



2026 Guidelines Grants for Arts Programs in Tompkins County (GAP Grant)

The GAP grant is for exemplary arts programming in Tompkins County, open to the Tompkins County general public.

Deadline:
Wednesday, February 4th, 2026 9:00pm

Administered by:
Community Arts Partnership of Tompkins County

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

All CAP Grants: at ArtsPartner.org (grant tab)

Note: These Guidelines are very detailed!
If you have not applied before (or even if you have) it's always a good idea to run your request idea by Robin before starting the process.

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Recommended: Grant Writing Workshops & Advice

Free Grant Information & Advice Sessions: Live and Zoom (or Watch Recording)

November 2025 through January 2026 (Registration required)

- CAP hosts multiple Zoom and live workshops in Tompkins County locations. Visit ArtsPartner.org.
- There's also a recorded version you can watch anytime.
- Robin Schwartz, CAP Program & Grant Director, discusses CAP's grants and (mostly) shares grant writing advice to help your requests rise to the top of the pile!

Recommended: Advice, Questions, Draft Review

Advice, Brainstorming, and Questions

Email Robin Schwartz, CAP Program & Grant Director (see above) anytime for advice, to brainstorm, and/or with questions. Reading these guidelines before contacting Robin is recommended.

Grant Draft Review

Robin can review application drafts. The earlier the better (to make time for any recommended changes), but she can view or comment on applications right up through the day of the deadline.

Drafts can be sent as either a word document or a pdf saved from the application's online platform. Sending a draft budget form along with narrative is recommended.

Be advised that although Robin facilitates the grant panel meetings, she does not make recommendations or state her opinions to the panel. Any recommendations that she may make when reviewing a draft is based on her experience and does not constitute a guarantee of funding.

Accommodations

If an artist needs assistance with any aspect of the grant process, please email.

Previous Applicant Alert

Funding is never guaranteed. The number and variety of applicants, the people on the decision making panel, the funding rules and criteria, and the amount of funds available change from year to year. Each request is rated based on the criteria listed in the guidelines, and the process is competitive.

New York State Council on the Arts and CAP Program & Priorities

This grant is part of [New York State Council on the Arts](#) (NYSCA) Statewide Community Re-grants Program (SCR) which CAP administers for Tom-pkins County.

CAP has three NYSCA 2026 grants with February deadlines: **Grant for Arts Programs (GAP)**, **Artist in Community Grant**, and **Arts Education Grant** (along with a locally funded Strategic Opportunity Stipend).

SCR is a statewide effort to make exemplary arts programming available to geographically, ethnically, and racially diverse segments of the State's population, and to support the continued development of local cultural resources responsive to community cultural needs. The program forms the cornerstone of NYSCA's partnership with local arts agencies throughout the state, providing a link between the Council and portions of the community that might not otherwise be able to access funding from NYSCA.

About the GAP Grant

The GAP grant funds public arts events in Tom-pkins County

- GAP support enables artists and organizations to **enhance the artistic cultural climate** in our communities and neighborhoods through public arts events.
- GAP supports events involving **local artists** (see exception below) **that are open to the general public. The presentation of local art by local active artist(s) must be the core activity.**
- Grants are available for arts programs of **high artistic merit and quality.**

The GAP grant funds local active and professional artists (with some exceptions)

- The qualifications and caliber of participating artists is a part of the evaluation process.
- A GAP grant priority is that requested artistic fees are geared primarily to Tom-pkins County resident artists. The exception is bringing in artists that represent art, art forms, or culturally related work not currently represented in Tom-pkins County.
- The grant cannot pay fees to students of universities, high schools, middle or elementary schools. (They can be part of the event, but not part of what this grant can fund.)

