THE ARTS COMMISSION + TOLEDO LUCAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Grant Application Workshop:
Artist Statements + Grant Narratives

May 17, 2025

The Arts Commission

Who We Are

The Arts Commission is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 1959 to foster Toledo's heritage in the arts. The organization is the longest-standing arts commission in the state of Ohio, serving youth, artists, arts organizations, and the general public. Since 1977, The Arts Commission has managed the City of Toledo's One Percent for Art program, the first in the state of Ohio and among the first in the nation, and maintains Toledo's impressive collection of public art.

Grant Application Workshop: Artist Statements + Grant Narratives

Zach Huber

Specialist Librarian, Small Business and Nonprofit Center at Toledo Lucas County Public Library Main

Workshop Facilitator

Zach Huber

- Business specialist librarian in the **Small Business and Nonprofit Department for the Toledo Lucas County Public Library** system.

- Nonprofit sector for 6 years at both large and small nonprofit organizations in the areas of marketing and fundraising, including both grant-seeking and grant administration

- Bachelor of Science in Journalism from Ohio University in 2013 and his Master of Library and Information Science from Kent State University in 2016

Introduction to Proposal Writing

Zachary Huber, Toledo-Lucas County Public Library

Proposal Package

- **Statement of need**
- **Project description**
- **Organization information**
- **Conclusion: Budget**
- **Attachments/supporting materials**

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Statement of Need

- Describes the issue or situation the project will address
- Describes how the grant can help you progress as an artist or how your art will impact the community.

Answer the questions:

- What is the problem or need you will be addressing?

- Who is affected by the problem and how?

- Why is this issue important?

- What evidence can you provide to support it?

- What is the underlying cause?

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The Refresh Collective community includes all young people of the city of Cleveland, especially teenagers that attend CMSD schools, youth from black and brown communities, and young people with no other access to arts education. The Fresh Force recruits teens from our in-school high school programs at CMSD schools and digital media afterschool programs.

To prepare teens for the onboarding process we offer free "My First Job Interview" workshops before interviewing applicants to narrow our list of Fresh Force teens down to fifteen. We then support the fifteen families through the complicated process to acquire a Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) summer job. YOU validates family income to meet federal TANIF funding regulations, so each participant in the Fresh Force is from a "Needy Family".

Youth voice drives all creative programming at Refresh Collective programming. When the Fresh Force performs they are expressing authentic perspectives from and aspirations for their community.

Project Description

- Longest section of the proposal

- Describes the solution to the problem addressed in the need section

- Includes the project goals and outcomes

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Project Description

Answer the questions:

- What are your expected outcomes?

- How will you achieve your outcomes?

- Who will carry out the project?

- How do you know how you are doing?

- How will you sustain the project?

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Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

The difference between goals, objectives, and outcomes

- **Goals**–broad, general description of what you will achieve

- **Objectives**–specific, measurable targets which will determine if you have met your goal

- **Outcomes**–the extent to which you have accomplished your objectives

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

- **Goal**: Bring awareness to community mental health by creating a mosaic mural to be displayed outside the local clinic.

- **Objective**: Host a day-long event for former patients of the clinic to participate in building the mosaic through an artist-designed template. A QR code will lead people to more information about the clinic.

- **Outcome**: The clinic will report an increase in traffic to their "services" page.

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Project Description: Evaluation

How will you measure success or show impact?

- **Summative**: measuring the outcome or product
  - Likert scale
  - Pre and post assessments
  - Journaling

- **Formative**: analyzing the process
  - Any bottlenecks
  - Any unanticipated delays?
  - Did the number of partnerships or volunteers shift? How did that affect the process?

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Goal	Our goal is to engage fifteen deserving Cleveland teenagers in the 2023 Fresh Force program to meet the specific Refresh Collective arts education learning outcomes: 1. Mastery of music production 2. Working knowledge of photo, video & graphic design 4. Adept job-readiness skills & career exposure 5. High level interpersonal communication skills
How will you know you have accomplished or made progress towards your goal?	Outcomes: -33% returning Fresh Force participants from the 2022 cohort -66% new Fresh Force participants -100% Retention rate throughout the six-week summer employment period -Observable growth in digital media production skills & social emotional competencies in each participant measured by pre- & post-surveys. -3 original hip-hop tracks produced -3 corresponding music videos produced -3 corresponding sets of album art produced -3 sets of custom apparel produced -At least 3 live performances

Project Description: Methods and Timeline

How will you achieve your outcomes?

Methods

- What other methods or solutions have been tried?

- Why is this approach different?

- How did you decide upon this particular method or approach?

- What factors went into your decision?

