# GETTING STARTED

## ALL THE THINGS YOU WISH YOU KNEW BEFORE APPLYING…

**A WORKSHOP FOR THE FUNDING BOOSTER PROGRAM OF THE CULTURAL COALITION SERVING SOUTHEAST & NORTHEAST CT**

What are the challenges facing Non-Profits today?
## Center for Effective Philanthropy

**Negatives: (What can we do? How can we respond?)**

- **INFLATION  -** Increased costs for supplies/service/programs.
- **STAFF & BOARD** - Lack of workforce, retention, staff & board burn-out, equity in pay.
- **TECHNOLOGY** - Keeping up with changing technology/trends.

**Positives:**

- **DONORS -** Increased size of individual donations & removed restrictions.
- **FUNDERS -** Increased trust from funders. Simplified applications, reporting requirements, and more operating grants.
- **FINANCIAL SECURITY -** Most saw balanced budgets or surpluses for 2023 and project healthy budgets for 2024.

# What is in your control to change?

1. **Diversify Funding Sources** - Alleviate some of the burden of inflation by creating financial security and sharing resources.

2. **READI Framework** - Deepen the impact, engage with the community - make it relevant, equitable, inclusive, accessible. Attract new board and staff members, build newer audiences.

3. **Strategic Planning -** Hone-in on what you do well, forget the fluff. Having a path/focus for staff and board relieves stress and creates a more functional work environment.

4. **Leave the Silo.** Engage in the larger creative network, collaborate, share resources, expand your support system. **Cultural Coalition - FREE Resources.**

# Diversify Funding
## Earned vs. Contributed Income - You Need Both!

### Contributed - Given

- Individual Donations - Unrestricted (can be used for anything) unless donor specifies use.

- Grants - Must be used for the purpose in which funds were awarded. Some grants are for general operating (can be used for almost anything). Grants can be cumbersome to apply for and manage but typically yield more $$ than sponsorships – app. $1-5K.

### Earned - Purchased

- Business Sponsorships - "Buying" marketing presence. Easier to apply for and manage than grants. Supports events or areas with lots of marketing, app. $250-$1K depending on reach.

- Membership Fees - Members are not Donors!

- Sales, Merchandise

- Program Registration Fees/Ticket Fees

- Special Event Income - **Be Realistic!**

- Interest on savings, long term savings, etc.

# Deepen the Impact
## *Relevant, Equitable, Accessible, Diverse, Inclusive*

**For your BUSINESS**- Being READI is good for your bottom line. Expanding access to your programs and services will boost participation, increase contributed revenue sources, and make your project more competitive in the funding arena.

**For your MISSION** - Being READI is good - you are a gatekeeper (in a position of power)! Acknowledging this role and how it can be used to create a more equitable future for our communities is our social responsibility.

**For your COMMUNITY** - Being READI is good as you are more accurately serving your WHOLE community not simply the ones that have participated thus far.

# Strategic Planning
# Is Your Organization Ready for Grants?

1. A clearly defined **mission statement and outline of your programming,** with descriptions, goals, a way to evaluate if they're successful, and a budget for each.

2. A **short or long range plan.** Does not have to be fancy but DOES have to involve all stakeholders, and give some direction to where the organization is going and why.

3. **Financial Statements.** Do you have an operating budget that is board approved? Are the expenses and income sources clear? Do you have a track record of sound financial practices? **TRANSPARENCY IS KEY!**

4. **Board List.** Do you have a board that operates according to your bylaws? Are they giving time, talent, and $$? Does your board reflect your community? If not, is this something you're working toward?

5. **Capacity.** Do you have the capacity and time to complete a competitive grant application? Do you have the staff capacity to manage the grant and reporting if awarded?

**Grants are competitive at every level. This puts you in a stronger position AND gives you copy/verbiage..**

# Leaving the Silo
## *Think Outside The Box & Access More Funding!*

**Individual artists have the talent but limited access to funding,**

**Non-profits have structure and access to TONS of funding!**

This is just another reason to think strategically about building authentic partnerships and relationships. Artists can work with you to amplify your mission/programs; you both get greater exposure, AND a grant can cover the artist fee and materials for your project/program + some of your administrative costs.

