



Access/VSA
The Kennedy Center

A Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability Program

Tips for Writing a VSA Program Site Proposal 2024-2025

This Webinar will Cover

How to prepare a contract proposal





Program Specific Content

Please contact Stephanie directly for program specific questions.

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Q&A at the End



The RFPs

There are seven different VSA Programs & Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

1. VSA Arts Connect All – Workshop/Residency Program
2. VSA Media Arts Discovery Program
3. VSA Theatre Discovery Program
4. VSA Visual Arts Discovery Program
5. VSA Museum Access for Kids Program
6. VSA Performing Arts Access for Kids Program
7. VSA EZ Program



How Many Proposals?

- You may submit proposals to 2 different RFPs for which you are eligible.
- You may submit only 1 proposal per RFP.
- Individuals are not eligible to apply for these contracts.

2

1

0

How Many Contracts?



1

The Kennedy Center will issue a contract offer for no more than 1 proposal per selected, eligible organization.

Not Offered this Year

Not offered in 2024-2025

- VSA Arts Connect All—Professional Development Program
- VSA Rosemary Kennedy Initiative





Newish Programs

VSA Media Arts Discovery Program

- Includes moving images, digital images, photography, sound, interactive, and virtual.

VSA Theatre Arts Discovery Program

- Includes theatre craft and drama process.

VSA Visual Arts Discovery Program

- If you liked the old Children's VAD, try this.

VSA Teacher Guides



VSA Visual Arts Teacher
Resource Guides
are online at
[https://www.kennedy-
center.org/education/vsa](https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/vsa)

Then click on
VSA Research & Resources
and look under Lesson Plans



No Minimums

VSA EZ Program

- Great for small numbers of participants
- No required number of participants
- No required number of hours of instruction
- Up to \$5,000
- Event, workshop, series of sessions



RFPs for Venues Only

- You must be a nonprofit **museum** to be eligible for the VSA Museum Access for Kids Program.
- You must be a nonprofit **performing arts venue** to be eligible for the VSA Performing Arts Access for Kids Program. A brick-and-mortar venue, not a resident company.



Professional Venue & Show

VSA Performing Arts Access for Kids Program

- Professional venue.
- Shows take place at the venue (not school).
- Professional performances (not students performing for students).



Conferences in August 2025

Conferences for required professional learning take place in early August 2025.

- Page 3, number 7 of RFPs
- LEAD
- ED@LEAD
- In Ohio, but NOT Toledo



Read the RFPs Carefully!



Read the RFPs Carefully

- Core program components on page 2.
- Training requirement on pages 3.
- Eligibility requirements on page 4.
- Unallowable costs on page 6.

These sections are similar, but not the same in every RFP.

2024-2025 RFP, VSA Program
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Page 2 of 11

Page 3 of 11

2024-2025 RFP, VSA Program
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

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Special Education Credentials

Special education credentials are required for all VSA Program Site Programs

- A person substantially involved in the development and/or delivery of the program.
- May be staff, a consultant, or an advisor.
- Make sure you list the credentials in the biography section of the proposal.
- Educational degree, school district certificate.

Contracts NOT Grants



- Seeking contractors to deliver VSA Programs—to become VSA Program Sites.
- Achieve VSA Program goals around the country.

Contracts NOT Grants

- **Contract for hire** process, rather than a grant process most familiar to nonprofit organizations.
- It is a competitive process.
- Looking to hire organizations with the best qualifications and that are cost effective.



Contracts NOT Grants

Contract to do **Work for the Kennedy Center.**

NOT GRANTS to your organizations to support your programs!



You are the Expert



Think of the contract as bringing **your expertise** to deliver the Kennedy Center's VSA Programs to our constituency (students with disabilities) in **your community**.



Use Existing Program Structures



Existing Program Structures

You may use your proven, existing program structures or frameworks.

You may use existing funding sources to achieve VSA Program goals and expand your services to the Kennedy Center and other stakeholders.



Example

Kids Awesome Arts **will provide** VSA Arts Connect All Workshop/Residency Program **services** to the Kennedy Center **through the framework of** our “Kids Create Program.”

Do not use grant-like language similar to:

“...this contract will support...” or

“...this contract will fund...”

