



FY2026-2027 Biennial Plan Summary

8.7.25

Needs Assessment Survey

- September 15 – October 31, 2024
- Promoted through e-newsletter, social media posts, press releases, and Meta ad buys
- 223 responses (50 individual artists, 34 grant coordinators from arts organizations, 14 grant coordinators from non-arts organizations, 51 with other paid or volunteer roles at arts or non-arts organizations, 14 with other ties to SEMAC, and 60 who selected “none of the above”.)

Needs Assessment Survey Key Findings

- Increase Awareness of SEMAC and Engagement with Underrepresented Groups
- Adjust Grant Amounts
- Improve Application, Grant Review Process, Capstone Requirement, and Reporting
- Provide Opportunities for Professional Development and Networking for Artists
- Improve Communications and Website

Other findings from Executive Director Meetings with Community Leaders throughout SEMAC Region

- Networking
- Strong Interest in Art, Nature, and Wellness
- School Residency Grants
- Support for Young Artists

Work Plan Overview

SEMAC will promote regional arts development in FY 2026 – 2027

by:

- offering financial support to artists and culture bearers, non-profit arts organizations, and non-arts organizations through six grant programs
- providing services to artists, culture bearers, and organizations such as grant writing workshops and professional development opportunities
- promoting arts activities to the general public through a monthly e-newsletter and an on-line regional arts calendar

The six grant programs SEMAC will offer in FY 2026 – 2027 are:

- Project Support for Individual Artists and Culture Bearers
- Rural Arts
- Artists and Culture Bearers in the Schools
- Programming Support for Organizations
- Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building for Arts Organizations (available FY2027)
- General Operating Support for Arts Organizations

Noteworthy changes made to the grant programs as a result of the Needs Assessment as compared to the previous biennium include:

- grant amounts were increased and dollar amount ranges were added for individuals and organizations
- individuals may apply to the Rural Arts Grant and this grant now requires a collaboration with one or more community organizations to ensure even the smallest communities in our region receive funding and to promote community-building through the arts
- individuals may apply for the Artists and Culture Bearers in the Schools grant, which will remove primary responsibility for this residency program from teachers and potentially increase the number of opportunities for K-12 students to interact with artists and culture bearers
- a new grant program was developed, Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building, to provide the support arts organizations expressed needing to ensure their stability and future strength

Other Context for Work Plan

- The addition of a third member of SEMAC's staff, Sharon Mansur, who started in late November in the new role of Outreach and Accessibility Manager, has significantly expanded SEMAC's capacity to offer services and to focus on improving accessibility to these and to our grant programs.
- SEMAC is committed to providing grants and services with a goal of equity and inclusion. This spring, we will see the results of the Equity Audit that Exposed Brick Theatre was hired to conduct by the Forum of Regional Arts Councils (FRACM). SEMAC will use the audit and data we have collected on our grantmaking since FY 2023 to focus our outreach efforts.
- Since FY 2023, 12.2% of SEMAC's grants to individuals were awarded to people of color, whereas the region's BIMPOC population is 16.7%.
- Looking at SEMAC's grantmaking history by county since FY 2023, we see that Dodge, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Steele, and Wabasha are underserved. These counties represent 32.6% of the region's population, whereas 19% of SEMAC's grants since were awarded to individuals and organizations in these counties.

Work Plan Priorities

- #1 - Expand Outreach, Inclusion, and Accessibility Efforts
- #2 - Provide Professional Development and Networking Opportunities for Artists, Culture Bearers, and Organizations
- #3 - Administer Grant Programs with a Focus on Improving Processes
- #4 - Ensure SEMAC Continues to be a Good Steward of Public Funds

#1 - Expand Outreach, Inclusion, and Accessibility Efforts

- Conduct targeted outreach to counties and communities historically underserved by SEMAC, including Prairie Island Indian Community
- Offer grant writing workshops for individuals and organizations on Zoom and in communities underserved by SEMAC in partnership with local organizations
- Partner with organizations serving underserved populations to provide grant coaching and language services to applicants
- Identify diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility goals for SEMAC and take steps to implement
- Expand SEMAC's social media network and increase number of e-newsletter subscribers
- Improve regional arts calendar on website and promote this resource to the general public
- Develop interdisciplinary partnerships to engage the community in conversations about the role of art, nature, and wellness

Measurable outcome

New individuals and organizations from the counties and communities historically underserved by SEMAC will engage with SEMAC, as grant applicants, grant recipients, workshop participants, and partners, and there will be increased awareness within the general public both of SEMAC's impact and of opportunities to participate in regional arts activities.

