The Path to Funding

THE PATH TO FUNDING

The Artist's Guide to Building Your Audience, Generating Income, and Realizing Career Sustainability

Zane Forshee, Christina Manceor, Robin McGinness

JOHNS HOPKINS
PEABODY INSTITUTE

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FOREWARD

Congratulations on your decision and commitment to devote your career—and in doing so much of your life—to the performing arts. You are engaging in more than a career; it is a calling. I use that word deliberately because I believe that if you have to ask yourself whether this is for you, it probably isn't. A career devoted to the arts is not just a career—you are on a mission. In order to do this, you have to *need* to do it. You have to not be able to envision doing anything else but be an artist. In many ways there is nothing more challenging and, at the same time, nothing more rewarding if you feel that calling. I assume that if you're reading this and have gotten this far, you do!

The question then becomes:

> "How do I make the most of this life, serve the art, do something good in the world by making a real contribution, and yes, make a living and be able to support myself?"

As is the case with so many fields and the world in general, the pace of change is dizzying. It's also true that in the arts, there are fundamentals that don't change, even though everything around them may be evolving. To become a great pianist, violinist, composer, dancer, or any number of other disciplines, you must be outstanding at your craft. There are no shortcuts to making art. Devoting many hours to excellence in performance is an unchanging and endless requirement, and that is as it should be. That is part of the rigor and joy of being an artist: the never-ending pursuit of making something beautiful happen.

But today, that pursuit of excellence is not enough. Artists today have to surround these core skills—the skills that have been essential to making music and dance for centuries—with a broader set of skills. Skills that include an ability to communicate beyond what you express through your performance, to develop your own audience and following, to relate to different communities, to develop a creative idea and convince someone to support it, listen to it, and engage. One of the exciting things about the world today is that there are so many direct avenues to finding an audience and to the world. For example, it is no longer necessary to have a recording contract (which hardly exist today) to be a recording artist. It is no longer necessary to have a book publisher to be published. The need for a middleman has never been less thanks largely to technology. So in that sense, there has never been a greater opportunity for artists to propagate their art. You just have to be creative and willing to do the work and not wait for others to do it for you.

I believe this is incredibly exciting and liberating. You can in fact chart your own course. And *that* is what this book is about. It is why the Peabody Conservatory has introduced the [Breakthrough Curriculum](#)[1] and [LAUNCHPad](#).[2] We are committed to ensuring that when our students go out into the world, they are equipped not just to speak through their art, but also to find a meaningful avenue for that art.

I invite you to read this book and develop these broader skills with the same joy and determination with

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1. https://peabody.jhu.edu/academics/breakthrough-curriculum/
2. https://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/career-services/

which you practice your instrument, write your music, or pursue your dance. Remaining open to these ideas will pay dividends and take you places you might never have imagined. Think of it the way you think about your practice—it's about the process and journey, as much as the result. Enjoy it and keep working to bring your art to the world!

Fred Bronstein
Dean, The Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Maryland
September 2022

PREFACE

> "Your mileage may vary. Take what you need and leave the rest."
>
> –Austin Kleon

Purpose

This book is a hybrid resource. It is part textbook, part workbook. Our goal is that you arrive at the end with the tools and confidence to build your own projects, for grants or otherwise. While we've centered the process around building a grant proposal, all the tools outlined in the coming pages can be helpful when creating an independently funded project, a crowdfunded project, or even just figuring out how to manage your artistic career.

The book provides new tools and processes to create ideas (there is a science to creativity!), describe your ideas, develop a budget and timeline for them, and talk about them to other people. You learn how to locate potential funding for those ideas, how to support them with examples of your past work, and how to identify who might be interested in your idea. For each of these steps, we walk you through a method for creating the content or building the skills, as well as explore your own methods. This is a guide, not a set of laws.

We hope that when equipped with these skills, each artist takes ownership of their art. With the confidence to find funding for your projects, you can also generate and sustain financial and creative freedom.

Audience

For Artists

This book is for today's creative workforce. The rise of technology and other societal changes have shifted how people in creative industries generate an income, including digital disruption, globalization, and the peer-to-peer economy (Bartleet et al., 2019; Young, 2018; Jackson & Bridgstock, 2019). Creative industries include architecture, design and visual arts; music and the performing arts; film, radio, and television; writing and publishing; advertising and marketing; and software and digital content (Bridgstock et al., 2015).

One segment of creative industries features highly proficient professionals that perform for a live audience. Performing artists include a range of disciplines via live entertainment events, although audio and video recording also allow for private consumption. Whether you are a performer on stage, an audio engineer in the booth, a producer behind the curtain, or a composer in the audience, this book shares how to connect with your community and develop project ideas into impactful, funded experiences. In addition, many professional artists with flexible and innovative careers share their perspectives on the grant writing process.

While the examples here focus on the performing arts, members of any creative industry can benefit from this resource.

For Instructors

Creative careers are more complex and diverse than traditional careers. This diversity makes the task of creative educators more challenging, as few students transition to traditional, full-time employment (Bennett et al., 2016; Bridgstock et al., 2015). This book addresses current trends in creative industries, including portfolio careers and the entrepreneurial skills in the arts needed to successfully transition from higher education student to professional artist. These skills must be integrated throughout the curriculum within artistic programs in addition to technical artistry skills.

To prepare students for the transition to professionals, we advocate for conservatories and music programs to introduce students to professional artists with a wide range of musical identities. By integrating excellence in artistry with a variety of practical skills and exposure to music industry professionals, musicians can better build and sustain a creative career in the arts. Each chapter includes conversations with professional artists about their career and their grant process.

Visit the [Peabody Path To Funding](1) webpage to share your experiences with the materials, provide feedback, and sign up to receive updates on supplemental instructor and student resources when they are available.

Organization

The book is organized into three parts:
1. The Artist
2. The Community
3. The Creative Project

Part I: The Artist introduces the scope of the book and the impact of arts education within the creative professions. You articulate who you are as an artist and compose a mission statement for your work. It also lays the foundation for relating your values and mission within your community and offers strategies to brainstorm ideas and build a mind map around project ideas.

Part II: The Community focuses on identifying the purpose of projects within the context of community needs. In addition, it addresses how to connect audiences with your artistic works. It also covers how to find appropriate funders and partners.

Part III: The Creative Project walks you through building a project proposal for a grant application. You dive into key components of a compelling project description, steps to build a budget and a timeline, as well as curate and create work samples. It covers how to demonstrate why you and why now with a cohesive package of professional materials.

Below is an overview of each chapter.

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1. https://peabody.jhu.edu/path-to-funding

Chapter	Topics
1 Introduction	Explain impact of arts education within the professional world and need for multi-faceted skills for high-level artists.
	Develop audiences to supports long-term sustainability.
2 Your Artistry and Your Values	Articulate who you are as an artist with a mission statement.
	Relate your artistic identity and values to the surrounding community, including audience, grantors, collaborators, and others.
3 Project Ideas	Build ideation methods and create a mind map.
	Develop strategies to get yourself "unstuck."
4 Your Audience	Identify the purpose of your project and the audience it serves.
	Articulate how to find and connect audiences with your artistic work.
	Share the impact of your project in your community.
5 Funders and Other Partners	Identify appropriate funders for your project.
	Align your project outcomes with a funder's goals.
	Build relationships and connect with potential funders.
6 Project Descriptions	Develop a compelling narrative that clearly outlines your project.
	Share your project with authenticity and cohesion that includes what, why, who, and how.
7 Project Budgets	List fundamental budget requirements and how to format.
	Construct a budget with details that support your project narrative.
8 Project Timelines	Identify basics of grant timelines and how to present the information.
	Build a timeline with logistics that support your project story.
9 Project Viability	Explain the value of showcasing your work.
	List strategies to create and benefits of consistent documentation of your artistic work.
	Integrate your previous artistic work effectively in your promotional materials and applications.
10 Make It Happen	Combine the elements of your grant application into a clear, cohesive, and convincing written proposal.
	Explain your artistic work in ways that authentically connect with others.
	Practice your verbal pitch to communicate both on video and in-person.

Features

Each chapter includes an overview of learning goals, perspectives of professional artists, and key takeaways. It also includes exercises that help you develop your artistic identity talk about your work,

and submit a compelling grant proposal. Robust examples throughout the book demonstrate key concepts and provide models to build on for your projects. References are provided at the end of each chapter and for the entire book. Glossary terms are defined within the text and compiled at the end. *The Path to Funding* is available in digital or print formats.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PART I

THE ARTIST

1

INTRODUCTION

Building a Sustainable Career in the Arts

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Overview

In this chapter, you learn how to…

- Explain the impact of arts education within the professional world.
- Discuss the importance of building multi-faceted skills for high-level artists.
- Explain how generating an audience supports the development of long-term sustainability.
- Explain the power of mindset and its impact on artistic potential.

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Letter To Artists

Dear Artists,

Welcome! We are so glad you are here.

Before we get started, we have some advice for you to consider as you prepare for the adventure that is about to unfold.

Be open. This book is going to push you to think about, develop, and explore new ways to approach your life as an artist. You will work to clarify who you are as an artist, find new ways of generating creative ideas, and then develop a comprehensive approach to launching a creative project. You will build the key components of an effective grant proposal, explore potential funders of your creative work to generate financial stability, and learn how to effectively frame your ideas to convincingly deliver them in both written and spoken form.

You can do hard things. Creating new projects and proposals and building the skills outlined above can feel overwhelming. But remember this: doing what you do right now as an artist—that magical ability of making something from nothing—is the hard part. It's important to recognize that developing the

artistic skills that you currently possess is the barrier to entry that many never have the courage to attain. ***If it were easy, everyone would do it.*** Keep this in mind as you move forward. You are an artist, and you have skills that are incredibly specialized, powerful, and difficult to attain. You and your skills are valuable. This book helps you develop the necessary new tools that augment your overall skills as an artist.

Start with where you are. You may be an emerging artist, or a long-practicing professional, or somewhere in-between. No matter your starting place, you already have tools in your arsenal to help you create and show your work. Maybe you have strong communication skills, a robust community network, or a library of media samples of your artistic work. Or maybe you have experience brainstorming new ideas, organizing things, or working with technology. Identify your strengths and capitalize on them by using them to your advantage. Where skills or ideas are newer, give yourself grace and time to incubate and develop in these areas. This is a process. We all have room to grow.

You have something to share. Part of the fun in creating art is sharing it with others, either in making it or experiencing it. Having a collection of your work is an invaluable touchstone. You can use your collection to reflect on your artistic growth, share new ideas on social media, as examples for students, and finally, for grants. Make a dedicated habit of regularly and consistently capturing and archiving your work. If you don't already capture your work, now is a great time to start. Use what you have available! A cell phone video is infinitely better than no video.

Sustainability as an artist is radical (Simonet, 2014). If you have had the good fortune of visiting Muir Woods or another redwood forest on the west coast of the United States, you'll eventually stumble upon a tree that is larger than anything you could imagine. That tree emerged not in days, weeks, or months; it grew over years and decades. The same can be said with your own artistic voice. You and your work are deeply connected to this moment in time while simultaneously evolving, growing, and moving in new or unexpected directions. The goal of this book is to assist your exploration of fostering an environment or framework for you to continue to evolve, just like those trees, for the long term:–not days, not weeks, not months—for decades. ***Artistic sustainability is about the long game. The world needs your art for years to come and enjoy it through all its continually evolving stages.*** Being intentional about how you think about, plan, and implement your life and artistic work fosters long-term **sustainability**.

Your path is your path. One of the easiest things for an artist to do is look over their shoulder at what their colleague, friend, enemy, or frenemy is doing and compare. This comes to us naturally because it is a byproduct of how we have all developed our individual skills as artists. We absorb our environments and part of that is looking at other artists' work. It can help us grow but can also lead to competitiveness. Along with creating a tremendous amount of psychological pain, self-doubt, and jealousy, it's a distraction from you living your life and creating your work. Pay attention to the success of others. Send them a note of congratulations (everyone loves a bit of encouragement!), and then get back to work. Andrew Simonet said it best in his book *Making Your Life as an Artist*: "The success of other artists is good for me" (Simonet, 2014).

So are you game? Ready for a little adventure? Good. Let's roll.

Artists in Action

"I also have a very personal experience of the transformational power of music. I bring that to everything I do. That's something that our students have in spades. We all have had a transformational musical moment and telling that story is the most powerful thing we can do."

– Jessica Satava

_____

"There are always those students just upstream of you that you see doing the same thing that you will eventually do kind of getting into the professional world doing their own projects. You start to become aware of how they're able to make those things happen. A lot of the thing that kept coming back was, oh yeah, there's grants out there. There are grants everywhere. Just need to apply for grants. It just kind of became like this mantra repeated by so many people, like, just get out there and apply for grants."

– Adam Rosenblatt

Building a Sustainable Arts Career

One of the major obstacles that is thrust upon almost every artist at some point in their journey is the construct of the "starving artist." There you are, doing your work, cultivating your skills and BOOM! – a family member, friend, colleague, or even that person behind the counter of your coffee shop confronts you with:

"Yeah, but what's your plan B? You're probably not going to be able to do [*insert your current project/artistic practice]* to survive."

This notion that you must choose between stability and creativity is the dichotomy that needs to be challenged. The truth is that you can achieve both longevity and the opportunity to create. We just need to set ourselves up for it.

The pages are designed to confront this myth by exploring how you can develop an audience for your work. Perhaps the biggest point for internalizing right now is that when you understand the kind of people who are interested in your work, you have the details you need to build an audience. That information in turn helps you communicate successfully with potential funders. Building those relationships and support helps provide the security you need to grow and take risks to develop your creative voice throughout your artistic life.

If we break this down into a top ten list, the process often resembles the following steps. Note that many of these steps can be combined, re-ordered, or re-mixed.

10 Steps to Artistic Sustainability

1. Artist creates work.
2. Artist shares work publicly (hooray for the internet!).
3. Artist identifies people that connect to their work.
4. Artist begins connecting with individuals within their audience.
5. Artist audience grows.
6. Audience begins to financially support the artist's work (e.g., gallery showings, attending performances, etc.).

7. Artist garners interest from both individuals and organizations, and receives financial support.
8. Artist is able to take more creative risks (and audience is excited to see 'what's next').
9. The path to artistic sustainability begins.
10. The myth of the starving artist is one step closer to becoming a thing of the past.

When we talk about building an audience, one point to consider is that an audience does not necessarily need to be large to be vibrant, energized, and impactful. The goal is to be thoughtful, empathetic, and authentic in the ways you communicate and apply these same qualities towards identifying and connecting with individuals, groups, and communities that you feel might align with what you do. The long-held belief that "people will find you" is not only incorrect, but it also does a disservice to you and your work. People will be interested in what it is that you are creating, you just need to make it easily accessible—draw them a map, give them a compass, and send them a personal invitation into your world.

Minding the Gap

How do we approach an artistic career when it feels like everything is changing? A quick online search offers dozens of cautionary tales regarding the state of the arts, the slow demise of arts organizations, and a lack of audience support or engagement. However, as the world of work, technology, and culture has evolved from the 20th to the 21st century (Gerber & Childress, 2018), the training of artists within academic institutions of higher education has remained, for the most part, static.

This static approach to the curriculum has created a significant deficit to the training of artists based on a recent Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) DataBrief (Frenette, 2020). The report identified a startling skills gap showing 65% of artists that completed post-secondary education were not lacking in artistic ability but financial skills, business management skills, and entrepreneurial skills. Before your eyes glaze over, recognize that this is precisely how the "starving artists" stereotype continues to persist today.

With each passing year, arts programs admit, train, and churn out new graduates, just as they did when they established their curricular model. Year after year, the field gets an influx of fresh artists entering the work force looking to begin their careers. Over time, this has created a unique supply and demand challenge within the arts marketplace (Munnelly, 2020). As the population of qualified artists increases with each year, compounded by shrinking audiences, interest, and support for many traditional art forms, the competition for full-time, part-time, and contract work increases, and arts jobs become increasingly difficult to secure, especially for those lacking necessary skills.

For those that manage to stay in the field, many arts alumni encounter having to navigate the skills gap outlined above (Frenette, 2020). This gap has come to the forefront in recent years as the training that most artists receive has not evolved to address or include the realities of the current marketplace.

How can this be the case? The reality is that most academic institutions have not updated the curricular needs of their programs to align with the skills that are required and desired in the arts industry today. Put simply, arts education programs are not training their students with the necessary business and entrepreneurial skills that will provide them with the competencies to thrive as self-employed artists or

freelancers, help them navigate the non-profit and for-profit sectors, and prepare them to build long-term, sustainable artistic lives (Frenette, 2020).

Regardless of whether your educational institutions incorporated these skills in your academic coursework, you can take advantage of opportunities to develop them independently. While the arts industry is indeed transforming—and this evolution has only been accelerated by the impact of recent economic and world events (Jeanotte, 2021; Khan et al., 2021)—there are countless artists currently building lives and careers that can only be described as successful or thriving. You'll be introduced to several in the following chapters.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 1-1.** Reflect on the ways in which the current arts industry impacts your creative work.

Artists in Action

"What it's allowed me to do is have experiences that I could never in my wildest dreams ever imagine doing when I was deciding to become a musician at eight or nine years old . . . a lot of things that I think, when I'm old and gray, I'll look back and say, thank goodness that my career was a lot of things. So grants allowed these projects to happen. And again, without them, would we do them anyway? Well, we'll try, but there's only so far you can go without some support."

– Brad Balliett

Building Successful Artistic Careers

How do artists build successful artistic careers today? Here's the short answer. The artists that develop creative, rewarding, and sustainable lives possess a multifaceted skillset that extends beyond their artistic skills (Munnelly, 2020). These artists recognize the need to obtain high level artistic abilities and hold a range of additional competencies that extend beyond the stage, studio, or practice room to support their professional work (Bartleet et al., 2019; López-Íñiguez & Bennett, 2020; Weston, 2020).

Let's dig deeper into that idea. The multifaceted nature of their work is evident when looking at artists that have developed fulfilling, sustainable artistic careers. These are highly trained artists that have developed organizational and professional skills that empower them to start their own ensembles, programs, collectives, arts organizations, studios, partnerships, and creative projects. These artists have developed multiple revenue streams, often referred to as a **portfolio career**, and frequently work in areas adjacent to or outside their area of artistic training. Additionally, they are not looking for opportunities to get into the workforce. They are building their own pathways, creating their own opportunities, and attracting new audiences as they move forward. These thriving artists have closed the skills gap outlined above to allow themselves **creative agency** over their lives, their artistic work, and their careers. They have the power to choose what they say "yes" to and what they say "no" to in their artistic work.

Along with the development of their own skills in the studio, many successful artists of today have cultivated skillful approaches of communication and audience generation empowering them to amass, foster, and engage an audience that supports their work. The most skillful of these artists understand

the need to have a direct communication method with their audience and foster a community both online and in person that extends beyond the artist themselves (Wilson, 2017).

The thriving artist of the 21st century understands who they are as an individual and how that connects to and impacts the work they choose to develop. They have successfully identified the communities, groups, and individuals that resonate with the work they are creating, understand how to communicate authentically about their work to generate interest, and have developed the ability to attain financial support for their creative endeavors, allowing them to take risks to create new work.

This moment of transition we are experiencing within the arts provides an incredible opportunity to finally eradicate the myth of the starving artist. This is the chance for every artist to reevaluate how they can connect with their values , their work, their audience, and how they can build sustainable lives for the long term. It's a chance to reset, reimagine, and rechart both our individual and collective course.

> **Artists in Action**
>
> "Last year [my flute and percussion duo] came out with an album that was funded almost exclusively by grant funding. And I will say, financially it would not have been advisable for us to go forward making this album and investing that money into this project without grant funding. Grants really made it possible for us to put this professional recording together and we would have been in the hole or not making an album without it. . . So instead of it putting us in debt, we have on-going income, we came out on top, and we're able to continue making money on that album. And it's an income driving endeavor rather than a net loss."
>
> — Christina Manceor

Creating and Funding Your Artistic Projects

It is easy to fall into a mindset of **scarcity** with our artistic work. In other words, we assume opportunities and resources are limited (Covey, 1989). But if we can learn to create our own opportunities and build a robust network of support, we can instead live in a world of **abundance**. We can find and generate value for ourselves and our work by designing and embracing our own unique paths.

Shifting focus from scarcity to abundance enables us to to discover the infinite number of approaches

Shifting focus from **scarcity** to **abundance** enables us to discover an infinite number of approaches to building a sustainable artistic career. The key lies in the connections between your artistic work and the community around you. Perhaps the most crucial element involves funding your work in a way that not only compensates you for your time, but also sustains your artistic process and creativity moving forward.

Again, channel the abundance mindset. There are people and organizations in your community who want to support your artistic work. It's your job to connect with them.

Many avenues to funding are available. However, this book focuses on the **grant writing** process, in large part because applying for grant funding requires a multi-faceted skill set. In addition to the artistic skills you've worked so hard to hone over the course of many years, it involves ideation, research, project development, logistics, collaboration, and communication, to start. Fortunately, these skills are

not just for grant writing. They are your groundwork for independence and autonomy as a creative person. They offer the ability to build what you want, where you want, when you want, with the collaborators you want.

Ultimately, this power to create and fund your projects from the ground up gives you agency not just in your creative work, but in ways you choose to design your life and career (Stanford d.school).

So, give yourself the gift of **creative agency**. As you explore this resource, take the opportunity to view the ideas put forth from a mindset of **abundance**. You'll need to practice this idea. What better way to begin developing this skill than by thinking about your own creative projects? There's plenty of room for you and your creative work in this world. Let's begin to take the first steps towards finding your place in it.

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 1-1. Impact Activity
Consider the adaptions you have made (or could make in the future) in response to the evolving industry 21st century artists face.

- How does the external world impact the way you pursue and practice your art?
- How does it impact your sources of income?

Exercise 1-2. Goals Activity
At the beginning of the journey, take a moment to identify a few areas of curiosity or improvement you would like to focus on as you work through this process.

- What are your personal and professional goals?
- What are the tools and resources you need most in this moment to take next steps toward your goals.

Key Takeaways

- Artistic **sustainability** is accomplished through deliberate and intentional planning of your life and artistic work.
- Artists of the 21st century that understand who they are as individuals and their connection to their work are better equipped to build engaging relationships with their supporters and position themselves to attain financial support that is sustainable and creatively liberating.
- **Creative agency** begins with shifting our approach from a **scarcity** mindset to one of **abundance**.

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in <u>About the Artists</u>. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- Brad Balliett on Advice to Younger Self
- Alysia Lee on Changes After Successful Grant Proposal
- Lara Pellegrinelli on Talking About the Work

Brad Balliett: Advice to Younger Self

ZF: If you could go in a time machine and talk to the early grant-seeking Brad, and share with him what you know now about the process of seeking funding, are there any things that you would like to share with him?

BB: Yeah, and I think this is something that I'm probably going to say over and over as we talk about grants, which is the projects that are likely to be funded are the projects that you're going to do anyway, that really, you're not waiting for a paycheck. *That's not the thing that's holding you back, because it's connected to what you want to do. You have a passion for it. The idea is strong enough. You've got enough pieces in place, that it's going to help, but you're going to make it happen regardless of what you're up against.* Even if that means you and your friends are working for free for six months or spending your own money to make it happen. I'd say the bulk of the projects that I've done that had support behind them are things that when the chips are on the table, I would say I'll do this anyway because this is just something that I don't want to go to the grave not having done.

ZF: That's an excellent point. There's a level of personal investment that you feel so strongly about that regardless of whether there's funding or not, you're going to keep pushing forward.

Alysia Lee: Changes After Successful Grant Proposal

ZF: After your first successful grant proposal, what changed for you with your next project?

AL: Oh, confidence! You know, before you submit your first grant proposal, you've talked to, for me at least, I had for a year been building Sister Cities Girlschoir[1] in my mind, a mind castle of what this organization could be. Everybody that I knew had heard about it to death. It was all I wanted to talk about at dinner and lunch and breakfast. My colleagues in my cohort in the Sistema Fellowship (at New England Conservatory), we'd all heard each other's business plans 1,000 times and given feedback. I had talked it through with business leaders throughout Boston and, of course, our professors.

So at the same time I felt confident about that, because of all that feedback that I could get. *Number one, get a lot of feedback.* You don't need somebody from Harvard. Lots of folks can give you feedback. I did feel confident. But you still feel like, is somebody going to give me money? It's one thing for someone to say, yeah, this is tight. It's another thing for someone to give you a check for $25,000. And I had never raised that kind of money before; $100,000 to me was a lot of money to raise, and it is a lot of money to raise.

I would say that confidence that this is an idea that is good. You kind of know that, right? Because you start to feel the prickles of it in your soul when an idea that's good comes to you. So you knew the idea was good, but you're communicating about it in a way that other people can get excited about it. And that's really invigorating, and that kind of confidence comes from success. So, I would say definitely confidence.

In that, if I get one person to catch on to this vision I've articulated well enough—one person who doesn't know me, right? [Someone] who's not invested in me in any way is willing to make an

1. http://sistercitiesgc.org/

investment in my idea [that is] not a thing yet. Now you're making investments in specific children that you may have met at my program, but in the beginning, you were just making investments in what seems like a logical idea that makes sense. And that's what you wanted someone to say.

My favorite thing is for someone to say, "I don't even like music, I'm not really interested in music, and your idea still makes sense to me." That's the kind of thing you want, the idea to be so locked tight that you don't have to be a music lover to say, "Oh, yeah, I want kids to experience music" or, "Oh, I want…." It's not about that. It's about the logic piece.

So I would say that you start to gain some confidence in your ability to communicate abstract ideas. And who better to do that than musicians? Most of us are communicating, especially if you're an instrumentalist, you're communicating abstractly. You're not using words. To communicate abstract ideas and to make them concrete is what I call a habit of mind of artistry.

So artists are good at that. We are going into it with a little leg up on some other folks. But you'll get that confidence every time those grant dollars roll in. It never ends, just like performing, you never feel apathetic about it. Because it's work and you feel kind of like you've birthed something, sometimes, depending on the size of the grant application. And so, to get a baby back is very nice.

ZF: What happens when you are getting NO's?

AL: Then the only thing I want to say then too, is when you get no's, what happens when you're getting no's? If you're lucky enough to have a foundation that will give you feedback, take it silently. Don't argue back with people, just take the feedback. But filter it through the lens of what you know to be true. And that can be difficult.

So that's what I mean by, when that foundation said, "Oh, well, you don't fit with our mission," I knew that we did. Maybe we didn't articulate it well, or in a way that made sense to them, right? We didn't use language that made sense to them. So, there was some bargaining to be done. But also, maybe your idea, not that your idea isn't good, I don't believe in that, but maybe you just haven't kerneled down to how strong the idea can be.

You might be fluttering around the edge of the idea. And that's not where the strength of the idea is. You want to get to the root of the idea. So, maybe you just need to go deeper into your own idea and elevate it a little bit. Right?

Or maybe your grant writing is not effective and that is the easiest problem! Because there are tons of tools and skills that you can build in terms of being a better writer and a better communicator about your idea.

The number one thing is just don't give up. No matter what, if you know your idea is great, especially one of those ideas where something unique about me lets me know that this will work, then you have to do those ideas. Because who else will do them? You can't deny the world your brilliance because somebody told you no. You have to just keep pressing through. There is some magic number about grants, YES's and NO's, it's not good, you're going to get more NO's than YES's. But, you know, just to keep it up, it's a numbers game.

Lara Pellegrinelli on Talking About the Work

ZF: You've had some experience interviewing these individuals and artists that are really about to embark on a project that makes them vulnerable. I was really struck by the one you mentioned with [Fred Hersch](.)[2]

- How did they get there?
- Were they ready to tell that story or did you feel them steeling themselves? Or is every artist different?
- How would you recommend students start to experiment with stretching and building those muscles?

LP: Do you mean in terms of talking about the work or making the work?

ZF: Talking about the work. From my perspective, our students and most artists in general, it's like, you can make the thing or start building the project. It's more like talking about it to others is where it gets kind of scary at times.

LP: I think it is scary. *I'd like to acknowledge that it is scary. What you're doing is making you vulnerable and that can be really scary for people. What can I do to help with that?* I mean, as a writer, I feel that on the other end of interviews sometimes. But mostly the people I'm working with are very professional, they're used to doing this work. I don't talk to a lot of people who are at the very beginnings of their careers anymore.

But what I can say is that as a writer, I've had personal projects and I've had to figure out how to talk about them as well and so I feel that vulnerability. I could speak to it from that perspective. I'm not going to say that much about the content of it but I will say that I'm a writer who has a memoir on the shelf. It's been on the shelf for three years now because of all my work for [Miller [Theatre]](.)[3] and I haven't had time to touch it. But it's a project that made me feel really vulnerable because it's not the type of writing that I usually do. It's very personal. I had to figure out how to work on the page with it and how to talk to others about it.

I took a memoir class, so I was in a writing group. I think that if you can find some community as you're trying to take those first steps, that's really helpful. The class I took, there were 10 writers in it, and we all read for each other. Everyone had the same experience of presenting their work, of reading their work, of getting feedback on their work. That's really valuable for taking those steps. Because before you want to put it in front of someone like me, you want to put it in front of… I think using your peers in that way is really helpful. Then everybody learns.

I would say also, look around you in your community, around you in terms of the people that you know. We often belong to more. I mean, in terms of my memoir, I have a community in that writing group in the writing class, but I also have other writers that I know who are not in that class. I have a husband, who's a writer and an editor, and I have family members and I have circles of personal friends who went through some of those life events with me or were witness to those life events and so they're multiple communities upon which I could draw if I wanted to talk about that work and progress.

2. https://fredhersch.com/
3. https://www.millertheatre.com/

Those are all resources for you in dealing with that vulnerability and creating safe spaces for yourself so that you are able to do that work because that's what we want. I think we all want to find ways that we feel safe enough so that we can make that work. ***If we're making work that's really emotional and really deep and really goes to the core of who we are, we have to create these safe spaces and negotiate how we're going to make that and put it out there in the world.***

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2

YOUR ARTISTRY AND VALUES

Defining Who Are You
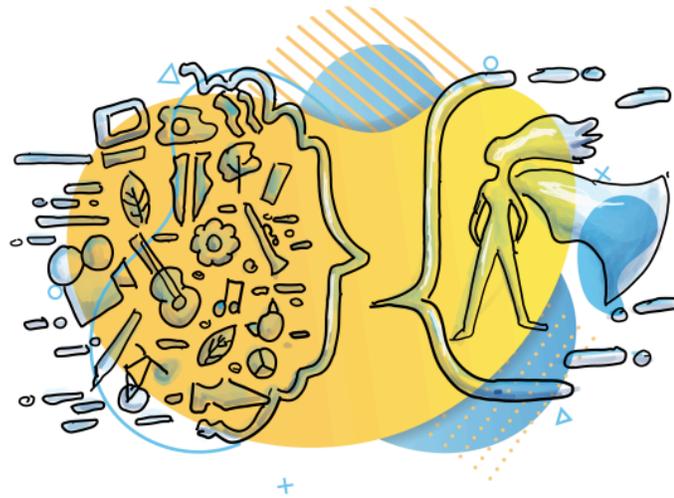
This will be the most personal and perhaps challenging chapter in this book. In the following pages, you will explore what drives you to create as an artist and articulate the work that comprises your artistic

creation and why it is important to you and the rest of the world. You will also examine the parts of your life outside of your creative work that are important to you. By the end of this process, you will be able to develop language that brings these driving forces together to create your **mission statement**.

This work is difficult and requires self-reflection. It can be uncomfortable and, like all challenges in our work as artists, deeply rewarding (especially when you put in the time and effort).

You might be asking:

> "Why do I need a mission statement? I've got real work to do."

Here's the thing. Your mission as an artist is what you're trying to give to the world—a way of moving, hearing, seeing, and collaborating. Without clarity about this mission in your work, you cannot tap into your most authentic self. That understanding of what drives you helps sustain your artistic life and career over the long haul. It will help you determine what projects, collaborations, and partnerships you say "yes" to, and which opportunities are a "no," because you'll have the tools to evaluate what aligns with your mission and what does not.

When you have clarity in your mission, an **alignment** emerges that connects you directly to the projects you develop, communities you build, and partnerships you create.

Curious? Excellent. Let's begin.

Artists in Action

"The more that you feel like people are getting on board with your mission and your project goals, the more you feel empowered to think more creatively, more innovatively, and collaborate with more people."

– Jessica Satava

"You learn to go for the grants that have values that align with your values. It's never a situation where you're trying to come up with a project to match a grant that you've found, but much more the opposite. You say this is what I'm doing. I'm going to keep doing this kind of regardless of what's going to happen."

– Brad Balliett

Your Artistry and Your Values

If you're reading this text, congratulations! You've taken a brave next step in thinking about your life, how your work fits into a multifaceted artistic container, and how to keep creating.

Let's reframe the stereotype of what life as an artist looks like. Contrary to popular belief, you can develop a creative life that is productive, sustainable, and balanced, where you're not overextended, overwhelmed, and overburdened. You can have time to live, time to create, time to earn,*and time to dream.* Don't underestimate the need to dream big as an artist.

This all sounds great, right? Sign me up for the well-balanced, creative, and engaging life of an artist.

But how do we get there? How do we take that first step towards crafting this kind of world? There is some work to do. You need to unearth **who you are** and **what you value** both as an artist and as a person. You need to identify your **artistic identity**.

The first step in this process is to consider the words we use to convey our work as artists to our community. Let's compare two responses to the common question, "What do you do?"

Conversation Stopper:

> Q: "What do you do?"

> A: "I'm a guitarist that is focused on contemporary solo and chamber works for the guitar."

Conversation Starter:

> Q: "What do you do?"

> A: "I work with guitars to explore the intersection of what's been done and what could be possible for those six strings. I think about how technology has changed the way we listen and work with composers to create new sounds for the instrument, new ways of playing it, and experiences that are worth showing up for."

The first version provides the facts, but it fails to consider the listener's perspective and certainly doesn't invite them to engage. To turn the narrative around, the second version gives us a look into the artist's creative process while also skipping all the technical terminology (Simonet, 2014). It connects with values someone who is not a guitarist can identify with and gives them an opening to learn more.

Artists with a clear understanding of their values, or what is most important to them, are able to more intentionally create lives and artistic work that align with those values (Beeching, 2010). They also tend to be the most satisfied with their careers and comfortable in their own skin.

By understanding your own values, you can find intersections with others and build on those connections to draw people in. This allows you to create an artistic life, career, and community around the values that are central to you and your work. When you're authentic and clear in those values, they emerge in how you show up in the world, including the following:

- The words you choose to use when you communicate
- How you dress and present yourself
- The artistic projects and collaborations you develop
- Your presence online
- How you treat others in society

This approach provides a scaffolding for individuals to shape a life that supports their needs. Your life as an artist balances many aspects, and your career is just one of these elements. Understanding your values helps you integrate art and creativity across your life and career holistically and stay in tune with what drives you. This means that no two artistic lives or careers will look the same. An artistic career requires being courageous in your efforts to articulate both your personal values and your mission.

Common Questions

- "I didn't realize how important financial stability is to me. How does this change things for me?"
- "I'm interested in so many different things. Am I supposed to pick only one?"
- "Am I less of an artist if I do other things besides (*insert artistic practice)* for money?"
- "I'm not sure how to be authentic to myself and at the same time, sell myself and my work to an audience. How do I avoid compromising my personal and artistic values?"

Regardless of what you discover, it's important to understand that as you connect with your mission, your community of partners, collaborators, and colleagues will grow. This alignment that you develop between yourself, your values, and your work as an artist serves two purposes:

- A compass to guide you towards artistic and personal endeavors
- A magnet to attract the partners that are right for you

Take a moment to reflect on your own mission and how you currently connect with the community around you.

