

East Central Regional Arts Council

K-12 Student Art Scholarship

**East Central Regional Arts Council
540 Weber Avenue Suite 109
Hinckley, Minnesota 55037
email: grantinfo@ecrac.org
www.ecrac.org
320-336-0200**

- Fiscal Year 2026 -
Grant Application Deadline: 3/1/2026
- Fiscal Year 2027 -
Grant Application Deadline: 3/1/2027



**This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota
thanks to a legislative appropriation from the
MN State general fund.**

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL (ECRAC) INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| What is ECRAC's definition of art? | 4 |
| GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION | 5 |
| ELIGIBILITY | 5 |
| NOT FUNDED BY ECRAC | 6 |
| GRANT FUNDING LIMITS | 6 |
| WHERE AND HOW TO APPLY ONLINE | 6 |
| DEADLINES | 7 |
| What determines a project's start date? | 8 |
| GRANT REVIEW PROCEDURE & CRITERIA | 8-9 |
| GRANT PROGRAM OUTCOMES | 10 |
| ECRAC'S CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY | 10 |
| GRANT PAYMENTS | 11 |
| FINAL GRANT REPORT & EVALUATION | 11 |
| Misuse of Funds Policy | |
| GRANT TERMINATION OR REVOCATION | 12 |
| APPEALS POLICY & PROCEDURE | 12 |
| APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS | 12 |
| OTHER ECRAC SERVICES | 13 |
| QUESTIONS & GRANT FUNDING CREDIT LINE | 14 |

EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL ARTS COUNCIL (ECRAC)

INTRODUCTION

The East Central Regional Arts Council (ECRAC) is a regional grant-making agency that supports the arts through funding from the Minnesota State Legislature and The McKnight Foundation. The Council distributes grant awards to artists, culture bearers, arts and other non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and local units of government and provides technical assistance for these grants.

Mission/Vision/Values:

ECRAC's mission is to support the arts and bring the life enhancing values they afford to Region 7E residents. The vision is that all Region 7E residents can participate, appreciate, create, and invest in the arts. The values of ECRAC are arts in action; integrity; artistic merit; and legacy. ECRAC is committed to providing opportunities for all in the arts by fostering inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in our organization and in the Region 7E arts community.

The East Central Regional Arts Council accomplishes this mission through programs and special initiatives in support of the arts. The work program of the Arts Council includes the following: Grant programs for organizations (501(c)3 non-profits, units of government, schools, or other groups using a fiscal sponsor) are the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, Art in Our Schools, the Small/Art Project Assistance Grant, Resiliency Grant and the Essentials Support Grant (formerly General Operating); Grant Programs for individual artists such as the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, the Resiliency Grant, ECRAC Individual Artist Mid-Career and Essential Artist Award Programs, and - IMAGE - the annual regional art show. Other resources include hosting various grant workshops, an arts library, art display equipment rental, an art gallery, and providing other arts related technical assistance and resource information.

ECRAC receives funding through appropriations of the Minnesota State Legislature and through The McKnight Foundation. These funding sources enable ECRAC to provide grant funds for local or regional arts projects in these Region 7E counties of Minnesota: Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, and Mille Lacs; including the sovereign Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe lands. All grants are contingent upon the availability of funds. Funds are offered to organizations and individuals for a variety of arts projects that develop or enhance local arts, arts organizations, artists, or art audiences.

The East Central Regional Arts Council is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit. The address is 540 Weber Avenue South, Suite 109, Hinckley, Minnesota, 55037. You can reach ECRAC by telephone at 320-336-0200, and by email at grantinfo@ecrac.org. The agency website is: www.ecrac.org.

It is always best to contact staff of the ECRAC for assistance well in advance (see the grant deadline section) prior to submission of a grant application to determine current funding availability, and for information on the correct application form to use. This also allows applicants time to review the grant guidelines and to ask pertinent questions regarding your proposed grant project.

What is ECRAC's definition of art?

Art can describe several things: a study of a creative skill, a process of using the creative skill, a product of the creative skill, or the audience's experience with the creative skill. The Regional Arts Council defines "arts" as activities resulting in the artistic creation or artistic performance of works of the imagination. When we say arts, we are speaking very broadly of visual, performing, media, literary, and interdisciplinary art forms through which we learn about, explore, shape, and express the human experience.

These activities include the disciplines listed in ECRAC's online application form. The list of disciplines is part of the National Standard for Arts Information Exchange which was developed by the National Endowment for the Arts and other state, regional, and national organizations. Arts agencies are required to report on their activities using this standard set of codes. The Regional Arts Council uses these disciplines to define and report arts activities supported.

