

East Central Regional Arts Council

Art in Our Schools Grant Guidelines

reflects revisions adopted by the ECRAC Board on June 15, 2026

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 Deadlines: Oct. 1 2025; Feb. 1, 2026
- Fiscal Year 2027 -
Grant Application Deadlines: Oct. 1 2026; Feb. 1, 2027



**This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota
thanks to a legislative appropriation from the
General & the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.**



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 for artists and arts organizations. 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.

❖ 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. Every project funded by ECRAC must be an art project.

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 the art project 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

ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND (ACHF) LEGACY GRANT OVERVIEW

In November 2008, Minnesotans passed the clean water, land, and legacy amendment to the Minnesota Constitution. As a result, over twenty-five years, three-eighths of one percent of the state's sales tax will be dedicated as follows:

- 33 percent to a clean water fund,
- 33 percent to an outdoor heritage fund,
- 14.25 percent to a parks and trails fund, and
- 19.75 percent to an arts and cultural heritage fund.

Proceeds from the arts and cultural heritage fund “may be spent only on arts, arts education and arts access and to preserve Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage.”

Funding for this grant program is dependent on the receipt of an appropriation from the Minnesota legislature from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

The Minnesota State Legislature has appropriated a significant portion of the arts and cultural heritage fund to the Minnesota State Arts Board and Minnesota’s eleven regional arts councils. These funds help make arts experiences more accessible and available to Minnesotans throughout the state.

Artists, culture bearers, arts organizations, community groups, human service organizations, public agencies, educational institutions, and others are invited and encouraged to take advantage of the ECRAC ACHF Legacy Grant program in Region 7E.

To see a comprehensive list of some Legacy Amendment projects funded by the arts and cultural heritage fund, outdoor heritage fund, clean water fund, and parks and trails fund visit the Legislative Coordinating Commission's searchable Web site at: <http://www.legacy.leg.mn>

❖ 25 Year Legacy Goals

The 25-Year Vision, Framework, Guiding Principles, and Ten-Year Goals for the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (PDF) was presented to the legislature on January 15, 2010 and can be found online at <http://www.arts.state.mn.us/pubs/pubs/achf-25-year.pdf>

❖ Definitions of ACHF Areas

Following the direction of the Minnesota State Legislature, the ECRAC Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund will support activities in three key areas. ECRAC ACHF Legacy arts project funding may be spent only on arts and arts access, arts education, and arts and cultural heritage as defined. Ultimately, the fund is intended to create a strong arts legacy in Minnesota.

Arts & Arts Access (AAA): Investing in high quality arts activities and expenses for all Minnesotans.

ACHF funding will support 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. Such grant activities may be, but are not limited to:

- Investing in activities that make the arts available to people who might not otherwise have access due to economic, geographic, or physical barrier.
- Ensuring that artists and arts organizations have sufficient financial support to create high quality art.
- Investing in the long-term health and vitality of the arts sector by supporting capacity-building and professional development.
- Investing in efforts that enable Region 7E residents to connect with arts/arts experiences and performances.
- Investing in efforts to fully integrate the arts into local community development efforts.
- Investing in efforts to integrate the arts into local and regional economic development planning.
- Investing in public art that is available throughout the region.
- Recognizing and rewarding artists/arts organizations/arts providers for exceptional artistic quality and service to their audiences and/or the region.
- NEW from the 2025 Minnesota Legislative Session: Arts and Arts Access funding must be used to “support Minnesota artists and arts organizations in creating, producing, and presenting high-quality arts activities; to preserve, maintain, and interpret art forms and works of art so that they are accessible to Minnesota audiences; to overcome barriers to accessing high-quality arts activities; and to instill the arts into the community and public life in this state. Grants provided under this subdivision must prioritize artists and arts organizations that plan to present art from communities that have been historically underrepresented in the arts or that improve access to the programs and projects for groups, including youth and historically underserved communities, that have struggled to access arts programming in the past.”

Arts Education (AE): Investing in lifelong learning in the arts

ACHF funding will support high-quality, age-appropriate arts education for residents of all ages to develop knowledge, skills, and understanding of the arts. Such activities may be, but are not limited to:

- Investing in efforts that enable Region 7E residents to connect with arts learning opportunities and residencies.
- Ensuring that artists/arts organizations/arts providers can invest in professional development and workshops.
- Ensuring that arts learning opportunities and professional development are available.
- NEW from the 2025 Minnesota Legislative Session: Arts Education funds must be used for “high-quality, age-appropriate arts education for Minnesotans of all ages to develop knowledge, skills, and understanding of the arts. Priority in the award of grants under this subdivision must be given to providing educational opportunities to underserved communities with grants for organizations or entities providing opportunities to K-12 students throughout the state for arts education, including access to arts instruction, arts programming, museums, and arts presentations.”

