



FY26 Vibrant Communities Grant Guidelines

*If you have questions as you prepare your Vibrant Communities Grant application, please contact **Tyrone Webb, Rural and Community Programs Manager**, at twebb@gaarts.org or 404-962-4044.*

[An application training video recording is available online.](#) The video includes details about completing and submitting the FY26 Vibrant Communities Grant application.

A virtual office hours session will be available on **Thursday, July 31, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.**, where GCA grants staff will be available to answer applicant questions. To participate in the online office hours session, click on the link: [Online Q&A for Vibrant Communities](#).

Applicants should thoroughly review the guidelines **before** preparing the application. The deadline to submit the application is **August 29, 2025, at 11:59 PM.**

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

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GCA Mission

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

Introduction to the Vibrant Communities Grant

The Georgia General Assembly allocated funds to GCA specifically to increase the reach of arts grants across the state. These grants are intended to help GCA fund arts programs in as many counties as possible. Some examples of projects that could be funded by the Vibrant Communities Grant are concerts, theatre productions, class field trips, art exhibits, murals, arts festivals, or arts classes. Please see page 4 of the guidelines for additional details.

GCA maintains a list of artists and organizations that your organization could hire through this grant. The Vibrant Communities Artist List is available on the GCA website: <https://georgia.org/ArtsGrants>

Please note: The Vibrant Communities Grant is a reimbursement grant. This means that if your organization is awarded a grant, you must first spend funds for the approved project, and then request reimbursement. Your organization will not receive grant funds before incurring expenses for the funded project.

Timeline for Vibrant Communities Grant

August 29, 2025	Deadline to submit completed application at 11:59 p.m.
Mid-October, 2025	Applicants are notified whether or not they received an award
October 15, 2025	Grantees may begin working on funded projects
Late October, 2025	Deadline for grantees to return grant contracts and required forms
November 2025- June 2026	Grantees may submit a Request for Reimbursement form. This form can only be submitted once the grantee has spent funds on the approved arts project. The grant funds will then be requested to reimburse the organization for the expenses.
November 2025- June 2026	Final reports are due 30 days after the completion of the project
April 3, 2026	Deadline to notify GCA if grantees anticipate that not all of the grant funds will be spent
June 1, 2026	All projects must be completed
June 30, 2026	All Final Reports are due for projects completed through June 1, 2026

Training

GCA has recorded an online application training workshop on the Vibrant Communities Grant guidelines and application. GCA staff will review the required elements of the application, offer recommendations for developing an arts project, and provide tips to applicants. Applicants are not required to view the webinar to apply. A virtual office hours session will be available online on **Thursday, July 31, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.**, where GCA grants staff will be available to answer applicant questions. To access the virtual office hours session, use this link: [Online Q&A for Vibrant Communities](#).

Eligible Applicants

An eligible applicant must be located in a county in which no organization received an FY26 GCA Project, General Operating Support, or Arts Education Grant. Eligible organizations located within the following counties may apply:

Appling	Dawson	Johnson	Schley
Atkinson	Decatur	Jones	Screven
Bacon	Dodge	Lamar	Seminole
Baker	Dooly	Lanier	Stewart
Banks	Douglas	Laurens	Sumter
Barrow	Early	Lee	Talbot
Ben Hill	Echols	Liberty	Taliaferro
Berrien	Effingham	Lincoln	Tattnall
Bleckley	Elbert	Long	Taylor
Brantley	Emanuel	Macon	Telfair
Brooks	Evans	Madison	Terrell
Bryan	Fayette	Marion	Tift
Burke	Franklin	McDuffie	Toombs
Butts	Gilmer	McIntosh	Towns
Calhoun	Glascok	Monroe	Treutlen
Candler	Gordon	Montgomery	Turner
Charlton	Habersham	Murray	Twiggs
Chattahoochee	Hancock	Oconee	Upson
Clay	Haralson	Oglethorpe	Walker
Clayton	Harris	Paulding	Warren
Clinch	Hart	Peach	Washington
Coffee	Heard	Pickens	Wayne
Columbia	Henry	Pierce	Webster
Cook	Houston	Pike	Wheeler
Coweta	Irwin	Polk	Whitfield
Crawford	Jasper	Pulaski	Wilcox
Crisp	Jeff Davis	Quitman	Wilkinson
Dade	Jenkins	Randolph	Worth

An eligible applicant organization must be physically located in one of the Georgia counties listed above and must be one of the following:

- A non-profit organization that has been designated as a 501(c)3 organization by the IRS and is registered with the Georgia Secretary of State
- A local government entity
- A public library
- A school or school system
- A college or university

Eligible Applications

Eligible Applications must:

