



## GUIDELINES FOR ARTS GRANTS

The Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council, administers grant monies allocated by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota earmarked for arts-related projects and general operating support of qualifying arts organizations, as well as the McKnight Foundation by supporting the development of individual artists.

*Guidelines for Arts Grants* provides specific information in each of the following areas:

- Application Procedures
- Eligibility Requirements
- Review Criteria
- Grant Categories

More information on Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council programs, services, policies and review criteria is available on our Web site at [www.semac.org](http://www.semac.org) and on request by calling 507-281-4848.

All individuals and groups seeking to apply for funding from SEMAC are strictly held to the following general qualifications. Please note that the more specific guidelines pertaining to each particular grant category, such as the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund, are located at the end of this document.

### **A. Deadlines**

Specific deadlines for each grant category are found at the end of this document. All proposals must be postmarked on or before the corresponding deadline. No special handling, such as express or certified mail, is required. Simply use first class mail. Although postal mail is preferred, hand delivered proposals will be accepted during normal business hours. Please call the office beforehand to make sure someone will be there to accept your application.

Proposals may not be submitted more than thirty days prior to the application deadline. No exceptions.

### **B. Application Assistance**

Applicants may sign up for a proposal drafting session during the month prior to the deadline. Although not a requirement for most grant categories, many applicants find it useful to discuss their proposal with staff and other applicants at the session.

Applicants may email a draft of their proposal to SEMAC staff up to a week before the deadline to make sure the proposal is on the right track. Staff assistance, however, does not guarantee funding. To obtain application assistance or to sign up for a drafting session, contact [staff@semac.org](mailto:staff@semac.org).

### **C. Eligibility – Who May Apply**

In order to be eligible for funding through SEMAC, all applicants must meet the following criteria.

1. Applicants must be located within the 11-county SEMAC region, including Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona Counties.
2. The primary focus of the proposal must be the fine arts, i.e., the development, education, performance and/or showcasing of the arts.
3. The proposal **must include** an accessible public capstone event to benefit the citizens of southeastern Minnesota.

Arts organization requesting funding must also meet the following requirements:

1. Be a non-profit arts organization with Articles of Incorporation on file with the State of Minnesota.
2. Have, or be in the process of applying for, federal tax 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service.
3. Have a Board of Directors that meets on a regular basis.
4. Have been in existence and operating year-round for at least three years.
5. Demonstrate the high quality of the arts products, services, or activities they provide and their impact on the community.

### **D. Eligibility – Who May Not Apply**

There are certain restrictions on funds that SEMAC administers. Grants cannot be awarded to any for-profit businesses, religious organizations, or organizations intending to influence public policy. With the exception of the Arts & Cultural Heritage grant program, public radio or television stations, museums, or civic organizations such as chambers of commerce and other community service organizations are also disallowed.

Grant proposals are not eligible if any of the following conditions exist:

1. The applicant has overdue final or interim reports from a previous SEMAC grant or their report was not approved by SEMAC staff.
2. The applicant received funds from the Minnesota State Arts Board (MSAB) or from the McKnight Foundation within the past two fiscal years.
3. Artists are required to pay entry or exhibition fees in order to exhibit and/or perform in the programming for which support is requested.
4. Further, funding may not be requested for:
  - a. adaptations or translations of original works;

- b. funding artist's lives and/or lifestyles;
- c. copyright or other legal fees;
- d. publishing initiated solely by the applicant (i.e., vanity press);
- e. strictly commercial activities or projects intended for retail or mass-market distribution (i.e., limited edition prints, note cards, CDs, DVDs, etc.);
- f. promotion of religious backgrounds, faiths, or beliefs and the project is designed essentially for the religious socialization of the audience;
- g. benefits, fundraisers, or regranting;
- h. hospitality costs;
- i. field trips or other travel costs for students;
- j. historic preservation projects;
- k. use in feasibility studies or lobbying;
- l. support of festivals or arts fairs;
- m. purchase or commission of a work of art for a public place;
- n. capital improvement or construction;
- o. purchase of real property; or
- p. endowment funds.

The Arts & Cultural Heritage category allows certain exceptions to the restrictions listed above. See the Arts & Cultural Heritage discussion at the end of this document for details.

#### **E. Eligibility – Funding Limits**

Eligible applicants in most grant categories are encouraged to reapply annually. However, a proposal may not be resubmitted without significant revision. This restriction applies whether or not the previous project received an award. Resubmission of the same project will disqualify the applicant from the review process.

Recipients may apply for up to two SEMAC Grants per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) from two different grant categories as long as the proposals are not submitted under the same deadline. Please note that Arts & Cultural Heritage Grants are separate and do not count toward this fiscal year maximum.