Sufficient Information

- Provide sufficient information to evaluate your proposal—narrative and contract fee justification.
- Concise text.
- Error free text.

WHO

WHEN

WHERE

How

WHY

WHAT

Wise Narrative Use



- Focus on sections describing your services.
- Have a strong summary description.
- Don't waste space on justifying the need for the program.

(more) Wise Narrative Use

Take the time to describe your structures, frameworks, strategies and methodologies.



(even more) Wise Narrative Use

Describe how your services **specifically** address the learning needs of students with disabilities.



Estimating Participant Numbers

- Estimate carefully. Don't inflate numbers.
- Ask participating schools for help with demographics.
- **Contractors are required to meet the proposed number of participants. Incomplete contracts will result in reduction of contract fee.**
- In inclusive settings, preference for 50% students with disabilities to 50% students without disabilities.

6. Projected Number of Program Participants *(integers only, no ranges)*

6a. Number of students/youth WITH disabilities directly served

6b. Number of students/youth WITHOUT disabilities directly served

6c. Average Number of hours of instruction or participation per student/youth with a disability

Transparent Fee Justification

Create a budget that provides sufficient transparency into:

- Understanding how your proposed contract fee ties to the services you will provide to accomplish VSA Program goals.
- The calculation of the contract fee. Provide adequate calculations for each line item.



Budget Format

- Use the expense categories on the form.
- Show calculations and include narrative for proposed contract fee.

Expense Category	Show Calculation	VSA Contract Amount	Other Amount (if applicable)
a. Organization program staff (program services/direct costs). Costs associated with staff working directly on program delivery			
b. Contractors & Consultants (per person rate x hours)			



Show Calculations

- Contract fee to enable participation of students with disabilities or educators of students with disabilities. Your calculations should reflect this.
- No percentages without explanation in calculation box. Show how you arrived at that percentage – hours x rate
- Use **Other Amount** column to show distinction between contract fee for students with disabilities and funding to support students without disabilities.

Avoid Percentages

- Do not list a percentage only in the calculation box. Show us how you determined the percentage. Example:

Show Calculation & Specify Items	VSA Contract Fee Amount	Other Amount
50% of teaching artists (TA) fee	2,000	
1 TAs x 5 hours x \$400/hour x 2 residencies = \$4000 \$4,000 x 50% = \$2,000 50% of students served have a disability.	2,000	
1 TAs x 5 hours x \$400/hour x 2 residencies = \$4,000 \$4,000 - \$2,000 from other monies = \$2,000. Students with disabilities participate in both residencies.	2,000	2,000



Unallowable Costs

- Unallowable expenses are listed on page 3, number 8 of the RFPs.
 - Food and beverage
 - Production costs
 - Equipment & durable education and art supplies
 - Space rental
 - Culminating activities
- Examples are on RFP page 6.
- Unallowable costs will be removed from any contract offer you may receive.

Avoid Cost Removal

- List the types of **consumable supplies and materials** in the budget. Use general categories such as paint, clay, construction paper, etc.
- You do not need to indicate the quantity or unit cost of each item.
- Unspecified supplies and materials will be removed from any contract offer you may receive.



Avoid Cost Removal

- List people teaching a workshop as teaching artists or facilitators. Prevent confusion with performing, which is a production cost and is unallowable.
- Make sure you distinguish between staff costs for program delivery and administrative overhead. Put the emphasis on program delivery. Make sure staff roles are clearly indicated in calculations.



Per Capita Costs

- Keep in mind costs **per student with a disability**.
- Even in inclusive settings, the VSA Program contracts are all about serving the students with disabilities.



Getting Bang for the Buck

- Maximize a contract by leveraging program partnerships and funding sources.
- Expand the reach and objectives of the proposed services by securing additional partners or funders.



It's all about the Logo

Contractors are **required** to use the VSA Contract Logo or acknowledgment line.



Logo & Logo

- Use in addition to your logo and funder logos.
- Guidance will be given on logo and acknowledgement line usage.





ANY
QUESTIONS
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Follow up Email

A follow-up email will go out to all attendees within a week with:

- Link to the recording of today's presentation
- Transcript



Thank You!

For questions, please contact:

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