



THE SOLO ARTIST FUNDING GUIDE

Fundraising Strategies, Grants
& Fellowships

A curated starter guide for finding the resources
to move your solo show forward.

FUND THE VISION.
TELL THE STORY.

START WITH A FUNDING PLAN

Funding a solo show rarely comes from one source. Think of your budget as a puzzle: **personal investment + individual donors + crowdfunding + grants + sponsorships + earned income + in-kind support**. Your mix will depend on the size, stage and purpose of your project.

This is a starter guide, not an exhaustive grant directory. Funding programs change frequently, so use these resources to begin your research and always verify current eligibility, deadlines and award amounts before applying.

FIRST: KNOW WHAT YOU NEED

- Development: writing, dramaturgy, coaching, rehearsal space
- Production: director, designers, venue, tech, costumes, props
- Documentation: photography, video, trailer, EPK
- Marketing: graphics, printing, advertising, public relations
- Touring: travel, lodging, shipping, festival fees
- Artist compensation: include your own labor in the real cost of the project

DON'T WAIT FOR ONE BIG GRANT.

Build several possible paths to the same goal. If one source falls through, the project can still move forward.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR SHOW

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Start with people who already know your work. Make a personal, specific ask and explain exactly what their contribution helps make possible.

CROWDFUNDING

Create a time-limited campaign around a clear milestone: workshop, premiere, festival run, touring launch or documentation shoot. Video and frequent updates help people feel part of the journey.

BENEFIT PERFORMANCE / READING

Offer a staged reading, excerpt night, salon or preview as a fundraising event. Pair the performance with a conversation about the project's mission and next step.

CORPORATE / LOCAL SPONSORSHIP

Approach businesses whose audience, geography or values connect naturally to the show. Think beyond cash: printing, catering, travel, lodging, rehearsal space and equipment can all be useful support.

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Heritage groups, alumni associations, professional organizations, museums, cultural centers and advocacy groups may sponsor work aligned with their communities.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

A school or university may pay for a performance, workshop, residency or guest lecture. Earned income from one engagement can help finance the next stage of the show.

PRE-SALES & TICKET PACKAGES

When appropriate, sell advance tickets, supporter packages or group bookings to generate cash flow before opening.

WORKSHOPS / COACHING

Use an adjacent skill to help finance the artistic project: teach a workshop, offer coaching, or create a paid educational event connected to your expertise.

IN-KIND SUPPORT

Ask for what you need, not only money. Donated rehearsal space, design help, equipment, housing, transportation or printing can reduce the cash budget dramatically.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP: A POWERFUL TOOL

[Fractured Atlas](#) is one example of an arts fiscal sponsor. Fiscal sponsorship can allow an eligible artistic project to solicit tax-deductible contributions and apply for some grants that ordinarily require nonprofit status.

A fiscal sponsor is **not** a source of free money. You still research grants, cultivate donors and run the campaign. The sponsor provides the nonprofit framework, oversight and fundraising tools, usually subject to membership, eligibility rules and administrative fees.

WHEN IT MAY BE WORTH EXPLORING

- You want donors to be able to make tax-deductible charitable contributions.
- A foundation you want to approach only funds nonprofit organizations or fiscally sponsored projects.
- You are building a larger public-benefit project but do not want to create your own nonprofit.
- You need fundraising infrastructure for a project that may continue beyond one production.

Important: Fiscal sponsorship models and tax consequences vary. Read the sponsor's agreement carefully and consult a qualified tax or legal professional when necessary.

GRANTS & FUNDING RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

Resource	Best For	Why Explore It
Creative Capital	Individual artists / new work	National artist funding for bold new work, including theater and multidisciplinary projects. Highly competitive; useful as an example of the level of project clarity strong applications require.
Foundation for Contemporary Arts - Emergency Grants	Urgent presentation needs	Rolling support for eligible U.S.-based experimental performing artists with a sudden confirmed public presentation opportunity or unexpected project expense. Recent awards range from \$500-\$3,000.
Foundation for Contemporary Arts - Grant Programs	Contemporary / experimental artists	A useful national resource to watch for artist grants and research opportunities; some programs are application-based while others are nomination or invitation based.
Fractured Atlas	Fiscal sponsorship / fundraising	Offers fiscal sponsorship and fundraising tools for eligible artistic projects; can expand access to tax-deductible donations and certain foundation/corporate funding.
NYFA - New York Foundation for the Arts	Artist opportunities & resources	A valuable place to research artist grants, emergency resources, professional development and opportunity listings. Eligibility varies by program.
Candid / Foundation Directory	Grant research	Research tool for learning which foundations fund the arts and what they have supported. Many public libraries and partner locations provide access to Candid resources.
Americans for the Arts	Arts advocacy / field resources	Useful for understanding the broader U.S. arts funding ecosystem and locating state/local arts agencies and field information.
State & Local Arts Agencies	Local and regional grants	Do not overlook your own state arts agency, city/county arts council and local cultural-affairs department. Smaller local grants can be more attainable than national awards.

Search locally, too. Try combinations such as “individual artist grant + your city,” “performing arts grant + your state,” “theatre fellowship + your region,” and grants connected to the subject or community represented in your show.

GRANT APPLICATION BASICS

A strong application makes the project easy to understand and easy to believe in. Answer the question being asked; do not make the panel hunt for the point.

- **Clear project description:** What are you creating, and what stage is it in?
- **Why this story / why now:** What makes the project meaningful or timely?
- **Specific use of funds:** Connect every dollar to a concrete need.
- **Realistic budget:** Income and expenses should tell the same story as your narrative.
- **Strong work samples:** Lead with your best material and follow the instructions exactly.
- **Artist bio / résumé:** Emphasize experience that supports your ability to complete the project.
- **Timeline:** Show that you have thought through the steps between funding and completion.
- **Audience / impact:** Who is the work for, and how will it reach them?
- **Proofread:** Then ask someone unfamiliar with the project to read it for clarity.

REUSE THE THINKING - NOT THE EXACT APPLICATION.

Keep a master folder with your bio, project description, budget, work samples, reviews and frequently used answers. Customize every application to the funder's priorities and questions.

BUILD A FUNDING MIX

Use this worksheet to turn a large fundraising goal into several smaller, more realistic targets.

Funding Source	My Target	Possible Lead / Strategy	Next Action
Personal investment	\$		
Individual donors	\$		
Crowdfunding	\$		
Grants / fellowships	\$		
Corporate sponsors	\$		
Community partners	\$		
Earned income	\$		
In-kind support	\$		

FUNDRAISING IS RELATIONSHIP BUILDING.

People support people and stories they believe in. Invite supporters into the journey, communicate clearly, thank them generously, and keep them connected to what their contribution helped create.

Please note: Grants, fellowships, award amounts, deadlines, tax rules and eligibility requirements change. Always verify current information with the funder or fiscal sponsor before applying or soliciting contributions.