



# CSA

*Community Supported Art*

**A Step-By-Step Guide To Creating A Direct And Sustainable Artist-To-Buyer Program In Your Very Own Community**



Springboard for the Arts









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## INTRODUCTION: A letter from Springboard for the Arts and mnartists.org

Hello!

Thank you for your interest in mnartists.org and Springboard for the Arts Community Supported Art (CSA) program model. We are thrilled with the response we've gotten, and wish you lots of success as you create new economic opportunity for artists and new art experiences for patrons.

Our program was created in January 2010, and we've had a season once a year since then. 2014 will mark our fifth anniversary. We are still learning about our own process and collecting feedback from the artists, shareholders, partners, and the more than thirty programs across North America who've run their own CSA program. We hope to continue building a network of communities that are experimenting with the CSA model, so that we can continue to learn from each other.

This is a compendium of everything we've learned in the process. Not all of it may work for you, but we hope you'll find it of some help in putting your own program together. Feel free to alter or amend these guidelines as you see appropriate; CSA certainly isn't a one-size-fits-all program. A lot of it will depend on the size of your organization, as well as the nature of the arts community in your town. We encourage you to customize the program as needed. We've seen the CSA program work in large cities, tiny towns, and everywhere in-between.

Keep us updated on how it all goes for you, and please feel free to get in touch with us if you have any questions.

For more stories of artists and their impact in communities and additional toolkits and resources, check out **Creative Exchange** at [www.springboardexchange.org](http://www.springboardexchange.org), or on **Facebook** at [www.facebook.com/SpringboardCreativeExchange](https://www.facebook.com/SpringboardCreativeExchange).

Good luck,  
***Springboard the Arts and mnartists.org***





## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

### Special Ingredients: What Makes CSA A Unique Program

#### **A self-sustaining economic model**

The essence of Community Supported Art (and agriculture) is building new economic models for local producers. To that end, the program income is sustained by the CSA members and the partner organizations. CSA is built on reciprocity and relationships between artists and the larger community.

#### **Building authentic connections with local food community**

We have discovered that community members who love local food tend to love local everything. By building authentic relationships with local food co-operatives, food media and publications, farmers markets, locally sourced restaurants, and small farms, we were able to find a broad new audience for local art. If you are not familiar with how an agricultural CSA works, do some research and find some farms near you. You can also find a comprehensive nationwide directory of CSA programs at [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org).

#### **Making pick-up events places where artists and members can build deeper connections**

One of the most important success criteria for CSA was in building lasting relationships between art producers and consumers. Since many members may have never seen and/or heard of CSA artists before, the events really serve to build and deepen those relationships. It's one thing to buy a piece of art; it's another to have the artists on-hand at the pick-up site to answer questions, talk about their practice, or just say hello. Feedback is usually that participants want more time to meet each other and to learn more about the artists. Events are a great opportunity to bring the community into artists' studios/work spaces or to bring art into public spaces and events.

#### **Careful attention to quality: jurors, art and presentation of shares**

CSA is about patron education and risk-taking on the part of CSA members, but you also want to be certain everyone takes home something they absolutely love (or at least like). Pay careful attention to your jury. Make sure they are comfortable with curatorial responsibilities, understand the spirit of the program, and will be serious-minded but also have fun with the process. You want art and artists that also "fit" the program. Make sure the artists selected have a proven track record of being able to meet production timelines, and are open to building new audiences for their work. Finally, the organizers should take special care in the presentation of the artwork at pick-up events. Members should be surprised and excited in the opening of their shares as much as they are in the artwork itself.

#### **Art is limited edition for CSA only—rare and unique—unavailable elsewhere**

CSA artwork should be created for the program in limited editions. This is what makes it, like an agricultural CSA, fresh and local.

#### **Keep it simple**

We want you to change, improve and adapt the CSA model to suit the needs of your community. As you make those changes, keep in mind that the simpler you keep the program the easier it is for people to engage. For example, we recommend that you keep the name Community Supported Art (CSA). It creates a clear link to the model of Community Supported Agriculture, which will give you a head start in explaining the program and its rationale to your community.

## Sample Budget

### Community Supported Art (CSA) Program Budget

Income	BUDGET
50 shares @ \$300	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$15,000
<b>Expenses</b>	
9 Artist commissions @ \$1,000 ea	\$9,000
Staff time	\$2,000
Packing materials	\$750
Pick-up events / venue rentals / food (\$500 ea. / 3 events)	\$1,500
Panel day (lunch for panelists, though this could also be used as a stipend)	\$250
Printing (farm letters, promo materials)	\$500
Marketing (hiring a freelance PR person, advertising)	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$15,000

## Working Out the Formula

Since 2010, our basic CSA model has been this: pay 9 artists \$1000 to make 50 pieces of artwork each, and sell 9 shares to public at \$300 a share.

This is not the only model, however. CSA programs around North America have priced shares as low as \$150 in smaller markets, and as much as \$800 in larger markets with well-known artists. Some have offered work by as few as 6 artists, and as many as 30. Several have even offered special pricing levels—half shares for \$200, and whole shares for \$300.

Most programs have paid the artists a \$1,000 stipend, but others have offered \$1,500 or \$1,750; one paid \$3,000. (This amount can be paid upfront to the artist upon their acceptance, all at once upon delivery of the work, or 50/50.)

The number of shareholders has ranged from community to community, as well: some have only offered 10 or 15 shares consisting of larger pieces of work for higher prices, while others as many as 100, consisting of smaller work at a lower price.

Many successful programs have been run in communities with a metro-wide population of over 500,000. However, CSA has also been run successfully in much smaller communities, too. Macon, Georgia and Frederick, Maryland have populations of 91,000 and 66,000, respectively; Jackson, Wyoming and Sharon, New Hampshire have 9,500 and 360. Each community has made their own adjustments, based on what you know about the artists and artistic community where you live. Some questions to ask:

- How many people in my community would be interested in a program of this kind? Could we find 50 buyers? 25? A hundred?
- Who are the primary consumers of cultural events in my community? Do you have a large tourist industry?
- What are the prices of agricultural CSAs in my community? Does the market seem to bear that price point?
- Do I want emerging artists, or midcareer artists?
  - If you're looking at emerging artists: what's a stipend that would be reasonable for an artist a few years out of school?
  - If you're looking at midcareer artists: are there well-known artists in my community whose work would be valuable to include, and who'd be interested in participating? How much would they expect for a stipend?
- What other value am I offering the artists? The shareholders?
- How much money is my organization comfortable handling? Will there be enough money to pay X artists \$Y upfront if we charge \$Z per share?

Artist exchange: Based on a great adaptation of the program in Philadelphia (run by the artist collectives Grizzly Grizzly and Tiger Strikes Asteroid), we began asking for eight extra shares from our nine artists, so that each participating artist would also receive work from every other artist. This obviously increases the amount of work they have to make, but it's also a significant added bonus on the part of the artist. They enjoy seeing what the artists have made, and having one for themselves.

Additional services for artists: In addition to the stipend, you can also include additional services for artists. For example, the Cambridge Center for Adult Education CSArt program provides the selected artists with a special series of professional development workshops. Does your organization offer similar services of any kind? These may be resources you already have access to, and the additional time, space or opportunities could give the selected artists a chance to meet and work with one another, and with your organization. Additional services or opportunities could include:

- Career planning classes or workshops
- Free or reduced rate space rentals
- Studio visits from arts professionals (in fact, some organizations have required curatorial studio visits to give support and feedback to artists as they complete the CSA project)
- Critique sessions with other artists or arts professionals
- Access to tools and workspace
- Extra promotional opportunities in your organization's newsletter, magazine, etc.
- Promotional opportunities with partners (profiles of each artist on partner websites, public radio programs, newsletters, etc.)
- Exhibition opportunities

Be sure that if you include any of these additional services, it's noted prominently in your outreach both to artists and the public. People like to know that CSA is not only beneficial to the artists financially, but also in terms of their professional development.







