

BIENNIAL REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL PLAN Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017

Regions 6E, 6W and 8

Southwest Minnesota Arts Council (SMAC)

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Janet Olney, President; Joyce Meyer, President-Elect; Cindy Reverts, Past-President; Paula Nemes, Treasurer; Tom Wirt, Executive Committee Board Member at Large
Greta Murray, Executive Director; Nicole DeBoer, Program Assistant;
Caroline Koska, Administrative Assistant; Helene Devereaux, part-time Office Assistant

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council is to promote and encourage the development of the arts in the 18 counties of Southwest Minnesota.

The Southwest Minnesota Arts Council serves as a source of funds and technical services which enable local organizations, educational institutions and individuals to sponsor and/or create and promote the arts in their communities. We value creativity, diversity, accessibility, integrity, learning, artistic quality, participation and advocacy.

VISION: Artists, arts organizations and arts activities thrive. Public value of the arts is understood and acted upon by community members, leaders and policy makers. The creative spirit is integrated into the social fabric of every community.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW: The Southwest Minnesota Arts & Humanities Council (SMAHC) was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 1974. In September 2013 the SMAHC membership, at its annual meeting, approved a name change to Southwest Minnesota Arts Council (SMAC). This change was made to facilitate better communication about who we are and what we do with our constituents. At this point in our history the majority of our funding sources are restricted to the arts. Having humanities in our name and mission sent a confusing message since we were not able to support humanities programming. We also adopted a new logo, a new and more accessible website and increased our marketing efforts.

SMAC has a proud history of promoting artists and arts activities throughout its eighteen-county region. Since its inception, SMAC has been supported by membership donations from individuals, businesses, organizations, schools, cities and counties, in addition to funding from the McKnight Foundation and the State of Minnesota through allocations from the general fund and arts & cultural heritage fund. Our membership revenue allows us to expand our budget beyond our State and McKnight allocations. Budget deficits can be covered with our unrestricted fund balance which is made up of unexpended membership revenue from previous years. It also allows us to address needs as they arise. The organization is governed by an eighteen member board of directors (one representative for each of the 18 counties served) elected from the membership. The board is advised by grant review panels made up of knowledgeable volunteer experts from the region. SMAC board members and panelists help spread the word about SMAC's resources, advocate for the arts, and serve as a conduit of information from their counties to the SMAC office. SMAC has three full-time and one part-time staff positions.

SMAC's 18 county service area includes Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Meeker, McLeod, Murray, Pipestone, Nobles, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Swift and Yellow Medicine counties. The SMAC region is the second largest regional arts council covering 12,066 square miles in the southwest corner of the state, bordering Iowa on the south and South Dakota on the west. The 2010 total population of the region was 282,681. The largest towns are Willmar (pop. 19,610), Hutchinson (14,178), Marshall (13,680) and Worthington (12,764). Medium size towns include Litchfield (6,726), Glencoe (5,631), Montevideo (5,383) and Redwood Falls (5,226), Windom (4,646) and Pipestone (4,317). Of 151 towns 138 have a population of less than 3,000. 73% are smaller than 1,000; 58% are smaller than 500. The Upper Sioux (pop. 982) and Lower Sioux (pop. 453) reservations reside within our region. Ethnic diversity is increasing in our region. 37.8% of Worthington's residents are nonwhite. 35% of Walnut Grove (pop. 871) is Asian and 28% of Milan (pop. 369) is Micronesian. 13% of Willmar is nonwhite. Much of the region's business is agriculture based. Health care institutions and schools are the largest employers in most of the region.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

With the assistance of SMAC Board Members and regional arts organizations, SMAC conducted information sessions and grant writing workshops in Marshall, Hutchinson, Luverne, Jackson, Pipestone, Willmar, Worthington, Montevideo, Morton, Ortonville, Redwood Falls, Adrian, Milan, New London, and Renville in fiscal year 2014 and Hutchinson, Worthington, New London, Marshall, Luverne, Adrian, Milan, Pipestone, Ortonville, Redwood Falls in fiscal year 2015. Constituent input was solicited at each of these sessions.

