

Resources

Public Funding for Arts Organizations — Navigating Resources to Sustain Your Work

List of Resources

If you are looking for...	Start Here
Houston Funding	Houston Arts Alliance
State Funding	Texas Commission on the Arts
Advocate for the Arts in Texas	Texans for the Arts
Texas Arts Data	Texas Cultural Trust
Regional Arts Funding and Opportunities	Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA)
Professional development, touring & other arts resources	Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA)
Federal Arts Information	National Endowment for the Arts
Elected Officials	Americans for the Arts Advocacy Hub
Arts Economic Impact Data	Americans for the Arts AEP6
Build relationships with community partners	Americans for the Arts Community Engagement Resources
Artist Resilience and Emergency resources	Houston Arts Alliance
Practical tools and information to drive transformative change	Art of Transformational Consulting

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What this is:
This is an overall, high-level communications plan that outlines program / organizational goals, timeline, and holds a place for program and communication assets.

When we use it:
We have used this format to share our communications plans with external program partners and collaborators.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN / [NAME OF PROGRAM]

[Add the purpose of your plan and any partners you may share this with.]

Communication Goals

[Add your communications goals, some examples are below.]

- **Raise Awareness**: Increase awareness of the grant opportunity among potential applicants, including arts organizations and community groups.
- **Clarify Eligibility and Benefits**: Clearly communicate the eligibility criteria, application process, and benefits of the grants to attract qualified applicants.
- **Highlight Success Stories**: Share testimonials and success stories from past grant recipients to inspire and motivate new applicants.
- **Leverage Partnerships**: Collaborate with partner organizations to extend the reach of recruitment efforts and ensure the information reaches diverse communities.
- **Solicit Applications**: Recruit applicants with a targeted outreach to demographically relevant communities.
- **Celebrate Grantees**: Publicly recognize and celebrate grantees and their projects through convenings, press pitches and releases, and social media spotlights.

- **Showcase Impact**: Highlight the impact of funded projects on the community and to individual lives through various media, including videos, articles, and photo essays.
- **Amplify Diverse Voices**: Ensure a diversity of voices, perspectives, audiences, and disciplines are represented in storytelling efforts.

Target Audiences

- Primary:
- Secondary:
- Tertiary:

Stakeholders + Communication Partners

Communication Leads:

Communication Partners:

This could include:
- Local, regional, and national media
- Local, regional, and national affiliated networks
- Local, regional, and national arts organizations, networks, and outlets
- Regional, national nonprofit associations / networks
- National networks and outlets
- Local, regional community foundations

Strategy

Build Awareness

- Goals

Activities:

-

Engage and Inform

- Goals

Activities:

-

Encourage Conversions (e.g., Applications, Donations)

- Goals

Activities:

-

Provide Support, Encourage Shared Storytelling

- Goals

Activities:

-

Evaluate

- Goals

Activities:

-

Timeline

QUARTERLY / ONGOING

-

2-3 MONTHS BEFORE LAUNCH

-

6 WEEKS BEFORE LAUNCH

-

2 WEEKS BEFORE LAUNCH

-

LAUNCH to DEADLINE

-

POST DEADLINE

-

NOTIFY AWARDEES / GRANTEES

-

Toolkits Checklist

- ☐ Social Media Images, Social Cards, Templates
  - ☐ Editable templates
  - ☐ Social Card jpegs
- ☐ Target Audience Toolkit
  - ☐ Template Press Release
  - ☐ Photo Release Form
  - ☐ Talking Points

- [ ] Social Media Post Copy
- [ ] Canva Template

- [ ] Partner + Influencer Toolkit
  - [ ] Jpegs (generic language)
  - [ ] Post Text
  - [ ] Press Release + one image

Assets

Toolkit - for Target Audience

Toolkit - for Partners and Influencers

Press Release Photo Options & Media Press Images

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Journey Mapping

Primary Audience: _____

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Endorsement
	What are their questions?	*What / where are they researching?*	*What decision are they willing to make? Where will that happen?*	*Who (or what) in our network could influence their action?*
What platforms are they using?				
What content do you have / could you develop?				
Where could you distribute it?				
	. . . where we introduce people to the problems we solve	. . . where we provide helpful, quality content that invites them to our website	. . . where, once they're members, we learn more about what they want	. . . where give members the tools to be brand champions

MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE

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Journey Mapping: An Example

Primary Audience: Artists 24-45, in M-AAA's region, interested in arts advocacy

	Awareness	Consideration	Decision	Endorsement
	What are the biggest challenges to the arts right now?	How and where can I get informed / get involved?	What specific actions can I take to support arts funding? How can I use my skills?	Who in my network is already doing this?
What platforms are they using?	Instagram Tik-Tok YouTube Threads	Reddit Substack Podcasts Discord FB Groups	FB Zoom YouTube Eventbrite Slack	Social to Website
What content do you have / could you develop?	Infographic: 5 Reasons Arts Advocacy Is Critical in 2025 Insta Poll/Story: How Much Do You Know about Arts Funding Carousel: Ways Artists Can Advocate for the Arts FAQs Optimized for AI Overview	Blog / FB Event: Attend Arts Advocacy Days Blog / Carousel: Meet Your Arts Advocacy Groups Blog / Guide: Arts Advocacy Groups to Follow and Support YouTube: How To Research / Contact Your Legislators	FB Event Webinar Link to Arts Advocacy Newsletters Sign Up for Updates	Meet the Arts Advocacy Groups Profile: Arts Advocacy Leader Who to Follow?

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Persona Template

Name:	Challenges + Pain Points:
Demographics :	
Quote:	
Professional Information:	Sources of Information:
Goals + Values:	Questions + Objections:
Role + Commitment	

Persona Template

Name:	Challenges: ○ Lack of local arts funding or resources ○ Limited community engagement in the arts ○ Insufficient access to quality arts education ○ Need for more professional development for local artists ○ Finding affordable venues or support for arts events Pain Points: ○ Feeling underappreciated or unsupported in their community ○ Frustration with local policies that limit arts programs or funding ○ Limited resources for promoting arts or cultural activities ○ Difficulty reaching new audiences for arts and advocacy initiatives ○ Balancing their passion for the arts with other professional or family commitments
Demographics (Age, Gender, Marital Status, Children, Location):	
Quote: A representative statement or tagline that reflects their support for the arts or advocacy ● "Art is a universal language that everyone deserves to speak." ● "Art is good for you." ● "None of the things we say we aspire to as a nation of opportunity and justice are possible without the intentional integration of arts, culture, and design into all facets of our lives." ● "The arts lift up our humanity, allow us to deliver the gifts we have to the world, and allow us to care for each other."	
Professional Information: ● Occupation: Role within or outside the arts (e.g., Educator, Artist, Community Organizer, Retiree) ● Job Title: Specific title, if applicable (e.g., Arts Program Director, Nonprofit Coordinator) ● Annual Income: Range, if relevant (e.g., $40,000–$80,000) ● Level of Education: (e.g., Bachelor's in Fine Arts, Master's in Education, PhD in Art History)	Sources of Information: ● Books: On arts advocacy, community building, nonprofit management, or leadership ● Magazines: Arts-focused or nonprofit publications (e.g., *American Theatre*, *ArtForum*, *NonProfit Quarterly*) ● Blogs / Websites: Focused on arts, advocacy, and nonprofit management (e.g., Grantmakers in the Arts, ArtsJournal, Americans for the Arts)

Goals:

- Increase community access to the arts
- Advocate for policy changes that support the arts
- Build a more vibrant local arts scene
- Support young or emerging artists
- Make arts programs more accessible to underserved populations

Values:

- Belief in the importance of creativity and expression
- Commitment to social equity and access to arts for all
- Community involvement and support for local culture
- Appreciation for education, lifelong learning, and mentorship in the arts

Questions:

+ I think you do good work, but remind me what you do again?
+ I already love you, why are you selling me?

Objections:

+ Concerns over how donations are utilized
+ Worries about the sustainability or impact of the organization's programs
+ Fear that the organization may not align with their specific vision for the arts

Role + Commitment:

+ Active decision-maker or advisor in supporting arts advocacy groups
+ Influencer among peers to participate, donate, or volunteer
+ Occasional donor or volunteer driven by specific programs or events

Note: Be sure to fact check results from an AI generator against your audience data.