# ASSEMBLING YOUR TEAM

## Team Roles

CSA requires a lot of different roles. These jobs can be distributed among a small or large group of people. One person can certainly handle multiple duties. In fact, here in Minneapolis-St. Paul, there are really just two of us that split these duties between us equally. However, be sure to build a team—more people means more community participation. These don't have to be paid positions, necessarily. Volunteers can be instrumental in staffing events or helping assemble the shares.

### **Administrative Coordinator**

This person is responsible for sales of the shares and communication with members. This should be a person comfortable with administrative work—the spreadsheet master and the credit card wrangler. This is the person that's responsible for setting up the mechanism through which the shares go on sale (more on that on page 25); this is the person answering phone calls and emails; this is the person whose name is on the press release ("For more info about buying a share, please contact so-and-so at 555-5555..."). This is also the person who sends invoices, emails and event reminders to CSA members, as well as keeps the master list of who's picked up their work, and who hasn't—they're the public face of the program. It's nice if they can be at the events to greet everyone and build a sense of community ("Hi, I'm so-and-so, I talked to you on the phone when you bought the share.").

### **Submission and Selection Coordinator**

This person needs to have experience and/or comfort with curatorial processes. It is especially helpful if they have technical skills and can support artists and jurors with the submission and selection process (including collecting artists' submissions of high-resolution images, video and documents, and distributing them to the jurors, as well as documenting the jury's decision-making process). This person also oversees the selection process and communicates the results of jury's selections to the rest of the team. They will also inform the applicants of the jury's decision.

### **Artist Coordinator**

This person oversees the call to the artists, the jury process, the production timeline, the contracts, and the deadlines. It's helpful if they have experience working directly with artists already—perhaps someone with gallery, exhibition space or museum experience. This should be someone who knows the arts community well, and knows the best local outlets for putting out a call for work. This is someone comfortable answering technical and logistical questions from the artists about the work they're making during the process. Finally, it's also the person the artist gets in touch with if there's delays in production, unanticipated emergencies, etc.

### **Communications and Outreach Coordinator**

This person needs to build press coverage and participation around your CSA program. They will write press releases, handle the social media, reach out to non-traditional partners, follow up with media, and coordinate with event partners. This person is the face of the CSA program to the community and to the media. If you feel in over your head, some of the CSA income could be used to hire a freelance PR person to get some stories in the local media about your project.

### **Assembly Coordinator**

This is a person that has a vision for how to package the art creatively, and how to gather volunteers to put it all together (typically, the fifty shares can be packaged in an afternoon once the art is all together). This person makes sure the packaging is feasible, easy to handle, easy to store, and that the art is protected properly (padding, wrapping, etc.). This person also coordinates secure pre- and post-event storage space for CSA shares.

### **Programming and Event Coordinator**

This person plans the events, making sure they're staffed and promoted. You will need your whole team or many team members to host events. You will also need emcees, volunteers, and performers. This person also coordinates with any vendors or partners. Most importantly, you will need a few people to work with the administrative coordinator in keeping track of CSA members and the shares themselves to check off the lists as they arrive and take their art home.



## **Partnerships**

There are lots of different types of organizations already in your community that can help you with the CSA process. Identify them and see if they'd be interested in hosting an event, kicking in some advertising or sponsorship money, putting out the call for artists, providing work space or volunteers, promoting the pick-up events, etc.

- Organization(s) with deep connections in the artist community (galleries, museums, arts advocacy organizations, artist-run groups, artist collectives, art retailers, etc.)
- Organization(s) with deep connections in the local food community (restaurants, agricultural organizations, farmers' advocacy groups, food co-ops, food blogs, etc.)
- Media and social media (magazines, newspapers, community newspapers, online publications, blogs, etc.)
- Select jurors with an eye towards partnership (i.e., a curator from a local museum, an editor for a local paper, or prominent people in the local food community)
- Bumper crop partnerships (groups or organizations that will recognize your CSA members are a desirable audience, as well as partners you can sell as an added value to the CSA members. Examples: local food lovers discount cards, ticket vouchers to the Orchestra, etc.)

## Funding

CSA is meant to be a self-sustaining program: that is, all the money that comes in, minus that needed for running the program, goes back to the artists. Above all else, the idea is to cultivate relationships between artists and people who'd be interested in their art.

However, there can be some upfront costs involved. For example, if you'd like to pay your artists the full amount of their stipend as soon as the contract is signed, you'll need some money in the bank. To that extent, you may want to think about some external funding before the process begins.

If you're part of a nonprofit organization, or partnering with one, there may be city, state or national grants available. Not just art grants—you can also look into economic and community development grants, as well, especially if you've included additional professional development opportunities for the artists.

In addition to public entities, there could be some possibilities with foundations, too. Many public libraries or universities have subscriptions to the Foundation Center website, a platform that allows you to search for funding opportunities by discipline, geographic area, and other factors. Call some program officers in your area and see if funding CSA could be a good fit. A handful of CSA programs around the country have had some foundation funding.

Sponsorship can bring some income, too. Small businesses or local corporations might be interested in sponsoring some aspect of the CSA program, even it's just an in-kind donation of space, materials, or promotion.

As with any creative endeavor, there are crowdfunding possibilities. A Kickstarter, Indiegogo, or similar campaign has its own particular set of rewards and headaches. It's worth considering if you and your organization are up for it.

In the end, CSA is a program that pays for itself. But a little money upfront can be helpful.





# GETTING THE WORD OUT

## Introduction

Here are some templates you can use for creating the emails, letters and documents you send to your artists, shareholders, jury members and partners. Feel free to use them exactly as they are with your own information plugged in, or change the wording as much as you'd like.

## Template: Jury Letter

Dear [RECIPIENT],

Thank you for your participation in CSA: Community Supported Art jury! This season we received 130 applications from artists of all disciplines. Out of these 130, we will be selecting 9 artists to participate in the program for the Fall season.

When reviewing applications and proposals it is helpful to keep the following considerations in mind:

- Artists must create **50 shares of work**.
- Artists and work samples must demonstrate a **high level of quality**.
- Artist project proposal is **representative of the artist's body of work**, but also takes the format into consideration—i.e., physical size, number and distribution of the work.
- Artists proposals must be **feasible**—no additional support will be provided in excess of the \$1000 stipend and all projects must be completed by [DATE].
- Though the work can be functional, it should **not be commercial, or resemble a mass-produced 'product'** (i.e., a handbag, kitchen product, or home décor available in retail stores).

We'll be meeting at [VENUE] on [DATE] from [START TIME TO END TIME — BE SURE TO BUDGET AROUND FOUR HOURS]. A lunch from [RESTAURANT] will be provided.

[INCLUDE A MAP AND STREET ADDRESS]

Call or write us with any questions!

[SIGNATURE]

## Template: Sample Call for Artists

### Community Supported Agriculture ART! (CSA)

#### What is a CSA?

Over the last 20 years, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has become a popular way for consumers to buy seasonal food directly from local farms. With the same buy-local spirit in mind, Community Supported Art is a similar endeavor to support local art, artists and collectors. It's been replicated in over thirty cities in North America over the past five years. We are seeking artists, of all disciplines, to launch our inaugural Community Supported ART (CSA) program.

Our local CSA program is modeled on the Community Supported Art project created by Springboard for the Arts and [mnartists.org](http://mnartists.org) in Minnesota.

Artists will be selected from a jury of local food and art luminaries to receive a stipend of \$1,000, great connections to local collectors and promotional support.

#### Here are the basics of how the CSA works:

Selected artists will create 50 "shares" for the program. A typical share will consist of a work of art/object of artistic production—multiples are encouraged, however creative ideas that translate your practice into this format or connect to themes like sustainability, farm, or food are also welcome. For example a limited edition of vinyl 7", a run of screen-prints, series of small tea cups, run of photographs, tickets to an upcoming performance or event, letterpress editions of a poem or short story, or even 50 small original paintings. Collaborations between artists or work by collectives are also welcome.