- Propose an arts project that will be completed between October 15, 2025, and June 1, 2026. **The grant period may not be extended.** If your application proposes project dates that are outside of this period, the application will be ineligible for review. If your organization receives an award, and then your project is not completed by June 1, 2026, your grant may be cancelled.
- Propose an arts project that will take place within the county in which the applicant is located. A virtual component of the project is allowable, but the project may not be entirely virtual.
- Include a 50% cash match for the grant request amount in the budget.
- Not include programming that promotes a specific religious doctrine or political party or candidate.
- Be the only application from an eligible organization. Multiple applications from the same applicant will not be considered for funding.
- Be submitted with no missing components by the deadline of **August 29, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.**

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects could include, but are not limited to:

- performances (theatre, dance, music, musical theatre, opera, storytelling, puppetry, and performance art)
- art exhibits (two-dimensional, three-dimensional, photography, and digital)
- media arts presentations (film, video, and audio)
- literary arts readings (poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction)
- folk & traditional arts performances or exhibitions (music, dance, theatre, storytelling, and crafts)
- public art (murals and sculpture)
- outdoor performances
- arts festivals
- multidisciplinary arts projects
- education in any of the arts fields referenced above, including workshops, classes, demonstrations, and field trips
- artist residencies
- arts integration
- STEAM (arts integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)
- in-school programs for students
- transportation and admission for field trips (must be within the applicant's county)
- a classroom residency by an artist
- arts programs with seniors
- arts programs with Veterans or military populations
- arts programs in hospitals or residential care facilities
- arts programs with incarcerated individuals
- professional development related to arts program development or arts management
- capacity building for arts programs or arts organizations, such as hiring a consultant to address specific organizational needs (e.g., creating a strategic plan, creating a fundraising plan, creating a community engagement plan, creating a marketing and audience development plan, providing professional development for applicant organization staff, etc.)

Projects may involve professional artists and/or local community members. For instance, a community could present an exhibit of work by professional artists or a showcase of work by local non-professionals.

Eligible projects may also include professional development and capacity-building projects, such as attendance at an arts conference, the engagement of a consultant to work with the organization to develop a strategic plan, etc.

While this grant will support in-school programs for students under age 18, it will not support programs exclusively for college or university students.

This grant will not support programs that are not arts-based. Examples of ineligible programs include, but are not limited to:

- humanities (history, religion, philosophy, languages)
- social sciences (sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, geography)
- sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, botany)
- culinary arts
- fashion
- martial arts
- competitive dance
- non-arts entertainment, such as magic shows, circus arts, balloon twisters, parades, fireworks, or reenactments
- body art, such as face painting, body painting, or tattoos
- non-arts recreation, such as inflatable jumpers, petting zoos, 5K races or other athletic events
- topiary or landscape art
- interior design or beautification projects
- renovations that are not specific to the implementation of an arts project
- equipment or furniture that is not specific to the implementation of an arts project
- signage that is not specific to the implementation of an arts project

Vibrant Communities Artist List

GCA maintains a list of artists and organizations that your organization could hire through this grant. The Vibrant Communities Artist List is available on the GCA website:

<https://georgia.org/industries/arts/grants/vibrant-communities>

In addition to using the Vibrant Communities Artist List to find potential arts programs, applicants may consider contacting the following groups to see if they offer relevant programs to present in their community:

- regional arts organizations (organizations that serve multiple counties with arts programming)
- theatres, dance companies, or other performing arts organizations
- bands, choral groups or orchestras
- museums
- sculptors, painters, photographers, mural artists, or other visual artists
- artist guilds

If you have questions about potential programs, or if you need contact information for arts organizations that serve your area, contact Tyrone Webb, Rural and Community Programs Manager, at twebb@gaarts.org or 404-962-4044.

Funding Request

Vibrant Communities Grant applicants may request no more than \$5,000 and no less than \$1,000.

The budget must show a cash match of at least 50% for the requested grant amount. This means that the applicant must raise from other sources at least 50% of the amount that is being requested from GCA. For instance, if an applicant is requesting \$5,000 from the Vibrant Communities Grant, that applicant must raise at least \$2,500 from other sources. In this example, the total income and total expenses must be at least \$7,500.

The amount being requested also cannot exceed 2/3 of total expenses for the proposed project. For instance, if an applicant's proposed budget shows total expenses of \$6,000, then that applicant may not request more than \$4,000 for the grant amount.

Application Deadline

The application and all required components must be submitted no later than **11:59 p.m., on Friday, August 29, 2025.**

Ineligible Applications

Applications that are submitted after the deadline, that do not contain all of the required information, or are submitted by applicants that do not meet the eligibility requirements will be ruled ineligible for review and will not be reviewed by the panel. Applications will not be accepted from organizations located outside of Georgia or located in an ineligible Georgia county. Applications also will not be accepted to fund proposals that do not include an eligible arts project. Additional application information will not be accepted after the submission deadline.