Payment of funds granted will be at the convenience of the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council, Inc.

#### **F. Grant Requirements**

Recipients are required to sign a contract stipulating the terms of the grant award. Specific instructions for completing the contract will be provided with funding notification. Three crucial requirements are outlined below.

When the project is completed, the recipient is required to file a final report with SEMAC within thirty days. Some longer projects will also require interim reporting, especially when the organization submits future proposals. Failure to submit reports will prevent any future funding until that report has been accepted.

Grant funds shall be spent solely for the purposes stated in the application. SEMAC requires that all unexpended funds in excess of \$500 be returned. Such funds will be redirected to other qualified, previously unfunded, grant proposals.

Recipients are also required to send thank you letters to their legislators as part of the final report process. For this reason, the applicant's Minnesota House District Number(s) are required on the RAC Data Collection Form. Call Minnesota House information at 651-296-2146 or visit their Web site at [www.leg.state.mn.us](http://www.leg.state.mn.us) for assistance in determining your district number(s).

## **G. Review Criteria**

SEMAC uses the following review standards for all applications. Applicants may call the office for detailed grant review procedures and schedule details.

- 1. Artistic Quality and Merit to the Arts.** Considerations used to address this criterion may include the following:
  - a. How well do the resources (qualifications of artistic personnel, facilities, activities, etc.) meet the project goals?
  - b. How well does the project meet or advance the goals of the organization?
  - c. How does the project contribute to the artistic development of the respective art form and/or audience?
  - d. How does the project increase the number and variety of arts opportunities in the community or attempt new approaches to existing art programs?
- 2. Need for the Programming.** Demonstrated need by the artist, the arts organization, arts resources, or the public. Considerations used to address this criterion may include the following:
  - a. Community involvement and support for the project
  - b. Whether the project is duplicated and if so, does it improve upon an existing program?
  - c. The method used to determine that the project is needed
- 3. Ability of the Applicant to Sustain the Programming.** Considerations used to address this criterion may include the following:
  - a. The planning process used to develop the project format
  - b. Qualifications of the personnel to be used in the project
  - c. Feasibility of the budget
  - d. Marketing and publicity efforts
  - e. Evidence of the applicant organization's fiscal responsibility
  - f. Previous successful efforts

## **H. Definitions**

- 1. Applicant:** The main arts organization, government entity or school organizing and implementing the proposal. If two groups are involved please select one to be the lead and therefore the applicant.

2. **Project Director:** The person designated by the applicant to oversee the implementation of the proposal. This person is responsible for the timely submission of all required forms and reports to SEMAC. This person should be knowledgeable in all aspects of the proposed project since SEMAC may need to contact this person with questions specific to the proposal narrative and budget. Please note that all SEMAC correspondence regarding this proposal will be directed to the project director.
3. **S.M.A.R.T. Model Evaluation Method:** Your answers to the application questions will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of your proposal. Refer to this S.M.A.R.T. model evaluation method when completing your application.

**S = Specific**  
**M = Measurable**  
**A = Achievable**  
**R = Realistic**  
**T = Time-bound**

4. **Capstone Event:** All proposals funded by SEMAC must include a public component to benefit the citizens of southeastern Minnesota. In other words, the project must culminate in a capstone event within the 11-county region that is accessible and open to the public. Examples of a capstone event include performances, gallery openings, and other events that showcase the arts.
5. **Start and End Dates:** The time period during which the proposal will take place and the community will experience the results, i.e., the actual preparation and activities of a proposal, not the planning thereof. The start date must be at least sixty days after the grant deadline, and the end date must be no more than one calendar year later. The end date may coincide with the final capstone event date, or for administrative projects, the end of your fiscal year.
6. **Matching Funds:** The portion of the proposal that the applicant plans to fund from non-SEMAC sources. For most categories, this amount must equal at least the equivalent of the amount requested, i.e., a one-to-one match. Although not required, in-kind items or services for which a fee would normally be paid, and are provided to the applicant at no cost, may be included for up to half the match, or 50 percent of the amount requested.
7. **In-Kind Contributions:** To be considered in-kind, donated goods or services must be necessary to the proposal, i.e., these goods and services would be purchased if they had not been donated. Professional services must be donated by a professional working in that profession and valued at the provider's professional rate. In-kind contributions must be itemized and accompanied by receipts or letters of verification for goods and services to be provided. Volunteers cannot be calculated as in-kind services.