Interested consumers/collectors will purchase a share (aka a "membership" or a "subscription") via [\[YOUR WEBSITE HERE, WHERE YOU PLAN TO HAVE THE SHARES FOR SALE\]](#) and in return receive 3 "farm boxes" of locally produced artwork at intervals this season. The pick-up evenings will be at local art sites and will be events in themselves.

#### Benefits of the CSA program include:

##### For Artists:

- Support for the creation of new work
- Establish relationships with local collectors and patrons
- Participate in the launch of an exciting new model of art support and distribution!

##### For CSA Members:

- Receive multiple works from local emerging and mid-career artists at a fantastic value!
- Develop relationships with the local artists and art community
- Discover new artists and explore a variety of disciplines
- Support local artist's careers and a vibrant community

## Template: CSA Application

To apply for consideration in the CSA program please submit the following materials via email to [YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS] by [DEADLINE].

### Resume

#### Samples of your current work:

- VISUAL ARTISTS: 8 jpeg images at 72 dpi, 900 pixels or less in the longest direction.
- MUSICIANS: 3 MP3 audio files (images must also be included to illustrate format and packaging)
- PERFORMING ARTS – VIDEO: Please provide links to 3–5 video examples of your work hosted at an outside site. For example: YouTube, Vimeo, etc.
- WRITERS: Please provide 3–5 writing samples in either PDF or Word doc format.

#### Artist's statement:

A brief artist's statement and proposal for the work you would create for the project.  
Why is this work a good fit for the Community Supported Art program? (One page max)

Selected artists will be notified by [DATE].

### Guidelines:

Proposed work must be completed by [DATE].

Please contact us if your work sample documentation does not fit the suggested formats.

Full stipend and delivery arrangements will be available upon acceptance of contract.

The stipend award is intended to assist with the production costs of the pieces.

Work should be easily transportable and fit into a 18" x 12" x 12" box.

For questions regarding the program or application process contact [CONTACT PERSON].

## Template: Artist Contract

### Contract for Participation in Community Supported Art

This letter, when signed by all parties, shall constitute a PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT made as of the [DATE]th of [MONTH], [YEAR] between \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter referred to as the "Artist"), located at (address) \_\_\_\_\_ and [YOUR ORGANIZATION] (hereinafter referred to as the "CSA"), located at [YOUR ADDRESS]

WHEREAS the Artist is a recognized professional artist; and

WHEREAS CSA has selected the work of the Artist and wishes to commission the Artist to create an edition of 50 works of art ("the Work") as per the Artist's proposal; and

WHEREAS the parties wish to have the creation of this work of art governed by the mutual obligations, covenants and conditions herein;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing premises and the mutual covenants hereinafter set forth and other valuable considerations, the parties hereto agree as follows:



### **1. Preliminary Proposal and Design**

The Artist hereby agrees to create the Work based on the preliminary proposal and design as submitted to CSA through their call for artists, described as follows: \_\_\_\_\_

### **2. Payment**

CSA agrees to pay a fee of [\$XXXX] to the Artist upon the signing of this Agreement. This fee shall be paid in advance of the Work being created and is intended to assist the artist in financing the creation of the work and serve as a stipend for participation in the CSA program. The Artist understands that they are responsible for claiming this income and applicable sales or transfer taxes.

### **3. Completion and Delivery**

The Artist agrees to complete and deliver the Work to [THE LOCATION] by [TIME] on [DATE]. Should the Artist choose to ship the Work to CSA rather than deliver it personally, the Artist will be responsible for any necessary shipping insurance to protect the Work. The completion date shall be extended for [XX] days should the Artist be disabled by illness preventing progress of the Work. The completion date shall also be extended by [XX] days in the event of delays caused by events beyond the control of the Artist, including but not limited to fire, theft and Acts of God. The completion date shall not be extended for reasons including insufficient materials or lack of planning. Should the Artist be unable to complete and deliver the Work by the above mentioned date for reasons other than those listed within this paragraph, they will be asked to return the stipend of [\$XXXX], in full, to CSA within [XX] days of breaching this contract.

### **4. Insurance**

CSA will not be insuring the work for the duration that it is dropped off until it is picked up by the Shareholder, but will handle the work with extreme care so as not to damage or alter the work prior to receipt by the Shareholder.

### **5. Rights to Reproduce and Image Use Rights**

The Artist agrees to allow CSA reproduce any of the images submitted to the call for artists in marketing materials for the CSA program. The Artist agrees to allow CSA to document and reproduce images of the Work for the exclusive purpose of promoting the CSA Program.

### **6. Ownership and Shareholder Rights**

Title to the Work shall remain in the Artist until the Artist drops off the work for delivery. The Artist is in agreement that CSA will be including the Work in [XX] different Shares, which will be purchased by [XX] different Shareholders. After CSA facilitates the purchase and transfer of the Work, ownership is transferred completely to the individual Shareholder. Due to the nature of the CSA Program, we will not have individual Shareholders hold any contractual obligations. By signing this contract, you are in agreement that the Shareholder does not bear responsibility for Non-Destruction, Alteration and Maintenance or Repair of the Work.

### **7. Governing Law**

The laws of the State of Minnesota shall govern this agreement

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have signed this Agreement as of the date first set forth above.

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

CSA: \_\_\_\_\_

## Template: Acceptance Letter

Congratulations! You've been selected to participate in the Community Supported Art (CSA) program, presented by [ORG]. Shares for the program will go on sale on [DATES], and pickup events for shareholders will begin [DATE].

Over the last 20 years, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has become a popular way for consumers to buy seasonal food directly from local farms. With the same buy-local spirit in mind, Community Supported Art is a similar endeavor to support local art, artists and collectors. Nine artists were selected from a pool of over [NUMBER] artists by [JURY INFORMATION]. You will receive a stipend of [\$XXXX], as well as great connections to local collectors and promotional support.

It's a wide-ranging group of artists, working in many disciplines. Also selected were [LIST OF OTHER ARTISTS]. We encourage you to share this opportunity with your mailing lists, social media followers, and anyone else who might be interested in buying a share.

Attached is a contract with full details. You will create an edition of [NUMBER] pieces of art for the program. *(If you're also including an artist exchange, add: This includes [X] pieces which you'll exchange with the other [Y] artists.)* The goal of the CSA program is to support the creation of new work, and to establish direct relationships with local collectors and patrons (as well as your fellow artists). CSA members receive works from emerging and mid-career artists at a fantastic value, develop stronger relationships with local artists and the art community and have a chance to discover new artists and explore a variety of disciplines.

**Additional guidelines:** Proposed work must be completed by [DATE]. Please contact us if your work sample documentation does not fit the suggested formats. Full stipend *(or half?)* and delivery arrangements will be available upon acceptance of contract. The stipend award is intended to assist with the production costs of the pieces. Work should be easily transportable and fit into a 18" x 12" x 12" container. For questions regarding the program or application process contact [PERSON].

## Template: Rejection Letter

Thanks for your submission to the Community Supported Art program. We had over [NUMBER] of excellent submissions *(Or, if you'd rather not list the number, "a large amount of excellent submissions")*. I regret to report that your work was not selected for participation. I appreciate the effort you put into your application, and I wish you success in your future endeavors. Please let me know if you have any questions.

## Template: Press Release

Release [DATE]  
[CONTACT]  
[ORGANIZATION]  
[PHONE]  
[EMAIL]

[YOUR GROUP] announces the Inaugural Season of Community Supported Art (CSA)!

[YOUR GROUP] is pleased to announce the featured artists for the inaugural season of Community Supported Art (CSA) and will begin selling member shares to this innovative program on [DATE].

What is Community Supported Art? Over the last 20 years, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has become a popular way for consumers to buy seasonal food directly from local farms. With the same buy-local spirit in mind, are pleased to bring CSA to our community, to support local art, artists and collectors. This local project is modeled on Community Supported Art in Minnesota, created by mnartists.org and Springboard for the Arts.