- How are you currently sharing your story with others?
- What strategies might improve or expand the ways you express your narrative?

Artists in Action

"If it comes from you, if it really comes from who you are as a person, there is no one like you. I think automatically that becomes compelling."

– Lara Pelliginelli

"To this day, honestly it's challenging for me when people say, 'what do you do?' It's actually really difficult for me to answer and feel good about my response. But I feel like going through that process was helpful in terms of me sort of being able to describe to myself what it is that I do."

– Wendel Patrick

Crafting a Mission Statement

As an artist, you're ultimately interested in attracting audiences, big or small, to participate in the artistic endeavors that you create. These can be in-person, online, or via social media. Through all of these mediums, having a clear mission and narrative of your work will help you reach more people. More importantly, it will help the right people, **your people**, find you (Highstein, 1997).

This all ties back to that concept of mission and being mission driven. In this section you will move through a series of exercises designed to help tease out the building blocks of who you are as an artist. You will also examine how to assimilate these parts and articulate a mission statement that reflects who you are as an artist.

Much like your creative work, your mission statement is a tool that continues to evolve. You and your

work are both in progress. Adjustments and growth are inevitable and necessary. Developing a practice of putting your values and mission into words will help guide you, not for days, but for decades.

To make understanding your mission easier, start by defining your identity or branding as an artist.

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Artists in Action

"You don't want to let the grants drive the mission and the direction of the organization, because you can get off on that tangent really quickly. So, you have to be careful. There's a line between following the money and keeping true to yourself and to your mission."

– Andrew Kipe

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Identity or Branding

The public identity that you project as an artist both on and off stage is important. It's how the world connects you to your work. The impression that you give to colleagues in rehearsal, at the studio, or in day-to-day communication reflects on you as a professional and as an artist.

You'll often hear this referred to in terms of branding. If this doesn't resonate with you, try reframing branding as how you communicate your identity with others. That starts with having a clear understanding of your values, which will be an important aspect of your artistic mission. Notice how this circles back to where we started?

Identity or branding involves articulating your truest self to others. It's about being open and willing to share who you are as an artist with the audience. Audience refers to those who engage with your work and those you interact with on a day-to-day basis.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 2-1.** Review an example of how one artist expresses their brand and identity through social media.

You might be thinking:

> "Couldn't I just hire someone to handle my marketing and social media presence?"

Yes, you could. However, you will always need to communicate who you are to anyone working for you and to personally represent yourself. They can't do that part for you (Beeching, 2010). Before you offload your life and livelihood into the hands of a stranger, keep this in mind: ***no one is going to tell the story of you and your work more authentically and more thoughtfully than you***.

Most importantly, what you share must be relevant. That requires identifying the intersection between ***what you want to say*** and ***what other people are interested in.*** Find the sweet spot where your ideas are curious enough to pique others' interest. This all comes down to understanding who you are and choosing language intentionally when communicating about your work.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 2-2.** Explore how to communicate with your audience in mind.

Writing Your Mission Statement

Let's get started with your mission statement.

Before you begin this process, please take a moment to set yourself up for success:
1. Schedule 30–45 minutes in a quiet place where you can think and reflect.
2. Turn off your electronic devices. (Airplane mode is your friend.)
3. Bring a favorite beverage.
4. Repeat steps 1 through 3 as necessary.

Your mission involves first identifying your core values, and then communicating them to the public. To craft an authentic mission statement, you must answer three questions (Simonet, 2014):

- What?
- Why?
- So what?

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 2-3**. Download Andrew Simonet's free book for excellent examples of artist mission statements.

What?

Let's start with "what." You'd be surprised how many artists and artist statements don't clarify what it is they actually do. Examples of your work and talking about those examples are incredibly helpful to an audience member.

- What is an example of your work?
- In what contexts do you do that work?

"I play trombone, and since I love to collaborate with other musicians, I often perform in orchestras and small chamber ensembles. I'm also involved in music education outreach programs to teach underprivileged kids."

Why?

We want to know.

- Why is your work important to you as a person? As an artist?
- What is your passionate connection to the work?
- Why do you get up day after day and do your craft?

"I love bringing inspiration and meaning to community audiences through music. When my creative work is attached to a social justice theme or broader project, I feel much more relevant and connected to the world."

So What?

This is probably the hardest one to answer, but it's almost always the most important question. If you

can find that answer, that reason, you will start to generate (a lot of) momentum in creating your mission statement.

- Why does it matter beyond your interest?
- Why might other people connect to it?
- Why does it matter to the world?

"By getting involved with projects that bring music into the community, I can inspire others to stay connected to the world, too. Teaching trombone to underprivileged kids allows me to bring the joy and power of music as self-expression into their lives at an early age, and as a female brass player, I can set a positive example and representation for the young musicians I'm working with."

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 2-4.** Construct the core elements of your artistic mission using the framework of "What," "Why," and "So What."

Once you've reflected on these three questions, the next step is to combine your ideas into a coherent paragraph (or two). Think about the ways all the ideas connect for you and your work. One way to approach this is by asking a final question: "How?" **How** does **what** you do tie into your **why**; and most importantly, **how** does your specific artistic work enable you to make the impact you articulate in your **so what**?

Remember, your mission statement will continue to evolve with you—nothing is permanent! Focus on your mission statement as a reflection of who you are as an artist at this moment in time.

Artists in Action

"It makes me really picky about my projects and about the grant proposals I put my time into, because I know that if I pick the right thing, I have a high chance at success. I have the luxury of saying okay, I really want to do this one thing. Now I'm going to put all my efforts into setting myself up for this one thing. I can really focus on my projects in that way. I found that to be a successful strategy for me personally."

— Christina Manceor

"You can't bend yourself in knots to try to get to money. If the opportunity doesn't speak to what you're doing and what your values are and what you're trying to accomplish, then it's not a good fit for you. Then you kill yourself trying to meet the parameters of that grant or develop new program that you either don't have interest in or can't sustain."

— Jeannie Howe

Aligning With Your Mission

Let's discuss staying aligned with your mission while developing your career.

Over the course of your working life, you will be presented with a multitude of opportunities to consider. When making big decisions, it can be helpful to possess a tool that allows you to determine if something is aligned with your values. Your mission statement can serve as that device.

We live in a world with limitless opportunities but limited funding. As a result, many artists shift from

a mission-centered approach to a more career-focused model (Simonet, 2014). It's easy to understand why—the status of opportunities, potential access to financial resources, and social recognition can be alluring.

Still, remember that the structure you are working to support, the foundation of who you are at your core, is what drives you to create. When the priorities shift and creative work is informed solely by career drivers, you will find yourself off course and out of alignment. While those career motivations might fill your pockets with cash, they may not feed your soul. At the same time, by using your mission statement as a tool to stay aligned with your personal and artistic values, you can set yourself up to pay the bills (and then some!) through the creative work that is most meaningful to you.

As Andrew Simonet puts so elegantly in his book *Making Your Life as an Artist,* "Your career is not your work; your career supports your work."

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 2-1. Artist Example
Artist and educator [Wendel Patrick][1] wears a variety of hats in his creative, personal, and professional lives. By representing himself on social media with consistency and authenticity, he has amassed a substantial following on Instagram (as well as other platforms). Check his work out at @wendelpatrickofficialmusic.

- Find several examples of artists in your field with public profiles you admire.
- How does each artist convey consistency and authenticity?

Exercise 2-2. Know Your Audience
While your core values and identity remain relatively constant, the way you share who you are and frame your narrative may change depending on who you are speaking to. Your audience probably includes groups of people in different demographics or contexts. For example, a teaching artist might frame their work differently when inviting colleagues to an in-person concert through social media versus sending emails to parents to recruit elementary school students to their virtual teaching studio. Consider these questions:

- What different audiences do you interact with?
- How might the way you communicate about your work change depending on the audience?

Exercise 2-3. Resource
Download Andrew Simonet's book [Making Your Life as an Artist][2] from [Artists U][3]. It is fabulous and free. For some incredible examples of artist mission statements, check out pages 126–129.

Exercise 2-4. What, Why, So What?
In this activity, you construct elements of your artistic mission by reflecting on Simonet's questions: "What," "Why," and "So what." Your responses to these questions will help add depth and specificity to your mission.

1. List ten words that describe your work, identity, and/or brand.

   ◦ In Simonet's book, he calls this a "Tiny Haiku."
   ◦ Nouns and verbs are especially good. Adjectives are okay, as long as it isn't all adjectives.

2. Freewrite for 5–10 minutes on what brings you meaning in your creative work.

   ◦ This could be now, in the past, or hopes for the future. Consider ideas such as: what inspired you to be an artist, your early and current artistic influences, what projects or audience experiences have been most impactful for you, etc.

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1. https://wendelpatrick.com/
2. https://www.artistsu.org/making
3. https://www.artistsu.org

- ◦ To **freewrite**, keep your fingers (or pen) moving; no need for editing, grammar, or complete sentences, just write.

3. Answer the questions: What, Why, So what?
   Now that you've reflected on past artistic projects as well as future aspirations, answer the three questions, "What," "Why," and "So what?" about your own work. Focus on content rather than writing style. It's okay to use bullet points.

   - ◦ What? What art form(s) do you practice?
   - ◦ Why? Why are you motivated to create and/or share art?
   - ◦ So what? How can you use the art you create to make a difference for yourself or others?

4. Evaluate your alignment between current artistry and identity.
   After reflecting on your responses to the "What," "Why," and "So what" questions, consider the following prompts:

   - ◦ How does your current artistic work align (or not align) with your identity and values?
   - ◦ Where are the points of intersection?
   - ◦ What feels out of place?

Key Takeaways

- Identifying your mission provides a framework to help you determine what projects, collaborations, and partnerships align with your values.
- Your mission can extend beyond your artistic work.
- Your mission may change and grow over time—as your work as an artist continues to evolve, so will your mission.
- Your career is not your work; your career supports your work.
- Creating alignment between your mission, personal values, and artistic practice brings your most authentic self to the forefront and provides the opportunity for audiences to connect with you and your work.

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in <u>About the Artists</u>. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- Adam Rosenblatt on his First Experience with Grants
- Andrew Kipe on Why Goals Are Critical

Adam Rosenblatt on His First Experience with Grants

How did you start using grants for your artwork?

ZF: How did you get into thinking about using grants for your artwork? How did that even fall into like something in your purview?

AR: I think for me it was just hearing about all of the colleagues and students that had come before me and that I saw, you know, as a student. Working in school, I was starting to have some ideas of projects I wanted to do, or things I wanted to try when I left school. And there's always those students just

upstream of you that you see doing the same thing that you will eventually do kind of getting into the professional world doing their own projects. You start to become aware of how they're able to make those things happen.

A lot of the thing that kept coming back was, oh yeah, there are grants out there. There are grants everywhere. Just need to apply for grants. It just kind of became like this mantra repeated by so many people, like, just get out there and apply for grants and you start doing your research. You start seeing what these grants are, which ones are out there, what they require. I remember starting to do my first few. Again, they all came back, none of them worked out. But eventually I got the one.

What do you wish you knew when you started to seek funding?

ZF: What are some of the things that you wish you knew at the beginning when you started to seek funding?

AR: Yeah, I definitely think that my first few failed applications didn't have to go that way. I had no idea what the panels were really looking for. You read, of course, the description and you kind of take your best shot at it. But I think I forgot that a lot of the time that the people reading those applications are people like me, just further ahead than me. Basically, you know, 10, 15, 20 years further ahead in their careers than me and they've seen a lot, and so they know how these projects work.

I think if I had advice, if I were to give myself advice those many years ago, I would say: First, make sure that it's a project that you believe in, like, *if it's not a project that you are 100% crazy about realizing, then it's probably not worth writing the grant application.* It's kind of like rule zero for me now, especially. If I'm not totally believing that it's going to be an awesome thing, then I'm never going to be able to write it authentically or convey that message authentically to a panel.

I remember making that mistake so many times. I thought, oh, I just need to apply for grants because that's what you do. I just need to, you know, think of a project to fit the grant. I found that very quickly that that is totally the backward way to do it.

Andrew Kipe on Why Goals Are Critical

Why is it so critical to stay aligned with your goals as an individual or an organization?

ZF: It's obvious to me why it's important to not chase, and just to stay aligned with your goals as an individual, as an organization. Would you have a few things you could just share from your perspective on why that's so critical?

AK: At the end of the day, whether you're an art organization with a mission or whether you're an individual artist with your own artistic vision, those things on some level can be malleable, right? They can evolve over time; they can go in different directions. *But you have to have some sort of guiding core as to why you're making art. Why are you doing this? Why are you as an artist or you as an organization going through all this really hard work? Let's face it, this is really hard work to make art* for somebody, for some community, for some group, for yourself on some level. But you want to give that out.

If you get to a place in your organizational journey where getting the money is more important than

making the art, you have come off the rails, right? We could think of some large arts organizations in this country if we wanted to that maybe have gone down that road.

As either an administrator or an artistic lead, a music director or orchestra member that's part of the organization, or as an individual in a smaller group, you have to have the grounded center to be able to say, this is not why we are here. This is not what the mission of this organization is to do. We're not going to do it and we're going to find another way. Even if that means we have to take a step back, maybe we have to change our programming somewhat, because the funds aren't there for this year.

It's better to do that and stay true to the mission than to follow money that maybe is not beneficial. You're seeing a lot of this right now in the museum world with money that came from individual donors, not necessarily foundations or whatnot, but individuals who have some problematic business tendencies, that have put a lot of money into different places. You have to know who you are, and who you are as an artist and as an organization.

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3

PROJECT IDEAS

Developing What You're Going To Do

Overview

In this chapter, you learn how to…

- Demonstrate and strengthen ideation methods and skills.
- Create a mind map related to your project.
- Develop strategies to get yourself "unstuck" from anchor problems.

Earlier you considered who you are as an artist, the artistic work you create, and how it aligns with your mission and values. Now, we can turn our attention towards what you want to develop.

Perhaps you already have a clear idea of what it is you want to create. If that's the case—great! On the other hand, you may not be sure what you want to develop or may be feeling stuck. Regardless of

where you are in this process, we will be using **mind mapping**, a technique to help you generate ideas, visualize them, and connect them together.

While there are other tools and strategies available to generate ideas, this chapter focuses primarily on mind mapping.

Defining Mind Maps

At its core, a **mind map** is a diagram that is developed, often in a freehand fashion, to capture ideas visually, organize them in a hierarchical manner, and discover relationships between disparate pieces within the whole. Mind maps typically emerge from a single concept placed at the center of a page and used as a vehicle to generate material for potential solutions to a problem or a challenge (AF Bureau, 2020).

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 3-1.** Learn more about mind mapping and the related problem-solving process of design thinking.

> "A Mind Map is a diagram for representing tasks, words, concepts, or items linked to and arranged around a central concept or subject using a non-linear graphical layout that allows the user to build an intuitive framework around a central concept."[1]

Below is are two examples of a mind map.

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1. https://www.mindmapping.com/mind-map
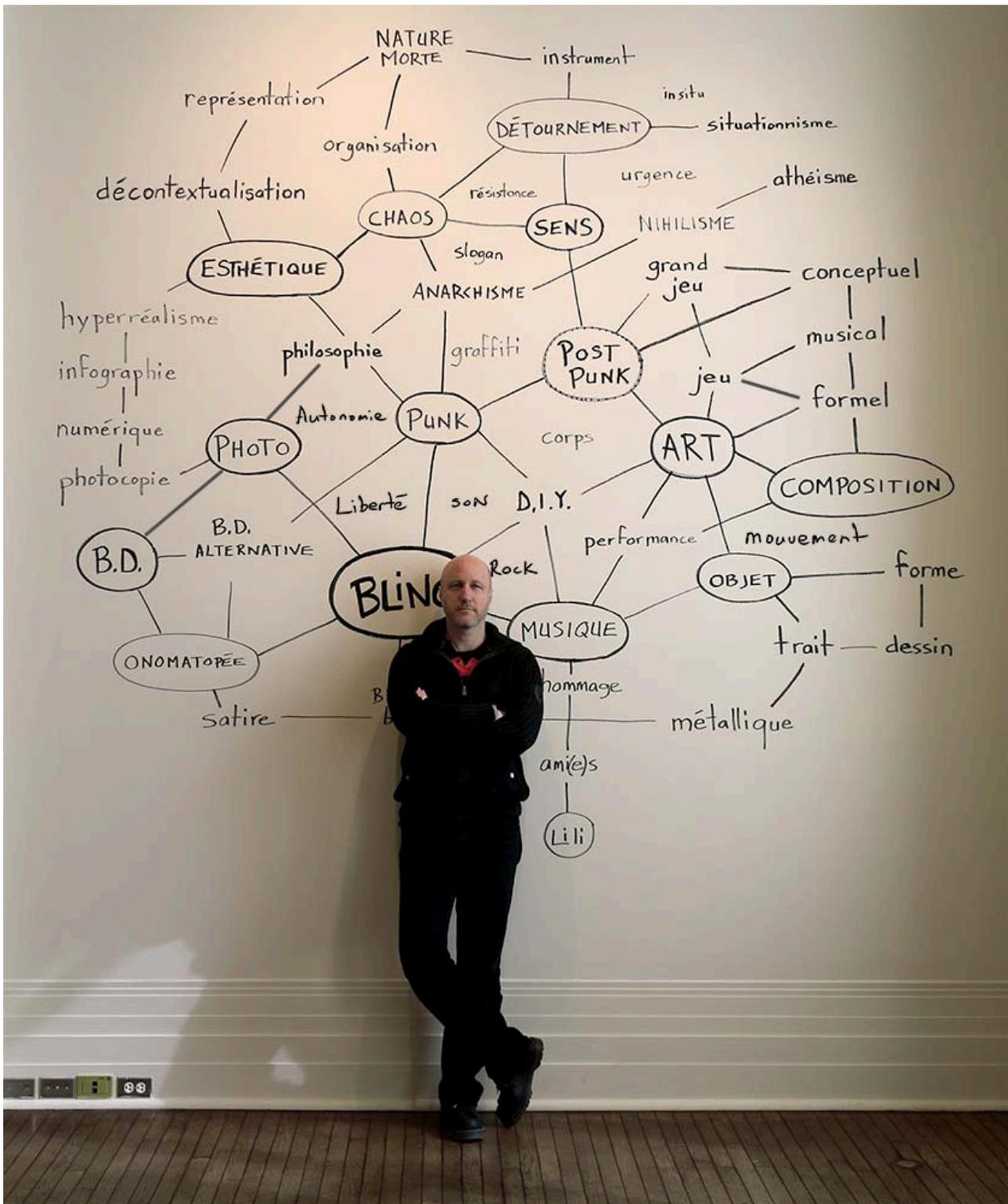
Figure 3-1. Sebastien Pesot standing in front of mind map; Exhibition "L'anatomie du Bling", Musée des beaux-arts de Sherbrooke

Figure 3-2. Mind map created Fall 2022 by Dr. Zane Forshee exploring ideas for a new concert series.

Why Mind Mapping?

> "The way to get good ideas is to get lots of ideas and throw the bad ones away."
> —Linus Pauling, American chemist

Why should you use mind mapping?

This process of idea generation, or **ideation**, allows you to rapidly develop possibilities. The more ideas that you *might* want to explore, the greater the chances of creating a better idea, project, or design.

The development of more possibilities creates greater access to innovative projects, ideas, designs and collaborations. This process is about creating and developing ideas—not just the obvious ones, but the wild and unexpected ideas.

> "The greatest originals are the ones who fail the most, because they're the ones who try the most. You need a lot of bad ideas in order to get a few good ones."
> —Adam Grant, American organizational psychologist

Letting Go – Where the Wild Ideas Are

We get through life by making judgments—judgments about the fastest way to the store, what we want to eat, what our next project will be, or what to wear. Sometimes we think through these judgements,

but other times they happen at the edge of or outside our awareness without letting us consciously take time to consider the decision (social scientists refer to this as **heuristics**). These unquestioned judgments help us live our life efficiently, but they can put up roadblocks for our imagination.

Busting out of our patterns of thought allows us to create novel solutions and ideas, but how do you let go? One method is to embrace the impossible:

- What would happen if aliens could see your project or problem?
- What would happen if it was on the moon?
- How would you create your project if gravity suddenly stopped working?

Playfully answering absurd questions is an excellent way to reset your mind for ideation work. Feel silly—don't take anything seriously. There's plenty of time for that later.

Artists in Action

"I saw lots of companies in Baltimore for adults. I saw way more companies for children. But the thing that I saw around the country when I was on tour was this disconnect between the generations and a disconnect between parents and children that I thought the arts could reconnect. Because in my opinion, you don't age out of creativity, and I don't feel like the arts is a drop off service for your children to go be creative and meanwhile you're struggling as an adult to even remember the creative human within you."

– **CJay Philip**

"I think it's made a big difference for me just psychically to know that I have these other people with me and that we can do more together than I could do on my own."

– **Lara Pellegrinelli**

Generating Project Ideas

The first step to coming up with ideas is letting go—letting go of self-judgment, letting go of the exciting ideas we may have already fixated on, and allowing yourself space. Modern models of creativity divide the process into a "production" phase and a "judgment" phase. However, judgment can often overtake our production of ideas and keeps us from generating a wealth of possible ideas (Puccio, 2018).

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 3-2.** Check out Adam Grant's TED Talk about the habits of original thinkers.

Think about your artistic practice—you likely already have methods for generative work and evaluative reflection. How do you separate them? This is easier said than done, so let's share some techniques to help you stay in the idea-creation phase.

One of the simplest tools is a five-minute timer. How often when trying to solve a problem or come up with ideas do you give yourself space to move past your first functional solution? Giving yourself five minutes to think of ideas ensures you can think past the first thing that comes into your head (Yudkowsky, 2015). Spend the time capturing any idea you have on paper or another preferred device. We've worked this technique into several chapters, so you'll have chances to practice.

Making a Mind Map

> "Success is a function of persistence and doggedness and the willingness to work hard for twenty-two minutes to make sense of something that most people would give up on after thirty seconds."
> —Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success*

Let's walk through the mind mapping process. We find mind mapping to be a great ideation tool for several reasons. Mind mapping relies on the free association of words, allowing all possible ideas to come to the surface. As a visual and tactile process, it can stimulate a wider range of connections.

When making your mind map, encourage yourself to move quickly, capturing whatever comes to mind. This works to overcome your inner critic and ensures you capture a lot of ideas for your project. The goal is not just ideas, but also possible links between your different ideas.

You can use software or go analog to create your mind map. Butcher paper, a flattened-out paper bag, or a chalkboard are all great options. Use what's available and allows you to make the largest, wildest map of your ideas.

Artists in Action

"It is not easy to come up with a concept that maybe no one else really understands, maybe you don't feel like you can even explain it with words. Then sort of take that concept and work on it for six months or a year and come up with a finished product. That's difficult to do. It's challenging, but it's also an extremely rewarding experience."

— **Wendel Patrick**

———

"Just be yourself. They want to see who you are and why you're doing this and your excitement. Your passion about the project is going to shine through, and that's going to show commitment. Don't lose that authentic personal touch because it's a piece of paper."

— **Christina Manceor**

Three Simple Steps to Creating a Mind Map

Follow these steps for creating a mind map (Kent State Online, n.d.).
1. Choose an idea (Exploring the potential)
2. Generate possibilities (Creating layers)
3. Create connections (Mining the ideas)

Step 1: Choose an Idea (Exploring the Potential)

To begin, take your idea, project, or challenge and place it at the center of what will become your mind map.

Step 2: Generate Possibilities (Creating Layers)

- Draw three to five lines that extend off the central point you are interested in exploring. If you've circled your main idea at the center of your page, the image might begin to look like a

drawing of the sun.
- Set a timer for two to three minutes. By giving yourself a time constraint, you provide a means to keep you from censoring your ideas. Go for quantity, not quality.
- Write down single words, short phrases, and ideas.
- They can be wild, far fetched, or beyond what might be feasible.
- Now repeat this process by building off the first round of ideas that you generated. Continue to repeat the process until you have three to four layers of word associations.
- Keep in mind that you want to move through this entire process of creating layers and word associations quickly. Doing it quickly, with a time limit, keeps us from censoring ourselves and capturing all of our ideas.

If you give yourself lots of time, you can draw the process out through self-censoring and editing. In contrast, a time constraint forces you to generate options in just a few minutes. Think about a time you procrastinated, perhaps for an assignment that you waited to the last minute (at some point we have all done this!). Somehow, almost magically, you can crank out that huge paper during a late night of burning the midnight oil and get it turned in on time. The same principle applies.

Step 3: Create Connections (Mining the Ideas)

This is where it gets interesting! Review your mind map for keywords, phrases, and ideas that excite you. Mash these ideas together and see what new connections, ideas and concepts emerge. The true value of this process is often found hidden in the outer layers of the mind map—the places where you've pushed beyond your inner critic to let the wild ideas emerge.

> **Artists in Action**
>
> "Usually, it starts with a very small kernel or core of an idea. Frequently it's just a piece, one [musical] piece that I'm really crazy about trying to perform. But usually, I realized for myself, if I just can't get this one idea or piece out of my mind, I know it's the start of something. But I found that the mistake I made in the past was I had this one kernel, and I thought that one kernel was enough of an idea to just start looking for funding.
>
> There's that one thing that I just can't get out of my head, whether it's an idea, a piece, a collaboration I think would be really interesting. I just kind of let it sit for a little while. I'm now kind of imagining this as a whole, complete experience rather than part of an experience. Then I feel comfortable to move forward to the next step. And sometimes that can take a long time."
>
> —Adam Rosenblatt

Getting Unstuck

In their book about design thinking, Bill Burnett and Dave Evans describe a set of problems they call **anchor problems**. These are problems that keep you stuck in your thinking—they hold you back from being able to move forward with building your idea. Below are some examples:

- "I can only perform this piece with a full 50-person orchestra."
- "I don't know anyone who will support this work."
- "I don't have enough relevant experience to create this type of creative work."
- "People aren't interested in what I do."

Anchor problems feel intractable, and outside your control. This is where we get back to wild ideas—how can you reframe the problem to find novel solutions? Imagine you are a wildly different person, an animal, or an alien—then how would you approach the problem? What would happen if it wasn't an issue, and you imagine your project past the problem?

Importantly, Burnett and Evans (2016) recognize there is a difference between anchor problems and problems stemming from facts about the world, which they call **gravity problems**. The sun is down at midnight, artists earn less than CEOs on average, and water makes things wet. These are problems to recognize and design around, rather than reframe.

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 3-1. Design Thinking
"Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success."
—Tim Brown, Executive Chair of IDEO[2]

Mind mapping is used in the human-centered creative problem-solving process called design thinking. Described by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans (2016) from Stanford's d.school,[3] design thinking provides a methodology for empathetic problem solving.

Exercise 3-2. Original Thinkers
Organizational psychologist Adam Grant studies "original" thinkers who dream up new ideas and take action to put them into the world (Grant, 2016). Watch his 15-minute TED Talk "The Surprising Thinking of Original Thinking,"[4] where he shares three unexpected habits of original thinkers, including procrastination and embracing failure.

Exercise 3-3. Ideation Tools
To explore more idea generation tools, check out this article by Alcor entitled "Idea Generation – Techniques, Tools, Examples, Sources And Activities."[5]

Key Takeaways

While this chapter focused on mind mapping, there are also many other tools out there to help with idea generation! Find the tools that work best for you and use them throughout the process of formulating your project and writing a grant proposal.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 3-3**. Explore more idea generation tools.

Key points include the following:

- Taking the time to ideate and brainstorm more ideas equips you to create better solutions.
- Don't just choose the first idea that comes to mind; instead, try to silence your inner critic to let new ideas through.
- Use a mind map to generate and organize ideas about your project.

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2. https://designthinking.ideo.com/
3. https://dschool.stanford.edu
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxbCHn6gE3U
5. https://alcorfund.com/insight/idea-generation-2/

- Watch out for anchor problems that can make you feel stuck—reframe or approach them from another perspective to move forward.

If you don't have clarity as to exactly what your project is going to be, that's okay—this is a process that takes time. Keep working through the mind mapping process or other ways you might have of generating ideas to help you define what it is you'd like to create.

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in <u>About the Artists</u>. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- Alysia Lee on Her Philosophy on Grants Applications
- Khandeya Sheppard on Transitioning From Idea to Event

Alysia Lee on Her Philosophy on Grants Applications

After getting a grant, do you start getting more approvals?

ZF: After that initial success of that first grant, obviously the confidence boost, because people like my idea, people support my idea. But then does that mean that right after that it was home run after home run in terms of getting more grants, or did you have some sort of up and down with that?

AL: I would say there's two pieces to that. I'm very picky about the grants that I apply for. Not everybody can be picky about that. There are two schools of thought, some people will apply for grants that are a little bit on the periphery, right? That might be pushing it a little bit, because you still might get those funds, right?

I'm not that way. I tend to apply for grants where, when I submit the grant, I am almost certain I'm going to get it. And that is a risk aversion of mine, because of my time capacity. I run a very small ship. So to me it's like, if I'm going to invest 12 hours, I want to know that you're going to send me $50,000 when I'm done. I tend to work that way.

There's a network of people who have funded us. People who are funding us. *I'm always asking this question, who else do you know that might be interested in learning about our work? Creating that network of folks who are supporting us is a big thing.* And also, just really getting in touch with the folks at the foundations in advance. You know, the Maryland State Arts Council is iconic for this. The recent Maryland State Arts Council, which has all new staff, their grants manager is happy to get on the phone with you and talk through and read your grant application and give you some feedback on it. That's not always been the case, but foundations are getting better at being more transparent and helping people to elevate their work so they can find the best ideas, not just the best proposals, right?

So, with that in mind, you can talk to these people before. Never send a grant application to someone you haven't spoken to. Talk to the people at the foundation first. Let them get to know your work. If you can, think about it two years out. Like, right now I'm thinking of the exact foundation that just published their grantees. And I read through the list, I was like, it's our time. We want to apply in two

years, so this season and last season we've been inviting them to shows. I'm not applying this year. I'm sure they're going to be like, "where's your application?"

But we're not ready yet. I know that we're not ready, our project isn't big enough, the budget isn't big enough for this match. So, we're inviting them to things, they're getting to know us, they're meeting our singers. You know, you can date people for a while too. So that when you propose, you don't want to propose marriage to somebody, and they say no. ***You want to know before you pull out the ring at the baseball stadium in front of the cameras and your whole family is there and her family is backstage, you want to know when you say, will you marry me?, the girl is going to say yes. So that's the same thing.*** That's my philosophy, but other people do have a different philosophy. And if you have more capacity to produce more grant applications, then that's a great thing too.

Khandeya Sheppard on Transitioning From Idea to Event

How do you go from idea to the pitch to an event?

ZF: So, one of the things I see as tricky is that period where you're like, "I've got the vision and I'm going to go into the embassy and I'm going to have this meeting." If your life was anything like mine, you're like, "I've got an idea and I know how to be really organized, but I have nothing in my hand to put in front of you. I don't have a brochure. I don't have a poster."

- What is it?
- How did you frame that to get someone to say yes?
- What was your pitch?

How did you come at that to walk in to a place like that and just say, "This is what I want to do," and walk out with, "Yes, we want to come with you."

KS: This is going to sound really silly to a lot of people, but it works. I think that number one–this is not the silly part–number one, do your research, research, research, research. Look at different types of proposals, different proposals that you've seen before, things that you may not have known are proposals. There are different websites out there–[LAUNCHPad](#)[6] has some–that show you how to write a proposal to do a pitch.

The silly part is I watched [the television show] [Shark Tank](#)[7] a lot. But honestly, and I'm glad I made you laugh, but the key to having a successful pitch is watching other people do it. Not just *Shark Tank;* I use *Shark Tank* as an example. ***The more that you see the process and the action of doing it and the types of questions, this is where I get my input, the types of questions that come back from the panelists on something such as Shark Tank.***

They may ask for more information than the person was prepared to give. That helped for the preparation of the process to go to someone like the embassy and say, "I need to have a thousand of these things kind of clearly aligned in my head for myself." So that if the question should present itself, I have an answer. If it doesn't, that's fine.

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6. https://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/career-services/
7. https://abc.com/shows/shark-tank

But I need to number one, talk to somebody like the ambassador about what the benefits are for the embassy being involved in my project, especially as I'm coming in as a new endeavor of Dynamic Steel. I had to show them my expertise and my experience before. I had to come to the table with that. I had to have it clearly written out as well, and be comfortable speaking with someone engaging in the conversation. I had to lay out how that aligns with what they have going on right then and there, and that's where my research came in.

Because since that new ambassador had been put in place, his charge was to try to be more heavily involved and promote more community driven things. I thought that that aligned perfectly with what he was aiming to accomplish in that timeframe. This is one of the events that could be a part of this process:

- Having all of those things clearly written down
- Looking at a lot of different proposal templates
- Figuring out which one was the best one for me to present this type of idea
- Using my background knowledge of having watched a lot of Shark Tank
- Being ready for the curve ball questions to come and being prepared to answer them

I think that made the experience better for me going in, because I felt a lot more prepared to handle any types of questions, even if I didn't have the answer yet, to handle those types of questions when it came time.

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PART II

THE COMMUNITY

4

YOUR AUDIENCE

Understanding Who It's For and Why

> **Overview**
>
> In this chapter, you learn how to…
>
> - Identify the purpose of your project and the audience it serves.
> - Articulate how to find your audience and connect them with your artistic work.
> - Explain the fundamentals of audience analysis.
> - Consider the impact of your project on your audience and community.

When you are developing a new project, work, idea, or concept, keep in mind that there are ultimately two questions a grant panelist will ask themselves as they read your proposal:

- What is it for?

- Who is it for?

If you understand that this is the lens through which a grant reviewer is perceiving your project, then you can more easily prepare your materials. (Godin, 2018). Your proposal materials can clearly articulate what you are making, who will experience the work, and how you plan to connect with that audience (Sivers, 2020).

This means you need to empathize with your audience. To understand how you can reach the audience you are interested in targeting, you need to be certain that your project aligns with the needs or interests of that specific community (Herstand, 2016).

As you take steps towards developing your project and identifying your audience, consider these words:

> "While you can be driven by a lofty, hard-to-quantify purpose, the goal of your actions or work should be more specific. If (one of) your objective(s) is to do good and not just to be expressive or make something for yourself, you should set a reasonably thought-through intention for what success (however you measure that) would look like. Keep in mind, the work you do can either solve a problem or plant seeds to inch towards a reality you want—the important thing is to be clear about what exactly it is your impact project is trying to accomplish."
>
> –Omayeli Arenyeka, in *How to think differently about doing good as a creative person* (Creative Independent)

Last, your ability to clearly communicate what and for whom you are creating is essential to successfully share the project outcomes and the audience impact.

As we dive into this chapter, you will find terms like audience, target audience, and community. Keep in mind that the size of your audience does not define the success of a project. There are successful projects with enormous audiences that span multiple generations, areas of interests, and demographics, as well as successful projects that are incredibly specific, with small, targeted populations. At both ends of the spectrum, the projects are impactful because their creators had a clear understanding of **what** they were creating and **who** they wanted to engage with when the project was shared with the public.

Artists in Action

"[Theaters] were offering plays that they wanted to do, cultivating seasons that really didn't have anything to do with what their audiences wanted. They were challenging their audiences and that's what they were there to do. So audiences left. Then theaters realized, 'Well, we actually need audiences to come to our theaters. So maybe we should understand what they want and cultivate seasons that both challenge them and engage them in different ways and maybe offer a smattering of different things for different tastes.'

