

Saying Less More Thoughtfully

As the number of applications increases, the workload for panelists intensifies. At this year's Evaluation Session, one program improvement request rose to the top, "Help us to say less, more thoughtfully."

Over the summer two teams worked together to identify what would make the grant application and screening process easier to read. Suggestions included a mix of steps that applicants can take and TDC/A program level administrative actions:

ACTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

1. Make proposals clear and brief; eliminate wordiness;
2. Remember your audience and avoid jargon;
3. Explain specialized skills again at the interview;
4. Stop copying and pasting from the previous year's application;
5. Focus on projects and not the organization.

ACTIONS FOR PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1. Grant writers often forget which heading they are writing under. Improve the e-Application questions so that there is a reminder of which section we are completing. This will help us to stay on track and to only write about Artistic/Cultural Purpose in that section and only write about Tourist Appeal in that section;
2. Give us specific examples during the orientation session so that you show us how to be succinct instead of telling us to be brief.

The following pages are examples from FY 2019 that organizations have generously "donated to the cause." They represent the very first question in the Artistic/Cultural Purpose section which used to be, "What is your goal or vision for this project?" and now reads, "What is your artistic/cultural goal or vision for this project?"

The comments are colored coded for ease of use.

- = artistic/cultural vision for the project
- = tourist appeal
- = organizational information
- = implementation

Example: Project Vision Statement of the Artist Series

Our continuing goal is to present programs that have appeal to a wide range of musical and entertainment tastes and to present programs of quality and entertainment value equal to any major city in the world - reinforcing the Sarasota County region as an exceptional place to visit and reside. Further, it is the goal of Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota to elevate its position as a dynamic and demonstrated leader among mid-size arts and cultural organizations in the region and beyond.

Specific goals/vision are:

- 1) Successfully build upon our three-year experience of presenting in southern Sarasota County.
- 2) Build our out-of-area and foreign visitor attendance by continuing to expand the use and effectiveness of website and web presence and social media to "cast a wider net."
- 3) Build upon cooperative cross-promotional opportunities - a prime example of which is informal collaboration with SILL (Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning) "Music Monday" programs.

The succinct statement then becomes:

This is an organizational goal. What is the specific artistic/cultural vision for this season or this project?

These are all tourist goals.

If the season has not been established yet, a succinct statement of vision for the project (or season) should be specific enough to relay why or how the selection of offerings will be determined.

Example: Project Vision Statement of the Sarasota Orchestra

A major goal for the Orchestra is to continue building and developing the sonic personality of the Orchestra. World-renowned guest artists and conductors, in partnership with Music Director Anu Tali will play a central role in accomplishing this artistic goal. The artistry of these varied and diverse musical personalities is sure to appeal to cultural tourists and other arts patrons who might otherwise need to travel to a major metropolitan area to experience performances of this caliber. Always foremost in our planning strategy is expanding our programming to appeal to a wide range of musical tastes while addressing a changing demographic. We continue to develop our role as a cultural leader in Sarasota County while increasing our regional and national visibility.

This is a mix of Tourist Appeal and organizational development.

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Example: Project Vision Statement of the Pops Orchestra

Our 2018-19 season marks the 43rd year of the Pops Orchestra. Begun as a fledgling ensemble created to provide performance opportunities for community musicians it has evolved into a volunteer orchestra of professional quality. The Pops now numbers over sixty-five musicians, drawn from the greater Sarasota/Bradenton community. In 2014, we rebranded ourselves as the "Pops Orchestra" with the tag line "Music You Love, Musicians You Know" to better reflect the programming we feature and the community base shared by both our musicians and audience. This season continues our vision to contribute to the cultural richness of our community by providing local musicians the opportunity to perform in a high-quality ensemble, present terrific concerts at affordable prices and be a catalyst for arts collaboration. In past seasons, we have established strong relationships with our local veterans organizations spearheaded by the Sarasota Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America. We partner with local colleges including the State College of Florida and the Ringling School of Art and Design, arts organizations including Sarasota Choral Artists, the West Coast Black Theater Troupe and the Manatee Concert Band. And, in 2017 we were honored to perform to over 10,000 people during the Opening Ceremony of the World Rowing Championships.

The succinct statement then becomes:

With additional specificity needed:

This paragraph refers to organization's history. If important, can be found on the website.

Collaboration is a tourism goal that can be selected. If so, some of the partnership information should appear under Tourist Appeal. AND if partnerships are a major part of the project's vision, then the art or cultural piece should be explained under implementation.

More organizational history

This season continues our vision to contribute to the cultural richness of our community by providing local musicians the opportunity to perform in a high-quality ensemble, present terrific concerts at affordable prices and be a catalyst for arts collaboration.

In doing so, we will use the theme "Pop Stars Take the Stage."

Example: Project Vision Statement of New College New Music

Our goal is to present contemporary and unusual works performed by world-class musicians and our own students in ways that engage and challenge our audience.

We work to attract a varied audience with a range of ages and backgrounds. This vital mix of people interested in exploring the new make for a more vibrant experience for both performers and audience, we have found.

Key to developing this audience is establishing trust, and we have achieved this in three ways. First, our audience trusts that NMNC concerts will be first-rate, often involving visiting artists recognized internationally as leaders in contemporary music. Second, audiences know that NMNC programs are relatively short, lasting about an hour. This enables audiences to give themselves wholeheartedly to the experience of music that is sometimes very demanding, without being overwhelmed by too much new information. Finally, NMNC approaches the concert experience holistically, ensuring that audiences feel welcomed and oriented from the first communication, to entering the lobby, to listening to the music, and enjoying the warm and inclusive receptions that follow (or are concurrent with) performances.

NMNC is known as one of the leading contemporary music series in the country. The proposed events are not offered as part of state or regional tours. For lovers of new music in our area, the only place to experience these visiting artists or our newly-created works will be at New Music New College.

With the addition of some specifics for the upcoming season, this becomes the artistic/cultural vision.

This is part of tourist appeal.

This is part of implementation.

This is part of tourist appeal.

Example: Project Vision Statement of the Hermitage Artist Retreat

The 70 or so artists working at the Hermitage during the grant period - painters, playwrights, composers, poets, and more - will showcase their work through programs designed and implemented by the Hermitage program staff. Our goal is to make these programs, including readings, concerts, open studios, and art demonstrations, accessible and free to tourists and residents alike throughout Sarasota County. This will be accomplished by offering between 20 and 28 programs during the Season, each with a rich variety of arts disciplines, and held at the Hermitage on Manasota Key or at other arts organizations to additionally serve their audiences.

Our vision is to enlighten and inspire thousands of people by Grammy, Pulitzer Prize, and Tony Award-winners, as well as other talented artists. We believe our strength is in a diversity of people, artistic disciplines, and aesthetics: Hermitage residencies are for all artists from all nations and backgrounds, working in all forms - from traditional to exploratory and experimental. The Hermitage is proud to bring this variety of creative talent to Sarasota County and to share their work with the public for free. As Co-founder and Program Director Patricia Caswell notes, "Here people can see the birth of pieces that will travel the world. Indeed, how often can a person say, 'I saw it first'? This is our gift to area residents and tourists."

This is the core vision for the project

This speaks to tourism.

This is about implementation.

This speaks to organizational mission.

This could remain as part of the project vision or included with the organizational mission.