



APPLICANT JOURNEY FOR

EMERGENCY

RELIEF FUND

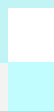
(ERF)

A SIMPLE, FAST-RESPONSE GRANT FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURE BEARERS FACING UNEXPECTED EMERGENCIES

A GUIDE FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS IN SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA

# Contents

03.	ABOUT SEMAC
04.	ABOUT THE ERF
05.	WHO THIS IS FOR
06.	WHAT TYPES OF EMERGENCIES ARE ELIGIBLE
06.	FUND STRUCTURE
07.	HOW THE APPLICATION WORKS
07.	SELECTION PROCESS
08.	WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE APPLYING
09.	IF YOU ARE SELECTED
09.	RESPONSIBLE USE OF FUNDS
10.	HELP & CONTACT





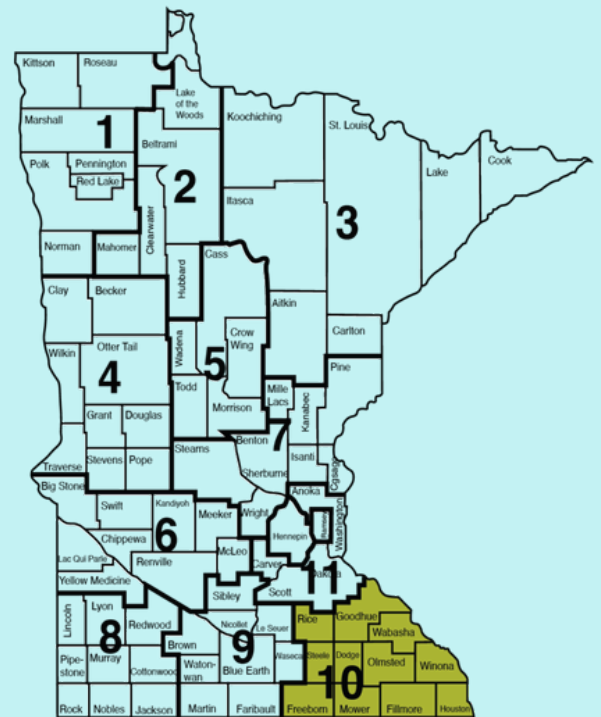
Flourish Summer Camp, Dream Acres Farm, 2025.

## ABOUT SEMAC

Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council (SEMAC) is the designated regional arts council serving Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona counties, including the Prairie Island Indian Community. Since 1977, SEMAC has supported local and regional arts development by distributing state arts funding and offering free services such as grant support, skill-building workshops, networking opportunities, and technical assistance.

In addition to funding programs, SEMAC provides free workshops and resource services for artists, culture bearers, and both arts and non-arts organizations across southeastern Minnesota, helping strengthen creative practices, organizational capacity, and community engagement in the region.

SEMAC is one of eleven regional arts councils designated by the State of Minnesota to make funding decisions using appropriations from the state’s general fund and the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF). For more information about the ACHF, visit <https://www.legacy.mn.gov/arts-cultural-heritage-fund>.



# ABOUT THE EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND

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The Emergency Relief Fund provides small, rapid-response financial support to artists and culture bearers who are experiencing unexpected emergencies that affect their ability to continue their creative practice.

Artists often work in conditions that can be vulnerable to sudden disruptions. Unexpected events such as illness, loss of transportation, housing instability, or the cancellation of performances or events can create immediate financial stress.

The Emergency Relief Fund is intended to offer short-term support during moments of urgent need, helping artists stabilize their situation and continue their creative work.

This program is not project-based and does not require a proposal, panel review, or final report.

## At-a-Glance

<b>Amount</b>	One time - \$500
<b>Who Can Apply</b>	Artists and culture bearers with an active creative practice
<b>Age Requirement</b>	18 years or older
<b>Residency</b>	Must have lived at least 6 consecutive months in the SEMAC region
<b>Emergency Timeline</b>	Emergency must have occurred within the past 6 months
<b>Examples of Emergencies</b>	Medical issues, housing insecurity, loss of transportation, cancelled gigs, caregiving responsibilities, etc.
<b>Selection Method</b>	Random selection after staff eligibility review
<b>Payment Method</b>	Check sent by mail

# WHO THIS FUND IS FOR

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The Emergency Relief Fund is intended for individuals with an intentional creative practice, including:

- Visual artists
- Performers
- Writers
- Music creators
- Filmmakers
- Culture bearers
- Makers and artisans
- Storytellers
- Artistic social conveners
- Idea purveyors
- Imaginaries
- Visionaries
- Arts educators
- Crafters
- Cultural workers
- Socially engaged artists
- and anyone who maintains an ongoing creative or cultural practice.

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Have lived for at least six consecutive months in:
  - one of SEMAC's service counties, or
  - a recognized Tribal Nation within the SEMAC region
- Demonstrate an active creative practice through work samples or documentation
- Have experienced an emergency within the past six months
- Proof of residency may be requested if needed for verification.