Defining "general public"

- **Projects must be open to, targeted to, available to, promoted to, and easily accessible to** the general public of Tom-pkins County and not primarily geared to an organization's membership, clients, followers, mailing list, or a mostly out-of-county audience.
- Events must be primarily geared to audiences that are Tom-pkins County residents. Events can be on college campuses if they are deemed easily accessible (parking), but will not be funded if the audience is deemed to be mostly a student audience (as most students are not Tom-pkins County residents).
- Projects can be geared towards specific communities, cultures, or ages, as long as anyone who wishes to attend can attend.
- Events with a small maximum number of attendees (like workshops) cannot be funded. Audience size is also a consideration.

Type of artistic projects funded:

- Funded projects must have at their core an activity that is **fundamentally arts related and in-line with art forms funded by NYSCA** that can include visual art exhibitions and public art; performances of theatre, music, dance; literary events such as readings; along with locally produced film screenings.
- The grant cannot fund activities the outcome of which is primarily rehabilitative, spiritual or religious, educational, therapeutic, or recreational.

Timeline:

- **Projects must take place between January 1st, 2026 and January 31, 2027.** (Award notification will not occur until March.

Priorities:

- Event sites that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be prioritized.
- **Community benefit** of the project is considered, along with whether the programming is available to **geographically, ethnically and racially diverse segments of the county**, and if the request supports the development of cultural resources responsive to community needs. (See “Funding Preferences / Panel Review Criteria”)

Who Can Apply to the GAP Grant?

1) NOT FOR PROFITS

- **The applicant must be a Tompkins County based not-for-profit organization** (a 501(c)(3) or NYS State not-for-profit organization either incorporated in NY State or registered to do business in NY State with a NYS Charities Registration) or a **Tompkins County government agency, municipality, or Tribal Nation.**
- **The Applicant must be:** located in Tompkins County with a Tompkins County mailing address, have as their primary mission providing services to residents of Tompkins County, and have an active Tompkins County board of directors which meets at least 6 times per year.

2) INDIVIDUALS or GROUPS with a fiscal sponsor or community partner

- **Individual artists, groups, and unincorporated entities** can apply through a not-for-profit “**Fiscal Sponsor Applicant**” (FSA) that becomes the official applicant for the grant. The FSA appears on the application as “Applicant” and they are sent grant payments. The FSA is responsible for financial IRS requirements such as collecting W-9’s and issuing 1099’s. The FSA must meet the requirements for not for profits above. Ask Robin for a PDF outlining the responsibilities and requirements of the FSA.
- There is another option for individuals, groups, or unincorporated entities called “**Community Partners**”.
- **Please contact Robin if you need advice for finding a Fiscal Sponsor Applicant or to discuss a community partner.**
- Individuals being fiscally sponsored for funding must be **18 years of age** at the date of submission, **be a current Tompkins County resident** (driver’s license proof may be required), and **must not be enrolled in a full-time degree program in 2026.**

Who Cannot Apply?

- Organizations that do not fit the eligibility requirements above.
- **Direct NYSCA applicants:** Organizations that apply directly or were fiscally sponsored in an application to NYSCA in 2026 may not apply for SCR funding and cannot serve as fiscal sponsors. (See next section.)
- New York State agencies and departments.
- Public universities, colleges; and public, private, or parochial secondary, middle, and elementary schools.
- CAP staff or CAP board members.
- Students under 18 or students enrolled in a full-time degree program.
- Past re-grantees that have not submitted final reports or did not comply with acknowledgment requirements.

(Organizations That Apply Directly to NYSCA Cannot Apply or Sponsor)

