

NYSCA Glossary

Plain-English translations of the terms you'll see in NYSCA applications.

APPLICANT

The person or organization submitting the grant. For Support for Artists, this is technically the fiscal sponsor (LIAA) on your behalf. For Support for Sponsored Organizations, this is also LIAA, applying for your group.

APPLICATION MANUAL

The detailed PDF guide NYSCA publishes for each funding opportunity. It lists every application question, eligibility rule, scoring criterion, deadline, and required attachment. Read the manual for your specific opportunity (Support for Artists, Support for Organizations, Support for Sponsored Organizations) before you start drafting. Available at arts.ny.gov.

AWARD PERIOD

The 12 months when the funded work happens and grant money can be spent. For FY2027, this is January 2027 through December 2027.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

A separate NYSCA opportunity (not part of the July 8 deadline) that funds construction, equipment, and design work at arts facilities. The FY2027 round opens fall 2026 with \$80 million available across small, midsize, large, and design grant categories. Specific award ranges and rules will be confirmed when NYSCA posts the FY2027 Capital guidelines.

DISCIPLINE

The art form your project falls under (e.g., Music, Theater, Visual Arts, Folk & Traditional, Literature). You pick one when you apply. It helps determine which panel reviews you, though NYSCA's actual panel assignments can be more internal and flexible.

FINAL REPORT

The paperwork you submit after the grant year ends explaining what you did and how you spent the money. A fiscal sponsor will often hold back a percentage of your award until the final report materials are submitted and the grant is closed.

FISCAL SPONSOR

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit (like LIAA) that holds and disburses grant funds for individuals or unincorporated groups who cannot legally receive grants themselves. The sponsor reports to the funder, you do the creative work.

FY (FISCAL YEAR)

NYSCA's funding year. FY2027 means the cycle running July 2026 through June 2027. This is the cycle you apply to now for work happening in 2027.

GRANT PERIOD

Same as Award Period. The window when you must do the funded work.

LOA (LETTER OF AGREEMENT)

The written agreement between a fiscal sponsor and the sponsored artist or group. It spells out the project, payment schedule, sponsor fee, reporting obligations, and what each party is responsible for. The LOA is signed BEFORE the application is submitted, since it may be included as part of the submission.

MULTI-YEAR GRANT

Some Support for Organizations awards span two years. Multi-year status is the sole discretion of NYSCA and cannot be requested by the applicant. If awarded, the second year is contingent on NYSCA's appropriation from the State Legislature and on contract execution, but you do not reapply. You submit interim reports and continue the funded work.

MUTUAL LOCKOUT (SCR RULE)

The rule that an applicant cannot apply to both SCR (through HAC on Long Island) and a direct NYSCA opportunity in the same fiscal year, because both pull from the same NYSCA budget. Example: if you apply through LIAA for Support for Artists, you are ineligible for HAC's Community Arts Grants or any other SCR opportunity that year, and vice versa. See SCR for full detail.

NYSCA

New York State Council on the Arts. The state agency that funds artists and arts nonprofits across New York. Created in 1960, NYSCA is part of the Executive Branch and led by a 21-member Council appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. Its annual budget is set each year by the Governor and Legislature (roughly \$82M+ in grants for FY2027). Staff and advisory panels review applications and recommend awards; the Council votes to approve final funding decisions.

NYSCA GRANTS PORTAL (SMARTSIMPLE)

The online system where you actually fill out and submit your NYSCA application. Branded SmartSimple, accessed through arts.ny.gov. This is separate from SFS (where prequalification and payments live). You'll create a SmartSimple login, select your funding opportunity, complete the application form, upload your work samples and supporting documents, and submit before the deadline.

NARRATIVE

The written portion of your application where you describe what you do, who you serve, how you'll use the funding, and the impact of your work. For Support for Artists this is one focused statement; for Organizations and Sponsored Organizations it's spread across several questions (mission, programs, community, planning). The narrative is what the panel reads most carefully, regardless of applicant type.