- 8. Organization's Total Annual Budget:** The total expenses and income that occurred in the last completed fiscal year and those projected in the current fiscal year. Note: Governmental units and public schools are not required to submit information on total annual budget.
- 9. Authorizing Official:** That person empowered to enter into contracts for the applicant organization. This is usually the board chairperson, president or executive director.
- 10. Fiscal Agent:** The non-profit organization legally responsible for the proper use of grant funds when an applicant organization is not yet eligible for federal tax status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. An authorizing official of the fiscal agent organization must sign the Fiscal Agent Agreement (see application) and provide proof of 501(c)(3) status.
- 11. Support Material:** You may choose to include up to 8 pages of support material with your proposal. They may be pieces with information about you and/or the proposed project, such as brochures, news releases, programs, newspaper articles, etc. Visual artists may submit thumbnail photos of their work. Please contact the SEMAC office at 507-281-4848 for specific instructions on how to submit support material.
- 12. Grant Appeal Process:** 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 business days of notification of SEMAC's Board's decision on that application.

The Board's Executive Committee will review the appeal prior to the next scheduled board meeting. The Executive Committee will determine if there exists sufficient cause for an appeal and if further investigation is warranted. If the Executive Committee finds that there is cause for an appeal, they will bring the matter before the entire Board, which shall make a final decision.

There is no right of appeal to dispute decisions with respect to artistic quality, merit, ability, or need.

## **J. Categories – SEMAC Programming Grants**

In addition to an explanation of each grant program SEMAC offers, noted here are any exceptions to the general qualifications listed above. Review the individual application forms available at [www.semac.org/application-forms](http://www.semac.org/application-forms) for further detail. If you have questions, please call the SEMAC office at 507-281-4848 for assistance.

### **1. Artists in Education Grants**

The Artists in Education grant supports artist residencies in schools. A residency is an interactive arts activity involving students, teachers, and artists, providing

young people with a direct arts experience with artists, as well as encouraging the artist's professional development by providing a unique employment experience and audience contact. Residencies serve as a resource for teachers working to integrate the arts into the curriculum. Residencies must be based on a well-defined project, at least one full day or up to five full school days in length, and culminate in a capstone event that is accessible and open to the public.

Postmark Deadline = July 1  
Minimum Request = \$200  
Maximum Request = \$2,000  
Matching Funds = one-to-one, in-kind only

## **2. Arts & Cultural Heritage Grants**

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund will support arts focused activities in three key areas: 1) Arts and Arts Access, 2) Arts Education, and 3) Arts and Cultural Heritage. SEMAC encourages applicants to research and develop proposals that incorporate two or more of the key areas with an emphasis on creating lasting partnerships among regional nonprofit arts organizations and other nonprofit groups. In addition to eligible arts organizations, nonprofits that do not have arts as a primary focus, such as schools, senior centers, community education, cultural groups and colleges are invited to apply.

While some activities otherwise ineligible are allowed, funds cannot be used for:

- a. Projects that the Minnesota State Arts Board (MSAB) has already funded or will be funding;
- b. Payment for new building projects;
- c. Benefits, fundraisers or regrating money;
- d. Compensation for ongoing school personnel in full or in part;
- e. A proposal or residency that supplants current school arts curriculum ;
- f. Tuition for teachers to earn degrees, meet licensure requirements, or meet continuing education requirements to retain a teaching license;
- g. Purchase of equipment or improvement to facilities within K-12 public schools. The exception will be, if a nonprofit arts group uses the school facility for rehearsal, classes, performances, or exhibitions, and it needs equipment or facilities improvements for its own work. The arts organization could apply for and receive a grant and could develop a cooperative agreement with the school that spells out how the school could also benefit from the purchased items or improvements. The arts organizations applying must have a proven history of an arts relationship with the school and the school must agree to publically acknowledge how the project was funded.

Postmark Deadlines = July 1, October 1, February 1, and April 1 if available  
Minimum Request = \$3,000  
Maximum Request = \$10,000 per fiscal year  
Matching Funds = on-to-four (20%), up to half may be in-kind  
Also Required = attend a proposal drafting session

### 3. General Operating Support

SEMAC accepts proposals for operating support from eligible nonprofit arts organizations with operating expenses of less than \$149,000 in the previous year. The purpose of these grants is to strengthen and stabilize organizations. The fiscal year, or accounting period for which funding is requested, must not begin before April 1 and must conclude within one calendar year.

