WVLS Innovation and Collaboration Grant
Application

1. **WVLS Member Library Applicant Information**

Name _VIRGINIA ROBERTS_

Library Name/Number _RHINELANDER DISTRICT LIBRARY_

Library Type _PUBLIC_

Population Served by Your Library _____

Are you a first time innovative grant applicant for the library named above?

Yes _X_   No ____

2. **Collaboration Partner Information**

Name _MELINDA CHILDS_

Organization Name/Number _ARTSTART 715 362 4238_

Organization Purpose

To inspire, challenge, and educate through cultural events and highly-distinctive curated visual art exhibitions with the purpose of strengthening and sustaining our community

Population Served by Your Organization _Similar to the library's. ArtStart serves all ages with a variety of programs in Oneida County and surrounding areas_

Are you a first time innovative grant applicant partnering with the library named above?

Yes _X_   No ____

3. **Explanation of the use of grant funds**
   In no less than 3 pages please:

   - Describe your innovative program or service. Why is it innovative? How does your proposed program/service reflect the call to action of "Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries" by The Aspen Institute?
   - Provide an outline of the program or service. What will happen and when?
   - Outline the goal of the program, how the new program/service aligns with each collaboration participant's mission, and how your library community will benefit from the new program? Please provide specific examples.
   - Address where future funding to sustain the new program/service will come from.

- Provide a project/service outline, expected budget including funds from the grant and each participating agency, and an estimated deadline for completion.
- Outline how your program will be evaluated.

4. Agreement

By applying, I acknowledge that within 60 days of the end of the program, I will submit a written report of how the program went with WVLS and within 90 days present an oral report during discussion with WVLS member libraries.

Should I be unable to fulfill these requirements, or should the project or service not be completed, I understand that I may be asked to reimburse WVLS for the grant amount.

Collaboration Organization
Director/Manager Signature _____
Date 3-28-17

Library Director/Manager Signature Virginia Roberts _____
Date 3/27/17

To be completed by the Library Board President
If granted the WVLS Innovation and Collaboration Grant, Virginia Roberts, RDL (name of applicant) has the library board's permission to implement the new program as stated above. The Library Board understands that the Director or Manager will be required to share the results of the program via a written report that is submitted to WVLS within 60 days after the program ends and present an oral report during a WVLS meeting. Should the director/manager not fulfill the reporting requirements, your library will be required to reimburse the grant to WVLS within 4 months of the start of the program.

Library Board President's Name Jane Roy _____

Library Board President's Signature _____
Date 3.28.17

The Rhinelander District Library, in collaboration with ArtStart, respectfully requests funding for a weekend intensive writers retreat. Funding from the WVLS Innovation and Collaboration Grant will support Library and ArtStart staff to hire professional authors who will then present in several public events, help with publicity, and intern staffing hours to assist in developing routines for this new program.

While the Rhinelander community is primarily an industrial town in the Northwoods of Wisconsin, it does have a history of drawing and creating artists and writers, inspired by the area's beauty and community engagement. One example is the University of Wisconsin School of the Arts (SOA). In the summer of 1964, about 50 students joined 6 writing instructors in northern Wisconsin for the first SOA in Rhinelander. UW-Madison and Extension professor, author, and innovator, Robert E. Gard, was a core founder of the program. The Rhinelander community was very disappointed when it was announced in 2015 that this program had been discontinued. Within weeks of SOAs discontinuation, Rhinelander District Library and ArtStart, along with local and statewide partners, were inspired to work together to create a "New" SOA based in Rhinelander.

Description: **A "Third Place" in the community, working with the community**
The "New" School of the Arts Northwoods Writer's Retreat hopes to fill a void in the area to provide inspiration with the natural as well as industrial beauty in the area, to provide quality instruction and feedback for those who wish to take their writing to the next level, involving the community in SOA as never before and to expose the the public to professional writers and writing students through readings and author events held throughout the weekend. Staff and those writers and writing instructors contracted will guide students through exercises to produce small works and give participants the tools to create larger ones. Workspaces include, but may not be limited to ArtStart, The Rhinelander District Library (RDL), and other area public spaces and buildings reflecting many styles and eras. Participants will have time to explore the area, architecture, and natural surrounds of the confluence of Wisconsin and Pelican Rivers, the area flowage, and many lakes. The expectation is in addition to participants expressing themselves more fully through the written arts—the stories in the community will also be told—and dispersed through and beyond the area from which they were generated.