The selected artists will receive a commission to create [XX] "shares" for the program. Interested consumers/collectors will purchase a share from Springboard for the Arts and in return receive [XX] "farm boxes" of locally produced artwork at intervals this summer. Featured works could include items such as: an edition of vinyl 7", a run of screen-prints, series of small tea cups, run of photographs, tickets to an upcoming performance or event, letterpress editions of a poem or short story, or small original paintings. Each member share [X] piece from each of the [X] CSA featured artist works over the summer and will also include "bumper crop" of additional artwork and arts opportunities. The pick-up evenings will be at local art sites and will be events in themselves.

Member shares cost [\$XXX] for the season and can be purchased by contacting [NAME]. Sales of member shares begin on [DATE] and will sell out fast.

The goals of the CSA program are to support artists and to create an engaged community of local arts supporters. CSA supports artists: in the creation of new work, to establish relationships with local collectors and patrons, and to participate in the launch of an exciting new model of art support and distribution. CSA Share member benefits include multiple works of art from local emerging and mid-career artists at a fantastic value! Additionally, CSA Members have the opportunity to develop relationships with the local artists and art community, discover new artists, explore a variety of disciplines and support artists' careers and a vibrant community.

[PARAGRAPH ON YOUR GROUP/ORGANIZATION'S MISSION. INCLUDE YOUR WEBSITE ADDRESS.]



## Template: CSA Member Email

Hello all,

[MONTH/SEASON] is finally here, and the Community Supported Art shares you purchased all those months ago are finally ready!

Here is a reminder of the dates for the pick-up events for the summer CSA shares, the first of which is next [DAY OF THE WEEK]. The events are free and open to the public, and all are invited. Bring a friend! There will be [MUSIC, FOOD, GUEST SPEAKERS AND ACTIVITIES] at all three. Many of the artists will also be present, so be sure to say hello.

All events are family-friendly, so bring the kids along, too.

[DAY OF THE WEEK, DATE], [START TIME – END TIME] at the [VENUE OR PARTNER EVENT], [CITY]  
(RSVP on Facebook!)

[DAY OF THE WEEK, DATE], [START TIME – END TIME] at the [VENUE OR PARTNER EVENT], [CITY]  
(RSVP on Facebook!)

[DAY OF THE WEEK, DATE], [START TIME – END TIME] at the [VENUE OR PARTNER EVENT], [CITY]  
(RSVP on Facebook!)

Thanks again, and we look forward to seeing you next week at the [FIRST VENU/EVENT]!

[SIGNATURE]

(P.S. If you haven't gotten a chance to pay us yet, we'll have a credit card machine onsite for you.)

## Template: Member Farm Letter

[DATE]

Dear CSA Member,

Thank you.

You are a founding member of the inaugural season of Community Supported Art (CSA) and it's been a great growing season in [YOUR STATE], thanks to your support.

When we decided to embark on this project, we had no idea just how much untapped passion, curiosity and openness there was in our community for new models of direct relationships between cultural producers and consumers—truly fertile ground. This first CSA share you are holding came from an incredible field of [number of applications] talented artist applicants. This shareholder community you are a part of was formed in a mere [how long it took the shares to sell] hours, in a flurry of connections over radio waves, networks and neighbors. In fact, our phone did not stop ringing for days as the waiting list grew. We envision that this CSA model will contribute to a local, sustainable cultural economy in [YOUR STATE]. We are so grateful that this idea took root in each of you.

With much gratitude,  
[YOU]

**Thank you to panelists and partners from both the local, sustainable food and arts community:**  
[PANELIST NAMES WITH ORGANIZATIONS]

**[MONTH] Featured CSA Artists:**  
[THREE ARTISTS]

**Bumper crop for this month**  
[WHAT IS THIS OBJECT?] [WHAT ORGANIZATION, SPONSOR, PARTNER OR PERSON PROVIDED IT?]  
[WHAT DO THEY DO?] [THEIR WEBSITE]

**CSA Partners**  
[YOUR ORGANIZATION, ITS MISSION, AND ITS CONTACT INFORMATION]

## Publicity Resources

Several local and national media outlets have featured the Community Supported Art project, either ours specifically here in Minneapolis-St. Paul, or other programs around the U.S. Here are some of our favorites. You may reference these resources to build support for your project.

[New York Times](#)

[Minnesota Monthly](#)

[Mpls. St. Paul Magazine](#)

[Minnesota Public Radio](#)

[American Craft](#)

[PBS NewsHour](#)

[The Atlantic Cities](#)

[Minneapolis Star-Tribune](#)

[Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

[The Asheville Post](#)

[Pittsburgh Post Gazette](#)

[Lincoln Journal Star](#)



## Attribution Note

We'd be appreciative if you featured this language somewhere on any of your organization's press releases, websites, promotional materials, etc.

***This local project is modeled on the Community Supported Art program in Minnesota, created by [mnartists.org](http://mnartists.org) and [Springboard for the Arts](http://springboardforthearts.org).***

A link back to our website would also be appreciated for any online presence: [springboardexchange.org](http://springboardexchange.org).



## PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

### Timeline

Here's a rough timeline based on what we've used in the Twin Cities for several years. Note that it gives the artists a few months to get their work ready from when they're notified in April, to when the work is due, in June, July or August. You can stagger the artists so that printmakers, book artists or others whose work is less time-intensive are a part of the June share, and so that artists whose work is more time-intensive are in the August share.

We've typically sold shares in the late spring and had the events in the summer (mostly so we can have the pickup events outdoors). However, many programs have done so in the fall or holiday seasons. Regardless of when you time the sales, your primary considerations are 1.) to make sure the artists have enough lead time to create the work and absorb any production delays, mishaps, false starts, etc., and 2.) to make sure you have enough time to sell out the shares between when they go on sale and the first pickup event.

- December 1: Press release to artists websites, call for work boards, etc.
- December 15: Applications open
- December 20, January 10: Public informational sessions (at your offices, a partner organization, or a public library, with a slideshow about successful submission techniques, images of other CSA projects, and a Q&A)
- January 15: Call closes, panel receives submissions for review
- February 10: Jury panel convenes to make final decisions on artists
- February 15: Notify artists
- February 16: First press release announcing artists and sell date
- March 20: Second press release
- May 3: Begin selling shares (no pre-sale)
- June 15: First pick-up event
- July 15: Second pick-up event
- August 15: Third pick-up event

### Number of events

For years, we had three pick-up events. In 2013, we tried having only two. Some programs have even done one big blow-out event. The Arts Partnership in Fargo, North Dakota has three pick-up events stretched over 6 months to create a longer experience for the participants. Whether you go with one, two, or three, the important thing to keep in mind is that they're set up to be fun, give the artists and shareholders a chance to mingle, and won't stress you out too much.



## Packaging

### Individual Artwork

The easiest way to handle the packaging for each individual piece of artwork is to *require the artists to do it themselves*. This can be as simple as asking the artist to have each piece wrapped in foam, paper or bubble wrap when it's dropped off, or can be as complex as the artist deciding to build a wooden box or some other specialty packaging for each piece. This is best for both your team and the artist:

**FOR THE TEAM:** It saves you and your team time, effort and money in assembling the shares. When the work is packaged and ready to go in a box, the assembly line goes a lot faster. It also makes it easier for the artist to drop off the work safely, knowing it's protected from scratches, nicks or other wear and tear.

**FOR THE ARTIST:** It gives the artist a chance to more carefully manage the first impression their work makes. In many cases, the packaging has become an important part of the individual artworks. One ceramic artist in the Twin Cities program created wooden plywood boxes with insulation foam and a handle for the tumblers he'd made. He explained that in some ceramic traditions, the receptacle was equally important to the finished work. The end result was a very attractive package that made a great impression on the shareholders. Another artist, a woodworker, packaged his bowls in a small cardboard box that was full of digital prints of other work from his studio. The box was stamped on the outside with his logo and tied with a piece of twine. The result there was a package that was not only attractive, but had great utility as a piece of marketing.