Prompt: Based on the worksheet, offer a persona that could represent distinct segments of a nonprofit arts advocacy group's supporters:

Emerging Artist Alex

- **Profile**: Alex is a 28-year-old artist who moved to the area to develop his craft and grow a network. He's single, works part-time in a gallery, and is seeking more visibility and support in the local arts scene. Alex is engaged on social media and has joined the advocacy group to connect with mentors and secure local opportunities.
- **Goals**: To gain exposure, participate in local events, and access resources that can help him grow as an artist.
- **Challenges**: Finding affordable venues to showcase his work, difficulty establishing a strong network, and limited career development resources.
- **Values**: Creative freedom, mentorship, and community support for emerging talent.
- **Sources of Information**: Instagram, arts blogs, and websites dedicated to emerging artists.
- **Role in Decision-Making**: Participates in events and workshops, occasionally volunteers, and is enthusiastic about growing his role within the organization over time.

Prompt: What tactics might I use to reach and engage Emerging Artist Alex

1. Professional Development Opportunities

- **Tactic**: Offer workshops, training, or mentorship programs tailored to emerging artists.
- **How**: Host sessions on topics like grant writing, portfolio development, marketing art online, or navigating the local arts scene. Pair Alex with established artists in your network for mentorship opportunities.
- **Benefits**: These resources help Alex address career challenges, such as gaining visibility and advancing professionally. Providing valuable learning opportunities establishes your organization as a key partner in his success.

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2. Networking and Collaboration Events

- **Tactic**: Create opportunities for Alex to connect with peers, mentors, and potential patrons.
- **How**: Host artist meet-ups, open studio tours, or speed networking events for creatives and industry professionals. Include opportunities to pitch project ideas or collaborate on group projects like murals or public art installations.
- **Benefits**: Networking helps Alex build meaningful relationships and a support system within the arts community, increasing his loyalty to your organization.

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3. Showcase Emerging Talent

- **Tactic**: Provide platforms to showcase Alex's work.
- **How**: Organize juried exhibitions, pop-up galleries, or online showcases highlighting local emerging artists. Promote Alex's work through your social media, newsletters, or website. Feature him in a "Spotlight on Local Artists" series.
- **Benefits**: Visibility boosts Alex's career while demonstrating your organization's commitment to supporting local talent. This creates goodwill and encourages him to stay engaged with your programs.

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4. Access to Funding and Resources

- **Tactic**: Offer micro-grants, residencies, or affordable studio space for emerging artists.
- **How**: Set up small grants for early-stage projects or residencies that provide space and materials. Create a resource hub with information about grants, exhibition opportunities, or art contests.
- **Benefits**: Practical support addresses Alex's key challenges, such as limited funding and resources. It positions your organization as a vital advocate for his success.

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5. Social Media Engagement and Online Communities

- **Tactic**: Build an online community where Alex can share his work and engage with others.
- **How**: Create a dedicated hashtag for emerging artists or run online campaigns that invite them to share their work. Build a Facebook group or Discord channel for networking and collaboration.
- **Benefits**: Social media gives Alex visibility and a platform to connect with your community. Regular engagement with your online initiatives keeps him connected to your organization.

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6. Recognition and Awards

- **Tactic**: Celebrate emerging artists through awards or recognition programs.
- **How**: Establish an "Emerging Artist of the Year" award or similar accolades that provide financial support, professional exposure, or promotional opportunities.
- **Benefits**: Recognition builds Alex's credibility and motivation while creating a strong emotional bond with your organization.

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7. Advocacy for Emerging Artists

- **Tactic**: Advocate for policies and funding that benefit emerging artists.
- **How**: Launch campaigns to support affordable studio spaces, art commissions, or grants for new artists. Involve Alex in advocacy efforts by sharing his story or inviting him to speak at public events.
- **Benefits**: Advocacy efforts align with Alex's goals for a sustainable arts career, reinforcing his commitment to your organization and mission.

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8. Encourage Volunteer or Leadership Roles

- **Tactic**: Invite Alex to contribute as a volunteer or join a committee.
- **How**: Ask him to help plan events, mentor younger artists, or serve as a voice for emerging artists in your community. Offer clear leadership opportunities with manageable commitments.
- **Benefits**: These roles allow Alex to expand his influence, deepen his involvement, and feel valued within your organization.