Harbi Mohamed Kahiye directs St. Olaf Somali Music Ensemble

# WHAT TYPES OF EMERGENCIES ARE ELIGIBLE

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Examples of situations that qualify include:

- Equipment, supplies, or personal loss due to fire, theft, or natural disaster
- Unexpected health issues and medical bills
- Increased cost of life-sustaining prescriptions
- Housing insecurity
- Food and basic daily need insecurity
- Legal issues or legal services
- Loss of income due to:
  - A loved one's death
  - Transition of a loved one to assisted housing
  - Unexpectedly becoming a caregiver
  - Art fairs, festivals, or events being cancelled
  - ICE action in SE Minnesota region
  - Quarantine or public health emergencies
  - Canceled gigs or paid events
- Unexpected loss of transportation
- Loss of child care
- Safety concerns

## FUND STRUCTURE

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The Emergency Relief Fund provides one-time financial support of \$500 to artists and culture bearers experiencing unexpected emergencies that affect their ability to continue their creative practice.

This support is intended to help address immediate needs during urgent situations, rather than fully covering the costs of a crisis.

Funds are issued by check and mailed to the recipient after completion of a short follow-up confirmation form.

# HOW THE APPLICATION WORKS

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Applications are submitted through SEMAC's online Grant Interface.

The application is designed to be short and straightforward. Applicants will be asked to provide:

- basic contact information
- creative or cultural practice resume
- work samples that demonstrate their creative practice
- information about the emergency
- demographic information

Work samples are used only to confirm that the applicant maintains an active creative practice. They are not evaluated for artistic merit.

## 2026 TIMELINE

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	<b>April 21</b>	ERF Application Opens
<b>Round 1</b>	<b>May 19</b>	Submission deadline for selection
	<b>May 29</b>	Applicants notified and confirmation forms sent
<b>Round 2</b>	<b>July 7</b>	Submission deadline for selection
	<b>July 17</b>	Applicants notified and confirmation forms sent
<b>Round 3</b>	<b>September 15</b>	Submission deadline for selection
	<b>September 24</b>	Applicants notified and confirmation forms sent

# SELECTION PROCESS

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The Emergency Relief Fund is non-competitive.

Applications are first reviewed by SEMAC staff to confirm:

- eligibility
- completeness

Eligible & complete applications are then entered into a random selection process.

To support equitable access, portion of funds will be set aside for artists who identify as Black, Indigenous, Multi-racial, Person of Color (BIMPOC); and/or a Person with Disabilities (PWD); and/or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, or Asexual (LGBTQIA+); and/or Veterans.

Remaining applications are then grouped by county and entered into a random selection process to help distribute support across the SEMAC region.

Selections are made in a way that reflects the overall distribution of applicants across counties, helping ensure that support is shared proportionally across the region.

Applicants who are not selected will remain in the applicant pool for future selections until they are funded, or program funds are exhausted.



"Zumbro River Underpass Mural" by Rochester artist Maggie Panetta, 4<sup>th</sup> Street bike path, Rochester, MN, 2023.

# WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE APPLYING

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Preparing a few items in advance can make the application process smoother. Other information will be asked directly in the form.

## Items to Prepare in Advance

- A resume of your creative or cultural practice, or a brief list of your past exhibitions, performances, publications, or related work
- Links to your artistic or creative presence (website, social media, etc.)
- If you do not have an electronic presence, you will be asked to provide 2–3 work samples from the past five (5) years that demonstrate your creative practice.

## Information You Will Be Asked to Provide

- Contact information
  - Full legal name and preferred name
  - Personal pronouns
  - County of residence
  - A mailing address where you can reliably receive a check
- Length of time engaged in your creative practice
- Emergency Category
- Basic Demographic Questions

## Information You Will Be Asked to Confirm

- Eligibility Confirmation
  - Confirmation that you meet all eligibility requirements (age, residency, and citizenship status)
- Emergency Confirmation
  - Confirmation that the emergency occurred within the past six (6) months

## IF YOU ARE SELECTED

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Individuals selected through the process will complete a short follow-up form to:

- confirm acceptance of the funds
- confirm or update their mailing address for check delivery

No expense documentation or narrative reporting is required.

## RESPONSIBLE USE OF FUNDS

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This support is intended to help address the emergency described in your application and support your ability to continue your creative practice.

Recipients are trusted to use the funds in a way that reflects their stated needs. If your situation changes or if you have questions about how to use the funds, you are encouraged to reach out to SEMAC staff.

SEMAC's goal is to provide timely support while maintaining care and integrity in how this program is shared across the community.

## PROGRAM SUPPORT

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SEMAC and Minnesota's other regional arts councils form the Artists Emergency Relief Fund Network, which is stewarded by Springboard for the Arts and supported in part by the F.R. Bigelow Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation.



# NEED HELP?

APPLICANTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ASK QUESTIONS EARLY AND SEEK CLARIFICATION WHEN NEEDED.

FOR ASSISTANCE, CONTACT DESMOND ANABRANG, GRANT PROGRAMS MANAGER AT [STAFF@SEMAC.ORG](mailto:STAFF@SEMAC.ORG). OR 507.281.4848.

FOR ACCESSIBILITY REQUESTS, CONTACT SHARON MANSUR, OUTREACH & ACCESSIBILITY MANAGER, AT [SHARON@SEMAC.ORG](mailto:SHARON@SEMAC.ORG) OR 507.322.1088, 711 TTY.

GRANT GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES ARE UPDATED REGULARLY, SO APPLICANTS SHOULD RELY ON CURRENT INFORMATION RATHER THAN PAST PRACTICES.