ECRAC Art Disciplines

| Discipline | Code | Discipline | Code | Discipline | Code |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|------|
| Dance | 01 | Visual arts | 05 | Photography | 08 |
| Dance, ballet | 01A | Visual arts, experimental | 05A | Media Arts | 09 |
| Dance, ethnic or jazz | 01B | Visual arts, graphics | 05B | Media Arts, film | 09A |
| Dance, modern | 01C | Visual arts, painting | 05D | Media Arts, audio | 09B |
| Music | 02 | Visual arts, sculpture | 05F | Media Arts, video | 09C |
| Music, band | 02A | Design arts | 06 | Media Arts, tech/experimental | 09D |
| Music, chamber | 02B | Design arts, architecture | 06A | Media Arts, screen/scriptwriting | 09E |
| Music, choral | 02C | Design arts, fashion | 06B | Literature | 10 |
| Music, new-experimental, electronic | 02D | Design arts, graphic | 06C | Literature, fiction | 10A |
| Music, ethnic | 02E | Design arts, industrial | 06D | Literature, non-fiction | 10B |
| Music, jazz | 02F | Design arts, interior | 06E | Theater, playwriting | 10C |
| Music, popular | 02G | Design arts, landscape architecture | 06F | Literature, poetry | 10D |
| Music, solo/recital | 02H | Design arts, urban/metro | 06G | Interdisciplinary | 11 |
| Music, orchestral | 02I | Crafts | 07 | Folk/Traditional Arts | 12 |
| Opera/Musical Theater | 03 | Crafts, clay | 07A | Folk/Traditional dance | 12A |
| Opera | 03A | Crafts, fiber | 07B | Folk/Traditional music | 12B |
| Musical Theater | 03B | Crafts, glass | 07C | Folk/Traditional crafts/vis arts | 12C |
| Theater | 04 | Crafts, leather | 07D | Folk/Traditional storytelling | 12D |
| Theater, general | 04A | Crafts, metal | 07E | Humanities | 13 |
| Theater, mime | 04B | Crafts, paper | 07F | Multidisciplinary | 14 |
| Theater, puppetry | 04C | Crafts, plastic | 07G | | |
| Theater for young audiences | 04D | Crafts, wood | 07H | | |
| Theater, storytelling | 04E | Crafts, mixed media | 07I | | |

Source: Minnesota State Arts Board

GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Our region of Minnesota has many young, talented, and energetic artists and culture bearers deserving acknowledgment. As a result, the East Central Regional Arts Council, with funding appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature, decided to offer gifted young artists and culture bearers a Scholarship opportunity to assist their promising futures. The East Central Regional Arts Council is pleased to offer Scholarships in amounts up to \$600. Eligible students are K-12. In other words, the Scholarship is available to any student in high school, middle school, or elementary school intending to enhance their artistic talents.

The student must live in one the following Minnesota counties: Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine., or on the lands of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

This funding is for special arts learning projects or programs for kids.

The program provides at least one student award annually, based upon a competitive review of submitted applications.

Applications must be for a specific art project that will advance the skills of the student in their art form.

The Arts Council is interested in funding projects such as training with a mentor or summer art programs such as music or visual art camps. Artists of any art form are welcome, see the list in the What is ECRAC's Definition of Art section. In the past the East Central Regional Arts Council has funded dance, design, folk and traditional arts, literature, media arts, multidisciplinary, music, theater, visual arts, and performing arts Scholarships for K-12 students.

Primary considerations for reviewing applications will be artistic quality and merit of the proposed project, and the student artist's goals and (age appropriate) artistic background.

ELIGIBILITY

All young artists in Kindergarten through 12th Grade who strive to improve their artistic abilities can apply. Keep in mind the board definition of art on page 4. The student applicant must also be a resident of Region 7 in East Central Minnesota.

NOT FUNDED BY ECRAC

This funding cannot be used for any travel or projects outside the State of Minnesota.

Employees and contractors of the East Central Regional Arts Council, members of the ECRAC board or any Scholarship selection committee, and their immediate family members are not eligible to apply for Scholarships.

This is NOT a Scholarship program for college, or any other school, credits, nor is it meant to replace regular artistic classes or training for homeschooled students. This should be supplemental arts training.

Projects that will end after December 31 of the Scholarship application year are ineligible.

GRANT FUNDING LIMITS: NEW AMOUNT!

This funding is up to \$599.