The performing arts organizations, many of them, are thriving. They're bringing in new leadership, young leadership, leadership with different points of view. They are doing all of these things to aggregate data on who's coming to them and why they're coming to them. They're looking at different subscription models. They're doing all of these things, but are they listening to what people want? Are they actually serving the purpose that they're there to serve? Are they just listening and then saying, 'Well, we've got to make money?' I don't know."

– Ian Tresselt

Identifying Your Target Audience

When you read the phrase "identifying your target audience," it might feel like we are going to talk about marketing, marketing strategies, or branding, but that's not our focus right now. It is true that all three of those elements can be important in a project's success, but for now we need to point our attention towards identifying the individuals who need or want the product or experience you are creating.

Let's begin by clarifying the two questions that will serve as guideposts to help identify your target audience and help you align the purpose of your project with the specific community it serves.

What is it for?

There is always a reason behind why someone is creating something—always. In addition to personal motivations, you'll want to articulate what purpose this project serves for your audience. It could be to solve a problem, explore an idea, build a new audience, or reduce the carbon footprint. The possibilities are endless. More importantly, with this question we have created the opportunity to clearly articulate the purpose of your project. This means you need to look at what you are working on from a 30,000-foot point of view in order to create and define the objective(s) of the project. If you distill the project and all its parts down to the essential outcome or outcomes, what are they? Not only will this help you define your **target audience**, it is crucial to communicate the essential outcomes to potential funders.That is what the funder wants to know and understand.

Who is it for?

At some point in your life, you may have heard the phrase, "There is a lid for every pot." Not every lid will work with every pot. But when you connect the 'right lid' with the 'right pot,' you can do some pretty amazing things.

The same thing can be said for artistic work and audience. Whether you are creating a new painting, piece of choreography, after-school program, novel, digital software, or interpretation of a Beethoven Sonata, you need to identify the audience or people you want to engage with the creation you are developing. When you can identify the 'right audience' (lid) to the 'right work' (pot), amazing outcomes can occur.

Answering the question, "Who is it for?" is an effective way to quickly understand the individuals you want to connect to your creative work.

You might be asking the following questions:

- "I never think about my audience. Why is this important?"
- "Everyone could be my audience, if only they took the time to learn about my work. Why do I need to define them?"
- "I have no idea who my audience is. How do I find them?"
- "I know who my audience is but don't know how to reach them. How do I engage with them?"
- "This is so stressful. I am an artist! I didn't get into this line of work for this! Why do I have to know this?"
- "I have an audience, but I want to grow it. How can I diversify who engages with my work?"

The good news is, regardless of where you landed within your responses, we offer tools, approaches, and information to assist you with answering the above questions.

So, let's get to work answering these questions. Grab some paper and a pencil or pen. First, we'll dig into the question, "What is it for?"

What Is It For?

Step 1: Capture

Create an overview of your project in three sentences or less. Earn bonus points if you can use less than 100 words. As you get started, think about the goal of your project and how it connects with your audience. It could be a performance, a product you are creating to solve a specific problem, or an event that provides an interactive experience for your audience. Regardless of the type of project, clearly identify the anticipated result when you share it with others. Include the goal and how it connects with your audience.

Step 2. Find the Gaps

Now that you have captured the fundamental purpose of the project, share the text with a mentor, colleague, friend, classmate, or family member with this prompt:

> "I would like you to take a moment and read this overview of a project I am currently developing for grant funding. From just these few sentences, answer these two questions. What do you understand about this project? What questions do you have from what I have captured?"

This next part is *important*! Pay close attention to their response and listen without responding right away. You may feel defensive of your ideas, but it's important to hear the other perspectives first.

- What questions do they have for you?
- What do they understand?
- What leaves them scratching their heads?

These questions are the essential data points you need to collect to identify and close the gaps in your thinking and communication of our first question: What is it for?

At the end of the session, thank them for sharing their thoughts with you—***feedback is a gift and thanking them is important***—and let them know you will be back in touch shortly with an updated version to review.

Step 3: Incorporate the Feedback

A couple words about receiving and accepting feedback—it's hard. At times, getting feedback from trusted colleagues, friends, or family can sting. Still, it is a critical step towards communicating clearly about your project (Kleon, 2014). Learning how to accept (and when to ignore) criticism is a key part of an artist's job. It is a chance to reflect, grow, and improve.

Now, reflect on the comments and revise your original draft.

- What can you change within the constraints of three sentences to answer the questions that emerged?
- Can you clarify a specific element of the project?

Perhaps you need to modify your approach or word choice. Regardless of how you do it, revisit the questions in Step 2 to clarify your message as revise this text.

Step 4: Circle Back

With your revised text, return to your reader and share your revision. Did you answer their questions? It's okay if the reader still has questions or if new questions emerge. Listen to their feedback, collect the points they bring up, and repeat Steps 3 and 4 from this process until you are satisfied with the results. While this process can be time consuming, the time invested is worth the effort. The clarity it provides improves your ability to effectively articulate the purpose of your proposed project for a potential funder.

Artists in Action

"When we're out in the community advocating, the best thing we can do is just simply share a path of passion and enthusiasm. And I do that every day. People want to be part of something that's exciting and transformational. What we're doing through grant funding is giving them that opportunity."

– Jessica Satava

Once you can answer the question, "What is it for?" regarding your project, we then turn to the next question, "Who is it for?" Accomplishing this task requires the following:

1. A clear understanding of the purpose of your project
2. Thorough audience research
3. Empathy

Fortunately, you've done a lot of the hard work already! Understanding "what" is the first step toward identifying "who," because your audience will vary depending on what you are planning to create. To narrow this down for your project, let's consider some examples.

Example: You're creating an interdisciplinary art installation, in collaboration with two dancers and a composer, that will be displayed in your city's local modern art museum. Your installation makes a statement on global warming.

Audience: Your audience might include patrons of or visitors to the modern art museum, environmentalists, locals interested in visual art, dance, or music, as well as friends and supporters of you and your collaborators.

Example: You're creating a music education outreach program for elementary school students in under-resourced schools that don't have music programs.

> **Audience:** Your audience might include the elementary students at the school, their parents, teachers, and school staff, and local supporters of music education.

If we zoom back out a bit, the main focus is connecting elements of your creative work and its purpose with the needs and interests of your community, no matter how big or how small. For artists creating a product, service, program, or app, consider the problem you are trying to solve. Then turn that work towards the individuals experiencing that challenge. For artists that are interested in creating a new experience for a listener, viewer, or event attendee, consider individuals or groups interested in similar or related types of work. Perhaps most importantly, we can greatly benefit from communicating with our potential audiences to ensure our work will make a positive, rather than harmful, impact, particularly with projects geared toward social change. It is imperative not to assume what a community needs without asking, getting input, and respecting community leaders.

Omayeli Arenyeka discusses how to be thoughtful and intentional about your creative work in her article, "How To Think Differently About Doing Good as a Creative Person"[1] in the *Creative Independent.* She talks about how to avoid the "Creative Savior Complex," align your artistic objectives with the community around you, and ensure you are actually making a positive difference for the problem you intend to solve.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 4-1**. Read and reflect on Arenyeka's article.

Knowing who you're trying to reach helps you maximize the energy and resources you're putting into your artistic work and allows you to interact and communicate with your **target audience** in more effective ways. Putting time and energy into this work upfront gives you a better direction for your efforts to build audiences at your events and performances, users for your new service, and interest from relevant organizations. It's also important to do your research and have conversations with the right **stakeholders** to make sure you are designing your project appropriately for your audience. When you're working to identify the audience for your project, consider the following questions:

- Is the project serving the community you've identified in the best way possible?
- Where and when is the project happening?
- Who can access it?
- What are the elements that make up your project?
- What community members or groups would have an interest in those elements?
- What is the impact you are trying to make?
- Who needs to interact with your art for this impact to happen?
- Who else supports your goal or your desired impact (organizations, groups, or individuals)?
- Who is connected to any partners or collaborators you're working with?
- How might your project be relevant to any of their supporters or **stakeholders**?

Artists in Action

"Steelpan, for us, is where young kids, older people, and everybody in between can go to a specific place and participate in this community

1. https://thecreativeindependent.com/guides/how-to-think-differently-about-doing-good-as-a-creative-person/

> music making activity. But the ethos of it is building community through this aspect of music making where everybody is on an equal playing field and learning different things."
>
> **– Khandeya Sheppard**

Who Is It For?

Let's go back to the overview text you created about your project to answer, "What is it for?" You'll use that as a baseline to brainstorm on "Who is it for?"

Step 1: Brainstorm

Set a timer for five minutes. Use the questions above to brainstorm a list of as many audiences or communities as possible that might be interested in your project. Note why you think these audiences might connect with your artistic work.

Step 2: Elaborate

Review your list. This is your chance to think more deeply about your own ideas. Continue to add ideas about what connects these groups or individuals to your work. Make notes about any audiences that may be more challenging to reach due to practical or logistical barriers. For example, there might be a jazz club in New York that you're connected with, but your jazz concert is in Los Angeles. Or you're hosting a display of visual art with live poetry, but some of your visual art fans live in another country and don't speak the same language.

Step 3: Prioritize

Identify a few groups that you consider to be the most likely, prominent, or accessible audiences. Not to worry! You may still come back to some of your other ideas later. For now, prioritizing will help focus your initial outreach efforts in the areas that will hopefully be the most rewarding.

After this exercise, you have an idea of who you anticipate your audience to be.

- How can you learn more about them?
- Where are they?
- And most importantly, how can you reach them?

To explore these questions, the next section will discuss how to better understand and connect with your audience through audience analysis.

> **Artists in Action**
>
> "Most musicians are hoping that their music creates transformational change, whether it's from an educational program or even in a concert hall. But you have to be able to articulate exactly how and what exact issue it's addressing. And the community has to believe that's important."
>
> **– Alysia Lee**

Finding Your Audience

Audience Research and Analysis

Now that you understand the focus of your project and have begun to identify your audience, you need to build your knowledge base about that community so you can effectively communicate with them about your work. There has long been a myth perpetuated in the arts that the audience will "find" you. While you *do* need to be findable, this myth could not be further from the truth. Before any audience can find you, they need a reason to connect with your work. The job of each artist is to create a vision for their work, identify their audience, and develop strategies for how they can engage their community in a dialogue about what they are creating.

There are several approaches that can help you better understand your audience. This is also referred to as **audience or user analysis**. In this section, we will look at a few tools commonly used to help identify the characteristics of a particular audience, with the goal of understanding the motivations and how to reach them.

Your research should correlate to the size of the project and how familiar you are with the project's subject, niche, or trends. Research can help eliminate blind spots in familiar areas. Larger projects in new areas may require more research. Audience research and analysis can identify messages or unrealistic ideas you haven't questioned or that don't hold up against the real world.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 4-2**. Read best practices and techniques for research methods.

As you begin to think about identifying your audience it is helpful to remember that audiences are made up of individuals and that it is possible to group or organize an audience in a multitude of ways. Western culture and the world of business in the 20th and 21st century enjoys grouping individuals into what can most easily be described as markets. However, you might find it helpful to think of this grouping as communities or fans. This term can cover a broad range of topics from values, attributes, and characteristics, to trading, the promotion of public services, and social influence. At its core, markets and market segments are comprised of people involved in the timeless exchange of goods and services (Martins, Yusuf, & Swanson, 2012).

Ultimately, artists want to understand what motivates a particular audience to engage in our work. To help us establish a clearer understanding of what generates interest from the individuals, there are a variety of approaches, tools, and techniques for businesses (and artists) to better understand the needs of the communities they serve. For the purposes of our discussion, we focus on developing a basic understanding of two specific topics to help you organize your audience research process: **demographics** and **psychographics**. We also provide resources that discuss how to avoid **bias** (Cambridge, n.d.) and **stereotyping** in the segmentation process.

> **Artists in Action**
>
> "We thought initially that high schools would be a great place. Let's go to high schools, right? They've got auditoriums, they've got [other things], but nobody came to the high schools. Where they came were to the churches, to the synagogues, to the community centers that had

built-in audiences already, that were doing some level of programming of some sort. It wasn't always music. Sometimes they had art shows; they had different things. But if we were in a high school and didn't have the kids on the stage, nobody cared. Even though it was around the corner from whatever marketing research we did around those people."

—Andrew Kipe

Demographics

The first step in your audience or user analysis is identifying a **demographic** group or groups that are relevant to your project. Demographic information, which is another form of **market segmentation** covers the external or physical characteristics that make up your audience (Martins et al., 2012). Basic demographics typically includes age, gender identity, income, and location.

Additional demographic factors are listed below:

- Occupation
- Level of education
- Relationship status
- Religion
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation

Neutrality and Reflexivity

As you conduct research, it's imperative to remain neutral and reflective in your efforts to minimize bias. For example, based on your personal upbringing, you may associate certain gender roles with parenting or housekeeping. Staying conscious of any preconceptions allows you to avoid bringing these with you in your research and audience analysis process.

Taking this a step further, neutrality and reflexivity allow you to be thoughtful about how you categorize your audience. This is important because, if you're not careful, **market segmentation** can lead to **stereotyping** (Clow & Stevens, 2009; Gregório, 2018). Take the time to check any assumptions before acting on them. One tool that you can use to begin the work of exploring your own biases is the online Implicit Association Test[2] utilized by authors Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald in their book, *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*.

> Dig Deeper in Exercise 4-3. Explore the difference between segmentation and stereotyping.

Psychographics

Demographic information helps you generate a rough sketch of your **target audience**. But when you're looking for deeper insights into your audience, that's the time to begin using psychographic segmentation.

2. https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/user/agg/blindspot/indexrk.htm

Psychographics is an approach to the classification of people that employs several assumptions within given characteristics (Lipke, 2000). It is the general term describing psychological characteristics of consumers, such as personality traits, values, and opinions, as well as lifestyle data like activities and interests (Lewis & Littler, 1999). As the name indicates, it is based on the segmentation of the United States adult consumer population (Martins et al., 2012). This approach utilizes a system of classification that combines psychological attitudes, values and beliefs associated with various socioeconomic characteristics (Atlas, 1984).

Psychographics can be challenging because it involves subjective information, in contrast to demographics that rely on objective, statistical data. Psychographic metrics are usually more important than basic demographic information in determining how to reach and excite an audience.

To begin developing a psychographic profile of your audience, start with the following prompts:

- Does your target audience have a distinct ***personality or lifestyle***?
- What are the ***interests*** of your target audience?
- What kind of ***activities*** or ***hobbies*** do they do?
- What are their ***attitudes, values,*** and ***opinions*** towards certain subjects?

Personality and Lifestyle

Examples of personality and lifestyle questions include the following:

- Are they introverted or extroverted?
- What does their day-to-day life look like?
- Do they have specific habits as part of their routine?
- Where do they shop?
- Where do they get coffee (if they drink it)?
- What kind of vehicle do they drive?

Interests

Examples of interest-based questions include the following:

- What kind of music do they like?
- Do they have a favorite type of food?
- What topics do they read about on the internet?

Activities or Hobbies

Examples of questions about activities and hobbies include the following:

- Do they enjoy outdoor activities?
- Do they exercise? How?
- Do they go to see live arts? Where?
- Do they have a pet?

Attitudes, Values and Opinions

Examples of questions about attitudes, values, and opinions include the following:

- How do they feel about recycling?
- Do they have strong political beliefs?
- How open-minded are they?
- Are they spiritual or do they have strong religious beliefs?

Attitudes, values, and opinions are often woven with characteristics in other categories. For example, someone might drive a Toyota Prius because they are environmentally conscious. Focus on collecting and analyzing more intangible characteristics, such as lifestyle, interests, hobbies, values, and opinions, as these are the points most relevant to targeting your project.

The tools outlined in this section provide you with information and techniques to gather data about individuals, groups, and specific populations. When used effectively, **market segmentation, demographics,** and **psychographics** allow you the opportunity to develop a "rough sketch" of the people that make up your potential audience. Having this information at hand can inform the work you create, the events you develop to support that creative work, and the mechanisms you employ to reach different communities within your audience. Developing or growing your audience requires that you understand the individuals that make up this community.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 4-4**. Reflect on the insights provided by demographics and psychographics.

Case Study: Louisville Orchestra

A great example of this can be observed in the case study of the Louisville Orchestra. By researching their current supporters and being intentional about the new communities they wanted to reach within the Louisville community, the Louisville Orchestra emerged from financial challenges and developed a thriving performing arts organization with a new, vibrant, and more engaged audience within the Louisville Community.

In 2008, the Louisville Orchestra faced an economic recession, an administrative reorganization, dwindling ticket sales, and a prolonged labor dispute. They needed to both reconnect with their existing audience and increase exposure in their community. To learn about their current and potential audiences, they hired a marketing research firm to conduct focus group interviews. They designed the interviews to help them better understand the current perceptions of the orchestra as well as an ideal image of the orchestra.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 4-5**. Learn more about the Louisville Orchestra.

Beyond the Audience

In this chapter, our primary focus has been on understanding and identifying your audience. These are the people who will engage with your project. However, these aren't the only people who can impact

who goes to your show, who hires you for that gig, or who funds your project! Let's take a moment to think about the impact and perspectives brought about by influencers and decision makers (Bernstein, 2014).

Influencers aren't just people on social media. This term can also refer to anyone who could speak to others about your project. This includes a reviewer, blogger, or an opinionated and respected person with a large group of friends. Influencers often have connections to individuals that are beyond your target audience and can raise the profile of your work. In essence, they can help you grow new audiences beyond your current scope.

Understanding who influences your audience can provide other helpful insights as well. You'll want to pay particular attention to what topics, trends, and ideas the influencers are promoting, as it may help you refine your marketing strategy.

Decision makers bring in the element of evaluation. They choose between options, often limiting what will be offered to the users or audience. A typical example of this in the performing arts is a manager for a concert series, or even a funder deciding what projects will be backed. While decision makers carefully consider the wants and needs of the users or audience, their perspective and values also play into their decision-making process. Sometimes, these values won't match the needs of your target audience. When this disconnect happens, it indicates one of two things:

1. Your work may not be a good fit for that series or funder.
2. You may need to reframe your work so that it appeals to both the decision makers and your target audience.

Making an Impact

Now that you have some basic tools to help you identify and understand your specific audience and what motivates them, it's time to align the narrative of your work so that you can connect with this community.

This comes back to that idea of empathy and understanding the needs of your audience. How can you position your project so that it resonates with your audience? Think about what you are creating and what it could offer.

Here's an example:

Malcolm, a violinist, is creating an after school strings music program for students between the ages of 6–9 years of age. What does this program offer the community beyond providing him with a source of income as a teaching artist?

- Mentorship to participants
- Musical skill building for participants
- Community building through the students participating
- Additional childcare for working parents
- A new artistic resource for the school or community center affiliated with the program
- The opportunity for students to develop self-expression, leadership skills, teamwork, and resiliency in their music making

- A new point of connection for the parents with the school or organization that hosts the program

In this case, the number of students impacted by this program may appear small, but that does not diminish the impact of the program overall. In fact, the effects extend beyond the students to the individual families and the hosting community organization. It provides new entry points of engagement at multiple levels, a powerful way for the artist to frame the project for the community partner and granting organization. The impact extends far beyond the quantity or size of the audience served. In this case, the value encompasses the experiences and skills developed by the participants and the opportunity to share an art form with a younger generation and specific community. This example aligns the artist mission with the project, the participants, and the partnering school or community center. In doing so, it articulates a successful project with a meaningful impact.

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 4-1. Social Change and the Creative
Read this article called "How To Think Differently About Doing Good as a Creative Person"[3] by Omayeli Arenyeka in the *Creative Independent*. Draft a brief response to the article that responds to the following prompts:

- What kind of change do you hope to see in the arts world?
- What is most unclear concept or muddiest point for you?
- Which point most resonates with you? Share the quotation or shiniest gem from the article.

Exercise 4-2. Research Methods
For a brief overview of research methods, check out this post from the University of Southern California School for Communication and Journalism called Four Research Methods for Audience Analysis.[4] One common way to conduct research about an audience includes surveys. Surveys are a great way to gather more data about your audience and can add weight to the targeting of your project proposal. Several free online survey options are available (e.g., Google Forms,[5] Survey Monkey,[6] or TypeForm[7]). Check out these survey design best practices[8] from Qualtrics. If it makes sense for your project, create a survey to learn more about your audience.

1. Define the purpose of your survey.
2. Draft 5–8 simple and direct questions.
3. Test your survey with peers for feedback.
4. Revise your survey based on feedback.

Exercise 4-3.Segmentation and Stereotyping
For more discussion on the difference between segmentation and stereotyping, read this brief article from Angry Ventures.[9]

Exercise 4-4. Psychographics
Review the following resources:

3. https://thecreativeindependent.com/guides/how-to-think-differently-about-doing-good-as-a-creative-person/
4. https://communicationmgmt.usc.edu/blog/4-research-methods-for-audience-analysis/
5. https://www.google.com/forms/about/
6. https://www.surveymonkey.com/
7. https://www.typeform.com/
8. https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/how-to-create-a-survey/
9. https://angry.ventures/blog/marketing-segmentation-stereotyping

- This blog post from *Hotjar* called "[Psychographics in Marketing](#)."[10] covers psychographics and how they are used.
- This brief article from *Angry Ventures* explores the [difference between segmentation and stereotyping.](#)[11]

Brainstorm some potential demographic and psychographic characteristics of your potential audience.

- What insight does this give you into your audience?
- How do these characteristics inform the way you might design your program?
- What does this begin to tell you about how you might communicate with these individuals?

Exercise 4-5. Louisville Orchestra
Released in 2010, a full-length feature documentary film, "Music Makes A City," chronicles the Louisville Orchestra. Aired nationally on PBS in 2014, it shares one of the most ambitious artistic undertakings by an American orchestra in history. Check out the following resources:

- **PBS Trailer**. Watch the PBS trailer for the Gramophone Award-winning documentary "[Music Makes A City](#)."[12] (2:06 min)
- **Documentary Website**. Visit the [film website](#)[13] for a wealth of information about the story, the composers, and the achievements of the Louisville Orchestra.
- **Series Website.** [Music Makes a City Now](#),[14] a new original web series inspired by the film, follows musical visionaries who build communities with great music.

Key Takeaways

Understanding your audience is critical to the successful launch of a project. It raises the likelihood that your project will find an interested audience, community, or set of users to engage with your work. Here are a few points to consider as you continue to refine your understanding of your target audience.

- With each new project you develop, two questions can help you stay aligned with the purpose of your project and the specific community it serves:
  - What is it for?
  - Who is it for?
- Demographics help you identify the external or physical characteristics of a potential segment of the population and can provide a rough sketch of your audience.
- Psychographics inform how to reach and excite your audience. More relevant to engagement than demographics, the subjective nature of psychographics can be challenging.
- Be neutral and reflexive to mitigate bias throughout the research process.
- The size of your audience does not determine the success of a project. Projects are successful when artists have a clear understanding of what they are creating, who they want to engage with the project, and how to communicate with that community. Focus on quality before quantity.

Artist Interviews

10. https://www.hotjar.com/blog/psychographics-in-marketing/
11. https://angry.ventures/blog/marketing-segmentation-stereotyping/
12. https://youtu.be/7yaonRBy5iU
13. http://www.musicmakesacity.com/
14. http://www.musicmakesacity.com/web-series/

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in <u>About the Artists</u>. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- Alysia Lee on What She Wish She Knew Earlier
- Khandeya Sheppard on What She Wish She Knew Earlier

Alysia Lee on What She Wish She Knew Earlier

What do you know now that you wish you knew when you first started seeking funding?

ZF: What do you know now that you wish you knew when you first started seeking funding?

AL: I think the number one thing about seeking funding is: there are almost never new questions. Repeat the answers that you know are the correct answer. When I first started grant writing, I would rewrite my grant every time. I would sit down with a blank word document every time I had a grant instead of relying on what I call a boilerplate—answering some basic questions that we know people are going to ask. Those questions get retooled.

How do you handle new questions?

Another thing is you want to stay organized, right away. So, you want to have your boilerplate in a folder and then revisions in a folder. When a new question comes up, I add that question to the boilerplate.

In light of the double pandemics of racial discrimination and COVID-19, we have new questions on our grant applications, right? There have never been a lot of questions about racial diversity and how organizations are representing community.

- What does that mean when you say you represent a community?
- Is that happening in your board?
- Is that happening in your staff or how are the people in that community also making decisions in your organization?

Those questions are pretty new for arts organizations, with a few outliers of funders who've been thinking about that for a while. You may have been thinking about it, but you may not have written a beautifully crafted statement on it. So, once you hear a new question, you want to pop it into your boilerplate and keep it.

You just want to stay very organized. Same thing about COVID-19—people are interested more in the ways that communities are driving changes in programs. All programs have changed because COVID-19 required that. So, how are you making those decisions? They may have not really necessarily asked us that before. "What's the power dynamic in your organization?" is really at the center of those kinds of new questions. You want to stay very organized with your answers.

Then the last thing is, ***you have to really think about the fundraising as a dating adventure that never ends***. It's like you're courting the person. It may take a while, may take a couple years, for a funder to trust in your vision.

Some funders are what I would say is risk incentivized. They like to fund new projects by young upstarts. And some are not. ***You have to know when a no doesn't mean no forever, it just means no right now. You have to keep in touch with those people. Keep the relationships positive.*** When you get the money, you've got to thank them well. When the money's been spent, you've got to wrap back around and say, I spent your money, thank you, and this is what we did with it versus what I said I would do.

If things have changed, be transparent and honest. Your goal is to have a funder come into your cycle of your organization and be a return donor. Not all donors want to donate every year to the same organizations, but if they donate once, then whenever that time is up, you're ready to cycle that money, come back, we want your money again. You want to just keep all of those money relationships very positive and uplifting, even when people deny you. Because it doesn't mean no forever, it just means no for right now.

Khandeya Sheppard on What She Wish She Knew Earlier

What do you know now that you wish you knew then?

ZF: The other question that I have is, as you look back, and this was obviously a major success as you did it, what would you have done differently? If you can go back and the post-Dynamic Steel success, you're like, "Yay… and part two."

KS: That goes to one of the questions I think that's posed to us all the time. What did you want to know before you started this project? I really wish—because I think I started to find out about it after I was really involved in the project—I really wish I had known how to approach it from the individual artist's perspective of getting grants to fund cultural projects such as these because they exist. I didn't approach it that way because in my head, at first the project was just, I am doing a concert. ***I did not look at it for all of the ramifications or the different opportunities that it could fit into. Technically, this was a cultural event happening in a cultural space.***

While I got great pleasure out of being able to put all these pieces into place, self-finance, get in kind donations and different things, I think to have a grant or community partner like a PNC [Bank] or something like that, that was able to invest in it further, could have probably alleviated some sense of stress while going through the process. Because you would definitely know where your funding was coming from or how you were going to recoup the funding in the end, in addition to ticket prices and different things like that.

I think knowing all the avenues that were out there or what was available to me, I would have spent more time or had somebody on the team spend more time researching that. That's one of the places where a grant writer comes in handy. If you know anybody that's interested in grant writing or development and finding those things out for you, or have their fingers on the pulse of these types of opportunities, that can be very helpful.

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5

FUNDERS AND OTHER PARTNERS

Finding Support

Overview

In this chapter, you learn how to…

- Identify appropriate funders for your project.
- Explain importance of alignment between a funder's goals and your values and project outcomes.
- List strategies to build relationships and connect with potential funders.

Once you have an idea about what you want to do for your project and who you want to reach, the next step is to find the funding to make it happen. While this chapter focuses on identifying grantors, the ideas apply to many types of funders, such as foundations, artists' funds, **corporate sponsors**,

individual donors, and more. It's also important to remember that support can extend beyond cash. Partner organizations and other collaborators can often provide marketing, services, space, supplies, and volunteers that are critical to project execution (also known as **in-kind support**—we'll talk about this more in [Chapter 8: Building a Project Budget](#)). These elements come together to make your project a success, so explore your options thoroughly when seeking support! As the proverb goes, "It takes a village."

Where To Look

You might wonder where to start. Fortunately, many avenues are available to find grant funders. We've included a list of ideas below to get your search off the ground. These strategies can be effective for seeking out funders, organizational partners, and other collaborators for your project.

Artists in Action

"You've got to advocate for yourself in that way and understand that if you're part of the whole as an artist, you are part of the whole movement, which includes our responsibility to make sure people understand the value of what you're doing."

– Jeannie Howe

———————————

"Number one, do your research, research, research, research."

– Khandeya Sheppard

Initial Search Sources

Visit Your Local Library

Your local public or academic library may have access to subscription resources or books that can help you identify potential funders (Beeching, 2010). For example, Candid's [Foundation Directory Online](#)[1] is a subscription database used by professional fundraisers. Candid also provides a wide variety of training virtually and in-person.

Ask Your Network for Recommendations

Your colleagues, collaborators, and mentors are a great starting point. There's a good chance someone in your artistic community has some experience, knowledge, or connections to share. Plus, by letting people know what you're excited about, you can build a community of support around your work and your project.

Explore Resources Provided by Local Arts Hubs

Many cities have local arts nonprofits that promote and support other arts organizations in the area. One example is [Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance](#)[2] based in Baltimore, Maryland. Organizations like

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1. https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/
2. https://www.baltimoreculture.org/

these often compile resources for artists, provide opportunities for connection between local artists and organizations, and sometimes offer grants themselves.

Search for Artist Grants Awards Locally and Nationally

There are many competitive grants and awards available throughout the country. For example, [The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts](#)[3] makes grants to visual artists and has a regional regranting program. In Baltimore, [The Rubys Artist Grants](#)[4] and the [Baker Artist Awards](#)[5] fund artists in all disciplines.

Search for Government-funded Arts Institutions

Arts institutions are funded by all levels of government, including city, county, state, and federal levels. These organizations receive funding with the sole mission to support arts activity in the relevant area, financially or otherwise. This mission often includes supporting individual artists as well as arts organizations. Some state-level examples include the following:

- [California Arts Council](#)[6]
- [Maryland State Arts Council](#)[7]
- [New York State Council on the Arts](#)[8]

You might also look at your state's [Association of Nonprofits](#).[9] The [National Endowment for the Arts](#)[10] is a prestigious resource at the federal level.

Find Funders of Similar Projects

Look for other projects like yours and check out the organizations that funded them, referred to as the "follow the money" method. The goal is to find funders that are aligned with your project, so working backwards is extremely effective. You increase the chances of finding relevant funders by tracking down the funding sources for similar initiatives. You may also find lesser-known funders and partners with perhaps less competitive selection processes this way, since you're mining less conventional sources for information.

Look for Organizations with Shared Interests and Values

Seek out funders who are aligned with your values and mission and/or interested in amplifying voices like yours in the community. Additionally, on a more practical level, the scope of the work matters as well. For instance, while many grantors are interested in funding project-based work, other grantors prefer to support artists and their organizations on a more comprehensive basis.

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3. https://warholfoundation.org/
4. https://www.rwdfoundation.org/rubys
5. https://bakerartist.org/
6. https://arts.ca.gov/
7. https://msac.org/
8. https://arts.ny.gov/
9. https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/find-your-state-association
10. https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/find-your-state-association

Thinking Outside the Box

While arts funders may initially seem to be the most direct fit for a creative project, make sure to explore all possible funding pathways. Especially if your project has interdisciplinary elements, consider these alternative examples:

- A music education project could be relevant to funders in both music and education.
- A visual art collaboration with dance and electronic media could qualify for visual art, dance, music, technology, and composition-related grants.
- A classical contemporary chamber music commission and sensory-friendly performance project could apply for grants geared toward performance, composition, or organizations that support people on the Autism spectrum.
- An installation project that addresses global warming could receive funding from arts grantors as well as environmental organizations.

You can exponentially increase your funding options simply by looking at your project from multiple perspectives. Just make sure to frame it appropriately! Using the first music education project example above, a grant to an arts-based organization may focus on the artistic merit of the project, while a grant to an education-based organization might emphasize the educational benefits. Always consider your project from the eyes of the funder and share how your project can contribute to the grantor's mission.

Technical Considerations

Consider the following technical notes as you begin your funding search.

Individual Artist Grants Versus Grants for Organizations

While some grants are available to individual artists, many grants are designed solely for **nonprofit, or 501(c)(3), organizations**. You can save yourself time by screening the grant guidelines early in your search process.

Fiscal Sponsorship

If you're not a 501(c)(3) organization but you'd like to qualify for organizational grants, you can use a method called **fiscal sponsorship**. This is where a larger nonprofit organization "sponsors" an individual artist or a small business by managing their grant-related finances, allowing them to receive grants that would normally be restricted to 501(c)(3) organizations. The sponsor may deduct a small percentage to compensate for their administrative time and responsibility. Fractured Atlas[11] is one of the most prominent examples. Other local organizations may also offer this service, such as Fusion Partnership[12] in Baltimore, Maryland. Note that entering into a fiscal sponsor relationship is a legal agreement and should be carefully considered.

Project Versus Operating Support

Consider the type of funding you need. **Project support** is usually meant to fund a one-time project, with expenses that are exclusive to that project. **Operating support** is generally for baseline, ongoing funding needs such as administrative or creative salaries, office space, insurance, and other recurring expenses.

With these considerations in mind, you're ready to begin your search! But how will you know when you've found a grantor that's a good fit? In the next section, we'll explore more about what to look for in a grantor and how to identify funders that are suitable for your project.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 5-1.** Explore resources to research grant listings.

Artists in Action

"I really wish I would have known that I could ask more questions of the funder directly. I didn't have to guess what they wanted. In asking questions, you get to know that funders are just people. They have a point of view. They have a lens from which they view the world, and they have a mission statement as much as you have a mission statement."

—CJay Philip

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"There are grants out there. There are grants everywhere. It just kind of became this mantra repeated by so many people. 'Just get out there and apply for grants.' And you start doing your research, seeing what these grants are, which ones are out there, and what they require. And I remember starting to do my first few. They all came back—none of them worked out. But eventually I got the one."

—Adam Rosenblatt

Research, Research, Research

The key to the research process is making sure you are pursuing funders and partners who align with

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11. https://www.fracturedatlas.org/
12. https://www.fusiongroup.org/

your artistic values and project goals. There are several aspects of funding organizations to consider that will help you identify whether they are an appropriate fit for your project.

- Funding level
    ◦ How much funding does this grant provide?
    ◦ Is your project (or a discrete portion of your project) within this range, or does it require a significantly larger or smaller budget?
- Mission
    ◦ What is the mission of the granting organization?
    ◦ How does your project and/or your artistic values fit within their mission?
- Audience
    ◦ What community does the funder aim to serve?
    ◦ Do they restrict their grants to a particular geographic area?
- Previously funded projects
    ◦ How are projects previously funded by the grantor similar to your project?
    ◦ How are they different?
    ◦ How do they connect to the funding organization's mission?
- Scope
    ◦ What is the level or type of impact this funder supports?
    ◦ Are they focused on artist-centered projects or broader community impact?
    ◦ Are they seeking to fund large nonprofits or emerging individual artists?

Use these factors as benchmarks to eliminate funders that don't align with what you want to do. Then focus your energy on the funders with missions that align with your own mission and project goals. Dig into past projects they have funded to analyze who the artists are behind them and how they present their work.

As you find grantors that seem like a good fit, the next step is to dig even deeper into these organizations to understand their mission and values (Artspire, 2011). Peruse their websites, analyze their public-facing messaging, and learn about their staff and governing board. This will help you to craft a proposal that connects strongly with the funder and maximizes your chances of success.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 5-2**. Reflect on how your artistic work aligns with local grantors and within your community.

Thorough research is time consuming, so give yourself plenty of lead time. Research grant options well before you envision the project taking place. The timing of grant cycles is important. For example, grant review cycles are often annual, and even if proposals are reviewed more often, it can take weeks or months for decisions to be made once you submit. This can mean looking months or even years in advance.

