COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP

2027 Guidelines
Strategic Opportunity Stipend (SOS)

CAP's SOS grant is for artists who are full-time residents of Tompkins County with a consistent record of producing art. Artists can apply for a specific and strategic opportunity taking place from January 1st, 2027 - February 29th, 2028 that will take their artistic career to the next level. Awards range from $100 to $800.

APPLICATION DEADLINE
Thursday, February 18th, 2027, at 11:59pm

SOS Funding

Funding for SOS comes from a local private foundation, CAP fundraising, and the Community Foundation of Tompkins County's Tompkins Today and Tomorrow Fund.

CAP Grants Page

At ArtsPartner.org (Grant tab) you'll find information about four CAP Grants, grant guidelines, application budget forms, and grant writing workshop dates with registration links.

Questions and Assistance

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

Robin is available via email anytime to answer questions, offer advice or help navigate the grant process. It's always a good idea to run your request by Robin before starting the application.

Accommodations: If you need assistance with any aspect of the grant process, please email Robin.

Applicant Support

Free Grant Information & Advice Sessions

- CAP hosts **live and Zoom workshops** from November 2026 through January 2027.
- Robin Schwartz, CAP Program & Grant Director, discusses CAP's grants and shares **grant writing advice** to help your request rise to the top of the pile!
- **Registration is required.**
- A **recorded workshop** is available to watch anytime.
- For **workshop dates** (or the link to the recording), visit the "Grants" Page at ArtsPartner.org.

Grant Draft Review

- **Robin can review application drafts.** Sending them by February 5th is preferred (to leave time for any recommended changes), but she can comment on applications through 5:00pm on February 18th.
- **Drafts can be sent as a word document (preferred) or a pdf.**
- (If working on the application on the online grant portal, you can save your draft as a pdf.)
- Sending the filled-in **budget form** along with the application is recommended.

Applicant Alert

- Although Robin facilitates CAP's grant panel meetings, she does not make recommendations or state her opinions to the grant review panel. Any recommendations she may give are based on her experience and do not constitute a guarantee of funding. **The grant is competitive.**
- Each request is rated by an independent grant panel based on the requirements, preferences and criteria outlined below. The panelists, the number of requests and the amount available change from year to year.

About the Strategic Opportunity Stipend (SOS)

- The Community Arts Partnership's Strategic Opportunity Stipend (SOS) helps Tompkins County individual artists obtain funding for specific and strategic career opportunities.
- New and emerging artists are welcome to apply!
- **Applicants can apply for $100 to $800.**
- **Opportunities must occur between January 1st, 2027 and February 29th, 2028.**
- The opportunity must be one that will boost an artist's ongoing and active artistic career in a specified and significant way. See samples below.
- An SOS request must have as its core activity an art form that includes theatre, dance, music, visual arts, film, prose, poetry or creative non-fiction. Although funded projects can also have rehabilitative, educational, therapeutic, spiritual, or recreational aspects, the primary funded activity and intended outcome must be one of the art forms listed above.
- The applicant must explain and provide details as to how their opportunity will be used as a strategic stepping stone that will significantly impact their art career and bring it to the next level. The SOS grant is a growth opportunity.
- The project or opportunity can take place anywhere in the world.

NOTE: CAP's other three grants are programs of New York State Council on the Arts' "Statewide Community Regrant" program (SCR). SOS is not part of that program. If an artist is applying for an SCR grant, they can also apply to SOS.

Who Can Apply

- Individual artists who are full-time residents of Tompkins County.
- Priority may be given to longer term residents who have lived in Tompkins County since January 2026 and plan on living in Tompkins County through at least 2029.
- (In some cases, proof of residency may be required, e.g. a driver's license.)

SOS Can Fund

SOS can fund expenses related directly to a strategic opportunity.

The following can be funded if closely aligned with an artist's career trajectory.

For Specific Opportunities:

- Artist fees for applicant and/or participating artists
- Technical support, rental of equipment, or materials
- Promotional expenses
- Filming, recording of work
- Entry, exhibition, registration, or tuition fees
- Travel

For Career Support:

- Skill building if directly related to career goals
- Purchase of equipment to support their art making
- Professional assistance or mentorships related to career growth

SOS Cannot Fund

- The creation of art or expenses for items listed above that are not related to a specific, dated and strategic opportunity
- Food and drink

Examples of Past SOS Awards

- Author: funds for promotional U.S. book tour.
- Playwright: funds to stage a new play for development, with future performances clearly specified.
- Choreographer: first-time commission to create dance pieces for an upcoming event.
- Musician: funds for promotion of new album.
- Visual Artist: costs related to their first solo show.
- Musician: cost of recording a music composition already accepted by a major label.
- Theatre Artist: filming of a former theatre piece to send to film festivals.
- Visual Artist: shipping of artwork to an invited exhibition in Europe.
- Filmmaker: flight costs to attend an invited overseas arts residency.