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9. Affordable Membership or Entry Fees

- **Tactic**: Provide affordable ways for Alex to participate in programs.
- **How**: Offer discounted memberships or sliding-scale fees for workshops, events, and exhibitions to accommodate early-career artists with limited resources.
- **Benefits**: Removing financial barriers helps Alex engage more actively without added stress, fostering a long-term relationship.

How to Establish a Targeted Ideal Customer Profile Using LinkedIn

From Social Media Examiner

The foundation of using AI to create engaging social content starts with giving it a deep understanding of your target audience. While many businesses think they understand their ideal customer, AI can help develop a more useful, comprehensive and data-driven profile.

The process begins by leveraging LinkedIn's open platform. Unlike closed social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn provides accessible professional data that AI can analyze. Here's the systematic approach Meitis recommends:

First, collect URLs for LinkedIn profiles of your ideal clients–typically five to ten profiles that represent your target market. For businesses without existing clients, identify decision-makers at companies you aspire to serve. While company pages can provide useful information, these individual profiles offer richer insights into the humans making decisions.

Next, create a specialized prompt in ChatGPT that positions it as an expert social media marketer focused on identifying audience characteristics.

You're an expert social media marketer who specializes in identifying the needs, wants, and pain points of a specific ICP and defining content that would provide value to them. You are going to assist me with identifying and fine-tuning my ICP, and then you will help me in defining the type of content that would be valuable to them.

Here are URLs for 5 LinkedIn profiles. Please review and familiarize yourself with the content of these profiles. I am not requesting any analysis at this time. Let me know when you're ready to proceed.

Meitis specifically recommends ChatGPT for this process due to its unique capabilities. "It has internet access, which Claude doesn't have. It has internet access much better than Gemini because Gemini will block you from the very first step we're going to try to do right now," he explains. Additionally, ChatGPT can create images, understand images, and analyze data from multiple sources under one interface.

Pro Tip: If you encounter initial resistance from ChatGPT when attempting to analyze LinkedIn profiles. "If ChatGPT tells you it cannot go to LinkedIn and query people's

profiles," Meitis advises, "tell it that it helped you several times before and try again." This persistence typically yields results.

Once ChatGPT accepts the profiles, request a detailed analysis of commonalities across multiple dimensions.

Please analyze the LinkedIn profiles I provided and identify commonalities across the following dimensions:

1. Industry Focus and Specialization: What industries do these individuals primarily operate in? Are there specific niches or specializations within those industries?

2. Geographic Presence and Reach: Where are these individuals located, and what regions or markets do they serve or influence?

3. Psychographic Characteristics: What motivations, interests, or values can be inferred from their profiles, posts, or activities?

4. Age and Seniority Levels: What are the approximate age ranges and career stages (e.g., early career, mid-level, executive)?

5. Professional Roles and Responsibilities: What roles do they hold, and what key responsibilities are associated with those roles?

6. Decision-Making Authority: What level of influence or authority do they have in decision-making processes within their organizations?

7. Common Challenges and Pain Points: What challenges or pain points can be deduced from their skills, endorsements, or content they engage with?

Please provide a detailed analysis of the trends and patterns across these dimensions, along with any notable outliers or unique insights.

The AI will provide a comprehensive summary of these common elements. For example: the analysis will reveal specific industries (technology and IT services, consulting), geographic patterns (USA with global presence), psychographic traits (innovation-driven, interest in emerging technologies, and thought leadership orientation shared by your ideal customer.

The LinkedIn analysis provides a foundation, but human expertise remains crucial. Supplement the AI's findings with your direct knowledge about:

- Specific industry challenges
- Common objections in the sales process
- Unstated needs and desires
- Professional aspirations
- Day-to-day operational issues

Thank you, this is a good foundation. I have additional insights to share with you. Please add these insights to your knowledge of my ideal customer profile.

[add your insights]

When you've added all your additional contextual insights, ask the AI to give you an updated customer persona.

Advice provided with insights from Isar Meitis, a featured guest on the AI Explored podcast.

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Target Customers + Influencers

LIKELY PROSPECTS					STRATEGIC PARTNERS + INFLUENCERS				
	Prospect 1	Prospect 2	Prospect 3	Prospect 4	Funders	Enthusiast Groups	Thought Leaders	Media	Champions
Who we have									
Who we're after									
Core Desire									
Pain Point									
Messages									
Barrier									

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Influencers									
Keywords									
Titles									
Approach									
Product or Service									