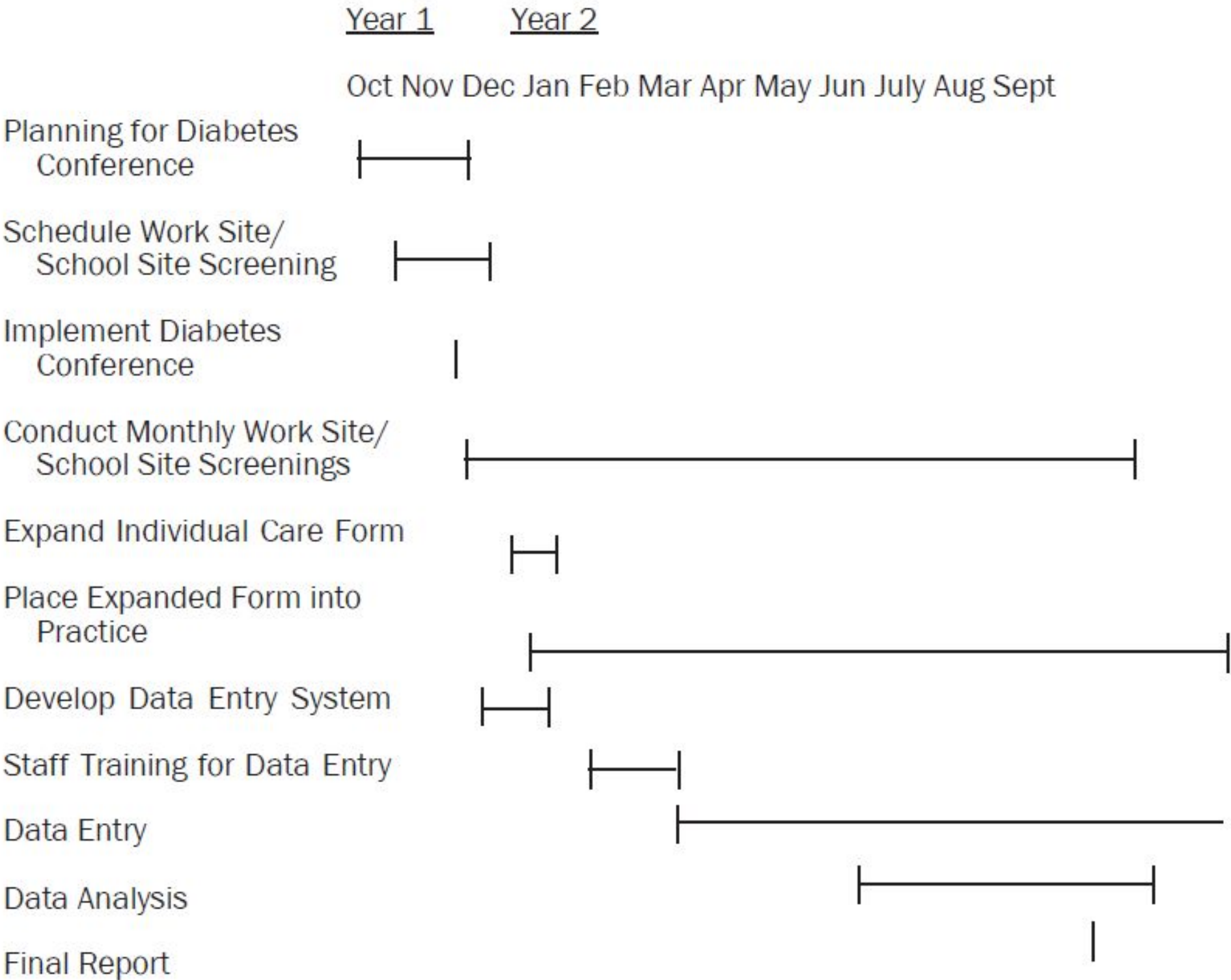- How did this response emerge as the best solution?

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Project Description: Methods and Timeline

How will you achieve your outcomes?

Timeline

- How will the project be implemented?

- What are the steps involved and when will they happen?

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Project Description: Methods and Timeline

Refresh Collective will run a high-level digital-arts program for innercity teenagers & grow our workforce of digital media artists in our 2023 Fresh Force program.

Planning efforts largely revolve around partner collaborations. We've developed this mastery-level job training program since summer 2021 building meaningful arts education and workforce development around the six-week summer jobs program supported by our community partner Youth Opportunities Unlimited. We engage local recording artists and industry professionals to line up guest speakers, & we rely on our community partnerships for performance & apprenticeship opportunities for Fresh Force participants.

Activities:

January 2023 - Interviewing & onboarding teen participants begins

May-June 2023 - Worksite orientation for fifteen teenagers chosen for the Fresh Force Juneteenth Weekend 2023 - Our first Fresh Force performance will showcase the music of veteran Fresh Force participants to inspire new recruits

June 20 - July 28 - The Fresh Force works 25-30 hours a week on payroll during the summer employment period at the Fresh Lab Recording Studio. All major instruction & production is completed during this summer intensive.

August-December - Fall programming provides ongoing performance opportunities and industry connections for ongoing education & apprenticeship opportunities. For high school graduates we also help facilitate teacher aide & professional development opportunities like a digital music marketing masterclass with iHeartRadio.

Project Description: Staffing

Who will carry out the project?