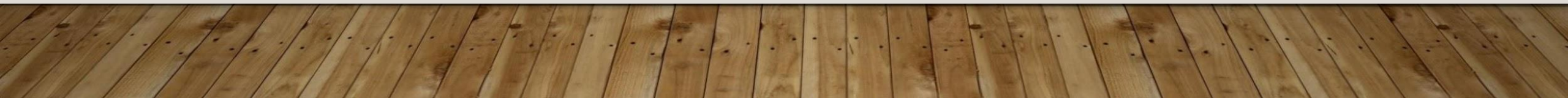**Don't limit yourself to just arts-based organizations!**

*Social Service*

*Health/Wellness*

*Academia*

*Social Justice*

ALL benefit from the arts!

# Leaving the Silo
## Collaboration: Relationships vs. Partnership

**Relationships - Are based on trust, mutual benefit, shared burden, and longevity.**

- A partnership is limited/contractual/transactional. Sometimes great relationships begin with transactional partnerships. If that's the case be honest about what you hope to achieve, and leave room for growth in the future.
- In any partnership OR relationship each side must contribute and benefit.
- The relationship hopefully extends beyond one program, or idea.
- It should be built by asking: what are your goals, and what are mine, and what can we co-create to satisfy both and raise each other up.
- Relationships take time, involve building trust.
- Any collaboration requires that you give up at least one of the following: time, money, control

**Building trust and taking time for a partnership to grow will yield a much deeper impact for both sides, and hopefully create a long-standing relationship.**

# Grants
## Where to Find Them & How to Approach Them

- **Utilize Free Services.** CC  newsletter/eblasts, Bank Foundation Directories, libraries, CT Dept. Economic & Community Development. Follow funders & other Nonprofits on Social Media/FB.

- **Look Inward.** Board and donor/member connections. Where do they work, who do they know? Blanket "Letters of Inquiry" yield VERY little fruit.

- **Start Small & Local.** If you've never received a grant try a local bank foundation or sponsorship. Regional banks: BOA, Chelsea Groton, Dime Bank, TD Bank, M&T Bank, Centreville Bank.

- **Investigate Your Target**. Funding Priorities Line-up? (CHECK) Guidelines are relevant? (CHECK) Read through FAQ's? (CHECK) Looked at past awardees? Anyone look like me? (CHECK)

- **Make the Call!** The Grant Officer is not your enemy. Chat them up. Explain your mission, program idea – be passionate about what you do/impact. **Follow their guidance.**

# Is This Opportunity Worth It?
# Use a Self-Test!

**Step 1: Funding Priorities** - Do the funding priorities line-up with your project/goals?

**Step 2: Eligibility** - Are you eligible to apply? Do you fit the parameters? What does the scoring rubric look like?

**Step 3: Funding Period** - Does the funding period fit within the timeframe of your project?

**Step 4: FAQ's** - Frequently asked questions provide a wealth of information! Check them out.

**Step 5: Awardees -** Do any of the programs look like mine? If not, that's a possible red flag.

**Step 6: Capacity** - Do you have the time/bandwidth to write, submit, manage the award, and do the final reporting?

**Step 7: Not sure still… Get Some Advice -** You may just need a little encouragement!

**\*\*\* PERMISSION GRANTED: Release Yourself From The Guilt Of Not Applying If It's Not A Good Fit! \*\*\***

# Funders Have Missions Too, What Are They Looking For?

- **Evaluation & Adaptation -** Do you self-evaluate; synthesize what you learn during programs, and how it will change what you do in the future? Do you adapt as feedback indicates need for changes?

- **Diversity, Racial Equity, Inclusion, Cultural Competency** – Requires review of behaviors, org structure, policies/practices. If you're not having conversations about equity <u>your organization will struggle to be relevant moving forward</u>.

- **Partnerships/Collaborations** – Breakdown silos. Funders are looking for the greatest community impact (make the most of every dollar). Collaboration is a key piece to expanding impact, and helps you reach new audiences, and share resources.

- **Fiscal Responsibility** – Is your operating budget clear? Does it accurately reflect the financial needs of your organization? Are funds allocated appropriately to reflect your mission/programming?
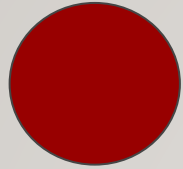
# Does the Program, Fit the Grant?