### Packaging for the Shares

There are many ways to package the artwork together once it's all been assembled. Depending on the number of artists and pickup events you have, you could be assembling anywhere from three to ten pieces of artwork in one place.

The first thing to consider: *group similar types of work together*. For example, if you have three sculptors, four painters, a printmaker, and a letterpress artist, you can have the first share contain all of the sculptors and one of the painters (perhaps a painter whose work is on heavy-duty 3" deep canvases), so you can fit everything into a box. The second group would then be the four flat media artists together in a portfolio or flatpak. To a certain extent, the format of the work will determine the type of packaging you use. You want the artwork to be packaged safely, and not have a lot of room to shift in the container. You might even consider rolled-up newsprint or packing peanuts to fill in the empty spaces between work.

Whatever you use, you'll want something that's big enough to accommodate the artwork safely, and is also *photogenic, easy to carry, and distinctive*. The photogenic quality is important: most likely, photos of your pickup event will include scenes of happy shareholders holding their interesting-looking boxes or packages with a great deal of pride and excitement. These images will be useful in marketing for your program.

Another factor to consider: *try to package the artwork on-site*, if possible. If you can have the artists drop off their artwork near where the pick-up event happens, it'll be much easier for you. Our first year, we had to drive a UHaul stuffed full of CSA boxes from our offices in St. Paul, where we'd packed them, all the way across town to the far end of Minneapolis (in a storm!), and then we had drive the shares that weren't picked up all the way back to our offices again for storage. If we'd had the artists drop off their work the day before at the site of the pickup party, we'd shown up in the morning to assemble them there, and then taken the few remaining shares back to our offices, it would have been much less stressful for all of us.

### **Here are some packaging ideas from various other CSAs:**

**WOODEN CRATES:** This has been a popular way of packaging artwork—it has that handmade, agricultural quality that people enjoy. Surprisingly, a good wooden crate of the size (roughly 12" x 18") and quantity (40–70) you'll need can be tough to find. LP crates work well, but they can be a bit on the heavy side, and relatively expensive. Check with your local farmers' market first. A lot of market vendors use wooden boxes custom-built for them by small woodshops or local companies, usually for reasonable prices. A commercial box company—even one that mostly deals in corrugated cardboard—can often build custom boxes out of wood, too. In the Twin Cities, we've used everything from a very small mom-and-pop operation in the basement of a house to a warehouse-based box factory located in an industrial park that mostly made custom packaging for electronics. We found both in the phone book—the smaller box company didn't have a website or email. Incidentally, we've never found anything online that wasn't prohibitively expensive to ship. There may be something out there, but we've never been able to find it. If our experiences have been any indication, most likely you'll be driving a van out to a tiny workshop or a non-descript factory in the exurbs to pick up your boxes.

**FRUIT CRATES:** Of the kind oranges and apples are sold in. If you check at an apple orchard or farmers' market, you can usually find a supplier. Occasionally, you can also find this kind of thing at a farm supplier, commercial kitchen retailer, or craft store.

**TOTE BAGS:** This has worked phenomenally well for some programs—a sturdy, sizable tote bag with your logo printed on the side. It's great from a marketing perspective, of course, and from a practical perspective, you can also ask shareholders to bring the bag with them to each pick-up event to bring their work home in. There are plenty of online resources for tote bags, as well as undoubtedly some local options. The Arts Partnership in Fargo uses artist-designed bags as one of the items included in the share.

**BURLAP OR MUSLIN BAGS:** These also have a nice agricultural quality, and work well for flatter work. You can easily find bags made of cotton, muslin, linen, jute, hemp, burlap, or any other number of materials. You can also order any of these types of bags in bulk on many websites (we've used an online retailer called [muslinbag.com](http://muslinbag.com) in the past, and have always had a good experience). Some can even do custom printing, but we've typically hired a local screen-printing shop to print the CSA logo on each one. This is a little cheaper and puts some money back into the local artistic economy.

**FLAT-PAKS AND CARDBOARD PORTFOLIOS:** Stamped with a logo or nice graphic, this can look good for 2D work.

### **Bumper Crop Ideas**

This is anything you'd like to add from partners—items you'd like to include because your shareholders might find them fun, interesting, educational or otherwise worthwhile.

- **Recipes:** We've also asked participating artists for a favorite recipe to include, which we then put into a booklet with each artist's photo and contact information. It helps give the artist a personality—and makes it easy
- **Tickets to arts events**
- **Small prints:** Some programs wanted to include more artists than they could afford to commission. In a few cases, they were able to include small prints or postcards of some of their work.
- **Coupons from local framers:** This is not a typo of farmers—we mean people that make frames for art! There will be fifty potential customers that might like to have their artwork framed, so it's a good opportunity for some framing business in your community.

- Coupons from other local arts-related businesses: Art materials retailers, designers, books, etc.
- Publications: From a local small press, booksellers, or magazine.
- Magazine subscriptions
- Membership offers from partners: This could be public radio stations, arts organization, co-ops, CSAs, or anyone else.
- T-shirts: Everyone loves them.

## Events

CSA pick-up events are great for deepening relationships between participants and CSA partner organizations. They are a fun and creative way to engage everyone involved. We suggest offering additional programming, with food and beverages whenever possible, to enhance the experience. There are lots of ways to do this:

### Existing events at your organization

If your organization has scheduled performances, gallery openings, artist events or public functions already, those are great opportunities to highlight the CSA program and cross-pollinate audiences. CSA members are excited to learn about other programming at your organization, and your current audience gets curious quickly when they see CSA members going home with armfuls of art.

### Public events/gatherings

Have a community-wide festival, block party, or farmers market in your area? Contact the organizers and work together to bring your CSA members and artists to their event. We've had great luck here in Minnesota partnering with other organization's public summertime events—in one case, the outdoor release party for a new public television arts program, and in another, an outdoor event at the contemporary arts museum.

### Partnerships with local food organizations

Get creative with the local food connections, particularly in terms of identifying artists that also may be farmers (or vice-versa). Have an event on a farm during an agricultural CSA pick-up time. Partner with an urban farmstead and participate in one of their events. Bring performers. Have an event with a local restaurant and invite the chefs to speak or, even better, serve a meal.

### Events in artists' spaces

Ask one of the CSA artists to host an event in their studio or workspace. If the artist makes hands-on work (i.e., potter, screen-printer, etc.), have him/her give a live demonstration. Create an opportunity for CSA members to make art themselves. One of the CSA featured artists may be a performing arts group, and members get to be an exclusive audience to one of their performances or have an event backstage. Some of the artists may be involved in several disciplines: if there are musicians or actors among the artists, give them an opportunity to perform in their rehearsal spaces.

*As noted earlier: it's always good to pick sites you'll have access to pretty regularly, whether it's near your offices/studio/home base, or it's a partner organization that will allow you to come and go and maybe even store materials or artwork safely overnight. If the site of the pick-up party is also the place where the artists drop off their artwork, you've saved yourself a few hours of transit time and a UHaul bill.*



## SELLING YOUR SHARES

### **Press, Marketing and Promotion**

Getting word out to the right people is the most challenging part of the CSA experience.

However, if you get the right people excited, you can get an amazing response. It's an interesting mix of cultivating a shareholder base made up of newcomers to art, seasoned insiders, and others somewhere in-between.

### **Here are three of the best methods we've found for getting the most attention:**

- **DIRECT EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA:** The least glamorous approach, but probably still the most useful! The people most interested in CSA may be the people that already have some relationship with your program, work, or organization. In our 2013 season, nearly two-thirds of buyers were from our direct email list. A few notes and reminders about CSA to your email constituents can go a long way.
- **NEWSPAPER COVERAGE:** "Newspapers are dying" is something people have been saying for the past ten years, and maybe it's true, but it's still the best way to reach the largest amount of potential shareholders. Most people in your metro area still turn to the local paper first for their information. Not only readers, but other media outlets—magazines, online news outlets, free weeklies—take their cues from the local paper. Getting coverage in the local paper is enormously legitimizing, and reaches all sorts of people who may not see art-related announcements regularly. If people read about a program that 1.) seems to be a cool idea, and 2.) is unique to your region, they'll be happy to get involved. If you have limited resources for promotion, focus on getting something in the local paper. It'll probably create the largest dividend.
- **PUBLIC RADIO:** There seems to be a natural overlap between people interested in local culture and public radio listeners. Getting on local public radio is therefore invaluable. This can be anything from a short feature during the local broadcast of All Things Considered (the ideal outcome!) to being the guest on a call-in or arts-focused program.

