

Community Arts Access Grant Program

Program Overview and Application Instructions

NDCA Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026)

Community Arts Access Tier 1 & 2 Grant Program

Community Arts Access Tier 1 & 2 grants provide up to \$4,000 in arts activity support to arts and non-arts organizations and unincorporated groups.

Program Deadlines

Round	APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE	Earliest Project Start Date	Latest Project End Date
Round 1	Thursday, April 10, 2025, 4:30 p.m. CST	July 1, 2025	June 30, 2026
Round 2	Thursday, September 4, 2025, 4:30 p.m. CST	December 1, 2025	June 30, 2026

Incomplete or late applications are not accepted.

Program Officer

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Contact the program officer for application support or questions.
 Alternate application formats available upon request.

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- To encourage groups to enhance the quality of programming and expand audiences in rural and urban areas while building capacity
- To promote knowledge and appreciation of the arts in North Dakota

Eligibility

- An organization may be the official applicant on only one application in this program.
- An affiliate and its host organization may not both apply for a grant from the same program. However, more than one affiliate of the same host may receive funding. *Example:* two distinct groups within a university may receive funding for different projects within the same fiscal year.

Applicants must be one of the following:

- **North Dakota state tax-exempt nonprofit arts organization**
- **Federally tax-exempt nonprofit arts organization**
- **Federally tax-exempt non-arts organizations and community education units**
- **Public entity such as a unit of state, local, or tribal government**
- **An affiliate arts-presenting or arts-producing organization** – A distinct program or division hosted with **an in-state 501(c)(3) tax-exempt institution or public institution** (such as an arts division of a city or tribal government, a public or nonprofit college or university, or a community service nonprofit organization) that provides arts programming or services for the general public.

- Tier 1 organizations (applicants in cities with populations under 6,000) must have ND state nonprofit status but are not required to be a federal 501(c)(3).
- Tier 2 organizations (applicants in cities with populations of 6,000 or more) must be a federal 501(c)(3).

All Applicants Must:

- Be physically located in North Dakota
- Have the majority of arts programming, services, or activities take place in North Dakota
- Primarily serve and engage North Dakota audiences and participants
- Be the organization that will receive the funds, not a fiscally sponsored group

This Program Funds:

- Arts activities including but not limited to art festivals, exhibitions, performance series, touring performances or exhibits, and stand-alone single discipline or multidisciplinary arts projects of all forms.

This Program Does NOT Fund:

- Activities or programs where teaching and/or learning is the *sole* outcome
- Activities or programs that take place as part of the K-12 school day curriculum and activities in public, private, alternative, charter, and home schools. This includes costs to subsidize school participation (tickets, bussing, etc.).
- **The CAA grant is not a general operating support grant for an entire fiscal year.**

Ineligible Expenses:

- Projects completed in previous fiscal years
- Payment of project costs incurred before the project start date
- Debt reduction or elimination
- Replenishing depleted reserve and/or endowment funds
- Starting, matching, adding to, or completing any type of capital campaign or capital expenditures
- Capital costs, such as improvements, construction, property, equipment costing over \$5,000
- Permanent acquisitions
- Fundraising events and activities
- Prizes, awards, or benefits
- Entertainment functions, including food, beverages, alcohol, and associated costs
- Sales inventory and related fees/taxes
- Fellowships, scholarships, or tuition fees
- Projects that are part of a required course or curriculum
- Travel and projects that take place outside the geographic boundaries of North Dakota

Ineligible Expenses (continued):

- Projects that are not open to the general public
- Projects involving the arts as therapy unless artists are employed as art therapists

Ineligible Activities:

- Projects that violate any federal, state, or local laws, ordinances, or policies
- Projects that support activities that are essentially for the religious socialization of the participants or audience or discriminate against people or groups
- Projects that attempt to influence any state or federal legislation or appropriation
- Projects that are managed by another entity other than the applicant

Ineligible Applications:

- Applications that are not complete and received by 4:30 pm CST on the application deadline
- Applications that use NEA or other federal funds and/or NDCA funds toward the match

Ineligible Applicants:

- Grantees of NDCA's Community Arts Access, Institutional Support, or Special Projects grants in the current fiscal year
- Applicant is not in compliance with any active grant agreement with NDCA

Grant Award Amount

All grants are subject to available funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the North Dakota State Legislature.

Minimum award request: \$1,250

Maximum award request: **May not exceed \$4,000 or 75% of the total project cash expenses**, whichever is less.

Matching Funds

- A 25% cash match is required of the total NDCA request amount. The total expenses must be \$5,334 or more in order to request \$4,000 from NDCA.
- Matching funds need to be a cash source other than from NDCA and NEA or other federal sources. Match sources may include general operating funds, past surpluses, other grants, cash, and earned income or revenue that is planned to be raised specifically for the project.