Artists in Action

"So I think that the most important thing I wish I had known, and the thing that I still tell people today, is don't be afraid to reach out and talk to the funder. You may find that they have a website, they may have a big online application, there may be this whole process you go through. People or organizations go through the whole thing, and they spend hours sometimes, or weeks, filling out these grant applications and then

get rejected, right? Only to find out that if you'd have actually reached out to the funders, had a conversation with them before you started to introduce yourself and the project, that often they will be a resource to help you navigate their process, to help you be successful.

I think people are sometimes intimidated to do that, but [the funders] want to help. They are in the business of giving this money away. So whether it's a corporate foundation or a government, that's their job. And they want to find the right people to get the right amount of money to. So, reach out, have a conversation."

—Andrew Kipe

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It's a wonderful thing, because you get to interact with human beings who are, for the most part, people who want to do the right thing. They want to have impact, and they might have an array of rationale, including their love for the arts. . . and fundraising is so reliant on relationships. First, if you're good at it, or if you're connected, it's a lot easier. But it's much more difficult if you are not established. So, that's your risk. Nobody owes you the money, though they certainly have to give it away. You have to help people dream with you."

—Jeannie Howe

Building Relationships

One key part of the research process involves building relationships with potential funders. In most cases, *it's okay to reach out to the funder directly and talk to them about your project.* In fact, it's not just okay—we highly recommend it. As a strategy, this can be an excellent shortcut to make strong connections with a potential funder.

Most funders are thrilled to chat with you to learn about your project and explore the intersection between your goals and their mission. This serves two purposes:
1. You can get to know one another and begin building a relationship.
2. You can ask thoughtful questions that will help you craft a stronger grant proposal that is truly catered to this organization's mission.

While grant awards are competitive, remember that a granting organization's primary purpose is to give away money to meet a certain community need, as designated by their mission. They want the award recipients to succeed. Furthermore, through the projects they fund, they want to demonstrate to their own funders that they are achieving their designated outcomes.

Solve Their Problem

When communicating with potential funders, make connections based on shared goals. How can your project help the funder achieve their goals? If there are points of connection, chatting with the funder is a great way to find them. If there aren't shared goals, then you've both saved yourselves some time earlier in the process. You can move on to other grantors who are a better fit for the work that you have planned.

It might take several touch points to truly connect with a funder, and that's normal. Remember, they are contacted by many people in your position. Be persistent, kind, reliable, thoughtful, and prepared in both meetings and written and oral communications. Preparation ensures that you make a good impression and value their time. If you're awarded a grant, you can continue to build this relationship by checking in as appropriate and providing timely updates and reports. If you're not awarded a grant, take the opportunity to request feedback and learn from the process. If you still think you are a good

fit, then you can make changes for the next round and apply with more confidence thanks to your communications with the funder.

Artists in Action

"The number one thing is just don't give up. No matter what. If you know your ideas are great, if you know you have something unique, then you have to do those ideas because who else will do them? You can't deny the world your brilliance because somebody told you 'no.' You have to just keep pressing through."

—Alysia Lee

"You get a lot of no's before you get a yes, right? I think that's important to know. For every 10 grant applications you submit, you might get two. And that just continues. A 20 percent average is just something you should be comfortable dealing with. But you do get the 20 percent."

—Andrew Kipe

"I'm working on grants often. It's kind of a game of not getting discouraged when you do them over and over and over and nothing ever happens. It's not even to say that you're doing anything wrong. It's just waiting for the right fit for your project to come along."

—Brad Balliett

Maximizing Your Time as a Grant Seeker

Clearly, applying for grants is a significant undertaking. First finding and then writing grant applications, plus getting to know the grantors, is time consuming! So how should you prioritize your time? In the end, it all comes back to preparation and alignment. Your chances of winning a grant increase when you meet the following criteria:

- You have a thorough, feasible, well-articulated, and engaging plan for your project.
- You have spent time researching the grantor and their mission and perspective.
- Your project goals align with the goals of the funder.
- Your application is well crafted to reflect these points of alignment.
- Your application uses clear and concise language that a non-artist can follow.
- You've connected with the funder and are in the process of building a professional relationship.

The bottom line is yes, this will take time. However, you can make the most of your time and effort by prioritizing the grants that allow you to check off the criteria above. Be persistent, even when some awards don't work out. Although the application process is time consuming, when you do receive an award, the impact on your artistic work and financial sustainability can be significant.

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 5-1. Research
These resources are a good starting place for your research. Explore the listings and find three interesting options. Share why they appeal to you.

- Peabody compiles a variety of options at LAUNCHPad's External Grants & Awards.[13]
- Candid's Foundation Directory Online[14] is used by professional fundraisers. Individual subscriptions are available, or you may have access through your local library.
- New York Foundation for the Arts Source[15] provides highly active listings of awards, grants, services and publications for individual artists and art professionals in the New York area.
- 3Arts Funding Resources[16] serves Chicago-area independent artists and beyond.
- Candid Guidestar[17] has a complete online information database for nonprofit organizations. Here you can find the IRS form 990s of foundations. These include a list of grantees with amounts, the list of the Board of directors, and information about the foundation's assets. The 990 can be particularly helpful when a foundation does not have a website, or when you are trying to determine giving parameters.

Exercise 5-2. Reflection
Consider how your artistic work fits in the context of your community. What kinds of local organizations and grantors are you currently aware of that align with your goals and values as a creator?

Key Takeaways

- There are many paths to search for grants; start with your personal network.
- Conduct thorough research on potential funders to identify what their organization stands for and their desired impact in their community.
- Ensure the mission of the funder aligns with the goals of your project and artistic values.
- Ask questions of the funder before applying for a grant. Start building a relationship early to better understand your audience (the funder) and articulate how your project intersects with the funder's mission.
- Start your research early.
- Maximize your time searching and applying for grants by committing appropriate research and outreach and making intentional choices about the grants you choose to apply to.

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in About the Artists. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- CJay Philip on the Impact of Grants
- Christina Manceor on Alignment and Research Methodology
- Alysia Lee on Building Relationships

13. https://peabody.jhu.edu/find-grants/#ExternalGrants
14. https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/
15. http://source.nyfa.org/content/search/search.aspx?SA=1
16. http://source.nyfa.org/content/search/search.aspx?SA=1
17. https://www.guidestar.org/

CJay Philip on the Impact of Grants

How have grants impacted your career outside of money?

ZF: Outside of money, how have grants impacted your career? It's obviously changed your organization structure and the size of your organization impact.

CJP: Besides money, there are some grants and some funding that come with fellowships, that come with recognition, that come with a connection to an organization. So the funding that I got from the [Robert W. Deutsch Foundation](18) made me a Robert W. Deutsch Fellow. I use that funding to have staff for Dance Bmore, then grow the organization, the programs, our reach in the community, and pay our teachers.

I got a [Warnock Foundation](19) grant, which was an itsy-bitsy amount of money, but they use that to do a really wonderful interview and sort of magazine-style spread. You can then use it as a link to share with people you know about what it is that you do. Then you are a part of those fellow alumni that connect in other ways.

I was a [Citizen Artists Fellow](20) for the [Kennedy Center](21). Being a part of that first cohort and meeting artists from all around the country – it also just makes you feel like gosh, I'm not crazy, I'm not alone, like there are people who just get a passion and a fire for something and are doing the thing. Even that Kennedy Center [award] was not a large sum of money by any means, but we were mentored for a year by [Yo Yo Ma](22).

I felt super special because I'm so close to Washington D.C.; some of the artists were from Chicago or out west and couldn't get here as often. So anytime Yo Yo was at the Kennedy Center, I was invited to come and be with him while he spoke or have conversations anytime there was an opportunity to share about the Citizen Artists program. I was invited because I'm so close and just steps away.

Being a part of that community–you know, I actually have a real friendship and relationship with the President of the Kennedy Center. We talked about her mom and how she's doing; we've talked about family and stuff. ***The relationships that you build inside of some of these awards and fellowships is incredibly valuable.*** I then can look to those fellows when I am working on a project and I need someone with that skill set, or that talent, and I can say, so and so is doing really great work in that arena or just get advice from other artists. Again, just not feeling so isolated and alone and siloed in the work that you're doing is really helpful to you as a person and growing as an artist.

18. https://www.rwdfoundation.org/
19. https://warnockfoundation.org/
20. https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/networks-conferences-and-research/networks-and-strategic-leadership/citizen-artist-fellows/
21. https://www.kennedy-center.org/
22. https://www.yo-yoma.com/

Christina Manceor on Alignment

What do you mean that your project is better aligned with that grant?

ZF: I want to dig into two things you brought up. The first was that the second granting organization you went after was more aligned with what you wanted to do.

- Can you talk about what that means?
- What do you mean that your project is better aligned with that grant?

CM: Right. I think this is one of the most important pieces of grant writing. It's very similar to finding community partners. *If your goals aren't aligned, then you have a big problem because you're not working towards the same thing.*

So, whenever I'm looking for a grant now, either for an organization or for myself, I'm making sure that I'm doing a ton of research on the granting organization. I want to understand these questions:

- What is their mission?
- What kinds of projects do they want to fund?
- Who are the people that are providing the money to that institution?
- What are the kind of biases or goals that they want to achieve with this money?
- What is the impact that they want to make?

Ideally, when you're applying for a grant, at least one or more of those things, ideally all of them, would be aligned with your project so that you are working toward the same goals. That's going to highly increase your likelihood of getting funded because the organization that's funding your project can see how it relates to what they want to be doing.

How do you find a good partner or a good match?

ZF: So, with that level of clarity around these organizations and your project how did you go about finding a good partner or a good match? How did you approach that with that methodology?

CM: Oh, the actual research finding the organizations? I think, well, I'm lucky because I work here at LAUNCHPad[23] and I have lists of grants available to me that I'm able to search through and I'm sharing with students regularly. So, that's one thing that I think is in my favor.

But aside from that, I also learned a lot from when I was working for a local nonprofit, Community Concerts at Second.[24] While I was working there, I ended up applying for many grants that funded concert series that were free for attendees. So, by having the relationship with that organization, I learned about local granting organizations. I was able to connect the dots and say, "Okay, here's one that we applied for with Community Concerts. I know about this funder. I understand how their grant works, so I can apply this to my other project too." So, it was partly situational if I were searching for it, I would start with local arts organizations and work my way out.

ZF: So there were situational kind of moments where you're kind of seeing, "Oh hey, this group is

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23. https://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/career-services/
24. https://cc2nd.org/index.html

working with this organization." But you have to be open to seeing what's happening. That's one part of it. Then the other part is?

CM: Yeah, I mean if you go to concerts, they'll list their funders. So you can see what organizations are funding any organization that you're attending a performance at, for example, or attending a teaching or some sort of educational opportunity. ***Then likely if that's similar to what you're trying to do, those funders might be a good bet to start researching because they're funding similar things in the city.***

ZF: So, it's kind of tracing the breadcrumbs and using any kind of thing you find and researching that.

CM: Yeah. Then the websites are not always up to date. Sometimes the people running them have one staff person who may or may not be technically savvy or may or may not have updated the website for multiple months or years. So, being able to actively search yourself and do that hard work will pay off because then you'll find the funders that aren't easy to find. There's more likelihood that it'll be less competitive for you to get funding in those cases too.

Christina Manceor on Research Methodology

What is your research methodology for a new grant opportunity?

ZF: Let's talk about that for a second. So now, say I find a new grant opportunity and I'm like, "Hey, check out this grant." And I send you a link to the site. Where do you go first?

CM: Well, I'd probably skip a lot of the instructions and I'd look at the guidelines. I'd immediately look at who's eligible first. Then I would also look at what the foundation is and then what the mission of the foundation is before I even look at the grant, because that's going to tell me those key elements before I get too far into the nitty gritty of what kinds of projects they want to fund.

ZF: That's really interesting. So, you go through the guidelines first and then mission of the organization.

CM: Then the grant description would be a close third.

What does the mission of the funding organization tell you?

ZF: So of those first two, obviously the first one tells you if it's for a non-profit or not. What does the second one tell you?

CM: The second one tells me about the funders:

- What is their goal as a whole?
- What is the bigger picture of what their funding is hoping to serve?

That can look like a lot of different things, but it would really quickly let me know if my project is in the general vicinity of that or not. Then the project description or the grant description would be a more specific version of that essentially. I can then narrow it down from there. ***But if I don't align with the foundation's mission, there isn't much point in applying for the project.***

ZF: That makes perfect sense to me. And then it also allows you to go onto the next one, looking for the

next opportunity. So, you've really built a framework for how to evaluate what could be a potential match very quickly.

CM: Yeah, I have a system for myself. I can't say it's an exact science. Also, sometimes this stuff is hard to find, so you might have to hunt and peck a little. *I have a goal of what I need to find so I'm not wasting my time digging into the "what are the questions they're asking me?" before I even know what the bigger picture is.*

Alysia Lee on Building Relationships

Have you ever been rejected for a grant and still built a relationship?

ZF: In particular, I love the fact that you're thinking about fostering relationships. I have a question about this. Have you ever had a grant that you've applied for, didn't get a yes, and then still built a relationship from that?

AL: Absolutely. [Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation](https://bartol.org/).[25] In 2019 Sister Cities Girlchoir won their education award as the top arts education organization in the city of Philadelphia. But when we applied to them in 2012, they denied our application.

Instead of sulking, you can reach out and ask, why? Sometimes they'll give you the why, but instead of that we just started inviting them to more things. So instead of just making one trip, because a lot of foundations will want to come out and see the work, right? So, instead of just making that one trip a year, I would invite them to come.

I don't believe in inviting people to performances. Invite people to come and see the work happening. The concerts are fruit. People want to see the work and to be able to tell how much work goes into, which we all know, producing a single concert performance. It's a lot. Invite people to those things. Invite people to the planning sessions with your community. Invite them to the first rehearsal, when things are a little crazy but there's a lot of excitement. Invite them to see things that are basically sweat events, right? Events where everyone is sweating–invite them to those things. And we started doing that, just getting to know them, and they could understand our application a little better.

Another instance of that is, there's an organization that early on has made it clear that they fund art for social change, which is what we think of our organization as. They kept sending us back comments saying that our organization sounded like social work, and so that was an opportunity to educate a funder. That just because children are present doesn't mean it's social work. *Children can have social change programs designed for them that are rooted in social change methods, rooted in resistance, rooted in elevation, rooted in collaboration, the same way adults can. So that was a chance to educate a funder, and that happens too, right? Now of course, they fund us.*

You don't want to change what you're saying and doing, but you have to not take things personally, number one. And you want to just maintain, even if that funder is denying you, which has happened. This has happened too, a funder may say you're not a good fit for us, even though you think you are (and I know I'm right). They will say, "oh, but this other funder is a good fit." Right?

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25. https://bartol.org/

And that's another thing, you never know. Someone on that board who read your application and said this foundation doesn't work. But I'm on another foundation's board and I'm going to call the executive director over there and say, "contact this woman and see what she's about." That's happened too. You never know the connections of where money is.

I always tell people, money is everywhere! There's plenty of money to fund all of your projects. There are so many silly, (I don't want to say dumb), but silly ideas that are being funded where you're like, "what? You wanted to bring puppies? And then do what? What are you talking about?" *So a fantastic idea absolutely can be funded. You just have to find the right match. It's about just finding who's excited about your project.*

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PART III

THE CREATIVE PROJECT

6

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Crafting Your Story

Overview

In this chapter, you learn how to…

- Develop a clear, concise, and compelling narrative that articulates your proposed project.
- Connect your work as an artist and any collaborators with your proposed project.
- Articulate your project in an authentic and cohesive statement that includes the what, why, who, and how.

Within every grant application, you will be asked to articulate your project in detail. Granting organizations may refer to this information in different ways. Here are a few examples you may encounter: project description, statement of grant purpose, executive summary, or project summary. Regardless of the nomenclature, your goal for this section of the proposal is the same. Your statement should meet the following criteria:

- Outline the overarching goal(s) of the project.
- Create a compelling argument as to why your idea is worthy of funding support.
- Describe the role(s) of any collaborators, if applicable.
- Connect you and your mission with the project.
- Provide an overview of proposed outcomes and impact of the project.

When done effectively, the **project description** clearly communicates your project to the reader and encourages further interest in you, your project, and what is possible. More importantly, with every step of this process, you want to consider how this project aligns with who you are as an artist, how it connects directly with where you are headed in your creative process, and how these points of intersection support the mission and vision of the grantor. Not only will this level of thought and creativity in your proposal engage the reader, it will also resonate with the funder.

Just as every project you develop is unique, so are the requirements of each grant. You need to understand what the specific requirements are for the application you are considering. While some grant applications measure by word or character count and others by page length, part of your job in any grant application is to understand those constraints and deliver prose that is engaging no matter the length.

As you develop your **project description**, keep these two questions in mind:

- If you can say it convincingly in 750 words, can you find a way to state it in 250 words?
- If you can outline your project in a sentence, where can you take the reader over the course of a page?

This is your challenge—to find a variety of methods that allow you to persuade the reader to be curious about your project and you.

> **Artists in Action**
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> "I think the hardest part for me is still the fine detailed craftsmanship of the project description. I'm a person who always says too much. The hardest part for me is actually paring it down anytime there's a character limit or a word limit or a page limit. I mean, there always is [a limit] because, you know, a panel doesn't have time to read 10 pages of description for every proposal."
>
> — Adam Rosenblatt

Describing the Project: Four Essential Elements (What, Why, Who and How)

To begin to develop a project description, your approach should outline and connect four distinct elements for the reader:

- What
- Why
- Who
- How

This can be overwhelming. Common reactions include, but are not limited to the following:

- "Where do I even begin?"
- "How do I talk about this idea?"
- "I can totally see it in my head, but how do I put this into words?"

Fear not! In this section, we break down these four essential components to provide you with the fundamental building blocks of your project description. This approach will provide a framework that allows you, with a bit of creativity, to develop a compelling narrative that is clear, concise, and persuasive.

An important point about you, your ideas, and the reader: ***The only person that understands your project is you.***

Never assume that "they'll get it." They won't (Highstein, 1997). Your reader is reviewing your grant application alongside dozens of others. They are probably tired, distracted, overworked, and worst of all . . . hungry. They may not be artists or have expertise in your field.

Help the future you—be clear, be detailed, and make the text engaging.

So let's get to work mining your brain for the details.

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Start by getting organized with the information you know so far about your project. Don't worry about writing eloquent paragraphs just yet. First, make an outline or list so you have all your key points in one place.

What

This is where you define, in prose, exactly ***what*** the project will be. The language you use to describe the project should make it possible for the reader to envision your idea. If you are struggling with where to begin, start by describing the process of implementing the proposed idea—take the reader behind the scenes. Trust that you know where you're going, so you can tell us how you'll get there.

Why

What is the inspiration, idea, or storyline of the project? Think about your reader. Help them understand ***why*** you are motivated to realize this idea of yours.

- Why are you driven to take this on?
- Why is this project important or impactful for your community?
- Why is the project integral to your artistic mission?

Remember, this is an incredible opportunity to highlight how the project connects with you and your artistic mission. (Refer to [Chapter 2: Your Artistry and Values](#)[1] if you've skipped ahead or need a refresher.)

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1. https://pressbooks.pub/pathtofunding/artistry

Who

List everyone **who** plays a significant role in the creation or implementation of the project: collaborators, choreographers, ensembles, soloists, directors, producers, audio engineers, videographers, set designers, etc.

- Who are those people and how are they contributing to the project?
- What makes their roles essential?
- Why are they the right people for this project?

How

You have captured what the project will be, why it needs to happen, and who is involved. The final element of this puzzle is **how** the audience will experience your work. It could be an installation, a video, a live performance, a film, a curated gallery show for one person—the possibilities are endless. No matter the mode or format of interaction for the audience, you need to clearly define the final goal or outcome of the project.

———————

Once you have this core information recorded, you can start to connect your ideas. Be sure to account for any specific grant guidelines. Based on those guidelines, make an outline. This will make your writing process easier. An outline helps you visualize the structure and organization of your description and ensures you include the essentials required by the grantor. When you're deciding how to organize your information, consider what basics the reader needs first to understand the nitty gritty details you might expand on later. Ultimately, the goal is to create a compelling and persuasive narrative in your own voice that both intrigues and informs readers.

> **Artists in Action**
>
> "Almost every grant is asking the same question. So the more preparation you have in the beginning, the faster each grant goes. You just get better and better at it as it goes, as time goes on."
>
> – Alysia Lee

Connecting You to Your Project

With the foundational components of your project firmly in hand, it's time to explore ways of connecting you directly to the project (Beeching, 2010). This can mean only one thing—it's about to get personal.

The key to creating a compelling narrative is finding the link(s) or connection(s) between your personal mission, your work as an artist, and your project proposal. This will be different for **everyone**!

The more closely you can bring these elements together, the stronger your proposal becomes. Projects that align with the values of the artist create a sense of inevitability for the reader (Creative Capital, 2019). The proposal quickly moves from just another grant application to the next logical and necessary

step in the artist's development. Hopefully, this motivates the reader to move the application forward in the review process.

Now that the key to creating **alignment** is clear, you may have the following concerns:

- How do we apply it to our own writing?
- What are the points of intersection between our mission statement and the project description?
- How do we connect the dots for our audience?

You need to cross-reference our mission statement with our project description. There's data in everything you have written.

To get started, review your notes and ask these questions:

- Can you identify common themes in the goals or potential outcomes of your mission statement and the what from your project description?
- Is the why of your project description reflected in the why of your mission statement?
- How do your collaborators and their values align with your mission statement?
- Do the skills needed to implement your project reflect your strengths and interests?

Personal Goals, Experiences, and Values

Take a moment to consider how your personal goals, experience, and values align with your project and its impact. When reviewing your mission statement and draft project description side by side, evaluate and consider these prompts:

- What are the patterns you observe?
- What are the differences?
- Is your artistic identity reflected appropriately (or at all) in how you are describing your project right now?

Here are some additional things to look for when comparing your mission statement and draft project description:

- **Overlap/repetition**. Do you use common evocative words or phrases in both texts?
- **Distinctive passages**. Can you find a connection between the larger themes of the texts?
- **Past experience**. Do they highlight artistic or other skills that prepare you well to execute your project?
- **Personality**. How does your personality come across in these texts?
- **Tone**. How does your project description align with how you speak to others about your work? How does it align with your branding?

It's worth mentioning that you don't need pages of examples connecting the texts. Choose one to three points to help "set the stage" for the reader. This might end up being only one or two sentences in one paragraph or even a few key phrases woven throughout your project description.

There is no right or wrong way to complete this kind of work. You choose the degree of context or

personal connection with the project proposal that you share. As always, let your project, mission, and artistic background dictate the points of intersection between your personal values and your project. Stay aware of those intersections so you can draw connections where they are appropriate.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 6-1**. Review several examples of how different artists present themselves and their work.

Building a Description—Examples in Practice

Keeping in mind the four essential elements of a project description, let's look at an example. In this section we cover the following elements:

- Analyze a rough draft project description.
- Review comments and corrections on the draft.
- Read a revised project description.

This is a fictional grantee and project. To build this example, we used the guidelines for Peabody's [Launch Grant.](#)[2] These selection criteria were modeled in part on the Greater Baltimore Culture Alliance's 2017 Rubys (2017) award:

- Artistic merit and skill demonstrated in the work samples
- Feasibility of completing project based on how it will be shown publicly, the identification and **alignment** of programming with the **target audience**, project **budget**, and **timeline**
- A prerecorded video proposal **pitch** that addresses the project, the external partner(s), **target audience**, audience programming, how the grant will help facilitate the realization of this project, and how your project aligns with the values of this funding source
- Creativity of the project as an innovative new direction for the artist's work or a significant deepening of the artist's current artistic practice

Review the project description below for any issues with the content.

Original Project Description

Project: Canyon Chorus Project

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2. https://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/career-services/job-seeking/job-posting/launch-grant/

Artist: Ben Cantantino

Canyon Chorus will be a program of 45 minutes, performed by choral ensemble in a location in the superstition wilderness outside of Phoenix, AZ. The area is visually stunning: smooth floors weathered by water, soaring walls rising far above. We'll take advantage of the live, wild acoustic and the clear spring weather in Arizona. The program will feature a composition of mine created for the space as well as a commission from a local composer. We'll fill out the remaining 25 minutes program with varied selections of repertoire chosen to suit the space.

As a choral conductor and composer, I am constantly attuned to the acoustics of spaces to create music. While much of my career has been centered on creating music in typical spaces, like churches and concert halls, I have started to build new opportunities with Acoustx, the 6-member vocal ensemble I lead, to perform in non-traditional spaces, such as warehouses, water tanks, and barns. While often acoustically motivated, these performances have created connections between repertoire, space, and community that have amplified our performances, creating experiences greater than the sum of their parts.

I'm equally devoted to the outdoors and a voracious hiker. The connection to the outdoors is so often lost in music. Over three years of hiking in the southwest, my ears have perked up by several spaces that would lend themselves to musical performance. Given that there are no instruments that would need to be hiked in, a vocal ensemble seems like an ideal way to integrate music into the wilderness.

Attendees will need to make the 3.5-mile hike to the canyon. Tentatively scheduled for March 23 & 24, 2024, we are likely to have excellent weather, with a low chance of precipitation and not overly hot. This will make the live performance itself an exclusive, galvanizing, experience, with music in contrast to the magical setting. Including a planned dress rehearsal to ensure that we are ready to capture good footage, and to allow multiple groups to experience this, without having a significant impact on the area. I'm also hopeful hikers out for the day may also join us by happenstance.

We will bring along someone to capture the performance, to use as material for establishing a similar series going forward. Using a multi camera setup will create high-quality captures of the performance. The video will allow us to advocate for future performances in different locations, perhaps with gear sponsorships for the future. For those unable to attend, the video will also allow many people to view the performance, get excited about the outdoors, and ideally, interest in the art of Indigenous communities of the local area.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I felt supported by art and the outdoors, but these things were rarely connected. These two elements of life feel so separated. Canyon Chorus aims to bring these together, while also being an exciting next step for myself and Acoustx in our exploration of the relation of space and sound. This also follows market trends—limited attendance events are a great way to create interest. Additionally, layered, multifaceted experiences are some of the best performing events in our industry.

Reviewing the Original Project Description

Build an Argument

The rhetorical structure of this proposal needs some improvement. The goal of your grant proposal is to make a persuasive argument. Break your proposal down to the main ideas, think about how those ideas build on each other to support the argument for your project, and then reorder your writing.

Be very cautious about using communities you don't identify with as a reason for your project. Have some serious and introspective conversations with and guidance from community members so that you can ensure an appropriate design.

Follow the Grant Structure

This proposal lacks structure and comes across as a wall of text. This is more difficult for a reviewer to process. Sometimes grant guidelines will include prompts or topics you need to cover. Use those prompts and follow the structure for them if needed. Even if the grant doesn't have explicit requirements, breaking up your description with section headers can help reviewers find what they need. Examples include:

- **Introduce yourself first**. The proposal launches straight into the project idea with no background.
- **Include section headers**. Help the reader categorize what they are reading. Section headers could include "About Us," "Collaborators," or "What's Next."

Be Specific

This draft could use more detail about who the collaborators are on the project, the reasoning behind choices you are making for the project, and how the project connects to your past work and experience. Areas that could benefit from additional detail include the following:

- Where will the concert be exactly? What restrictions will the location place on the project?
- Who is the local composer? Any other collaborations important to this project?
- What is your connection to the Superstition Wilderness? Why have you chosen it specifically for the project?

Polish the Prose

Once these broader content and structure concerns are addressed, this proposal needs additional revisions to grammar, punctuation, and phrasing to remove distractions and make the writing clearer and more concise. Aim for simple but correct and clear language to communicate your ideas. Examples include the following:

- Superstition Wilderness should be capitalized; multi-camera needs a hyphen; etc.
- Several sections are wordy and could be more concise, leaving room for relevant details (e.g., "Canyon Chorus aims to bring these together, while also being an exciting next step for myself and Acoustx in our exploration of the relation of space and sound.")

Below is a revised project description with these revisions incorporated.

Revised Project Description

Project: Canyon Chorus—Lower La Barge Box Canyon: Project Description

Artist: Ben Cantantino

Who I Am

As a choral conductor and composer, much of my career has been centered on creating music in typical performance spaces like churches and concert halls. However, I have started to build new opportunities with Acoustx, the 6-member vocal ensemble I lead, to perform in non-traditional spaces, such as warehouses, water tanks, and barns. While often acoustically motivated, these performances have created connections between repertoire, space, and community that have amplified our performances, creating experiences greater than the sum of their parts.

I'm also a voracious hiker. The connection to the outdoors is so often lost in music—we feel we need closed, controlled spaces to create and consume performances. Over three years of hiking in the southwest, my ears have made note of spaces that would lend themselves to musical performance. Given that there are no instruments that would need to be hiked in, a vocal ensemble seems like an ideal way to integrate music into the wilderness.

What I Propose

Canyon Chorus will be a choral program of 45 minutes, performed by Acoustx in La Barge Box Canyon in the Superstition Wilderness outside of Phoenix, Arizona. We'll take advantage of the live acoustics of the canyon and the clear spring weather in Arizona. The program will feature a new 10-minute composition of mine, created for the space, a new 10-minute commission from a local composer, and a varied selection of other repertoire suited to the space to fill out the remaining 25 minutes.

For the commission, we plan to work with [Native American Composer Apprentice Project](#),[3] an Arizona initiative that premieres works of Native students from communities in Arizona. We've started conversations about how we can further their mission, learn from the work they are doing, and provide a performance opportunity for the project.

How We'll Share

Two public performances are tentatively scheduled for March 23 & 24, 2024. To comply with National Wilderness rules, attendance will be limited. We're in early conversations with the park service about what exact requirements would apply, but we are hoping for about 25 audience members for each performance. This will make the live performance itself an exclusive experience, contrasting music and natural space.

We will also capture audio and video of both performances. This will create important

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3. https://newmusicusa.org/projects/native-american-composer-apprentice-project-nacap/

promotional material for Acoustx, while also allowing a wider audience to experience a version of the performance and creating recordings for our composer collaborator. We plan to use this video as a pitch to future funders, including hiking equipment companies, who might be willing to partner on future performances. For those unable to attend, the video will also allow many people to view the performance, get excited about the outdoors, and engage with the artistic work of the Indigenous communities of their local area.

Why Now

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I felt supported by art and the outdoors. Canyon Chorus aims to bring these experiences together, while also being an exciting next step for myself and Acoustx in our exploration of the relation of space and sound. The projected number of audience members also follows market trends–limited attendance events are a great way to create interest. Additionally, layered, multifaceted experiences (such as the Candlelight Concerts[4] popular in many cities) are commercially some of the best performing events in our industry. Canyon Chorus will expand on these trends not just to create art, but to build connection to our natural surroundings and community.

Notice how the revised project description clearly addresses the *what, why, who,* and *how* questions, revealing the impact of the project. In a one-page proposal you will need to decide which details to include and which to leave out.

- Which details about the Canyon Chorus project feed your excitement?
- Where would you want more information?

Navigating the Process

All components of your **project description** need to tie together and align with the goals of the grant organization or funder. You are working to show you are well-qualified, competent, and organized in your project. Here are a few points to consider as you begin this process to keep you on track.

Do Your Research

Investigate the funding opportunity to make sure you and the grant organization are a good fit. Does your creative work and your artistic mission align with the values of the funder? It takes a lot of effort and time to develop a grant proposal. Make sure you meet the eligibility requirements, your project aligns with the mission, and that your partners and collaborators are on board to be part of the process.

Use Clear Language

Take the reviewer on a step-by-step journey through the review criteria. Make it easy for the reviewer to navigate through every piece of your application. Use headings that match the grant criteria to guide the reader.

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4. https://candlelightexperience.com/

Follow Formatting Guidelines

Pay attention to the details regarding page limits and formatting (margins, fonts, and type size). Make sure you submit every requested piece of the grant application. The requests are actually requirements. An incomplete application will be eliminated and not considered—no matter how interesting the project may be.

Seek Feedback

Ask someone unfamiliar with your project to review your application. Consider sharing your proposal materials and review criteria with two to three colleagues. Feedback and dialogue are also often available from the funding organization, even before the grant is submitted. Reach out to the funder—building that relationship is an important step that is often overlooked. You can gather key information about the funder's goals, and best of all, funders want to help you succeed!

Meet Deadlines

In grant applications, deadlines are critical. Funders typically will not offer flexibility on submission deadlines. In fact, that's the first hurdle created to remove applicants. Late submissions are rarely accepted. Give yourself more time than you think you need to prepare your application and solicit feedback so that you can put your best quality work forward and submit on time.

Recycle and Resubmit

With a bit of revision, material created for one grant can be repurposed for future proposals, either to the same funder or a different opportunity. With most grants, there is an opportunity to get feedback from the reviewer, which can be incredibly helpful to improve your next submission. The more often funders see your work, the more likely it is that opportunities will come your way, either directly through the grant or through connections and relationships that grow out of the application and review process.

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 6-1. Artist Awards
Check out the Baker Artist Awards website[5] to review how different artists present themselves and their work.

- Which examples resonate with you? Select three artists.
- How might you translate some of these ideas to your own work?

Key Takeaways

The **project description** requirements of every grant vary. What remains relevant is finding an

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5. https://bakerartist.org/awards/awardees

approach that connects you to your project. Regardless of the word count or page limit, finding these points of **alignment** helps create a connection between you and the reader.

Remember, you may not win the first time you apply for a grant. Many seasoned grant writing artists find that it takes two to three tries before they are successful with a particular grant opportunity.

Like our work as artists, it takes practice. As you work on developing your narrative, remember the following:

- Identify the *what, why, who,* and *how* of the project.
- Be intentional in connecting you and your work to the project.
- Show the reader your project is the next logical step in your artistic evolution.
- Tell your story with your audience in mind.
- Find points of alignment with potential funders.
- Compile your materials in a cohesive way to present a unified narrative.

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in [About the Artists](). This section includes the following artists and topics:

- Lara Pellegrinelli on Making a Compelling Case for a Story
- Jessica Satava on Approaching Artistic Projects

Lara Pellegrinelli on Making a Compelling Case for a Story

How do you make a compelling case for a story?

ZF: I'm wondering if you could talk about what it is that you look for to make a compelling case for a story. I know a lot of times you're putting a pitch together for that piece or that area that you want to develop.

LP: Sure, it can be a lot of things. I have, of course, my own personal interests. As a writer, I've focused on jazz and new music, I've focused on jazz vocals, I've focused on issues of jazz and gender, but also, I think narrative qualities in what projects are, are really helpful and when artists have compelling personal stories. When I'm thinking about narrative, I mean that. I'll say, someone can make incredibly compelling music, beautiful music, profound music, I'm the type of writer who thinks "that's great, hear the music." I don't know if I necessarily have to write about that. There are reviewers who'll say, "Oh, well, I can capture that, I can put that down." I don't usually review. I mean, in the past I have reviewed, but it's not something that I really do anymore or even really see myself doing into the future.

But when I hear that an artist, for example, I'm going to go back more than 10 years, Fred Hersch, the pianist, who was one of the first openly gay jazz musicians. He went into a coma and he made a project called Coma Dreams. That tells a story by itself and for me as a writer, that's something that's easy to latch on to and to want to help tell that story.

So, those are things that I would say that I look for in projects that I'm going to pitch and also people who are doing things that have just never been done before. We still haven't had that much coverage in jazz or classical music about projects that relate to the environment or projects in jazz that are related to gender, that has been really slow to happen. It's still such a male dominated area. So, things like that. ***When I feel like there are stories that have yet to be told and the kinds of art that people are making or who people are, bringing themselves into that work, I think it's really important.***

How do you help an artist unpack their story and make it clear?

