

ADVANCING  
BLACK ARTS  
IN PITTSBURGH

**Tool Kit**

THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS  
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The City of Pittsburgh is known for its rich contributions to the canon of Black cultural creativity. Cultural experiences and creative innovations have always reflected the expressions and imaginations of people from the African diaspora. The *Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh* program is where access and opportunity connect with Pittsburgh artists who are thriving in their creative process as a means and a way of life.

*Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh* is a joint grant-making program created and managed through a partnership between The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments. The program is committed to helping create a vibrant cultural life in Pittsburgh and the region. Both foundations have made consistent investments in the initiative since 1988. In recent years, both foundations have codified their longstanding efforts toward equity into aspirational visions that seek to support the development of a more inclusively imagined future. The Pittsburgh Foundation imagines a region where courage, voice and racial equity are the norm as our region moves authentically toward the mutual goal of economic sustainability for all. The Heinz Endowments' *Just Pittsburgh* is an aspirational vision meant to inspire thought and action toward creating a region that is inclusive and equitable.

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This effort to achieve a more equitable arts ecology within the region is a core value of the initiative and its funders. The program's values include:

- Racial equity.
- Readiness.
- Wealth building for artists.
- Ecosystem design thinking.
- Interdependence.
- Building pathways.
- Documentation.

In addition to these values, the program employs the following imperatives as a means to further its mission of Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh:

- Financial capital.
- Collective accountability.
- Evaluation and learning.
- Tools and resources.
- Thought leadership.
- Broader ecosystem support.

As we reviewed reports and planning documents that preceded this toolkit, we realized that the field has already provided a blueprint for resources that could assist with grant proposal planning. This toolkit represents an answer to a direct request from the field for examples of a successful grant application, budgets, *curricula vitae* and artist statements that could be used as a guide to approaching funding requests.

We hope that you find these resources useful. Special thanks goes to Heather Hopson for sharing her application for Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh, an application that has been successfully funded. We look forward hearing from you to learn whether this toolkit has been useful for you and what other resources we could make available to assist you on your journey to sustainability.

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## The Application

When approaching any funding request, it is strongly advised that you thoroughly review the funding institution's requirements listed in the request for proposals (RFP) prior to approaching the program officer and/or applying for funding. Funding is not one size fits all. The last thing you want to do is waste your time writing a grant application that doesn't fit the funders' requirements or requires you to adjust your work to fit funding priorities that do not align with your project.

Once you have established that your project aligns with the funding priorities, then connect with the program officer to confirm. As you begin your application, be mindful of cutting and pasting in text from previous proposals, as it is obvious to program officers when this is done, particularly if you're careless in how you reuse information and fail to update proposal dates and other pertinent information. Remain honest about what you intend to do with the grant if received, and exactly how you plan to allocate the funds.

### Quick Tips

- Don't wait until the last minute; funders will rarely, if ever, extend a deadline for you.
- Use the internet. There are many applicants who have been where you are and willingly share tips that worked for them and resources that have helped. Also, during your search, you may find additional funders for your project locally and nationally.
- Be honest. We know it doesn't require \$500,000 to take a picture.
- Be passionate about your work. Convey your excitement authentically in your application.
- Research resources that can help you create the best work samples.
- Save all of your application forms where they can be easily accessed, such as on Google drive. Many funding applications are redundant. Recycling answers from previous applications is a time-saver, but only if you appropriately update proposal information. Saving to the cloud can also save you time and energy if your computer crashes while you're writing.
- Consider soliciting a friend or a partner to interview you with questions from the grant application. Record your answers. Use the recorded information to complete your application.

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Look at what works. These applications were successfully funded. Are there elements here you could adapt to your own applications?

### **Additional links that may be helpful:**

- Proposals and grants for artists.
- Writing tips/handbook.
- Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council grant opportunities.
- Visual and performance art sample proposals.
- How to answer common grant application questions.
- Sample grant proposals/letters of inquiry.
- Additional links.

