

Project Name

SW MN Arts Council 2020-2021 Biennial Plan

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.

Region – Background, demographics, other context for the plan

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.

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 2017 total population according to mncompass.org was 276,987. The largest towns are Willmar (pop. 20,008), Hutchinson (14,188), Marshall (13,860) and Worthington (13,430). Medium size towns include Litchfield (6,645), Glencoe (5,511), Montevideo (5,165) and Redwood Falls (5,031), Luverne (4,707), Windom (4,488) and Pipestone (4,102). 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. Region wide we are 12.9% diverse – or identifying as nonwhite. 59.6% 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. 33.4% of Willmar identifies as nonwhite. That is an increase of over 20% in Willmar alone since the 2010 census. Much of the region's business is agriculture based. Health care institutions and schools are the largest employers in most of the region.

The Southwest Minnesota Arts & Humanities Council (SMAHC) was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit 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 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 staff positions.

Needs assessment process

SMAC conducted a variety of information gathering initiatives in 2018 and 2019 to ensure broad input into the priority setting responsibility of this regional arts council, including:

~ Input was solicited at each grant review panel meeting regarding our grant process

~ From conference attendees at the Annual Artist Gathering (12 surveys completed in 2018)

~ From conference attendees at the Arts Organization Summit (22 surveys completed in 2018)

~ Surveys were conducted via Constant Contact in August 2018 (80 surveys completed) and March 2019 (76 surveys completed). The surveys were sent directly to our database of approximately 3,500 people: 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, arts-interested public who have asked to be included in our email list, people who have attended our workshops and conferences, and our newsletter mailing list. The opportunity to participate in the survey was also marketed via social media channels to the arts-interested public.

~ 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.

Needs Assessment Results Summary

Organizations:

- Need for financial support for art projects, general operations, equipment and facility improvements (in that order.)
- Need for paid staff.
- Need for opportunities to network with other arts organizations and access information.
- Need for board development training.
- Need to attract new audiences, volunteers and supporters.

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.
- Need for affirmation.
- Need for direct assistance with grant writing. "Overwhelming" is a term commonly voiced regarding our applications.
- Need for training on the business side of art (how to sell their art.)

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

- Need for advocacy for the importance of the arts, particularly at the local level.
- Public Art in our rural communities.
- Art classes – for youth as well as adults.
- Places for people to display their artwork. A safe place for people to understand/converse/share about arts from different cultures.
- Region-wide grant workshops; access to SMAC staff in-person around the region.
- Government acknowledgement of the importance of art as enriching their communities.

- 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 and lack of budgets for art supplies and equipment underlining the need for more advocacy for the arts in schools and communities.]

Needs identified by board members, staff and grant panelists:

- Need for more applications from more diverse populations and projects reaching more diverse populations.
- Need for more diversified audiences.

Description of the planning process & [those involved]

SMAC invites constituents to participate directly in its planning and information gathering process through 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. [Region-wide audience]

SMAC Board full day strategic planning sessions are held annually; for this biennium they were held on January 13, 2018 and January 26, 2019. [Entire SMAC Board – up to 18 members]

The SMAC Grant Program Committee meets at least twice per year each spring (February – April) to do a deep dive analysis of each of our grant programs and bring change recommendations to the SMAC Board for decision. [6-8 SMAC Board members elected annually.]

The SMAC Executive Committee & Long Range Planning Committee meets annually in March to review our biennial plan and redirect as needed (in the interim year) or review and make recommendations for an upcoming two-year plan based on information received from constituents, state government, the MN State Arts Board and other regional arts councils. [Two committees consisting of 10 SMAC board members.]

The SMAC Board met on March 26, 2019 to discuss, revise and approve the preliminary Biennial Plan for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 pending additional input from a public hearing scheduled for April 23, 2019. The board may further revise the biennial plan as State funding information becomes available. [Public hearing attendance varies each year.]

After the public hearing, the final FY20-21 biennial plan will be submitted to the MN State Arts Board prior to the May 15, 2019 deadline.

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.

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 sponsor) and units of government in the 18-county service region (6E, 6W & 8). Individual artists applying must permanently reside within our 18-county region, as evidenced by official identification documents and/or voter registration.