- Local not-for-profit organizations that have applied directly to NYSCA for 2026 funding (or applied to NYSCA through a fiscal sponsor), whether funded or not, are called “Direct NYSCA Applicants” (DNA) and cannot apply for this grant, our Artist in Community Grant, or our Arts Education Grant.
- In addition, a DNA cannot serve as a Fiscal Sponsor Applicant for an artist or group.
- **However, an applicant CAN hire or book a DNA** for a service, or for use as a venue, and can directly pay the DNA for any direct costs related to the use of the DNA such as rental, staff and/or custodial costs. The DNA can run the box office for a rented event, but cannot take a portion of the ticket sales.
- **The funded GAP program cannot be included or advertised** as part of the DNA’s season or as one of the DNA’s programs or events. It can be included on the DNA’s website and promotion as a supported event.
- **CAP will have a DNA list in December, but believe they will be:** Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Cherry Arts, Center for Transformative Action, Cinemapolis (Seventh Art Corp), Civic Ensemble, CSMA, Cornell Cinema, Cornell University, Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers, Hangar Theatre, Historic Ithaca, History Center in Tompkins County, Ithaca College, Ithaca Murals, Ithaca Shakespeare Company, Johnson Museum of Art, Kitchen Theatre, NYS Early Music Association, Traditional Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Healing, Opera Ithaca, Opus School of Music, Running to Places Theatre, Saltonstall Foundation, Sciencenter, Story House Ithaca, State Theatre, Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts.

What Can the GAP Grant Fund?

- GAP can fund costs directly related to the requested public event such as participating artist fees, marketing and publicity costs, printing costs, space rental (just for the project), technical personnel for the project, and payment to the organizers of the project. FSA can take an admin fee for being a fiscal sponsor which can also be part of the request.
- GAP can fund supplies and materials that are used up during the event such as art supplies. Supply cost expenses cannot exceed \$1,000.
- Funded events do not have to be free for the general public, but the participation cost should not be too prohibitive. Sliding scales are optional but appreciated for increased audience access.

The GAP Grant Cannot Fund

- Artist fees for creating, developing, writing or framing the art being presented to the public. Example: Music rehearsals are fundable, but not the writing or commission of the piece being performed. A visual art exhibit is fundable, but not the creation of the art being presented. An exception to this rule is a public art mural.
- Workshops unless they are open to the general public with no limitation on audience size, do not have prohibitive costs, and expect a good sized audience.
- The purchase of permanent equipment.
- Food and refreshments.
- Requests greater than an applicant's total project expenses, minus their total project income.
- Projects taking place in a school during the school day or immediately after. (For these type of projects, see CAP's Arts Education grant which funds artist residencies.)
- General operating support, capital expenditures, construction, improvements, mortgage, utilities, rent payments (unless the rent payment is solely for the funded project and not a monthly fee), or expenditures for establishment of new organizations.
- Payments to staff or staff salaries unless the funding requested is not part of their salary.
- Fees paid to students of universities, high schools, middle or elementary schools. (Students can be part of the request, but GAP funds cannot be used for their payment.)
- Travel costs to bring in artists from out of County or accommodations for traveling artists (unless that artist's expertise or discipline is not represented in Tompkins County - see page 3.)
- Galas, benefits, or fundraising events.
- GAP funds cannot be used for donations to other causes or organizations.
- Entertainment costs for entertainment that is for the background and not the main event.
- Money for awards, juror fees, prizes, or lobbying costs.
- Activities which are targeted to an insular group such as clubs, camps, memberships, or congregations.
- Events that have limited registration such as workshops with a small maximum attendee limit.
- Events that are geared towards audiences outside of Tompkins County.
- Activities that announce that they are open to the general public but are not easily accessible or not promoted to the general public, or are not in the spirit of targeted to the general public.
- Activities where the core activity is primarily recreational, rehabilitative, religious, scientific, educational, therapeutic or activities with religious content.
- Magic or illusion shows, culinary arts, martial arts, yoga, science shows, animal shows, art therapy, sip and paint.
- Activities taking place at a private home or other locations not generally open to the public.
- Public art projects on private property.
- Acquisition of works of art or books.
- Projects with a prohibitive admission fee. Sliding scales are optional but appreciated.
- Activities that have taken place prior to January 1, 2026 or are scheduled after January 31, 2027.

Request Amount, # of Requests

There are three grants programs that are part of NYSCA's Statewide Regrant Program (SCR).