### **Other notes on promotion and publicity:**

- **YOUR JURY.** One of the reasons we've found it so useful to select an outside jury of respected professionals from your artistic community—curators, writers, artists—is that it can be a way to spread the word in the earliest stages of the promotional and outreach process. If your panelists are excited about the artists you've selected and the projects that will be included in CSA, they'll start telling people to pay attention, even months before shares go on sale.
- **YOUR ARTISTS.** The artists you select for CSA will very likely already have well-established email lists and social media presences. Share your promotional materials with them—the press release templates, for example. They can get word out to their followers and fans before the shares go on sale, reaching a group that's already interested in local art.



- **ADVERTISING.** In 2013, we tried paid advertising and underwriting for the first time. We placed ads in some regional lifestyle magazines, with popular email newsletters, and on public radio programs. It was very expensive, and it didn't have an impact in sales at all. Perhaps if you can cultivate partnerships or in-kind sponsorships of some kind, it could be worthwhile. But in our media market, at least, it was by far the most expensive and least useful method of promotion.

### **Timing: When To Put The Shares On Sale**

You don't want the shares on sale too early. You want to build up some media attention in the weeks leading up to when the shares go on sale—the message you're pushing is this: "The shares go on sale on our website at exactly 10 a.m. [or whatever time you choose] on this day. Mark it on your calendar now!" By the time the shares do go on sale, people have marked it on their calendars. You've created an element of excitement, the equivalent of people lining up for a long-awaited new movie, book, or record (back when people still camped outside record stores for that kind of thing). People will be ready.

On the other hand, you don't want to put them on sale too late. If the shares aren't selling as fast as you'd hoped, you need some cushion time in there to be sure you can sell them all out before the first pickup (or when you have to pay the artists). Shares can sell out in as little as a week, but it can also take longer—a few weeks, a month, or a few months, depending on what kind of media coverage you've gotten, the level of interest, and all those other intangibles. If you look back at our timeline, there's about a month between the first press releases and the sale date, and a little over a month between the sale date and the first pick-up event.

When we surveyed 21 CSA programs about their experiences, about 50% reported that it took 1–3 months for shares to sell out.

### **How To Sell Them**

The first thing we learned was don't try to sell the shares by phone or email. It just presents too many logistical problems. Say you put the shares on sale at 10 a.m. on Monday. What if ten people call at the same time, and nine go to voicemail—how do you decide who's in? What if you also get ten emails at the same time? It's too confusing and there's too much potential for error.

This is why it's best to have a reservation system in place. Using a free service like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey, or a paid subscription service like Formstack (\$14 a month for the most basic plan), you can easily create a



reservation system that captures people's names, emails, and even their payment information. You can either have a link to this form on your website, or it can also easily be embedded. In any form service, you'll have a choice of making the form "live" at any time. If you put the form somewhere people can bookmark it, you'll have the option of activating it when the shares go on sale—say, 10 a.m. on that Monday. That way, everyone's got an equal shot, and you can accept multiple reservations at one time.

### **Forms of Payment**

If you're comfortable with it and have an account, you can embed a PayPal widget in the form—that's probably the easiest way to accept payment. On Formstack, you can create a secure form for credit card information, and then run it using Square or another smartphone credit card payment-processing service.

If you prefer a more low-tech approach, you can also have the form say, upon completion, that you'll get in touch with the person to make arrangements, either a credit or debit card over the phone, or a check. This is obviously somewhat time-intensive, but you can generally collect all the payments in a few hours, and it gives you a nice way of directly connecting with all the shareholders.

Also: it's best to get payment upfront. We recommend you avoid accepting payment at the pick-up events.

### **Should I Charge Sales Tax?**

You can, but you may not have to. It depends on the laws in your state, your nonprofit status and a number of other factors. We recommend that you talk with your accountant about what's best for your organization.



## FILLING IN THE GAPS

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Will CSA work as a fundraising program?**

No. Not really. Organizations have used it for that purpose before, with mixed results. With a little tweaking of the numbers, it could work for raising some money. But it's really not meant to bring in much in the way of profit, in the way a successful fundraiser does—the numbers aren't really high enough. Above all, the purpose of the CSA is to create relationships between the artists and shareholders, as well as the artists and your organization, and (not least of all) the artists and each other. The bulk of the money is best spent when it goes directly to the artists to create interesting new work in a unique format.

That said, you can certainly offer individual shares of artwork as premiums or in a silent auctions for fundraising purposes. We've done that ourselves.

#### **The artists' stipends seem kind of low for the amount of work that's involved. Is that fair?**

The primary thing to remember here is that the artists are proposing work for the specifications of the project. An artist knows what he or she is capable of with a \$1,000 stipend, and a good proposal will find a way to make 50 pieces within the confines of the project, and also represent their usual standard of quality. It's up to the artist to know what they are capable of, and it's up to the jurors to be wise in selecting work based on quality as well as feasibility.

For example, will a painter be able to make 50 of his or her regular large-scale canvas paintings for twenty dollars each? Of course not. However, we had work by a local painter in our first share that does typically work large-scale on 5-foot sheets of paper, or with room-sized installations. But he was able to create a 20" x 30" drawing, and then had life-sized, high-quality reproductions made on archival paper by a local printer. He then hand-signed the whole run and numbered them, so it was a limited edition print. It was one of the most popular pieces in the share. Shareholders signed up for his personal mailing list, and when he had some major shows later on, those shareholders paid attention and came out for them.

If you do look at the per-piece breakdown, though, think of it like this. It's true that the work would be priced much higher if it were being sold in a gallery. However, a gallery would also take a sizable commission, which cuts significantly into the artist's profit per piece. What CSA does is remove the middleman, putting the art right into buyers' hands. The advantages to participating in CSA are not just the stipend and the monetary compensation—it also guarantees the shares get into the hands of fifty patrons. That's fifty patrons that may want to form relationships with the artists and may wish to buy more work from them. Another example here: a shareholder last year was taken with some 1' x 1' stained glass windows one of the artists had created for the share. The shareholder got in touch with the artist, and commissioned four more pieces like it, so he could have a row of five of them installed into a picture window in his house. The artist was able to work out his prices with the patron directly—we make the connection, and then we're out of the picture. That's a much better deal than making work for a gallery show, where (1) you're certainly not guaranteed to sell 50 pieces, (2) even if you do, a sizable commission is taken, and (3) there may be expectations for the gallery to be involved in any relationships made between patrons and the artist.

**How will I make sure the shareholder gets the correct box? How will I keep all 50 shares straight?**

The best way is to make the shares as uniform as possible, so you don't even need to number them. Keep a master spreadsheet of the 50 shareholders alphabetized by name. When the member/shareholder picks up the share, you can mark them as having picked up a box. Then you'll know who's picked up their share, and who hasn't. You can number each box and dole them out in numeric order if you're really on top of it, but that's not necessary.

Again, we'd encourage you to keep the shares as uniform as possible in terms of content. This doesn't mean the work that goes in each share has to be exactly the same — it won't be, and in fact, part of the fun is the variations between the pieces the artists creates. For example, some photographers and printmakers we worked with made three different editions of 16, 17 and 17 each (for a total of 50 pieces), so that there were three different possible pieces the shareholder could receive. That's great and it's definitely encouraged. But basically, when you hand a shareholder their box, you can hand them any one of the fifty boxes, and know that any one of them is essentially the same as any other.