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 – project evaluation results, 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
- Information gathered by other means from grantees, participants, grant panelists, audience members, arts-interested public

GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Art Project Grants & Art Legacy Project Grants: Matching project grants of up to \$7,000 are available to organizations to produce or present high quality arts events. Matching grants up to \$25,000 are available for high quality projects that will instill the arts into the community and leave a legacy of art for the community and/or state. 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. These grants are reviewed by a panel of volunteers who make recommendations to the SMAC Board of Directors. Review Criteria: Artistic Quality & Merit (originality, artistic excellence); Impact on the Participants and Audience (arts awareness, access, evidence of growth); Reaching the Underserved (outreach to underserved communities, ADA accessibility); Ability to Accomplish (planning, advertising efforts, budget, subsidy level); Outcome Evaluation; and, for organizations requesting over \$7,000: Justification of funding level. This program is funded by State General Fund Appropriation and Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds.

Art Legacy Project Planning Grants: Matching grants of up to \$2,500 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. 20% cash match required. Monthly deadlines, August 1 – November 1 and also January 1 - April 1 or until funds are depleted for grants of up to \$2,500. 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; Impact of the Planning; Reaching the Underserved; Ability to Accomplish; Outcome Evaluation Plan. This program is funded by State General Fund Appropriation and Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds.

Arts Organization Development Grants: Matching grants of up to \$5,000 from Arts & Cultural Heritage funds. Monthly deadlines, August 1 – November 1 and also January 1 - April 1 or until funds are depleted. These will be reviewed by a rotating committee from the SMAC board of directors. Grants are available to arts organizations for projects that will increase their capacity to provide arts services and activities, including hiring consultants or attending workshops to help with board development, fundraising, strategic planning, financial management, etc. 20% cash match required. Review Criteria: Impact on the Organization; Merit of Organization & Artistic Quality of its Programs; Feasibility of the Project; Outcome Evaluation Plan. This program is funded by State General Fund Appropriation and Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds.

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. Monthly deadlines, August 1 – November 1 and also January 1 - April 1 or until funds are depleted. Funded by State Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds. These are reviewed by a rotating committee from the SMAC board of directors. Review Criteria: Merit of the Organization & Artistic Quality of its Programs; Feasibility of the Project.

Equipment & Facilities Improvement Grants: Matching Grants of up to \$10,000 from Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds are available to arts organizations to increase the capacity of arts organizations to provide arts services and activities through funding for equipment and arts facilities improvement, both of which were identified as needs of our constituents. 20% cash match required. Two application deadlines/year. Grants are reviewed by a committee of the SMAC board or a panel of volunteers who make recommendations to the full board of directors. Schools are not eligible for this program. Review Criteria: Impact on the Organization; Merit of the Organization & Artistic Quality its Programs; Feasibility of the Project; Outcome Evaluation plan.

Operating Support Grants: In response to an identified need for unrestricted operating support SMAC created a grant program for arts organizations in existence for a minimum of three years. Operating Support funding enables qualifying organizations to maintain their ongoing programs, services, and facilities without special emphasis on new initiatives as justification for funding. There are two levels of funding based on the average of their budget for the past two years excluding equipment and facilities improvement costs and previous SMAC OS grants. Level 1: 35% maximum per year for arts organizations with an average of under \$25,000 operating budgets and Level 2: 15% maximum per year for arts organizations with an average of \$25,000 and over. Arts organizations that are eligible for MSAB operating support funds are not eligible for this program. Criteria includes Quality of Programs & Excellence in the Field; Commitment to the Community; Organizational Stability; Commitment to Sound Management; Impact the Funding will have on the Organization. Funded with State Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds.

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 \$2,500. Established Career Artists may apply for up to \$7,000. Two deadlines/year for each category. Grant requests are reviewed by a panel of artists who make recommendations to the Board of Directors. Review Criteria: Excellence of work and demonstration of exceptional talent; Project's contribution to the Artist's Professional growth; Feasibility of the Project. Funded by McKnight funds.

Individual Artist – Community Collaboration Grants: Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to artists for projects that allow them to create a major new work while collaborating with the community, introducing community members to the arts in a new way. Two deadlines/year. Grant requests are reviewed by a panel of artists who

make recommendations to the Board of Directors. Review Criteria: Excellence of work and demonstration of exceptional talent; Artistic Merit of the Community Project; Community Collaboration; Project's contribution to the Artist's Professional Growth; Feasibility of the Project; Outcome Evaluation Plan. Funded with State Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds.

Art Study Opportunity for Youth Grants: Grants of up to \$500 are available to fund artist-training needs for students going into grades 5 through 12. No match required. There is one deadline per year. Grant requests are reviewed by a panel of artists and art educators who make recommendations to the SMAC Board of Directors. Review Criteria: Overall Excellence of Work and Demonstration of Exceptional Talent; Evidence of Serious Commitment; Project's Contribution to the Student's Artistic Growth; Outcome Evaluation Plan. Funded by State Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds.