For Tier 1 applicants only, the matching funds may include documented in-kind services and contributions. However, these cannot be more than 50% of the total match. *Example:* If the request from NDCA is for \$4,000, the in-kind match cannot exceed \$500 for a match of \$1,000.

Calculation Tip: To calculate 75% of the total project cash expenses, take the total expenses x .75.

Example 1: Total expenses are \$2000. Take $\$2000 \times .75 = \1500 . A maximum of \$1500 can be requested from NDCA. The remaining \$500 is the 25% match.

Example 2: Total expenses are \$3500. Take $\$3500 \times .75 = \2625 . A maximum of \$2625 can be requested from NDCA. The remaining \$875 is the 25% match.

Example 3: Total expenses are \$5500. Take $\$5500 \times .75 = \4125 . \$4125 is larger than \$4000 (the maximum amount that can be requested from NDCA). Write \$4000 for the NDCA request amount.

Application Review Process

1) After Submission: Applications are reviewed by staff for eligibility and completeness. If changes are required, applicants will receive an email from our online grants system (administrator@grantinterface.com).

2) Panels: Panelists are selected annually. For more information, visit: arts.nd.gov/get-involved/become-panelist. Online meetings are open to the public. Anyone may attend and listen to the discussion but may not present or participate. See arts.nd.gov/news/ndca-meetings for meeting dates.

3) Review Criteria: The panel evaluates each application and makes funding recommendations to NDCA's Board based on how well the applicant addresses specific review criteria. Panelists individually score complete applications. Those scores are averaged to arrive at the final score.

4) Panel Score: Proposals will be evaluated on how the applicant addresses the four (4) review criteria, with total possible points of 20, or 100%.

- a. Applications with average panel scores of 75%-100% will be sent on to the Board of Directors for approval.
- b. Applications with average panel scores of 60%-74% will be considered to receive a partial grant.
- c. Applications with average panel scores of 59% or below will not be approved.

Applicants are separated into the following panel review process based on their geographic population:

- Tier 1 – applicants in cities with populations under 6,000
- Tier 2 – applicants in cities with populations of 6,000 or more

5) Board Approval: NDCA’s Board of Directors has final authority to approve grants.

If Funded

Notification

- Communication regarding the grant award is via email (administrator@grantinterface.com).

Payment

- **Request for Funds Form and Timing:** Community Arts Access grantees are required to submit a Request for Funds to receive payment of grant funds awarded. After submission, allow up to four (4) weeks for payment.
- **Disbursement Amounts:**
 1. Requests can be made up to 80% of the total grant award upon signing the grant agreement. The remaining 20% can be requested after the completion of the online final report.
 2. Or grantees can request the total amount of the grant award after the completion of the online final report.
- **Return of Funds:** Grantees are required to spend the entirety of the NDCA grant award. Groups are required to raise and spend the match requirement as well as the grant award. The final report must show expenses at or greater than the budgeted amount or funds will need to be returned.

Reporting

- **Change Reports:** Any project changes to the activities, timeline, or budget need to be approved in writing by the program officer. Note that not all project changes can be approved.
- **Final Reports:** An online final report is due 30 days after the project end date that was entered at the time of application or by June 30, 2026, whichever comes first. Overdue final reports will affect future eligibility to apply for and/or receive NDCA funding.

Recognition

- Grantees are required to acknowledge NDCA support by using the **NDCA logo and credit line** on all promotional materials of the funded activity.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

How to Apply

Grant applications are submitted online through the NDCA online grant system.

1. To apply, go to grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=ndca
2. Register or log into account.
3. Click “Apply” at the top navigation of the website.
4. Click the “Apply” button next to “Community Arts Access FY26 Application.”

Application Support

First-time applicants are encouraged to contact the program officer if they have questions while preparing the application. The program officer can assist with eligibility questions and project idea development and goals.

Online Application Tips

- You can type responses to application questions into text boxes or you can work in another document and paste the answers in. The online grant system automatically saves your work. There is also a “Save Application” button at the bottom of the application form.
- Rich text formatting is limited in narrative questions. You may use bullets, numbers, bolding, italicizing, and underlining. Text boxes with character length limits include letters, numbers, spaces, and paragraph breaks.
- Confirmation emails are sent automatically to the applicant after the application is successfully submitted. If you do not receive a confirmation email (administrator@grantinterface.com), contact the program officer.

Application Requirements

1. Applicant Information
2. Narrative and Review Criteria
3. Outcomes
4. Budget
5. Work Samples and Summary of Artistic Achievements
6. Board List and Project Personnel Resume(s)
7. Determination Letter

Applicant Information

Select the Tier Applying to:

Tier 1 (populations under 6,000) or Tier 2 (populations of 6,000 or more)

Organization Mission Statement *(Required)* (750 maximum characters)

Provide the applicant's board-approved mission statement. Do not include additional information such as vision or values statements.