## The Project Budget

Start by writing out everything that you need. Don't create a wish list, but identify only what is necessary to complete your project, and then assign a realistic cost to it. Edit by consolidating like items into themes; for example, paint, paintbrushes and canvases could be grouped as "supplies." Since you've already read the RFP, you will have an idea of what the funding institution will not fund. When preparing your project budget, approach the process with honesty and show that you've done your research. If you need to raise more money than what you're applying for, simply add a budget line that says other funds are pending and from what source. Again, each institution is different in terms of what is an acceptable budget. If necessary, reach out to the designated program officer at least two weeks ahead of the application deadline to assess budget feasibility.

Provide a balanced project budget that itemizes revenues (including the requested grant amount) and expenses related to activities described above. Where appropriate, show calculations that make clear how you arrived at the numbers you project. List any revenue sources in addition to this request, indicating which are pending and which are confirmed. List the estimated value and use of in-kind donations separately.

It is also critical to remember that funds awarded to individuals through this grants program are not excludable from gross income and must be reported to the IRS. Please consult a tax professional to review the impact of this grant on your personal tax liability. Grantees will be required to submit an IRS Form W9 as an individual and a signed grant agreement.

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**Quick Tips**

- Do your research and know what expenses this funder permits.
- Be honest about what you need.
- Remember to pay yourself. If you don't attribute a value to your work, others may assign a value for you. Use [Wage for Work](#) as a resource to determine a fair value and cite the source.
- If you are using your personal finances to cover fees, include those in your budget.
- Include in-kind donations. This not only gives you an idea of what you're donating to your own success, but it also gives funders an idea of the project's actual cost.
- Include a line item for grant administration or other administrative responsibilities. Foundations will not cover grant-writing fees, but will generally cover the cost of program reporting, budget maintenance and general project management fees.
- If the grant you are applying for represents 25% or more of the total revenues available for the project, you will need to consider how feasibly it presents to program officers and panelists. If you are unable to secure such a large grant, how will the project move forward? It is important to diversify your revenue streams and plan accordingly.
- If you're working from home, consider including a budget line item to cover that expense. The IRS provides guidelines for work-at-home expenses [here](#).

This [example](#) of a project budget may be helpful to you.

You may want to use this project budget template for both your organizational and project budget, which can be found [here](#). The Excel file is [here](#).

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### Additional links that may be helpful:

- [Financial planning/goals worksheet.](#)
- [Applying for grants with a realistic budget.](#)
- [Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania grant application tips.](#)
- [Samples of documents you need to make your case to funders.](#)
- [Sample budget.](#)

## THE CV

A *curriculum vitae* or CV is “an overview of your artistic professional history and achievements. Although it looks similar to a resume, it contains different elements which are only related to your artistic professional practice.”<sup>1</sup> Your CV should showcase work you have done that best aligns with your project. Though some projects may require your complete catalogue of artistic history and achievements, most do not.

Topics to include in your CV:

- Name and contact information.
- Education/academic degrees.
- Professional experience.
- Teaching experience.
- Awards/grants/fellowships/honors/scholarships/residencies, etc.
- Exhibition history.
- Collaborations.
- Commissions.
- Listing of media coverage of your work.
- Publications.
- Lectures/presentations.
- Other relevant content.

### Quick Tips

- Avoid making your CV overly complicated.
- You should keep a running CV of all your accomplishments.

Here is a strong example of a *curriculum vitae*.

<sup>1</sup><https://thepracticalartworld.com/2011/02/12/how-to-write-an-artists-cv-in-10-steps/>

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**Additional links that may be helpful:**

- [Sample resumes & CVs.](#)
- [Intro to writing a CV.](#)
- [Diversity in the arts information.](#)
- [Copyright/intellectual property information in the arts.](#)

## The Artist Statement

An artist's statement is a written text that explains who you are as an artist and outlines your artistic motivation, inspiration and approach to making your art. It is a concise, biographical summary of you and your art. It can be limited to one project, or may cover your artistic career overall. It includes the philosophy and approach that supports your creative work, (such as influences, processes, tools/medium choice and artistic goals), and your career trajectory to this point.