***You can't fit a square peg into a round hole***.

Never sacrifice the integrity of your program to fit into the funding priorities of a grant. Not only is it obvious to the grant reviewer, but you're not staying true to your mission.

HOWEVER, sometimes funding priorities make us think "outside the box" about ways we SHOULD be partnering, opportunities we might be missing to be more equitable, and ways to reach new audiences and adapt.

**Keep an open mind, but always be aware of where you're headed.**

# General Rules of Grant Writing
## *Make it hard for them to say no!*

1. **The technical writer vs. the emotional writer** – BE BOTH! Data drives points home, emotion connects the reader to your mission and its impact.

2. **ANSWER THE QUESTION!** Repeat the question, or provide headers to make sure you're answering everything.  Multi-Pronged Questions are very common.

3. **Use their words right back at them!!** Repeat key words to support your points.

4. Just like in applying for a job… **Confidence is a good thing!** As long as it's mixed with humility.

# General Rules of Grant Writing (cont…)
## *Make it hard for them to say no!*

**5. Don't show a picture of desperation or provide general information**, funders don't want to be the saviors of sinking ships. Rather, they want to know all the who/what/where/when/why of your project, and how it will make an impact/fill a need.

**6. Watch-out for Character/Word Limits & Language** – Use language the general public will understand, and be careful of character limits! They always include the spaces.

**7. Presentation Matters!**
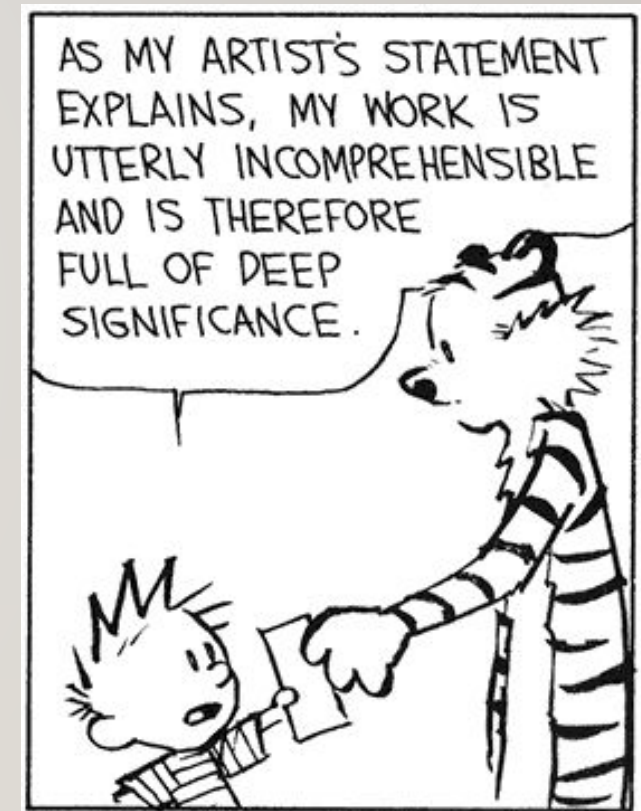
# BOTH TECHNICAL & EMOTIONAL WRITING
## Typical Grant Question: *What need will your project address?*

**Example Question from a Tech Grant:** {ORG} prides itself on our ability to adapt, shift, and respond to the needs of our community. Therefore, when the pandemic hit and {ORG} temporarily shut its doors, we didn't miss a beat. Our staff, utilizing our current laptops, shifted to working from home and within weeks our programs moved to virtual platforms. Now, almost a year later, when over 96% of arts/culture organizations across the country have cancelled events, 37% have made either temporary or permanent reductions in staff, and, in CT, nonprofit organizations have suffered a $4.5B financial loss (Americans for the Arts), {ORG} has remained steady, retained our staff, and continued to offer programming both virtually and in-person when feasible. {ORG} has survived, and will continue to survive and flourish because we listen to the needs of our community, we adapt, adjust, and grow always remaining relevant. However, this does not mean we are without need. During this time when we have pinched pennies to ensure our fiscal stability we are faced with a dire situation where the tools we rely on 100% to function are crashing. Our laptops no longer hold a charge, they cannot perform updates, and they struggle to work with various applications and software that we use on a daily basis. Therefore, {ORG} is requesting assistance to address this immediate need….
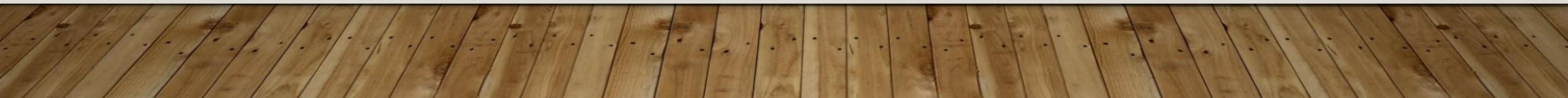
# Breaking it down…
# ANSWER THE QUESTION!

