



Emergency Relief Funds: Guidelines for 2026-2027

Effective April 1, 2026 through February 28, 2027

Program Intent

The Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) provides short-term relief to artists facing housing, healthcare, income, transportation, legal, or property loss emergencies that impact their wellbeing or ability to work.

Award Amount

This program offers one-time awards of **\$500**. In general, payments for emergency assistance are considered gifts and are not taxable income.

The Artists Emergency Relief Fund Network is stewarded by Springboard for the Arts and supported by F. R. Bigelow Foundation, Jerome Foundation, McKnight Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation.

SW MN Arts Council Contact Info

Contact the SW MN Arts Council (SMAC) office with questions or to request accommodations while applying. Email: info@swmnarts.org. Phone: 507-537-1471 or 800-622-5284. [Website](http://www.swmnarts.org) (www.swmnarts.org)

Table of Contents

Application Deadlines	2
Who Can Apply	2
How to Apply	3
Award Selection Process	4
Distribution of Funds	4
Reporting	4

Application Deadlines

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 pm on the deadline date.

ROUND 1 DATES

- **Application Deadline: May 1, 2026**
- Results Notification: May 6, 2026
- Awardee Acceptance: May 18, 2026
- Board Release of Funds: May 26, 2026
- Payments Issued: May 29, 2026

ROUND 2 DATES

- **Application Deadline: August 1, 2026**
- Results Notification: August 6, 2026
- Awardee Acceptance: August 17, 2026
- Board Release of Funds: August 25, 2026
- Payments Issued: August 31, 2026

ROUND 3 DATES

- **Application Deadline: November 1, 2026**
- Results Notification: November 6, 2026
- Awardee Acceptance: November 16, 2026
- Board Release of Funds: November 24, 2026
- Payments Issued: November 30, 2026

ROUND 4 DATES *(if funds remain)*

- **Application Deadline: February 1, 2027**
- Results Notification: February 5, 2027
- Awardee Acceptance: February 16, 2027
- Board Release of Funds: February 23, 2027
- Payments Issued: February 26, 2027

Who Can Apply

Geographic Area and Residency

The Emergency Relief Funds 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. 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 at the time of application.

Eligible Emergencies

The following emergencies are eligible for funding:

- Housing emergencies
- Healthcare emergencies, including medical debt
- Legal emergencies
- Property loss emergencies, including theft, loss due to natural disasters, etc.
- Emergencies resulting from loss of employment, income, or food benefits
- Transportation emergencies (e.g., urgent car repairs, loss of access to reliable transport)

Proof of the emergency is not required, but applicants will be asked to indicate the type of emergency they face. Artists can only receive Emergency Relief Funds once.

Other SMAC Grants for Individuals

Artists may still apply for Emergency Relief Funds if they have a current SMAC grant project in progress or another SMAC grant request pending. Applicants with overdue final reports are not eligible to apply.

Conflicts of Interest

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, spouses/domestic partners of SMAC staff or board members, and children/stepchildren of SMAC staff or board members who live in the staff or board member's household are ineligible to apply.

How to Apply

Application Methods and 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 program.

- on paper with required attachments, submitted by mail (PO Box 55, Marshall, MN 56258), or contact us to arrange drop-off. Print out an application questions document from our website or contact us to request a paper copy.

Application Questions

In the application, you will be asked to provide:

- The type of emergency you are facing (checkbox)
- Artist resume (attachment) or description of your background in the arts (text box)
- Two samples of your work (attachments or links)
- Optional demographic data

Award Selection Process

Random Selection

Up to 10 eligible applicants will be randomly selected in each of the first two rounds. In the next two rounds, applicants will be randomly selected as funds remain. Any applications that are not selected will be automatically carried over into the next round, if one remains.

Notification & Acceptance

All applicants will receive email notification of their selection results. Awardees must respond within 10 days to accept their award.

Distribution of Funds

At their next board meeting, the SMAC Board of Directors will approve the release of funds for the number of awards that were selected and accepted that round. Awardees' identities and emergencies will not be shared with the SMAC Board of Directors, nor will the awards be made public.

After the board's release of funds, a check for the full award amount will be issued on the last business day of the month.

Reporting

No final report is required, but awardees may choose to share an impact story or quote by emailing it to info@swmnarts.org.