- **Grants for Arts Program** ("GAP") Applicant is a not for profit.
- **Artist in Community Grant** (AICG) Applicant can be individual artist or group of artists..
- **Arts Education** (AE) grant. Applicant can be not-for-profit, individual artist or group.
- **An application can be for a single event or an event series** such as a concert series or a year of exhibitions. **The maximum request for a single event or series is \$5,000.**
- **A not for profit organization can submit up to three grant requests for unrelated programs** through the GAP grant and/or the Arts Education grant. (The Artist in Community Grant is for individuals). **NEW: The total request for all three cannot exceed \$7,500.** *For example, a not-for-profit might have a performers showcase, and an unrelated senior program, and an unrelated after-school program. That would result in two GAP grant applications and an Arts Education grant and they can request \$7.500 total across all three.*
- Note: **If a a not-for-profit is acting as a Fiscal Sponsor Applicant**, those sponsored requests are not considered part of their funding limit or three project limit. Sponsored events are considered separate.
- Tribal Nations are exempt from the 3 request, \$5,000 limit. (However, individual Tribal organizations within Tribal Nations are still subject to the 3 request, \$5,000 limit.)

How Decisions Are Made

- A diverse panel composed of area community leaders, artists, business people, and educators will be sent the application materials after the due date. They'll have at least three weeks to read all of the approximately 60 requests.
- The panel will meet virtually in early March of 2026 to discuss each request and rate them based on the criteria below.
- Requests may or may not be fully funded based on a) availability of funds, b) an applicant's budget, and/or c) place in the ratings.

Rating Criteria and Request Priorities

Panelists rate the requests using the criteria below.

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

Community Benefit:

The panel considers all applications as a whole to ensure that funded requests collectively reach broad and diverse audiences, which can include rural audiences, culturally diverse segments of the county's population. and broad demographics such as age, ethnicity, race, and economic status.

- Projects are prioritized and receive a higher rating if they demonstrate that they are providing successful access to under-resourced or diverse communities.
- Projects are prioritized if they support the development of local cultural resources that responsive to specific community cultural needs.
- Requests should contribute to the artistic landscape of Tompkins County and its communities.

Community Interest, and Promotion:

- Is there demonstrated community interest, support, and benefit?
- Can the applicant effectively promote the funded event to the general public? Do they have an effective promotion and marketing plan that reaches as many new people as possible?

Artistic Merit:

- Artistic quality and program quality its considered along with caliber and credentials of participating artists.

Guidelines, Application, Budget:

- Adherence to these guidelines, and alignment with GAP Grant funding preferences.
- Application clarity, completeness. Were all questions answered in full? Is the budget clear, accurate?

Feasibility:

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

Applicant's History (if previously funded):

- Compliance with grantee requirements and prior success with funded projects.

After The Deadline

- Applications received after 9:00pm on the deadline will not be accepted unless in the case of widespread electricity and wi-fi outages.
- Applications will be checked for eligibility, completeness, and accuracy. Applicants may be contacted for clarification and/or additional information.
- Participating artist work samples or artist resumes may be requested after submission.
- Applicants will be informed of decisions regarding their requests in late March.
- Grantees will be featured in CAP's publicity, website, and press.

Grantee Responsibilities if Funded

- All awarded not-for-profits or fiscal sponsors sign and return a **contract** acknowledging receipt of the award. The contract outlines the obligations and the procedures for the grant, providing a final report, and proper acknowledgement language on all publicity materials.
- Sponsored artists and groups will also be sent a form to sign with the same information.
- A **required google form** will be available for keeping CAP posted on event dates, locations and times.

When Does Award Payment Arrive?

- **Grant checks can be sent** after the contract is received.
- **Disclaimer:** Depending on the history of the applicant with regard to programming events, CAP may hold back the award until proof of event scheduling is received.
- **LATE PAYMENTS:** CAP receives the funds to distribute to awardees directly from New York State. In 2024, CAP (and all statewide agencies administering this grant) did not receive funds until August. This delay affected many of the funded projects. Some had to be postponed, and a few were cancelled. 2025 funds arrived in increments starting in March and were distributed according to funded event dates. We do not expect this delay in funding for 2026, but we cannot make that promise. In the event of delayed funding, CAP will be very flexible if funded projects need to be postponed.

