly explained. All cash match requirements are evident and secured. No ineligible budget categories are included. No general operating expense is incorporated outside of the 10% indirect overhead budget line item.
- **22 points - Strong Evidence:** There are adequate fiscal resources in place, with most aligning with strategic program goals. Any changes in financial statements or in programmatic budget are explained. All cash match requirements are evident with some requested but pending. No general operating expense are incorporated outside of the 10% indirect overhead budget line item. There are adequate fiscal resources in place, with most aligning with strategic program goals.
- **15 points - Some Evidence:** Basic fiscal resources are present, with some alignment to strategic program goals. Changes in financial statements or in programmatic budget are not clearly explained. Cash match requirements include sources that are projected or unclear. The budget includes ineligible categories.
- **8 points - Weak Evidence:** Limited fiscal resources are evident, with minimal alignment to strategic program goals. Changes in financial statements or in programmatic budget are not explained. Cash match goals are unclear or unmet. The budget includes ineligible categories and general operating expenses.
- **0 points - No Evidence:** Fiscal resources are not detailed or insufficient and poorly aligned with strategic program goals. Changes in financial statements or in programmatic budget are not explained. Cash match requirements are unmet. Ineligible budget categories and/or general operating expenses are included.

APPENDIX II: FY28 LONG-TERM RESIDENCY SUPPLEMENT (LTRS) RUBRIC

Does the organization appear to have the necessary experience to execute a long-term residency?

- ☐ **Yes** (2 points)
- ☐ **Maybe** (1 point)
- ☐ **No** (0 points)

Does the organization appear to properly support the needs of teaching artists and partner organizations?

- ☐ **Yes** (2 points)
- ☐ **Maybe** (1 point)
- ☐ **No** (0 points)

Do you recommend this organization for LTRS funding?

- ☐ **Yes** (2 points)
- ☐ **Maybe** (1 point)
- ☐ **No** (0 points)

END OF GUIDELINES