Request Amount

Requests can range from $100 to $800.
CAP has $20,000 to distribute.

How Decisions Are Made

- A diverse panel composed of community leaders, artists, business people, and educators will be sent the requests after the due date. They'll have at least three weeks to review.
- The panel will meet on Zoom in March to discuss each request and rate them based on the criteria below.
- For funded artists, the funding amount is based on a) availability of funds, b) applicant's budget, and/or c) place in the ratings.

Panel Review Criteria

Panelists rate each request using these criteria

Ratings range from “1" (does not meet any of the criteria) to “4” (meets and exceeds all criteria).

- How well does the request fit the SOS guidelines?
- Does the artist have an active and ongoing art career?
- The merit of the strategic opportunity and its impact on the artist’s ongoing career trajectory.
- Did the artist follow the directions outlined in the guidelines and application? Were all questions answered in full?
- Do the budget expenses align with and make sense for the stated opportunity? Is the budget realistic and clear?

Funding Priorities

- Priority may be given to longer term residents who have lived in Tompkins County since January 2026 and plan on living in Tompkins County through at least 2029.
- Depending on the number of applicants, funding priority may be given to local artists whose work has impacted or been shared with Tompkins County communities in the past few years through performances, residencies, art shows, workshops, and the like.

After The Deadline

- Applications received after 11:59pm on the day of the deadline will not be accepted except in the case of electricity and widespread wi-fi outages.
- Applications will be checked for eligibility, completeness, and accuracy.
- Applicants may be contacted for clarification and/or additional information.
- Applicants will be informed of decisions regarding their requests in (ideally) mid-March.

Funded Artist Responsibilities

- All awarded artists must sign and return a **contract**.
- The contract outlines the obligations and the procedures, including a final report, and proper acknowledgement on all publicity materials.
- Grants are considered income, so funded individual artists will provide a W-9 and receive a 1099.
- SOS grant recipients will appear on the Community Arts Partnership website. The Community Arts Partnership reserves the right to describe or reproduce material from any funded request for publication or public relations purposes.

When Does Award Payment Arrive?

- The contract will ask for the correct name and address for a check.
- Once the contract and W-9 are received, CAP can send a check.
- (CAP may hold back the award until proof of opportunity scheduling is confirmed.)

SOS Submission Instructions

Due: Thursday, February 18th, 2027, 12:59pm

1. SOS BUDGET FORM - UPLOAD ONLINE

- The SOS budget form **is available as an .xlsx** on the ArtsPartner.org grant page. Make sure you are in the Strategic Opportunity Stipend section. Let Robin know if you need the form in a different format.
- We highly recommend you fill out the budget form before you fill out the application as your budgeted needs will inform your writing.
- (You will be uploading your completed **budget form** to the application platform.)
- Please use the form for cash expenses and income. Do not insert non-monetary contributions in income.

2. FILL OUT SOS APPLICATION ONLINE

REQUIRED: WATCH 5-MINUTE INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO

(There are many clickable links on the platform that will not bring you to the right place, so it's not entirely user friendly. Watching this video will save you time and energy!)

youtube.com/watch?v=b1TermKUhY8

FIND ALL of our GRANT APPLICATIONS at commongrantapplication.com

First time users "Register" or "Login"

Click "Start Draft Application" from dashboard

Find on List: "Community Arts Partnership"
(*Don't click "Community Arts Partnership"*)

Click the blue button Select Programs

Locate: which grant you'd like to work on.
(Don't click the name of the grant).

Click the blue button Start Draft App

NAVIGATING THROUGH THE APPLICATION

- You'll see the sections of the application you'll need to fill out on the left side of your screen.
- You can navigate through the sections by clicking there or by using the back and forward buttons.
- Most of the fields have **character limits which include spaces between words.**
- **"Save"** frequently! If a glitch happens or you accidentally close the screen you won't lose data.
- **"Pause"** when you wish to stop working. Your work will be saved and you can go back anytime.
- When you log back in: **"Resume Draft Application"**

NOTE: **APPLICATION QUESTIONS ARE LISTED BELOW**
Applicants might prefer answering the questions offline to then cut and paste into the application platform. You'll see **character limits with spaces** along with the questions.