Organization/Group History *(Required)* (2,000 maximum characters)

This section helps introduce your group to panelists who may not be familiar with who you are.

- Provide a brief general history of the applicant. Summarize why and how the group formed and what it does.
- Give a brief description of the group's structure.
- What kinds of events or programming has the organization provided? Briefly describe activities over the past five (5) years.

NEA Questions *(Required)*

NDCA collects this information for the National Endowment for the Arts.

SAM Unique Entity ID *(Required)*

For organizational applicants, provide a System for Award Management (SAM) Unique Entity ID (UEI) number. Applicants can attain a SAM UEI without having to complete a full entity registration.

1. To apply, click here sam.gov.
2. You will need the organization's legal name and address.

Please check your SAM UEI expiration date and renew your SAM UEI before it expires.

Narrative

Proposals will be evaluated based on how the applicant addresses the four (4) review criteria, with total possible points of 20, or 100%.

Project Title *(Required)* (75 maximum characters)

Provide a short title describing the project.

Project Start Date *(Required)* The earliest date that can be entered is 7/1/2024. The project start date must include all publicized marketing efforts that include the NDCA logo and credit line.

Project End Date *(Required)* The latest date that can be entered is 6/30/2026.

Review Criteria

Arts Activity (0-5 points) (1,500 maximum characters)

1. The description of the activity is clear. Project collaborators are making a commitment of resources.
 - Describe the activity (what, when, where, how).
 - If applicable, provide a list of key activity partners, including volunteers. Describe how partners will leverage their resources to demonstrate their support for the project, including in-kind goods and/or services.

2. If artists and/or artist groups were selected for the activity, there is a clear description of how and why the artists were selected or the selection process is clearly defined and achievable.

Community (0-5 points) (2,000 maximum characters)

1. There is evidence that the activity will benefit the community(ies) identified.
 - Describe the community(ies) and audience(s) that will benefit from the activity. *Examples might include groups such as veterans, youth, greater North Dakota residents, individuals with disabilities, older adults, people of color, and/or other specific groups.*
 - How will the activity relate to and benefit the community(ies) and audience(s) identified?

2. There is evidence of community support.
 - How has the community(ies) shown support for the activity? *Examples might include through financial contributions, volunteer time, in-kind donations, or programming support and/or involvement.*

3. Accessibility needs of participants and/or audiences with disabilities are understood and addressed.
 - Every grantee commits to hold all funded activities in spaces that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements. How does the activity meet this requirement and ensure 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 publicized and made available to the public? Who is responsible for handling inquiries concerning accessibility?

General Information about Accessibility and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

NDCA's applicants' programs and facilities should ensure the arts are accessible to every person. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides guidance to ensure the arts are available to everyone.

If you have questions about the ADA or need ideas to make your programs and facilities accessible, contact NDCA's Accessibility Coordinator Rhea Beto at rbeto@nd.gov or (701) 328-7594 or visit the National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Accessibility resource page [arts.gov/impact/accessibility](https://www.arts.gov/impact/accessibility).

Ability (0-5 points) (2,000 maximum characters)

1. There is an achievable activity plan and timeline for the activity.
 - What is the timeline for major activities related to the project?
 - Who is responsible and what will they do to ensure the project is successful?

2. A marketing and promotional plan is provided and relevant to the activity and community(ies) identified.
 - Describe how the activity will be promoted to increase public awareness and participation for the project. How is the plan relevant to the activity and community(ies) identified?
 - If this is an annual event and/or you have received an NDCA grant for this event before, describe adjustments made to reach new audiences.

3. The budget is appropriate for the activity. It will a) demonstrate attainable earned revenue including the match, b) demonstrate reasonable costs, c) compensate artists and arts organizations appropriately, and d) include only administrative expenses relevant and necessary for the project.

- If fees are associated with the activity, what considerations are being made for those who may find these costs a barrier? *Examples might include ticket discounts, scholarships, or transportation reimbursements.*

Evaluation (0-5 points) (1,000 maximum characters)

1. The applicant has identified two (2) effective project outcomes that clearly support NDCA program outcomes. The evaluation plan is appropriate for project outcomes.
 - Describe the evaluation plan in detail. What methods will be used and how will those methods measure progress? *Examples might include audience/participant counts, audience/participant and artist surveys, post-performance feedback, etc.*
 - If using a survey, describe what type of survey you will use.

Outcomes

This section addresses how the applicant's outcomes match the program outcomes and how these can be effectively evaluated.