As described in the Aspen Institutes's "Call to Action" in the report *Rising to the challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, ArtStart and RDL are collaborating in "areas of mutual interest". This opportunity develops "strategic partnerships in the community to fulfill a community need" and leverages "the economic development potential of the public library as a community platform" with the library as one of the "platform[s] for curating local…culture". Rhinelander District Library Director Virginia Roberts, and senior staff and an possible intern will work with ArtStart's Development Director Melinda Childs and Program and Operations Director Ashley McLaughlin and a curriculum committee of regional literary artists and arts educators, and administrators to design a creative writing workshop retreat. Public events and workshops will primarily be held at the Library and ArtStart with select activities hosted at other local venues.

The weekend will begin with a celebratory dinner and reading on Friday night. The next day will be filled with workshops and individual writing time and one-on-one critique. The weekend will culminate with a group activity and Sunday Brunch. Other local events, such as school classroom visits, readings, and book signings may precede and compliment the retreat, and will be geared for a wide variety of participants including children. There will be a reasonable fee for participation, but no one will be turned away due to lack of funds. ArtStart and the Rhinelander District Library will reserve some funding for a scholarship fund. The target audience will be regional writers as well as local participants, primarily adults. Some of the weekend events, such as readings, public receptions, and author events, will be free to area residents to make the New SOA accessible to local residents. The goal is to have a true mix of regional and local participants. This is an important aspect to insure shared perspectives and connections. This timely program is for bringing urban and rural voices together.

A key aspect of this program's success is the curriculum committee. Members include representatives from Rhinelander District Library, ArtStart, The Wisconsin Arts Board, Nicolet College, University of Wisconsin, The Robert Gard Foundation, local partners, and past SOA participants and instructors. Many of these stakeholders have been involved in discussions about how to reinvent SOA over the past two years. For this session, a curriculum committee will specifically be asked to identify authors and instructors who would be of interest and relevant to writers today. Authors identified will be a mix of local and regional professionals across a variety of

genres. While many of these authors have not been contacted or confirmed by the whole committee some potential authors are well known in memoir, rural history, and nature writing. Authors considered have a link to rural life and are able to convey the lyrical nature of same, and relate it to an outside audience. All under consideration are experienced writing instructors and have many years experience teaching a variety of writing styles in many different venues such as classroom and workshops to all ages. Preliminary recommendations from the curriculum committee include inviting Jerry Apps to serve as a keynote due to his history with the SOA. In the program re-launch the need to start small is imperative to ensure the level of quality that SOA is known for.

Timeline

March 2017	Save the Date will go out to Past SOA Participants
April 2017	Curriculum Committee meets to determine participating instructors
	Intern hired (library student)
May 2017	Instructors Finalized, Promotion across the region, Registration Opens
August 2017	Retreat August 4th-6th 2017

Goals

Program goals will build on Gard's original vision to create a supportive environment to help people grow as artists and use their creative power for engaging in community development. By bringing together local and regional literary artists this retreat will offer students of all ages high caliber writing instruction. ArtStart has received generous support from the Gard Foundation to bring back SOA and plans on three SOA Retreats in 2017 (a writers retreat, an Art and Nature program, and a STEAM based art and technology retreat). Each one will be designed in collaboration with local partners who are best suited to the subject matter of the retreat. The Rhinelander District Library and ArtStart will be the first of many local organizations to work together based on a mutual ability to present high caliber arts and literature programs to the area and the expressed desire by both organizations to have this type of program as a cornerstone for SOA.

Another goal for this project is to take manageable steps to rebuild a beloved program. In many ways, this retreat is a pilot program to enable both organizations to connect with the SOA Community, test program options, and most importantly, gain insight and feedback as to what future programs participants would like to see. SOA meant a great deal to the Rhinelander Community. It was a successful hybrid of local and regional artists, which has had lasting impact on both. Rhinelander area artists and educators had access to university instructors and professional artists who may not have otherwise visited Rhinelander. Artists from around the region have previously registered as a chance to be inspired by the Northwoods and to participate in a creative retreat. The cross-pollination formed lasting bonds, great art, and helped grow Rhinelander's continuing creative and business economy.

Sustainability

Rhinelander currently struggles in many ways but is proud of our rich history of arts support of which SOA is an example. The community begun evolving when Rhinelander was selected as one of 5 cities to participate in the National Endowment of the Arts funded, "Arts in the Small Community Program" in 1966; this is where SOA was born.