- Staff

- Volunteers

- Consultants

- Collaborators
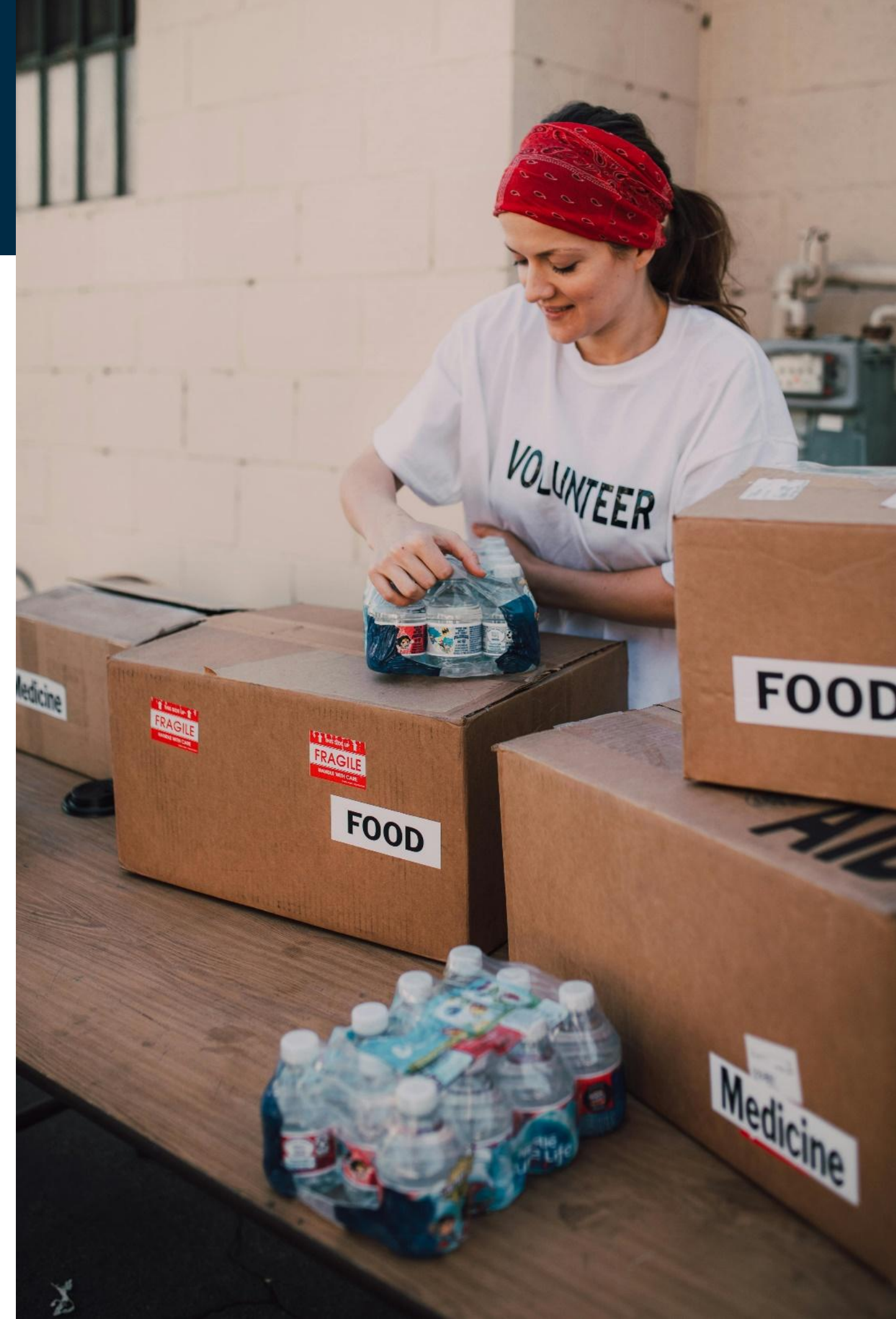
DeeJay Doc, Executive Director, acts as creative director of the Fresh Force program. He has over three decades experience of music production & has led the Refresh Collective to engage over 10,000 Cleveland youth in arts education since 2011.

Philip Hewitt, Funding Cultivator, coordinates community partnerships especially Youth Opportunities Unlimited summer youth employment. He has ten years experience in youth mentorship.

Zachary Schwartz, Lead Educator, is an experienced hip-hop journalist & creative writing educator. He has been working with Cleveland youth for five years & leads most of our arts education programming.

CJ Thompson AKA Bars & Poetry and Olympio Jefferson AKA Anti are Educators & recording artists who grew up through Refresh programs. Now as college students they return in the summer as educators to help instruct.

Juan Evans AKA Dark Note, Peer Mentor, is a two-year Fresh Force participant & high school grad who is in training to join Refresh education staff.

Project Description: Sustainability

How will you sustain the project?

- Indicate how the project will be funded in the future

- Provide the grantmaker with assurance that other funders are in the mix

- Let's the funder know that the project will outlive the grant

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Refresh Collective solicit donations from our donor base year round. We regularly build relationships with local foundation & we would hope to be able to raise the $20,000 else where.

Without full funding we would need to reduce our instructional staff and the fall season professional development and apprenticeship opportunities for the Fresh Force youth.

Lastly we may need to reduce the Fresh Force numbers down from 15 if we are unable to fundraise for the full budget.

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Conclusion

- Final appeal

- Restate the need(s) your organization or project is addressing

- Restate why it is important to THIS funder

- Be persuasive!

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Talk about how this project or category of support will elevate you to the next level of your career, project, or work. What are you asking for funding for? What is currently stopping you from advancing? How will receiving this funding help your artistic practice? Be specific. Explain why it is important, as if the panel does not understand your artistic practice.

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Think about the audience that will be viewing or participating in your work. What do you anticipate the positive impact will be on them? Be as specific as possible. (Who is your audience? How will they have an opportunity to participate in your work? How do you think this experience will positively impact them or what is the hope for a positive impact?)

Grant Application Workshop: Artist Statements + Grant Narratives

Catherine Clements

Artist + Consultant

Catherine Clements

- **Artist and arts administrator** based in Bowling Green, OH

- MFA from the University of Georgia in Printmaking and Book Arts and a BFA from Bowling Green State University in Two-Dimensional Studies with a minor in Arts Management

- Catherine co-owns and operates Now Serving, a local pop-up restaurant, and is the Vice-President of the Board of Directors for the Cocoon, an organization that provides support to survivors of demostic and sexual violence in northwest Ohio

What are Artist Statements + Grant Narratives?

An **artist statement** describes a creative practice or body of work, giving the reader valuable context to enhance their understanding of the maker's creative output.

A **grant narrative (or project narrative)** communicates specific details of a project or practice, as part of an application, proposal or other request for support.

Where to start?

Grant Narratives

- Do your research!
  - Look at the call closely
  - Outline the requirements
  - Check out the org website
    - Highlight important language, organizational values and priorities
  - Scout out the application portal
  - Always work in an archival document