WHERE AND HOW TO APPLY ONLINE

ECRAC has competitive grant programs. Because of that a reasonable amount of planning time should be allowed to develop a grant proposal application. Grant writing technical assistance is provided by ECRAC staff upon request by the grantee. The staff person can best be of help to you if you contact them in advance of the application technical assistance deadline. However, if time is available, they will still answer questions after the assistance deadline. Keep in mind that assistance from an ECRAC staff person does not imply that grant funding will be received.

There are different application forms for organizations and for individual artists. Schools, and units of government, use the organization form and guidelines. If in doubt about which application to use, contact ECRAC staff.

Applicants must use the ECRAC online application form for the specific category of funds requested. Upon request the application and grant guidelines can be made available in alternative formats. To accommodate your request for an alternative format, ECRAC will need at least 10 working days' notice.

You may access the ECRAC website for the online application forms at www.ecrac.org/grants. You will find information on past funded grant projects at the bottom of the webpage.

For the online grant portal, used to access the upcoming grant applications and your previous grant proposals, go to <https://www.ecrac.org/manage-my-grant>

Do not apply for more than one grant, per grant program deadline. Be sure to include all attachments with your application, or your application will be considered incomplete and thus ineligible.

Organizations required attachments include artist and project director résumés, board member information, fiscal sponsor agreements (if applicable), and your annual organization budget. Individual artist required attachments include artist résumé, mentor résumé and/or other project expense details. Both types of applications require you to complete and submit the online application, provide a project budget and detailed budget explanation, and work samples.

Applicants cannot submit any grant application proposal materials by mail, in person, or by email. The online application materials are at: www.ecrac.org/grants . The ECRAC grant portal is available at: <https://www.ecrac.org/manage-my-grant> Completed applications must be submitted online before 11:59 p.m. on the deadline date.

Questions? You can reach ECRAC by telephone at 320-336-0200 and by email at: grantinfo@ecrac.org.

DEADLINES

When you submit a grant application proposal, please be aware that it will take about 2-3 months before a final decision is reached by ECRAC. Another consideration is that grantees are required to complete the grant project before the end of December of the application year. The earliest allowable starting dates and the corresponding end dates are listed below.

The Scholarship grant deadline dates are:

| GRANT DEADLINE at 11:59 p.m. | FINAL APPROVAL BY | EARLIEST START DATE | LATEST END DATE |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| March 1, 2026 & 2027 | May 31, 2026 & 2027 | June 1, 2026 & 2027 | December 31, 2026 & 2027 |

If a deadline date falls on a weekend, or a holiday, the deadline will be 11:59 p.m. on the next working day.

Technical assistance is provided through the grant deadline based on staff availability and we will try our best to answer any questions students or parents have.

What Determines a Scholarship Project's Start Date?

The start date for an ECRAC grant is defined as “the point at which the project is set in motion (e.g. rehearsals, advertising and public notification, payment of fees, ordering and/or paying for supplies or printed material, etc.).” ECRAC does not fund projects that are already underway. Grantees must wait until their notification of grant award before printing and/or disseminating publicity materials. No funds can be expended prior to the project start date. Funds incurred before the project start date of June 1 (such as entering into a contract with an instructor) cannot be included in the grant project and may make your project ineligible. Please contact ECRAC staff if you are unclear about whether ECRAC would consider your project as already started.

GRANT REVIEW PROCEDURE & CRITERIA

The accuracy, content, completeness, and merits of the application are solely the responsibility of the applicant and their parent/s. ECRAC staff will review all applications for accuracy, completeness, and eligibility. The ECRAC Board of Directors will have the final determination regarding application completeness and eligibility. Applicants and/or their parent will be notified of the receipt of their application and when the grant application review will take place by email. The ECRAC board, by majority vote, makes all final funding decisions. ECRAC staff do not participate in this grant review and funding process other than to introduce applications, describe the status of the grant application completeness and eligibility review, and to take minutes.

Grant applicants may not discuss their application with ECRAC review panelists or ECRAC board members following the grant deadline until the ECRAC board has acted on the application. Communications regarding an application with ECRAC board members or panelists during this time will result in the application being deemed ineligible for funding.

All grant review meetings are open to the public.

Open Meeting Policy

- ECRAC is covered by the spirit of the Minnesota Open Meeting Policy.
- Rules of conduct are in effect from the meeting start to adjournment.
- Members of the public audit the meeting only. Disruptive persons will be asked to leave.
- Grant reviews – applicants may attend and are not allowed to provide additional information.
- All discussion of grant applications is public record.
- Persons wishing to address the Council (not a grant applicant) must notify ECRAC at least 24 hours in advance.
- An agenda is available at the meeting or on the ECRAC website.