Arts in the Schools Grants: Grants are available to schools for educational art 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. Allowable project-types or categories under this program are Field Trips, Artists in Residence and Pre-Packaged Theatre. Field Trips: Grants of up to \$2,500 available for field trips to high quality professional arts activities not available locally, costs associated with juried art exhibits, or prepackaged theatre. 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; Impact; Feasibility; Outcome Evaluation Plan. Funded with State General Fund Appropriation and Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds.

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. For this biennium, awarded in fiscal year 2020 only.

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. Every other year the award highlights an educator who has been instrumental in promoting & encouraging the arts. Nominations are reviewed by the SMAC Board of Directors. Recipients receive a plaque recognizing their achievements, a \$1,000 award, and are recognized at the SMAC Annual Celebration and through regional media. Funded with State General Fund Appropriation and SMAC funds.

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 (FY2020 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. Funded with SMAC funds.

SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS

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 grantee artists with an opportunity for a solo show, an artist reception, and assistance in developing promotional materials. Performing artists, most of whom have received an artist grant, are showcased during the art exhibit receptions.

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. Events are planned which showcase regional artists and arts activities. If possible, arts organizations and artist studios are encouraged to host an Open House prior to the evening celebration. 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 an 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 by email 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. 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.

Technical Assistance: SMAC staff is available as a resource for potential applicants and the general public. Assistance is provided via e-mail, phone and in person. Staff provides information and referrals to other sources of information on request. Staff host free grant webinars approximate 6 weeks prior to every grant program deadline. In addition, staff travels 4-6 times/year to host in-person grant workshops across the region. 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. SMAC maintains a limited resource library of books on fundraising, organizational development, planning, marketing, etc. SMAC has an extensive web site that includes SMAC programs, guidelines and deadlines, a regional arts calendar, an artist & arts organization registry, articles of interest, list of SMAC Board members, and current art news items. We are continually working to improve and update information provided on the web site. 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. Two conferences are held annually: Arts Organization Summit and the Artist Gathering. Both offer education on topics including 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, and evaluation. These two annual conferences are free to attend in order to eliminate the barrier to access. An annual Artist Retreat is held at a central location in the region that appeals to all types of artists and allows for two-day immersion into hands-on classes and in-depth learnings. Additionally, SMAC hosts other arts-related learning sessions on current, pertinent topics such as ADA access; these are scheduled as issues arise affecting our region and constituents. Beyond learning events, networking opportunities may be scheduled for local artists and arts organizations. We continue to work with and encourage statewide arts organizations to plan workshops and meetings in our region.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion: SMAC will actively connect with underserved constituents and communities. We will work to define and address barriers and issues of access. We will continue outreach to communities which have not traditionally 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. Our goal is to address the need for more diversified audiences, both for SMAC and our constituent organizations.

Work Plan for grants, programs & services

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

Objective #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, easy-to-navigate 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 youth art study opportunity grants
- respond to requests for information in a timely manner
- develop/improve/maintain contacts with underserved populations
- continue/improve grant writing workshops and grant learning opportunities

Objective #2: Allocate appropriate 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 for organizations and, separately, for artists
- make available tools for artists and arts organizations via workshops, web and other technologies
- communicate artist and arts organization activities via web, social media channels and other means
- provide workshops on topics that will help organizations and individuals grow in their artistic journey and in what they offer to the citizens of Minnesota
- develop workshops and opportunities to improve outreach relationships 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
 - career development

Objective #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
- provide artist & arts organization registry opportunities through the SMAC website

- provide advocacy tools & training
- host an annual arts celebration showcasing artists and arts organizations
- recognize Prairie Star & Prairie Disciple award winners as outstanding artists and arts advocates in our region
- provide exhibit opportunities for regional artist grantees in the SMAC Art Gallery
- provide performance opportunities for artists at the SMAC Art Gallery Receptions and the Annual SMAC Celebration

Objective #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 mass email systems and social media channels to disseminate information across the region regarding grant deadlines, events, workshops and other opportunities
- utilize press releases to inform region about SMAC activities
- incorporate the use of ever-changing technology to facilitate increased participation
- make connections and alliances with Native American tribes including the Upper Sioux and Lower Sioux communities in addition to our growing immigrant and other underserved populations
 - o work to define and address issues of access and barriers
 - o empower the SMAC Equity Committee to engage underserved populations on a regularly scheduled basis; potentially through an Equity Taskforce
 - o convene a series of meetings with Native American and immigrant populations for group discussions about developing and strengthening relationships

Objective #5: Increase Access to the Arts 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.