TO SEND ROBIN A DRAFT of an application in progress.
See **"PDF Download"** on the portal. It's best to also send her your completed budget.

"**SUBMIT" WHEN YOUR APPLICATION IS COMPLETE!**

- If any fields were not filled out, you'll see "**Not Ready for Submission**" and a list of incomplete fields.
- When your request is complete, click **"Submit"** (Once submitted you can't edit it again.)
- You will get a confirmation email and can see your completed application from the "Grants" tab on the dashboard. You can download a PDF for your records.

TO WORK ON MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION AT A TIME
If you are submitting more than one CAP grant, you need to exit one to be able to work on another.
"Pause" an application you are working on.
Then, from the dashboard, **click "Exit draft application."**
Then you'll see **click** "**Start Draft Application**" and follow the directions from above.

3. ARTISTIC RESUME - UPLOAD ONLINE

- In order for the grant panel to assess the impact of the requested opportunity on an applicant's career, a **resume** showing your artistic activities is required and must be and uploaded to the grant platform.
- **If you do not have a resume and wish to create one** or want to learn about what a resume is and the difference between an CV, bio, and resume, check out this great post from New York Foundation for the Arts. nyfa.org/blog/how-to-create-an-artist-resume/.
- **The resume can be quite brief and recent.** I can be a list of your current (maybe the last five years) artistic activities. Headings can be (for example) recent exhibitions (solo or group), recent performances, readings, publications, etc. **If you are (for example) a working gig musician, you can summarize** i.e. "Over 50 performances in Tompkins County and regional bars and festivals in 2026." and "Five National Festivals in 2026"

4. OPPORTUNITY CONFIRMATION - SEND BY EMAIL TO ROBIN

If an SOS request is for an opportunity that an applicant is registered for or has been invited to, please send confirmation in an email (or forward an email) to Robin at programs@artspartner.org
(If there is a delay for the confirmation, email Robin.)

Application Questions on Online Portal

Contact Information

- (Name, AKA, Pronouns, Email, Phone, Website)
- Are you a full-time Tompkins County resident? Since when?
- Are you 18 years of age or over as of 1/1/2027?
- Will you be registered as a full time undergrad or grad student in 2027? If yes, name school.
- Do you have plans to continue living in Tompkins County through 12/2029?

Current work

- Briefly describe your recent work (500 character limit)

  Use one or two sentences (e.g. "I am a visual artist. My most recent work is mixed media sculptures using newspapers and recycled materials," or "I am a writer and am currently working on a series of poems based on my experiences while living in Mexico in 2025."

Opportunity Details

- Name of Opportunity e.g. "Brooklyn Film Festival Premiere"
- Date(s) or date Range of Requested Opportunity* *Provide a short answer, e.g. "May 16-25, 2027"*
- Have You Received an SOS award from CAP in 2025 or 2026?
- If yes, name the year and title of the funded project.
- Grant Amount Requested (must match budget sheet)
- Summary Statement *(750 character limit with spaces) Briefly describe your opportunity*
- Detailed Statement *(4,700 character limit with spaces)*

  Here's where you can provide a long description of the opportunity. (Note that the next question will address the project's impact on your career.)

  Be sure to address the following somewhere in your narrative:

  - Describe your project or opportunity (who, what, when, and where, if applicable).

  - Which expenses would you like SOS to cover?

  - Is this an invited opportunity? If yes, was the process competitive?

  - Is this project different or new for you? Have you done similar projects in the past?
- Project Impact *(3,000 character limit with spaces)*

  Describe in great detail how this project or opportunity will impacts your professional career moving forward. A timeline or well-thought-out future plan of action with specific examples is appreciated.
- Your Personal Tompkins County Community Impact *(700 character limit with spaces)*

  Have you shown or shared your work in Tompkins County in the past few years? (i.e. exhibits, workshops, events, performances…) Describe briefly, using no more than four sentences.
- In-kind Donations *(500 character limit with spaces)*

  The required budget should not include in-kind donations - just actual cash expenses and income. Are there any donations you are receiving for your project? If yes, list briefly, (i.e. collaborating artists donating some of their time, donation of printing costs, donation of materials, etc.)
- Potential Adjustments *(500 character limit with spaces)*

  If the amount you need for your opportunity exceeds what this grant can fund (max $800), can you make up the difference or decrease costs? Explain.
- Potential Income *(500 character limit with spaces)*

  If you list income in your budget below that you don't yet have in hand, what is the likelihood those funds will come through? (Skip this question if not applicable)

(Upload Budget and Resume)