



Why are United Arts Fund (UAF) and COMPAS making these changes?

In an era of substantial and fundamental change, many nonprofits are reexamining how they operate to better fulfill their missions and meet the needs of their communities. Workplace giving and federated campaigns (initiatives that raise funds on behalf of multiple organizations like UAF and United Way) are experiencing rapid change due to technology and younger employees' interests in supporting their communities in different ways including online media, special events, and volunteerism. UAF is one of many community-based arts funds across the country seizing opportunities for new and strategic collaborations that will build the resiliency of their grantees and also increase the impact of donor contributions. At the same time, COMPAS recognizes the need for its work to align more strongly with shifting community priorities. As the economics of the organization evolve, it is necessary to find more efficient ways to manage our grant making business while holding true to our mission, values, and programming interests.

How did you decide on these changes?

Looking to the future, the COMPAS Board and leadership team completed a strategic planning process with the goal of deepening the organization's relevance and impact. They commissioned an independent and extensive program assessment of all programming with an emphasis on UAF and related grant making. More than 70 individuals were interviewed one-on-one and in small group meetings. Supplemental research was carried out to verify, clarify, or expand on the information collected through the interviews.

The significant findings included:

- As UAF allocations have diminished in the past decade, the average grant amount decreased by 36 percent. At the same time the number of applicants and dollars requested has increased substantially. In spring 2012, we had 148 applicants requesting a total of more than \$1 million. UAF allocated \$185,000 to 34 grantees.
- Arts groups participating in the COMPAS program assessment say larger grants to fewer organizations over more than one year would be a more effective strategy and have more impact. For example, in the recently completed FY13 grant round, the average grant totaled \$5,440. The numbers affirmed what we heard in the program assessment --smaller grants appear to have little, or at best, limited impact on a shrinking pool of grantees. We also heard from this year's applicants and grantees, the grants are not cost effective given the time and expense to prepare a proposal and final report.



- Smaller organizations interviewed in the UAF program assessment expressed interest in peer interaction and learning. Among those interviewed, those who also had participated in ArtsLab reported that their experience was valuable and recommended it as a good model for COMPAS.
- Many respondents representing the arts and philanthropy communities suggested that COMPAS, like other nonprofits, would benefit by focusing its mission and work more sharply in order to leverage its resources most effectively and efficiently.

Why did you choose ArtsLab?

ArtsLab is recognized as a national leader in capacity-building for smaller arts organizations. Over more than a decade, it has created and refined a uniquely robust program focused on leadership and strategy development. It seemed to us there was a lot of common ground between UAF/COMPAS and ArtsLab's missions, purpose, and work. We share a history of supporting smaller and mid-sized organizations that are rooted in community. Many ArtsLab participants have been among UAF's applicants and grantees. However, ArtsLab not only offers monetary support like UAF, but also peer learning and customized consulting in a concentrated way that had longer-term benefits for the grantee. In fact, an independent evaluation of ArtsLab completed last year observes that, "...the strength of the program rests in the process, which maximizes participant reflection and application of learning, as well as the content of the work, which challenges participants to look deeply at the environmental content of their work, shape strategy based on that 'outside-in' thinking, and find new, perhaps transformative ways to adapt and imbed themselves in the work of their communities."

We believe that UAF dollars combined with those of other funders would result in support for a program of far more impact than our smaller and more incremental operations and programming grants.

So what does this mean for UAF?

United Arts Fund is excited to play a greater role in our work with smaller arts organizations by strategically collaborating with other like-minded arts funders. UAF allocations will be raised, as usual, through workplace giving campaigns that kickoff in the summer and continue through the fall. Of the total contributions, UAF will allocate \$135,000 in 2013 and in 2014 to Arts Midwest to support a new cohort of up to 16 ArtsLab grantees. The new grantees from the Twin Cities and Southern and Western Minnesota will be announced by Arts Midwest in early July. ArtsLab support will provide technical assistance, individualized consulting, and organizational support to implement strategic priorities. The support also will go towards a web-based Knowledge Center and Leadership Idea Exchange that will be available to the entire Minnesota arts community.



UAF will allocate directly the remaining money (expected to be approximately \$50,000 per year) through a new Youth Arts Fund. A statewide opportunity, the Youth Arts Fund will offer grants for in-school arts residencies that emphasize strong collaborations and co-design with school staff, and broader youth arts programming. UAF will publish new Youth Arts Fund guidelines and application materials in October 2012.

We look forward to monitoring the changes over the next couple of years to see if and how well they meet our goals and objectives for UAF and COMPAS.

So will UAF still offer General Operations Support or General Programming/Projects Support grant programs?

No. The UAF will no longer provide General Operations Support or Programming/Projects Support grants. This was a tough decision and we understand that this will be difficult for some grant-seekers. We believe the decision to support ArtsLab and refocus the remaining grants on Youth Arts will help better achieve the mission and sustainability of both UAF and COMPAS.

Can my organization apply for ArtsLab participation?

The application round for participation in the upcoming ArtsLab cohort is now closed.

However, ArtsLab is creating a new Leadership Idea Exchange, a series of hosted conversations to explore significant questions and shared concerns facing our communities. These discussions will include artists, arts and civic leaders, educators, and arts sector advisers and offer opportunities for sharing ideas on:

- trends emerging in our communities and the arts/culture field;
- promising tools and tactics to build resilient organizations;
- participatory techniques to guide conversations that invite multiple perspectives;
- fresh perspectives on designing our future and the role of creativity in community;
- new and relevant links among leaders across sectors of communities across sectors in communities and Minnesota.

The Leadership Idea Exchange is available to all artists and arts organizations free of charge. This is one of the primary benefits that UAF sees in its collaboration with ArtsLab. We hope everyone will take advantage of this new resource.

The first Leadership Idea Exchange session will be on July 24 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Como Zoo in St. Paul. To learn more, check out the ArtsLab website:

<http://www2.artslabonline.org/newsroom/minnesota-arts-community/2012/06/artslab-announces-leadership-idea-exchange>



How will this affect other COMPAS programs?

Other COMPAS programs are not affected by the UAF changes. According to the State Statute that governs workplace giving campaigns, COMPAS is not eligible to receive any funding support from the UAF. This will continue to be in effect as UAF implements the changes in 2013 and 2014.

How does this change affect my organization, if we just received notification of a new UAF grant in May 2012, or if we have an existing UAF grant?

The changes do not affect your organization. All grants approved in May 2012 or before will be paid as noted in your signed Grant Agreement. If you have questions, please contact Dan Adolphson, Director of Program Engagement at 651-292-3215 or dan@compas.org