Arts & Cultural Heritage (ACH): Building bridges between Minnesotans through arts and culture

ACHF funding may be used for events and activities that represent the diverse ethnic and cultural arts traditions, including folk and traditional artists and art organizations, represented in this state. Such activities may be, but are not limited to:

- Providing Region 7E residents with opportunities to celebrate our cultural heritage through events and activities that represent the range of Minnesota's ethnic and cultural arts traditions including festivals.
- Ensuring that Region 7E residents can experience folk/traditional arts of diverse cultures by supporting the work of traditional and folk artists/arts organizations.
- NEW from the 2025 Minnesota Legislative Session: Arts and Cultural Heritage funds must be used for "events and activities that represent, preserve, and maintain the diverse cultural arts traditions, including folk and traditional artists and art organizations, represented in this state."

In addition, also from the 2025 Minnesota Legislative Session: "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, regional arts council grants or other arts council grants for touring programs, projects, or exhibits must ensure the programs, projects, or exhibits are able to tour in their own region as well as all other regions of the state."

GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this ECRAC grant is to enhance the existing arts curriculum in educational facilities throughout Region 7E, the counties of Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine, and the sovereign Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe lands. The standard for the program is artistic excellence. This program will supplement the existing school arts curriculum with such programs as artistic residencies, arts related field trips, and special arts events or projects.

Grants of up to \$5,000 are available. No match is required. Grants can be used to support all K-12 and community college students and/or student groups such as (but not limited to) drama club, art classes (see ECRAC definition of art on page 3), entire grades, gifted and talented students, or Community Education programming for all ages. Grant projects are required to include a community component such as an open to the public event (art show, performance, demonstration, or discussion).

❖ ECRAC Grant Program Outcomes

It is important for grantees to understand that funding for this program comes from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF), a fund created by 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, and the community benefits. Therefore, outcomes and outcome evaluation are an important part of the funding proposal; in fact, they are a legislatively mandated requirement.

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.

In the application you will identify which of the following best describes the majority of the people you will to serve with your proposed grant project:

- Young children
- School age children
- Teens or youth
- Adults – general public
- Adults – professionals or peers
- Adults – artists
- Adults – learners
- Adults – seniors or elders
- Inter-generational groups (e.g., families)
- Communities (e.g., neighborhoods or cities)
- Organizations
- People in institutional settings
- People who might have difficulty communicating (e.g., reading, writing, or speaking)
- People who may have sensory difficulties (e.g., vision or hearing)
- People who may have mobility difficulties
- People who may have cognitive difficulties

In the application you will also identify the kind of possible changes or effects expected with your art grant project. Which of ECRAC's very broad program outcomes best describes the kind of change you expect from your project?

- Artists develop their practice - arts learning opportunities are available for artists
- People access arts experiences
- People develop arts skills or knowledge - residents connect with arts learning opportunities, residencies, special art projects, and field trips

Having your own specific outcome in mind for your proposed grant project means that the people you serve are supposed to be different in some way as a result of this project. In the application proposal you will identify what kinds of specific changes or effects that you expect to see in the people to be served by this grant project.

- An emotional response or reaction
- A changed attitude about something or someone
- A new awareness about something or someone
- A new intention or motivation to take some course of action
- A changed perception of themselves or others
- A new or expanded understanding or knowledge about some topic
- A new or expanded skill in some area
- A change to their behavior after this experience
- Changes to their relationships with someone else: could be new, strengthened, enriched, or changed in some other way
- Your organization will have a new or improved ability or capacity to do something
- A change to some other condition (for example, some kind of individual well-being, community strength, etc.)

In summary, your proposed art grant project outcome will be:

- who you will serve;
- which of ECRAC's broad program outcomes you expect as a result of the art project;
- and, finally, the specific change you expect to see in the people served by your project.

❖ Grant Project Outcomes & Measuring Results

During and after the grant project activities you will have to evaluate your grant project outcome. In the application proposal ECRAC will ask you to describe the outcome evaluation planned for your project. You will provide either quantitative or qualitative measurements or both. When funded your grant final report must include a summary of these evaluation results.