Input was solicited at each grant review panel meeting, from grantees and conference attendees and during meetings with constituents over the past two years. Additional input from grantee final reports, meetings with arts organizations throughout the region, informal conversations with constituents, constituent e-mail comments and historical reviews of SMAC programs and income history helped to shape our plan. A survey was conducted via Constant Contact in December 2014 and January 2015. The survey was sent to grant applicants, arts advocates, SMAC members, schools, alternative learning centers, arts organizations, historical societies, libraries, community education, cities, chambers of commerce, State Legislators, SMAC annual celebration attendees, art teachers, media, grant panelists, people who have asked to be included in our email list, people who have attended our workshops and conferences, and our newsletter mailing list.

NEEDS IDENTIFIED

Organizations: Need for financial support for art projects, general operations, equipment and facility improvements (in that order.) Need to attract new audiences, volunteers and supporters. Core audiences & volunteers are aging. Longtime volunteers are experiencing burnout. Need for paid staff. Need for opportunities to network with other arts organizations and access information.

Artists: Need for financial support. Need for opportunities to connect with other artists. Need for more galleries and performance spaces, opportunities to share their work with the public. *Although we are able to provide some funding assistance for venues through our Equipment & Facilities Improvement Grants and the SMAC gallery, this is a need that is beyond our capacity to address substantially throughout the 18 county region.*

Needs identified by constituents in general, not specifically artists or organizations:

More arts teachers in the schools. *Although this is not something we are able to address with grants, we received many comments about the reduction and elimination of art teachers in the public schools.*

Art classes – for youth as well as adults

Public Art

Advocacy for the importance of the arts, particularly at the local level.

Needs identified by staff and grant panelists:

Understanding budgeting and finances (artists & organizations)

Understanding evaluation – purpose and methods, articulation of goals (artists & organizations)

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of nonprofit organizations and board members (organizations)

Need for paid staff (organizations.)

Need for more diversified funding sources (organizations).

Need for more diversified audiences.

DESCRIPTION OF PLANNING PROCESS

SMAC invites constituents to participate directly in its planning and information gathering process through forums, public meetings, written evaluations and assessments, electronic surveys of grant applicants and program participants, and constituent e-mail comments. See above section on needs assessment.

SMAC Board full day strategic planning sessions were held on February 22, 2014 and January 24, 2015. The SMAC Grant Program Committee met on May 27, 2014, August 19, 2014, February 7, 2015 (full day.) The SMAC Long Range Planning Committee met on January 28, 2014, February 12, 2015. The SMAC Executive Committee met on April 28, 2015 to recommend draft budgets for 2016 and 2017. Additional planning discussions were held in conjunction with SMAC board meeting April 28, 2015.

The SMAC Board met on April 28, 2015 to discuss, revise and approve the preliminary Biennial Plan for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 pending additional input from a public hearing scheduled for May 26, 2015. The board may further revise the biennial plan as State funding information becomes available. Ongoing planning will continue throughout the next biennium as we evaluate our current programs and look to the future needs of the region and our capacity to meet those needs.

WORK PLAN FOR GRANTS, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

SMAC Goals, Objectives and Activities for 2016-2017

Goal #1: Increase the awareness of and access to the arts in our region.

1. Provide effective and efficient grant programs for the production or sponsorship of art for individual artists, organizations, communities, schools, and youth through regular appropriations, McKnight funds, Arts & Cultural Heritage funds, and memberships, contributions and donations

Activities include:

- conduct electronic grant application process
- conduct electronic grant review process in combination with in-person grant review panel meetings
- announce guidelines for all grant categories well in advance
- maintain an informative website
- assist potential applicants to develop strong applications through workshops and on-on-one coaching,
- provide grant programs for arts projects, arts and learning opportunities, and individual artist projects

- sponsor annual youth art opportunity grants
- respond to requests for information in a timely manner
- develop/maintain contacts with minority populations
- develop grant writing workshops to be made available on YouTube

2. Allocate at least 15% of SMAC staff time to collectively and individually develop artists' and arts providers' capacity to succeed

Activities include:

- enable constituents to learn from each other and specific subject matter experts through at least one high-quality conference per year
- make available marketing tools for artists and arts organizations via workshops, web and other technologies
- communicate artist and arts organization activities via web, social media channels and means
- provide workshops on evaluation
- develop workshops to improve outreach links with underserved communities
- encourage collaboration with artists, arts organizations, other local and regional organizations and units of government
- provide technical assistance to artists, schools and arts organizations including
 - advocacy, information and referral
 - organization development
 - marketing
 - public relations
 - career development
 - disseminate "What is Art?" video and print material to aid in the understanding of high quality art via our website and presented at workshops throughout the region

3. Promote and celebrate arts creators, providers and appreciators in southwest Minnesota

Activities include:

- advertise regional arts activities through website, newsletter and email
- advocate for the arts within and beyond the region
- conduct advocacy training workshops
- host at least one arts celebration during the biennium
- recognize with Prairie Star & Prairie Disciple awards outstanding artists and arts advocates in our region
- provide exhibit opportunities for regional artists in the SMAC Art Gallery
- provide performance opportunities for artists at the SMAC Art Gallery Receptions and the Annual SMAC Celebration.