Project Outcomes (*Required*) (150 maximum characters)

In one or two sentences, state two (2) distinct and measurable project outcomes. **The project outcomes must support the following program outcomes:**

- Grantees expand or enrich the ways they connect to their communities.
- Communities with limited arts programming develop their capacity to offer arts experiences for their constituents.
- North Dakotans participate in meaningful arts experiences that are not routinely available to them.
- North Dakota artists build meaningful relationships with audiences they aren't currently serving.

How will the outcomes be evaluated? (*Required*) (150 maximum characters)

For each project outcome, select a program outcome that the activities will achieve. (Required)

From the menu, choose a program outcome.

Outcomes and Evaluations Tip: Applicants may refer to “Getting Started with Program Evaluation: A Guide for Arts Organizations” [nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Getting-Started-with-Program-Evaluation.pdf](https://www.nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Getting-Started-with-Program-Evaluation.pdf), published by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

Budget Form and Instructions

Download the budget form appropriate to the applicant’s population. Complete and upload to the online application.

➤ **Tier 1 (populations under 6,000)**

<https://www.arts.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/grants/CAATier1FY26BudgetandInstructions.pdf>

➤ **Tier 2 (populations of 6,000 or more)**

<https://www.arts.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/grants/CAATier2FY26BudgetandInstructions.pdf>

Work Samples and Summary of Achievements

Provide three to five (3-5) work samples produced within the last five (5) years.

Organizational applicants are required to submit work samples and a summary of artistic achievements for one to two (1-2) of the artist(s) or artist group(s) that have been selected for the activity. *(Required)* (1,000 maximum characters)

Notes about Rights

- The works and the rights to those works resulting from NDCA grants are the sole property of the artist(s).
- Copyright registration is the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- All work samples submitted are public information and will not be returned. NDCA may use samples in promotional materials.

Complete work samples include the following:

1. Images, video, audio, and/or written work
2. A work sample description

Images

Provide a **JPG or JPEG** file(s) for **up to five (5) images** with a maximum of **5 MB each**.

Video

Provide a URL link for **up to two (2) video samples** for a maximum total length of **3 minutes**.

- Video files must be uploaded to youtube.com/ or vimeo.com/
- Include only the material intended for panel review
- Include a Vimeo password, if applicable
- No video slideshow of images or promotional videos

Audio

Provide a URL link for **up to two (2) audio samples** for a maximum total length of **3 minutes**.

- Audio files must be uploaded to soundcloud.com or dropbox.com
- Include only the material intended for panel review
- Include a Soundcloud password, if applicable

Online Samples: Keep video and audio samples available online until notified of grant award status.

Written Work

Provide a **PDF file** for **up to three (3) pages** of written work.

- Include only the material intended for panel review
- Remove title pages, table of contents, etc.
- Scripts: formatting should follow industry standards

Combination

If using a combination of sample types: 1 page = 1 image = 1 minute. You may submit up to 3 images/pages/minutes. *Example:* If there is 1 minute of video, you can include a combination of images and written work that total 2 additional pages and/or images.

If you do not want your video(s) to be public, see guidelines below on how to make them private and available for panel viewing.

- In YouTube, set the video sample to “Unlisted” (not the “Private” setting listed). This allows anyone with the link to view the video without a Google account and it is not public for viewing.
- In Vimeo, when uploading a video, select “Only people with a password can see this video.”
- For YouTube support, visit support.google.com/youtube.
- For Vimeo support, visit <https://help.vimeo.com/hc/en-us>.

Work Sample Description

Include the following information for each work sample:

1. Artist Name
2. Title of Work
3. Completion Date
4. Location - Provide the location of any work sample that is a performance, concert, event, exhibition space.
5. Medium – Provide the medium for any work sample that is visual art (e.g., acrylic, clay, etc.).
6. Duration/Pages
7. For video and audio samples, state the length of the sample and the length of the complete artwork (e.g., 2 minutes of a 46-minute symphony).
8. For written work, provide the number of pages of the portion of the artwork that will be read in the work sample. (e.g., 2 pages of a 12-page scene, or 3 pages of a 200-page novel).

Board List *(Required)*

A board of directors **OR** advisory committee is required, encompassing **three (3) individuals at a minimum**. Provide a list that includes the following information below (upload a PDF) or provide a website link to the board information on the organization’s website.

1. Board member name
2. Board position
3. Primary professional/community affiliation
4. Professional title
5. City and state of residence

Project Personnel Resume(s) *(Required)*

Provide a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of two (2) resumes of key administrative leadership or personnel who are responsible for the proposed project program, and administration of grant funds. Include name, title, years of service, and resume. Limit each resume to two (2) pages. (upload a PDF)

Determination Letter *(Required)*

Provide the Federal IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter, North Dakota certification of nonprofit incorporation, or tax-exempt certificate letter for a public entity. (upload a PDF)