**QUESTION:** Provide detailed info about how activities will <u>address the stated need and intended impact</u>. Include the <u># of individuals</u> served and <u># of hours</u> participants will be involved. If the request is for project support, note whether this is a <u>new or existing</u> program. If existing, how long has it been in operation. (300 Word Max)

**The Need-** (Emotion & Data!) Can you demonstrate there is a community need? Use demographics, studies, data.

**The Impact-** (Emotion & Data!) Brag a little about the strength of your program.

**Project Details -** (Don't be general) This NEW project will run for 8-weeks, two-hours per session, for 16 total contact hours.  The project directly serves our 100 members and indirectly serves the community at large through marketing/culminating event etc.…

**Steer clear of generalized statements, project "concepts" and outlines.**

# Breaking it down…
# USE THEIR WORDS BACK AT THEM!

**CFECT.org**

| Programs that empower youth: | Programs that promote basic needs & rights: |
|---|---|
| Enhance quality early childhood education & intervention; | Promote individual & family economic security; |
| Support mentoring programs; | Increase food security, access to healthcare & human services, especially in communities of color.; |
| Programs that promote mental/physical health; | Decrease homelessness; |
| Enhance educational opportunities in science, literacy, art & culture; | Utilize arts & culture experiences to education & improve quality of life; |
| Support youth-led social change & elevate unheard voices. | Promote healthy relationships. |

# Breaking it down…
# USE THEIR WORDS BACK AT THEM!

**Preference is given to programs that:**

- Are collaborative in nature,
- Regional in scope,
- Promote systems change,
- Are rooted in evidence-based, solution-oriented approaches,
- Serve lower-income communities,
- Seek to eliminate racism & societal inequities,
- Incorporate the voices of clients, consumers & youth in planning,
- Include specific, measurable outcomes, and
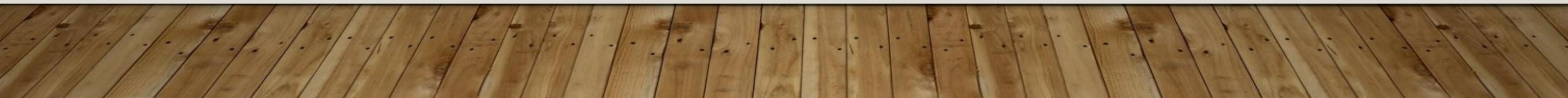- Affect positive change over the long-term.

# Breaking it down…
## SHOW CONFIDENCE, IT'S OK TO BRAG A LITTLE!!

**Question: Brief overview of your organization & mission. 150 words**

(ORG) is a 19-year-old community arts center with a mission to provide a nurturing environment for artistic creativity and development through educational fine arts programs and events, for all ages. This mission is evident from the moment you enter, from our abundant art store, open studio's, display of local art by students and seasoned artists, one-of-a-kind sculpture wall, and expansive selection of supplies/equipment. (ORG) classes, summer camps, workshops, and community partnerships make us a hub for town activity, with offerings for all ages, incomes, and abilities, in over 20 artforms. **Everything about (ORG) nurtures an atmosphere of inclusiveness, acceptance, spontaneity, and creativity, allowing our students to let their artistic ability shine-- and it works!! In the past two years 5 of our students have WON the National Ceramics Competition where over 1,100 pieces were submitted but only 100 pieces selected nationally. This makes (ORG) an official award-winning studio!**

# Breaking it down…
## BE SPECIFIC

- Will the reviewer be able to understand the project clearly? Remember, they know nothing about you, your organization, or your work!