Review Criteria

The East Central Regional Arts Council makes every effort to distribute available funds fairly and equitably among the various art forms and across all geographic and cultural areas of the region. Projects supported by ECRAC are expected to encourage and reflect the high standards of artistic excellence. The Regional Arts Council will consider each application on its own merits. Applications are reviewed in the order received. In reviewing the applications, a grant review panel and/or the ECRAC Board of Directors will use the following criteria.

All young artists in Kindergarten through 12th Grade who strive to improve their artistic abilities can apply. Parents can assist in the application process. If the application is determined to be complete, an art project, and of sufficient artistic quality to indicate further review, the following grant review criteria will be discussed.

These factors constitute the grant review standards: artistic quality and artistic merit of the project; and the student artist's goals and (age appropriate) artistic background. This is a competitive program; however, the Arts Council does want to hear from the students, in their own words, why they want to enhance their artistic abilities.

Based on the grant review standards and the recommendation of the grant review panel (if applicable), the East Central Regional Arts Council Board of Directors shall make one of the following decisions for each grant applicant: full funding of the amount requested; partial funding of the amount requested; table the request, pending receipt of additional information or stipulations for the application; or no funding.

The grant review panel (if applicable) will present its recommendations for the grant review in writing to the East Central Regional Arts Council Board of Directors. ECRAC relies heavily on the recommendations of the panel.

The ECRAC Board of Directors will determine if grant review procedures have been properly followed and will approve, disapprove, or table based on adherence to the procedures and guidelines herein described. They can also set stipulations for applicants based on these.

All grant applicants will receive a grant allocation notification within 30 days after the final funding decision is made by ECRAC.

ECRAC Grant Program Outcomes

It is important for grantees to understand that funding for this program comes from the people of Minnesota to support the arts. Because our fellow citizens have made this commitment, we have an obligation to be intentional about arts projects: the outcomes, impacts and results. ECRAC's very broad ACHF outcomes are: artists and the arts are visible in communities; artists develop their practice; organizations develop capacities that advance the arts; people access arts experiences; people develop arts skills or knowledge; people have meaningful arts experiences; and people make connections to ideas, organizations, or one another.

For this application, the following are being served with the proposed grant project:

- School age children

In the application, the kind of possible changes or effects expected with the art grant project are:

- People develop arts skills or knowledge

The specific outcome in mind ECRAC has in mind for your proposed Scholarship grant project means that the Scholarship applicant will have:

- A new or expanded skill in some area

Scholarship applicants should talk about skill development in the scholarship grant application. Recipients will report on these outcomes in the Final Report submitted after completion of the scholarship.

ECRAC'S CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

ECRAC observes strict procedures to prevent any conflict of interest. Any board or staff member of the Regional Arts Council with a direct financial or employment interest relating to any grant application to be reviewed will inform the Council of such affiliation prior to review of any grant application. The member will leave the room and not vote, rank, or participate in the grant review discussion. The Council reports annually on those members with affiliations who declared conflicts of interest. The ECRAC board chair and executive director have the authority to determine the existence and effect of a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest exists if a Regional Arts Council board or staff member, or grant reviewer: receives direct financial benefit from the organization or project being reviewed.

- serves as an employee or governing board member of an applicant organization.
- serves with or without pay as a consultant for the applicant being reviewed.
- has familial (or adversarial) relationship with an applicant or a staff or board member of an applicant organization.
- receives free tickets or other benefits from the grant applicant being reviewed.
- has a particular sensitivity for, or against, either the art form or subject matter.

The ECRAC board chair and executive director have the authority to determine the existence and effect of a conflict of interest. Relatives of ECRAC Board Members are not allowed to apply for this funding.

GRANT PAYMENTS

Scholarship grant applicants will receive notification regarding the ECRAC grant funding decision. Notification of awards will occur by May 31 to student artists and culture bearers, and their legal guardians.

If funded, a contract will be sent for the student and their legal guardian to sign. In cases where the grant is less than the full amount requested, or if the ECRAC board has stipulations, the applicant will receive a revision at this time. If the grantee agrees with the terms of the contract, the student and parent, will sign and submit the form to the Arts Council. Prior to receipt of the award, the recipient must submit the Notification of Award and provide verification of their enrollment in the awarded program (if applicable).

No funds will be authorized until the signed Notification of Award contract and any required information (if needed) have been submitted.

The Scholarship award payment (check) is issued jointly to the Scholarship recipient and their legal guardian.