Objective #6: Increase Art Education 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

Objective #7: Increase Arts & Cultural Heritage activities 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.

Objective #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.

Objective #2: Maintain a strong and highly functional board of directors.

Activities may include:

- promote and recruit board members whose diversity reflects and represents our constituents
- recruit board members for their skills and expertise to support the future vision of SMAC
- 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

Objective #3: 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

Objective #4: 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

Objective #5: Continue to evaluate our resources to benefit the arts.

Activities may include:

- Conduct an annual Board and Staff retreat
- devote adequate time during board meetings 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.

Work Plan: Priority 1

Priority 1 Heading

Grant Programs: Provide effective and efficient grant programs for the production or sponsorship of art for individual artists, organizations, communities, schools, and youth

Priority 1 Objectives

Objectives 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 & host grant writing workshops

TOP GOALS

As stated on the MN State Arts Board Website:

"In order to realize our legacy vision, the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Minnesota's regional arts councils must work together to accomplish the following goals":

1. The arts are interwoven into every facet of community life.
2. Minnesotans believe the arts are vital to who we are.
3. People of all ages, ethnicity, and abilities participate in the arts.
4. People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.
5. The arts thrive in Minnesota.

Goals addressed in Priority 1

Indicate which of the top goals listed above are supported through the efforts described in Priority 1.

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Outcome for Priority 1

Southwest Minnesota artists and organizations/government units will report they have access to grants funding including information, education and services. Regional residents experience increased access to the arts via a reduction in geographic, cultural and/or physical barriers.

Indicators for Priority 1

As a result of this program, 85% of grantees will report that their project exceeded or met the artistic quality and merit goals set forth in their application and positively impacted communities in the SW Region.

Evaluation Methods for Priority 1

Evaluation will occur through information submitted in grantee final reports.

Work Plan: Priority 2

Priority 2 Heading

Strong Organization: Maintain a strong and highly functional staff and board of directors and their capacity to strengthen arts organizations and artists while acting as responsible stewards of public and private funds in service of the arts.

Objectives may include:

- recruit & maintain a strong and highly functional board of directors whose diversity reflects the constituents of the region
- recruit panelists whose skills, knowledge and experience allow them to effectively score applications according to the relevant criteria
- recruit panelists who belong to or represent underserved communities
- provide training & educational opportunities for staff, board members and panelists to strengthen their ability to better serve constituents and support the arts

TOP GOALS

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Goals addressed in Priority 2

Indicate which of the top goals listed above are supported through the efforts described in Priority 2.

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Outcome for Priority 2

Residents of the Southwest Region will indicate satisfaction with how the resources for the arts are allocated and the benefits those resources produce.

Indicators for Priority 2

75% of respondents to our planned FY21 needs assessment survey will react/respond positively in regard to our administration of funds.

Evaluation methods for Priority 2

The FY21 needs assessment survey which will engage the constituents of the SW MN Region as detailed above in the needs assessment section.

Work Plan: Priority 3

Priority 3 Heading

Equity and Diversity: Actively and effectively connect with all constituents and work to define and address barriers and issues of access.

Objectives may include:

- design effective marketing and communications plan to engage the arts-interested public
- leverage current & past board members and other volunteers to serve as a conduit between SMAC and our constituents

- convene a taskforce of small, rural community leaders that can forge connections between SMAC – the arts – and underserved populations; target people who are an integral part of those communities as taskforce members
- create and execute a targeted, but flexible, outreach plan for staff, board members and SMAC-connected arts leaders to “go to” the underserved communities
 - make connections and strengthen alliances with Native American tribes including the Upper Sioux and Lower Sioux communities in addition to immigrant, disabled and other underserved populations
 - emphasize one-on-one community engagement and relationship building
 - focus on relationships, listening, understanding and trust
- utilize all available communications methods to disseminate information across the region regarding grant deadlines, events, workshops and other opportunities; ensure those communications are available in languages representative of our underserved communities
- address accessibility issues and reduce or remove them where possible to facilitate increased participation
- empower the SMAC Equity Committee to engage underserved populations on a regularly scheduled basis; potentially through an Equity Taskforce

TOP GOALS

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5. The arts thrive in Minnesota.

Goals addressed in Priority 3

Indicate which of the top goals listed above are supported through the efforts described in Priority 3.