**Quick Tips**

- Let your work speak for you.
- Artistic statements vary in length; be mindful of what the funder is requesting.
- Tell the reader why you do what you do in an authentic way. Do not feel that you must use art-world jargon.
- The concluding paragraph should drive home the most important points in the statement.

Please review a sample artist's statement [here](#).

**Additional links that may be helpful**

- [Intro to artist statements.](#)
- [Explaining the unexplainable through your artist statement.](#)
- [Four tips for writing a good artist statement.](#)
- [How to write an artist statement.](#)
- [Sample writing statements.](#)



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## The Evaluation

Almost every grant application will ask you to define goals, objects and outcomes. These definitions are meant to help simplify the process.

### DEFINITIONS

*Goal:* What you want to do. Goals are general, broad, often abstract statements of desired results.

*Objectives:* How you're going to do it. Objectives are narrowly defined, precise, tangible, concrete and can be measured.

*Outcomes:* What will happen if you receive funding. Outcomes should be specific, narrow, measurable, and express the benefits of completed a project.

### Quick Tips

Before approaching this aspect of the application, make sure you have thoroughly read the RFP and are clear about what the funder is looking to support.

#### Goals

- Make sure your goals align with your proposal.
- Include your target population.
- Include a feasible timeline if not requested elsewhere in the application.

#### Objectives

- Include the specific artistic components of your project, in terms of final product, not process.
- Include how you will interact with the community.
- Include attendance projections.
- Make sure your objectives are realistic and can be completed within the course of the grant period.

#### Outcomes

- Describe in real terms what will happen as a result of the work you do and who will be affected by it.
- Back up your results with statistics that align with your project.
- Be sure to include both qualitative and quantitative outcomes that best fit your application.

### DEFINITIONS

- Quantitative measures assess a numerical value, such as number of tickets sold, or how many visitors viewed your exhibition.
- Qualitative measures assess non-numeric value, such as how a person may feel transformed or affected by your work.

Please see evaluation criteria [here](#).

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**Additional links that may be helpful:**

- Words to avoid in writing goals, objectives and outcomes.
- Writing measurable outcomes.

## The Work Sample

According to Creative Capital, an organization that supports artists, a work sample is “a representation or document of your work. It introduces your art to the world in the form of still images, manuscript excerpts, sound and/or video clips.”

Work samples should be able to speak to your ability to do what you propose to do in your project. They should be of the highest quality in your particular discipline/art form.

**Quick Tips**

- Include only the highest quality samples of your work.
- Ask an accomplished or successful artist to view your work samples for you prior to submission.
- Work samples should represent your strongest artistic achievements to date and provide an understanding of your body of work.
- Links on YouTube, Vimeo and SoundCloud are an excellent way to provide samples.
- If your work sample is the product of collaboration, include a description of the lead artist’s/organization’s role in the work’s creation.

Please see sample work samples [here](#).

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**Additional links that may be helpful:**

- [Best practices for artist samples.](#)
- [Artist project samples.](#)
- [What to list in a work sample.](#)
- [Three things to know about work samples.](#)

## In Closing

In closing, please remember: there is no perfect applicant. Following all of these rules will not guarantee funding. However, we are most interested in making sure applicants are empowered to clearly convey their concepts and hope this tool kit will enable you to better understand and meet requirements during the application process. Ingenuity and passion are critical and can at times elevate an application despite the fact that other aspects of a proposal are lacking.

We wish you the best of luck as you pursue your purpose!

