FY27 Vibrant Communities Grant Application 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 FY27 Vibrant Communities Grant application.

A virtual office hours session will be available on **Thursday, August 6, 2026, at 2:00 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 31, 2026, 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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Basic Information

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 5 of the guidelines for additional details.

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. Also, **GCA requires receipts** to be submitted with the reimbursement request.

Timeline for Vibrant Communities Grant

August 31, 2026	Deadline to submit completed application at 11:59 p.m.
Mid-October, 2026	Applicants are notified whether or not they received an award
October 15, 2026	Grantees may begin working on funded projects
Late October, 2026	Deadline for grantees to return grant contracts and required forms
November 2026-June 2027	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 be requested to reimburse the grantee for expenses.**
November 2026-June 2027	Final reports are due **30 days** after the completion of the project
April 3, 2027	Deadline to notify GCA if grantees anticipate that not all of the grant funds will be spent
June 1, 2027	All projects must be completed
June 30, 2027	All Final Reports are due for projects completed through June 1, 2027

Training for Applicants

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, August 6, 2026, at 2:00 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.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

An eligible applicant must be located in a county in which no organization received an FY27 GCA Project, General Operating Support, or Arts Education Grant. Eligible organizations located within the following counties may apply:

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

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, 2026, and June 1, 2027. **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, 2027, 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 31, 2026, 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

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 Monday, August 31, 2026.**

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. 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. If an applicant knows that they are ineligible under this policy, then the applicant should not submit an application. If GCA determines that an applicant who has received a grant was or has become ineligible under this policy, GCA will cancel the grant.

Grant Funding Notifications

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

Grant Application

Registration in GCA's Online Grant System

All applications must be submitted via GCA's online grant application system: 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.

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. To begin an application, click on the blue **Apply** button under the FY27 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 imbed 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 below 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.

EXPENSES	AMOUNT ($)
TOTAL EXPENSES	

INCOME (*MUST INCLUDE GRANT REQUEST AMOUNT*)	**AMOUNT ($)**
VIBRANT COMMUNITIES GRANT REQUEST (amount must be between $1,000 and $5,000)	
TOTAL INCOME	

- **Your budget must show a 50% cash match for the request amount.** This means that the income side of your budget must show that you plan to raise an amount equal to at least half of your Vibrant Communities request from other sources. For instance, if you are requesting $2,000, then your budget must show at least an additional $1,000 in cash raised from other sources as income for the project. Matching income can be from donations, admissions, memberships, sponsorships, other grants, applicant cash, etc. It is acceptable if you do not have the matching income on hand at the time that you apply. For instance, if you plan to sell tickets to a performance, you may include the income from anticipated ticket sales in your project budget. Income also may include funds that you already have on hand.

- **In-kind contributions cannot count toward the match.** In-kind contributions refer to materials or services that are donated to the project. In-kind contributions should **NOT** be included in your budget as either expenses or income.

- **The Total Income in the budget must be equal to or greater than Total Expenses.** For instance, if the expenses for the project add up to $5,000, the budget must show **at least** $5,000 in income. Income and expenses do not have to be equal, but expenses cannot be more than income.

- **You may include expenses in addition to the cost of the artist.** For example, if you are bringing in a theatre company for a performance, your budget may include costs for expenses such as advertising, venue rental, printed programs, box office staff, utilities, insurance, or anything else that is a necessary expense for the event.

- **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 $10,000), 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, including snacks, per diem for meals, etc.
- Entertainment expenses, such as receptions, refreshments, staff or cast parties, staff awards, flowers, etc.
- Late registration fees for conferences
- Fees paid to lobbyists 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
- Severance pay, legal settlements
- 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 or regranted funds
- Fiscal sponsorships
- Rental costs for home office workspace owned by individuals or entities affiliated with your organization
- Vehicle purchase costs
- Visa costs paid to the US Government
- Any expenses labeled as miscellaneous, other, additional expenses, discretionary expenses, slush fund, etc.

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 provide a board member list, with the following for each 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 FY27 Vibrant Communities Grant application deadline is **Monday, August 31, 2026, 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 Monday, August 31, 2026**.

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 FY27 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

The FY27 Vibrant Communities Grant application deadline is **Monday, August 31, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.**

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