ZF: Could we talk for a second about, and I bring this up because a lot of our students are creating projects that have a personal connection to them. When you are kind of helping that student or that artist unpack that story that they're telling, what are the things you're thinking about or what are the elements that you're trying to distill it down to so that there's a clear through line for the reader?

LP: ***I think everyone has to start by asking the big question, which is the 'why.' I feel like when I'm doing work, that's always the question that I'm trying to answer.*** It is, why is this person, or these people if it's a collective, why are these people making this music in this place and at this time?

If you can answer that question, then you have everything that you need. So, asking yourself the why and being very clear on the why, I think is the starting point. That's that kernel, that kernel of belief and I'm stealing that question from Christopher Small (1927–2011) from his 1998 book, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. That's the central question in the book. For ethnomusicologists, that's where I feel like my ethnomusicology training comes in is in asking that big why question within a cultural and temporal context.

If you can think through these prompts:

- Why am I doing this?
- What is the meaning?
- What is the cultural value?
- How is this in dialogue with what I see happening around me in the world at this moment?

That is super important. If you can articulate those things for yourself, then it should be possible to start articulating them for others. Then the rest is the craft of trying to put it on the page. Does that make sense?

ZF: That makes complete sense. So, understanding what's driving you behind that project.

LP: Yeah, every single person is different and we may think, well this has been done before. We might not feel confident in the art that we're making as something original or something new, but if it comes from you, if it really comes from who you are as a person, there is no one like you. I think automatically that becomes compelling. As highly trained artists, we might be dismissive and think, oh, that's going to be too fluffy or too vague or too simple but a lot of what drives what we do is simple and that it's joyful, or it's love or it's meant to connect in a certain way, it's human.

We don't need anything to be ultra-sophisticated when it's coming from in here, that's where it needs… I mean, it can be. I've seen lots of work that is also, we'll say ultra-sophisticated and very thinky and

we can do that, we can make that kind of stuff, too, but I don't think we should be dismissive of things just because there's something plain or very simple or genuine in the impulse that is starting them.

Every person I think expresses that in a different way and that's kind of the beauty of it from where I sit is seeing all these different incarnations of what it is that people do. We're still finding new things in Bach and Beethoven. It's there, you just have to be strong enough and confident enough to just be willing to be vulnerable and put that out there.

Jessica Satava on Approaching Artistic Projects

How do you approach artistic projects and seeking funding?

ZF: How do you approach thinking about these artistic projects and going after that funding and galvanizing a team to go after something in a direction–like how do you do that?

- How do you approach that?
- Do you find one person you want to partner with?
- Do you find a team?
- Do you see it individually and then share it with everyone and try and get them on board?
- What has that process been like for you?

JS: Well, usually the ideas for collaborations always start with a conversation and are usually pretty organic, right? You're sitting there having coffee with somebody that you want to get to know and collaborate with like just kind of generally. And then the ideas start to percolate for all of us.

What I found is that as important as collaboration is, and as much as everyone wants to do it, and as much as everybody wants to talk about it, there has to be one person who is willing to do the work of driving the collaboration, providing the structure and the framework and doing the hard work of coordinating all the voices. That's the hardest work of collaboration.

Finding ways forward when agendas start to rear their heads, but it is so worth it. And the fact of the matter is, it is 100, well, I shouldn't say 100%, that's hyperbole, right? But I think that collaborations always have a better chance of getting funded than people who are just going out on their own.

Can you describe how you collaborate with others?

ZF: Can you talk about some of your experiences? I'm going to bet you're that galvanizing force in your work.

- What does that look like for you sometimes?
- What does that feel like?
- How do you do it?

JS: It's really fun and really uncomfortable all the same time, because it means that you have to give up control. Musicians like us, classical musicians, our whole world is wrapped up in the notes on the page and our ability to recreate them and not really stray very far away from what that looks like. A lot of us have that type A kind of personality where I want to show up and do my thing and I want to be responsible for myself and all those other people, like they just didn't practice.

I'm sorry you didn't practice, but here I am and I'm prepared, you know? That kind of thinking anyway, I hope I'm not overstepping here…. I know us, I know us very well and that thinking is not helpful when it comes to collaboration.

So, I guess what I found is that often things will just come to kind of like, they lose a little momentum, and somebody has to be the one to get on the phone and say, oh my gosh, I just had this great idea. I know how we're going to get this moving again.

There can be conflict between the collaborators and it's easy to feel resentment when you feel like these people don't want this as much as you do, and they aren't working as hard to see it through. That involves being willing to say, I set my own ego aside and I need to just stay focused on what the most important thing is here. That's the goal of getting funding to solve a problem through this project. ***The community and the problems we're solving, the ways that we're serving them is the focus***.

It's just part of the process that crazy stuff is going to happen and you have to get the phone and sort through people's problems and their egos and find ways forward across all of those obstacles. That's why applying for grants as a collaborative effort is so valuable because we all learn so much about ourselves and either figure out that, okay, maybe that wasn't really a natural collaboration and we're not going to do that again next year, right? Or that this has been transformational for absolutely everybody involved and we're so glad we did it and let's keep it going and expand it.

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7

PROJECT BUDGETS

Outlining Where the Money Goes
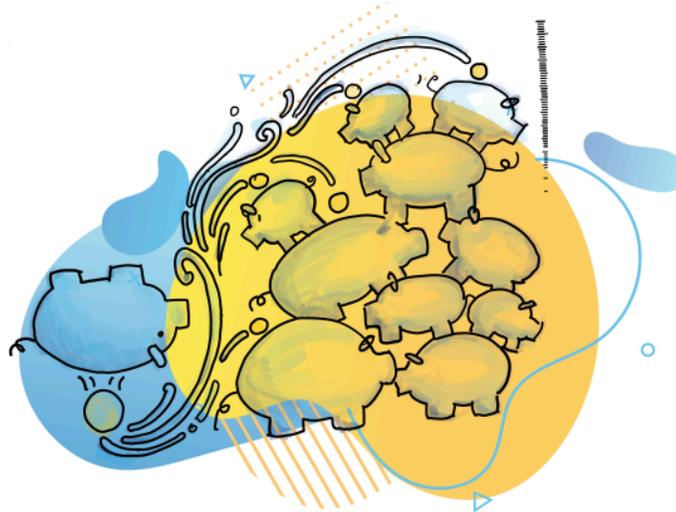
Overview

In this chapter, you learn how to…

- Review the fundamental requirements of grant budgets.
- Identify best practices for formatting budgets.
- Construct a budget that reflect details and logistics to support your project narrative.

In this chapter you will build your project **budget**. Your budget supports the narrative created by your proposal through a detailed account of how you plan to use the funds you are requesting.

This can feel overwhelming at first. Keep in mind that the budget helps you tell the story of your project from a different perspective. The function of the budget is to show the reviewer that you've thought

through every detail, including what resources it takes to move forward with your proposal. They want to determine if what you are proposing is feasible in terms of time, talent, and resources.

Building A Budget

We are going to address what it will cost to make your project happen. This will include identifying what you are going to pay yourself. If you haven't done this before, or become frazzled when trying to put a dollar amount on the value of your time, this is a moment to pause and take a breath—here is your cue:

> DEEP breath in.
> DEEP breath out.
> DEEP breath in.
> DEEP breath out.
> Repeat as needed.

While figuring out these elements can be challenging, paying yourself, any collaborators, and your project partners is critical to the success of your proposal and the work itself. So roll up your sleeves and let's dig in.

The process of building a budget helps you create a complete and thorough financial plan for your project. This financial plan is critical to broadly outlining your **project management**, understanding where you'll need to invest cost and effort, and demonstrating to your funder that you don't just have the vision, you have the know-how to make it reality (Creative Capital, 2018).

You might be asking yourself—how can I know what this is *really* going to cost when I haven't even begun this project?

Welcome to the wonderful world of building something from nothing. You find the answers to this question by working through your project income and expenses step by step:
1. Gather project expenses and income sources.
2. Organize expenses and income into categories.
3. Assign dollar amounts to each item and category.

Identifying and Organizing Project Expenses and Income

Let's take the first step towards tackling the budget for your project. Any project budget contains two categories that are fundamental from a financial perspective:

- Project expenses
- Project income

Project expenses are what you need to spend money on to make the work you're creating happen. This includes equipment, tools, collaborators, and other costs we'll get to in a moment. **Project income** refers to anything you receive to support your project, most often in the form of money. This can include grant funding, personal funds, **crowdfunding**, **in-kind donations**, and other possibilities which depend on the specific type of project.

Let's start with the cash that must leave your pockets to make the project "go."

Artists in Action

"I learned very quickly when I'm making a budget for a grant to make sure that not only are all of my collaborators that are involved in the grant are paid well for their time, but that I'm also paid well for my time. It's something I learned very quickly, that actually grant panels want to see that you're also taking care of yourself and that you're not just going to put yourself into debt by funding this project."

—Adam Rosenblatt

Identifying the Expenses

Here's the bottom line. You need money to bring your project to life. By carefully outlining what you need to spend and how it fits into the larger scope of your project, funders can better understand how your project works beyond the narrative of the **project description**. Ultimately, you want to use your budget to prove to funders that your project is a strong investment of their resources and demonstrate concrete elements that support its proposed impact. The first step to accomplish this is to break down the answer to this fundamental question: What will the money be used for?

What Will the Money Be Used For?

There are a few categories to consider to successfully answer the above question.

Personnel. For collaborators, you need to know and calculate their hourly rates.

- Are you working with other artists or institutions?
- How will they be compensated?

Marketing. Most projects require some marketing and communications to be successful. This can include both physical materials and digital marketing.

- How do you plan to market your project?
- Where do you plan to market your project?
- Which social media platforms and audiences best suit your project?

Facilities. You need to know what it costs to use any space or facility necessary for your project, including performance venue and practice space.

- Does your project require space to be presented to the public, like a recital hall, studio, or gallery?
- What about space required for the creation of the project, like a recording studio, rehearsal space, or filming location?
- If appropriate, where will you store oversized project-related materials such as lighting, sets, or backdrops?

Travel. Be sure to include both travel and lodging costs for personnel, and shipping costs for any necessary equipment.

- Will travel be required to complete the project?
- Will you need to ship project-related equipment or materials?

Materials and Equipment. If you are using your own equipment, you can include that as a cost. You can add to your project income by listing it as an **in-kind donation** from yourself. If you need to purchase a special piece of equipment to make this project happen, you should include this in your budget as well.

Administration. Administrative efforts require compensation as well. While some grants cover grantee administrative costs, not all grants do. Check the grant's instructions before you include this in your costs. Whether or not a grant covers these specific costs, it is important to have a clear understanding of the time and cost of the administrative work involved in a project. It is often this work that makes or breaks the success of a project reaching the finish line.

———————

Before we leave this section, some items are **non-allowable expenses**. Repayment of personal debt, along with routine overhead costs like regularly rented housing, studio space, or office space, are generally not allowable expenses.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 7-1**. Begin to brainstorm expenses for your project.

Don't worry about any expenses you forget the first time you draft your budget. You can always come back to this and adjust things. Right now, we're sculpting in clay and it is malleable. The most important thing is to start breaking these cost areas down and defining them for first yourself and, ultimately, your reader.

Artists in Action

"One of the things that I learned that day is, me needing money is like saying nothing. That's what everybody says, 'I need funds!' What would those funds go to? Be specific."

— CJay Philip

"Not only do you write the grants, but you've got to practice and you've got to do the marketing. You've got to rent the halls and load the truck and all of the things that go into all that too, right? You don't have the luxury to not be strategic about how you do your funding."

— Andrew Kipe

Identifying the Income

Next, let's outline the funding sources that will support your project. While the grant you are applying for may make up most of the funding for your project, listing other sources of funding and **in-kind donations** shows that your project will maximize the investment of grant funds. Just as we had to explain what the money is used for, now we need to share with potential funders the other available sources of financial support for the project. We now explore where the money comes from.

Where Is the Money Coming From?

Once again, if we break this down into a few categories, things will quickly fall into place.

Grants or Foundation Funds. This includes all grant funding. This can come from a variety of organizations, including non-profits, foundations, and governments, among others.

Business or Organization Donations. Some businesses and organizations will offer funds or donate space, advertising services, or products, often in exchange for listing and promoting the business as a sponsor.

Crowdfunding or Individual Donations. Funding can include money from a GoFundMe or other **crowdfunding** campaign, or a personal contribution from a patron, family, or community member.

Personal Contributions. Ask most artists about a project they developed and you will almost always find that part of their journey includes a personal contribution to overcome a funding gap and show an investment in their work. Putting forth some of your own money to create a proof of concept to share with potential funders is not uncommon. It is, in fact, often what helps an artist take the first steps towards realizing the project and building the necessary momentum to go from "nothing" to "something."

Sale of Services or Products. Depending on the type of project you are developing, you may need to include ticket sales, merchandise, CDs, or anything else that would generate earned income.

In-kind Donations. **In-kind donations** refer to non-monetary contributions of goods and services for which you would have otherwise paid. For a typical arts grant, this often includes performance space, loaned equipment, or individuals donating their time and expertise. They are important for a couple of reasons:
1. Help make the project (or aspects of the project) viable, as financial resources can be limited.
2. Show buy-in or support for you and your project from collaborators, organizations, and partners.

This in-kind support can, when used strategically, create additional credibility for your project. This is especially important because some funders may be more inclined to fund projects that show evidence of existing support from other organizations, groups, or individuals. Hopefully it also creates a bit of FOMO (fear of missing out) for the grant panelist and helps convince them to move your application forward in the review process.

Dig Deeper in Exercise 7-2. Start brainstorming sources of income for your project, just like you did for the expenses.

Artists in Action

"You now have your artists fees and that's the one thing I do love about grants. It allows me to do one of my favorite things, which is pay artists– pay my friends."

– CJay Philip

Categorizing Expenses and Income

The next step is to group your expenses and income into categories that make sense for your project. Categories help tell the story of how your project will work. They also provide an opportunity to include contextual details about equipment, personnel, space needs, and the related financial implications that can be challenging to summarize concisely in a project description.

Expenses

- Personnel
- Marketing
- Travel
- Administration
- Materials
- Value of in-kind contributions

Income

- **Crowdfunding**
- Grants
- Business donations
- Personal
- Sales
- In-kind contributions

Dig Deeper in Exercise 7-3. Put this into practice by organizing the income and expenses you have brainstormed for your own project.

Length and Detail of a Budget

Now that you have your project expenses and income grouped in categories that support your **project description**, it is time to think about the length and detail of your **budget**. Take a moment and review the requirements for your grant. Many granting organizations ask for budgets to be no more than one page. Use the whole page to fill in funding details about your project. Keep in mind that correct formatting of your budget and all other submitted materials for your specific grant is a critical first step in the review process.

Too Much Detail to Fit on One Page?

As mentioned above, most funding providers for individual or independent artists require a one-page

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budget. With that in mind, many of the examples in this section will be structured around a one-page budget model.

Depending on the scope of your project, there may not be enough space on the page to capture all the expenses or income sources that you identified. One solution you can use to meet a single-page budget requirement is to determine which items could be combined without losing detail. For example, rather than listing performer fees by concert, combine them into one budget line item called "performer fees."

Not Enough Detail to Fill One Page?

Conversely, your project might not have that many elements regarding expenses and income. One approach that can be helpful is to consider ways to break down your costs into more specific items. Rather than one line item for the category of "marketing," list the different ways you want to market your project, such as using social media, distributing physical posters, or attending similar events to talk with patrons.

Assign Dollar Amounts to Each Item and Category

If you are reading these words, then woo-hoo! You have reached the final part of this process and that can only mean one thing—it is time to start assigning dollar amounts to each expense and contribution. These individual expenses and income sources are called **line items**. Each line item typically includes a category, specific service, cost breakdown or description, and total cost. For example, if you need to rent a performance space, you could list the line item this way.
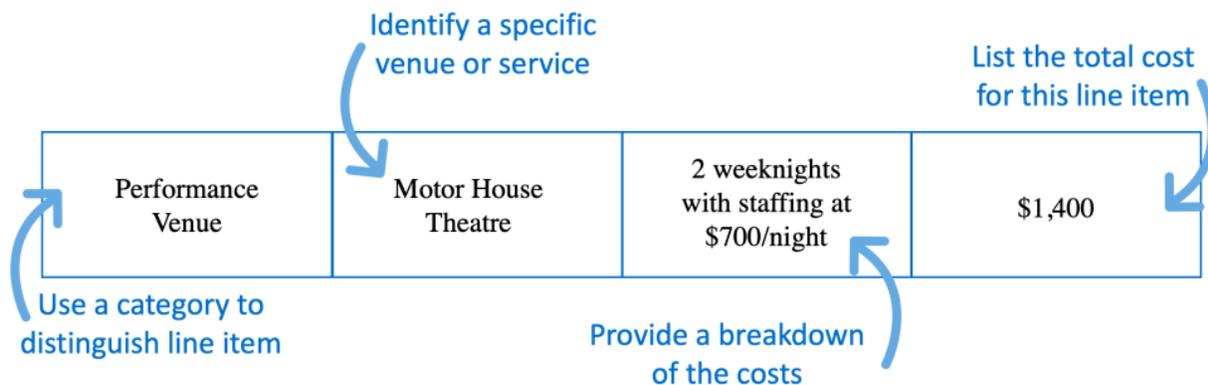
Figure 7-1. Sample Budget Line Entry.

This process requires two distinct skills:

- **Research.** This means searching the web for everything about your project like it's your job (because it is). This includes costs of physical materials related to your project, rehearsal spaces, venues, recording studios, artist fees for co-creators, etc.
- **Informed guesswork.** Think of this like packing for a long trip with a single bag—you don't know exactly what the weather is going to be like, but the future you needs to be warm enough, dry enough, and comfortable with whatever the world tosses at you. Now take that metaphor and apply it to dollar amounts.

Ultimately, wherever possible, assign a specific number amount along with a source for your cost. This shows the reviewer that you have a firm idea of the projected costs, and they can count on your ability to complete the project on the proposed budget. It also shows that you did your homework. Sometimes it is impossible to know the exact cost. In those cases, do your best to make an estimate by researching a similar product, space, or service with a known price. In this scenario, it is a research/informed guesswork combination.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 7-4**. Explore pay scale resources from established arts organizations.

Once you have dollar amounts assigned to each of your line items, you can finish assembling your budget. Keep it looking clean by rounding off amounts to the nearest whole dollar. Add up the subtotals for your budget categories and include them as well.

You can continue to modify your budget as your project changes, but the three-step process of identifying expenses and income sources, organizing them into categories, and assigning dollar amounts provides a solid starting point.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 7-5**. Assign expense values for your own budget.

Artists in Action

"The best advice that I ever got about fundraising was from Dean Fred Bronstein. He said, 'Jessica, money follows leadership.' That was so encouraging to me because it reminded me that if I'm just doing my job well and building relationships in the community and serving, staying focused on the service part of my work, that the fundraising will fall in line."

– Jessica Satava

Telling the Story through Numbers: Successful Models

In this section, you can review an example budget that needs improvement. Then, you evaluate the revised version to compare the difference. Proposed costs must make sense for the project (or be **reasonable**), fit acceptable costs established by the guidelines (**allowable**), and have a specific and definite use (**allocable**).

Original Budget

Read through the original budget below to determine if you can catch any issues with the line items or format.

Description	Amount	Details
PRODUCTION EXPENSES		
Administrative & Commission Fees		
Production coordination fees	2,000	40 hours at $50/hour
*Composer fees	3,000	6 composers at $500 each
*Audio/Visual support for concert	600	12 hours at $50/hour (6 hrs meeting, 4 hrs editing, and 2 concerts)
Student Performer Fees		2 concerts at $200 per concert per musician
*Strings	1,200	Violin, Viola, Cello at $400 each
*Piano	400	
Percussion	400	Marimba, Vibraphone, Portable Accessories
Winds	800	Flute and Clarinet/Oboe at $400 each
Venues and Transportation		
ABC Retirement Community venue	0	In-kind contribution
Peabody venue	0	In-kind contribution
Transportation	100	Ride shares and percussion transport
Marketing/Promotion	200	Facebook ads, fliers, programs
Entertainment/Reception	100	Post-concert reception at Peabody (ABC venue has no fee)
Rehearsal snacks	100	
EXPENSE TOTAL	**$ 8,900**	
Funding Sources		
Peabody Launch Grant	5,000	*Items covered by grant
ABC Retirement Community	300	
Personal Contribution	400	
Crowdfunding campaign (GoFundMe)	1,000	
Private donations	2,300	Solicit donations from retirement community residents
REVENUE TOTAL	**$ 8,900**	

Room for Improvement

Let's take a critical look at the original budget above.

Format and Organization

- It is easier to read a budget when the total cost is in the far right column.
- The performer costs are similar—combine them to make space for more granular detail

elsewhere.

- Using categories is a great way to structure your budget, but make sure to include subtotals for the income or expense of each section.

Amounts difficult to read in the center of the table

Include subtotals for categories

Combine similar items

Description	Amount	Details
PRODUCTION EXPENSES		
Administrative & Commission Fees		
Production coordination fees	2,000	40 hours at $50/hour
*Composer fees	3,000	6 composers at $500 each
*Audio/Visual support for concert	600	12 hours at $50/hour (6 hrs meeting, 4 hrs editing, and 2 concerts)
Student Performer Fees		2 concerts at $200 per concert per musician
*Strings	1,200	Violin, Viola, Cello at $400 each
*Piano	400	
Percussion	400	Marimba, Vibraphone, Portable Accessories

Figure 7-2. Suggestions to improve the format and organization on the budget.

Specificity

- Be more specific about the administrative needs.
- Be more specific about the compensation for composers. What are they creating?
- Some **line items** are unclear, such as the Entertainment/Reception line—are the funds already secured? How are they being used?
- When **project expenses** exceed the total possible grant, many applications require that you indicate what the grant will fund. This could be done more clearly.

Description	Amount	Details
PRODUCTION EXPENSES		
Administrative & Commission Fees		
Production coordination fees	2,000	40 hours at $50/hour
*Composer fees	3,000	6 composers at $500 each
*Audio/Visual support for concert	600	12 hours at $50/hour (6 hrs meeting, 4 hrs editing, and 2 concerts)

What does the asterisk mean?

What are the composers creating?

What activities comprise the administrative hours? It's over 20% of the cost but not clear what it means.

Figure 7-3. Be specific about expense and revenue line items.

Details Matter

- For items with costs that can be reasonably estimated, round numbers like the Transportation line item indicate that the grant writer has not estimated the actual expense.
- Although the Marketing/Promotion budget is small, these expenses would be clearer as separate line items.
- A successful **crowdfunding** campaign requires active marketing and promotion, which is not indicated in the Marketing/Promotion category.

Description	Amount	Details
PRODUCTION EXPENSES		
Venues and Transportation		
ABC Retirement Community venue	0	In-kind contribution
Peabody venue	0	In-kind contribution
Transportation	100	Ride shares and percussion transport
Marketing/Promotion	200	Facebook ads, fliers, programs
Entertainment/Reception	100	Post-concert reception at Peabody (ABC venue has no fee)

Include actual estimates when available

Include all marketing expenses, such as crowd-funding campaign

Break out into separate lines

Figure 7-4. Appropriate details build credibility and demonstrate that you have done the research.

Fundraising and Donations

- Even when receiving a service or product as an **in-kind donation**, always list the estimated cost. The **in-kind support** can then be listed under income or funding sources.

- A personal contribution communicates that the artist has some "skin in the game" and can help reviewers take the artist more seriously. Don't overcommit yourself. You can also make in-kind contributions to your project.
- A large gap in funding could create concern for a funding committee if not secured.

Revised Budget

The updated budget below includes revisions based on the critiques we just went over. Review how it has changed.

EXPENSES	Details	Amount
Personnel Costs		**Subtotal $ 8,500**
Production coordination fees	40 hours at $50/hour for coordinating performances and rehearsals, coordinating meetings, and creating promotional materials	2,000
*Composer fees	6 approx. ten-minute compositions at $500/each	3,000
*Audio/Visual support for concert	12 hours at $50/hour (2 hours meetings, 6 hours editing, and 4 hours setup & recording for 2 concerts)	600
*Performer Fees	7 Peabody student performers at $200/ performance	2,800
Rehearsal snacks		100
Venues and Transportation		**Subtotal $ 402**
Retirement Community venue		75
Peabody venue	Goodwin Hall at $75/day rental	75
Transportation	3 Ride shares from Baltimore to Towson at $84/ round trip	252
Marketing and Promotion		**Subtotal $ 347**
Entertainment/Reception	Post-concert refreshments at $75/concert	150
Advertising	10 days of targeted Facebook ads at $10/day	100
Printing	Staples, 50 fliers at $20, 250 programs at $77	97
EXPENSE TOTAL		**Expense Total $ 9,249**

Items covered in part by Peabody Launch Grant

FUNDING	Details	Amount
Peabody Launch Grant		5,000
Peabody Institute	In-kind venue donation of Goodwin Hall	75
ABC Retirement Community	Includes general funds and in-kind venue and reception donation	450
Private donations	Personally solicited contributions from retirement community members	2,324
Crowdfunding campaign	GoFundMe donors gain early access to recordings, as well as process updates and sneak peeks	1,000
Personal contribution	8 hours of production coordination at $50/hour	400
REVENUE TOTAL		**Total $ 9,249**

Budgets clarify the financial narrative of a project. After reading this example, do you have a clear idea of where the money will come from and how it will be used? Do the costs seem reasonable? Are all the uses specific and clear? Where would you ask this artist for more details, and where do you feel they could save some space?

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 7-1. Project Expenses Brainstorming Activity
In this activity, you'll brainstorm potential expenses related to your project.

1. Find your favorite note taking materials.
2. Set a timer for five minutes.
3. List out any possible expenses you can think of that you might need to execute your project.

This is just a draft, so no need to be concerned about the order or organization for now. If you get stuck, imagine the project happening in your head and walk through the processes, people, and materials you'll need to create the final product. Keep adding to the list if you think of things as you advance through this chapter.

Exercise 7-2. Project Income Brainstorming Activity
Just like you did for the expenses, take a few minutes to brainstorm about sources of income for your project. Set your timer for another five

minutes. Add a new section to your notes for income. Try to think outside of the box and challenge yourself to be as specific as possible. For example, instead of just writing "individual donors" as a funding source, brainstorm where you might find these donors and how you can connect with them.

As with expenses, appropriate sources of income will depend heavily on the content and goals of your project. If your project is interdisciplinary, consider grants related to all the disciplines that make an appearance. If your project has a social justice theme, research local nonprofit organizations whose missions align that might be able to provide in-kind support. If you are proposing a project that is more ongoing in nature, consider revenue sources that can make your project financially sustainable beyond the original grant funding. Again, this is a work in progress that will continue to evolve along with your project.

Exercise 7-3. Categorize Expenses and Income
Access your notes with your draft list of expenses and income sources from Exercises 7-1 and 7-2. Using the categories in the chapter as a starting place, begin to organize your items into the appropriate groups. Create new groups as needed and remove the ones that don't fit for your project. The goal is for the categories and individual items in your budget to create a clear picture that helps reviewers visualize how the project will work. More importantly, it shows how the grant funds will be allocated to achieve the intended impact(s).

Exercise 7-4. Pay Rate Resources
One challenge in building a budget can be setting your own rates, or establishing reasonable rates for other artists. The American Federation of Musicians publishes recommended pay scales, shared below.

- American Federation of Musicians [1]
- AFM Los Angeles chapter pay scales [2]
- Nashville Musicians pay scales [3]

Other artistic labor unions (AGMA,[4] SAG,[5] Equity,[6] to name a few) also create pay scale agreements with organizations which you can use to assign values within your budget.

Exercise 7-5. Assign Expense Values
Review the categorized list of expenses you created in Exercise 7-3. Consider the following questions:

- What are the expenses to which you can easily assign precise dollar values?
- Which ones are leaving you stumped?
- Who can you ask or where can go you for more information for those items that you're less sure about?

Exercise 7-6. Budget Resources
For more information about creating a budget, review these resources:

- Budget Basics for Artist Fundraising [7] provides a detailed overview on building a budget from *The Creative Independent*.
- Making a Project or Annual Budget [8] provides a detailed process for creating line items for an artistic project from *Creative Capital*.
- Budget Tips and Samples [9] includes budget tips and samples from *Creative Capital*.

Key Takeaways

Creating a detailed **budget** that thoughtfully and creatively reflects your project narrative is imperative to writing a strong grant proposal.

1. www.afm.org/departments/freelance-membership-development
2. https://afm47.org/allscales.html
3. www.nashvillemusicians.org/scales-forms-agreements
4. https://www.musicalartists.org/
5. https://www.musicalartists.org/
6. https://www.musicalartists.org/
7. https://thecreativeindependent.com/tips/budget-basics-for-artist-fundraising/
8. https://creative-capital.org/2015/02/12/page-handbook-goes-project-annual-budget/
9. https://creative-capital.org/content/docs/Budget-Tips-Examples-2017.pdf

- Your budget is a tool that tells the story of how you will develop your project in terms of resources.
- There are three steps to creating a budget:
    1. Gather **project expenses** and **income** sources.
    2. Categorize expenses and income.
    3. Assign specific dollar amounts.

- Your budget should support the narrative created by your proposal.

As you go through the budget creation process, keep these points in mind:

- Your budget should support the narrative created by your proposal. Tell your project's financial story through your categories, the order of your line items, and details in your descriptions.
- Refer to the grant instructions and guidelines frequently, as they provide the formatting details and expected budget categories.
- Expenses are evaluated on being reasonable, allowable, and allocable. Proposed costs must make sense for the project (or be **reasonable**), fit acceptable costs established by the guidelines (**allowable**), and have a specific and definite use (**allocable**).

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in <u>About the Artists</u>. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- Jessica Satava on After the Initial Success, What She Wish She Knew Earlier, and the Day of an Orchestra Director
- Brad Balliett on Iterative Improvements and the Most Difficult Part of the Process

Jessica Satava on After the Initial Success

What did you learn after your first successful grant proposal?

ZF: After your first successful grant proposal, what did you learn? What were your takeaways and then how did that impact or affect the way you went after the next one or the next project?

JS: I think when you're a musician or when you're an administrator, we know that time is a limitation. There are so many things that we could be doing with our time, practicing, paying the bills, talking to donors. Sometimes it feels really difficult to devote the time that we need to sit down and write a grant.

But when you get one and it comes through, it gives you that confidence. It's so renewing and fulfilling to feel like somebody out there sees that I can solve a problem in my community and believes that I have the tools to do that. *That is an incredible feeling to know that somebody has confidence, that the work we're doing is meaningful and [they are] willing to support it with a significant chunk of money. That really means something.*

Then it propels you forward to be that much more tenacious and that much more focused on your goals.

Then you start thinking creatively. Okay, well, if they would fund that, then what about if we did this next cool thing that we've been thinking about and let's plan for next year and let's start setting all of this up so that we can be in a really good position to ask again next year from this foundation. Or this foundation has a slightly different spin on it and we can take it in a different direction. It just feels good. It builds your confidence, and you know that you're not wasting your time.

ZF: I love that. And so, you become more daring and more creative with each step?

JS: Absolutely. The more that you feel like people are getting on board with your mission and your project goals, the more you feel empowered to think more creatively, more innovatively and collaborate with more people.

ZF: Does this tie back to that piece of advice you shared from Dean Bronstein around money follows leadership?

JS: Absolutely. ***Business as usual doesn't excite funders, and innovation requires leadership.*** So, that is 100% a Dean Bronstein advice moment.

Jessica Satava on What She Wish She Knew Earlier

What do you wish you knew when you started?

ZF: So, I want to ask a question then, knowing where you are now in that process, if you could talk to yourself at the beginning of that journey, what would you do differently or what do you wish you knew when you started?

JS: As a classical musician and as a result of the training and the formality of the environment of classical music, at least up till the last couple of years, there's this barrier, right? Like if somebody gives you a set of guidelines for something, you don't ask questions, you do everything they say when you're submitting, like for a competition or something, you follow it to the letter and you hope for the best. You turn it in by the deadline and you hope that all went well and that you're going to get it. You're going to get into the competition. And there's just really no conversation. It's just, I do what I'm supposed to do and hope that that gets me where I want to go.

What I've learned is that the key to all of this is asking questions. So, just kind of working to break down that barrier in our minds, that [misconception that] we can't have a conversation about these things. The people at these foundations and these granting organizations are there because they care about solving problems and supporting innovation and they want to talk to us. So when I learned that I could call and ask questions, it really was awesome because it did two things:
   1. It kept me from wasting my time if it wasn't an opportunity that really was applicable for my organization.
   2. It helped me build relationships within the foundations and the organizations that were giving, you know, distributing the funding that led to me having an increased opportunity to get some grant money from them.

ZF: That's a great discovery. So, really going to the source and not being afraid to ask the question.

JS: Absolutely.

Jessica Satava on the Day of An Orchestra Director

What does the day of an orchestra director look like?

ZF: You've shared with us the moment where it kind of really clicked for you where like, I want to work in this environment, building this orchestra, this collective sound. If you were to talk about what the job and what the work is, and break it down into categories of what your day looks like, what is it that you're doing, because some of the work you're doing is being in front of the orchestra and you're out in the community representing the orchestra, but then there's behind the scenes work. And I was wondering if you can talk about some of that world for us.

JS: Absolutely. So, the number one most important part of my job is raising money to ensure that our programs and our orchestra and our artists can be sustained by the organization. I love that because I have to say the best advice that I ever got about fundraising was from Dean Fred Bronstein. I was embarking on my new career and I was kind of transitioning away from Peabody and moving to Johnstown to come and do this work, he said, "Jessica, money follows leadership."

That was so encouraging to me because it reminded me that if I'm just doing my job well and building relationships in the community and serving, staying focused on the service part of my work, that the fundraising will fall in line, will fall in lock step with all of that.

So fundraising is a major part of it. Of course, then there's the production side, the artistic operations side. There's the programming planning, which is super fun. *I love the artistic programming side of my work, collaborating with a conductor to bring all of these ideas and this vision that he has for our community to life. That's incredible.*

Of course, there's lots of logistics. I spend a lot of time writing checks, paying bills, providing financial statements to the board, I spend lots and lots of time working with them to support their leadership in our community and to make sure they have the information they need to make decisions for all of us. I'm a manager. I manage a lot of staff. I manage 70 employees of the orchestra, so I spend a lot of time hearing from people, listening, solving problems. It's just, it's such a fascinating job because I honestly get to do everything you could possibly imagine doing. I've really learned a lot.

Let's see. The other thing that I've really had a chance to focus on that I never did before coming to this job is marketing and communications, promotional work and PR (public relations) for the orchestra. Setting the tone for the organization in the community through that work has been incredible. I've enjoyed that so much. Learning how to use data to drive decisions has been really fun for me.

So what am I missing? I feel like there's a lot of things that I didn't tell you, but… oh, oh yeah! The collective bargaining agreement. So, I get to bargain with the union for the terms of our agreement with them, with the orchestra. So, that's been a really interesting part of my work. I feel like I'm this close to having a labor law degree, or I could, but that's been really fascinating for me too.

Brad Balliett on Iterative Improvements

Have you ever tweaked an idea from a rejected submission?

ZF: Have you ever had an idea, you believed in the idea, you kept working on the idea, and then you

submitted a grant [and] it didn't get picked up? Then you learned in the process of that, how to tweak it a bit more and resubmit it for another opportunity? Has that ever happened?

BB: Definitely, yes. There's almost always a grant out there that seems tailor made for whatever project you're doing. Each grant is almost like a draft for a better version of that same grant, because even the act of typing out what you want to do, how you're going to spend your money, what you're going to do the third week versus the fourth week, and how you're going to assess your success helps to organize your thoughts.

