



# VSA Minnesota Artists-in-Residence Program

## *Teaching Artist Roster Application Instructions*

School Year 2012 - 2013  
(September 1, 2012 – August 31, 2013)

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## ***VSA Minnesota General Information***

### **Mission**

VSA Minnesota's mission is to create a community where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in and access the arts. We are a non-profit organization, founded in 1986, that provides programs and services that make the arts available and accessible to Minnesotans with disabilities.

### **Values**

VSA Minnesota is dedicated to ensuring that music, theater, dance, creative writing, visual and media arts play a part in the lives of all people. In addition, VSA Minnesota believes that experiences in the arts enhance personal growth, increase educational achievement and enable career success. Participation in the arts promotes acceptance and inclusion in all aspects of life.

### **History**

VSA Minnesota is an affiliate of VSA - The International Organization on Arts and Disability, in Washington D.C. Each year millions of people participate in VSA programs through a nationwide network of 48 U.S. affiliates and in 68 affiliated organizations around the world. Formed in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, 18 years before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, VSA was originally known as National Committee - Arts for the Handicapped. VSA has played a significant role over the years in changing society's attitudes toward people with disabilities. With that change, the organization has regularly looked at its own identity to ensure it is consistent with current attitudes and language used by the disability community.

VSA is not an acronym for our former name Very Special Arts nor for the other phrases we used such as Vision, Strength & Access. Words such as 'special' and 'handicapped' do not reflect current language trends in the United States and many other countries. Rather, VSA, VSA Minnesota and all of the other affiliates will acknowledge our former names and our history as being part of what brought us to where we are today and what informs our current composition.

The Evolution of the VSA name:  
1974: National Committee - Arts for the Handicapped  
1985: Very Special Arts  
1999: VSA arts  
2010: VSA



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## Artists-in-Residence Program

VSA Minnesota believes that all Minnesota students should have access to high quality arts learning experiences as part of a complete, basic education. The goal of the Artists-in-Residence (AIR) Program is to enhance creative expression and personal development through arts experiences for students with disabilities and their peers who otherwise would have limited access. These awards act as a catalyst for partnerships between educational settings throughout the state and VSA Minnesota Teaching Artists to work together to support, strengthen, and expand arts education for all Minnesota students.

Residency projects are scheduled according to available funding, location of requests and teaching artist availability. Projects vary in artistic disciplines and duration, dependent upon the needs of the students. While it is not a requirement, recipients of these projects are encouraged to utilize the VSA Minnesota's Teaching Artist Roster. Residency sponsors, teaching artists work together to design the residency project, along with administrative support from VSA Minnesota's Arts in Education Coordinator (AEC). Visit our website to find out more about ***AIR Proposal Guidelines*** ([www.vsamn.org/new.html](http://www.vsamn.org/new.html)), including schools or educational settings eligibility, funding range, restrictions, description of application materials and requirements for residency sponsors and teaching artists.

## Teaching Artist Roster

VSA Minnesota's Teaching Artist Roster is an approved listing of professional teaching artists qualified to work in educational settings. The Roster will be online making it more efficient, accurate, and able to address the needs of educational settings utilizing teaching artists in their programming.

- The primary purpose is to identify and promote **high quality teaching artists who have particular expertise working with students with disabilities**. The Roster is intended as a resource for AIR participants, as well as any community groups seeking teaching artists to work in inclusive arts settings. While VSA Minnesota will promote the Roster to residency partners and others, there is no guarantee of work associated with this resource listing.
- The Roster has a secondary purpose of **promoting and supporting professional development for teaching artists**. Teaching in and through the arts is a complex profession and a growing field – and more support and training is needed. With the new Roster, VSA Minnesota hopes to play a role in advancing the field of teaching artists, with the ultimate goal of supporting, strengthening, and expanding arts education for all Minnesota students.

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## ***Eligibility and Commitment***

The Teaching Artist Roster is for individual artists. There is no specific eligibility requirement in terms of numbers of years of experience. However, applicants should understand that this Roster is designed to promote individuals who demonstrate past experience and success as a teaching artist in K-12 public school settings. Service organizations must contact the AEC in order to apply.

### **Teaching Artist Roster applicants must:**

- be 18 years of age or older;
- be a resident of Minnesota;
- be professional artists with expertise in one or more arts disciplines;
- have skills in working with youth and teachers in educational settings; and
- have a commitment to become familiar with various disabilities and effective methods for adapting techniques and differentiating instruction to reach all learners.

### **Teaching artists assigned to residency projects:**

- will remain on the roster indefinitely, contingent on the submission of an annual update which consists of a current resume and evidence of participation in one professional development activity; and
- are independent contractors for VSA Minnesota and, as such, are responsible for his or her own taxes, and property and workers' compensation insurance.

### **Assignments for residency projects are determined by several factors, including, but not limited to:**

- the teaching artist's level of experience;
- stated interests;
- time availability;
- location; or
- arts discipline requested.