Here's a good example: We'd experimented with having 18 (instead of 9) artists distributed to 100 shareholders — an "A" share with three works by three artists to 50 shareholders, and a "B" share with three works by three different (but complimentary) artists to the other 50. So, for example, if the "A" share had a screenprint, fabric piece and painting, the "B" share might have an etching, a knitted piece, and a silver gelatin photographic print. Sound complicated? It was. So while it was a fun idea, and it did mix it up a little bit and make it possible to include more artists, it ultimately proved to be more of a hassle than it was worth. We had to print two different farm letters, make sure they got into the correct boxes, make sure we knew which shareholder had gotten an "A" and which had gotten a "B," and then explain to shareholders that there was two different possibilities of two totally different groups of work. Shareholders like an element of chance, but they also like to know they're getting the same product as their neighbor. You'll have enough administrative work to do without fielding calls from five or ten shareholders complaining that they'd heard such-and-such artist was included and they were really hoping to get a piece from them and I am very disappointed I didn't...

So it's easiest for you to keep 50 uniform shares, consisting of the same artists, for all of the shareholders. It reduces the likelihood of shareholder disappointment and administrative error.





**What if a shareholder can't come to the pick-up event?**

The advantage of keeping a small pool of shareholders is that you can get to know them on a one-by-one basis, so it's not hard to work out arrangements with them personally. Not everyone is going to be able to attend the pick-up events—and, in fact, there's a good chance at least one shareholder won't be able to make any of them. In the case of a shareholder missing one event, you can plan to bring their shares with you to the second or third pickup events. However, the best plan of action is to designate a place with regular staffing and business hours for their as-yet-to-be-picked-up shares to be stored until they can come get them—your gallery, your administrative offices, or even a participating local business. Just assure the shareholder that if they can't make the event, their share is safe with somebody responsible. In limited cases, we've delivered the shares to people's houses or even sent them via FedEx (at the shareholder's expense). That's your call, though.

**Is it just for visual artists?**

The short answer is “no.” Performers, writers, dancers, crafters and anyone else are welcome to participate in our program. For us, the best proposals from non-visual artists typically have a physical component to them. One writer in a previous season partnered with an illustrator and a letterpress artist, and published one of his short stories on a hand-printed broadside. A performance duo—one of which was an illustrator—made limited-edition posters for a set of four performances they held for shareholders only. A musician pressed a song he'd written and recorded (a “small farmers' march”) onto a 7" vinyl record, with packaging made up of some of his photographs. Shareholders like to have an object in their packages, and the best proposals typically make use of that. There are a number of programs across the country that have used the CSA model for other disciplines: check out New Hazlett Theater in Pittsburgh for a great model of a performing arts CSA.



## EVALUATING THE EXPERIENCE

### Evaluation/Success Criteria

#### **All CSA shares sell!**

This is huge. Because CSA is self-supporting, the most important success criterion is selling all the CSA shares to members. Make sure you keep your first season small and build a lot of excitement for the project. You want to be certain you can pay CSA artists for the work they produce. This is the whole point! Give yourself plenty of lead time in announcing when the shares go on sale, and be sure you've done a thorough job promoting the event with local media. One story on the local public radio station could be instrumental in selling a large number of shares.

#### **CSA members are happy.**

Make sure all your communication makes it clear that CSA members must be adventurous consumers. There is no guarantee they will like everything they get—just like agricultural CSAs offer no guarantee that everyone loves beets. The value is in the adventure of getting nine pieces of great art directly from the artists, as well as making the connection with these artists, and learning more about how they work. Also make sure that your events are meaningful and intelligently put together, and that you offer great customer service and opportunities for feedback.

#### **CSA artists are happy.**

Invite artists into the process and really work hard to foster relationships between them and CSA members. Our #1 success criterion is additional relationships beyond the scope of the CSA project. We want artists and patrons to find each other and ride off happily into the sunset.

#### **Your CSA team is happy.**

CSA does not happen magically. It is the result of a lot of dedicated and enthusiastic individuals. Make sure the core team is clear on what the benefit is to them individually or as an organization. CSA is not designed as a fundraiser in its own right, although it does build new audiences and relationships. Does it help fulfill your mission (whether that's in relation to individual artists or arts patrons)? Will it increase your organization's visibility? Will it build new community or partnerships?

## Artists Survey Questions

### Have you had any contact with shareholders since your participation in CSA?

- Yes, I've sold artwork directly to a shareholder.
- Yes, I've had a studio visit from a shareholder.
- Yes, shareholders have signed up for my mailing lists.
- Yes, shareholders have attended an opening or event I've had.
- Yes, shareholders have contacted me via email.
- No, not that I know of.

### Have you had any contact with other CSA artists since the project ended?

- Yes, I've bought artwork from another CSA artist.
- Yes, I've sold artwork to another CSA artist.
- Yes, I've done a studio visit with another CSA artist.
- Yes, I've curated another CSA artist into an exhibition, project, etc.
- Yes, I've attended another CSA's artist's exhibition.
- Yes, I've emailed another CSA artist I met through the project.
- No, not that I know of.

### Have you incorporated the project you created for CSA into your ongoing practice? (You've continued it on a larger scale, completed similar work since, etc.)

### Was the stipend enough to produce your shares?

### How much time did it take to produce your work?

- Less than a month.
- 1–2 months.
- 3–4 months.
- 4–6 months.
- More than six months.

### What did you use your \$1000 stipend for?

- Art materials for the CSA project (paper, paint, etc.).
- Fabrication for the CSA project (having an object made
- Printing for the CSA project.
- Studio time/payment to myself.
- Payment to an assistant.
- Costs related to art but not CSA specifically. (More than \$700.)
- Living expenses not related to art.

### How important were the following aspects of the CSA project?

#### (Range from "Very Important" to "Unimportant.")

- The opportunity to make new work.
- An opportunity to meet collectors and get your work in their hands.
- Receiving funds to make your work.
- Having a promotional relationship with the Walker Art Center and Springboard for the Arts.
- Meeting other artists.
- Attending the pick-up events.

**Please rank the following aspects of the CSA administrative process.**

**(Range from "Very Satisfied" to "Very Unsatisfied.")**

- Staff Communication
- Program Promotion
- Pick-Up Events
- Application process

**Anything else you'd like to tell us about the CSA experience, what you got out of it, what you wished had been done differently, etc.?**

## **Shareholder Survey Questions**

**Have you had contact with any artists since your participation in CSA?**

- Yes, I've purchased artwork directly from a CSA artist.
- Yes, I've had a studio visit with a CSA artist.
- Yes, I've signed up for an artist's mailing list.
- Yes, I've followed an artist on social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.).
- Yes, I've attended an CSA artist's opening or event.
- Yes, I've emailed a CSA artist directly.
- Not yet, but I plan to reach out in the next six months.
- No, and I don't plan to.

**What was your favorite piece of artwork in the CSA share you purchased?**

**How many of the nine pieces did you give as gifts?**

- None, I kept all of them.
- 1–3 pieces.
- 4–6 pieces
- More than 6.
- I gave them all as gifts!

**Were you familiar with any of the CSA artists before becoming a shareholder?**

- Yes, one or two of them.
- Yes, three to six of them.
- Yes, most or all of them.
- No, none of them.

**Have you purchased original artwork before?**

- Yes.
- No.

**How many visual arts openings, performances or other arts-related activities do you attend a month?**

- Few or none.
- One or two.
- Two to four.
- More than one a week.