Sometimes it's just the act of writing a grant that makes you organize some things that you realize, I didn't have a plan for that! And it's a darn good thing that I had to write this out, or else I would have been improvising in the moment and thank goodness that didn't happen.

Honestly, I think if you're improvising on a grant application, that comes through a little bit. But the next time you write the grant, when you say, well, I thought this through last time I wrote this grant. Then it's actually your plan and then it turns from improvising into confidence and that confidence comes through. So it's well worth taking a couple stabs at something.

Besides the fact that there's no grant I know that does not like to see repeat applicants. A dismissal is really an invitation to try again. And probably most people that ultimately get those big, pie in the sky grants (you know, like National Endowment for the Arts or something), they've probably been trying a bunch of times. The people on the committees are probably saying, this is the person or this is the group that's doing the kind of sustained work that we want to support. How do they know you're doing the sustained work? Because they've seen you applying seven years in a row. They say, well, this has legs, they're supporting themselves. Now we want to give you some support.

Brad Balliett on the Most Difficult Part of the Process

What part of the grant proposal process do you still find difficult today?

ZF: What part of the grant proposal process do you still find difficult today?

BB: *The part that I still find really difficult is probably finding the right words. Because after enough time with a group or as an individual, you have certain work samples that you really stand behind. You feel really personally connected to [them] and you feel like [they] really represent the best of you.* That's a gift because those are kind of untouchable.

You've got your recordings, your videos, whatever. It's that trying to unlock what's the combination of words that expresses what we're trying to do? It's going to get right at the heart of it in a way that the person that's reading this says, "I understand. And I'm right there with you!" The difficulty is that you just don't know who's reading your words. You can have an idea of the set of values that the institution that's giving the grant stands for and the type of projects they've funded in the past, but it is a person that's reading your words.

There must be a way to still be professional and polished and still feel like you're talking directly to the person that's reading these words, that's going to put it not in this (no) stack, but in this (yes) stack. That's something that I'm not sure there's ever going to be an answer for. We have to just do our best every time and kind of throw it up in the air.

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8

PROJECT TIMELINES

Planning When Are You Going To Do It

Overview

In this chapter, you learn how to…

- List the fundamental requirements of grant timelines.
- Identify best practices for formatting timelines.
- Construct a timeline that reflect details and logistics to support your project narrative.

In this chapter you will build your project **timeline**. The timeline helps you develop realistic expectations for yourself and your project partners and allows grant committees to evaluate how thoroughly you have conceptualized your project.

This can feel overwhelming at first. Keep in mind that these documents simply tell the story of your

project from a different perspective. Along with providing clarity to the fiscal needs and requirements of your project, funders want to understand how you will go about developing your project over the course of the grant period or grant cycle. Your project timeline is the tool that provides a 30,000-foot view of your logistical plans to the reader of your project description–from the moment funding arrives to the moment you share your work with the world. The timeline is an opportunity to outline the necessary steps of your project and convince the granting organization that your project has a viable execution plan.

Creating a Project Timeline

At this point you've developed your budget and the ability to tell the story of your project through numbers. Now it's time to share with the grant panel how you plan to make your project happen by creating a project timeline.

Every large project needs a detailed plan for you to know if it is on track. In less organized instances, this can look like a pile of sticky notes or scribbles in notebooks and scraps of paper. We've all been there, and sometimes a little disorganized brainstorming can be the first step in ideating what your project will look like. But as you seek funding, you need to translate that data into an organized and informative format to convince a granting organization of project success. Let's talk about a different approach that helps you organize your project into manageable steps and increase the likelihood that your funder says "yes" to the proposal.

Most grants have a grant cycle or grant period in which the funds they award must be used. A project timeline creates a structure for you to outline and break down the necessary tasks for your project to be successful within that time frame. Timelines also help you develop realistic expectations for yourself and your project partners, including those who are responsible for different pieces in a collaborative project.

Last, the timeline helps grant committees evaluate how thoroughly you have conceived of your project and whether you have the critical thinking and planning skills to execute it successfully. Have you ever used the "I just wing it" approach? Let's map things out a bit more concretely.

Artists in Action

"You can run into some really insane obstacles sometimes, you know. It's like being nibbled to death by little ducks, all the little problems you have to solve. But if you have that one core idea that inspired you in the first place, that kind of fire at the very beginning, that's what I found is kind of the driving force through the whole thing."

— Adam Rosenblatt

The Key Components

As mentioned above, a **timeline** is a task list that helps you stay on track. There are four important items to consider as you craft the timeline for your project. They include **major events**, **dependent** or **minor events**, **reporting requirements**, and **internal deadlines**.

To clarify this process, let's look at an example of a New Collaborative Work for one dancer and one musician.

Major Events

Major events are the important milestones for your project. If you are launching a product, this would be your launch date. If you are putting together concerts, these would be the concert dates.

Examples for the New Collaborative Work application include the following major events:

- Soft premiere
- Final concert

Dependent or Minor Events

Minor events are smaller events that are required for the major events to move forward. If you are performing new commissioned works, this could be the date you need to receive the completed scores. If you are creating a product, a date for finishing an initial prototype or receiving basic materials.

Examples for the New Collaborative Work application include the following minor events:

- Confirmation of venue, audio engineer, and videographer
- Final score deadline
- Final choreography deadline

Reporting Requirements

Some grants include **reporting requirements** while the project is in progress and after it has concluded. You will want to make sure you build time into your schedule to capture the required data points that your grant requires.

Examples for the New Collaborative Work application include the following reporting requirements:

- Mid-project budget and progress report
- Final project report including performance attendance, recordings, and career impacts

Internal Deadlines

Attach **internal deadlines** to the major tasks required for your project. Building these checkpoints for your project shows detailed planning, and helps reviewers check your estimates for how long the project will take.

Examples for the New Collaborative Work application include the following internal deadlines:

- First draft of score and choreography
- Workshopping and rehearsal of music and dance
- Marketing strategies

Dig Deeper in Exercise 8-1. Use the examples and categories above as a guide to list the key components of your own timeline.

Break Down Large Tasks or Events

When large tasks or events feel overwhelming (and they will), break them into smaller parts in your **timeline** to show the funder that you understand the necessary steps to complete your project.

Using the example from the New Collaborative Work application, the task "final score deadline" has several subtasks:

- Determine project parameters (e.g., use of media, electronics, etc.).
- Deliver first draft.
- Workshop score with musicians.
- Revise score.

There won't always be space for this much detail on one page, so you will need to be thoughtful regarding where you include more details. Consider approaching the more self-explanatory aspects of the project with less text so you can focus on the details that may be most relevant for you, your project partners, or the grant committee.

Artists in Action

"I had to write all of these things down and really be very clear and intentional about what I was trying to accomplish: who all the key players were going to be, what it could bring to the embassy, how does it benefit the embassy to engage in this project, and what would the benefit be for me and the person I was trying to honor."

— Khandeya Sheppard

Estimating Your Project Timeline

First, determine the amount of time you have for your project. Be sure to work within the grant parameters or grant cycle for your specific grant. Keep in mind any explicit deadlines the granting organization specifies within the grant period.

For instance, many projects take less than a year, so using months to divide the timeline works well. For longer projects, instead consider using three-month quarters for your timeline. Below are some best practices to consider.

- **Include Margin for Error**. The first 1–3 months may require meetings with partners to re-establish activities and responsibilities, so it is important to have a buffer for scheduling and conversation. Something will go wrong—plan for it in your timeline.
- **Leave Time for Delivery**. Not everything arrives in two days or less! If your project includes ordering equipment or commissioning new work, make sure you build those estimates into your timeline. Reach out to vendors and partners to get estimates about how long you should expect to wait.

- **Build In Wiggle Room**. Funders know that you can't anticipate every issue that might delay your project. Be conservative in your estimates and build in time for correction. This shows forethought and garners confidence that the project goals are realistic and can be accomplished.
- **Make Time to Assess Project**. Make time along the continuum to "assess the state of the project." Every grant project runs into challenges and not everything goes as planned, so demonstrate that you will be monitoring the progress to address issues efficiently. The future you will thank you and so will the funders.

Beware of the Planning Fallacy!

All humans—yes, all humans—struggle to estimate how long it will take to do something. We are good at creating projects for ourselves. We are not as good at factoring in the difficulties we may encounter along the way (Yudkowsky, 2015). Most people refer to those difficulties as problems. But you can also look at these unexpected hiccups as unexpected surprises (or, better yet, happy accidents or opportunities!).

Consider this common example.

> **Artist:** I booked the venue two months ago, and the manager just contacted me to say they cannot honor our agreement. They are double booked.

> **Timeline:** Surprise! You must book a new space. Do not worry, you have built in enough slack into your timeline to find a new venue. Besides, the original space had a terrible parking lot for guests. Now you can find a venue with more accessibility.

It is also important to break your project down into small enough parts so that you can effectively estimate the time each task will take. One strategy that can be helpful is to check your estimates with people who have done similar projects. Your colleagues can be an incredible resource and help you identify gaps in your planning.
"When one is applying for a grant or seeking funding budget time. Budget enough time to do it and, maybe, you don't know what that time is when you're just getting started, or doing this for the first time, but my advice is more than you think. More time than you think is needed to do it."
– Ian Tresselt

Formatting Your Timeline

Different formats work best for different types of projects. For some, a narrative form will work well.

For others, a linear, time-based structure will be the clearest. For a collaborative project, you may want to organize your timeline based on the different collaborators.

Regardless, it can be helpful to try out a number of designs to see which best captures and reflects your project. This section illustrates three different styles of timelines for you to consider as a starting place: linear format, table format, and graphical format. Examples for the sample project New Collaborative Work for Dancer and Musician showcase these different styles.

Linear Format

At its most basic, you can create a timeline linearly in a simple word processing document. This format works well for citations with a lot of detailed information about each item.

Your Name – New Collaborative Work for Dancer and Musician

Timeline

June 2020

- ◦ Creative team meets to discuss ideas for the project and define parameters (multimedia, tech, etc.)
- ◦ Solidify project budget

July 2020

- ◦ Research and contact potential venues, audio engineers, and videographers
- ◦ Develop marketing strategies
- ◦ Composition in progress

August 2020

- ◦ Confirm venue, audio engineer, and videographer
- ◦ Composition in progress
- ◦ **Aug 31 – Composer delivers draft score to performers and choreographer**

September 2020

- ◦ Performers and choreographer workshop score with composer
- ◦ Document workshopping (photo, video, etc.) for promotional use
- ◦ Composer revises score as needed
- ◦ **Sept 30 – Composer delivers final score to performers and choreographer**

October 2020

- ◦ Choreography in progress
- ◦ Workshop choreography with composer
- ◦ Document workshopping for promotional use

November 2020

- ◦ Workshop choreography with dancer and composer
- ◦ Document workshopping for promotional use
- ◦ **Nov 30 – Mid-project budget and progress update**

December 2020

- ◦ *Break from project activities*

January 2021

- Book studio or other location for soft premiere
- Continue workshopping choreography with dancer, composer, and musician
- Document workshopping for promotional use
- **Jan 31 – Choreography finalized**

February 2021

- Rehearse and workshop new work
- Coach new work with mentors or teachers

March 2021

- **Mar 15 – Soft premiere for friends and colleagues**
- Receive feedback from friends and colleagues
- Continue rehearsing new work
- Promote upcoming performance

April 2021

- **April 10 – First Performance**
- Submit project activity report to grant organization

Table Format

Using tables, or multiple columns, you can create a more complex timeline covering several focus areas or partner activities. This is a helpful format to consider if you have a complex project with multiple different pieces or people contributing at the same time.

Your Name – New Collaborative Work for Dancer and Musician

Timeline

		Project Development	**Deadlines & Benchmarks**
2023	**June**	Creative team meets to discuss ideas for the project and define parameters (multimedia, tech, etc.)	
		Solidify project budget	
	July	Research and contact potential venues, audio engineers, and videographers	
		Develop marketing strategies	
		Composition in progress	
	August	Confirm venue, audio engineer, and videographer	**Aug 31 – Composer delivers draft score to performers and choreographer**
		Composition in progress	
	September	Performers and choreographer workshop score with composer	**Sept 30 – Composer delivers final score to performers and choreographer**
		Document workshopping (photo, video, etc.) for promotional use	
		Composer revises score as needed	
	October	Choreography in progress	
		Workshop choreography with composer	
		Document workshopping for promotional use	
	November	Workshop choreography with dancer and composer	**Nov 30 – Mid-project budget and progress update**
		Document workshopping for promotional use	
	December	No scheduled project activities	

Your Name – New Collaborative Work for Dancer and Musician

Timeline

		Project Development	**Deadlines & Benchmarks**
2024			**Jan 31 – Choreography finalized**
	January	Book studio or other location for soft premiere	
		Workshop choreography with dancer, composer, and musician	
		Document workshopping for promotional use	
	February	Rehearse and workshop new work	
		Coach new work with mentors	
	March	Receive feedback from friends and colleagues	**Mar 15 – Soft premiere for friends and colleagues**
		Continue rehearsing new work	
		Promote upcoming performance	
	April	Submit project activity report to grant organization	**Apr 10 – First performance**

Graphical Format

Using a graphical format allows you not only to explain the necessary tasks for your project, but also to show the time they will take. Because you can show duration, this format works well for situations where there are ongoing, long-term tasks as part of your project.

It can also show the progression and dependencies of your project visually. Simple versions can be built in slideshow or spreadsheet software applications, or you could explore web-based apps.

Your Name – New Collaborative Work for Dancer and Musician

Timeline

Tasks (2023 – 2024)	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Define project parameters and budget	X										
Research, contact, and book venue, engineer, and videographer	X	X	X								
Composition and workshopping in progress		X	X	X							
Choreography and workshopping in progress					X	X		X	X	X	
Document workshopping (photo, video, etc.)				X	X	X		X	X	X	
Mid-project budget and progress update						X					
Book studio or other location for soft premiere								X			
External feedback from mentors and colleagues; soft premiere									X	X	
Promote final performance										X	X
Collect reporting material and submit final project report										X	X
Final Performance (April 10)											X

Each of these formats focuses us on different aspects of the project.

- Which format gives confidence that there is adequate time allotted for each step and the clearest picture of how the project would come together?
- Which examples provide enough detail to connect the dots between significant project tasks?

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 8-1. List Key Components
Using the key components presented in the *Creating a Project Timeline* section above as a guide, begin to list the key components of your timeline. Start with the major events, then break those down into dependent or minor events. Remain cognizant of reporting requirements and internal or other external deadlines that are pertinent to your project.

As you go through this process, you may find yourself thinking of new items for the budget that relate to items you've added to your timeline. Alternatively, you may find yourself referring to your budget to fill in gaps in your timeline. This is good! It is critical that your budget and timeline align. They need to tell the same story while adding detail, substance, and context to your project description.

Exercise 8-2. Reflection
After reviewing the linear, table, and graphical timeline formats, consider the strengths and weaknesses of each. If none of these are the right fit for your project, consider what aspects would be needed to create your ideal timeline.

- Which do you think could work best for your project?
- What are the pros and cons of your choice?

Exercise 8-3. Additional Timeline Resources
In the post, How to Create a Project Timeline in 7 Simple Steps,[1] Asana covers creating a project timeline in detail from a project management perspective. While slightly different from creating a grant timeline, the detailed process they outline may give you ideas for improving your timeline and managing expectations for your project.

Key Takeaways

Creating a detailed timeline that thoughtfully and creatively reflects your project narrative is imperative to writing a strong grant proposal.

- Your project timeline creates a structure for you to outline and break down the necessary tasks for your project to be successful within a given period.
- Timelines help develop realistic expectations for yourself and your project partners, including those who are responsible for different pieces in a collaborative project.
- Timeline estimates help grant committees evaluate how well you might execute the project successfully.

There are four key components to a successful timeline:

- Major events
- Dependent or minor events
- Reporting requirements
- Internal deadlines

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in About the Artists. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- Wendel Patrick on Highlighting Strengths
- Lara Pellegrinelli on How To Pitch a Project

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1. https://asana.com/resources/create-project-management-timeline-template

Wendel Patrick on Highlighting Strengths

Can you tell me more about your artistic approach to developing applications?

ZF: We're always kind of in a world observing and then that influences what we're creating and making. But is that the case in this instance, or was it more like, I'm just curious about how this all works and like seeing what everybody else did?

WP: It was definitely more the second. I mean, I would actually say that in general when I'm most certainly influenced by other things I don't really… I almost never purposely look at other things for inspiration. Like, I might hear something and be like, wow, that's really cool and gives me a really great idea for something, but for the most part, artistically, I like to sort of experiment and just see what I come up with.

In some ways that actually was stepping out of a comfort zone to do that, you know. I think artistically, I try as much as possible to not be derivative. Not like a conscious choice, you know, I just like to fiddle with things. Yeah, it was definitely more like if I'm applying, let me see what other applications I think are strong and why.

Honestly, I was encouraged to do that also by the person that I spoke to and it wasn't even so much about the art at all. It was about how are they presenting their art. I would do really specific things like that. I don't know if they helped, but you had to in order to basically say as much as possible about a project.

One of the things that I would do for everything that I introduced or for every project or element, instead of saying what it was, the first sentence that people would read was a quote from someone else about the work. Who knows how successful this was, but whoever is reading that is going to be like, oh, this magazine or this person said this. It's still about the art, but it becomes more about also giving people an idea of what stage you are in your career.

It's just giving people more context than just the art itself. People are always looking for additional information, and if the additional information is that someone else has already said that this is good, you're going to be less inclined to look at it and think that it's not. So really concerted specific choices that I made in terms of constructing the application.

ZF: It sounds like you were really thoughtful around narrative and also very creative in like how you framed it. Because you're right, giving that context before a person engages with a piece of art is really helpful.

I'll give you an example from my own life. I take my daughter to the museum and we're looking at a painting and she's just like, "eh" and then she kind of wanders. But if there's a story I set up, like look at who the person was or what they're doing, then she goes and interacts with them. It's like a totally different response. Of course, that's at the five-year-old level.

So how do you accomplish that?

WP: Oh, yeah. Well, I'll just say that ***you also have to play to your strengths, but a strength isn't a strength unless you make it obvious that it's a strength.*** And what I mean by that is, you know, so I do a lot

of different things. Just, that's just like a factual statement, right? But that can look very different to different people, right?

If you're looking at my grant application and it says that I'm a pianist and hip-hop producer and a beat boxer who does turntables, it sort of sounds like somebody who just isn't particularly focused. Or someone like does a lot of things and maybe is good at one of them or some of them, but not great at any of them. I mean, actually it doesn't sound like this, but these are conclusions that somebody could logically draw.

For me, in my situation, I have to try to mitigate that as much as possible, right? Whereas somebody who is the world's greatest violinist, are they going to have another, different challenge, right? Everybody has to figure out some way to present themselves. But for that grant application, you could present up to 10 different works, right?

So what I did is, my first work wasn't actually a work. The first work was basically a depiction of all of the different things that I do. So represented within that first work, because you can put, I think, up to ten supporting documents or images. I just chose ten things that spoke to all of these different things that I did then as my first work. Then for works two through nine, those were very specific examples of each of those ten things.

So that way we sort of get it out immediately.–like I do a lot of things. Beyond that, you are now at liberty to peruse the rest of the application and make a decision as to whether or not I do any of those things or all of those things well, as opposed to the initial example being like, wow, this guy's really unfocused.

ZF: That's a great point and a really creative way of solving that. Introducing it right off the bat, and then kind of taking the rest of the application to kind of lay out each element of it.

Lara Pellegrinelli on How to Pitch a Project

What advice would you give about how you're pitching a project?

ZF: Once you had that success, you've popped the door open, you've climbed in, you're there and now you're pitching ideas. If you could go back in a time machine and look at yourself, knowing what you know now, what would you tell yourself or what advice would you give yourself about how you're pitching a project?

LP: I feel like once I got in that door, I think still, just basically what I said that there has to be a clarity of idea. There has to be a timeline, there has to be evidence that you know how to do what it is that you're saying you're going to do, and I think that's really what people are looking for. I would say the same in the grant environment.

In the clarity of that language, as a writer, that's something that I know how to do, and I think a lot of artists have to learn how to do maybe more than I had to do because that's part of the craft of what I do. It's not "I play the oboe and I've had to learn how to write a grant proposal." I'm a writer, so I write things and I make things. I would say in terms of the kinds of pitches that the students are doing, when I look back, I would say there's a lot of advice I could give on the pitching and on the proposals.

But maybe just first to acknowledge that, especially for grant language, I would say when I've had to write grant language, it is the hardest writing to do.

It's the hardest kind of writing for me to do because it has to be so super specific, and it has to be so clear and there can't be any room for any misunderstanding. You have to say what everything is about in a paragraph. It's just that little nut. ***It's really hard, even when you know what the project is, even when you have super clarity. To be able to put it down, it takes a long time***. I've helped others do that.

Occasionally, when it's a friend or someone that I work closely with, there are a few people I've worked closely with over the years who have asked me, "I have this grant proposal due, can you help fix the proposal? I've done a draft of the proposal," and it can still take days to do the proposal summary of just looking at the language, really asking yourself, just to say what it needs to say.

Are there any extra words, is it clear? Is there a logical progression from sentence to sentence? It's like playing phrases when you get out the Etude Book. That's what it is that you're doing in the grant summary. It's like an etude exercise, that you have to make this thing and it has to be really perfect.

They're not always perfect the first time that you hand something in that you need to get a grant. It might not be perfect; it might be less than perfect. It might be a B or a B- even but it's the best that you can do. Then you'll get feedback and you'll put it away. And you'll take it out again in a week or a month or a year. You'll look at it with fresh eyes and it'll be easier to fix.

You'll know more than you did, you'll be outside of it and able to maybe tinker with the language. Maybe you will throw it away and start again. Those are all things that we do. That kind of writing, it's just really challenging, it is really hard. It's really hard work because everything has to be exactly where it's supposed to be.

References

Asana. (2020, July 29). *How to create a project timeline in 7 simple steps.* https://asana.com/resources/create-project-management-timeline-template

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9

PROJECT VIABILITY

Demonstrating Why You and Why Now

Overview
In this chapter, you learn how to… • Explain the value of showcasing your work. • List strategies and benefits to consistent documentation of your artistic work. • Articulate the difference between a resume and curriculum vitae (CV). • Integrate your previous artistic work effectively in your promotional materials and applications.

So far, we have covered many topics:

- Developing your artist statement
- Drafting a project description

- Defining your target audience
- Creating a project budget
- Preparing a project timeline

Take a moment to pat yourself on the back. You have invested time and effort in yourself and your ideas. Many people talk about creating something or starting a new project. You have separated yourself from the pack by thinking about and building these materials. Fortunately, this process is repeatable and gets more "doable" with each attempt. As with most things in life, the hardest part is taking the first step.

The materials outlined above (**artist statement**, **project description**, **target audience**, project **budget**, project **timeline**) help tell the story of you and your project. In this chapter, we explore how your résumé and work samples provide the opportunity to strengthen the alignment between your previous work experiences and artistic projects and success with your proposed project.

When thoughtfully connected to your proposal, both your résumé and work samples serve as powerful tools of persuasion to funders. Additionally, they help you stand out amongst other applicants and give the grant reviewer the chance to experience your artistic world.

Establishing Your Credibility

To begin, let's discuss a few tools that can support your application, including your **résumé, curriculum vitae** (CV), **bio**, and **website**.

If you don't have all of these, that is okay. This is an opportunity to take inventory of what you have so that you can develop missing elements in the future. Both our artistry and our **portfolios** are works in progress, and we all have areas we want to improve. This is a chance to gain clarity as to areas in which you might want to grow.

Here we define each component and how they can support your work in a grant application. The first obstacle for grant applicants is distinguishing between a résumé and a CV. The application may request either and you need to know which to use and how to set it up to support your project.

Résumé

Résumés are used for many reasons—to request auditions or apply to competitions, summer festivals, scholarship applications, grants, and teaching positions at all levels. Your résumé provides the reader with an overview of your most relevant qualifications, skills, and experiences (Beeching, 2010). It's an opportunity to detail the highlights of your background that are specifically relevant to the situation. This means you will likely create a different résumé for each application, each tailored to the specific context. Résumés are typically limited to one page, or occasionally two.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A **CV** (curriculum vitae or "course of life") is a comprehensive document that provides more extensive documentation of your experience in a format comparable to that of a resume, but it goes into greater detail and typically has no page limit. CVs are commonly used to apply for academic positions.

Artist Bio

Now, let's talk about effective **artist bios**. Perhaps it is easier to start with what a bio isn't. A bio is not merely a list of your accomplishments or a chronology of your life history. Instead, an artist bio is a snapshot of you in text. It's an opportunity for readers to learn who you are as an artist and why you do what you do.

A bio serves many purposes, but at its core it is a marketing tool in paragraph form that highlights what makes you stand out as an artist. It gives audiences a way to feel connected with you as a person. This becomes incredibly helpful for presenters when they are making a case for you to their audiences. It also helps the media speak about you effectively and, if you're working with management, provides talking points for them with potential presenters, partners, or future collaborators.

Website

This brings us to the final item on our list—the **website**. A website is a piece of digital real estate. All artists need professional websites to present their work to the world (Herstand, 2017). No matter what your individual career path holds, a website is where potential audience members, students, collaborators, presenters, or donors can learn about you and your work. When you meet someone or interact with their work, what do you do? You search online to learn more. A website offers you complete control over how you share your story and work with the world.

Cultivating Your Professional Materials

Now that we have defined these components, take a moment to consider what elements you have and what you might need to create or revise. Let's circle back to the earlier point about cultivating those materials to support your project.

With any project proposal, your continued goal is to align your mission and past or current artistic work with the project. This is also the case with your résumé, CV, bio, and website. Each grant has specific requirements regarding these materials. A project description and résumé may be requested, or you might be asked to submit a project description with a link to your website.

In addition to ensuring clarity and clear organization, it is important that you align your professional materials to support the project. For example, this means that for a new interdisciplinary work, you highlight your past interdisciplinary work on both your résumé and website. You might consider emphasizing the collaborators, the role you played in the project, and a digital link to access the work. This helps the grant panelist understand the type of work you do and it also builds confidence that you have a record of success with project development. It is how you demonstrate your expertise or specific skills relevant to the project. The more you can connect and show successful outcomes of past projects, the greater the chances of obtaining support for your current ideas.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 9-1**. Explore resources to help you build and refine your professional materials.

Artists in Action

"Anything that you put out is a reflection on you."

– Wendel Patrick

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"I think relating [what you do] to an artistic process and project development, really being able to communicate what the values are, your goals, and really thinking about how what you do resonates with a donor, whether it's a corporation, a foundation, or individuals. Because you're really talking to individuals, regardless of whether or not you're doing institutional fundraising. It still is very much about this relationship."

– Jeannie Howe

Showcasing Your Work

Your résumé, CV, bio, and website are all powerful tools for you to showcase skills and experiences that support your proposal. Now let's turn our attention to your most powerful secret weapon—**work samples**. Work samples offer a moment when your project can truly connect with the panel. They serve as a vehicle to build enthusiasm for your work as an artist and display your creativity in new and interesting ways.

Works Samples Overview

Each grant you apply for will have specific requirements regarding your work samples, and part of your job is to understand what you can and cannot submit to support your application. As we see from the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance Rubys application, one common request from funders is that at least one work sample should relate directly to the project. Keep in mind this does not need to be a polished video or finished product, and can be a draft version. Below are more examples we see from the Rubys application:

- Script or book synopsis
- Storyboard
- Installation layout
- Draft drawings
- Thematic outline
- Rehearsal audio or video

Note that many organizations require current work samples from within a three- to five-year span. Plan to continually update your **portfolio** to showcase more recent work.

The Power of Work Samples

Once you submit a grant proposal, it ends up in a pile on someone's desk or in their inbox. During the review process, evaluators often look at many applications in a short period of time. Often, they may be reviewing proposals that address similar issues or share aesthetic similarities.

As Creative Capital notes:

"Your entire application—including words, images, audio, and video—is an exercise in persuasion. As an applicant, your job is to show the evaluators that you have a terrific and innovative idea, and you have the capacity and experience to pull off that idea. Essentially, you want to prove to the granting organization that they would be missing out by not joining you on your extraordinary creative journey. Great work samples will help make this happen" (Creative Capital, 2018).

By choosing relevant, high-quality work samples and presenting them professionally, you can engage reviewers, draw their full attention to your project, and build a better case to persuade them that your work deserves funding.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 9-2.** Read Austin Kleon's article called "Three Reasons to Show Your Work."

Capturing great documentation of your work is often a defining factor in securing funding for your project (Creative Capital, 2018). This does not mean that you must invest thousands of dollars in equipment. Your smartphone is an incredibly powerful tool that can provide more than enough multimedia footage, images, and sounds to support your application.

What often separates a great application from a good one is the artist's ability to feature thoughtfully-selected work samples that allow the grantor to understand the artist's work and see the potential for "what could be" with a given project. Just as you have developed your skills as an artist, approach how you capture and select your work samples with the same level of interest and care.

The strongest work samples will capture your sensibility and areas of exploration. For evaluators who don't know you, **your work sample is your work**—it's the single way they will experience it (Creative Capital, 2018).

Artists in Action

"There's really nothing that speaks to the project's capacity and to your ability to put on projects [more] than work samples and audio/video score samples. Whatever it is, it is strong irrefutable evidence of your past [ability] to get it done. So, I made the conscious choice with a couple of projects to invest heavily in making sure that the documentation was as good as I could possibly make it. So far, it's really paid off."

—Adam Rosenblatt

Document, Document, Document: It's All Valuable

Now that we've shared the power of work samples, let's discuss how you can avoid struggling to find materials at the last minute before applying. As mentioned above, capturing great documentation of your work is often a defining factor in securing funding for your project (Creative Capital, 2018). One of the most effective strategies you can implement is to build a practice of capturing your artistic process at regular intervals.

More and more artists are using video, audio, and images to perform, promote, and distribute their work. A secondary goal of this resource lies in developing your skills to create, edit, and distribute professional materials yourself. Self-producing your own media has become increasingly easy as

software applications streamline the process and lower the learning curve for creating attractive videos and clear recordings.

As your career grows, you need to capture images, drafts, or short videos of ideas you are developing. These items do not need to be polished or perfect. The goal is to capture your process and utilize the tools you have readily available to document your progress. You can do this daily, weekly, or on some other timeframe that works for your schedule. The most important step is that you begin to intentionally capture your work with consistency.

In addition, consider a mix of formats, like video, audio, and still images. Aim for a wide variety of multimedia materials. This collection provides options that you can pull from to highlight where you are in your process and to demonstrate aspects of your current proposal. By intentionally documenting what you're doing as an artist, you will amass a library of work samples which you can continually draw upon to bring the viewer behind the scenes to experience your work in a more intimate way (Flynn, 2019).

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 9-1**. Explore resources and tips to create media and work samples.

Connecting the Dots

- What if you don't have content yet that directly represents your proposed project idea?
- Isn't the need for funding to create your project the whole point of applying for a grant to move forward?

This is a common question that emerges as artists begin to develop skills in project funding. Let's consider some ways to work around this common challenge.

> "It's possible that some of the work you are pitching in an application won't be far enough in development for you to provide documentation. Don't worry—you can use previous work samples to help the evaluators imagine what your future work will look like. The work samples should build a bridge between what you've done before and what you propose to do in the future. […]
>
> Do not assume that the evaluators will make the connection between your past and future work, however. Instead, help them connect the dots where you can by filling out descriptions of the work" (Creative Capital, 2018).

Let's look at two projects where artists do not have work samples directly related to their project proposal but are still able to communicate the potential of the project: Sprocket and Árabe.

Example: Sprocket

A new work for the Akropolis Reed Quintet composed by Steven Snowden, [Sprocket](#)[1] joins reed quintet and a rideable percussion bicycle.

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1. https://www.newmusicusa.org/projects/sprocket-a-scrap-metal-sextet-composed-by-steve-snowden-for-reed-quintet-rideable-percussion-bicycle/

Project Overview

> "A new work for the Akropolis Reed Quintet composed by Steven Snowden, *Sprocket* joins reed quintet and a rideable percussion bicycle designed and fabricated by Detroit resident and Kresge Arts Fellow, Juan Martinez, and performed on by local experimental percussionist, Zac Brunell. Like Juan's other larger-than-life, rideable public art pieces, his percussion bike will use pedal power to create numerous sounds while having three wheels for stability. As the percussionist pedals the bike (while fixed in place or not) a set of custom-designed and fitted levers and gears will create several effects that change depending on how fast the bike is pedaled. Juan and Steven will work collaboratively alongside Akropolis and Zac to determine what sounds the bike produces and how to incorporate them in *Sprocket*."

Notice the concise and engaging language used to frame the project for the reader. The description manages to outline all the creative members of the project, their roles, and how the project will unfold for the **target audience** in four sentences—yes, four sentences. Brevity and clarity can be powerfully persuasive forces. In addition to the written text, the artists include supportive **work samples**. Again, observe how the [Akropolis Reed Quintet](#)[2] uses two specific yet varied work samples to help tell the story of their collaborators to give a sense of the potential work to the grant organization.

Juan Martinez, Metal Fabricator and Bicycle Artist

The first video in the "Project Media" section of the application focuses on [Juan Martinez](#),[3] metal fabricator and bicycle artist. This 3-minute film brings the viewer into his world—his studio. The video captures his work, enthusiasm for what he does, and passion for sharing his art in his community. It tells a story and provides clear examples of what he creates.

Steve Snowden, Composer and Percussionist

The second video is Steve Snowden's [*A Man with a Gun Lives Here*](#),[4] a 10-minute work for three percussionists. There are two important points to observe regarding this video in the application:

- The video displays the composers incorporation of unconventional materials to generate sounds for the piece and performers.
- It doesn't feature the applicants performing.

Why are these points important? First, the applicants highlight a video that shows the engaging approach of composer Steven Snowden and how he weaves elements of theatricality into his pieces. Again, this helps to create a stronger narrative around the proposed project for the grant evaluators. Second, this video reflects the composers innovative and playful approach towards percussive devices in his work. One particular moment that highlights this quality can be found at the 7:00 mark in the video, where Snowden has the percussionists moving a paper bag filled with ball bearings across the head of a bass drum to generate sounds for the piece.

2. https://akropolisquintet.org/
3. https://vimeo.com/271480743
4. https://youtu.be/AJhtaJHvB_0

Summary

With these two work samples and thoughtful writing, the applicants brought this project to life for the reader without creating or showing a single work sample that stems directly from the proposed project.

Example: Árabe

Middle Eastern immigrants have substantially influenced Mexican food, language, and architecture–but what about the music? Vocalist and composer Amanda Ekery[5] explored the musical influence Arab immigrants had in Northern Mexico with Árabe.[6]

Project Overview

> "Middle Eastern immigrants have substantially influenced Mexican food, language, and architecture – but what about the music? The al pastor taco comes from the Arab shawarma in which meat is cooked vertically on a spit; over 4,000 Spanish words are of Arab descent; and many churches in Guadalajara are constructed in the style of the Moorish Empire. But what about the music? I am going to discover and research the musical influence Arab immigrants had in Northern Mexico through interviews with elders in my community and Dr. Alfaro Velcamp, working with musicologist/organologist Hannah Grantham, and composing and recording music for my 11-piece ensemble that is truly representative of who I am, informed by research and family tradition."

Again, notice the clear questions that serve as the catalyst to succinctly define the objectives of the project in four sentences. The composer and primary researcher of this project, Amanda Ekery, thoughtfully outlines connections between Middle Eastern and Mexican cultures to contextualize the project inspiration and masterfully highlights her other research partners in the proposal to strengthen the research aspects of the project.