25-year arts legacy outcome(s)

- People of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities participate in the arts.
- Minnesotans believe the arts are vital to who we are.

#2 – Provide Professional Development and Networking Opportunities for Artists, Culture Bearers, and Organizations

- Offer professional development workshops for artists in partnership with Springboard for the Arts with facilitated opportunities for networking
- Offer arts management training opportunities for arts organizations in partnership with Propel Nonprofits and Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement (MAVA) with facilitated opportunities for networking
- Develop a resource list for artists with other grant opportunities, organizations offering professional support and training, residencies, etc.
- Identify a plan to coordinate in-person networking events and take steps to implement

Measurable outcome

Individual artists, culture bearers, and leaders of arts organizations will learn new skills and have access to information and resources that allow them to advance their personal careers and lead with confidence. Participants will feel connected to and supported by the regional arts community.

25-year arts legacy outcome

- The arts thrive in Minnesota.

#3 – Administer Grant Programs with a Focus on Improving Processes

- Provide financial support in the form of grants to individual artists, culture bearers, arts organizations, and non-arts organizations (including schools, local government and tribal entities, etc.)
- Simplify grant applications and reporting requirements
- Improve website navigation and reduce accessibility barriers to grant information
- Review all e-mail templates used for grant communications for clarity and to ensure information is up to date
- Recruit new Arts Advisory Panel members to ensure diverse representation of arts expertise and cultural backgrounds, and participation from all 11 counties
- Continue diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-bias training for Panel members

Measurable outcome

Grant funds are awarded following SEMAC's policies and procedures, including the Conflict of Interest Policy, and a majority of applicants report that the process is uncomplicated and transparent.

25-year arts legacy outcomes

- People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.
- The arts are interwoven into every facet of community life.
- People of all ages, ethnicities, and abilities participate in the arts.

#4 - Ensure SEMAC Continues to be a Good Steward of Public Funds

- Hire a consultant to work with staff and Board to review and update bylaws, mission, vision, and goals, and to develop a long-range strategic plan
- Set a plan to celebrate SEMAC's 50th anniversary in FY2028
- Review, update, and consolidate organization's policies and procedures
- Evaluate General Operating Support Grant Program with changes to be implemented FY2028
- Assess Artists in the Schools Grant Program with changes to be implemented FY2027 or 2028
- Research and develop a micro-granting or guaranteed income program for individual artists and culture bearers to launch in FY2028
- Continue annual diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings for SEMAC staff and Board
- Establish a committee of the Board to develop equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility goals for SEMAC; integrate these throughout the work plan; and track progress

Measurable outcome

Work on this Priority will result in a long-range plan, easy to reference policies and procedures, improvements to the General Operating Support and Artists in the Schools Grant Programs, development of a new grant program to better serve individual artists and culture bearers, and a continued commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility throughout SEMAC's work.

25-year arts legacy outcome

- People trust Minnesota's stewardship of public arts funding.

Grant Programs

- Project Support for Individual Artists and Culture Bearers
- Rural Arts
- Artists and Culture Bearers in the Schools
- Programming Support for Organizations
- Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building for Arts Organizations (available FY2027)
- General Operating Support for Arts Organizations

Project Support for Individual Artists and Culture Bearers

- To encourage individual artists and culture bearers to take the next step in their creative pursuits by providing the financial support needed to experiment, take on a challenge, or deepen their practice.
- The grant proposal must be to support the creation of new work and include an opportunity for public engagement with that work.
- Emerging artists may apply for \$2,000 - \$4,000.
- Advancing artists may apply for \$3,000 - \$6,000.
- To apply as an advancing artist, applicants must demonstrate that they have received regional or national attention for their work.
- Two submission deadlines annually: July 28 and January 19
- The earliest start date for use of funds must be 90 days after submission deadline.