When it was announced that School of the Arts was to be discontinued, there were several in the community who immediately believed this was a project to be taken on at a local level. A community group formed to determine what desire there was to rebuild the program in the area. This group included stakeholders from the Rhinelander Area Chamber of Commerce, The City of Rhinelander, The University of Wisconsin Extension Oneida County, Nicolet College, local business owners, ArtStart, Rhinelander District Library, childcare professionals, and past participants and instructors. This group also received communications from statewide interested partners including Arts Wisconsin, The Wisconsin Arts Board, and the Robert Gard Foundation. The community stakeholders—ArtStart and the Rhinelander District Library, as well as individual donor support, and the Northern Arts Council, among many, along with workshop student tuition, will continue the SOA Writer's Retreat/Workshop and refine it to face the needs of the Twenty-First century Northwoods community.

ArtStart Development Director, Melinda Childs, convened meetings of stakeholders for over a year and visited with the University of Wisconsin Continuing Studies Department in Madison to determine how to rebuild the popular program. ArtStart's philosophy, since opening in 2011, has been to work with community stakeholders

collaboratively and to share resources in order to make great things happen. In the process of growing its own programming, ArtStart defined the creation of SOA Legacy programming. The goal is to host three weekend retreats in 2017 in collaboration with local partners. The Rhinelander District Library had simultaneously approached ArtStart as a primary partner with the idea of a writer's retreat, in keeping with the original history of the first SOA Programming. The Rhinelander District Library was in process of setting their programming schedule for the year and this opportunity fit perfectly while also allowing the Library to offer a more unique and intensive kind of programming.

Strategies:

- Build in local programming - Author events and readings on Thursday and Friday afternoon/evening, author event, Saturday night SOA Participants read works in progress. The local media will be saturated with press releases, interview availability of both instructors and program producers, and columns in the local community paper, *The Star Journal.* Flyers and posters will be distributed throughout businesses, schools, hotels, restaurants, assisted living facilities, child care facilities by way of a network of staff, community booster organizations, and volunteers with ArtStart, the Rhinelander District Library, and other area service organizations. University Extension will assist with branding and media purchases and distribution.
- Writers will use the area's natural, architectural and industrial beauty for inspiration. Offer walking tours of area museums, galleries, parks and area waterways for example the world famous Tiffany dome of the Oneida County Court house.
- Ask area businesses to support the writers by supplying materials, refreshments or space either at reduced cost or in-kind.
- Ask for spoken evaluation during the event, film portions of the workshop to view key exchanges, and produce a written follow-up survey after the event to instructors, writers, participants and community members. Use all of this information to continue to hone future events.

This year's evaluation work will establish a baseline for continuing programming in 2018 as measured by the completion of 2017 programming and information gained from evaluation.

Workshop staff will conduct surveys, focus groups, and one on one conversation throughout the retreat weekend, and follow with post program communications. Local stakeholder's will also be interviewed prior to and at the conclusion of this program to include their goals, perspectives, and thoughts. Staff will measure our results against the following objectives to gauge successful change in the program and by extension our community:

1. Engaged participants pushing their own artistic boundaries, sharing with one another, and offering critical feedback to program directors as measured by verbal and written evaluation and participation in work-in-progress readings.
2. Regional awareness of the re-launch of SOA Program as measured by electronic and paper survey through social media (Facebook likes, tweets, retweets, and Instagrams) input from community members, the Chamber of Commerce, service organizations and local partners, determined by location services when electronically provided or as indicated by the surveyed

Funding
Support (*not including in-kind, other donations, room, board, or additional income*)
$ 1,500 ArtStart Cash from Gard Foundation
$ 1,500 Rhinelander District Library
$ 500 Northern Arts Council programming grant to the Rhinelander District Library apportioned
$ 750 Rhinelander District Library Foundation Adult Summer Programming grant apportioned
$ 6,000 Wisconsin Arts Board Funds (grant application awaiting approval)
$10,250 Total current support

The Rhinelander District Library requests WVLS Innovation and Collaboration Grant funds in the amount of $3,675:
$ 3,000 Regionally/Nationally known Writer/Author
$ 675 Intern (library student intern)
$ 3,675 Total grant request

Thank you for this opportunity to reimagine a historical and influential program. The Rhinelander District Library and ArtStart are proud of our rich history as leaders in rural literary arts activity. The goal is to leverage that history and build upon it to chart a new course for community and cultural development to navigate a changing socio-economic infrastructure. We believe cultural organizations can lead the way.