## For More Information

**The Pittsburgh Foundation**

<https://pittsburghfoundation.org/advancing-black-arts-pittsburgh>

**The Heinz Endowments**

<http://www.heinz.org/strategic-areas/creativity/advancing-black-arts-in-pittsburgh>

**Contact:** [fundingarts@pghfdn.org](mailto:fundingarts@pghfdn.org) or 412-394-2617



## For Reference

### Example Budget

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Budget/Unit Price</b>
Canon EOS Rebel T6i DSLR Camera Bundle	\$800
iPad Pro and Tripod	\$1,400
Prints and installation supplies	\$1,800
Printed products	\$500
<b>Services/Advertisements</b>	
Social Media Advertising/Marketing *Includes paid online influencers to distribute participant search survey and promote exhibit	\$700
Website Designer	\$500
Graphic Designer/Photographer/ Videographer/Project Assistant	\$3,500
Photo Shoot (Wardrobe, Makeup, Signs)	\$800
Total:	\$10,000

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## Example Budget 2

### REVENUES

#### Grants/Contracts

- Foundation, corporations and/or government contributions (please itemize).
- Individual donors.
- In-kind support (donated goods, services, equipment, non-cash items, volunteer hours).

#### Earned Revenue

- Ticket sales.
- Program sales.
- Other.

#### Total Revenue

### EXPENSES

- Salaries (artist fees).
- Guest artist/commissioning fees.
- Payroll taxes.
- Fringe benefits.
- Consultants and professional fees (itemize type(s) of consultant(s) and fees).
- Venue/space rental.
- Artist travel and housing.
- Equipment.
- Supplies, materials and support costs (please itemize categories, ie: installation, studio expenses, artmaking materials, production costs, staging, etc.).
- Documentation.
- Promotion/marketing.
- Printing, copying, telephone.
- Insurance.
- Evaluation.
- In-kind expenses (should match in-kind support).
- Other (specify).

### TOTAL EXPENSES

### NET

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## Example CV

Heather Hopson

Address and phone number redacted for privacy

Email: [hello@motormouthmultimedia.com](mailto:hello@motormouthmultimedia.com).

Linkedin: [www.linkedin.com/in/heather-hopson](http://www.linkedin.com/in/heather-hopson)

## Experience

### Founder & Communications Director, Motor Mouth Multimedia

Pittsburgh, PA, May 2011-Present

- Owner of communications and marketing firm, which consists a collective of creatives and consultants of color.
- Collaborate with others to tell diverse stories, provide unique perspectives and increase the visibility of important issues.
- Create strategic communications campaigns for local and national clients, including Denny's, Hamilton Beach, Netflix, Allegheny County Health Department, Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership (GPNP), United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania and University of Pittsburgh.
- Publish [DiaryofaFirstTimeMom.com](http://DiaryofaFirstTimeMom.com), a nationally award-winning parenting website promoting positive images of African-American families.
- Received special invitation from White House to join in-person conversation about childhood obesity with Former First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama and Let's Move! Staff.

### Founder, Single Mom Defined

Pittsburgh, PA, May 2018-Present

- Founder and creative director of Single Mom Defined, a travelling photo essay and video exhibition unveiled at Three Rivers Arts Festival and installed throughout Pittsburgh region.
- Develop communications and marketing plan, securing media coverage with all major news outlets in Pittsburgh area and select national news coverage.
- Manage online and in-person community of single mothers. Facebook page made up of more than 14,000 mothers and private Facebook group consists of more than 700 members.
- Publish [SingleMomDefined.com](http://SingleMomDefined.com), a parenting website combatting the negative narrative about single mothers and connecting mothers to information they need to thrive.
- Build strong alliances with regional human services, education organizations and corporate sponsor to increase access to resources and change systems/policies to better support single mothers and children.
- Develop strategic plan for programming, mentoring and advocacy.
- Manage the Women and Girls Foundation's Femisphere Codeswitch hackathon.
- Founder of the Fairy Godmothers Giving Circle, which grants the wishes of single mothers.