### **While there is no set residency format, there are still general principles and goals for teaching artists:**

- Collaborate with collaborating staff to determine goals, objectives, evaluations, core group composition, schedule, culminating event, and budget.
- Collaborate with collaborating staff to compile the AIR Project Proposal.
- Collaborate with the planning team, arts education committees, community groups, etc.;
- Collaborate with collaborating staff on residency project development and delivery;
- Work with both collaborating staff (in-service) and students (hands-on, participatory lessons);
- Align residency activities with Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts and identified Individual Education Plan goals developed by the residency committee;

- Use effective teaching methods for adapting techniques and differentiating instruction to reach all learners;
- Support efforts to integrate arts learning with other subject areas; and
- Support a school's ability to continue arts education programs in the absence of a teaching artist, by sharing skills, techniques, and curricula with staff.

## **Annual Update**

Accepted teaching artists will remain on the Roster indefinitely, contingent on the submission of an annual update. The update will consist of a current resume and evidence of participation in one professional development activity (see below). The purpose of the update process is to verify that rostered teaching artists have remained active in the field. **Please note:** It is important that you keep your contact information up-to-date. When you change e-mail addresses, phone numbers or mailing addresses, you will need to contact us to make these changes. Otherwise, we will not be able to contact you for possible residencies.

It is expected that teaching artists who work with VSA Minnesota continue to develop their professional skills by attending trainings, workshops and/or conferences supported by VSA Minnesota on an annual basis. VSA Minnesota hopes to implement three annual professional development opportunities specifically designed to support rostered teaching artists. In addition, we will identify and promote other professional development opportunities, and provide support as possible. Future residency opportunities can be based upon this expectation.

In the event rostered teaching artists are unable to attend, participation of the following will be considered: attending a training or workshop specifically for working with children, youth or adults with disabilities or working with children, youth or adults with disabilities in the arts; attending a training or workshop specifically for teaching artists; attending a conference related to Arts Education or to your specific discipline; taking classes to improve or expand your practice as an individual artist; observing or assisting another professional teaching artist; or any other professional experience that improves your work as a teaching artist.

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## ***Application Materials***

Applications will be accepted on an on-going basis in the disciplines of Dance, Literary Arts, Media, Music, Performing and Visual Arts. Artists may apply in more than one discipline. There is no minimum or maximum number of artists selected for a particular discipline or for the Roster overall, it is at the discretion of VSA Minnesota.

There are FOUR required components of the application. These pages are designed as fill-in forms, to be completed on a computer, and may not be reformatted; however, alternative formats are available. In addition, there are FIVE supporting components to be enclosed. Visit our website to download the ***Application Form*** ([www.vsamn.org/forms.html](http://www.vsamn.org/forms.html)).

## Application Forms

1. **Cover Page.** Contact information, other basic details.
2. **Area of Experience.** A chart to provide an overview of your experience and expertise.
3. **References.** References should include at least one K-12 educator, a staff member at a cultural organization or others who can attest to your work.
4. **Narrative Questions.** These questions present an opportunity to express your personal approach and your expertise.

## Supporting Components

1. **Biographical Statement.** The biographical statement should read as a quick introduction to who you are as an artist/teaching artist, and might include a brief summary of your professional/educational background.
2. **Sample Lesson Plan.** Your lesson plan should be no more than 2 pages long, and should include the following elements:
  - lesson title;
  - learning goals/outcomes;
  - activities/instructional strategies;
  - assessment criteria and strategies;
  - connections to benchmarks listed in the Minnesota Department of Education [Academic Standards in the Arts](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/StanCurri/K-12AcademicStandards/index.htm) (<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/StanCurri/K-12AcademicStandards/index.htm>);
  - logistical details and requirements, i.e. grade level(s), time frame, materials, space, etc;
  - may also include benchmarks in other subject areas, lists of vocabulary/skills/concepts to be addressed, and other related lesson planning elements as appropriate;
  - make clear what you want students to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson, as well as how you will assess these learning goals.
3. **Resume(s) or C.V.** Resume should address your training and experience as both an individual artist and a teaching artist. You may submit two separate resumes or one resume that addresses both areas. Resume(s) should be 1-2 pages in length.
4. **Work Sample(s).** A work sample that demonstrates your abilities and achievements as an individual artist. Optional: An additional work sample to demonstrate your work as a teaching artist in a K-12 classroom.
  - Work samples will be accepted in the following formats:
  - Videos files attached or on DVDs or– 3-5 minute segment, note selected track(s). Accepted video formats include .wmv, .flv, .mpg.
  - Audio files attached or on CDs or– 3-5 minute segment, note selected track(s). Accepted audio file formats include .mp3, .wav, or .wma.

- Digital images attached or on CDs/DVDs – up to 10 images. Accepted digital image formats include .jpg, .gif, or .pdf.
- Digital text documents attached or hard copies of literary work – up to 10 pages. Accepted digital text formats include: doc., .rtf, or .pdf.