3, 5

Outcome for Priority 3

Our grantees, audiences and people served will more accurately reflect the diversity of the region. Regional residents build connections to their own and others' cultural heritage through regional arts and cultural events and/or activities.

Indicators for Priority 3

We will see an increase in the numbers of grant applications for projects involving a high-level of artistic quality & merit from and/or serving diverse or underserved populations.

Evaluation methods for Priority 3

RAC Data Collection statistics.

Work Plan: Priority 4

Priority 4 Heading

Promotion of the Arts: Promote, celebrate and advocate on behalf of arts creators, providers, and appreciators in SW MN.

Objectives may include:

- advertise regional arts activities through website, newsletter and email
- advocate for the arts within and beyond the region
- conduct advocacy training
- host an annual arts celebration showcasing artists and arts organizations
- recognize Prairie Star & Prairie Disciple award winners as outstanding artists and arts advocates in our region
- provide exhibit opportunities for regional artist grantees in the SMAC Art Gallery
- provide performance opportunities for artists at the SMAC Art Gallery Receptions and the Annual SMAC Celebration

TOP GOALS

As listed on the MN State Arts Board Website:

"In order to realize our legacy vision, the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Minnesota's regional arts councils must work together to accomplish the following goals":

1. The arts are interwoven into every facet of community life.
2. Minnesotans believe the arts are vital to who we are.
3. People of all ages, ethnicity, and abilities participate in the arts.
4. People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.
5. The arts thrive in Minnesota.

Goals addressed in Priority 4

Indicate which of the top goals listed above are supported through the efforts described in Priority 4.

1, 2, 5

Outcome for Priority 4

Community members will have the tools to effectively advocate for the arts in their schools, cities, counties and at the state level. Regional artists connect to new audiences and/or build relationships that provide artistic growth.

Indicators for Priority 4

Schools will respond to community input in regard to arts in education. Local and county governments will increase support for arts programs. Individual artists will have increased opportunities to showcase their work and share with communities in the region.

Evaluation Methods for Priority 4

Measured through grant applications; specifically increased financial and/or in-kind support by school and government entities; identified individual artist opportunities presented within project descriptions.

Work Plan: Priority 5

Priority 5 Heading

Technical Assistance/Capacity Building: Develop artists' and arts providers' capacity to succeed.

Objectives may include:

- enable constituents to learn from each other and specific subject matter experts through at least one high-quality conference per year for organizations and, separately, for artists
- 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 other means
- provide workshops on topics that will help organizations and individuals grow in their artistic journey and in what they offer to the citizens of Minnesota
- develop workshops and opportunities to improve outreach relationships 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
 - career development

TOP GOALS

As listed on the MN State Arts Board Website:

"In order to realize our legacy vision, the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Minnesota's regional arts councils must work together to accomplish the following goals":

1. The arts are interwoven into every facet of community life.
2. Minnesotans believe the arts are vital to who we are.

3. People of all ages, ethnicity, and abilities participate in the arts.
4. People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.
5. The arts thrive in Minnesota.

Goals addressed in Priority 5

Indicate which of the top goals listed above are supported through the efforts described in Priority 1.

1, 5

Outcome for Priority 5

Artists and organizations in the Southwest Region will say have access to the resources, information, markets, personnel/volunteers, and audiences they need to accomplish their mission.

Indicators for Priority 5

85% of constituents will indicate that SMAC-provided training and resources met or exceeded their needs.

Evaluation methods for Priority 5

Success factors, or need for change, will show up in post-event surveys, evaluations and grantee final reports.

Identification of arts experiences and background

SMAC seeks representation from artists and arts advocates who represent the diverse populations in our region, including age, gender, profession, ethnicity and discipline of arts interest or expertise.

Rotation System

Board members are elected by the SMAC membership to a 3-year term and may be re-elected to a second three year term. One third of the board terms expire each year.

Names and Affiliations

2019 Board of Directors and their Affiliations

John White, Ortonville (Big Stone County): writer, photographer, retired journalist, Arts Meander, Big Stone Arts Council member; Elected 11/13

Georgette Jones, Watson (Chippewa County): ESL teacher / art educator, theatre participant, speech coach; Elected 1/16

Anna Johannsen, Windom (Cottonwood County): art teacher, fiber artist, Remick Gallery Board of Directors, Cotton Quilters Board member; Elected 1/19

Kristen Kuipers, Jackson (Jackson County): organist/pianist/vocalist, art teacher, private music instructor, theatre participant, Jackson Center for the Arts member, member of Southwest Minnesota Community Choir; Elected 1/19