GRANT REVISION REQUESTS

Grantees agree to notify ECRAC staff in writing, for prior approval, of any proposed changes to the grant project or any revision of the approved budget in the NGA. The Regional Arts Council must preapprove significant changes in the project such as changes in dates, project goals or outcomes, and/or budget changes of 20% or greater (per line item). No revisions are allowed to the grant project without ECRAC prior approval. There are instructions for this, if needed.

FINAL GRANT REPORT & EVALUATION

Scholarship Grant recipients must submit a final report to ECRAC. They have 30 days after the completion to submit the report. The final report will show how grant funds were used and will provide documentation of income and expenses pertaining to the project, including copies of proofs of payment. The final/financial report form will also serve as the outcome evaluation of the grant project.

The Regional Arts Council CANNOT provide any grant funds to applicants who have outstanding or unacceptable grant final reports or unsatisfactory mid-point progress reviews.

Misuse of Funds Policy

The East Central Regional Arts Council has a Misuse of Funds Policy. The ECRAC staff document their questions and conclusions about possible misuse of state grant funds. Staff then works with the grantee to ensure misuse did not occur. Any determination of Misuse of Funds is made by the East Central Regional Arts Council Board of Directors. A misuse determination will impact the grant in question and future funding. Any Misuse of Funds determination is reported to the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota.

GRANT TERMINATION OR REVOCATION

A grant contract may be terminated at any time upon written request of the grantee. Such termination does not necessarily relieve the grantee of its responsibilities as set forth in the grant contract. ECRAC may terminate a grant contract at any time upon failure of the grantee to comply with one or more of the conditions of the grant contract. A contract may be terminated by mutual written consent of ECRAC and recipient. Occasionally, additional stipulations or conditions will be placed on the use of the grant funds. These conditions, or in some cases recommendations, from the Regional Arts Council will be clearly outlined in the contract.

ECRAC will rescind its grant commitment if: a grantee does not submit the signed Notification of Award contract with appropriate signatures within 45 days, or upon request, the recipient does not return required grant stipulations with the signed Notification of Award contract.

APPEALS POLICY & PROCEDURE

If an applicant can show cause that the established grant review procedures have not been followed, the applicant may file an appeal. There is no right of appeal for disputes of decisions of the East Central Regional Arts Council with respect to artistic merit.

To file an appeal, the applicant must notify the Regional Arts Council Executive Director in writing within 10 days of the notification of ECRAC's action and describe the point or points of issue with the grant review procedure. ECRAC will approve, disapprove, or table the appeal based on adherence to its grant review procedures within 30 days.

BEFORE YOU FILL OUT THE APPLICATION

Best practice and past grant application history indicate successful Scholarship grant applications are written by the K-12 students themselves with the assistance of parents or legal guardians, when needed.

File Upload Details

You will upload several files. Document uploads must be a MS Word, MS Excel, or PDF document. It is highly recommended that you create your own Application Packet within the grant interface to assure that your documents have uploaded correctly; errors in formatting may have an adverse effect on your application which may then be found incomplete and ineligible.

OTHER ECRAC SERVICES

ECRAC provides a variety of services to the arts community in the region, including:

- Art Gallery
- Resource Information
- Identification of the connection between the arts and community and economic development
- Arts Library
- Workshops for artists and organizations
- Grant Information Sessions
- Grant Writing Technical Assistance
- Art Show Display Equipment Rental
- Art shows such as the annual IMAGE Art Show
- Space for meetings and art events

Please contact ECRAC if you, or your organization, would like further information regarding these services.

Grant Application Workshops: Information sessions are held monthly. Participants will learn about the grant programs, application process, and how to write an effective ECRAC grant application. This is a great opportunity to get your questions answered on your project ideas.

Grant Library: ECRAC maintains a library of submitted and funded grant applications. Reviewing these materials can enhance your understanding of the process and may improve your application. The application library is normally open during regular office hours (9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.). Our staff is happy to help you. Calling to make an appointment in advance is required.

To see a list of previously funded projects, visit this web page and scroll to the bottom:
<https://www.ecrac.org/grants-available>

**ANY QUESTIONS??? Call 320-336-0200
or email grantinfo@ecrac.org
www.ecrac.org**

**East Central Regional Arts Council
540 Weber Ave, Ste 109
Hinckley, MN 55037**

**STAY UP TO DATE!
Make sure you are on the ECRAC newsletter mailing list!**

ECRAC Mission

The ECRAC mission is to support the arts and bring the life enhancing values they afford to Region 7E residents.

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council as provided by appropriations from the Minnesota State Legislature with funds from the State's general fund.