4. Actively and effectively connect with constituents

Activities include:

- convene marketing committee to advise and design effective marketing plan
- board members will serve as a conduit between SMAC and our constituents
- utilize email to disseminate information regarding grant deadlines, events, workshops and other opportunities

- utilize press releases to inform region about SMAC activities
- re-evaluate all communications including the VOICES newsletter, incorporate the use of new technology (webinars, Skype, etc.) when possible to facilitate increased participation
- strive to make connections and alliances with Native American and immigrant populations
 - convene a meeting of individuals from Native American and immigrant populations for group discussions about developing and strengthening relationships
 - work to define and address issues of access and barriers

5. Increase Access to the Arts (Legacy) by supporting Minnesota artists and arts organizations in creating, producing, and presenting high-quality arts activities; to overcome barriers to accessing high-quality arts activities; and to instill the arts into the community and public life in this state

Activities include:

- provide financial and technical support to eligible individual artists and organizations for activities that support access to the arts
- provide operating support grants for arts organizations
- provide arts organization development grants for arts organizations
- provide equipment and facilities improvement grants for arts organizations and arts facilities
- provide scholarships for attendance at conferences and workshops that will increase capacity to provide quality arts experiences.

6. Increase Art Education (Legacy) by supporting life-long learning and appreciation of the arts, including but not exclusive to K-12 activities

Activities include:

- provide financial and technical support to eligible individual artists and organizations for activities that support life-long arts education.

7. Increase Arts & Cultural Heritage activities (Legacy) by supporting events and activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions, including folk and traditional artists and art organizations, represented in this state

Activities include:

- provide financial and technical support to eligible individual artists and organizations for activities that support arts and cultural heritage.

GOAL #2: Act as responsible stewards of public & private funds in service of the arts.

1. Invest \$678,581 in fiscal year 2016 and \$698,024 in fiscal year 2017 in arts activities and arts organization development in the region through SMAC grant programs

Activities include:

- review and revise grant programs as appropriate
- track all inquiries, applications, and grants accurately.

2. Maintain a strong and highly functional board of directors

Activities include:

- incorporate ongoing education related to key Board functions into Board meetings
- facilitate board and volunteer training to increase pool of technical assistance providers
- appoint and convene committees to advise staff and board as a whole and report at board meetings
- encourage and facilitate attendance at nonprofit trainings by board members

3. Develop a succession plan for key staff positions

- review and refine all job descriptions
- develop written procedures for key elements of job descriptions
- develop a transition toolkit

4. Fund high quality projects

Activities include:

- provide training to grant review panelists
- develop new and refine existing rubrics to assist grant panelists in the evaluation of grant proposals

5. Develop methods to increase our system's level of accountability, including but not limited to:

- peer review
- checks and balances
- public involvement

6. Continue to evaluate our resources to benefit the arts

Activities include:

- Conduct an annual Board and Staff retreat
- devote two board meetings/year to facilitate organizational evaluation and adjust strategic plan as needed
- evaluate programs and make modifications as appropriate
- solicit input from all grant applicants
- conduct surveys and listening sessions to encourage additional input from constituents.

**This amount subject to change depending on actual State general fund and Arts & Cultural Heritage fund allocations.*

Program Information

Grant Program Eligibility: Except as noted below, SMAC grant programs are open to nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations (or nonprofit organizations applying through a fiscal agent) and units of government in the 18-county service region (6E, 6W & 8). Our grant programs are now an on-line process.

Overall Goals for SMAC Programs

- Support artists and arts organizations in creating, producing and presenting high-quality arts activities
- Overcome barriers to accessing high quality arts activities
- Instill the arts into the community and public life in our region

- Support high quality age appropriate arts education for residents of all ages to develop knowledge, skills, and understanding of the arts
- Support events and activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions including folk and traditional artists and arts organizations represented in this region.