Janet Olney, Willmar (Kandiyohi County): fiber artist, director of Willmar Area Arts Council, board of directors Willmar Community Center, Main Street Willmar board of directors; Elected 9/12

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

(Lincoln County OPEN)

Michele Knife-Sterner, Marshall (Lyon County): Associate Director of Access Opportunity Success @ SMSU, musician, visual artist, actor; Elected 11/16

Lisa Hill, Hutchinson (McLeod County): musician, Hutchinson Center for the Arts board member, Crow River Singers member; Elected 2/17

(Meeker County OPEN)

Emily Peterson, Slayton (Murray County): visual artist, art teacher @ RCW; Elected 10/17

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

Erica Volkir, Pipestone (Pipestone County): Pipestone Performing Arts Center board member, theatre participant; Elected 9/17

Anne O'Keefe-Jackson, Morton (Renville County): visual artist/pottery, arts supporter, Lower Sioux member; Elected 10/15

David KelseyBassett, Lamberton (Redwood County): visual artist/graphic designer/screen printer, musician; Elected 8/17

Scott Wessels, Luverne (Rock County): Luverne Green Earth Players member, theatre participant; Elected 9/18

(Swift County OPEN)

Claire Swanson, Granite Falls (Yellow Medicine County): fiber artist, Upper MN River Valley Arts Meander steering committee; Elected 9/16

SMAC Staff:

Executive Director **Nicole DeBoer** was hired effective July 1, 2017. Nicole formerly held the SMAC Program Assistant role for 8 years, and prior to that was the Creative Director at The Schwan Company. Nicole is a visual artist focused on graphic design and painting. **Caroline Koska**, Financial & Grants Administrator since June 2011, sings, plays piano and flute, participates in community theater productions, and teaches piano lessons. Marketing Coordinator/Receptionist **Krystl Louwagie** began August 2016. Krystl currently works primarily with ink and actively shows in both open group and juried exhibits with plans for upcoming solo shows.

Nomination Process

The SMAC Nominating Committee is made up of a minimum of 5 current SMAC board members. The committee seeks nominations for board positions for each of the 18 counties. One third of the board positions are elected at the SMAC annual meeting of its membership as terms expire. Mid-term vacancies are filled by the SMAC board of directors. Nominations are solicited via press releases, email messages to our contact list, our website and word of mouth. Nomination forms and board responsibilities are posted on our website at <http://swmnarts.org/about/become-a-board-member/>.

Grant making and monitoring process

Grants are reviewed by grant panels made up of artists and arts advocates from throughout the region, representing a balance of areas of expertise, ages, geography and ethnicity. Panel recommendations are forwarded to the SMAC board for final action. In general, grantees receive 80% of the grant award on receipt of the signed grant contract and within 30 days of the project start date. The 20% balance may be claimed on approval of their grant final report which is due within 60 days of the project ending date. Further information on our grant making process can be found within our grant guidelines at <http://swmnarts.org/grants/> and in further details below:

General Grant Guidelines

Fiscal Year 2019: July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019

Program Intents & Commitments

Applicants must make the case that their project fulfills SW MN Arts Council's program intent and one or more of its commitments.

SW MN Arts Council (SMAC) is committed to:

- Supporting artists and arts organizations in creating, producing and presenting high-quality arts activities
- Overcoming barriers to accessing high quality arts activities
- Instilling the arts into the community and public life in our region
- Supporting high-quality, age-appropriate arts education for residents of all ages to develop knowledge, skills, and understanding of the arts
- Supporting events and activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions including folk and traditional artists and art organizations, represented in this region

The following projects and organizations are NOT eligible for SMAC grants:

- Applications that do not have an art focus.
- Activities of a for-profit project, organization, or business.
- Payment of costs for projects that will take place outside the geographic boundaries of the state of Minnesota. Must not use more than ten percent of the total grant award for costs related to travel outside the state of Minnesota, including performer, artist, or consultant travel. (Does not apply to Individual Artists receiving McKnight Foundation funds)
- Costs for relocating the applicant's legal address/residence outside the state of Minnesota.
- Projects where funds are requested to account for deficits in projects or programs begun prior to the project earliest start date. In other words, payment of debts incurred before the grant activities begin or outside of the grant project scope of activity.
- Applicants with past due SMAC final (or other) reports.
- Applications where funds are to be used to match other SMAC grant applications.
- Requests for new building construction, purchase of real estate, or endowment funds.
- Fundraising events: Grant funding should allow projects to break even, not make a profit.
- Activities which are not open to the public. Projects must be inclusive and accessible in their process and/or final product, considering economic, geographic, and physical accessibility, as well as the cultural, racial, ethnic, age, and gender make-up of the community. (Does not apply to Individual Artists or youth grantees)
- Activities essentially for the religious socialization of the participants or audience.
- Activities that attempt to influence any state or federal legislation or appropriation.