Grant Narratives

- Outline your project or practice
    - be concise and specific!
    - include important details:
        - **who:** you, partners, audience
        - **what:** plan, expected outcomes
        - **why:** reason for project, need for support
        - **when:** timeline, sense of urgency
        - **where:** making and presentation spaces
        - **how:** materials, processes, equipment
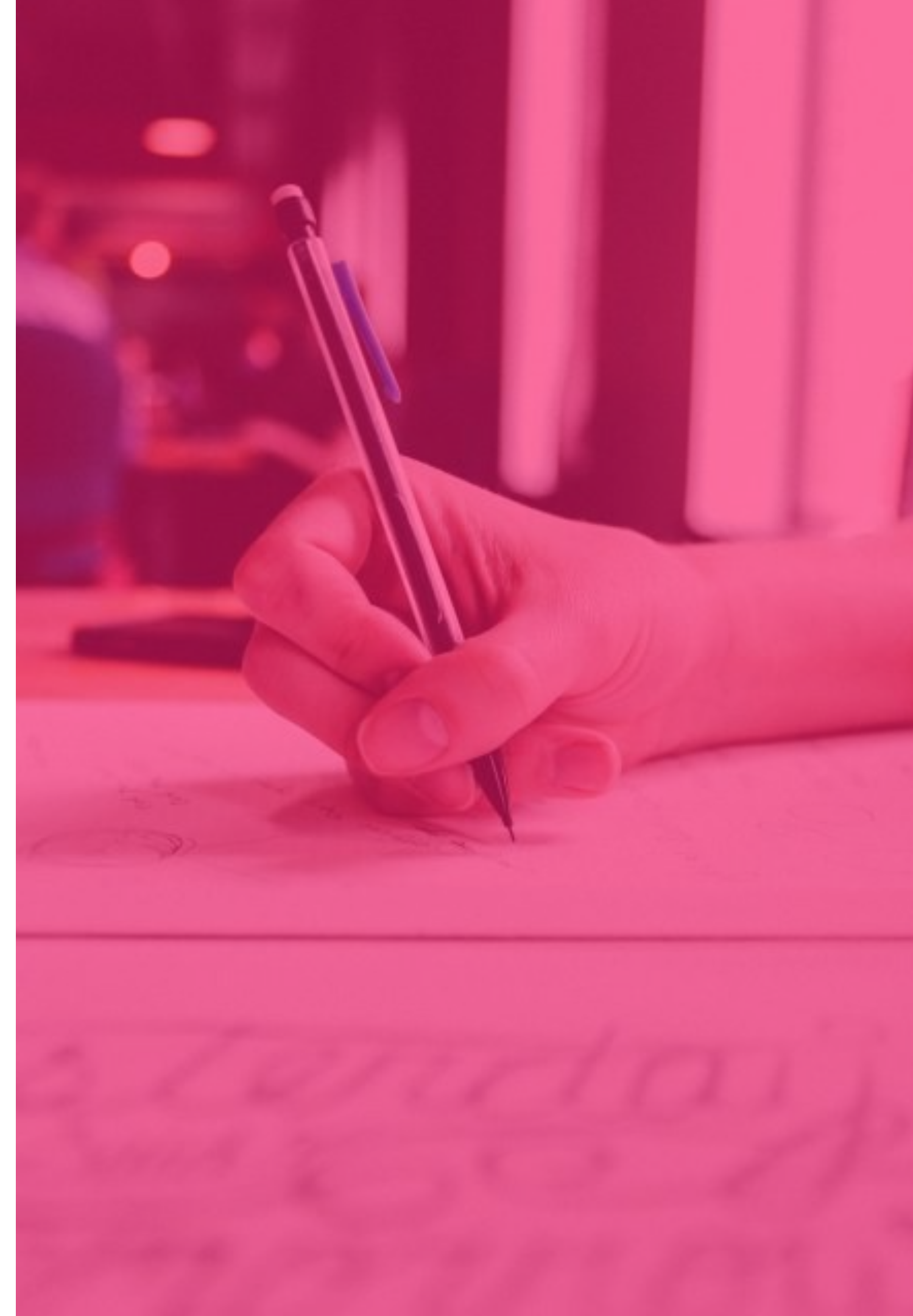
Now put it all together!

Grant Narratives

- Prioritize the info in your outline by importance to the project

- Align your needs and goals with the mission and values of the organization or call

  - give them a reason to advocate for you!

- Double check that you've hit all of the requirements in the call

- Edit down to word count

- Read it out loud!

Artist Statements

- The artist statement is a tool for documenting and archiving the motivations and processes of your creative practice.

- They can be an umbrella covering all of the creative work you do, or describe specific projects or bodies of work

- You might adapt one document many times or write new artist statements for each endeavor

- Not an artist bio
  - only include biographical info that's directly relevant to your creative output
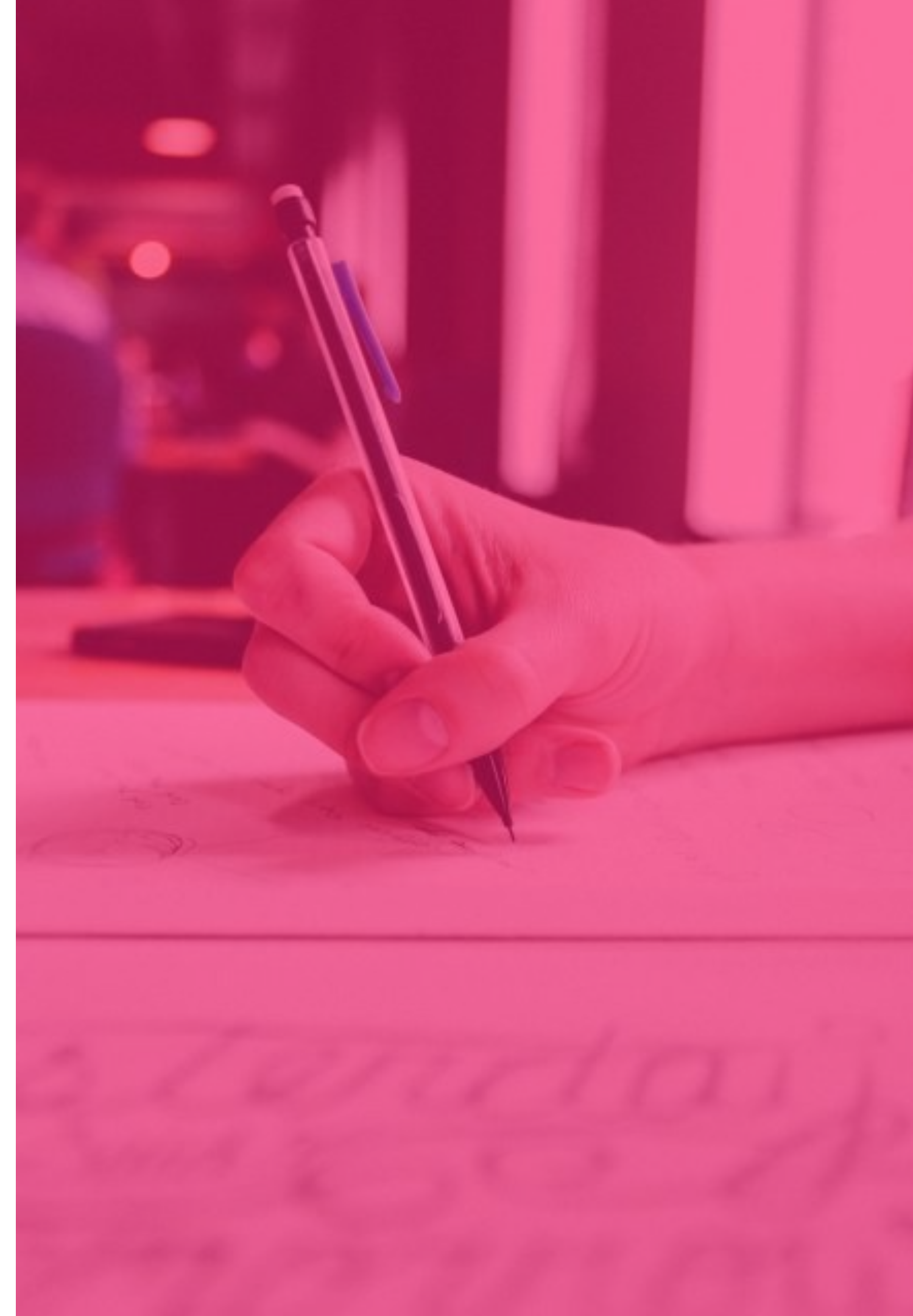
Artist Statements