Target Population

- Arts Organizations
- Cities
- Counties
- Schools
- Other nonprofit organizations
- Individual Artists
- Residents of the 18 counties of our service region in southwest Minnesota

Program Outcomes

- Artists and arts organizations will increase their capacity to create, present & produce high-quality arts activities
- Residents of southwest Minnesota will have increased access to quality arts activities
- Residents of southwest Minnesota will have access to arts learning opportunities
- Residents of southwest Minnesota will have access to activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions represented in this region

Measurement Tools

- SMAC Database – number of applicants, number of grantees, types of projects, geographic distribution of funds, number of successful first time applicants
- Grantee final reports – number of audience members, participants and artists
- Site evaluations – quality of projects and events
- Number of attendees at SMAC sponsored events and art gallery exhibit
- Surveys of grantees, participants and constituents
- Comments from participants, grant panelists, audience members

Art Project Grants: Matching project grants of up to \$5,000 are available to organizations to produce or present high quality arts events. Matching grants up to \$20,000 from Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds are available for high quality projects that will instill the arts into the community. 20% cash match required. Three grant rounds per year. Applicants for Arts & Cultural Heritage Funded grants must demonstrate that their project will be new or build on previous projects and build the arts in their community. There are three grant rounds per year. These grants are reviewed by a panel of volunteers who make recommendations to the SMAC Board of Directors. Review Criteria: **Artistic Quality of the project (originality, artistic excellence);** Impact of the project on the audience and participants (arts awareness, access, outreach to underserved communities, evidence of growth); Ability to accomplish the project (planning, advertising efforts, budget, subsidy level); Evaluation plan; and, for organizations requesting over \$5,000: Justification of funding level. *This program meets the identified need for funding of local arts projects.*

Arts Organization Equipment & Facilities Improvement Grants: The goal of Arts Organization Development Grants is to increase the capacity of arts organizations to provide arts services and activities and to provide funding for arts facilities development, both of which were identified as needs of our constituents. Matching Grants of up to \$5,000 from Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds are available to arts organizations for organization development projects and equipment purchases. Monthly deadlines August 1 through April 1 or until funds are depleted. Monthly grants are reviewed by a committee of the SMAC board who make recommendations to the full board of directors. Matching grants of up to

\$15,000 from Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds are available for arts organizations or communities for the purchase of equipment or arts facilities improvement. Schools are not eligible for this program. There is one grant round per year. These grants are reviewed by a panel of volunteers who make recommendations to the SMAC Board of Directors. 20% cash match required. Review Criteria: Merit of the Organization and Artistic Quality of Past Activities; Impact on the Organization's ability to produce quality projects in the future; Feasibility of the Project; Evaluation plan; and, for requests over \$5,000: Justification of funding level. *This program is designed to meet the identified need for financial support for equipment and facilities improvement.*

Legacy Art Project Planning Grants: Matching grants of up to \$2,000 from Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds are available to organizations for the planning of art projects or activities that will create a strong arts legacy in Minnesota. 10% cash match required. Monthly deadlines, August 1 - April 1 or until funds are depleted for grants of up to \$2,000. These will be reviewed by a rotating committee from the SMAC board of directors. The goal of the Legacy Art Project Planning Grant program for organizations and communities is to encourage deliberate planning for the development of high quality art projects that are beyond the normal scope of an organization's activities. Our experience with these programs has shown that grantees have developed improved project grant proposals that are more likely to receive funding and result in successful projects. The need for public art, access to information, financial support and for encouragement and support for local arts groups and artists are addressed by these programs. Review Criteria: Artistic Quality and Merit; Ability of applicant or organization to accomplish the project or program goals as presented; Demand or need for the grant project or program in the community served; Evaluation Plan.

Arts Organization Start-up Grants: Grants of up to \$2,000, with no cash match required for newly formed arts organizations to develop articles of incorporation, by-laws, and apply for their 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. Limit one per organization. Review Criteria: Merit, Need and Ability. Monthly deadlines, August 1 - April 1 or until funds are depleted. These will be reviewed by a rotating committee from the SMAC board of directors.

