

# St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts

## FACT SHEET

### Mission

The mission of the St. Louis Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts (VLAA) is to contribute to the cultural enrichment of the greater metropolitan area by providing low-income artists and emerging arts organizations with free legal and accounting assistance. We operate referral and mediation services, provide information about arts law and business matters through educational programming, and support the broader role of the arts in the community.

### History

VLAA was founded in 1981 by the Arts and Humanities Commission (now Regional Arts Commission) and the St. Louis University School of Law. Accountants were added in 1984. While our name connects us to the St. Louis metropolitan area, we serve Southwestern Illinois, and respond to enquiries from the entire state of Missouri. VLAA is the proud recipient of the arts organization 2005 Missouri Arts Award.

### Volunteers

Through VLAA, more than 300 accountants and lawyers offer counsel to artists and administrators who are asking for assistance in record numbers. Each year VLAA volunteers donate approximately \$100,000 in *pro bono* services. They help painters, poets, musicians, playwrights, photographers, illustrators, dancers, crafts groups, theatre companies, orchestras, art galleries, and others.

For arts organizations, our caseload most often includes obtaining nonprofit and tax-exempt status and setting up bookkeeping systems. VLAA is proud to have provided these start-up services to more than 85 groups. Individual artists typically receive assistance in protecting intellectual property, reviewing contracts or leases, and record keeping.

### Services

- Making referrals to lawyers and accountants
- Sponsoring seminars and public forums
- Providing for guest speakers
- Publishing how-to guides and *Arts Law Memo*
- Contributing articles to a variety of publications
- Mediating arts-related disputes
- Maintaining a reference library
- Supplying model contracts and other arts law and business materials
- Conducting and disseminating research on issues affecting the arts
- Collaborating on arts advocacy initiatives
- Supporting the development of affordable spaces in which artists can work and live.
- Matching volunteers with arts organizations seeking new board members
- Providing access to the national volunteer lawyers for the arts network

### Location

VLAA is located in the Regional Arts Commission's building, 6128 Delmar, which opened in 2003.

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## Staff

Our programs are administered by part-time Executive Director Sue Greenberg, who joined VLAA in 1986. During the summer, she is the company manager at The Muny. Sue teaches legal issues in the arts for Webster University's Arts Leadership graduate program, and is a freelance writer and playwright. She is a graduate of Washington University where she majored in Arts History and Urban Studies. Ken Konchel is our administrative assistant. He is an abstract architectural photographer.

## Supporters

Our FY10 operating budget is \$77,500. These donors generously supported our efforts with donations of \$250 or more:

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