GAP Application & Budget Submission Instructions

Due: Wednesday, February 4, 9pm

Community Arts Partnership of Tompkins County
Robin Schwartz, Grant and Program Director, programs@artspartner.org
ArtsPartner.org

1. FILL OUT GRANT APPLICATION ONLINE

LEARN HOW TO FILL OUT APPLICATION - Watch 5 minute video

(It is not entirely user friendly - so please watch)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1TermKUhY8

Here's the beginning steps (after login)

Click "Start Draft Application"

Locate "Community Arts Partnership".

Click "Select Program" (*Don't click "Community Arts Partnership"*)

Find grant you want to apply for.

Click "Start Draft App" (*Don't click the name of the grant*).

The video explains the rest!

HOW TO LOG IN

First-time users register: <https://www.commongrantapplication.com/register.php?refOrgId=159456&refProgId=&refProgType=all>

Returning users login at: <https://www.commongrantapplication.com/login.php?refOrgId=159456&refProgId=&refProgType=all>

(APPLICATION QUESTIONS ARE LISTED BELOW)

If you prefer to fill the application out initially in word or pages to then cut and paste into the grant application platform, please note character limits (with spaces). Seeing the questions below can help you see all of the information you need to gather.

2. GAP GRANT BUDGET FORM

- The GAP grant budget form is available as an .xlsx on the ArtsPartner.org grant page in the GAP grant section) and also as a download from the online application.
- (Your completed budget form is then uploaded to the application platform).
- If you need any assistance putting together a budget or understanding the budget form, we can help!
- See Sample Budget below.

Questions you'll find on the Online Application

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Contact person (*person writing the application*): Name, Title, Phone, Email, Pronouns

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

- Name of Organization, Mailing Address, Municipality
- Website
- Executive Director or President Name, and Email
- NFP Status and EIN Number
- Activities of Applicant Organization (*Briefly describe the mission or activities of the Applicant Organization (300 characters with spaces)*)

IF APPLICABLE, SPONSORED GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL

- Name of Individual or Group being sponsored
- Activities of Individual or Group being sponsored (*300 characters with spaces*)

PROJECT INFORMATION

- Name of Project (*up to 4 words*)
- Grant Request Amount (*must match budget sheet*)
- Website/Social Media Links for Funded Event
- Summary Statement (*Summarize your project in one sentence. (200 characters with spaces)*)
- Dates, Times, Location, Fees, Audience

List proposed event(s) information in this format:

Activity - Dates/Times - Location - Ticket Fees - Expected audience size.

EXAMPLES:

Jazz Concert - Sat, October 15, 3pm - IHS Kulp Auditorium - \$15.00 (sliding scale) - 150 people

Jazz Concert - Sun, November 5, 2pm - Danby Community Center - \$15 (sliding scale) - 100 people

If you don't yet know all the details, write what you do know, for example:

Modern Jazz Concert - a Saturday evening in the Fall - downtown location - \$15 (pay what you can) - 150 people

Detailed Project Information (6000 character limit with spaces)

- *Here's where you can write a detailed clear, concise, and factual description of your project. (6000 character limit with spaces)*
- *Describe the event, the participating artists, and who is organizing the project and your goals. Address demonstrated community interest based on past experience. Talk about program quality. Don't assume the panel knows anything about your organization or event.*
- *Address your funding needs. Note that the decision making panel will be closely examining your budget and will look to this narrative to understand your expenses. For example, if you have "marketing costs" in your budget, explain those in this section. If you have a "recording" cost in your budget, tell us what the recording is for. The budget should be explained in the narrative.*

Is the Event Location(s) ADA Complaint?

If the event location(s) are accessible to the mobility impaired, you can just reply "yes".

If not, explain (i.e. stairs, high threshold, bathroom in separate floor, etc.)