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## **Founder, Free Store Penn Hills**

*Pittsburgh, PA, May 2016-May 2018*

- Devise and implement strategic plan to successfully open Free Store Penn Hills, a consignment store minus price tags for neighbors in need to address recent rise in suburban poverty.
- Build strong alliances with regional human services, education organizations and corporate sponsor to increase access to resources and training opportunities for Free Store customers.
- Develop communications and marketing plan, securing media coverage with all major news outlets in Pittsburgh area as well as an Allegheny County Council proclamation.

## **Communications Director, Allies for Children**

*Pittsburgh, PA, January 2014-August 2017*

- Devise and execute communications and marketing plan for newly established child advocacy organization, which included the creation of high-quality printed, electronic, and digital products.
- Develop branding efforts and build brand equity and awareness.
- Manage and monitor statewide blogger ambassador program.
- Serve as communications committee co-chairperson for statewide Campaign for Fair Education Funding.

## **Project Assistant/Social Media & Video Manager, Pittsburgh Public Schools**

*Pittsburgh, PA, May 2012-December 2013*

- Create and execute comprehensive communications and marketing plan.
- Manage and monitor school district's social media accounts and superintendent blog.
- Collaborate with graphic and web designers and videographers to produce high-quality materials.

## **Reading Teacher, Benjamin Stoddert Middle School (Turnaround Model)**

*Temple Hills, MD, June 2010-June 2011*

- Monitor and evaluate student performance.
- Develop and deliver engaging and differentiates instructional plans.
- Growth and Excellence Award Recipient for significantly improved state test scores.

## **Host/Producer, GIS Marketing & Communications**

*Cayman Islands, September 2007-May 2010*

- Schedule video shoots, conduct interviews, and proofread scripts.
- Format/Proofread articles/videos for GIS blog, website, and social media outlets.
- Write/Edit/Host GIS Spotlight, a weekly program covering Caribbean & Latin American policies.

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**Reporter, Cayman Islands Television Network**

*Cayman Islands, August 2004-August 2007.*

- Serve as reporter and fill-in anchor.
- Generate innovative and exclusive story ideas.
- Cover local and international news stories, including Hurricane Ivan, a category five storm.

**Reporter, WKYT, CBS Affiliate/WDKY, Fox Affiliate**

*Lexington, KY, April 2002-August 2004*

- Write/Edit/Voice news packages.
- Execute live shots.
- Produce accurate, engaging stories within tight deadlines
- Writer/Producer, WPXI, NBC Affiliate.  
*Pittsburgh, PA, September 1999-February 2002.*
- Serve as off-camera reporter.
- Write/Produce stories and live cut in's for WPXI, MSNBC, and CNN.

**Reporter/Producer, Sheridan Broadcasting Corporation**

*Pittsburgh, PA July 1999-July 2000.*

- Generate national and international story ideas.
- File reports reaching an estimated 20 million listeners on 300 affiliates.

**Reporter/Videographer, WELG, City Government Affiliate**

*Lansing, MI January 1999-August 1999.*

- Report and shoot video for Profile: East Lansing.
- Proficient in use of audio board, character generator, and BETA camera.

**Education**

Michigan State University: Bachelor of Arts Journalism

Maryland Department of Education: Standard Professional I Teaching Certificate (English 7-12)

**Awards**

40 Under 40 Awards (Pittsburgh Magazine and PUMP) Recipient, Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh 2014 & 2017 Grant Recipient (Presented by The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments), Black Weblog Awards Best Parenting Website, BlogHerLicious Best Video, Caribbean Broadcasting Union Award Recipient (Best Television News Feature, Best Television Regional Awareness Series, Best News Magazine Program), Lang Writing Award Recipient, Pan American Health Organization Excellence in Health Journalism Award Recipient, Startup Nation Home-Based Business 100 Winner, The Incline's Who's Next in Communications Inaugural Pittsburgh Class.