Work Sample Notes:

- Performing artists are strongly encouraged to submit video rather than still photos.
- Do not submit original manuscripts or artwork.
- Work samples should ideally show current/recent work.
- All work samples should be clearly labeled with the name of the artist, the title of the work, the date of recording/date of work, and, if applicable, the specific role of the artist within the piece.
- Please include a **work sample description**, the title and date of the work, and one or two sentences to provide additional description, i.e., materials used, or context or purpose of the work, etc. If the work sample demonstrates a collaborative effort, please be very clear about your personal contributions to the work. These notes about appropriate work samples are guidelines – ultimately, the point is to demonstrate a high level of artistry and quality.
- Work samples are returned after final action only if a self-addressed, postage-paid mailer is included with your application materials. The return postage and size of return mailer must be correct or the work sample cannot be returned.
- If you have a work sample that is available online, you may include the web link with the work sample description.

**5. Photographic Image.** Images should be a CURRENT publicity photo of yourself or your group, and ideally would show you “doing” or “teaching” your art. You may submit up to three digital images. High-quality digital images are preferred.

**Supplemental Material (optional)** You may submit one or two additional documents, with a combined total of no more than 2 pages, to support your application. Examples include:

- Letter of recommendation from a K-12 teacher or an education director at an arts organization
- Newspaper or other media review of your work (as an artist or a teaching artist)
- Documentation of student work (a program from an event; written assessments; etc.)

### **Formatting and Preparation**

Submitted materials (non digital format) are preferred to be typed on 8½” x 11” white paper, standard, easy-to-read font (Arial, such as this), 12pt. or larger and a 1” margin. Please include your name and date at the top of each page, and do not exceed the number of pages allowed for each section.

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## **Evaluation Process**

VSA Minnesota will determine eligibility of applications received, based on the criteria listed below. In some cases, the applicant and/or the applicant's references may be contacted for additional information or follow-up questions.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

Evaluation of Roster applications will include the following criteria:

### Artistic Excellence & Experience

- Level of quality/mastery in one or more artistic disciplines (e.g. skill, technique, innovation, purpose), as shown in written responses and in work sample;
- Experience as an individual artist;
- Artistic training, both completed and ongoing.

### Teaching Excellence & Experience

- Experience and skills working as a teaching artist with students in K-12 public schools or higher education;
- Experience and skills working as a teaching artist with children, youth or adults with disabilities;
- Ability to develop a complete and comprehensive lesson plan;
- Understanding of applying Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts;
- Effective teaching strategies to engage students in the creative process;
- Effective methods for adapting techniques and differentiating instruction;
- Skills in using assessment and reflection techniques;
- Ability to effectively integrate arts with other subject areas;
- Education training/teaching artist training, both completed and ongoing.

### Communication & Organizational Skills

- Clear and informative narrative responses;
- Ability to communicate effectively with both students and teachers;
- Overall quality and completeness of application.

### Additional Application Criteria

- Credible and appropriate references;
- Unique skills, abilities, or qualities not addressed above.

## **Notification**

We recommend that you allow sufficient time for the review of your application. All applicants will receive notification as to their status within one week following the interview. All applications must submit all the required information and materials to be accepted for review by VSA Minnesota.

If eligible, your information will be added to the VSA Minnesota Teaching Artist Roster online. At this time, the Roster will remain a document available to the public upon request only. Our intent is to publish it on our website within the upcoming year.

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## Assistance

The AEC is available to answer questions about these guidelines and provide assistance regarding the application process: contact Craig Dunn directly at 612-332-3888, 800-801-3883 or email [info@vsamn.org](mailto:info@vsamn.org). If you have extensive questions, or would like to have a draft of your application reviewed prior to submitting it, please plan to schedule an appointment.

## Checklist

### **One set of the following application materials, assembled in the following order:**

- Application Forms: Cover Page, Experience/Expertise Chart, References, and Narrative Responses (4 pages max.)
- Biographical Statement (125 words max.)
- Lesson Plan (2 pages max.)
- Resume(s) (1 or 2 resumes, each resume 2 pages max.)
- Work Sample(s) (optional: include postage-paid, self-addressed mailer for work sample returns)
- Work Sample Description (100 words max.)
- Photographic Image (3 images max.)
- Supplemental material (optional; 2 pages max.)

## Deadline & Delivery Instructions

There is no deadline; completed Artists-in-Residence **Teaching Artist Roster Application Forms** are processed on-going and are accepted via email, mail, fax or hand-delivered. A digital copy of the application sent as an email attachment is preferred but not mandatory.

- Email applications to: [info@vsamn.org](mailto:info@vsamn.org)
- Mail applications to:  
Attention: Arts in Education Coordinator  
VSA Minnesota  
528 Hennepin Ave., Suite 305  
Minneapolis, MN 55403
- Fax applications to: 612-305-0132
- Applications may also be hand-delivered to the VSA Minnesota office at the address above during normal business hours 9:00AM – 5:00PM, Monday – Friday, please call 612-332-3888 or 800-801-3883 in advance.

*VSA Minnesota provides equal employment opportunity to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, gender, marital status, age, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, disability, status with regard to public assistance, political affiliation, membership or activity in a local commission, creed, religion or testing positive to any communicable disease that medical evidence indicates poses no health or safety threat to others and that does not interfere with fulfilling job duties.*

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