Arts Organization Development Grants: Matching grants of up to \$5,000 from Arts & Cultural Heritage Monthly deadlines, August 1 - April 1 or until funds are depleted. These will be reviewed by a rotating committee from the SMAC board of directors. Funds are available to organizations for projects that will increase the capacity of arts organizations to provide arts services and activities, including strategic planning. 10% cash match required. Review Criteria: Merit, Need, Ability, Evaluation Plan. *This program is designed to meet the identified need for financial support for organization development.*

Operating Support Grants: *In response to an identified need for operating support* SMAC has developed a new program for arts organizations in existence for a minimum of three years with two categories based on the average of their budget for the past two years excluding equipment and facilities improvement costs. Funding levels 25% maximum per year for arts organizations with an average of under \$25,000 for the past 2 years' operating budgets (excluding equipment & facilities improvement costs) and a 15% maximum/year for arts organizations with an average of \$25,000 and over for past 2 years operating budgets (excluding equipment & facilities costs). Arts organizations that are eligible for MSAB operating support funds are not eligible for this program. Criteria includes merit, ability, need and evaluation plan. Applicants must participate in the Cultural Data Project. *This program also may address the need for paid staff.*

Individual Artist Grants: Grants are available to artists for projects which will aid in career development. They may include art study opportunities. **Developing Artists** may apply for up to \$1,500. **Career Artists** may apply for up to \$5,000. Grants of up to \$7,000 from Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds are available to **Career Artists** for projects that incorporate a community component that would provide an opportunity for the community to benefit as a result of the project. Emphasis is placed on reaching the

community in new ways. **Art Study Opportunity for Youth Grants** of up to \$500 are available to fund artist-training needs for students in grades 5 through 12. There is one deadline per year for each category of Individual Artist Grant program. Grant requests are reviewed by a panel of artists who make recommendations to the Board of Directors. Review Criteria: Overall excellence of work and demonstration of exceptional talent; Evidence of serious commitment; Project's contribution to the artist's growth; Project's impact on the community (for ACH Funded Career Artists only)

Our goal is to provide financial support for artists and to provide encouragement and support for artists as identified in our needs assessment.

Arts in the Schools Grants: Grants are available to schools for educational projects that involve students, artists, educators and the community in a significant way. No match required. Two rounds per year. These grants are reviewed by a panel of volunteers who make recommendations to the full SMAC Board. Two categories under this program are Field Trips and Artists in Residence. **Field Trips:** Grants of up to \$2000 available for field trips to high quality professional arts activities not available locally. **Artists in Residence:** Grants of up to \$4,000. Applications from schools are strongly encouraged to include an educator-training component. Review Criteria: Artistic Quality and Merit; Ability of applicant to accomplish the project; Collaboration and Support, Evaluation Plan.

Our needs assessment identified a need for financial support for arts in schools. The goal of the Arts in the Schools Grants program is to provide high quality arts learning experiences in the schools and in the community. While we are not able to address the need for more art teachers in the schools, we can offer quality arts experiences for students through this program.

Cultural Bank Insurance Program: Member organizations may apply for this program to guarantee against losses, up to \$400/event or 1/3 of the project cost, whichever is less, for projects which are expected to break even or make money. Funds for this program come from organization membership fees (\$50/organization). Applications must be filed 28 days prior to a scheduled event and are reviewed and approved by the Executive Director. Final report form must be filed 60 days following the event.

Our goal is to encourage organizations to sponsor arts activities. This program facilitates small arts events by reducing the risk of financial loss due to unforeseen circumstances.

SMAC Board Initiated Grants: The SMAC board has set aside funds to be used to fund specific opportunities as they arise. Examples include sponsorship of the Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative's Young Artist Conference and scholarships for attendance at the Rural Arts & Culture Summit (FY2017 only). *The Young Artist Conference addresses the need for art classes for youths. The scholarships for attendance at the Rural Arts and Culture Summit address the need for networking, addressing volunteer burnout, audience development and information access.*

Prairie Disciple Award: One award is made each year to recognize an individual whose activities have best aided in the development of the arts in the SMAC region. Nominations are reviewed by the SMAC Board of Directors. Recipients receive a plaque recognizing their achievements, a \$500 award, and are recognized at the SMAC Annual Celebration and through regional media.

Our goal is to bring attention to the importance of arts advocacy work in our region and inspire others to advocate for the arts. *Advocacy was identified as a need in our needs assessment.*

Prairie Star Award: One award, funded by the McKnight Foundation, is made every other year to recognize an individual whose work and activities have best exemplified the highest quality of work in the SMAC region. Nominations are reviewed by the SMAC Individual Artist Grant Review Panel who makes recommendations to the Board of Directors. The recipient will receive a \$5,000 award and be

recognized at the SMAC Annual Celebration and through regional media. Awarded in fiscal year 2016 only.