Keys With No Purpose

To support her project, Ekery shares the audio from one of her own compositions *Keys With No Purpose*[7] to display her ability to fuse composition with her penchant for research. This song elegantly aligns the Árabe proposal as it displays the applicant's ability to create works influenced by research.

Some Short Songs

In the second video Some Short Songs,[8] Ekery shares the range of her compositional interests and abilities by including a highly contrasting work. In addition, Ekery frames both the first and second videos by outlining specific points regarding her work as a composer to support her application.

5. http://www.amandaekery.com/
6. https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/projects/arabe/
7. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9npojfW2RXM
8. https://youtu.be/pu02A4PeYUo

Research

Lastly, Ekery submitted a research paper, "Syrian Female Musicians: The Last Hundred Years," to demonstrate her "dedication and thoroughness when creating and executing a project." Notice how Ekery continues to support her track record of success via these work samples to show the quality of her work and her ability to bring a project to fruition.

Summary

Using a well-crafted text that highlights Ekery's desire to connect intersecting cultures, a sense of place, artistic inspiration, and musical innovation through research, the applicant provides an intriguing idea to the reader that is only strengthened by their choice of work sample that highlights their compositional skills.

With three work samples and thoughtful writing, the applicants brought this project to life for the reader without creating or showing a single work sample that stems directly from the proposed project.

These two artists' applications successfully persuaded the funder to back them without a single work sample specifically related to their project. Without materials directly representing the future project, these artists chose to focus on the quality of their previous work, track record of success in standing up new projects, and alignment of their available work samples with the goals of the project proposal. Through thoughtful curation and by providing context within the work sample descriptions, they clearly demonstrated their artistic work and ability to successfully complete the project.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 9-3**. Reflect on the two example projects discussed in this section.

Get Feedback

As with all projects, it is helpful to get feedback on your work samples from friends and colleagues before you apply. The perspectives of someone who knows your work well versus someone who has never experienced it before will differ greatly, so it is helpful to seek feedback from a wide range of people. ***Reviewing your project with someone else who has not been working on it is critical.*** They bring their own viewpoint to your work, and this can inform revisions you want to make before submitting your application (Creative Capital, 2018).

Artists in Action

"I don't believe in inviting people to performances. Invite people to come and see the work happening. The concerts are fruit. Invite people to the planning sessions with your community. Invite them to the first rehearsal, when things are a little crazy but there's a lot of excitement. Invite them to see things that are basically sweat events, right? Events where everyone is sweating. Invite them to those things."

– Alysia Lee

"If you end up in a scenario where you have a funder who's putting so many different constraints on the money for you to get it, you've got be

willing to walk away. Find somebody who's willing to actually work with you because they believe in your project, not because they're trying to force your project into their mold."

— Andrew Kipe

Putting Your Project in Context: Why Now?

The question "Why Now?" is frequently posed to artists as they approach a granting organization. In fact, this is one of the questions you were asked to address when you developed your project description. Like a boomerang, here it returns regarding your **work samples**.

This is your opportunity to reflect on your work samples and determine how well your selections align with your creative goals.

Step back from your application and review your work samples and project description.

- Do you find alignment?
- Do the materials support one another?
- Do the materials present a clear narrative?

In the Sprocket and Árabe examples above, the materials strengthened the proposals by demonstrating the **viability** of the project and how it aligns with the trajectory of the artist's creative path. Akropolis skillfully connected each work sample element back to the text and project's objective of developing a new work by Steven Snowden for the Akropolis Reed Quintet and a rideable percussion bicycle. This thoughtful curation and **alignment** between their work, their partners, and the project goals creates a convincing application that connects all the dots for the potential funder. The same quality of alignment comes through with Ekery's materials in that they tie directly to the personal connections that the artist establishes within the project overview. The text and video links directly back to the artist and the project itself to strengthen the overall proposal.

Every application provides different pathways and challenges to highlight your work. Your goal is to demonstrate how the proposed project aligns with where you are in your artistic journey. Just like everything in life that is rewarding, it takes practice. If you struggle to find an answer to "Why Now," take a few steps back and review these three points:

- Your **artistic mission**: What inspires you?
- Your **project description**: What is it for?
- Your **audience**: Who is it for?

What are the common threads or points of intersection between your mission, project, and audience? After you can answer these questions, you can confidently outline how your project is the next logical step in your artistic development.

Another point to consider as you create this outline, beyond why this is the right time for YOU to create this project, is why this is the right time for this project to exist in the world (Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, 2017). Once these elements are clear to you, you have a better chance of succinctly articulating them to the grant reviewer. Likewise, take the time to apply the same rigor of exploration

to the materials that support the project proposal. Thoughtfully selected work samples serve as the strongest advocate for your craft and creativity.

> **Dig Deeper Exercises**
>
> **Exercise 9-1. Presenting Yourself and Your Work**
> Sharing your work is an integral part of building relationships and creating a vibrant artistic career. We have linked several resources below to support you in developing media to showcase your work. Explore the following Peabody LAUNCHPad web resources for tips, templates, and ideas to create compelling portfolio materials:
>
> - Presenting Your Professional Materials[9]
> - Building a Website[10]
> - Media Development[11]
> - Create Media LibGuide[12] from the Arthur Friedheim Library collection
>
> List three things from each webpage that you can do to improve your professional materials.
>
> **Exercise 9-2. Three Reasons to Show Your Work**
> Read author Austin Kleon's article entitled, "3 reasons why you should show your work."[13] Reflect on any ways in which you are already showing or at least documenting your artistic work. You can apply these ideas towards building your work samples:
>
> - Not only does documenting your work give you the opportunity to see your progress, but it also provides you with material to comb through and, when appropriate, use as work samples for projects.
> - You can bring evaluators into your process.
> - Feedback is informative—online, from peers, and from grant panelists.
>
> **Exercise 9-3. Reviewing Work Sample Examples**
> After reviewing the two example projects in this chapter, what do you notice about their work samples? What did you find particularly effective about the samples they chose? Alternatively, were there elements you felt were disconnected from some aspects of their project or identity? Consider how you can devise your own strategies to connect the dots between your existing work samples and the project(s) you want to create.
>
> **Exercise 9-4. Reflections**
> Consider the question of "why now?" and reflect on the reasons the timing for your project is important.
>
> - What are the common threads or points of intersection between your mission, project, and audience? Why is this an important step in your career as an artist?
> - What is currently happening in your life, in your community, or in the world that supports the need for this project?
> - What are the consequences if you cannot or do not complete this project?
>
> Consider how your answers to these questions might impact how you frame your artistic mission, project description, and other elements of your project and proposal.

Key Takeaways

> "Keeping track of what you've done helps you better see where you've been, where you are, and where you're headed. It also helps you share your story with others."

 9. https://creative-capital.org/content/docs/Budget-Tips-Examples-2017.pdf
10. http://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/career-services/marketing-self-promotion/building-a-website/
11. https://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/career-services/marketing-self-promotion/media-development/
12. https://musiclibrary.peabody.jhu.edu/c.php?g=1062111&p=7722667
13. https://austinkleon.com/2016/03/24/3-reasons-why-you-should-show-your-work/

     –Austin Kleon

The examples we reviewed above lead us to these key points (Creative Capital, 2018; Kleon, 2016):

- The primary role of your application is to persuade. Every aspect of the application needs to accomplish this task—from the words and the images to the audio samples and the video.
- Your **work samples** serve to make you stand out and show a track record of excellence.
- Document your work. Include the work in progress as well as the final products.
- Your work sample is the only way a funder unfamiliar with your work can experience it.
- The strongest work samples share who you are and indicate where you want to explore.
- Provide context for your work to help evaluators connect the dots. Use descriptions of each sample to explain your selection and connect them to your proposal.

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in <u>About the Artists</u>. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- CJay Philip on the Most Difficult Parts and Feedback
- Adam Rosenblatt on the Challenge of Grants

CJay Philip on the Most Difficult Parts and Feedback

What part of the grant proposal process do you still find difficult?

ZF: What part of the grant proposal process do you still find difficult? Although, it sounds like you don't find many difficult, because you're just capturing them.

CJP: Well, I had plenty of grants that I haven't gotten. I don't get most of the grants that I apply for, but I keep plugging away. There are a couple areas that are really challenging for me. The stats and data speak is not my strength, and there's always some stats and data speak that they watch. You're like, what? I'm finding that material. So right now, we're rethinking on an ongoing basis [how] we're capturing our data.

I'm capturing what's important to me. But also I know some of those things are important to funders, but I just recommend that people sort of on an ongoing basis, really think about the bigger picture of the work that you're doing. There's usually people out there in the field who are also doing that work:

- What does that look like?
- What does the research say about the work that you're doing?

So I'm very intuitive. No one had to tell me that kids were going to be more on their phones, parents are going to also be on their devices, and texting each other from the other room–that somehow [that] wouldn't create some sort of distance between them and their relationship?

The research later went that way. I was like, you didn't have to tell me that. In 2010, I saw the writing on the wall. That's why I started the FazaFam [a Baltimore-based family strengthening program

building bonds and memories through music, movement, and games]. Same thing about isolation and loneliness. No one had to tell me that that was detrimental to one's health, especially for senior citizens that are losing so many other friends. But now the research that's coming out of Boston is saying that loneliness and isolation has a similar detrimental pattern to your health as smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. That's crazy.

I actually have to pay closer attention to what researchers are saying because of our funders who speak research, who speak data. Again, it goes back to my first point–understand your funder and speak to them in their language. That to me is sort of the area that I need to work on.

Importance of Feedback Sessions

CJP: There's one other thing, the biggest challenge for me. There's this one grant and I literally am so on the fence. I've applied for it twice, and everybody in Baltimore's like, 'oh, you you should apply for that,' or 'you'd be great for that.' I was like, 'Yeah, everybody tells me that, but every time I apply for it, I don't get it.' Oh yeah, I definitely want the feedback session, because you've got to tell me why I didn't get this grant.

I always do the feedback session to find out. I do highly recommend that. Sometimes you think that whatever you think it was, that it's like being on a blind date. Like why didn't they like me, you know? Why didn't they call me again? No idea. You have to go back and ask them. If they say, 'Do you want to follow up to find out?' Always say yes.

Always go get that follow up—you will glean and learn. I remember with this one grant, the one that I didn't get, I was like 'Whew!' So glad I didn't get that. Her biggest feedback was literally you lost out by like a 10th of a point, like we got down to the points. They loved your idea. All three of the people who audited yours said that it should be funded at the full amount. Nobody even said less money. So it literally was like between you and somebody who's been writing grants for 10 years longer than you. Like it was just the writing, you know? It was good. It was solid. You would have been funded, you just lost out by a 10th of a point. So don't go changing. That was really helpful because I was like, do I need to revamp that and you know I wouldn't, but like you have those thoughts. 'No, they loved everything about what you did. You just didn't win the grant.'

If we have 100 to give out and we have 300 people applying, guess what? 200 people aren't going to get this grant. Sometimes you're that one, and it doesn't mean that your idea isn't good. I know people who have applied for the same grant every year with almost the same exact proposal, and in year four they finally got it. They were like, I didn't change anything. I just kept saying the same thing, the same thing, and then in year four, okay, you are now a so-and-so fellow.

Working with Funders on their Application

CJP: But the biggest challenge with this one particular grant for artists. The folks that they had reading [the applications] were younger and awesome and enthusiastic, but had less understanding of how art and theater worked. That can be the challenge as artists.

If you're competing in a grant scenario that's not art-based, we can sometimes speak language that a lay person may not understand. You've got to break it down for your like five-year-old nephew, read it to him. If he's not like 'Huh?' then you have a chance.

Adam Rosenblatt on the Challenge of Grants

What are the advantages and challenges of creating a project proposal with a group or ensemble?

ZF: What are the advantages and challenges of creating a project proposal with a group or ensemble?

AR: Yeah, so I don't have so much experience about this yet. I've definitely stayed mostly as kind of a lone wolf, or certainly where it was clear that all the artistic weight was on me, and everybody coming on board kind of knew that. But now I'm part of this new ensemble that has 501(c)3 status, that has a history of getting grants, that has a board, all this stuff. It's definitely a more cumbersome process, but it can be more rewarding, I'm finding.

But it takes much more clear communication. It's easy, I would say, if the hierarchy is really clear and if everybody agrees on the hierarchy going in. Okay, this person is in charge of this or this person is just, like, it's their project in the end. The buck stops with them, good, bad, or indifferent. The buck stops with them. And then everybody's clear and then it can kind of flow down from there.

That was the instance, a little bit, with Timber when I was working with other performers, of course, and with visual artists. The visual artists had a very clear mandate for me from the beginning, like I want to do this piece; I want to know how you guys see visual elements of this piece. It was really great to work with them in that capacity, but it was because the relationship in the hierarchy was clear from the very beginning.

I've approached a couple of times, kind of a work where it's like equal partners at the very top, where it's kind of like co-owned, the project is co-owned by several people. I've found that you have to be very, very clear always. Communication is then the most important thing. The more it's clear what everybody thinks, how everybody feels about this decision or that decision, then you can kind of move forward with confidence. Again, the payoffs can be much greater because you're combining a lot of forces that can have a bigger effect. But the process of steering a ship with more people involved can be tricky. So I found that clear communication is the most important thing in those instances. Yeah.

ZF: That's great. Yeah, I imagine it's a combination of being super clear, and also clear division of, like, who owns what, is that correct?

AR: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, if that's not laid out at day one – then it can always change, of course – but if you don't have kind of buy in from everybody that this is the relationship, this is the structure we agree on. I'm responsible for this, you're responsible for this. And here we go. Then if you don't have that in place, then it's just kind of begging for misunderstandings, for disappointment, for frustration.

The only way around that is just to communicate clearly and to be generous with people. That's kind of a secondary thing but know that it's also easy to get lost in the kind of minutia of the relationships and how you say things, or how you receive things, or something like that.

It's always good to keep in mind that everybody wants to do this project because they really want to see the project succeed. Anything that they're saying or doing is just for the end goal of that, to make the project succeed. It's a good thing to keep in mind when you're in the thick of it.

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10

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Pulling It All Together

At this point, you have drafted your **mission statement**, **project description**, **budget**, and **timeline**, as well as begun to pull together your **work samples**. This is no small feat! Seriously, find a way to reward yourself—even if it is simply walking down the hall to get a snack out of the fridge. Take a moment

to acknowledge the work that you have dedicated towards this process and the new skills you have developed along the way.

Before we get too deep into our celebratory mode of operation, though, it's important to make sure all of the elements of your proposal align. This might involve a few rounds of feedback and revision. Let's take a few moments to talk about the final steps before you upload your proposal and press "send."

Finalizing Your Proposal: Putting the Pieces Together

Alignment

You have encountered the term "**alignment**" throughout this text and here it is, again, to pay you a final visit. This term first appeared as you developed your artistic mission statement, then popped back up as you developed your project description and work samples.

The idea behind this term is to ensure that there is a clear connection or line between you, your **artistic mission**, your work as an artist, your project, your budget, and the work samples that you submit for review. The overarching goal is to build connections between each element of your proposal. So gather your materials for a holistic review.

As you review the individual elements of your proposal, note how well each piece connects with the supporting parts. For example, consider these questions for your project description:

- Is there a noticeable connection to your project in the language you chose to frame your artistic mission statement?
- Do you see how the project that is proposed in the description fits as a logical next step in the progression of your work?
- If so, how? If not, what can you change to create a greater sense of alignment for the reader?

A practical strategy is to identify specific areas where you find gaps, differences, or disconnects between the elements of your application. Then return to those areas to explore new ways of creating connections. Your ability to thoughtfully balance and weave together your artistic values and the needs of your audience will greatly increase your odds of creating a compelling proposal for the grantor.

Similar to considering the funder's perspective when creating your project description, ensure you are deliberately addressing that view as you assemble your final proposal. Take advantage of the extensive research you conducted during the grant review process to get to know their organization and understand their mission. This knowledge helps you frame every element of the proposal in a way that is consistent and relevant to the grantor.

Formatting

Please, please, please study the grant formatting requirements. Every grantor has specific formatting requirements. Granting organizations are interested in creating a level playing field and part of what makes that possible is by requesting that all applicants submit their materials in a specific format. There are numerous approaches to how each organization requests your materials for submission. Your job is

to meet those requirements precisely. These are audience-specific rules, not guidelines. Deviating from their requirements causes your proposal to stand out for the wrong reasons.

Before you begin building your proposal, take the time to understand *exactly* what you need to do.

For example, if each part of the grant application has a specific word or character count, make sure your text is within the given parameters. Do not submit 600 words if they are asking for 250 words. The reader is not fascinated with your prose; instead, the application is not considered.

Take the same approach regarding page lengths. If it asks for a project description that is one page in length, do not give them two pages.

Also, if your grant requires a multi-page document, take note of how they would like each section to be labeled. Frequently, you need to have your name and project title on each page, as well as a header for the specific piece of the application that is being submitted (e.g., Timeline). Here is an example of a clear page heading:

Canyon Chorus – Lower La Barge Box Canyon: Project Description

Ben Cantantino
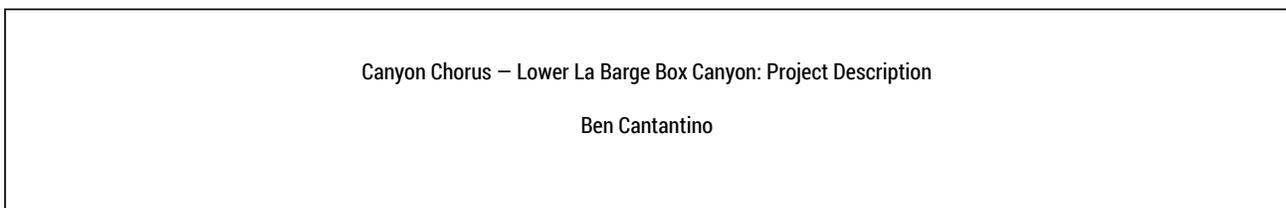
Specifications for each grant will vary. Ultimately, your documents and headers should provide clarity regarding who you are and what you are proposing. Funders want you to be creative. They also need to know that you can follow directions. Failure to comply with basic formatting requirements is an easy (and very avoidable) reason for your proposal to be rejected (Beeching, 2010). This is a simple barrier to entry that most, if not all, granting organizations utilize.

> **Artists in Action**
>
> "Be clear. Be concise. Follow directions! Read the directions and follow them. You might be communicating with someone who doesn't have the level of training that you have. So make sure you give them enough information, but make sure that it's the important information. Don't expect them to just understand the value of what you do."
>
> – **Jeannie Howe**
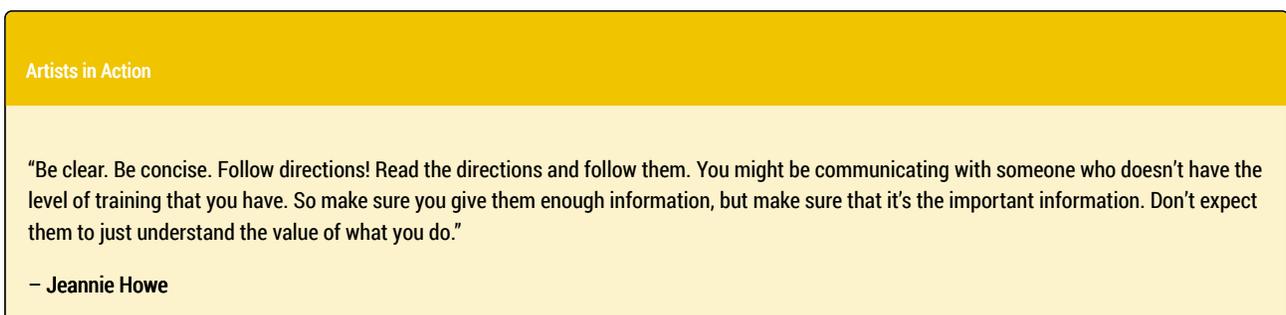
Feedback

Another recurring theme throughout this text has been the need for feedback. Earlier we mentioned the importance of having colleagues review your project description, using the grant's specific criteria to guide their feedback. As you put the finishing touches on your proposal, this is a great time to circle back to your peers with the full application. Ask them if you managed to connect the dots for the reader. You may have been thinking and writing about this project for many weeks, months, or even years, so it is crucial to collect feedback from objective readers who are less familiar with the project. Ask if they are able to find the clear connections between you, your work, this project, and how it fits into the

overall trajectory of your life as an artist. If there are gaps in your design, this is the moment to identify them and adjust.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 10-1**. Read and reflect on how to manage negative feedback.

Submit and Celebrate

After going through several rounds of feedback, proofread your proposal one last time. This is your chance to make any last-minute updates and corrections. Once you're happy with the completed proposal, it's time to hit "submit." Congratulations! Take some time to celebrate, and enjoy the satisfaction of having created something that is designed to help you build a sustainable life as an artist.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 10-2**. Reflect on the goals you articulated at the beginning of this process.

Talking About Your Work

The need for artists to develop the ability to communicate about their work is an important point highlighted repeatedly in this book. Our discussion focuses primarily on how you can clearly articulate in prose who you are as an artist, how that directly connects to your project, and how to frame a narrative that inspires interest and support from potential funders and granting organizations. An equally important skill is how we can best connect with individuals and audiences in person.

Most of the time that you spend on this planet, when you're not grant writing, involves moving through the world, living your life, doing your work, conversing with other humans, and advocating for the work you are creating. Here's the thing to keep in mind—it is impossible to predict who will connect you to the next opportunity or supply you with the financial backing needed to move your work forward. It could be a friend of a friend you meet at a social gathering, someone that attends a performance or gallery showing, or it could happen while standing in line at the grocery store. The point is that this unpredictability means ***you always need to know how to talk about your work*** and be ready when it does happen.

Along with being able to comfortably share who you are and what drives your creative work with those who are not artists, funders and grant organizations often request meetings or a video verbal **pitch** about you and your work as part of the application process. So, there's really no escape here. The world wants you—no, the world needs you—to be able to connect with others about your idea, project, and work in a way that opens the door for exploration, conversation, and support.

You might be thinking: okay—message received. Now, how can I actually do this? Great question. In this section, you'll learn how to construct a verbal **pitch** through several steps that can easily be brought together to create a powerful and engaging narrative.

> **Artists in Action**
>
> "Because you start to feel the prickles of your own soul when an idea that's good comes to you. So you knew that it was good, but you're

communicating about it in a way that other people can get excited about it. And that's really invigorating and that kind of confidence comes from success."

– Alysia Lee

Building Your Pitch

Step 1: What, Who, and How

This all comes back to the questions:

- What is it for?
- Who is it for?
- How will it happen?

What's powerful about these questions is that they get to the root of your project. Using these prompts to help guide our thinking, we can begin to unearth what is driving us to move forward with a particular project. Still, articulating all of this can be overwhelming. It's easy not to know where to begin. Let's begin by breaking it down into smaller pieces. Then we can weave them back together to provide a fully integrated approach in how we talk about our work and its connection to who we are as individuals and artists.

What Is It For?

First, we need to tackle this big question: What is it for? You've done a tremendous amount of work in answering this question while building your application materials. This time, the approach will be a bit more targeted and specific, aimed towards answering the "what" in each of the following prompts:

- What is your project?
- What problem(s) are you addressing, or what idea(s) are you exploring?
- What motivates you to act?
- What is your innovative solution?

Take a few moments to develop one or two sentences addressing each of the "what" prompts listed above. The idea here is to capture the key points you want the listener to understand. Remember, they are not reading these responses. Instead, they are engaging with you in a conversation that you are prepared to have.

What is your project? Think about which elements of your project are most important to highlight for the listener to get a high-level overview of your project and for them to want to learn more about it.

What problem(s) are you addressing, or what idea(s) are you exploring? Clearly identify the "why" of your project. For example, if you are developing a product or new approach to something, you need to be able to explain why you are doing it. Share the driving factor behind this new design. If your project is exploring a concept or idea, articulate exactly what you are thinking about and ***why*** it is important to you.

What motivates you to act? Once you have a solution to the problem or the idea, you must find the link that connects you on a personal level to the problem or idea at hand. Possessing a well-defined understanding of what motivates you to tackle this project helps connect you to your listener. As a culture, we crave personal connection. Think about how to make your project personal and how you can use that strategy to connect with others and strengthen and support your narrative.

What is your innovative solution? The goal in this last "what" prompt is to outline *why* your approach to the problem you're solving or idea you're exploring will work and be of interest to the listener. Distill your ideas down to one or two sentences that underscore how you can accomplish the project and spark the interest of the listener to support you.

Who Is It For?

Now we need to turn our attention to the second question: Who is it for? In this instance, we are breaking this down into two specific questions to help develop our narrative:

- Whom will you serve?
- Who are your partners and collaborators?

Whom will you serve? Remember, there's always an audience, big or small, for anything we create. The point here is to succinctly articulate both who they are and ***how you will reach them***.

Who are your partners and collaborators? No artist is an island, and this is especially the case for most creative individuals when they take on a project. You need to be able to easily communicate who your team is: the community, external organizations, artists, and/or other partners you will be working with to develop your project. This will help you define the project for a listener.

How Will It Happen?

Last, you will want to address the question: How will it happen?

- How are you creating change?
- How is your project funded?
- How can others help make an impact?

How are you creating change? Outline the potential impact for your project. This is your opportunity to think about the outcome of the work you are developing and how it helps, connects with, or impacts the **target audience**.

How is your project funded? Every artist and project has a different answer to this question. You might already have committed partners with **in-kind donations** or **crowdfunding** to support your project. Maybe you have been building a project from personal funds as a starting point and are seeking funding as a next step in the development of the project. Other artists might be operating as a functioning business and need support to expand the reach of their work. Regardless, you need to possess a firm grasp on the financial status of your project. Be prepared to explain how the new funding helps move the project forward, and for longer term initiatives, how you plan to build a framework of sustainability.

How can others help make an impact? This is the moment where you make "the ask" of your listener.

Your goal with this question is to either identify specifically how the person you are speaking with can help you or provide an explicit way for someone to help. This conversation will be different every time, as you are not asking potential funders, granting organizations, collaborators, patrons, and audience members for the same thing. Thus, a crystal-clear understanding of why you are speaking with an individual or organization informs the potential outcome of the conversation. One helpful technique involves identifying the desired outcome and working backwards from that point. This allows you to create a framework for the conversation to help drive the discussion towards the result that you intend.

Step Two: Building the Script—Structure and Talking Points

As outlined above, every conversation is different depending on the situation, context, and specific outcome you are hoping to achieve. While we cannot control where the discussion goes, there is an opportunity to stack the deck in our favor. This is accomplished by thoughtfully creating a structure or pitch to engage the listener as you tell the story of your project.

If you review your notes from Step 1, you may notice a skeletal structure that you can expand with details from your answers to the prompts "what," "who," and "how."

Take a look at this structure as a possible model:

- **Introduction.** Introduce yourself and what you do as an artist (you can access this from your mission statement).
- **What.** Explain what the project is to the listener.
- **Who.** Outline the project's audience and your collaborators and/or partners.
- **How.** Talk about the impact of the project, how it will happen, and how the person speaking with you can help.

Using this framework, cull through your notes from the "what," "who," and "how" prompts to gather the important details of your project and develop your key **talking points** that you can utilize for conversations.

As you begin to shape this material into a narrative format, you will want to keep in mind that less is more for the listener. This requires that you concentrate on highlighting the key elements of your project. A good goal to work towards is a **pitch** that can be delivered in five minutes or less. Anything more than that and people lose focus on what you are saying. If you lose their attention, you have lost their funding or support.

To help you navigate this challenge, consider word count as your partner in persuasion. On average, you can speak about 150 words per minute at a conversational pace. This means your text needs to be 750 words or less. Yes, that's right—750 words or less. While at first daunting, this constraint of

word count can help guide you in the design of your text as it demands deliberate attention to word choice and structure. There is no room for superfluous items or points. Your script needs to be focused, informative, and authentic. Channel your inner Ernest Hemingway. Be merciless with your pitch script. Experiment with what you can remove so that you keep only the essential. It's like you are packing a road trip travel bag—when in doubt, leave it out!

Once you have a draft of your pitch script, take a few moments to review your text and see if it answers the following questions:

- Does it articulate the importance of your project?
- Does it identify who is involved and why?
- Does it include a specific call to action?

These three questions provide an opportunity for you to reevaluate the design of your pitch script and gain insight regarding gaps in the structure of your text.

Last, consider having a trusted colleague, friend, or mentor review your script. Share the three questions listed above and ask for feedback. This will help you uncover what is working and what needs to be improved, with the goal of creating the strongest possible text to present to potential supporters of you and your work.

Artists in Action

"Getting that first positive email back from a grant application was a big boost in confidence and it helped my momentum. A lot. It was a big deal. . . When I was first starting out, grant income was kind of the primary income for whether a project could move forward or not for me. Of course, I would sink a lot of personal resources into it as well—my time and whatever financial resources I could personally put into it. But without a few key grants funding a few key projects, they definitely wouldn't have happened."

— Adam Rosenblatt

Step Three: The Delivery

With your pitch script prepared, now it is time to bring the conversation to life. Before we move forward, let's take a moment to acknowledge that building skills in public speaking is a process. Each of us has skills and abilities that are unique to who we are as individuals. With that in mind, everyone experiences a different level of comfort with speaking publicly. This is an opportunity to grow. If you focus on the process of building the skills needed to speak publicly about your work versus the outcome of each attempt, you will find that your path to improvement is clearer, more focused, and more sustainable.

If you remember anything from this chapter, the most crucial element to use as a guide is that your pitch and delivery need to sound like you. This is where the real work begins. Creating a natural, authentic presentation that is confident, possesses a conversational flow, and sparks the interest of the listener takes time to cultivate. As you begin to develop and hone this skill, below are a few tips to help you get started.

Be Brave—Employ An Eraser

Your **talking points** are a frame that is etched in pencil, not a permanent marker. As you begin to work on delivering your pitch, keep in mind that this is a malleable document designed to support you. It provides a conversational map that organizes your thoughts, and it, much like you, needs to change and evolve. As you work on talking through the text and memorizing passages, you will begin to tweak things to smooth transitions and set up points of interest.

Pace Yourself—The Power of Recording Is Real

Once you have a basic grasp of how your pitch is structured, begin recording yourself. This does not require an elaborate setup. All you need is something to capture audio or video so you can listen back to gain insights on what works and what needs improvement. Pay attention to your pacing.

- Are you rushing?
- Where in the delivery of your text does that occur?
- Are you speaking clearly?
- How's your posture and body language?
- Are you emphasizing the most important points?

Recording yourself can be an incredibly powerful, and at times humbling, tool to help you improve your pitch delivery.

Start Small, Then Build Your Courage

As you get comfortable recording yourself and refining your delivery, the next step is to present your pitch to another human being. This is where things get interesting because it begins to feel real. Grab a friend or colleague that you are comfortable with and ask them to let you share your pitch. Have your listener pretend to be the funder and invite questions. As you go through this process, pay attention to what holds together and what falls apart in your talk. Remember that this is a process, meaning you may need several rounds of repetitions before being comfortable.

As part of this process, you need to find ways to practice talking about your work. So make a list of friends or family members, colleagues, and mentors with whom you can practice pitching. If this is new for you, it takes time to build these muscles. Again, *it's a process: think marathon, not sprint*. Once you get comfortable pitching to an individual, create an opportunity to pitch to a small group of three people and work your way up to speaking in front of a larger group. In each scenario, you make new discoveries about engaging the audience. The more varied the situations, the better prepared you will be in the future to tackle talking in any given scenario where you need to advocate for your work.

These Skills Are on Loan

As artists, we have spent years of our lives developing specific skills that provide us with the ability and power to create things of beauty at will. Yet we all know from experience that if we don't continue to work in the studio, rehearsal space, or practice room, those abilities can weaken. Each of us has an artistic practice that needs to be nurtured and maintained for continued growth and development. Your pitching skills also require this type of support and commitment. So keep in mind that you

need to continue creating opportunities to advance your skills in talking about your work. Much like maintaining your physical body, the muscles of public speaking require regular exercise.

> **Dig Deeper in Exercise 10-3**. View samples of student projects created at Peabody, including a sample video pitch from a recent graduate.

Next Steps

As with many significant moments in life, often the first steps towards a goal can be the most challenging. At the same time, they can be the most rewarding and transformative. Taking risks and stretching our skillset provides the opportunity for us to grow and get a glimpse of our own potential.

All this growing, building, stretching, creating, and developing can be difficult, and with all of this comes the reality that failure will be part of this process. Before you push the button to send your ideas and work out into the grant universe for funding or rejection, try to keep the following points in mind as you navigate the process.

Think about the long game. You may not win a grant the first time out. Rejection does not feel good, but in this arena, it is not personal. It usually takes two or three tries to receive funding, even for veterans. Like any art form, grant writing takes practice, reflection, and time. You have given yourself the time to develop your craft. Consider offering yourself that same level of patience and support as you build your grant writing skills.

Rejection does not mean you are a failure. A grant application that gets rejected is not a failure. Most granting organizations will provide comments or feedback on your application so that you can improve. Often, we grow more from our "failures" than we learn from our successes. After the sting of disappointment subsides, pick yourself up and get to work on learning how you can improve. Take the time to reach out to the granting organization for feedback and make adjustments so you can avoid repeating mistakes.

Recycling isn't just for the environment. You can reuse the material from a grant application, with revision, in future proposals to the same or different funders.

Keep showing up. Funders and grantors build relationships with artists. That process can begin as soon as they meet you. This means attending information sessions about the grant or feedback sessions based on your submitted proposal and seeking guidance from the organization for proposals you may be developing. Get to know your potential backers and help them get to know you.

As artists, we understand that progress in our work is made when we consistently show up for ourselves. It is never easy to create something from nothing, which is what we do each and every day in our craft. It's what makes us inspiring and important to the world. The same principle will be true for every grant proposal that you construct over the course of your artistic life. The more frequently this becomes a part of your life as a creative individual, the more skilled, confident, nuanced, and creative you will become in advocating for your work.

There will be good days and there will be challenging days. Our job is to keep going, keep creating, and keep pushing the boundaries of what is possible.

Dig Deeper Exercises

Exercise 10-1. Feedback

For perspective on how to assess and manage critical feedback, check out Ann Klein's essay on the *Creative Independent*, "On responding to negative feedback: Walking with a broken foot."[1] Respond to the following prompts.

- Which metrics do you want to use to measure your success?
- And what path do you want to explore?
- Does this feedback help me get closer to myself?
- What can I learn from it?

Exercise 10-2. Reflection

Look back at the goals you articulated in the *Exercise 1-2. Goals* activity.

- How has your perspective changed as you've moved through this process?
- Did you address any of your areas of curiosity or improvement?
- If so, what did you accomplish?
- What further steps can you take to continue working those (and other) personal and professional goals?

Exercise 10-3. Learn About More Student Projects

To take a behind-the-scenes look at projects, events, and other career endeavors initiated by variety of Peabody students and alumni, check out LAUNCHPad's Creative Wire blog[2] and Max Q Podcast.[3]

In addition, Mezzo-soprano Maddalena Ohrbach (BM '22) won a Peabody Launch Grant in 2021 for her project, Prison Pipes. In her video pitch, she does a fantastic job articulating why her project is important, what community will benefit, and how her skill sets prepare her to execute the project.

