

BIENNIAL REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL PLAN
Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019
Regions 6E, 6W and 8

Southwest Minnesota Arts Council (SMAC)

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Joyce Meyer, President; Anne O’Keefe Jackson, President-Elect; Janet Olney, Past-President; Michele Knife Sterner, Treasurer; Tom Wirt, Executive Committee Board Member at Large
STAFF: Nicole DeBoer, Executive Director;
Caroline Koska, Financial & Grants Administrator; Krystl Louwagie, Marketing Coordinator & Receptionist

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: Originally SWAFAH, a regional arts supporter and funder which had been in operation in the area since 1968, became The Southwest Minnesota Arts & Humanities Council (SMAHC) in 1974 and was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. 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 four full-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 2015 total population of the region was 277,621. The largest towns are Willmar (pop. 19,848), Hutchinson (14,170), Marshall (13,793) and Worthington (13,208). Medium size towns include Litchfield (6,761), Glencoe (5,540), Montevideo (5,327) and Redwood Falls (5,214), Luverne (4,707), Windom (4,637) and Pipestone (4,200). 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. 482) and Lower Sioux (pop. 982) reservations reside within our region. Ethnic diversity is increasing in our region. 54.3% of Worthington's residents are nonwhite. 44.9% of Walnut Grove (pop. 871) is Asian and over half of Milan's population (pop. 400) is Micronesian. 27.5% 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.

WORK PLAN FOR GRANTS, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

SMAC Goals, Objectives and Activities for 2018-2019 (end date: June 30, 2019)

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 may 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-line

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

Activities may 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 may 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 may 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 may 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 may 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 may 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 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 may 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 may 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:

- Regional Arts Council peer review
- checks and balances
- public involvement

6. Continue to evaluate our resources to benefit the arts

Activities may 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.