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## Affiliations

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Amachi Pittsburgh, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Cayman Islands Board of Directors, Chuck Cooper Foundation Board of Directors, Healthy Start Center for Urban Breastfeeding Advisory Board Member, Leadership Development Initiative XXIV, Leadership Pittsburgh Board of Directors (Leadership on Board Program), National Association of Black Journalists, Send a Kid to Camp Golf Tournament and Camp Coordinator, Stanford Medicine PreTermConnect Advisory Board Member, TedX Pittsburgh Emcee, The Pittsburgh Foundation Single Mothers Project Advisory Committee, The Sprout Fund Advisory Committee, Western Pennsylvania Diaper Bank Burgh Baby Citywide Diaper Drive Coordinator

## Example Artist Statement

Not long ago, I hosted an award-winning television show in the Cayman Islands. Today, I'm back home writing a different kind of story for my parenting website [DiaryofaFirstTimeMom.com](http://DiaryofaFirstTimeMom.com). In my 20 years working as a professional journalist, this by far is my best assignment. Growing up, I dreamed of becoming Oprah Winfrey. I was a newspaper editor at Penn Hills High School and a teen talk show host on WAMO. I later earned a journalism degree from Michigan State University and worked as a TV reporter throughout the U.S. Instead of joining Ms. Winfrey on her couch, I headed to the Cayman Islands to pursue my career overseas. I arrived five days before a category five hurricane!

For seven years, I hosted a TV show and traveled the world with government delegations. Then, I followed my heart to Washington, D.C. to pursue a relationship and obtain a teaching certification. Within a year, I taught at a high-needs school, got dumped by my long-term boyfriend and moved back to my hometown as a single mom-to-be.

A couple of months later, I fell in love all over again—this time with a beautiful baby girl. During my 10-month-stint as a stay-at-home mom, my daughter inspired me to create a blog, and *Diary of a First Time Mom* was born on Mother's Day 2012. Since launching, the website has expanded to more than 20 writers and tens of thousands of readers and social media followers, in part due to the generous support of the Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh program. After receiving a grant in 2014, I worked to take control of the narrative being told about African-American mothers and increased awareness about topics, such as breastfeeding, infant mortality, natural hair care and single parenting.

As part of a #ChocolateMilk campaign advocating for increased breastfeeding in the Black community (without shaming formula users), I created culturally relevant articles and videos, featuring Pittsburgh's leading African-American

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lactation consultants and Obstetrics & Gynecology specialists. The curated collection also produced personal breastfeeding experiences—both good and bad—of more than 30 African-American mom bloggers across the country. The work received national recognition and connected Diary of a First Time Mom to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). I have since participated in several CDC focus groups. The growing platform also led to blogger spokesperson contracts with major companies, including Denny's, Hamilton Beach and Netflix, national campaigns with Always, Aquafresh, Walmart and more, and an invitation to the White House by Former First Lady Michelle Obama.

To use social media for social good, I secured donations for the Western PA Diaper Bank and Free Store Penn Hills, a consignment store minus price tags for families in need I founded with friends. I also facilitated blogging workshops at the University of Maryland.

My approach to multimedia projects—whether it includes an essay, a video or a photo, is centered on relationship building. I get to know my subjects, develop a trust, learn about their authentic selves and share stories that engage and inspire. As a child, my parents nicknamed me M&M. It wasn't for the sweet candy. The M's stood for motor mouth! As for my motto, Bob Marley said it best, Love the life you live. Live the life you love. This fuels my goal of expanding my interactive, online community, where mothers of color learn to love the lives they design for their families and celebrate their Blackness.

### Essay Examples

- [Dear Baltimore Mom of the Year.](#)
- [A Letter to Trayvon Martin's Mother.](#)
- [Why I Won't Let my Daughter Listen to Beyoncé's Lemonade.](#)
- [Five Things Black Moms Can do in the Wake of Police Shootings.](#)
- [#ChocolateMilk Campaign.](#)
- [Mom of the Week: Single Mom Stretched Dollars to Africa.](#)
- [Why I Won't Cut up My ACCESS Card.](#)

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## **Additional advice for writing an application:**

- General overview of arts funding options.
- Six commonly asked grant application questions.
- Sample documents from Grantspace.