False Information

Any grant award made based on false information in the application may be cancelled by GCA at any time.

Debarment and Suspension Policy

GCA will not award any grant to applicants who are or have in the past been debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from receiving funds from federal agencies. Additionally, GCA will not award any grants to applicants who, within the past three (3) years:

- Have been found liable in civil court for or criminally guilty of fraud.
- Have been found liable in civil court for or been found criminally guilty of any crime related to obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public transaction or contract.
- Have been found liable in civil court or been found criminally guilty of any violation of federal or state antitrust statutes, embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.
- Are currently under indictment for any crimes mentioned above.

- Have had a public transaction terminated for cause or default.
- Have been deemed ineligible to do business with the federal government under any statute or regulation.

If an application is funded, applicants will be required to certify their eligibility for the award under this policy by signing a grant contract that contains an attestation confirming that the applicant has not been debarred. If an applicant knows that the applicant is ineligible under this policy, then the applicant should not submit an application. If the applicant is unable to certify to GCA that the applicant is eligible under this policy, the applicant will be required to provide an explanation. If GCA determines that an applicant who has received a grant was or has become ineligible under this policy, GCA will cancel the grant.

Grant Funding Notifications

Grant funding notifications will be sent via e-mail in mid-October.

Registration in GCA's Online Grant System

All applications must be submitted via GCA's online grant application system. To submit an application, go to: <https://georgia.org/ArtsApply>

- If you are unsure if you already have an account in GCA's online grant system, please contact Tyrone Webb, Rural and Community Programs Manager, at twebb@gaarts.org.
- If you already have an account, but you forgot your password, click **Forgot your Password?** and a password reset email will be sent to the email address connected to your account.
- If you need to create a new account, click **Create New Account** and enter the required registration information. Once you have entered the information, click **Create Account**. You will be taken to the Email Confirmation page to confirm that you are receiving emails from the system. Follow the onscreen instructions and click the Continue button to finish the registration process.

In order to create a new account for your organization, you will need your organization's FEIN number, as well as your **SAM UEI (Unique Entity Identifier)**. If your organization does not have a SAM UEI, go to <http://SAM.gov> and register your organization. Obtaining a SAM UEI is free. Receiving a SAM UEI may take several weeks, so please do not delay submitting your request for a SAM UEI.

Completing the Application

Once you have logged in or set up an account, go to the **Apply** page. This page will show you any open grant opportunities for which you may apply. To begin completing an application, click on the blue **Apply** button under the FY26 Vibrant Communities Grant section.

Once in the application:

- If you would like a copy of the application, click the **Question List** button.
- Once you have completed the form, you may click the **Application Packet** button to download a copy of the questions and your responses.
- All fields with an asterisk (*) are required fields.
- The system will auto-save every 100 characters typed or every time you click out of a field.

- Some fields have character limits. Responses that are longer than the set limit will be saved, **but** an error message will appear informing you that the limit has been exceeded. You will not be allowed to submit the form until the length of the response has been decreased.
- If you save and exit the system, you will access the draft of your application from your *Dashboard* the next time you log in. Pick up where you left off by clicking the pencil icon to the right of the request.

Requirements

These are the elements of the Vibrant Communities Grant application:

ONLINE APPLICATION

- **General Information** (required of all applicants)
- **Authorized Officials** (required of all applicants)
- **Narrative Questions** (required of all applicants)

ATTACHMENTS

- **Budget** (required of all applicants)
- **Support Material** (required of all applicants)
- **Board Member List** (required of non-profit organization applicants)
- **IRS 501(c)3 Letter** (required if the applicant is a non-profit organization)

Narrative Questions

You must answer the following questions within the online application. Do not embed links to outside sources in your answers to the narrative questions. Panelists are not required to follow these links. If you would like to direct the panel to a website, include that link in the *Support Material*.

There is a 2,000-character limit to the answer for each question.

1. State the organization's mission statement or purpose.
2. Briefly describe your organization.
3. Briefly describe the community, city, and county served by your organization.
4. Describe the project for which funding is being requested.
5. Why is your organization undertaking this project? How will the community served by your organization benefit from this project?

Budget

You may use the table format on the next page as the model to create your budget for the proposed project. You may create the budget in Word or Excel. Or you may use the budget form provided by GCA, which is available to download on the website: <https://georgia.org/industries/arts/grants/vibrant-communities>.