The following are the methods you will choose from in order to document the progress toward your art project outcomes:

- Reviewing program statistics or other documents related to the project
- Reviewing or critiquing a portfolio, experience, or other artifacts of the project (by experts, peers, or others)
- Conducting interviews with stakeholders
- Conducting focus groups with stakeholders
- Creating one or more case studies about the project
- Making structured observations of stakeholders during project activities
- Surveying stakeholders about their knowledge skills, attitudes, behaviors, or motivations
- Gauging stakeholder priorities using interactive methods such as sorting cards or voting
- Having stakeholders describe or capture their own impressions using PhotoVoice, talk-aloud interviews, making maps or illustrations, journaling, etc.

Please note that the term stakeholder suggests the people data is gathered from. It could be participants, audiences, community members, artists, project partners or organization staff. This depends on the project.

ELIGIBILITY

This grant program is open to all public or private non-parochial elementary, middle, secondary, charter, or community college schools physically located in Region 7E (Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine Counties, and on the sovereign Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe lands in Minnesota). Please contact ECRAC staff regarding any eligibility or application questions.

- No school district may receive more than two Art in Our Schools grants per school year.
- All projects must be those not funded by the school in the previous school year.
- These funds are intended to supplement existing curriculum, not supplant it.
- All projects must have an open and accessible to the public component.
- Applicants must submit their department specific budget within the proposal.
- Also see the NOT FUNDED BY ECRAC section.

GRANT FUNDING LIMITS- NEW! GRANTS UP TO \$5,000

Grants of up to \$5,000 are available. Schools can receive up to two Art In Our Schools grants per ECRAC fiscal year. The fiscal year is July 1 to June 30.

Eligible applications can include cash support (i.e., not in kind) for the project, but it is not required. The cash match can include earned income, other grants and contributions, or cash on hand. In kind cannot be included as part of the cash match.

Matching funds may consist of: cash on hand, in kind contributions, earned income, or other grants or contributions. In kind are donated items such as materials, labor, and space that can be given a dollar value and are a significant part of the project. Applicants must be able to prove that the in kind is committed (i.e., letter from donor indicating commitment and value). ECRAC does have sample in kind donation voucher forms, if needed during the project to document the donation.

Applicants are required in the grant application budget form to identify where all grant project funds will be expended. All matching funds included in the budget should be committed to the grant project.

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.

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 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.

For educational facilities the required attachments include artist and project director résumés, board/advisory member information, and your department's annual organization budget. 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. Grant 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 the next fiscal year. The earliest allowable starting dates and the corresponding end dates are listed below.

The grant deadline dates for Fiscal Years 2026-2027 are:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DEADLINE	GRANT DEADLINE at 11:59 p.m.	FINAL APPROVAL BY	EARLIEST START DATE	LATEST END DATE
September 20	October 1, 2025 & 2026	December 31, 2025 & 2026	January 15, 2026 & 2027	June 30, 2027 & 2028
January 20	February 1, 2026 & 2027	April 30, 2026 & 2027	May 15, 2026 & 2027	June 30, 2027 & 2028

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

DEADLINES

Technical assistance is guaranteed if you contact ECRAC staff before the technical assistance deadline. After that date, assistance will be offered based on staff availability, and we will try our best to answer any questions.

❖ What determines a 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 (such as entering into a contract with performers) 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 applicant is responsible for ensuring that the application is accurate, complete, and submitted by the deadline.

Upon submission, ECRAC staff will first review applications to confirm that the applicant is an eligible Region 7E school and that the proposed activities meet grant eligibility requirements (per the Not Funded by ECRAC section). Applications that do not meet these requirements will be considered ineligible and will not move forward in the review process.

ECRAC staff will then review all eligible applications for completeness and provide this information to the grant review panel and Board of Directors.

The ECRAC Board of Directors has final authority regarding application eligibility, completeness, and funding decisions.

Grant project directors will receive email confirmation that their application has been received and will also be notified by email of the date, time, and location of the grant review meeting.

Applicants are encouraged to attend the grant review meeting to observe the review process. To ensure fairness and consistency for all applicants, no additional information, materials, or testimony may be provided after the application deadline or during the review meeting.

The ECRAC Board of Directors, 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, to describe the status of the grant application completeness and eligibility review, and to take minutes.