Rural Arts

- To bring arts experiences into the smallest rural communities in southeastern Minnesota with populations below 7,500.
- The lead applicant can be an individual artist or culture bearer living in the SEMAC region or a non-profit organization in the rural community where the project is proposed to take place.
- Proposed projects must include a collaboration with a local community partner – a non-profit organization, library, government department or agency, tribal entity, etc. – opportunities for active community engagement, and an accessible public event.
- Grant amount requested can be between \$3,000 and \$6,000.
- One submission deadline annually: January 19, 2026 and January 18, 2027
- The earliest start date for use of funds must be 90 days after submission deadline.

Artists and Culture Bearers in the Schools

- To provide students in grades K-12 with opportunities to work directly with artists and culture bearers. Grant activities must supplement the school's arts curriculum and not be a substitute for these requirements.
- The lead applicant can either be an individual artist or culture bearer living in the SEMAC region or the school in which the residency will take place. Written acknowledgement from the secondary applicant (school or artist) confirming their commitment and role in the proposed activities is required.
- No public event is required however the participating school must agree to share the residency in their district's communications to families, with the School Board, and/or with any local press contacts to raise awareness of the importance of the arts.
- Grant amount requested can be between \$2,000 and \$4,000.
- Applications open July 1 and will be accepted until allocated funds are spent. Applications received by the first of each month will be reviewed that month.
- Earliest start date for use of funds must be 90 days from the first of the month when the application is reviewed.

Programming Support for Organizations

- To support activities directly involved in the creation, performance, publication, and exhibition of the arts with a focus in one or more of the three key areas identified in the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund Legacy Amendment – Arts Access, Arts Education, and Cultural Heritage.
- Nonprofit arts and non-arts organizations (non-profits, schools, local government and tribal entities) are eligible to apply, and collaborations between arts and non-arts organizations are encouraged.
- An accessible public event is required.
- Grant amounts requested can range from \$3,000 to \$11,000 and must comply with the following: Arts organizations receiving MSAB Operating Support are eligible for one grant up to \$11,000; other arts organizations are eligible for two grants up to \$16,000 total; and non-arts organizations are eligible for one grant up to \$6,000.
- Two submission deadlines annually: September 30 and March 30
- Earliest start date for use of funds must be 90 days after the submission deadline.

Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building for Arts Organizations (available FY2027)

- A new program to provide the support nonprofit arts organizations need to adapt to change, work on new strategies, develop competencies, or improve processes and systems.
- Examples of eligible proposals include feasibility studies for accessibility, strategic planning, financial consultation, and professional development opportunities for staff. Proposals to purchase new equipment to be used for arts programming also will be considered, if the applicant can make a strong case for how it would increase the organization's ability to better serve the needs of its community and/or contribute to the future financial health of the organization.
- In addition to a written final report, representatives from organizations receiving this grant must participate in a public forum to share information gained and the impact of the grant on their organization.
- Grant amounts requested can range from \$1,000 to \$5,000.
- One submission deadline annually: January 18, 2027
- The earliest start date for use of funds is 90 days from the first of the month when the application is reviewed.

General Operating Support for Arts Organizations

- To support administrative and other overhead expenses over the course of two years (biennial grant). These grants are available to nonprofit arts organizations with operating expenses of less than \$174,000.
- Recipients must submit an interim report after Year One to receive Year Two payment.
- Grant amounts are up to \$5,000 per year.
- Arts organizations with 501(c)3 status only are eligible to apply. Colleges, universities, and local government entities are not eligible.
- Applications open July 1 and are accepted until allocated funds are spent.
- Applicants who submit by August 31 will be notified in November; if funds remain available after this, applicants who submit by November 1 will be notified in January.
- The earliest start date for use of funds must be 90 days from the first of the month when the application is reviewed.

Grant Review Process

- Eligible applications for the Project Support for Individual Artists and Culture Bearers grants, Rural Arts grants, Artists and Culture Bearers in the Schools grants, and Programming Support Grants for Organizations are assigned to Arts Advisory Panel members for their review. Subcommittees of the Board review applications for the remaining grants programs (Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building grants and General Operating Support grants).
- The Panel is comprised of artists, arts professionals, and other community members who support the arts and who live in the SEMAC region. Panelists may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. Interested individuals are encouraged to apply to join the Panel.
- SEMAC also encourages anyone interested in joining the Board to contact the Executive Director.
- Established Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures are followed.