The budget should be uploaded to the online application.

advertising, venue rental, printed programs, box office staff, utilities, insurance, or anything else that is a necessary expense for the event, such as artist fees and technical support.

- **Your grant request amount cannot be more than 2/3 of total expenses.** For instance, if your total expenses are \$5,000, you may request a maximum grant of \$3,333.
- **The following list of expenses are ineligible and should not be included in your budget:**
 - Capital expenditures/equipment (which are permanent fixtures or equipment that costs more than \$5,000), including:
 - Buildings or real estate/land purchases
 - Construction, renovations or improvements involving structural changes
 - Roads, driveways, parking lots or other projects/repairs
 - Permanent or generally immobile equipment
 - Debt and interest associated with capital expenditures
 - Programming outside of Georgia
 - Programs that are not arts-based
 - Fundraising event expenses, as well as general fundraising expenses
 - Tuition for college/university study
 - Scholarships, gifts, prizes, or awards. This includes cash prizes, gift certificates/gift cards, or any other cash equivalents with monetary value
 - Endowment funds or cash reserves
 - Depreciation
 - Bad debt, fines and penalties or deficit reduction
 - Alcohol, concessions, food, or drinks
 - Entertainment expenses, such as receptions, refreshments, parties, staff awards, flowers, etc.
 - Late registration fees for conferences
 - Fees paid to lobbyists or lobbying generally
 - Goods for resale, including concessions, promotional merchandise, clothing, or other items purchased for sale
 - Improvements to arts facilities that also serve as private residences
 - Any expenses labeled as miscellaneous, other, additional expenses, discretionary expenses, slush fund, etc.
 - Travel and accommodation expenses that are over the rate allowed by the state of Georgia (see <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120> for a breakdown of travel rates)
 - Any air travel not on a U.S. flag air carrier or a foreign air carrier under an air transport agreement with the United States when these services are available
 - Prohibited telecommunications and video surveillance services and equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities
 - Audit costs that are not directly allocable to a federally required Single Audit
 - Contributions or donations to other entities
 - Rental costs for home office workspace owned by individuals or entities affiliated with your organization
 - Vehicle purchase costs
 - Visa costs paid to the US Government

Support Material

Applicants may submit various support materials, combined into one file, up to a maximum of ten pages. Support materials should provide additional information about your project, your organization, your community, or the artist(s) involved with your project. You may include links to websites by listing the website on a Word document and uploading that document.

Examples of information you may want to submit as support material include:

- A link to your organization's website
- A link to the artist's website
- Artist resumes or short biographies
- Newspaper articles or reviews of the artist or your organization
- Marketing materials specific to the proposed project
- Photos of projects your organization has completed
- Photos of work by the artist you would like to present
- Links to video or audio samples by the artist
- Drawings/designs of the project

Board Member List

Nonprofit organizations must include a list of the board of directors. List the following for each Board member:

- Name
- Position on board (if applicable)
- Corporate, business, or community affiliation
- Number of years on the board or committee
- Board term end date (if applicable)
- City and county of residence

For Units of Local Government, Schools, and Colleges/Universities, the Board List is not required.

IRS 501(c)3 Letter

If the applicant organization is a non-profit organization, then attach a copy of the organization's IRS 501(c)3 letter. You may not substitute any other type of document for the IRS letter. The IRS letter must belong to the applicant organization as GCA does not allow fiscal agents. Public schools, public libraries, units of local government, and public colleges/universities are not required to submit an IRS 501(c)3 letter.

Submitting the Application

Once you have completed the questions in the online application, you will upload the budget, support material, board member list (if your organization is a non-profit), and IRS letter (if your organization is a non-profit). You will then click SUBMIT. You will receive a confirmation e-mail acknowledging that your Vibrant Communities Grant application has been submitted. Remember, the FY26 Vibrant Communities Grant application deadline is **Friday, August 29, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.**

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

GCA will not accept applications after the deadline for any reason, including technical issues with the applicant's computer system, or problems with the online application system that occur after the **GCA office closes at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 29, 2025.**

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

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES GRANT SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

Be sure to complete all of the questions in the online application and attach all required components. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Applicants cannot submit additional information or material after the deadline.

GCA ONLINE GRANT SYSTEM

The FY26 Vibrant Communities Grant application will be completed online. The application is available here: <https://georgia.org/ArtsApply>

ONLINE APPLICATION

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

- ☐ General Information
- ☐ Authorized Officials
- ☐ Narrative Questions

ATTACHMENTS

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

- ☐ Budget Form
- ☐ Support Material
- ☐ Board Member List (required only of nonprofit applicants)
- ☐ IRS 501(c)(3) Letter (required only of nonprofit applicants)

APPLICATION DEADLINE

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