Grant applicants may not discuss their application with ECRAC grant 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.

❖ **OPEN MEETING POLICY:** all grant review meetings are open to the public.

- 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 in person meeting, by request, 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 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.

These factors constitute the grant review standards: merit and artistic quality; ability of the applicant to accomplish the project; demonstrated need for the project; and serving an underrepresented constituency. If the application is determined to be complete, an art project, and of sufficient artistic quality to indicate further review, the following 4 grant review criteria will be discussed.

Review Criteria cont.

• Merit and artistic quality of the project – 10 points available

Grant review considerations used to address this criterion may include:

- The artistic quality of the artist to perform the residency (schools must submit the required support materials as outlined in the application);
- The merit of the residency plan, including the artist or field trip schedule;
- The community (open to the public) component; and
- Effective use of artist / teacher contact time.

If the eligible application is determined to be of sufficient artistic merit and quality to indicate further review, the following standards will also be applied.

❖ The ability of the applicant to accomplish the project or program outcomes and activities as proposed. This is demonstrated by a planning process, qualifications of the artistic and grant personnel, a publicity plan and previous successful grant or other efforts – 10 points available

Grant review considerations used to address this criterion may include:

- Budget feasibility and fiscal responsibility;
- Work résumé of the Project Director and artistic résumé of the artist or art activity proposed;
- How the residency, field trip, or arts related special project will be publicized, documented, and evaluated;
- Feasibility of the residency plan and schedule;
- Number of artist to student contact hours as appropriate to the project; and
- Past ECRAC grant project history of the school

❖ Applicants must demonstrate a demand/need for the grant project or program in the school district served – 10 points available

Grant review considerations used to address this criterion may include:

- Does the applicant define the school district, or student group, or community served?
- Will the project meet an artistic need at the school or in the community?

❖ Applicants must demonstrate equity and inclusion for the grant project or program in the school served – 6 points available

Grant review considerations used to address this criterion may include:

- Does the applicant describe how the project identifies and proactively addresses barriers to engaging historically marginalized, targeted, and underserved people and identities that may otherwise have limited access to your proposed activity.

Examples might include:

BIPOC (Indigenous people and People of Color including Native American, Black/African/African American, Afro Latino, Caribbean, Chicano/Mexican, Central American, South American, Middle Eastern/North African, Southeast Asian/Asian/Pacific Islander); immigrants and/or refugees; economically disadvantaged individuals; people with disabilities; LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual) people; older adults; and pre-K children.

- Does the applicant explain how they are positioned to engage with and support the underrepresented community they described.
- Are the underrepresented among the applicant's or the project's leadership, artists, and decisionmakers?
- In what ways has the applicant made attempts to be more equitable and inclusive?
- If the applicant is an organization or group that primarily serves people identified above, what are the unique ways in which they will engage with members of your community who are not yet connected to their work?
- Is the project's venue publicly accessible? In what ways does the grant project ensure that people with disabilities can participate? Examples might include ADA accessible venue, ASL interpretation, audio described performance, large print programs, sensory tours, etc. How will accessibility options be conveyed to the community?

- If there is a financial cost for participants of your project, what considerations are made for those who may find such costs a barrier? Examples might include ticket discounts, scholarships, waived membership dues, transportation reimbursements, stipends, etc.

NEW! Eligible applications will need to receive a minimum score of 20 out of 36 in the review scoring to remain eligible. A score of 20, however, does not guarantee a grant award.

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; full or partial funding with stipulations or budget revisions; table the request, pending receipt of additional information; or no funding.

The grant review panel (if applicable) will present its recommendations from 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 by email within 30 days after the final funding decision is made by ECRAC.

ECRAC'S LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Legal Compliance and Required Documentation

All applicants and grantees are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

A current IRS Form W-9 must be uploaded with the application. ECRAC uses this form to verify the legal name and tax identification information of organizations that may receive grant funds, helping ensure compliance with grantmaking and financial reporting requirements.

Failure to provide required documentation or comply with applicable laws and regulations may result in an application being deemed ineligible, termination of an awarded grant, or the return of grant funds.

GRANT PAYMENTS

Grantees will receive notification regarding the ECRAC grant funding decision. If funded, a contract called the Notification of Grant Award (NGA) and a Request for Payment (RFP) form will be included in the notification. In cases where the grant is less than the full amount requested, or if the ECRAC Board of Directors has stipulated revisions, the applicant will receive them and a revised approved budget in the NGA. If the grantee agrees with the approved budget and other terms of the contract, an authorized signer of the grantee must sign and submit both forms to ECRAC. The NGA contract also requires the signature of the project director.