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PANEL / PANELIST

The group of arts professionals NYSCA convenes to read and score applications in your discipline. Most are working artists or arts administrators from across the state.

PREQUALIFICATION

The status nonprofits must hold in NYS to be eligible for any state grant. Must be active in SFS by the application deadline. Individual artists applying through Support for Artists do NOT prequalify themselves — the fiscal sponsor must be prequalified. Maintained in the Document Vault inside SFS, where the org uploads its IRS Form 990, audited or reviewed financial statements, and CHAR500 (NYS Charities Bureau filing). These three documents expire annually and must be re-uploaded each year. Applications submitted while expired are disqualified without review. Open your vault proactively before expiration.

SCR

Statewide Community Re-grants. A NYSCA-funded grant program administered locally by Huntington Arts Council for Suffolk and Nassau Counties. Slightly smaller award amounts than direct NYSCA grants, with a different review process. SCR funds community-focused, public impact programs rather than general operating support or creative fees for the applicant. SCR awards and direct NYSCA awards come from the same FY budget, so any applicant (artist or organization) may not apply to both in the same year. No double-dipping. You must choose: SCR through HAC, OR direct to NYSCA through Support for Artists, Organizations, Sponsored Organizations, or Targeted Opportunities.

SFS (STATEWIDE FINANCIAL SYSTEM)

New York State's official portal for vendor registration, prequalification, and grant payments — NOT the application itself (that's SmartSimple). To be eligible for NYSCA funding, your organization must be registered in SFS as a vendor. Registration requires emailing two documents to grantsgateway@its.ny.gov: the Grants Management Registration Form, and (if you don't already have an SFS Vendor ID) a Substitute W-9. Once registered, you get a Vendor ID and access to the Document Vault where prequalification lives.

SKIP-A-YEAR RULE

NYSCA Support for Artists applicants can only apply every other year. If you receive funding in FY2027, you cannot apply again until FY2029. This rule does NOT apply to Sponsored Organizations (you can apply yearly).

SPONSOREE

The artist or unincorporated group whose project is being sponsored by a fiscal sponsor. If LIAA sponsors you, you are the sponsoree.

SUPPORT FOR ARTISTS

NYSCA's \$10,000 flat grant to individual artists for the creation of new work. Requires a fiscal sponsor like LIAA. NYSCA caps the fiscal sponsor's administrative fee at a maximum of \$500 per award. One award per artist per cycle.

SUPPORT FOR ORGANIZATIONS

NYSCA's flexible operating support grant for arts nonprofits with their own 501(c)(3). You apply directly, no fiscal sponsor needed. Award range \$10,000 to \$49,500.

SUPPORT FOR REGRANTS AND SERVICES

NYSCA's program category (formerly called Partnerships) that funds regrant administrators and service organizations covering all 62 New York counties. SCR (Statewide Community Re-grants) sits inside this category. This is how NYSCA pushes funding into every region of the state, including Long Island via Huntington Arts Council.

SUPPORT FOR SPONSORED ORGANIZATIONS

NYSCA's flexible operating support grant for unincorporated groups, distinct programs inside parent orgs, or nonprofits without their own 501(c)(3). Requires a fiscal sponsor like LIAA. Award range \$10,000 to \$49,500, capped at 50% of your prior-year operating expenses.

SUPPORT FOR TARGETED OPPORTUNITIES

NYSCA's program category (formerly called Special Opportunities) for funding that doesn't fit the standard grant structures: creative performance residencies, subsidized rehearsal spaces for performing arts, and folk arts apprenticeships. These have their own eligibility rules and deadlines outside the July 8 application window.

WORK SAMPLE

Documentation of your creative work submitted with the application: video, audio, images, or writing. Work samples are essential evidence for the panel and carry significant weight. Work sample requirements differ by artistic discipline for Support for Artists — pay close attention to the format, length, and quantity specified in the manual for your discipline. Be strategic: every sample should clearly support a claim you make in the narrative. Never leave a panel wondering 'why did they include this?' Quality and relevance matter more than quantity.