- Applications submitted for the purpose of regranteeing, lobbying or scholarships.
- Projects that don't provide timely promotion of the project throughout the SMAC region with use of the proper funding credit line and logo.

The applicant must not exceed 90% of the total project's cash expenses in combined support from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council.

Application Assistance

It is always best to contact SMAC staff prior to submission of a grant application to determine grant eligibility. To request a review of your application prior to submission, contact staff at least two weeks prior to the deadline. A staff member will review the application, as time permits, for eligibility and completed requirements. Staff review does not imply that a grant request will be funded. Project quality, content, budget, and accuracy of an application are solely the responsibility of the applicant. Free grant writing assistance workshops are scheduled for organizations interested in applying to the SMAC grant programs. To sponsor a workshop in your area, please contact the SMAC office 507-537-1471, toll-free 800- 622-5284, or e-mail info@swmnarts.org to make arrangements for a workshop.

Grant Review

1. SMAC staff reviews the application for accuracy, completeness and eligibility. Only eligible, complete applications will be forwarded to the grant review panel. Grant applicants may not discuss their application with SMAC panelists or board members following the grant deadline until after the board has acted on the application. Communication regarding an application with SMAC board or panelists during this time will result in the application being ineligible for funding consideration.
2. A grant panel reviews all eligible applications based on the criteria for the grant program. See program guidelines for specific criteria. Panelists are chosen for their knowledge and expertise in the arts and nonprofit management, and their ability to interpret the guidelines and review criteria equitably and fairly to each application. Geographic representation, ethnicity, and gender are also considered to ensure the panel reflects the diversity of the region. The time and location of the panel meeting will be posted on the SMAC calendar at www.swmnarts.org. SMAC operates in the spirit of the State of Minnesota open meeting guidelines. Applicants are welcome to attend the meeting to hear the panel deliberations and proceedings. Interaction between applicants and panelists is not allowed.
3. Board and panel members with a conflict of interest in regard to a specific applicant or project declare such and abstain from comment and rating of that application.
4. The recommendations of the panel are submitted to the SMAC Board of Directors for final approval. Grants will be awarded in ranked order to applications meeting the criteria, to the extent of funds available. If funding is limited, and the scores of applications near the cut-off point are within 2%, additional considerations will be applied in the following order: artistic merit, first time grantees or final report history, equity (such as native, immigrant, or elderly populations), and geography.
5. All applicants will receive email notification of acceptance or rejection after final review of the application by the Board of Directors.
6. If the application receives partial funding, a revised project description and budget must be submitted within 30 days of notification.

Appeals Policy

Any applicant who can show cause that established grant review procedures were not followed, or can show that the policies of the program are not equitable to all applicants, may file an appeal in writing, within ten (10) days of notification of the Board's decision on that application. There is no right of appeal to dispute decisions in regard to each program's respective criteria. Contact SMAC at 800-622-5284 or 507-537-1471 for a copy of the appeal process.

Grant Contract and Distribution of Funds

Organization grantees must provide proof of 501c3 status for their organization (or fiscal sponsor) before a contract can be issued. All awarded grantees must sign an electronic contractual agreement within 30 days of notification. Grantees who are individuals must provide a completed W-9 form before a grant check can be issued. Failure to provide any required documents within the prescribed time can result in the cancellation of a grant commitment. Eighty percent (80%) of the grant award will be sent to the grantee upon receipt of the signed contract and within thirty (30) days of the project start date. The remaining twenty percent (20%) of the grant award will be sent to the applicant upon receipt and approval of the Final Report.

Interim Reports

You may be asked for an interim report if you have multiple outstanding grants from the SW MN Arts Council.

Acknowledgement of Financial Assistance

IMPORTANT: SMAC's financial assistance must be acknowledged on all publicity and promotional materials through the credit line included in your grant contract. The grant contract will direct you to the specific credit line to use and if the Legacy Logo (shown here) should be used in promotion of the project.

The "Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment Logo Usage Guidelines" and electronic versions of the approved logo are located on the SMAC website, along with a complete listing of all credits, logos, and posters, at <http://swmnarts.org/grants/legacy-logo/>.