No funds will be authorized until the NGA contract and RFP have been executed. Funds will then be approved and forwarded to the grantee within 45 days of receipt of the NGA and RFP. If stipulated by the ECRAC Board of Directors they may split grant payments by providing initial grant funds after the receipt of the NGA and RFP, and the final payment after receipt of a successful interim progress review. If so, details will be included in the NGA and RFP notification.

Additionally, before the first grant payment of a fiscal year is made to a grantee ECRAC requires grantees to complete Grant Management Training. If requested, travel expenses incurred related to this training can be reimbursed by ECRAC. However, most sessions are now held online.

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), if the amount is over \$600. No revisions are allowed to the NGA contract or to the grant project without ECRAC prior approval. There are instructions for this, if needed.

FINAL GRANT REPORT & EVALUATION

Grant recipients must submit a final report to ECRAC. Organizations have 60 days, from the end of the grant project date as proposed in the approved application and as stated on the NGA and RFP. ECRAC may also require an interim report or may conduct a mid-point grant progress review. The final report must be the ECRAC online format provided in the grant portal and will include: project narrative; documentation of press releases, project publicity, website pages, and news articles. The final report will show how grant funds were used and will provide documentation of income and expenses pertaining to the project. Grantees must keep all proofs of grant payments and receipts for 3 years in case of audit. The final/financial report form will also include all documentation on the outcome evaluation of the grant project. The Regional Arts Council cannot provide any grant funds to applicants who have outstanding or unaccepted grant final reports or unsatisfactory interim 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 consult with the grantee regarding misuse concerns. 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

The NGA 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 the 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 NGA contract.

ECRAC will rescind its grant commitment if:

- a grantee does not submit their signed NGA and RFP within 45 days, or
- upon request, the recipient does not agree to, or return any required grant stipulations at the time the signed NGA and RFP are due.

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 45 days.

NOT FUNDED BY ECRAC

To ensure fairness and alignment with public funding guidelines, the East Central Regional Arts Council (ECRAC) does not fund the following types of projects or expenses:

Project Focus & Eligibility

- Applications that do **not center on arts or culture**
- Applicants who are **not based in Minnesota**, or whose grant activities **do not take place in Region 7E of Minnesota**
- Projects led by **for-profit businesses or organizations**
- **Travel costs outside of Minnesota**
(Note: You may include out-of-state artists in your project, but their travel to/from Minnesota cannot be covered by the grant)

Funding Restrictions

- Projects that request funds to **cover past debts or deficits** from activities that began before the approved grant start date
- Applications that propose to **match other ECRAC-funded grants** with this funding
- Requests for **new building construction, real estate purchases, or endowment funds**
- Expenses related to **alcohol**, including beverages, servers, insurance, or licensing
- **Fundraising events**, where the primary goal is to raise money and donors receive tax-deductible acknowledgments
- Requests for **general operating support**
(Arts organizations may apply separately for the ECRAC Essentials Support Grant)

Accountability & Compliance

- Projects that **cannot clearly track and report how grant funds are spent**
- Use of Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF) dollars to **replace traditional public funding** (ACHF funds must supplement, not substitute, state general fund or capital investment dollars)
- Spending ACHF dollars on **administrative, indirect, or overhead costs** that are not directly tied to the funded project (Grantees must document all grant-related costs and submit proof with the final report)

Ineligible Activities

- Projects that involve **political lobbying** or aim to influence public policy
- Religious organizations or projects focused on **religious instruction or socialization**, including parochial schools
- Activities that **require artists to pay excessive fees** to exhibit or perform
- Events or programs that are **not open to the public** or **not ADA accessible**

Promotion Requirements

- Grantees who do **not promote their project** or **don't use the required ECRAC and ACHF logos** or credit line in a **legible font** during project promotion

NOT FUNDED Cont.

Fair Review Process

- Applicants who **contact ECRAC board members or grant panelists** about their proposal after submission and before final approval (*this may result in disqualification*)
- **Artificial intelligence (AI)** cannot be used to fully generate art, application answers, or art grant proposals. Applications with excessive AI-generated content may be deemed ineligible. For additional information and to review ECRAC's full AI Policy visit ecrac.org.