- Your artist statement is an extension of your creative practice
    - write in language you would use
    - find a tone that feels authentic
    - give the work room to speak for itself
- Express your values as someone who engages with the world through a creative lens
- Hype your work up
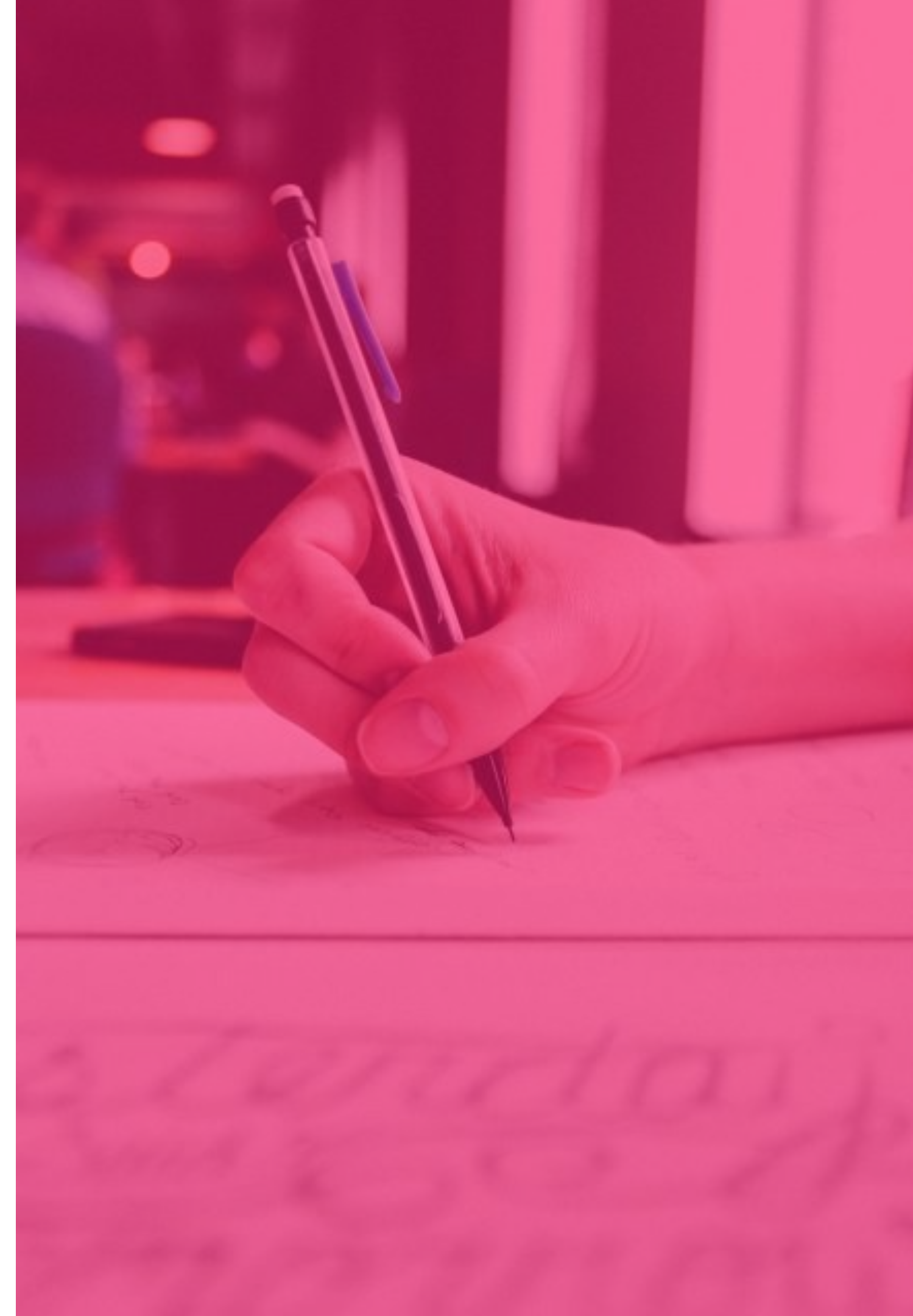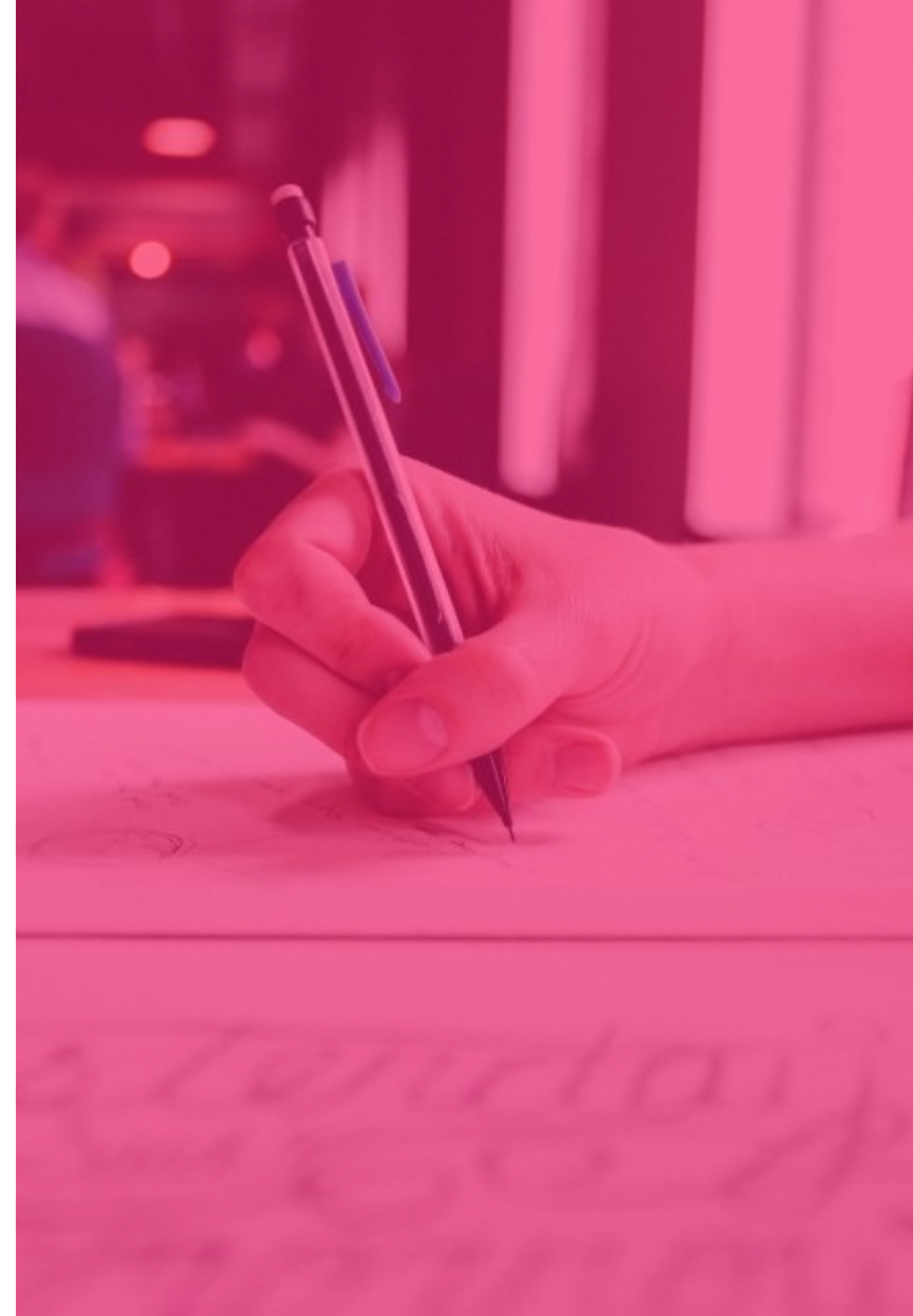
Artist Statements