Grant Review Criteria

- Artistic merit and quality of applicant's past work and of the project
- Demand or need for the project by the applicant or by the constituents served
- Ability of the applicant to accomplish the project they describe

Eligibility by Applicant Type

Individual Artists and Culture Bearers are eligible to receive two grants total per year:

- One Project Support Grant for Individual Artists and Culture Bearers or one Rural Arts Grant
- One Artists and Culture Bearers in the Schools Grant

Arts organizations receiving MSAB Operating Support are eligible to receive two grants per year:

- One Programming Grant (up to \$11,000)
- One Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building Support

Arts organizations in rural communities with populations below 7,500 are eligible to receive four grants per year:

- Two Programming Grants or one Programming Grant and one Rural Arts Grant as the lead or co-applicant (up to \$16,000 total)
- One Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building Grant
- General Operating Support

Arts organizations NOT in rural communities that do NOT receive MSAB Operating Support are eligible to receive four grants per year:

- Two Programming Grants (one application per grant cycle) (up to \$16,000 total)
- One Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building Grant
- General Operating Support

Non-arts organizations and local government entities in rural communities with populations below 7,500 are eligible to receive one grant:

- One Programming Grant or one Rural Arts Grant as the lead or co-applicant (up to \$6,000)

Non-arts organizations, colleges or universities, and local government entities NOT in rural communities would be eligible to receive one grant:

- One Programming Grant (up to \$6,000)

K-12 schools would be eligible to receive two grants per year:

- One Programming Grant (up to \$6,000)
- One Artists in the Schools Grant either as the lead applicant or as the co-applicant with an artist as the lead applicant

Services

In addition to grantmaking, SEMAC offers the following services to artists, arts organizations, and the general public:

- Grant writing workshops
- Grant coaching
- Language translation services (by Project FINE)
- Resource list for individual artists and culture bearers
- Professional development workshops and trainings (by Springboard for the Arts, Propel NonProfits and Minnesota Alliance for Volunteer Advancement)
- E-newsletter
- Social media promotion of regional arts events
- On-line regional arts calendar

Budget FY2026 - Income

Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council (SEMAC)			General Fund	Arts & Arts Access	Arts Education	Arts & Cult Heritage	McKnight Foundation	Other Funds	
PROJECTED BUDGET: Fiscal year 2026			2026 State	2026 State	2026 State	2026 State	Foundation	Funds	2026 Total
		REVENUE							
1		State of Minnesota: Appropriations for 2026	\$191,991	\$766,370	\$155,320	\$51,765	\$0	\$0	\$1,165,446
2		State of Minnesota: Carryforward from 2025	\$0	\$130,000	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$200,000
3		McKnight Foundation	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$90,000	\$0	\$90,000
4		Other Income	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18,000
5		Interest	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
6		TOTAL REVENUE	\$191,991	\$896,370	\$205,320	\$71,765	\$90,000	\$2,000	\$1,457,446

Budget FY2026 – Expenses (Grant Programs and Services)

Programs and Services								
Grant Programs and Services								
a	Individual Artists and Culture Bearers Grants	\$2,000	\$30,000	\$6,000	\$2,000	\$90,000	\$0	\$130,000
b	Rural Arts Grants	\$4,000	\$35,000	\$6,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
c	Artists in Schools Grants	\$2,000	\$0	\$18,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000
d	Programming and Project Support for Organizations	\$10,000	\$380,000	\$48,000	\$22,000	\$0	\$0	\$460,000
e	Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
f	General Operating Support Grants	\$10,000	\$140,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000
g	Grant Coaching and Language Services	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
h	Grant Writing Workshops	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
	Grant Programs and Services, Operations and Support	\$82,000	\$152,800	\$54,000	\$17,584	\$0	\$0	\$306,384
	Subtotal Grant Programs and Services	\$111,000	\$739,800	\$132,000	\$46,584	\$90,000	\$0	\$1,119,384