- Watch her full Launch Grant video pitch.[4]
- You can read more about Maddi and her project, as well as other Peabody Launch Grant winners in this post called "Launching Student Dreams"[5] in LAUNCHPad's Creative Wire blog.[6]

Key Takeaways

- Before clicking "submit," find areas where you feel there are gaps, differences, or disconnects between the elements of your application and return to explore new ways of creating connections.
- The ability to comply with basic formatting requirements and deadlines is a simple barrier to entry that granting organizations utilize to prioritize applications.
- Artists need to clearly articulate who they are in relationship to their creative work, how that directly connects to their project, and how to frame a narrative that inspires interest from individuals, audiences, and support from potential funders both in prose and in person.
- Grant writing takes practice, reflection, and time. Your artistic skills were acquired incrementally. Provide yourself with that same level of patience and support as you build your

1. https://thecreativeindependent.com/essays/on-responding-to-negative-feedback-walking-with-a-broken-foot/
2. https://peabody.jhu.edu/creative-wire/
3. https://peabody.jhu.edu/max-q-podcast/
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tv1Tw32xjQ8
5. https://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/career-services/student-alumni-stories/creative-wire/launching-student-dreams/
6. https://peabody.jhu.edu/creative-wire/

grant writing and pitching skills.

Artist Interviews

Below are excerpts from artist interviews conducted by Zane Forshee. Full artist bios and interviews are available in <u>About the Artists</u>. This section includes the following artists and topics:

- Jeannie Howe on Advice on Grant Proposals
- Andrew Kipe on Learning From Mistakes
- Khandeya Sheppard on Navigating Rejection

Jeannie Howe on Advice on Grant Proposals

What do you wish you knew when you first started?

ZF: Thinking back on all of these experiences that you just outlined, which are huge and incredible and wide variety, what do you wish you knew when you first started? Knowing what you know now, what do you wish you could have told yourself when you first started out?

JH: I would say that part of it is ***trust yourself. But also, know what you don't know.*** One of the things that's really important about fundraising is that you depend on content experts. I know for artists, a lot of times, they're the content experts, but there may be parts of their projects [for which] they aren't the content experts. For example, the people who are running the organizations where they're doing their work.

Make sure that you are really listening, and really asking the questions, and really absorbing them, because your job is to be a communicator. What you have to talk about needs to be super compelling and you need to be communicating accurately. You just don't know everything, you know?

I would get to be friends with a lot of different people in the theater. If you had a bad day, you could go down and watch rehearsal. I was counting on my college, if not high school biology, when I was working in the medical sciences and I had to fundraise for research projects, along with the many other things I was doing. So it was understanding your role as an interlocutor, as a translator of sometimes complicated ideas.

Do you have advice of common things to do in grant application?

ZF: Do you have any advice, like common things that you see are like the do's and don'ts? Could you offer a couple?

JH: Be clear. Be concise. Follow directions! Read the directions and follow them. I would say and this is not a don't, but this is something that people don't do a lot—make sure there's money in the budget to run your organization and to pay yourself if you're doing proposals for yourself.

This is another challenge in philanthropy is that a lot of people don't want to pay for general operating or for overhead, but you have to turn on the lights, you have to pay your rent, and, you know, in some cases you have to feed your children. You certainly have to eat. You have to do that. If you don't,

nobody, very few people—and I have been in situations where this has happened—but [there are] very few times when people come back and say, hey, I don't see anything in the budget for you.

You've got to advocate for yourself in that way and understand that if you're part of the whole as an artist, you are part of the whole movement, which includes our responsibility to make sure people understand the value of what you're doing. And that value is represented by a price tag, that this is not the, "oh, it'll be great exposure for you" you know, oh, I'm doing you some kind of favor. No, I mean what you do as artists requires training. It requires time. I guess everybody can try to get a part-time [barista] job, but what we're trying to do is to create a better world and to do our work, right? So yes, I think this would be very high on my list.

Any other common mistakes you see grant writers and artists make?

ZF: Any other common mistakes you see grant writers and artists make and things that they put together?

JH: I think in writing, often people will make assumptions. They have plenty of room, even in a short proposal, to provide details. I think in every field, we get completely immersed in our own bubble of what we do. You have to remember it's important to know your audience. You have to remember that you might be communicating with someone who [isn't] going to have the level of training that you have, and they might not have as broad knowledge. So make sure you give them enough information, but make sure that it's the important information. Don't expect them to just understand the value of what you do, you know? If it's going to have impact on kids, talk about it. What is it going to do? So that's what I would include too.

Andrew Kipe on Learning From Mistakes

Has there been a project that you've had funded that failed?

ZF: Has there been a project that you've had funded that failed? I mean maybe you did the thing, but it didn't have the desired outcome, or it sort of went in a direction that you didn't expect or think about?

AK: Yes, I think, yes. Not every project, not every idea is a good one, right? In a large organization sometimes it's challenging to give projects the time they need to sort of grow and thrive. My rule is it takes three years to start a new initiative, and I've talked about three years a lot just on purpose, right? Because in my mind, that's how it works. I think this [also] applies for individuals. Now small groups don't have necessarily the capital to be able to maybe wait as long. You've got to think about that.

But if you were to start a new concert series and you go out the first year and maybe you only sell 150 tickets to each of the five concerts or whatever, you're like, I don't know, that was a failure. You know, that's not good, right? But you've got to give it time: to market it, to find your audience, all those different pieces.

Hopefully you can find the grant funding to be that bridge to get you there. To be fair, sometimes it just doesn't work. For whatever reason. That post-mortem that we talk about, when something has died, you go back and you figure out why. Well, we were in the wrong place.

I mentioned earlier about the community outreach concerts that we started. We thought initially that high schools would be a great place. Let's go to high schools, right? They've got auditoriums–nobody came to the high schools. Where they came were to the churches, to the synagogues, to the community centers that had built-in audiences already that were doing some level of programming of some sort. It wasn't always music, sometimes they had art shows or different things. But if we were in a high school and didn't have the kids on the stage, nobody cared, right? Even though it was around the corner from whatever marketing research we did around those people.

We learned that lesson and the series didn't die, but we stopped playing in high schools and we focused more on other places. This is tangential to the whole funding question, but I think *you do have to make sure that you're willing to modify your projects and be open to being wrong and tweak them as you go along*. As it relates to grants, I think the important thing for students to understand is, whether it's a one-time funding opportunity that maybe has a report, often they'll have a report out at the end or a multi-level funding, you can change it.

If you start that project and it doesn't work, when you get to that final report that goes back to the funder, you can say, 'Here's what we learned.' You know, we did this and that, we didn't do this, and here's why, right? That's okay. Again, you don't necessarily have to have every piece of everything figured out when you make that application. However, you'll do better having done that if that relationship piece has been set at the beginning too.

Khandeya Sheppard on Navigating Rejection

How do you navigate rejection?

ZF: Because you're talking about partnerships with institutions and organizations, you also mentioned partnering with individuals. If you'd called me and said, "Hey, do you want to do this?" And told me about it? I would have said yes, like, "Yes, I want to do that."

But my question is…

- Did you get to "no" ever?
- If so, what did you do?
- How did you navigate that?
- If you hit a roadblock, how did you wiggle around that?

KS: I will say that not everybody that got asked wanted to be involved in the project. However, I think I over populated my options of people, if that makes sense. I thought about a multitude of different people that this could benefit, knowing that there was a possibility that some people may not want to be a part of the project. *But I had the conviction that I was going to do it anyway.* Even if it was me and my band and that's all that ended up happening, and I had to make some different arrangements around where it was going to happen and how it was going to pull off, I knew that I wanted to have this concert for this person. That was my goal.

What it ended up turning into was the benefit of having these conversations with other people. So, when I did get that "no" from certain individuals, I said, "Well, thank you for your time. Thank you for your

consideration here in this project. If you would like to come and see the concert anyway…" Just to show a favor [to them].

Number one, I don't know exactly what the reason for the "no" was and I didn't want to make any assumptions, right? You want to leave them with the experience of the project anyway. So I offered for them to come to the concert and experience the project anyway, with the hopes that if you do something in the future, we can try to re-engage that partnership.

The most important and key part for me is leaving the door open for people in the future to want to be a part of what you have going on, what your artistic project or your endeavor is going to be. Sometimes it's hard to get the "no", but the "no" helps you dig a little bit further in: were you clear in what you were presenting?

- Was it just not the right fit for that person at that time? You don't really know what's going on with that partner or something else.
- Did that leave an opportunity for somebody else who really wanted to be a stakeholder at the table to come in and have their place in this particular time?

You can find out later in the future, there may be other people like the people you were trying to reach out to to be a part of the project that maybe better suited for what you have going on.

ZF: That makes really a lot of sense. One of the things that really struck me was that you didn't have one person as the linchpin that held everything together, other than the person that you were honoring. Like, that person was kind of the focus, and then everything else was "all are welcome." If you'd like to be part of this, there is room. If you don't, you're still invited. It's all are welcome and however you want to engage.

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GLOSSARY

abundance

the situation in which there is more than enough of something

alignment

the correlation between ideas, projects, artistic disciplines, or values offering the possibility of synergistic collaboration.

allocable

any costs with a specific and definite use

allowable

any acceptable costs established by the guidelines

anchor problem

a stubborn obstacle in your problem solving or ideation process which may feel unsolvable and keep you from imagining novel solutions

artist

a person engaged in creative endeavors; That's you! (Whatever you are doing to create in the world makes you an artist.)

artist bio

a brief narrative that describes who you are as an artist, your art, why you create, as well as your artistic background; see bio

artist statement

a written expression of your current artistic goals, and motivations; see mission statement or artistic mission

artistic identity

a conception of yourself as a creative person, in relation to your art and community

artistic mission

a written expression of your current artistic goals, and motivations; see mission statement or artistic statement

audience

the people interested in your art, project, or performance

audience analysis

the process of identifying and describing people who may use or attend your project; also user analysis

bias

the action of supporting or opposing a particular person or thing in an unfair way, because of allowing personal opinions to influence your judgment

bio

a brief narrative that describes who you are as an artist, your art, why you create, as well as your artistic background; see artist bio

budget

an overview of all expenses and expected sources of income for a project

community

a group of people connected by a common interest, such as geographical location, identity, affinity, or interest

corporate sponsor

a business that provides funding for projects or nonprofits, often in exchange for marketing and publicity

creative agency

the feeling of control over actions and their consequences related to creative work and lifestyle

crowdfunding

the use of small amounts of money from a large number of individuals to finance a new venture; often uses social media and websites to bring people together, with the potential to increase entrepreneurship by expanding the pool of investors beyond the traditional circle of owners, relatives, and venture capitalists

curriculum vitae

a comprehensive document covering artistic projects, education, and experience; common in academia (CV)

decision maker

a person that chooses between options, often limiting what will be offered to the users or audience

demographic

the statistical characteristics of human populations (such as age or income) used especially to identify markets

dependent event

a smaller event that is required for the major event to move forward; see minor event

fiscal sponsorship

a nonprofit organization that can receive and disburse funds on behalf of unincorporated individuals or organizations; often used for grant funds with specific nonprofit-related requirements and usually incur a fee for the service

freewrite

to write without self-censorship or judgement to allow your stream of consciousness onto the page

grant writing

the act of creating proposals with specific requirements for funding from granting organizations

gravity problem

a problem defined by immovable circumstances, either because they are beyond your control or because you are not willing to change them

heuristics

methods of thought consciously or subconsciously used to solve problems, which can vary in their effectiveness for different tasks

ideation

the process of creating new ideas

in-kind donation

a non-monetary contribution of goods and services; see in-kind support

in-kind support

any non-monetary support, such a contribution of a venue, equipment, time, labor, or supplies; see in-kind donation

individual donor

a person who provides funding to projects or nonprofits

influencer

one who exerts influence; specifically, a person who is able to generate interest in something (such as a consumer product) by posting about it on social media

internal deadline

a checkpoint for the major events required for a project

line item

an item listed in a budget, such as the cost of electricity

major event

an important milestone(s) for your project

market segmentation

the process of breaking down markets or groups of people into smaller groups based on shared needs or characteristics; performed to create strategies that cater more specifically to individual groups

mind map

a diagram that is developed, often in a freehand fashion, to capture ideas visually, organize them in a hierarchical manner, and discover relationships between disparate pieces within the whole

mind mapping

the process of creating a diagram to capture ideas visually, organize them in a hierarchical manner, and discover relationships between disparate pieces within the whole; often developed in a freehand fashion

minor event

a smaller event that is required for the major event to move forward; see dependent event

mission statement

a written expression of your current artistic goals, and motivations; see artist statement or artistic mission

non-allowable expense

the generally indirect expense like personal debt repayment, housing rental, or rental of studio space

nonprofit, or 501(c)(3), organization

an incorporated organization created around a mission which serves the public good; nonprofit status must be applied for through the Internal Revenue Service and requires the organization to have a board of directors; a 501(c)(3) designated organization can receive tax-deductible donations

operating support

the funding for baseline, ongoing funding needs such as administrative or creative salaries, office space, insurance, and other recurring expenses

pitch

a concise, compelling description of your project, typically delivered in situations where you are meeting new people, or requesting funding; most often in person, but can be in a video or other medium

portfolio

a selection of an artist's work (such as images, audio recordings, and videos) compiled over a period of time and used for showcasing talents

portfolio career

a working style where you combine multiple streams of income—often creating a mix of full or part-time employment, freelancing or working as a consultant

project description

a grant document which describes your project in detail, sharing what the project is, why it is important, who is involved, and how it will be accomplished; sometimes called a statement of grant purpose, executive summary, or project summary

project expenses

all costs of the project, including funds for marketing, administration, personnel, or facilities; includes planned and actual expenses

project income

the specific funding sources of the project, including grant funds, individual and personal contributions, and in-kind donations; includes planned and actual income

project management

the process to help define the goals and objectives of the project, determine when the various project components are to be completed and by whom, and create quality control checks

project support

any funding for a one-time project, with expenses that are exclusive to that project

psychographics

the market research or statistics classifying population groups according to psychological variables (such as attitudes, values, or fears) including activities, interests, and hobbies

reasonable

the proposed costs that make sense for the project

reporting requirement

the required progress report(s) to the funder while the project is in progress and at conclusion of project

résumé

a short document detailing your relevant artistic projects, education, and experience for a job or opportunity; usually 1 or 2-pages formatted with bullet points rather than prose

scarcity

a situation in which something is not easy to find or get

stakeholders

one who is involved in or affected by a course of action; an interested party that can either affect or be affected by the entity, including investors, employees, customers, and suppliers

stereotyping

the forming or using a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment

sustainable

the ability to maintain your activities over the long term; for many artists, this involves multiple income streams, and the flexibility to pivot when their situation changes

talking point

the most important idea(s) to communicate in a pitch

target audience

a group of people (attendees or users) you expect to take part in your project

timeline

a grant proposal document showing a sequential map of important events, checkpoints, and goals during the grant period from planning to execution

user analysis

the process of identifying and describing people who may use or attend your project; also audience analysis

viability

a measure of the ability to complete work as intended or to succeed

website

a collection of web pages and related content with a common domain name; often includes photos, examples of your art, a bio, and contact information; a primary marketing and networking tool

work sample

the proof of your knowledge and skills; adds credibility when show what you have done; comprise a major portion of your portfolio; includes photos of projects, multimedia recordings, documents, etc.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The artists featured in the Artists in Action and the Artist Interviews sections are also instructors for courses in the Breakthrough Curriculum led by the Peabody LAUNCHPad career services office. To provide diverse examples of artist careers and foster stronger mentor networks within the student population, the expertise of each artist is available to students beyond the sections they teach. Below is a brief bio for each artist and the audio podcast for the full interview.

Brad Balliett

[Brad Balliett](#)[1] enjoys being a musical omnivore, focusing equal parts of his career on composing, playing bassoon, and teaching artistry. Brad is principal bassoon of the Princeton Symphony, a member of Signal and Metropolis Ensemble, a founding member and former Artistic Director for Decoda, a member of the composer-collective band Oracle Hysterical, and on faculty at The Peabody Institute, The Juilliard School, and Musicambia. Brad spends as much time as possible outside, observing birds and trees.

[Audio interview of Brad Balliett with Zane Forshee](#).[2] (44:44 min)

Jeannie Howe

Jeannie Howe is the Executive Director of the [Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance](#)[3](GBCA), an organization founded by artists and organizations to work toward common goals of critical importance both locally and nationally, and to act as a voice for the cultural community. Since 2012, she has overseen a significant increase in membership and programs have grown to include artists awards, professional development (including programs for aspiring arts administrators of color) and region-wide audience development efforts including [CultureFly.org](#). Prior to joining the GBCA, Howe was founder and president of BayCliff Associates and provided management and fundraising consultation for various nonprofit clients, including Everyman Theatre in Baltimore for whom she led a successful $17.7 million capital campaign. Howe currently serves on the Boards of The Leadership Alumni Council (President), Baltimore National Heritage Area (Secretary), and the Baltimore Orchard Project. She holds a B.A. in Theater from St. Mary's College of MD, and a M.A. in Theater from Miami University of Ohio.

[Audio interview of Jeannie Howe with Zane Forshee](#).[4] (49:04 min)

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1. http://www.bradballiett.net/home.html
2. https://tinyurl.com/PY-BBalliett
3. https://www.baltimoreculture.org/
4. https://tinyurl.com/PY-JHowe

Andrew Kipe

With over 20 years of experience in orchestra management, Andrew Kipe is currently the Assistant Dean of Performance Activities at The Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University. As executive director of the Louisville Orchestra, his leadership vision focused on redefining the role of an orchestra in its community with unique experiences that defied the conventional orchestral performance. Kipe served in leadership roles with the Phoenix Symphony, the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, the Portland (Maine) Symphony Orchestra, and the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra.

[Audio interview of Andrew Kipe with Zane Forshee](.)[5] (39:28 min)

Alysia Lee

[Alysia Lee](.)'s[6] full-circle role as an artist, arts educator, teaching artist and arts advocate, gives her a broad perspective of the arts ecosystem. A Kennedy Center Citizen Artist, she is the Founder and Artistic Director of [Sister Cities Girlchoir](.)[7], the El Sistema-inspired, girl empowerment, choral academy in Philadelphia, Camden, and Baltimore in its tenth season.

She recently ended her tenure as the arts education policymaker for the Maryland State Department of Education across five arts disciplines: music, dance, visual art, theatre, and media arts. This year Alysia debut as series editor of Hal Leonard's Exigence for Young Voices, the new choral series uplifting Black and Latino composers for young choir ensembles. Lee also is on the faculties of Longy School of Music of Bard College and Peabody Conservatory. Lee is also a proud Chorus America board member.

[Audio interview of Alysia Lee with Zane Forshee](.)[8] (60:31 min)

Christina Manceor

[Christina Manceor](.)[9] is a percussionist, career educator, and entrepreneur who integrates problem solving and collaboration to enhance and innovate experiences for students, audiences, and arts organizations. Currently, she works at the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University as Assistant Director of the LAUNCHPad career services office, and serves as adjunct Professional Studies faculty for Peabody's innovative Breakthrough Curriculum. She also performs as a freelance musician, pursuing artistic collaborations in chamber music, world music, orchestra, jazz, and improvisation. She co-founded the flute and percussion ensemble [Duo Sila](.),[10] and also performs with the samba band Bateria Terra Maria and the Kris Johnson Group, a jazz/funk/soul fusion band based in Detroit. Christina earned her B.M. in Percussion Performance with a minor in Performing Arts Management at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and completed her M.M. in Percussion Performance at Peabody. Currently she is pursuing an Ed.D. at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, specializing in Entrepreneurial Leadership in Education.

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5. https://tinyurl.com/PY-AndrewKipe
6. http://alysialee.com/
7. http://sistercitiesgc.org/
8. https://tinyurl.com/PY-ALee
9. http://www.christinamanceor.com/
10. https://duosila.com

[Audio interview of Christina Manceor with Zane Forshee](#).[11] (49:04 min)

Wendel Patrick

[Wendel Patrick](#)/Kevin Gift[12] majored in both music and political science at Emory University and earned his M.M. in Piano Performance as a scholarship student at the Northwestern University School of Music in Illinois. Patrick is a winner of the 2015 Baker Artist Awards' Mary Sawyers Baker grand prize and was a member of the faculty at Loyola University in Baltimore, Maryland from 2001 to 2013 teaching piano, introduction to music theory, music history and electronic music production. He has taught at the Maryland Institute College of Art and at Loyola University Chicago where he was Department of Fine and Performing Arts Guest Artist-in-Residence for 2019.

Wendel Patrick is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Music Engineering and Technology at The Peabody Music Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University. He teaches "Hip Hop Music Production: History and Practice," the first course of its kind to be taught at a major traditional music conservatory in the United States. Recently named the new host of "Artworks" on Maryland Public Television/PBS, Patrick is currently a 2021–2022 Harvard Nasir Jones Fellow at The Hutchins Center for African and African American Research.

[Audio interview of Wendel Patrick with Zane Forshee](#).[13] (42:17 min)

Lara Pellegrinelli

An ethnomusicologist by training, Lara Pellegrinelli is a freelance journalist and scholar with bylines in *The New York Times* and the *Village Voice*. Pellegrinelli began reporting locally in New York for WNYC and has been a contributor to [NPR](#)'s[14] arts coverage since 2008, reporting stories that have been heard on Morning Edition, All Things Considered and Weekend Edition. In 2021, Pellegrinelli led a team of reporters in a data analysis of the NPR Music Jazz Critics poll, published on NPR Music as *"Equal at Last? Women In Jazz, By The Numbers."* Pellegrinelli received her Ph. D. in music from Harvard University. Her dissertation, *"The Song is Who? Locating Singers on the Jazz Scene,"* is the first ethnographic study of jazz singing. She currently teaches at The New School in New York City.

[Audio interview of Lara Pellegrinelli with Zane Forshee](#).[15] (59:11 min)

CJay Philip

CJay Philip is the Artistic Director of [Dance & Bmore](#),[16], a Baltimore-based ensemble with a unique fusion of community conscious movement, original music, and spoken-word. Dance & Bmore also designs community programs for youth, families, and elders with dozens of teaching artists bringing DAB's five programs to over a thousand Baltimore residents each year.

11. https://tinyurl.com/PY-CManceor
12. https://wendelpatrick.com/
13. https://tinyurl.com/PY-WPatrick
14. https://www.npr.org/people/955992658/lara-pellegrinelli
15. https://tinyurl.com/PY-LPellegrinelli
16. http://danceandbmore.com/

Philip's work in the community has garnered her a Baltimore Social Innovators Award, an Arts Advocate Award, and a Champion of Courage Award. She is currently a [Robert W. Deutsch Fellow](#)[17] and was part of the first cohort of Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Fellows.

Before relocating to Baltimore, Philip worked on Broadway in productions of *Hairspray, Big the Musical, Street Corner Symphony*, and toured in *Dreamgirls* and *Legally Blonde*. As a writer/director/choreographer she has traveled the world creating award-winning productions and collaborations. Philip teaches Interdisciplinary Collaboration at Baltimore School for the Arts and is a certified practitioner of Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process.

[Audio interview of CJay Philip with Zane Forshee](#).[18] (58:50 min)

Adam Rosenblatt

Chicago-based percussionist and performer [Adam Rosenblatt](#)[19] has a penchant for finding interesting and uncommon ways to present and perform contemporary music. He is a fixed member of Chicago-based ensemble [Beyond This Point](#)[20] and mixed ensemble Something Out There, both of which focus on the ambiguous space between musical and theatrical performance. Rosenblatt has performed in venues ranging from Berghain in Berlin with experimental electronic duo Matmos to Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York, and in festivals ranging from Maerzmusik Festival in Berlin with the Ictus ensemble to the Bang on a Can LOUD Weekend with Baltimore-based indie rock group Horse Lords.

He earned a Bachelor of Music Degree from the Peabody Conservatory and a Master of Music Degree from the Yale School of Music, both under the tutelage of Robert van Sice.

[Audio interview of Adam Rosenblatt with Zane Forshee](#).[21] (45:01 min)

Jessica Satava

Jessica Satava is a passionate advocate for the power of symphonic music to activate and unite communities. In 2022, she was appointed Executive Director of the [Greenville Symphony Orchestra](#)[22] in South Carolina. Previously, she served as Executive Director of the [Johnstown Symphony Orchestra](#)[23] in Pennsylvania. Under her leadership the orchestra has enjoyed its first year of fiscal balance in recent memory due to the aggressive pursuit and achievement of revenue goals, implementation of an innovative digital approach to fundraising and audience development, strategic board recruiting, and the initiation of key community partnerships to support inclusion and access for all. Jessica served previously in artistic and operations roles at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.

[Audio interview of Jessica Satava with Zane Forshee](#).[24] (40:09 min)

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17. https://www.rwdfoundation.org/our-work/2017/8/12/motor-house-7l6lr
18. https://tinyurl.com/PY-CJPhilip
19. https://rosenblatt.live/bio
20. https://www.beyondthispoint.org/
21. https://tinyurl.com/PY-ARosenblatt
22. https://www.greenvillesymphony.org/
23. https://www.johnstownsymphony.org/
24. https://tinyurl.com/PY-JSatava

Khandeya Sheppard

Khandeya Sheppard[25] is a steelpan musician, educator, and arts administrator with a wide range of solo and ensemble performance experiences in the United States and Trinidad and Tobago. She is a member of the LAUNCHPad team and serves as the Manager of Community Partnerships at Peabody.

Sheppard is a solo performer, Pan Masters Steel Orchestra[26] member, music director, and leader of NEXUS Band and Dynamic Steel Project,[27] creator and co-founder of the Black Berklee Network, and founding member of the HBCU Jazz Education Initiative.[28]

Audio interview of Khandeya Sheppard with Zane Forshee.[29] (44:46 min)

Ian Tresselt

With over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit arts sector, Ian Tresselt helps creatives, entrepreneurs, designers, students, and visionaries tell authentic stories. He is a collaborator with the Edie Demas Group and leading the cultural sector, design thinking strategy, capital projects and campaigns, nonprofit arts management, and international production and touring. He has worked for numerous organizations including the Odyssey Theatre in Los Angeles, Classic Stage Company and The New Victory Theatre in New York, and Everyman Theatre in Baltimore.

Audio interview of Ian Tresselt with Robin McGinness.[30] (50:57 min)

25. https://peabody.jhu.edu/faculty/khandeya-sheppard/
26. https://panmasters.com/
27. https://www.kaydsmusic.com/dynamicsteelproject
28. https://www.hbcujazz.com/
29. https://tinyurl.com/PY-KSheppard
30. https://tinyurl.com/PY-ITresselt

ABOUT THE TEAM

Kathleen DeLaurenti, Editor

[Kathleen DeLaurenti](https://peabody.jhu.edu/faculty/kathleen-delaurenti/)[1] is the Director of the Arthur Friedheim Library at the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University. Previously, she served as scholarly communication librarian at the College of William and Mary where she participated in establishing state-wide open educational resources (OER) initiatives. She is co-chair of the Music Library Association (MLA) Legislation Committee as well as a member of the Copyright Education sub-committee of the American Library Association (ALA) and is past winner of the ALA Robert Oakley Memorial Scholarship for copyright research. DeLaurenti served as the inaugural Open Access Editor of MLA and continues to serve on the Open Access Editorial Board.

She holds an MLIS from the University of Washington and a BFA in vocal performance from Carnegie Mellon University.

Zane Forshee, Lead Author

[Zane Forshee](https://zaneforshee.com)[2] serves as the Marc C. von May Distinguished Chair of Professional Studies, Director of Peabody LAUNCHPad, and is a guitar faculty member of the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University.

Forshee's work as an artist has led to appearances worldwide including: the Palacete de Amezúa (Madrid), the Joseph Joachim Konzertsaal (Berlin), the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), and the Chimei Museum (Taiwan). His wide-ranging collaborative projects include choreographer danah bella, percussionist and composer Gene Koshinski, film composer Christian Biegai, and an upcoming collaboration with artistic polyglot Wendel Patrick.

His most recent recording, Valenciano: Guitar Works of Asencio, Esplá & Rodrigo, reached Number 1 on Amazon's Classical Music Chart and No. 6 on Billboard's Classical Crossover chart. He is a Fulbright Scholar, Wigmore Hall Charitable Trust recipient, D'Addario Foundation Grant Winner, Maryland State Arts Council: Independent Artist Awardee, and received a Peabody Institute Dean's Incentive Grant for his collaborative research project with the Department of Neurology at Johns Hopkins that explored the Impact of Weekly Guitar Lessons on Functional Movement and Well-being in Parkinson's Disease Patients, among others.

Forshee has presented masterclasses, key notes, guest lectures, and workshops at the Royale Conservatoire of Scotland, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Staffordshire University (UK), North

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1. https://peabody.jhu.edu/faculty/kathleen-delaurenti/
2. https://zaneforshee.com

Carolina School for the Arts, University of Edinburgh, St. Olaf College, Johns Hopkins University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music, among others.

Of him, Baltimore City Paper writes: "As the old adage goes, those who cannot do, teach. Apparently Zane Forshee didn't get the memo. . . do not miss out on the chance to learn a thing or two from the man who makes music his life in the classroom and on stage."

Valerie Hartman, Editor

[Valerie Hartman](https://www.linkedin.com/in/valeriehartman/)[3] is the Senior Instructional Designer at the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University. Solid editing and visual design skills, reinforced with a strong background in pedagogy and technology, allow her to present key messages with clarity and style. She partners with faculty to create learning experiences that motivate students, improve comprehension, and foster the application of new skills.

Hartman also teaches graduate level courses in multimedia and e-learning design and development. She earned a BBA in Finance and Management from the University of Houston and a Master's in Professional Writing from Towson University. She is currently working towards a doctorate in Instructional Technology at Towson University with research interests in creativity in online environments, active learning pedagogies, universal design for learning, and design-based research.

Christina Manceor, Author

[Christina Manceor](https://www.christinamanceor.com)[4] is a percussionist, career educator, and entrepreneur who integrates problem solving and collaboration to enhance and innovate experiences for students, audiences, and arts organizations. Currently, she works at the Peabody Conservatory as Assistant Director of LAUNCHPad (career services), and serves as adjunct Professional Studies faculty for Peabody's innovative Breakthrough Curriculum. As a Baltimore-based freelance percussionist, she pursues artistic collaborations in a variety of genres and styles.

As an educator passionate about helping emerging artists further their careers, Manceor enjoys teaching both artistic and professional skills. In addition to her work designing and teaching Professional Studies courses at Peabody, she is a career coach at the conservatory and manages experiential learning programs, grants, and other resources for students and alumni. She was previously percussion faculty at Mount St. Mary's University, and her experience in music education spans over a decade of private percussion instruction.

As a performer, Manceor is co-founder of the flute and percussion group Duo Sila, and also performs with the samba band Bateria Terra Maria and the jazz/funk/soul fusion band the Kris Johnson Group. Additionally, Christina's extensive background in performing arts management informs her work as both a performer and educator, having previously served as Managing Director of Community Concerts at Second, and co-founded About\face, a cross-genre and cross-disciplinary concert series in Baltimore.

Christina earned her B.M. in Percussion Performance with a minor in Performing Arts Management

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3. https://www.linkedin.com/in/valeriehartman/
4. https://www.christinamanceor.com

at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and completed her M.M. in Percussion Performance at Peabody. Currently she is pursuing an Ed.D. at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, specializing in Entrepreneurial Leadership in Education.

Robin McGinness, Author

[Robin McGinness](#)[5] is an operatic baritone and career coach interested in finding ways to use theater and games to facilitate professional development, self-management for performers, art song house concerts, and modernizing the operatic repertoire.Currently an instructor of Professional Studies at the Peabody Institute, McGinness helped create core classes of the Breakthrough Curriculum, Building a Brand and Portfolio, and Pitching Your Creative Idea. A staff member of LAUNCHPad, Peabody's career services office, since 2015, McGinness has invested years in helping both undergraduate and graduate students prepare for their lives after school. McGinness also co-hosts MaxQ, Peabody LAUNCHPad's podcast focused on exploring what life is like for recent Peabody graduates.

As a baritone soloist, McGinness has performed in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall and Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium. Other recent performances include Carmina Burana with Maryland Symphony Orchestra, Duruflé Requiem with the Peabody Symphony Orchestra, and Brahms Requiem with The Washington Chorus, a performance praised by the Washington Post for its "warm baritone."

McGinness holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory and the Peabody Institute. Previously, McGinness has been a resident artist at Opera Theater St. Louis, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, Teatro Nuovo, and Bel Canto at Caramoor and was the Baritone Studio Artist in the Arizona Opera Marion Roose Pullin Opera Studio. An award-winning performer, McGinness placed first in the Sylvia Greene Vocal Competition, second in the Piccola Opera Competition, and received the Patricia A. Edwards Award in the Annapolis Opera Vocal Competition.

Joseph Montcalmo, Reviewer

[Joseph Montcalmo](#)[6] has spent over 20 years building, developing, deploying, and teaching educational content, courses, and programs. He has created online learning business plans for multiple universities; participated in the creation of 30+ online/hybrid degree programs and hundreds of courses; created, edited, and published a variety of multimedia; has experience with learning space design and theory; and teaches online at the graduate level. Montcalmo has presented on topics including effective collaboration, pedagogy, integration of technology into teaching and learning, action research, and approaches to successful leadership.

He earned his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Master of Business Administration with a focus on Management and Leadership from Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

Sarah Thomas, Editor

[Sarah Thomas](#)[7] is a violinist and educator driven by collaboration and connection with both performers

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5. https://www.rob-mcginness.com
6. https://www.joemontcalmo.com
7. https://sarahthomasviolin.com

and audiences. Whether she's performing "old" or "new" music in someone's living room or a large concert hall, Sarah strives to create an environment for everyone present to share the gloriously human experience of loving music together.

A member of the Peabody Conservatory's LAUNCHPad, Thomas supports students and recent alumni in their career pursuits through professional skills coaching, grant program management, and curricular support for core Professional Studies courses. She is an adjunct lecturer for the Peabody course *Building a Brand and Portfolio*, which she helped develop alongside her LAUNCHPad colleagues.

In addition to her work at Peabody, Thomas is a founding member of the Bergamot Quartet, a string quartet fueled by a passion for exploring and advocating for the music of living composers. Bergamot has performed in venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, and the Banff Centre and collaborated with artists including Sō Percussion, Arx Duo, Claire Chase, Dan Trueman, and Terry Sweeney. Passionate about education, they have served as ensemble-in-residence for the MATA Jr. and Junior Bach programs for young composers and held performances, workshops, and lectures at universities including Princeton University, Peabody Conservatory, Towson University, Shenandoah Conservatory, University of Texas El Paso, and New Mexico State University.

Thomas holds Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the Peabody Conservatory and a Professional Studies Diploma from the Mannes School of Music, where Bergamot Quartet was the inaugural Cuker and Stern Graduate String Quartet in Residence.

ABOUT THE PEABODY INSTITUTE

The Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University advances a dynamic, 21st-century model of the performing arts, building on its rich history of innovation and leadership as the first conservatory in the United States. Comprising both a Conservatory for undergraduate and graduate studies and the Preparatory, Baltimore's largest community performing arts school, Peabody empowers musicians and dancers from diverse backgrounds to create and perform at the highest level. Courses of study range from classical and jazz performance, ballet, and modern dance to cutting-edge programs in acoustics, recording arts and sciences, and music for new media, taught alongside the Conservatory's signature Breakthrough Curriculum, a career development framework that prepares citizen-artists to help shape the future of the field and serve their communities.

A division of Johns Hopkins, one of the world's preeminent research universities and medical institutions, Peabody provides opportunities for interdisciplinary studies through its dual degree program and important initiatives in both arts-in-healthcare and clinical care for performing artists. A leading voice at the intersection of art and education, Peabody is also a convener of critical discourse, providing platforms for a broad range of artistic perspectives to engage with current issues and critical ideas in the cultural sector.

To learn more about the Peabody Institute, visit https://peabody.jhu.edu/.