Final Report

A final report must be completed within 60 days of the project end date. The online form can be accessed within SMAC's online grant system. The report requires information on the number of persons involved, the actual costs, and an evaluation of the project. Failure to submit a final report within 60 days of the end of the project without a prior request for an extension will result in a 20% penalty on the applicant's next application. Grant awards may be reduced if actual expenses are significantly less than projected expenses.

Sample Grant Contract

AP-## Organization Name: Project Name

Project Start Date - Project End Date

PROJECT DIRECTOR:

AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL:

FISCAL SPONSOR:

In order to finalize this grant, your organization's authorizing official, project director, and fiscal sponsor (if applicable) must complete this contract within thirty (30) days, indicating agreement to the following terms:

I. Grant Amount

A. The Southwest Minnesota Arts Council will pay to the Grantee or to the Grantee's fiscal sponsor (if applicable) an amount not to exceed the Amount Awarded listed above.

- 80% of the Amount Awarded will be paid to the Grantee (or to the Grantee's fiscal sponsor, if applicable) approximately 30 days prior to the project Start Date, if the completed contract is received in time.

- The final 20% of the awarded grant funds will be held back until the grantee's final report has been received and approved.
- The grant award may be reduced if the actual expenses are significantly less than the total projected expenses.

B. All Grantee funds budgeted for the project will be provided as stated.

II. General Conditions

A. The project will be carried out in compliance with the project description, personnel, budget, and dates as set forth in the application, including any revisions made and approved by the review panel and the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council Board of Directors.

B. Any changes to the project plan or budget must be requested and approved in writing and in advance with the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council.

C. Access to participation in the project will not be limited on the basis of age, national origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, or physical ability.

D. The Grantee will not use these funds for payment of costs for projects that will take place outside the geographic boundaries of the state of Minnesota, costs for relocating the applicant's legal address/residence outside the state of Minnesota, activities that are essentially for the religious socialization of the participants or audience, or activities that attempt to influence any state or federal legislation or appropriation.

E. By accepting this grant, the Grantee agrees that it will not promote, support, or engage in terrorism of any kind, nor will it make sub-grants to any entity or individual that engages in these activities.

F. The Grantee is responsible for complying with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances in relation to the use of these funds. Failure to comply may result in termination or forfeiture of the grant.

III. Publicity and Acknowledgement

A. The Grantee will provide broad-based publicity to the community at large prior to the event.

B. All publicity and promotional materials for the project must include the following credit line, which must be clearly visible on all of the Grantee's publicity materials and printed in an easy to read font size: This activity is funded in part with a grant from the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council made possible by the voters of Minnesota, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

C. The Legacy Logo will be incorporated, where practicable, into printed and other materials as per the usage guidelines. An electronic version of the approved logo and usage guidelines are available here.

D. The grantee will display this poster at project events.

IV. Final Report

A. The Grantee's successful, timely completion of an online final report by the final report due date listed above is required in order to receive the remaining 20% of its grant funds.

B. Any profits realized by a project that outperforms its goals will be used by the Grantee for future arts-related projects.

C. Failure to submit an online report within 60 days of the end of the project without a prior request for an extension may result in a 10% scoring penalty on a future grant application.

D. In the event the project cannot be completed as stated, all granted funds must be returned the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council.

V. Accounting

The Southwest Minnesota Arts Council reserves the right to audit the financial records of projects which receive grant funds. The Southwest Minnesota Arts Council shall have access to any books, documents, papers, and records regarding the granted project in the case of an audit evaluation of the project. These records and supporting documents shall be retained for a period of three (3) years following the completion of the project.

IV. Liability

The Grantee agrees to indemnify and save and hold harmless the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council, its Board, its agents, and employees from any and all claims or causes of action arising from or relating in any way to the grant activities by the Grantee or Grantee's agents or employees. This clause shall not be construed to bar any legal remedies the Grantee may have for the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council's failure to fulfill its obligations pursuant to this grant contract.

VII. Future Grants

Future grants will be contingent upon compliance with the terms of this grant contract.

SIGNATURES: In witness whereof, the parties have caused this agreement to be executed by their duly authorized representatives below.

SMAC Executive Director:

Project Director:

Authorizing Official:

Fiscal Sponsor:

Public Meeting

The public was notified via press releases (picked up by regional media outlets to arts-interested public), emails (to our extensive database of contacts) and social media channels (for the arts-interested public and followers of SMAC information). The meeting was held at 6:30pm on Tuesday, April 23 at the SMAC offices at 114 North Third Street, Marshall, MN. Input has been incorporated into our biennial plan before submission to the MN State Arts Board.