



Artist Equity Grants: Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2024

Effective July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

Program Intent

The Artist Equity grant program provides funding to Black, Indigenous, and other artists of color at any career stage for activities that foster the development of their artistic skills and career, expand their audience, and increase their ability to live and work in the SW MN Region. All arts disciplines are accepted.

SW MN Arts Council acknowledges that systems currently in place have historically marginalized and underserved indigenous people of the Americas and communities of color. We are committed to closing access gaps in the arts, breaking down barriers, and building bridges across communities. It is vital that we support artists in writing their own narratives, and we hope to do so by providing dedicated resources and recognition to artists of color in our region.

Artist Equity applicants may request funding for costs including, but not limited to:

- Purchase of supplies or equipment
- Compensated time or childcare costs while working on a specific body of work
- Research
- One-on-one study with a mentor
- Attending workshops or conferences for professional or artistic development
- Rental of facilities for presenting work or for studio space
- Website or portfolio production
- Framing
- Recording
- Editing or other costs related to publishing

Grant Award Amounts

Artist Equity grants are available for up to **\$4,000**. Grant funding counts toward your taxable income.

The Artist Equity grant program is dependent on funding from the McKnight Foundation and on funding from the voters of Minnesota, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

SW MN Arts Council Contact Info

Contact the SW MN Arts Council (SMAC) office with questions, for a draft review, or if you need accommodations while applying for this grant.

Email: info@swmnarts.org. Phone: 507-537-1471 or 800-622-5284. [Website](http://www.swmnarts.org) (www.swmnarts.org)

Table of Contents

Important Dates and Deadlines	2
Who Can Apply	3
Ineligible Activities	3
How to Apply	5
Grant Review Process	6
Appeals Policy	7
Grant Contract and Distribution of Funds	7
Acknowledgement of Financial Assistance	8
Reporting	8

Important Dates and Deadlines

Project Start and End Dates

The start date for a SMAC grant is defined as the point at which the project is set in motion (e.g. auditions, rehearsals, advertising and public notification, payment of fees, ordering and/or paying for supplies or printed material, etc.). No funds can be expended prior to the project start date. Funds spent before the project start date, such as a deposit on a contract, cannot be included in the grant project budget. No advertising by the applicant can take place before the start date, whether or not it will be paid for through the grant. However, posting basic information such as event dates is allowed.

Projects must be concluded no later than June 30, 2025.

Application Deadlines

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 pm on the deadline date.

ARTIST EQUITY ROUND 1 DATES

- Grantwriting Webinar: July 6, 2023
- Request application draft review by August 30, 2023
- **Application Deadline: September 13, 2023**
- Panel Review: October 10, 2023
- Board Action: October 24, 2023
- Earliest Project Start Date: November 1, 2023

ARTIST EQUITY ROUND 2 DATES

- Grantwriting Webinar: see recording of July 6, 2023 webinar
- Request staff review of application by February 14, 2024
- **Application Deadline: February 28, 2024**
- Panel Review: March 19, 2024
- Board Action: March 26, 2024
- Earliest Project Start Date: April 1, 2024

Who Can Apply

The Artist Equity grant program is open to indigenous artists and artists of color, including those who are:

- Indigenous
- Black/African/African American
- Afro Latino
- Caribbean
- Chicano/Mexican
- Central American
- South American
- Middle Eastern/North African
- Southeast Asian/Asian/Pacific Islander

In the SW MN region, this could include those who are Black, Dakota/Lakota, Hispanic/Latinx, Hmong, Karen, Micronesian, Somali, etc.

Geographic Area and Residency

The Artist Equity grant program is open to permanent residents within the SW MN Arts Council service region, consisting of eighteen counties (Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Swift, and Yellow Medicine counties) and two tribal nations (Pezihutazizi/Upper Sioux Community, Cansayapi/Lower Sioux Community). We acknowledge that the Southwest Minnesota region occupies the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of the Dakota people.

Applicants must be a region resident for at least six months prior to submitting an application and remain a resident throughout the contract period. Applicants may be asked to provide proof of residency, which must

be demonstrated by the following, each showing an eligible address: 1) A valid MN state ID/driver's license or other federally recognized documentation and 2) Bills for utilities or mortgage/rent.

Age Requirement

Applicants must be at least 18 years old by the time of signing their grant contract.

Other SMAC Grants for Individuals

Artists may only have one pending SMAC grant request at a time, across all grant programs for individuals. Artists with a current SMAC grant project in progress may not apply for another individual grant until reporting on the first grant is completed. Applicants with overdue final reports are not eligible to apply.

Conflicts of Interest

Artists who will be acting as grant review panelists in a particular round cannot apply in that round. SMAC Board Members are not eligible to apply during their tenure on the Board or until two years following their resignation from the Board. SMAC staff and the immediate family members (children, parents, or spouse/partner) of SMAC staff or SMAC Board members are ineligible to apply.

Ineligible Activities

The following requests and activities are NOT eligible for these grants:

- Projects that do not have an art focus.
- Equipment requests not specifically tied to the proposed project.
- Activities of a for-profit project or business or projects intended for mass-market distribution.
- Credits or materials necessary to fulfill degree requirements for students, including tuition, class projects, and school-related exhibits, performances, or shows.
- Projects that primarily involve developing curriculum plans, teaching materials, or other related activities intended to advance your professional teaching career; or applications that are primarily educational projects within a school system.
- Requests for new building construction or purchase of real estate.
- Fundraising events. Grant funding should allow projects to break even, not make a profit.
- 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 in which funds are to be used to match other SMAC grant projects.
- Requests for funds to account for deficits in projects 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.