- Do you elicit excitement so the reader genuinely wants to see the project realized?

- Are you providing a clear program OUTLINE and not a program CONCEPT. Answer the who/what/when/where/why, whether they ask it directly or not.

- Don't save the best for last! Make points up-front. Reviewers get overwhelmed. "Hook" them right up-front because by the last paragraph they can be skimming.

***Ask someone outside the organization to read the grant, like US!***

***This service is FREE through the Funding Booster Program!***

# Common Questions:
# OUTCOMES & EVALUATION

**Some sample questions…**

- **Describe anticipated results during and after the funding period.**

- **What difference will this program make to your community?**

- **How will the success of this initiative be defined and measured?**

- **Which tools will you use to evaluate the project?**

- **Describe the benefits expected from this program or activity.**

Keep evaluations simple -- Survey Monkey, Google/FB analytics, Zip Code analysis etc... Readers can tell when you're "throwing in the kitchen sink" or over-committing. Make sure you can complete the evaluation -- they'll ask for the data in the final report!

*DISCUSSION: What are some simple evaluation techniques?*

# Understanding Outcomes Vs. Outputs

**Outputs =** How many people attended my event, how many tickets were purchased, seats filled? The numbers behind the program.

**VS.**

**Outcomes** = Did we IMPACT our community/audience? How much? Did we make a difference or "move the needle" on the larger community issue we were working to impact? Did we achieve the goals of the program?

# Common Questions:
# MONEY QUESTIONS

**Some sample questions…**

- **How would you secure the remaining funds or modify this program or project if a partial award were approved?**

- **What other steps have you taken to raise funds for this activity or program?**

- **What alternative plans have you made in the event you don't receive the full amount?**

    *Remember… Confidence is a good thing! As long as it's mixed with a touch of humility.*

**Example:** "X program can not operate without these needed funds, but {ORG} has successfully raised funds for programming for 10 years and we're committed to securing what is needed. If funds are not received the program will be postponed or reduced in scope until funds are identified."

# What is In-Kind?
# How do you reflect it in your budget.

**What is it?** In-kind: In lieu of money, donated goods or services.

**How do you account for it?** Estimate the value of <u>time</u>, goods, or services. Include these values in your project and organizational budgets as income AND expenses.

**Why is this important?** If these goods/services were not donated you would need to find the money to cover them. Therefore your board/staff/partners need to see these very real expenses.

**Why is it important to include in-kind in grant applications or budgets?** In-kind shows that you're doing everything you can to keep the costs low by asking for donations of goods and time. Many grants require you to "match" your award (i.e. funder provides $10K, you match with $10K of your own for a total budget of $20K). Typically in-kind can be used to cover a portion of your match! In-kind also raises the overall cost of your project, making the grant ask less of the whole.

# Creating A Project Budget Like A Pro!
## *** *Example* ***

**Think of your budget as your narrative in numbers! All the pieces must be represented.**

- Separate income into **Contributed vs. Earned vs. In-kind** (volunteer hours, donated goods/services). In-kind must cancel itself out/be reflected in both income & expenses.

- Project Budgets should **show a real picture of program expenses** - including all administrative and overhead costs, but you don't necessarily charge these to the grant.

- Are your **line items clear** or are several expenses mixed into one category?

- **Limit "miscellaneous"** income or expenses. What are these incomes/expenses?

- **Matching grants** – Can you use in-kind? Where are the matching funds coming from?

- **Typically you "zero-out" program budgets**. Operating Budgets SHOULD show surplus! Surplus/Cash Reserve shows responsible financial management - ability to plan for future.

# Final Reporting
## *** Don't Make These Mistakes ***

**Mistake #1** - You were awarded the grant, and you do not look at the final report requirements until after the project is over…

**Mistake #2** - You forget to do any evaluations or collect any data from your project…

**Mistake #3** - You spent the funds in different ways than you originally applied for, and now it's time to complete the final report…

A final report is simply asking you to report back on exactly how the funds were used, the results of the program in which you received funding, and lessons learned/successes achieved. The biggest mistake an awardee can make is forgetting about the original grant and the goals, and purposes the funds were supposed to be used for!