- Observe what you're making/doing!

- Chat with friends and strangers!

  - try to hone in on words and descriptions you use frequently/across groups

  - record yourself, play it back and listen

- Do some reflective writing!

- Conduct a formal analysis!

  - Describe what you've made/ done in the most literal way possible

Artist Statements

- Tailor your statement to fit your needs
  - consider your audience and goals
  - be mindful of length and attention span
- Give em the juice, wrap it with a bow
  - engage the reader
  - prioritize info based on importance and relevance
  - bring it to an impactful conclusion

Grant Application Workshop: Artist Statements + Grant Narratives

Liz Bayan

Artist Subgranting Coordinator, The Arts Commission

NEW **Grant Opportunity for artists**

Project Grant

The Project Grant is a competitive program offering financial support to artists to create or complete original works of art that show artistic growth and/or creative experimentation. The Project Grant is open to artists across all mediums. Emerging, Mid-career, and Established artists are encouraged to apply. **Artists may request funding at the $2,000, $2,500, or $3,000 level. Requested grant amounts should not exceed $3,000.**

2025 Project Grant

How is this different from the Accelerator Grant?

The Project Grant is meant to support artists by **helping move an idea/project/or body of work past the finish line and support an artists' growth, experimentation, and ultimately their creative career**. While the Accelerator Grant offers quick turnaround for immediate and broad needs of artists, the **Project Grant is tied to the creation AND completion of a specific work of art**. Applicants must have a good idea of how and when their work will be completed and be able to submit documentation of their finished work within the granting period.

- Artists who have already received an Accelerator Grant(s) should feel comfortable applying for this opportunity.

- Artists with an interest in growing their grant writing skills or building their portfolios up to prepare for larger dollar grant requests or a Merit Award are encouraged to apply for a Project Grant.

- While hobbyists and emerging artists are welcome to apply, competitive applicants will have a prior body of work and should be prepared to submit work samples of their original works of art.

Applications open: May 19 - June 8

2025 Project Grant

Eligible Applicants

- Individual artists and artist collectives with a current residence or a creative studio within 30 miles of downtown Toledo may be eligible.

- Competitive applicants will be artists with a prior body of work who are creating or completing ***their own original works of art*** to build their portfolio; or who have an upcoming exhibition or other public opportunity to share their work in the next 9 months.