How to Apply

Application Assistance

Before beginning an application, applicants are encouraged to contact SW MN Arts Council to determine if this grant program is right for their project and that their activities and expenses are eligible. Other forms of assistance include grant support open office hours, info sessions and webinars, and conversations with staff. Visit the SMAC website for more details.

To request a review of your application prior to submission, contact staff at least one week 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.

Accommodations

Applicants may fill out and submit their application in several ways:

- through our online grant system, accessed on our [website](http://www.swmnarts.org) (www.swmnarts.org)
- in a Word document, submitted by email along with required attachments to info@swmnarts.org. The document can be found on the webpage for this grant program.
- on paper with required attachments, submitted by mail (PO Box 55, Marshall, MN 56258) or contact us to arrange drop-off. Print out a questions document from our website or contact us to request a paper copy.

Contact the SW MN Arts Council office if other accommodations such as audio or video responses are needed.

Application Questions

In the application, you will describe your proposed project and answer questions related to the following criteria:

- the feasibility of the project
- your experience in your artform
- the project's contribution to your growth as an artist

You will also be asked to provide some demographic data.

Materials Needed

You will need to provide the following materials:

- Project budget
- Artist resume or bio
- Samples of your work (attachments or links)

You also have the option to provide supplemental information about specific equipment or supplies, mediums or techniques, a study opportunity/workshop/conference, or a teacher or mentor's qualifications.

Grant Review Process

Eligibility Check

SMAC staff reviews submitted applications for eligibility and completeness. If there are missing requirements or eligibility concerns, the applicant will have 48 hours to make corrections or provide additional information. Only eligible, complete applications will be forwarded to the grant review panel.

Grant Review Panel

A grant panel reviews all eligible applications based on the criteria for the grant program, outlined below. Panelists are chosen for their knowledge and expertise in the arts and their ability to interpret the guidelines and review criteria equitably and fairly for each application. Geographic representation, ethnicity, and gender are also considered to ensure the panel reflects the diversity of the region. Board and panel members with a conflict of interest in regard to a specific applicant or project declare such and abstain from comment and scoring of that application.

Scoring Criteria

The review panel will use the following criteria to score each application:

- *Feasibility of the project* (10% of total score)
 - The project activities and timeline are feasible and achievable.
 - The budget is clearly itemized, responsible, and meets the needs of the project.
- *Excellence of work* (45% of total score)
 - The resume or narrative show the artist's training and accomplishments at an appropriate level for their chosen project.
 - The work samples show artistic quality and promise in the artistic discipline presented. Artistic quality can be defined by:
 - Authenticity or originality
 - Technical skill
 - Personal artistic vision/voice
 - Professional commitment
 - Work that evokes or provokes emotion, intellectual inquiry, or other response from an audience

For folk, traditional, or cultural art, consider:

- Authenticity
- Technical skill
- Commitment to the art form
- Recognition from the community to which the art form belongs
- The applicant has an artistic vision for the project that demonstrates the excellence of their work.
- *Project's contribution to the artist's growth* (45% of total score)

- The project meets the artistic needs of the applicant.
- The applicant shows that this project will play an important role in their artistic and/or professional development.
- The applicant has identified specific proposed changes to take place as a result of their project and a plan to measure or prove whether those changes have taken place.

Observation

The date and time of the panel meeting will be posted on the [SMAC calendar](http://www.swmnarts.org/calendar/) (www.swmnarts.org/calendar/). SMAC operates in the spirit of the State of Minnesota open meeting guidelines, so applicants are allowed to observe grant review panel proceedings. They must notify SMAC staff at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting time if they plan to observe. Applicants will then receive a link if the meeting is virtual. Applicants cannot interact with the panel. If attending virtually, applicants must turn off their microphones and cameras.

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.

SMAC Board

The recommendations of the panel are submitted to the SMAC Board of Directors for final approval. Grants are awarded in ranked order to applications meeting the criteria, to the extent of funds available.

Notification

All applicants will receive email notification of acceptance or denial after the SMAC Board's final funding decisions. If an 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 info@swmnarts.org for more details about the appeal process.

Grant Contract and Distribution of Funds

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. A check for 100% of the grant award will be sent to the grantee upon receipt of the signed contract and within thirty days of the project start date.

Acknowledgement of Financial Assistance

Funding for this grant program comes from The McKnight Foundation and from the voters of Minnesota, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

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



A complete listing of all funding credit lines, logos, and posters is located on the SMAC website. [Grant Credit Lines and Logos](https://swmnarts.org/grant-credit-lines/) (<https://swmnarts.org/grant-credit-lines/>)

Reporting

A final report must be completed within 60 days after the project end date. The report form can be accessed within SMAC's online grant system. You will be asked to provide information about project's actual costs along with copies of receipts for all expenditures. You will also provide information about your outcomes and any audience reached through the project. Grant awards may be reduced if actual expenses are significantly less than projected expenses. 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. If a final report is not submitted and there is no communication from the grantee over a period of six months after the report deadline the grant will be closed and the grantee must wait three years before they are eligible to apply to SW MN Arts Council again.