Postmark Deadline = February 1  
Minimum Request = \$200  
Maximum Request = \$4,000  
Matching Funds = not required

### 4. McKnight Individual Artist Grants

These grants encourage the development of entirely original work by emerging and established artists. Artists must be permanent residents of the SEMAC region, and have resided there for at least one year prior to the grant deadline. Such work could include original literary or dramatic scripts, musical compositions, choreographies, visual arts creations, and interdisciplinary works. The original work must be earmarked for a public showcasing, via publication, performance, or exhibition, in conjunction with a non-profit arts organization located within the region. Recipients of Individual Artist Grants are not eligible to apply for funds over the next two consecutive deadlines, i.e., application may only be made as often as every three years.

Postmark Deadline = February 1  
Minimum Request = \$200  
Maximum Request - Emerging Artists = \$2,500  
Maximum Request - Established Artists = \$5,000  
Matching Funds = not required

### 5. Mentorship Grants

Mentorship grants are intended to serve artists in the earlier stages of their career development by providing them funds necessary to obtain the assistance of a professional mentor to guide them to completion of a project. Artists are expected to work face-to-face with a mentor on a well-defined capstone project designed for public showcasing. Grant funds are specifically designated for payment of mentorship services and project costs.

Postmark Deadline = thirty days prior to intended start date,  
funds are not always available; check with SEMAC  
Minimum Request = \$200  
Maximum Request = \$2,000  
Matching Funds = not required

## 6. Opportunity Grants

Opportunity grants provide assistance for “sudden” projects. These nominal grants are intended to enable artists, non-profit arts organizations, and schools to take advantage of opportunities that arise with little advance notice. Recipients are eligible to apply twice in a given fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) if funds are available.

Postmark Deadline = thirty days prior to intended start date  
Minimum Request = none  
Maximum Request = \$250  
Matching Funds = not required

## 7. Presenter/Production Assistance

*Presenter Assistance* grants are intended to help regional arts organizations sponsor appearances by touring artists or companies who have demonstrated high levels of artistic quality. These grants are not for local productions or artist residencies in schools. *Production Assistance* grants support activities directly involved in the creation, performance, publication, and exhibition of art. The two distinct subcategories within Production Assistance grants are: 1) Arts Production Projects, and 2) Administrative Support Projects.

Postmark Deadlines = October 1 and, if funds available, April 1  
Minimum Request = \$200  
Maximum Request = \$3,000  
Matching Funds = one-to-one, up to half may be in-kind

## 8. Small Towns/Rural Areas Grants

SEMAC wishes to support and encourage the creation and development of art and arts organizations in communities with populations under 7,500. This support may be used for assistance in activities which directly involve the creation, performance, publication, or exhibition of art or assistance in administrative, operating, or capital expenditures. Applicants may include arts organizations, government entities and public or non-religious private schools, either individually or in cooperation.

Postmark Deadlines = October 1 and, if funds available, April 1  
Minimum Request = \$200  
Maximum Request = \$3,000  
Matching Funds = one-to-one, up to half may be in-kind

## K. SEMAC Infrastructure Grants for Arts Organizations

Unlike programming grants, an infrastructure grant supports the foundation on which arts organizations ensure their future stability. Funding for these non-competitive grant opportunities is not always available, and an accessible public capstone

event is not required. Please contact the SEMAC office at 507-281-4848 to inquire about availability and procedures.

### **1. Arts Management Training**

SEMAC offers non-competitive grants to help regional nonprofit arts groups send key staff, board and volunteers to management education workshops, seminars or conferences. Examples of management training topics include fundraising, audience development, financial management, organizational development, marketing, and volunteer management.

- Postmark Deadline = thirty days prior to training start date,  
funds are not always available, check with SEMAC
- Minimum Request = none
- Maximum Request = \$300 per event per person,  
fiscal year maximum of \$600 per organization
- Matching Funds = not required

### **2. Capital Purchase/Improvement**

The Capital Purchase/Improvement grant is designed to encourage and support other fundraising efforts toward the completion of the goal. Funds may be used for any capital project, new or restored, or for the purchase of equipment. There must be a capital campaign in place, with board approval and a written plan. The organization must have been programming continuously, though not necessarily year-round, for ten years.

- Postmark Deadline = thirty days prior to intended start date,  
funds are not always available; check with SEMAC
- Minimum Request = cost of the project must be at least \$30,000
- Maximum Request = \$10,000
- Matching Funds = two-to-one (66%), cash only

### **3. Program/Administrative Consultancies**

This category offers professional consultants for board retreats, fundraising, working with volunteers, or budgeting. Eligible non-profit arts organizations may apply for these non-competitive grants.

- Postmark Deadline = thirty days prior to intended start date,  
funds are not always available; check with SEMAC
- Minimum Request = \$200
- Maximum Request = \$3,000
- Matching Funds = one-to-one, in-kind only