- Applications will be accepted from university or college-level **adjunct** teachers.
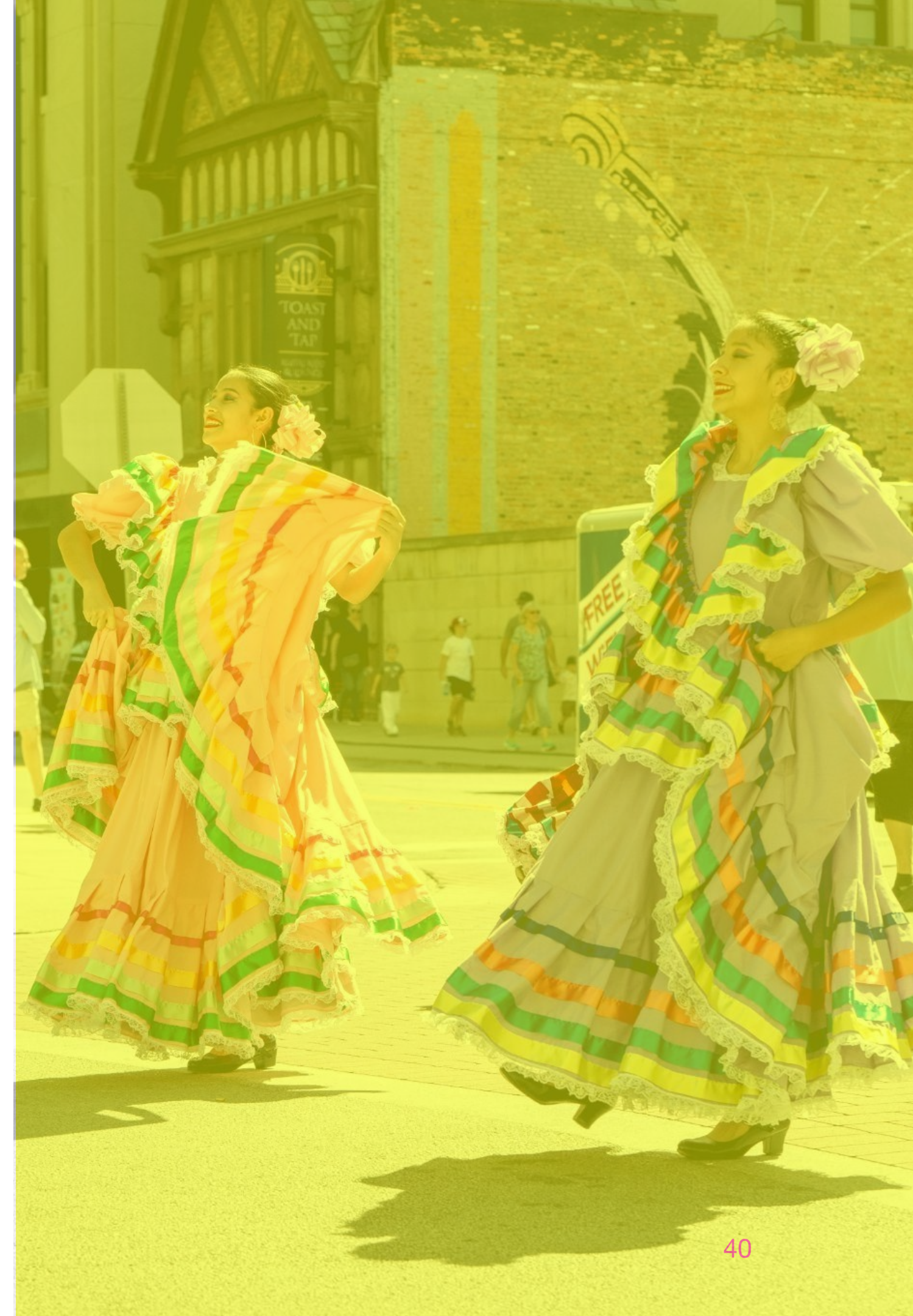
Ineligible Applicants

- Artists enrolled in a **degree or certificate-granting program** of any kind at the time of application are NOT eligible for Project Grants. Applications will not be accepted before the graduation date.

- Producers, commercial artists, creative directors, art organizers, or **those providing logistical support to other artists** are not eligible for this opportunity.

- **Nonprofit organizations** are ineligible for this opportunity.

Eligible Categories of Support

Materials + Supplies

For example: film + photo chemicals, raw materials, paper, canvases, paint, paintbrushes, clay, printmaking supplies, glass blowing supplies, etc

Equipment + Tools

For example: presses, camera lenses, instruments, welders, audio equipment, etc.

Project Support + Framing*

For example: paying other artists to help you with your project such as illustrators, musicians, copywriters, copy editors, fabricators, etc.

Framing can account for no more than 50% of the total project budget

Ineligible Categories of Support

Regular Overhead Expenses

For example: studio rent, utilities, insurance, accountant, bookkeeping, or costs associated with a commercial photography or graphic design business.

Travel-related Expenses

For example: plane tickets, parking, gas, mileage, lodging, food, etc.

Laptop/Technology Expenses

Unless it relates directly to your artmaking practice, you may not request funding for a laptop or other technology.

Expenses covered by other TAC funding

For Example: expenses covered by a Toledo Lucas County ARPA Individual Artist Grant, an Accelerator Grant, or a Merit Award.

Question 3—Budget Template
Estimated Budget for Funding Request
Funds must be spent between **July 1, 2025—April 1, 2026.** You may not spend the funds outside of these dates.

At least **50% of the funding** must be used in **creating the artwork itself** (supply costs, paying other artists for their support, studio recording time, etc). **Only list Expenses covered by this funding request.**

	A. Expense Name/Store	B. Expense Category	C. Expense Description	D. Estimated Expense Cost
1				US$
2				US$
3				US$
			Budget Template Total	US$0.00

Add row

Grant Budget Template—Spending period: July 1, 2025 - April 1, 2026

Grant Application Workshop—Artist Statements + Grant Narratives

Question 4, part II—Additional Funding Budget Template

If your project needs more funding in order to be completed, where are those funds coming from?
Please list all **additional expenses** not covered by the Project Grant funding.