Budget FY2026 – Non-Grant Program and Services Expenses and Totals

Nongrant Programs and Services							
a	Artist Professional Development Workshops	\$600	\$4,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,800
b	Arts Management Trainings	\$500	\$5,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
c	Board, Panel, and Staff Trainings	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
e	Regional Arts Promotion	\$4,000	\$7,000	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$16,000
	Nongrant Programs and Services, Operations and Support	\$50,000	\$70,500	\$29,500	\$8,292	\$0	\$158,292
	Subtotal Nongrant Programs and Services	\$61,100	\$87,200	\$32,500	\$10,292	\$0	\$191,092
Total Programs and Services		\$172,100	\$827,000	\$164,500	\$56,876	\$90,000	\$1,310,476
Fundraising		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
General Administration		\$19,891	\$23,353	\$8,264	\$1,555	\$0	\$53,063
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$191,991	\$850,353	\$172,764	\$58,431	\$90,000	\$1,365,539
SURPLUS/CARRYFORWARD to FY 2027 or (DEFICIT)		\$0	\$46,017	\$32,556	\$13,334	\$0	\$91,907

Budget FY2027 - Income

Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council (SEMAC)				Arts &	Arts	Arts & Cult			
PROJECTED BUDGET: Fiscal year 2027			General Fund	Arts Access	Education	Heritage	McKnight	Other	
			2027 State	2027 State	2027 State	2027 State	Foundation	Funds	2027 Total
		REVENUE							
1		State of Minnesota: Appropriations for 2027	\$191,991	\$980,679	\$172,234	\$57,429	\$0	\$0	\$1,402,333
2		State of Minnesota: Carryforward from 2026	\$0	\$46,017	\$32,556	\$13,334	\$0	\$0	\$91,907
3		McKnight Foundation	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$90,000	\$0	\$90,000
4		Other Income	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
5		Interest	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500	\$2,500
6		TOTAL REVENUE	\$191,991	\$1,026,696	\$204,790	\$70,763	\$90,000	\$12,500	\$1,596,740

Budget FY2027 – Expenses (Grant Programs and Services)

Programs and Services								
Grant Programs and Services								
a	Individual Artist and Culture Bearers Grants	\$2,000	\$40,000	\$6,000	\$2,000	\$90,000	\$0	\$140,000
b	Rural Arts Grants	\$4,000	\$45,000	\$6,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$60,000
c	Artists in Schools Grants	\$2,000	\$0	\$28,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000
d	Programming and Project Support for Organizations	\$5,000	\$414,000	\$60,000	\$41,000	\$0	\$0	\$520,000
e	Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Building Grants	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
f	General Operating Support Grants	\$10,000	\$140,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000
g	Grant Coaching and Language Services	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
h	Grant Writing Workshops	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
	Grant Programs and Services, Operations and Support	\$61,800	\$162,200	\$57,000	\$12,000	\$0	\$0	\$293,000
	Subtotal Grant Programs and Services	\$110,800	\$803,200	\$157,000	\$60,000	\$90,000	\$0	\$1,221,000

Budget FY2027 – Non-Grant Program and Services Expenses and Totals

Nongrant Programs and Services							
a	Artist Professional Development Workshops	\$600	\$4,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,800
b	Arts Management Training	\$500	\$5,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000
c	Board, Panel, and Staff Trainings	\$5,500	\$4,000	\$2,050	\$1,000	\$0	\$12,550
d	Long Range Planning Consultant and Meetings	\$4,000	\$7,000	\$3,000	\$2,340	\$0	\$16,340
d	Regional Arts Promotion	\$8,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$16,000
e	Arts, Nature, and Wellness Program TBD	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,000	\$9,000
	Nongrant Programs and Services, Operations and Support	\$50,000	\$80,000	\$27,000	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$161,000
	Subtotal Nongrant Programs and Services	\$69,100	\$105,700	\$34,050	\$7,340	\$10,000	\$226,190
Total Programs and Services							
		\$179,900	\$908,900	\$191,050	\$67,340	\$90,000	\$1,447,190
Fundraising							
		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
General administration							
		\$12,091	\$34,537	\$7,909	\$685	\$500	\$55,722
TOTAL EXPENSES							
		\$191,991	\$943,437	\$198,959	\$68,025	\$90,000	\$1,504,912
SURPLUS/CARRYFORWARD to FY 2028 or (DEFICIT)							
		\$0	\$83,259	\$5,831	\$2,738	\$0	\$91,828

Comments or questions?

*Please contact Anastasia Shartin, Executive Director, at
director@semac.org.*

Thank you!