NOT FUNDED BY ECRAC – SCHOOL SPECIFIC

For grant requests from Region 7E schools, ECRAC cannot provide funding for the following:

School Staffing and Curriculum Support

- Replacing, supplanting, supplementing, or restoring discontinued or non-existent arts programs in schools.
- Paying an artist or arts organization to provide services that are substantially the same as those typically provided by a classroom teacher or arts specialist.
- Compensating school employees or personnel, in whole or in part.
- Funding teacher tuition, degree programs, licensure requirements, or continuing education credits needed to obtain or maintain a teaching license.

Not Funded School Activities cont.

Student-Only or School-Only Activities

- In-school projects conducted exclusively by or for students.
- Projects carried out solely for student organizations.
- School programs or activities that are not accessible to the general public and serve only students or staff.
- Routine school arts activities, including but not limited to one-act plays, music competitions, and similar events.

Ineligible Expenses

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Travel outside of Minnesota.
- Equipment purchases.
- Capital improvements or construction projects.
- Real estate purchases.
- Endowment funds.
- The sole purchase of artwork or solely commissioning works of art.

Previously Funded School Activities

- Projects or activities that were funded by the school during the previous school year. To be eligible, proposed activities must represent new or expanded arts opportunities rather than continuing school-funded programming.

Note: ECRAC has attempted to provide a thorough and clear articulation of its eligibility rules, but it reserves the right to declare an application ineligible for reasons not explicitly stated here. If you have questions about the eligibility of your project, please contact the ECRAC office. Grantees are responsible for complying with all 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.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You will first want to familiarize yourself with basic information about East Central Regional Arts Council grant funding. Please read through this entire document before starting the online application form. The application form includes specific questions which will assist the Regional Arts Council reviewers in determining eligibility, artistic quality & merit, ability, community need, equity & inclusion proposed.

Technical assistance is available for applicants who need advice in developing a grant proposal. The Regional Arts Council also conducts grant workshops that help applicants understand the grantmaking philosophy as well as the process for submitting successful grant applications. Assistance from staff does not imply funding for an application. The content, accuracy, completeness, and merits of the grant proposal are solely the responsibility of the applicant.

- TIPS ON COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The grant portal opens 4-6 weeks before the deadline. A reasonable amount of planning time should be allowed to develop an application. Grant writing technical assistance is provided by ECRAC staff as requested. The staff person can help you best if you contact them well in advance of the application technical assistance deadline. Assistance from the staff person does not, however, imply that grant funding will be received.

Contact the ECRAC office to determine the availability of funding and which of the grant areas your proposal fits into. The ECRAC Grant Program Officer phone number is: 320-336-0200. The email address is grantinfo@ecrac.org.

Attend a ECRAC Grant Information Session. This is not currently a grant requirement, but it is strongly recommended by the ECRAC Board of Directors. They are online as YouTube videos, available by zoom, and in-person.

Read over the application questions and contact ECRAC if you are unclear about them or the grant review criteria.

Use the online forms provided by ECRAC. The application materials are on the ECRAC website: <https://www.ecrac.org/grants-available>

You will have to remain within the specified amount of space for answers. Do not submit additional materials. Additional pages and materials not requested won't be reviewed by the Council or by a grant review panel. Do not mail or email any application-related materials to ECRAC.

Complete and submit your online application before 11:59 p.m. of the deadline date. Applications submitted after this are ineligible.

To be eligible, your application must include ALL required materials. If not, the application can be found ineligible.

Give all people involved in the grant project (project director, artist, school finance officer) a copy of the approved grant proposal to ensure agreement.