Our goal with this program is to honor an outstanding artist and publicize the importance of high quality artists in our region.

SMAC Art Gallery: 8 exhibits per year showcasing SMAC Individual Artist Grant recipients. The SMAC Art Gallery was developed in response to requests from artists for more exhibit opportunities in the region. Our goal is to provide increased access to the arts for the community and to provide increased exposure for artists. The gallery provides emerging artists with an opportunity for a solo show, an artist reception, and assistance in developing promotional materials. Performing artists are showcased during the art exhibit receptions. *This program meets the identified need for exhibiting and performing venues.*

SMAC Annual Meeting and Arts Celebration Event: The SMAC Annual Meeting is held in conjunction with our annual celebration at a different location in the region each year. The event includes a celebration of the arts and may include a fund raising event with a silent and/or live auction. Events are planned which showcase regional artists and arts activities. The Prairie Star and Prairie Disciple recipients are honored at our Annual Celebration.

Our goal is to connect artists, arts supporters, arts organizations, and arts advocates at a fun event that highlights and celebrates the arts in our region. *This activity meets the need for advocacy, opportunities for artists and organizations to connect, encouragement and support for local arts groups and artists and access to information.*

“Voices” Newsletter: SMAC’s newsletter includes information on grant programs, grants awarded, arts activities in the region, a calendar of events, a listing of opportunities for artists and arts organizations and articles of general interest on arts events and activities. Published 6 - 10 times per year. Currently available via mail or on our website.

Our goal is to increase awareness of the arts and arts activities in our region as well of inform the public of opportunities for funding, training and other resources. *This activity addresses the need for access to information.*

Technical Assistance: SMAC staff is available as a resource for artists and arts organizations. Assistance is provided via mail, e-mail, phone and in person. Staff provides information and referrals to other sources of information on request. SMAC maintains a toll free telephone line to allow ready access to constituents. Staff is available to meet with local arts organization representatives to address specific concerns and provide assistance as requested throughout the region. An on-line public art toolkit developed by Forecast Public Art is made available to SMAC constituents via our website. The Toolkit includes resource information, sample documents, visual aids, and on-line links. SMAC maintains a limited resource library of books on fundraising, organizational development, planning, marketing, etc. SMAC has a web site that includes a list of SMAC programs and deadlines, a regional arts calendar, articles of interest, links to other arts organizations and resources, list of SMAC Board members, news items and features work by regional artists. We are continually working to improve the web site. Our grant guidelines are available on the website.

SMAC seeks to fund quality art projects, whether traditional or experimental, that are challenging, original and move the imagination. Such work will be finely crafted and well performed. We have developed a video and print material to aid in the understanding of high quality art, “What is Art?” which is available via our website and presented at workshops throughout the region. These tools are designed to bring clarity to the creative process and highlight how the professional artist conceives and presents

their work to the public. It will illuminate how an effective grant application is not dependent on the medium an artist chooses to employ, but how the artist uses the medium for creative expression. An artist's artistic vision should be unique and clearly visible to the grant review panel. A strong proposal will include evidence of an interest in bringing the artist's unique voice to the "tools of their trade."

Our goal is to strengthen artists and arts providers' capacity to succeed. *Access to information, technical assistance for artists and organizations, encouragement and support for local arts groups and artists and opportunities for artists to connect with each other and for organizations to connect with each other have all been identified as needs.*

Workshops and Conferences: SMAC conducts workshops and conferences annually to address specific needs of constituents. SMAC will design and conduct workshops and collaborate with other organizations to present workshops for SMAC constituents. Topics could include organizational development, board development, marketing, fund raising, arts & education, public art, career development workshops for individual artists, and networking opportunities for artists and arts organizations, evaluation. Scholarships will be available to subsidize the costs of attending workshops and conferences. Plans for this biennium include grant writing workshops, arts organization workshops, and an **artist retreat**. Networking meetings may be scheduled for local artists and arts organizations. In addition, we will continue to work with and encourage statewide arts organizations to plan workshops and meetings in our region.