- This may include any in-kind donations, outside grant funding, sponsorships, or self-funding.

	A. Expense	B. Funder Name (where are you getting it from?)	C. Type of funding (in-kind, grant, sponsorship, self-funded)	D. Expense amount	E. Confirmed, Pending, To be Raised, or Already spent
1				US$	
2				US$	
3				US$	

Other funding total
US$0.00

Add row

Grant Budget Template—Spending period: July 1, 2025 - April 1, 2026

Grant Application Workshop—Artist Statements + Grant Narratives

Question 5—Project Timeline

In chronological order, please provide all the major milestones of your project from start to finish.

Such as:

- Research phase(s)
- In-process creating
- Production
- Seeking other outside funding
- Public Presentation

Include any milestones you've already completed.

	A. Milestone	B. Estimated start date	C. Estimated completion date	D. Is this milestone started, completed, or in-progress
1				
2				
3				

Add row

Project Timeline

Grant Application Workshop—Artist Statements + Grant Narratives

Project Proposal Grant Narrative Questions

Project Proposal

Please explain your project in detail. Tell us about what the project is, the ideas it explores, and include your collaborators and their role in completing the project (if you have them).

Creative Catalyst

How will your proposed project or new work act as a catalyst for your artistic and professional growth?

Public Presence

How will the public experience your artwork once it's completed?

Visual Plans (optional)

Please upload any visual plans, schematics, drawings, blueprints, layouts, in-progress work that you have for this project.

2025 Project Grant

Digital Portfolio

- Artist resume or curriculum vitae (two pages maximum)

- Artist statement (150 words minimum, 300 words maximum)

- Bio (50 words minimum, 150 words maximum)

- Work Samples and Descriptions (only work samples from the past 3 years will be considered)
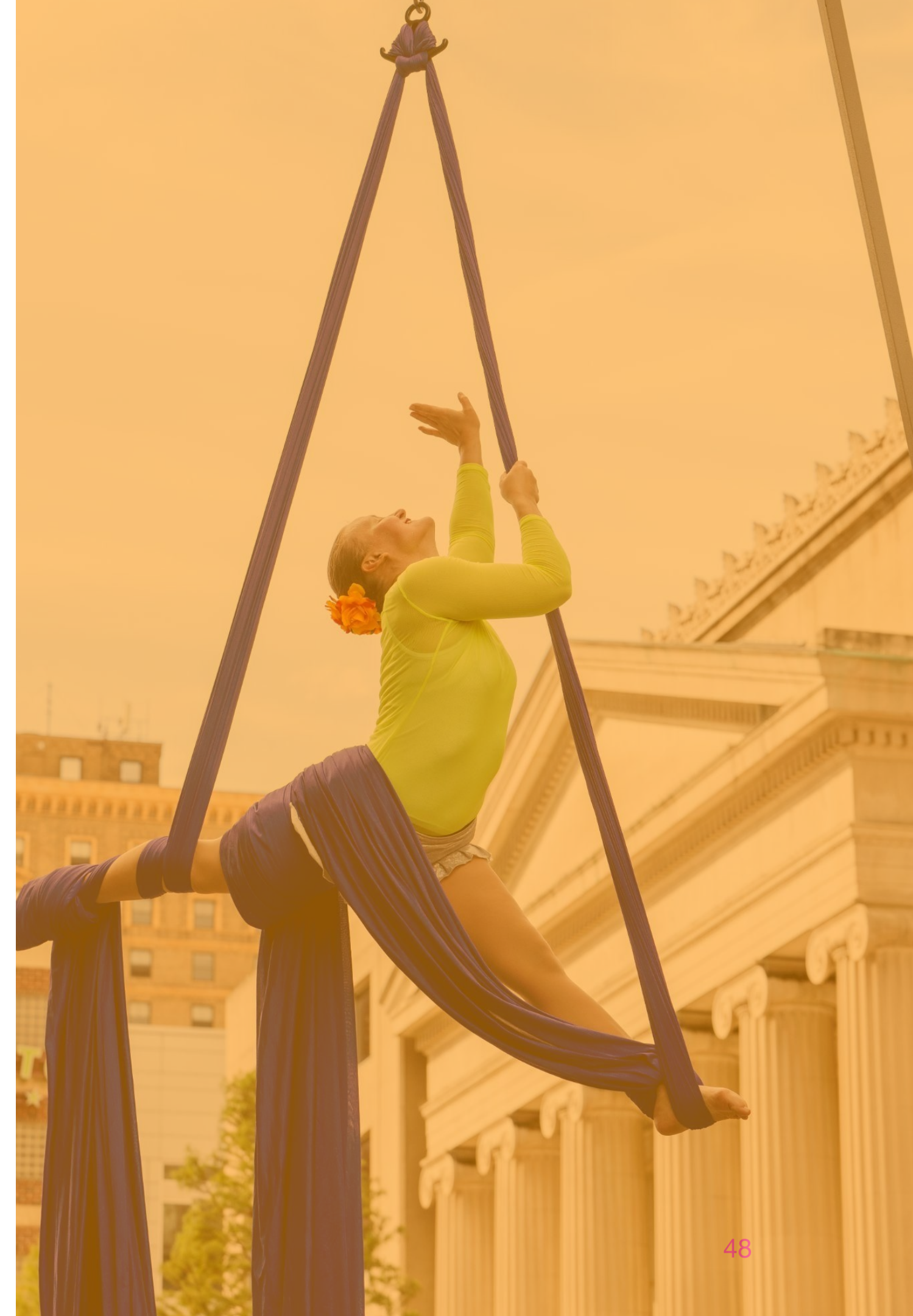
Artist Statements + Grant Narratives workshop

Ask questions early!

Liz Bayan

Artist Subgranting Coordinator

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Lindsay Glass

Engagement + Capacity Building Director

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