Additional Considerations

1. Grant funds must be used within one year from the deadline date and must have a component that is open and accessible to the public and is advertised as such.
2. Grants of up to \$5,000 are available. Grants may be for 100% of the Total Project Expenses; however, a match is encouraged. The request for funds should be the difference between the Total Income (Match) for the Project and the Total Project Expenses.
3. Project income (match) is not required for this funding; however, it is strongly encouraged. Any cash and in kind contributions must be available and explained in detail. In-kind income should be significant items such as donated materials, labor, or space that can be given a dollar value. Cash match may include earned income, other contributions, and/or cash on hand.
4. Residencies must involve the general community in some significant aspect. Example: receptions, poetry readings, exhibitions of the artist's or students' work, or a public performance. Residencies must also allow at least one core group or class of students to work with the artist daily throughout the residency.
5. A teacher must be present in the classroom at all times during residency, special art project, or on the field trip.
6. Residencies, special projects, and field trips must include at least one hour of in-service for artist(s)/teacher contact time.
7. Residency artists selected should reflect applicable background to the school's artistic needs. Their artistic resume will be considered as part of the application process. Criminal history background checks are the sole responsibility of the school and are highly recommended.
8. Field trips and special arts projects must also involve the general community in some significant aspect. Examples: joint bus trips; Power Point presentations; volunteer involvement as guides; student or teacher sharing program with community groups following a field trip or art project.
9. Applications may now include reasonable costs associated with food or beverages for participants.
10. Applicants must submit a residency and/or a field trip schedule as part of the application for the proposed project. You will find these in the online application form for you to complete and upload. This is a requirement.
11. Grant funds cannot be used for travel outside of Minnesota, equipment purchases, capital investments, construction, purchases of real estate, endowment funds, and sole purchase of, or to

solely commission works of art. Nor can funds be used to support “routine” school arts activities, such as one-act plays, music competitions, etc. All projects must be activities not funded by the school in the last school year, or they will be considered ineligible.

12. Granted activities must not be essentially for the religious socialization of the participants, or be primarily historic in nature. Parochial schools are ineligible for these funds.
13. The Council does not provide grant funds to schools with past due or unacceptable final or other reports from prior ECRAC funded projects or schools that have violated the Misuse of Funds policy.
14. 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.
15. It is the responsibility of each school receiving public funds to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. The ECRAC has information about ADA compliance. If you have questions about this, please contact Arts Council staff.
16. Art In Our Schools grantees must include the required funding credit line in all advertising, news releases, printed programs, and promotional materials for the project.

Your credit line will be found in your grant contract, the Notification of Grant Award (NGA). The funding credit line will either be:

- “This activity is made possible in part by a grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council with funds appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature from its general fund”; or
- “This activity is made possible in part by a grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council with funds appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature from its general fund and the arts and cultural heritage fund”.

Grantees must also use the logo(s) and hashtag (#ECRAC) in all grant-related promotional materials and social media per the contract.

17. Be sure to include all attachments with your submitted application, or your application will be considered incomplete and thus ineligible. Required attachments include the following.
 - Project Personnel Work Résumés & Artist Résumés (no more than 2 pages each) and include professional background, plus teaching or residency experience
 - Artwork Samples
 - School Board of Directors and/or Advisory Committee Member lists
 - Project Expense Budget and Project Income Budget
 - School or Department Annual Budget (one page)
 - Schedule for the residency, field trip, or special art project
 - Support materials for field trip locations (professional institution performance or exhibition information) or the in-service plan for a residency
 - Signed Certification Page

OTHER ECRAC SERVICES

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

- Art Gallery showcasing regional artists
- Arts Resource Information to support planning and growth
- Community & Economic Development Support through arts-based initiatives
- Arts Library with materials for inspiration and learning
- Workshops for artists and arts organizations
- Grant Information Sessions to guide applicants through the process
- Grant Writing Technical Assistance available by request
- Art Show Display Equipment Rental for community art events
- Annual IMAGE Art Show celebrating local artists
- Meeting & Event Space available for arts-related gatherings
- Annual Zoom reimbursements for art organizations or groups of artists
- Reimbursements for professional development, *Event Scholarships* for artists or art project personnel

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 (Mondays – Wednesdays from 9 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 all previously funded projects, visit this web page and scroll to the bottom:

<https://www.ecrac.org/grants-available>

QUESTIONS & GRANT FUNDING CREDIT LINE

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

East Central Regional Arts Council
540 Weber Ave S
Suite 109
Hinckley, MN 55037

STAY UP TO DATE!

Make sure you are on the ECRAC e-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.

If funded by this grant program, any publicity for your grant project needs to include:

1. the 2 logos (ECRAC and ACHF Legacy) on the front page of these guidelines, found at <https://www.ecrac.org/manage-my-grant/press-kit>
2. the following funding credit line,
3. and these hashtags below for social media use.

This activity is made possible in part by a grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council with funds appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature from its general fund.

or

This activity is made possible in part by a grant from the East Central Regional Arts Council with funds appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature from its general fund and the arts and cultural heritage fund.

#ecrac

#ArtsLegacy