In addition, SMAC will be conducting listening sessions in communities that have not been participating in our programs to better understand what their needs are, understand language differences in how we talk about the arts, and gain insight into how we might better serve those communities. We plan to hold a listening session at the Lower Sioux Reservation in FY2016 and in other new ethnic communities during the biennium. *Our goal is to address the need for more diversified audiences, both for SMAC and our constituent organizations.*

Our goal is to strengthen artists and arts providers' capacity to succeed. *Access to information, technical assistance for artists and organizations, encouragement and support for local arts groups and artists and opportunities for artists to connect with each other and for organizations to connect with each other have all been identified as needs. Workshops on evaluation, budgeting and finances, addressing volunteer burnout and roles and responsibilities of nonprofit board members are addressed at our workshops and conferences.*

Attachment #E: NAMES & AFFILIATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

2015 Board of Directors' Affiliations

John White, Ortonville (Big Stone County): writer, photographer, retired journalist, Arts Meander, Big Stone Arts Council member; Elected 011/13

Marilee Strom, Windom (Cottonwood County): musician, former art teacher, business owner. Elected 10/10

Kathy Fransen, Jackson (Jackson County): Harpist, certified clinical musician, theatre. Coordinator, Rhythm of the River; performed in several Jackson County Art Guilds productions. Elected 09/12

Janet Olney, Willmar (Kandiyohi County): Fiber artist. Coordinator, Willmar Area Arts Council. Elected 10/12

Joyce Meyer, Canby (Lac qui Parle County): Visual artist, photographer, art educator, musician; Canby Arts Council Advisory Board. Elected 9/13

Kate Aydin, Hendricks (Lincoln County): Arts advocate. Elected 9/11

Paula Nemes, Marshall (Lyon County): musician, Marshall Area Stage Company; active in several Lyon County arts organizations; librarian at Marshall Lyon County Library; Elected 10/10

Tom Wirt, Hutchinson (McLeod County): Potter, founder Hutchinson Center for the Arts and MN Pottery Festival, past member Hutchinson Arts Commission, former SMAHC and MSAB grant review panelist. Elected 8/12

Susan Marco, Dassel (Meeker County): writer, Master of Arts degree in English from St. Cloud State University; former English and creative writing teacher; published author; Elected 10/10

Kelly Muldoon, Slayton (Murray County): graphic artist; board member of the Prairie Music Association and the Prairie Oasis Players; Slayton Friends of the Library; Elected 10/10

Brett Lehman, Worthington (Nobles County): Worthington International Festival, Worthington City Band, Worthington Concert Association. Elected 9/14

Reggie Gorter, Pipestone (Pipestone County): Dancer and vocal musician, has also participated in community theatre, owns local dance and music studio. Elected 4/15

Dan Wahl, Walnut Grove (Redwood County): visual artist; musician; published author; participant in community theater productions; MFA in Creative Writing; Elected 02/11

Cindy Reverts, Luverne (Rock County): visual artist with an emphasis in pottery and glass work; Rock County Fine Arts Association board; Elected 02/11

Dana Johnson, Appleton (Swift County): producer/filmmaker, musician; Pioneer Public TV. Elected 1/15.

Scott Tedrick, Granite Falls (Yellow Medicine County): journalist, Granite Falls Riverfront Revitalization, theatre director/actor. Elected 11/12

SMAC Staff

Executive Director Greta Murray has worked at SMAC for 31 years, the past 17 as executive director. Murray is a weaver and musician. She has served on the board of the MN Citizens for the Arts, as a Minnesota State Arts Board Grant Panelist, played lead alto saxophone with the Minneota Community Jazz Band and served as treasurer for the Southwest Minnesota Weavers Guild. Administrative Assistant Caroline Koska performs in a flute duo, sings in the Prairie Arts Chorale, and acts in musical productions

with the Marshall Area Stage Company and Lake Benton Opera House. Caroline has been with SMAC since June 2011. Program Assistant Nicole DeBoer has a graphic arts background and has been with SMAC since April 2010. Part-time Office Assistant Helen Devereaux has been with SMAC since July 2007.

Attachment J: PUBLIC MEETING

An article in our May-June 2015 newsletter, *Voices*, and an alert posted on our website announced that a public hearing on the Preliminary SMAC Biennial Plan would be held at 7:00 p.m. on May 26, 2015 in the SMAC office in Marshall, Minnesota. A press release was sent to all media in the 18-county region as well as our entire email list announcing the May 26 public hearing. The biennial plan was posted on the SMAC website and printed copies of the plan are made available at the hearing.