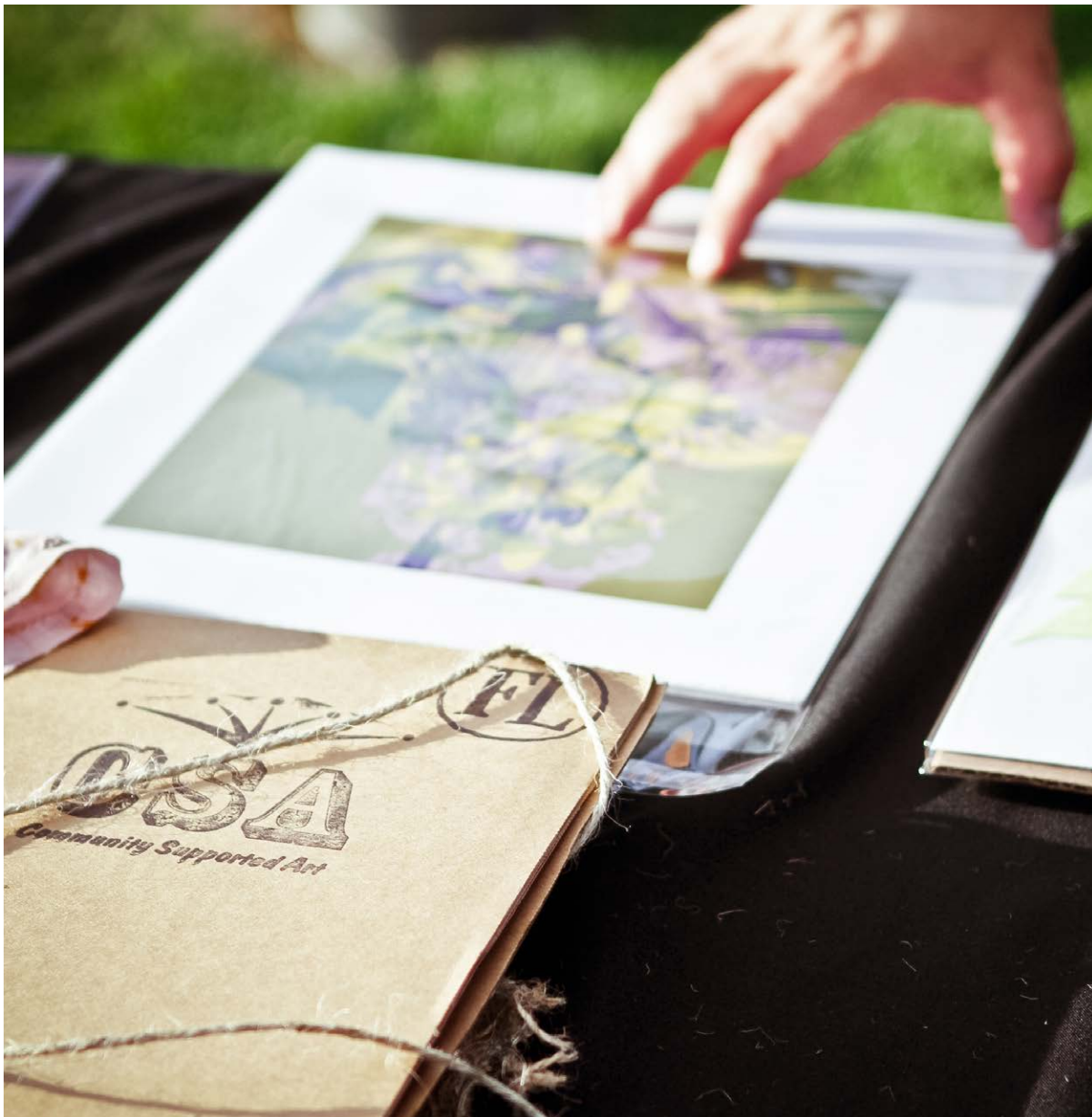
**Have you visited an artist's studio?**

- Yes.
- No.

**What did you enjoy most, or find most valuable about the program?**

**(Range from "Important" to "Not Important.")**

- The opportunity to help artists make more work.
- The opportunity to meet working artists.
- The opportunity to begin an art collection.
- The affordability of the artwork.
- Attending the pick-up events.



## Member Evaluation and Feedback

At the end of our first season, we surveyed the 50 CSA Members to determine how well the project was meeting our goal of connecting patrons directly with individual artists. You may wish to create a similar survey on [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) to track your shareholders' experience and improve it for the future.

Here's what our first group of shareholders said.

- 45% of CSA Members "have plans" to buy art from one of the CSA artists
- 40% of CSA Members were familiar with "none" of the artists before CSA
- 35% of CSA Members were familiar with "1-2" of the artists before CSA
- 60% of CSA Members attend "none" or "1-2" art openings, performances or arts-related activities each month

*"I really don't know a lot about the local art scene and have always wanted to learn more. Frankly, I am intimidated by the art/culture community for fear of being looked down upon. I have a CSA share, and I see a lot of similarities. Prior to joining the CSA, I never would have ventured to try something other than 'safe' veggies like potatoes and carrots. Now, I eat and love parsnips, chard, ramps and so many other wonderful things I didn't even know existed or if I did, was too scared to try or too cheap to spend money on. I full expect to get some art I don't like in this share. I also fully expect that I will get some art that I respond to and fall in love with that I never otherwise would have taken the time to experience."*

*"I loved the surprise of seeing what was in my CSA box - and really happy with the high quality work. I am most happy about knowing that we are supporting some artists in our community."*

*"This program was innovative and inspiring. When telling people about it, I always received an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response. I love our art and it has made us consider pieces we never would have."*

*"It was a fun experience. The exposure to artists we hadn't heard of, their very interesting work, and the well organized events made for a rewarding first tie experience. We have signed up for the Fall event and have recommended this experience to our friends."*

*"It was a great opportunity to get exposed to a number of artists and art that I may not have had the opportunity to otherwise see."*

*"I thought it was a great idea and a great way to add art to my collection without breaking the bank. I shared my share with two other people, and we've had fun splitting up the work and fighting for our favorites. I also enjoyed seeing new work from artists I wasn't familiar with but now love. Thanks!"*

*"This is a great way to enhance, expand, or simply begin your collection of art. The diversity and variations of art disciplines is outstanding. Who wouldn't want to proudly display, use and share the treasures received through the CSA?"*

*"It was an incredible value! I was delighted with all of the artwork; I enjoyed the surprise factor and I was grateful to be able to participate in and support the local art scene. It's a brilliant program!"*

*"Participating in this CSA was a highlight of our summer. I especially enjoyed opening and sharing the box as a family. We have been introduced to an eclectic, inspiring group of local artists."*

*"A simply wonderful experience. I have things I will treasure for a long time, things that made spectacular gifts, and a list of artists I will return to....priceless!"*

*"The opportunity to meet nine talented local artists through something as tangible as an actual piece of art was a real pleasure. I feel as though I know my local art scene better, I've got some wonderful new bits of art, and I'm excited to plug in to more events and art purchases down the road. Overall, an outstanding program."*



## ADDITIONAL HELP

### Online Resources

Springboard for the Arts maintains a few online resources for other CSA programs.

There's a Facebook group for CSA programs here:

[www.facebook.com/pages/CSA-Community-Supported-Art/333091438960](https://www.facebook.com/pages/CSA-Community-Supported-Art/333091438960).

You can see links to other programs around North America (and, soon enough, Europe), as well as photos, updates, and news about Community Supported Art.

We also maintain a map of active, upcoming and previous CSA programs in North America on our website: [springboardforthearts.org/community-supported-art-csa](http://springboardforthearts.org/community-supported-art-csa). Each program on the map includes a link to their website. You can use it to find programs near you or programs in similarly sized cities, and compare logos, prices, schedules, and everything else.

On the CREATIVE EXCHANGE platform, there is a discussion forum and other ways of connecting with others who are implementing the CSA model.

### Additional Consulting Services

Springboard for the Arts and mnartists.org staff are available for additional consulting services, depending on the needs of your CSA project or artist community. Prices are determined based on the scope of work. Please contact us for additional information. Some services we might provide include:

- Developing online tools for selection/jury process
- Creating Non-Traditional Community Partnerships
- Project and Artist Coordination
- Press and Public Relations
- Event Planning
- Speaking Engagements
- Developing permanent, local artist resources & services in your community

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