Your grant is still "open" until the final report is accepted. If major changes occur with the project or how the funds will be spent you must connect with the funder for pre-approval.

# Helpful Hints

- Formatting matters!! Make sure fonts/sizes, spacing is consistent, spelling/grammar etc.…

- Most applications are submitted online. Be sure to create a template OFF-Line and copy/paste when you're ready to submit. Otherwise you might lose your work if system crashes/forget to save.

- Always have another set of eyes look it over for inconsistencies. Sometimes you're too close to the program/grant to see that pieces of information are missing.

- If anything is left unclear, the reviewer may be left with doubt.  Include a cover letter clarifying. It's OK if they call with questions… That means they're being thoughtful.

- All attachments included?? Double/Triple Check.

- Was Grant Awarded – YES! Great, don't forget to send a thank you! Acknowledge foundation on website and in all marketing, invite them to relevant events. Keep the relationship positive.
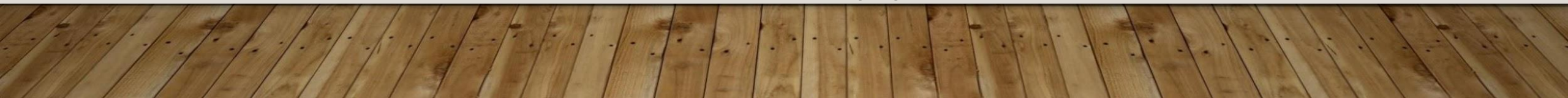
# The "What If's"

What happens if…

- You didn't receive funding… Call. Are there comments? A Scoring Rubric?

- The program changes during the funding period…

- You don't receive the other funding needed…

- A key partner backs-out…

- The project doesn't achieve any of the stated objectives…

- A global pandemic occurs and you have to shut-down... (What are the odds!)

**Call them!! Be honest.**

**They DO NOT want to to take the money back and can typically be flexible.**

**Don't make this a habit – says you're unreliable.**

# Comments From Grant Reviewers

- Not a clear articulation of how this project fits the guidelines.

- Appreciate the data and numbers, but the narrative needs more humanity to it – the emotion gets lost in it.

- Budget is too general and the ask is not in-line with funding priorities. They did not read grant guidelines -- the ask is more than the total budget.

- The project would benefit if it's rooted in the community. Where's the collaboration?

- How will the org recruit for participation? Where's the promotional plans?

- More thought into how you will effectively evaluate the impact of your event.

- There is no real connection to the audience. The program only goes skin-deep – doesn't reflect the voices of, and participation directly with, the organization's community.

# Comments From Grant Reviewers

- Needs more information/thought about how this aligns with the funding priorities.

- The budget does not correspond to the narrative.

- Wanted to hear more about how they were measuring outcomes.

- The program is operating outside the timeline for the grant funding period.

- I don't see how this program is connected to their mission?

- This is a wonderful program and I can see the authors deep emotional connection, but the narrative questions are simply not answered.

   ***\*\* BE A REVIEWER! That's the best way to improve your own applications. \*\****

# Some Resources for Grants & Data

- Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition: culturesect.org; CT Office of the Arts

- Dept Economic & Comm. Dev. & State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) & New England Fndt. Arts

- NEA/NEH/IMLS: National Endowment for Arts, NE for Humanities, Inst. Museum & Library Services

- Americans for the Arts: Great data!!

- CT Humanities Quick Grants (MUST talk to them first. 6x/year; Up to $5K; Only if there's a humanities component)

- Chelsea Groton Bank Foundation (Rolling but reviewed in May & October)

- Dime Bank Foundation (Deadlines March, June, Oct annually)

- Dominion Energy Foundation & Charter Oak Credit Union Foundation (Deadlines Both Quarterly)

- Edward & Mary Lord Foundation (Deadline Rolling; LOI First; Talk to Cultural Coalition Staff before submitting)

- Bank of America (BOA) Searchable Database

- Frank Loomis Palmer Fund & Bodenwein Public Benevolent (Deadlines November & New London focus)