Community Interest (1,700 character limit with spaces)

- *Who are you expecting to come to your event based on your promotional efforts and community connections. (ages, communities, locations, interests...)? Let us know if your project reaches under-served areas, populations.*

Project In-Kind Contributions ((500 character limit with spaces)

- *(optional question) Please list any donated services or goods (called "in-kind" contributions) for your project. (artist fees, space, food, equipment, etc.) Do not put these in-kind expenses in your budget.*

Reduced Funding (1000 character limit with spaces)

It is not always possible to provide funded requests with the full amount requested.

a) Tell us which expenses are most crucial for the success of your project.

b) If your project receives funding at a significantly reduced level (i.e. if you apply for \$5,000 and receive \$3,000), can you adjust? For example, you might schedule less events, or raise ticket prices, or find other sources of funding. Explain.

Promotional Efforts (1000 character limit with spaces)

- *Describe your planned publicity/promotional efforts for your project to attract community interest and attendance. This can be a list such as: instagram posts, facebook event boosts, newsletter, ..."*

Previous Projects

If applicant received a GAP grant in 2024 and/or 2025, please list as follows:

a) Name of Event(s), b) Date of Event(s), Audience Size(s), Audience Make-Up.

Tell us if you have unspent funds that you will roll over to 2026, if your project(s) went as planned, and/or if it is not complete. (1000 character limit with spaces)

NYS REPORTING *Provide just one number for each*

- *Number of Participating Artists / Total Number of Expected Audience / Total Number of K-12 in Audience*

Budget Form Instructions

- **The expenses and income you list in the budget form must be actual cash needed or received.**
- Do not include in-kind donations. (There's a narrative question in the application for in-kind.)
- Provide a **detailed breakdown** in Column B. See examples below.
- Please be as accurate as possible. (We understand that income is often your best guess.)
- **What Part of the Budget Do We Require?** We'd like to see the full budget for your requested project. If (for example) you are requesting money for musicians for a concert, we'd like to see all of that concert's expenses, not just the musician fees. Sometimes, expenses are very basic. For example, if a library is holding in-house events, it's possible the only expenses are artist fees. *Having said that, we don't need to see utilities, annual rent and such. Just the expenses for the project.*
- **Subtract your income from your expenses.** That number is what you need for your project and can be your request amount. If this number is over \$5,000, your request can only be \$5,000.
- The request amount in the example below is \$2,270. Column D must equal this same amount.
- Column D is where you can indicate which of your expenses fit this grant. Please refer to what is funded and not funded in the guidelines.
- You can add additional lines or expand lines, but please stay close to this format as possible.

Budget Form Sample

PROJECT EXPENSES	PROVIDE DETAILED BREAKDOWN BELOW To expand line to fit text, see row number (left). Drag line down.)	INCOME AMOUNT	WHICH COSTS CAN BE PART OF GAP REQUEST? Same number as GAP Grant Request
Artistic Personnel	1st Event: 2 musicians. 2nd event: 1 musician. 3rd: 3 musicians. (6 at \$300 each.	\$1,800.00	\$1,000.00
Technical Personnel	Sound engineer for 3 events (\$250.ea)	\$750.00	\$500.00
Space Rental Fees	\$250 rent x 3 concerts	\$750.00	\$500.00
Admin (Organizer or Fiscal Sponsor fee)	Callie Jones - Event organizer	\$350.00	
Equip Rental, Supplies			
Advertising; Promotion	Boosted Social Media (\$250) printed posters and programs (\$170)	\$420.00	\$270.00
Remaining Operating Expenses (itemize)	Rental Scores	\$250.00	
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,320.00	\$2,270.00
PROJECT INCOME	PROVIDE DETAILED BREAKDOWN BELOW	INCOME AMOUNT	
Admissions	150 pay average of \$7 each	\$1,050	
Earned Income (merch, ads...)			
Contributions - Individual or Business	\$1,000 Sponsorship	\$1000.00	
Other (explain)			
	TOTAL INCOME	\$2,050.00	
	SUBTRACT: EXPENSES MINUS INCOME =	\$2,270.00	
	GAP GRANT REQUEST:	\$2,270.00	Same number as Column D total above AND not exceed \$5,000